



International Amateur Radio Union Region 1 2011 Regional Conference – Sun City, South Africa 12 to 19 August 2011



Subject	Stop Changes to the Beacon Band On 50 MHz And Discuss A New Band Plan		
Society	USKA	Country:	Switzerland
Committee:	C5	Paper number:	SC11_C5_47
Author:	Stefan L. Streif, HB9TTQ		

Current Situation

The actual band plan for the 50 MHz band was created in a time when only a small number of countries allowed amateur radio operation on this band and when there was very little activity on it.

At the interim meeting of the Region 1 VHF/UHF Committee in Vienna in February 2010, the committee decided the shift of the beacon sub-band toward 50,4 MHz by the end of 2012. After the meeting, a discussion started in Switzerland (and other countries) about the problems this decision creates.

Most of today's 50 MHz beacons are not equipped with configurable VFOs. Thus, the change of frequency requires the purchase of new crystals and a lot of adjusting. This will be expensive. Most of the beacon owners are enthusiasts and pay the costs of the beacons themselves. It is highly probable that some of the beacon owners will stop operating their beacons if they have to change the frequency.

Another problem poses the location of some of these beacons. A lot of them are installed in remote areas or on mountaintops. A change of the transmitter frequency therefore requires two expensive expeditions. Firstly, the beacon operator will have to pick up the transmitter and bring it to the workshop, and the second expedition will have to bring it back and reinstall the transmitter. Most of the beacon owners do this once in a solar cycle, normally during the sunspot minimum.

Proposal

USKA proposes to temporarily halt the change of the 50 MHz beacon sub band immediately. The next possible time for changing will be after the next solar flux maximum (2015 - 2017).

Furthermore, USKA proposes that the VHF/UHF/Microwave Committee discuss and propose a new 50 MHz band plan. This band plan should be coordinated with IARU Regions 2 and 3. A new band plan should better distribute activities over the available spectrum between 50,0 and 52,0 MHz.