ARRL Oregon Section Traffic Manager's 2024 Year in Review

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This will be my sixth year serving as the ARRL Oregon Section Traffic Manager. The primary responsibility of the STM is to oversee traffic network activity within the section and to insure the networks are staffed, trained and ready to provide messaging services to the public in the event of disaster or emergency when normal communication facilities are inoperable.

This report highlights Oregon Section traffic activities observed during 2024. Monthly reports from Net Managers and Station Activity reports from individual operators are compiled to provide data for this report.

Synopsis

In 2024 the Oregon Section saw a major decline in participation in formal traffic handling. Younger hams are not as interested in the disciplined format of manual traffic nets as their predecessors. The internet has replaced the radio for radiogram and even general bulletin and personal messaging over our digital networks. Sadly, the numbers can't hide the fact that the manual traffic net is obsolete.

Traffic Nets

Qualified traffic nets observe recommended operating methods and practices as published in the ARRL NTS Manual and the Methods and Practices Guidelines Manual (MPG) as outlined here:

1. Net operations respect Section Boundaries. (ARRL NTS Manual, Ch. 2.2)
2. Net assigns liaisons to and from the Region net and the DTN Hub. (ARRL NTS Manual, Ch. 2.2)
3. Net operation complies with MPG Chapter 4, Net Operations.
4. Net control stations follow best practices outlined in MPG Chapter 5, Net Control.
5. Net managers have an emergency operations plan filed with the STM.
6. Net managers report net activity to the Section Traffic Manager every month.

The Section Traffic Net cannot function without Liaisons!

Compliance with Section Boundaries provides national network-wide, uniform and orderly routing of message traffic and provides for accountability and traceability of messages. Restricting Section traffic net operations to Section Boundaries maintains order, discipline and efficiency.

Traffic nets are not for social entertainment! They provide emergency communications services for our neighbors in the community which calls for a high level of operating proficiency and discipline. Handling third party traffic is not a hobby, it's a commitment.

The Current State of Affairs

Oregon has only a single qualified Section echelon traffic net and it hangs on by a thread. The Oregon Section Net is a CW operation meeting daily at 18:30 local time on 3.566 Mhz. Participation averages 7 check-ins per session with

very little traffic. There are only two net control stations and the net seldom sends a liaison to the Region net and only when there is inter-regional or inter-area traffic.

Oregon's long time dedicated HF SSB traffic net, Beaver State Net, meeting daily at 17:30 local time on 3.920 Mhz, was released as a traffic net and assumed ARES net status due to non-compliance with traffic net methods and practices. The decline began many years ago when the net merged with the Oregon ARES Traffic Net. As participation declined in the ensuing years, the format of the net shifted away from traffic net rules. Beaver State Net was turned over to Oregon ARES management in April of 2024. Although the net claims to handle all traffic offered, it remains uncertain how inter-section traffic can be handled with no apparent liaison station assignments. The regular practice of implementing internet forwarding for net administration reports bypasses radio links contrary to the 'all traffic offered' claim. Clearly, this is not a traffic net.

The Northwest Oregon Traffic and Training Net, a local echelon VHF net serving areas West of the Cascade Range to the coast and from Salem to the Columbia River, was founded in 1992 by me with the help of a group of dedicated traffic handlers. It too suffers from a lack of operator participation, but we hang in there and provide newcomers with an operating example of traffic net procedure and radiogram formatting that are otherwise not available. Again, the popularity of a disciplined net format is not as popular as the less formal social nets found on the VHF/UHF bands, but we try to demonstrate traffic net methods and practices none-the-less. NTTN meets on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday at 18:05 local time on the 145.27 (pl 107.1) Timber repeater. This net needs more support, net control stations are needed to fill open NCS slots. It may not survive the coming year.

To assist newcomers with training information and encouragement, with the help of my NCS staff, a web page is now posted at https://www.qsl.net/nttn .

The Numbers

See the Attached charts for details.

Net Sessions, QNI and QTC numbers refer to Net activity. SAR and PSHR numbers refer to personal participation points by individual operators who report it.

QNI numbers are Section net session check-ins not counting visiting stations who do not contribute to message origination or delivery within the Section. Only numbers of Section members are shown here. It was found that the reporting Local level nets do not contribute to traffic processing in a significant way, however, messages received and processed through the Section net are likely forwarded and delivered at the Local net level.

QTC numbers show the total number of messages processed through the Section by the various nets.

SAR points indicate Station Activity Reporting and are typically higher than the QTC number because 2 X SAR points are awarded for Receiving and Sending or Receiving and Delivering a single message and only a small fraction of participants report their SAR numbers. A more accurate accounting, if all participants submitted reports, would show the SAR totals at least twice the QTC amount. The SAR indicates the total number of messages originated, received, sent and delivered.

PSHR Points show the level of participation, both in terms of net activity, digital services provided and planning man-hours that an individual station operator contributes. The annual points total divided by 5, is a good estimate of Volunteer Hours that can be reported for IRS tax exempt credit for voluntary public service. In

the Oregon Section there were only 2 stations reporting PSHR. If every station that participates in public service activities were to report it, this number would be much, much higher and would go a long way to justify our spectrum use.

For now, the lights remain on. For how long is unknown.

Submitted by,

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Attached: Oregon STM Statistics for 2024