

Wilderness VHF Protocol Reminder

The FM column in February 1994 *QST* presented "A Wilderness VHF Protocol," suggesting a procedure for remote hikers or campers shielded from access to repeaters. The protocol calls for wilderness hams to announce themselves on, and to monitor, the national calling frequencies for five minutes beginning at the top of the hour, every three hours from 7 AM to 7 PM while in the back-country. This way, a ham in a remote location may be able to relay emergency information through another wilderness ham who has better access to a repeater. Readers were enthusiastically in support of the proposal, although after one year, I haven't yet heard of any incidents when the protocol has possibly saved life or limb. In light of the widespread support of the protocol, however, I urge readers, now enjoying the '95 hiking season, to continue to use and to promote the use of the wilderness protocol.—William Alsup, N6XMW, Oakland, California; 76202.52@compuserve.com

Wilderness VHF Protocol

Frequencies

(FM simplex): 52.525, 146.52, 223.50, 446.0, 1294.50 MHz.

Times (local): 7:00 to 7:05 AM, 10:00 to 10:05 AM, 1:00 to 1:05 PM,
4:00 to 4:05 PM, 7:00 to 7:05 PM.

It may take a few years for the Wilderness VHF Protocol to take off and become universally known and used by all hams who walk the wilds of our country carrying their hand-held transceivers. It's reassuring to know that there's at least one agreed-upon technique for amateurs to use if they get into a tight spot. Remember, though, this protocol won't work if it's only used by hams who need to call for help—someone else has to be *listening*. The way to help this practice spread is by using it whenever you can. Check the national simplex frequencies on all bands for which you're equipped, and give your call sign once or twice so that others will know you're there. Operators whose home stations are in or near wilderness areas, national

parks, etc, are also encouraged to join in. You just might help save someone's life someday, or perhaps you'll make a new friend on the trail (and it can be a good excuse for a five-minute rest break)!

If you make any contacts using the Wilderness VHF Protocol this hiking season, share it with your fellow hams. Even if it's just a routine exchange of greetings, let's hear if this is catching on. Report a simple contact with call signs, date, time, location, etc; if the incident involves safety or other assistance, include any details you think are interesting. Send it to me at *QST*, 225 Main St, Newington, CT 06111; e-mail bbattles@arrl.org. Have a fun and safe time in the wilderness!—WS1O