

Lee County ARES – Wilderness Protocol Training Script (2025 Edition)

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Part 1 – On-Air Training Script

Opening

This is KI5QHC. Good evening everyone. Tonight, we'll spend a few minutes learning about something every ham should know — the Wilderness Protocol. This is a simple but powerful way to make sure we can reach help — or offer it — when we're outside normal repeater coverage, or when repeaters are down during an emergency. Whether you're camping, hiking, driving through rural Texas, or supporting emergency operations — this protocol could save lives. And while it's designed for simplex operation, the same concept applies to monitoring our local repeaters. Just like the Wilderness Protocol encourages regular listening on simplex calling frequencies, keeping an ear on our local repeaters and emergency nets ensures that we can hear — and be heard — when someone nearby might need assistance. The more of us who actively monitor, whether on simplex or repeater, the stronger our emergency communications network becomes.

What It Is

The Wilderness Protocol is an ARRL-endorsed guideline for amateur radio operators to monitor and call on standard simplex calling frequencies at specific times. Its goal is to ensure that if someone needs help outside repeater range — there's a good chance another operator is listening. The primary national calling frequency is 146.520 MHz (VHF), with secondary frequencies at 52.525 MHz, 223.500 MHz, 446.000 MHz, and 1294.500 MHz. Although it began as a backcountry protocol, it remains vital today for preparedness and emergency coordination.

When and Where to Monitor

National guidance recommends monitoring every three hours starting at 7 AM — that's 07:00, 10:00, 13:00, 16:00, 19:00, and 22:00 — for at least five minutes past the hour. Here in Lee County, ARES has an enhanced monitoring schedule to strengthen readiness:

Time (Local)	Action
:00	Monitor PRIMARY repeater 147.220 MHz (+0.600, PL 114.8)
:30	Monitor SECONDARY repeater 147.240 MHz (+0.600, PL 114.8)
:15 and :45	If repeaters are down, monitor or call on 146.540 MHz (simplex)

HF operators can also monitor 3.953 MHz or 7.253 MHz LSB during these same time windows.

Priority Calling – Long Tone Zero (LiTZ)

For priority or emergency calls, use the Long Tone Zero signal. Key your microphone and hold the DTMF “0” key for about 10 seconds before speaking. Example call: “This is KI5QHC calling emergency, emergency, emergency under the Wilderness Protocol on 146.520 MHz — requesting assistance.” If you hear the LiTZ tone, stop transmitting immediately and listen — someone may be in distress.

Winlink Messaging (Data)

When voice communications are not possible, Winlink provides an alternative for sending messages via radio using VARA FM or VARA HF. Primary RMS Gateway: KD5BJ-10 — 145.610 MHz, VARA FM (WIDE) Secondary RMS Gateway: WB5YYQ-10 — 144.950 MHz, VARA FM Peer-to-Peer (P2P): KD5BJ — 145.610 MHz, VARA FM P2P For HF VARA Winlink, select an appropriate RMS gateway based on band conditions (80 m, 40 m, 20 m) using the Channel Selection window in Winlink Express. Tips: • Use Channel Selection to update the latest RMS frequency listings. • If VARA WIDE doesn't connect, switch to VARA NARROW (1200bps). • Coordinate P2P use outside :00/:30 voice windows to avoid contention.

Why It Matters

The Wilderness Protocol and LeeCares enhancements create a layered, resilient monitoring plan. Even a handheld on simplex can make a difference if someone nearby is listening. These procedures make our ham community a safety net — always ready to assist when other systems fail.

Closing

That concludes this evening's Wilderness Protocol training segment for Lee County ARES. For more details or a printable copy, visit leecares.org or consult the ARES Field Resources Manual. Remember: Listen first. Call smart. Help when you can. This is KI5QHC — clear.

Part 2 – Operator Reference and Quick Guide

Enhanced Monitoring Schedule

Time (Local)	Frequency / Action
:00	147.220MHz(+0.600,PL114.8) – Primary Repeater
:30	147.240MHz(+0.600,PL114.8) – Secondary Repeater
:15&:45	146.540MHz(Simplex) – if repeaters unavailable

HF Voice Frequencies

3.953 MHz LSB
7.253 MHz LSB

Winlink Gateways

Gateway	Frequency / Mode	Notes
KD5BJ-10	145.610■MHz■VARA■FM■(WIDE)	Primary■RMS■Gateway
WB5YYQ-10	144.950■MHz■VARA■FM	Secondary■RMS■Gateway
KD5BJ	145.610■MHz■VARA■FM■P2P	Peer■to■Peer■Winlink

LiTZ (Long Tone Zero) Emergency Signal

- Hold the “0” key on your DTMF keypad for ~10 seconds before speaking.
- Then state your emergency message clearly.
- If you hear this tone, stop and listen immediately.

This quick guide summarizes the LeeCares adaptation of the ARRL Wilderness Protocol for 2025 operations.