

MILE HIGH RADIO CLUB, dba; WNKI578-1610AM and MOUNTAIN RADIO NETWORK

History:

WNKI 578 – 1610 AM was formed in 1987 by the “Emergency Radio Committee” of the “Coordinated Resources Management and Planning Group” aka; CRMP. The Committee recognized the need to have an AM Emergency Broadcast Station, thus serving the areas of Idyllwild, Pine-Cove and portions of Mountain Center.

Around the same time that WNKI was formed, so was the Mile High Radio Club (MHRC) along with the Mountain Radio Network (MRN). Many of same core local volunteers worked and supported all three of these vital operations. While WNKI was purely broadcast radio, both the MHRC and MRN focused on two-way Amateur Radio Communications, supporting Local, County, State and Federal Agencies along with various “Non-Governmental First Responders” with auxiliary volunteer based emergency communications.

Base and Mission:

Today the Mile High Radio Club (MHRC) maintains all of these volunteer based emergency communication operations. More specifically the MHRC and the Idyllwild Fire Protection District (WNKI 578 Licensee) signed a formal Agreement in December 2014 for the operations and oversight of WNKI through the joint coordination and cooperation of the organizations.

Throughout the San Jacinto Mountains, there are 290 registered FCC licensed Amateur Radio Operators; this includes; Idyllwild / Pine Cove, Mountain Center and Anza. Then surrounding our mountain range between Hemet, Banning, Palm Springs and Palm Desert, the number jumps to 1,950 registered FCC licensed Amateur Radio Operators.

Our communities are remotely located within the San Jacinto Mountains of Riverside County, California. Linked by only three roads, the communities are at an elevation of 4,000 to 6,300 feet. The region is subject to and has experienced wild land fires, heavy storms along with mud and rock slides and road closures. These communities experience large numbers of visitors year-round due to snow, art festivals, and various community activities encouraging visitation. It is of significant importance that the residences, local camps and all public traffic in the affected areas receive the emergency message over station WNKI578 and know that there are alternate means of communicating with neighboring communities, Counties or States when life-threatening situations arise.

Currently:

WNKI’s base station is in the process of being reconfigured with modern technology, programming and transmitter. Moving from analog towards digital technology will allow for the ease of remote station programming changes via phone, internet or radio transmission. In addition the transmitter may be adapted to “Live Stream” its broadcast over the internet with additional hardware. All of these improvements are being overseen by the MHRC as time and funding permits.

MHRC acquired the MRN license and a pair of Amateur Repeaters in 2014. At the time the stations were not linked as the 2 meter repeater required repair. The volunteer base of the MHRC quickly solved the situation, re-coordinated the repeaters with authorities and increased radio coverage into Pinyon Pines, the Coachella Valley and points beyond. This is now a vital link connecting both east and west Riverside County, thus

allowing direct communications with both Primary and Alternate Emergency Operation Centers under the direction of the Emergency Management Department (EMD) of Riverside County.

Goals:

Provide improved emergency radio communications into the communities of Pine Cove north of Marion Ridge and reaching Poppet Flats, Silent Valley and the Vista Grande areas along highway 243. Then towards the east along Highway 74 between Garner Valley and Pinyon Pines. These areas, not only do they include our only ingress and egress corridors in times of evacuation, they are identified within the citizen comment sections of the original CWPP as locations seeking broadcast radio communications in times of emergency.

As for WNKI and AM broadcast communications, the FCC limits the wattage output power to 10 watts. Therefore the most effective way to provide broadcast coverage into the identified areas in need of service is through a linked or repeated broadcast system as defined in our Strategic Plan, which was developed as an answer in support of comments made within the original CWPP.

We have also learned from the Silver Fire and in the interest of Public Safety that it's imperative that we provide two-way Amateur Radio Communications into the Silent Valley and Poppet Flats areas along Highway 243 of our Mountain Range. Current communications through Disaster Core and EMD of Riverside County operations into and out of that area are marginal at best, yet improvements can be made. With the current reports surrounding Riverside County / Cal Fire and possible budget cuts looming, Station 63 in Poppet Flats could be a casualty. With this in mind, the safety of many—as pointed out in our review of the citizen comments within the CWPP—the Mile High Radio Club has a plan to provide Amateur Radio via a linked repeater into Poppet Flats, connecting to MRN, thus allowing communications with our vulnerable neighbors north of Pine Cove.

Signs – Road Side:

WNKI at one time had road side signage directing motorists to dial into 1610 AM. It has been discovered that the signs were never properly permitted and thus removed. Highway signs are governed by Caltrans and there is a specific permit process involved. Caltrans also requires that before permit requests are submitted for such signage that the broadcast station's signal reach to both ends of the highway requiring the signage. With the limits of broadcast wattage it's imperative that we work towards the stations strategic plan and build out the ribbon network along highways 74 and 243. Once this effort is completed, signs directing the traveling public to tune into WNKI 578 – 1610 AM can be posted.

RACES / ARES / SKYWARN Project 2017 Updates

<i>Project Name</i>	<i>PROJECT SITE</i>	<i>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</i>	<i>PRIORITY</i>	<i>2006 Status</i>	<i>2017 Status</i>
Repeater Hub	Marion Ridge	Secure New Permanent Site	High	In Long Term Secure Site	Faced with Re-Location, In-Process
Repeater Install - North	Ranger Peak	Expand Radio Coverage, Complete Link with N6MRN, Provide Communications with Poppet Flats / Silent Valley	High	Non-Existent	Applications and Coordination, In-Process
Repeater East Upgrade	Santa Rosa	New Repeater / Controller / Digital	Medium	Non-Existent	Operational, Requires Upgrades
Repeater Hub Upgrades	Marion Ridge	New Repeater / Power Supplies / Controllers	Medium	Operational	Operational, Requires Upgrades
County RACES Operations	Marion Ridge	Communication Structure, HF Transceiver, Deploy Gear, Operations – Communications with County EOC's	Low	Existed	Moved out due to limited space @ Station 23, Operations Non-Existent

WNKI 578 – 1610 AM – Projects 2017 Updates

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Base Station	Idyllwild Fire Protection District	Broadcast Upgrades / Transmitter / Controls	High	Operational	Operational and In-Process
Ribbon Network	Highway Corridor – 243 / 74 Poppet Flats to Pinyon Pines	Hardened Sites, Expand Coverage per Strategic Plan	High	Non-Existent	Proposals Submitted
Highway Signage	Highway Corridor – 243 / 74 Poppet Flats to Pinyon Pines	Alert Travelers, Tune to 1610 AM	High	Existed – However they were Non-Permitted	Signage has been removed
Live Stream	Idyllwild Fire Protection District	Live Stream WNKI 578 Via Internet	Medium	Non-Existent	Proposals Submitted