



## **Radio Orienteering at Ball's Bluff**

Radio orienteering is derived from military operations in Europe during the First World War. Commanders used radios to communicate with their troops. While the radio was transmitting, opposing forces were able to take a bearing on the emitted signal and target the source of the emissions.

The orienteering-like sport that descends from this military technique is called ARDF (Amateur Radio Direction Finding) also sometimes called "fox hunting," and the principles are the same as they were 100 years ago. By pointing the radio receiver's antenna and listening for the transmitted signal, you can determine its direction, hone in on its location, and find its associated control box.

At Ball's Bluff, we will offer a 10-control fox-orienteering training event as an orienteer's introduction to ARDF. It's orienteering with a twist. The map is a normal orienteering map, but the on-map controls lead you to the *vicinity* of the low-power radio beacon. Once you navigate to the control location, using normal orienteering techniques, you will be able to hear the beacon's signal with your ARDF equipment. Your task is to find the beacon located within 30-50 meters in any direction from the control. The radio beacon transmits continuously, but there is no flag, only an e-punch control box. It's meant to be hard to see so that you have to use the strength of the radio signal to find the control box.

This optimizes the opportunities for practicing with the ARDF equipment but should leave orienteers plenty of time to go out on their preferred classic O course as well.

Mike will have five sanitized and individually packaged receivers available for rent for a fee of \$10 cash, payable directly to Michael. He will also provide you with some basic instruction in how to use the equipment.

**For insurance purposes, only people who have pre-registered for a regular FHC orienteering course will be allowed to participate in the ARDF training event.** Pre-register and pay for a normal orienteering course just like always.

The ARDF event will be first come/first served. There will be two start windows with 5 participants each at 10 AM and 12:30 PM. The 10 AM starters must be back at the registration area by 12:15 PM so the equipment can be re-sanitized before the 12:30 PM starts.

Collateral (car keys or driver's license) is required to use an ARDF receiver.

For anyone planning on bringing their own ARDF receiver, Michael will be using 80m wavelength beacons.

For a quick introduction to ARDF, please go to [www.ardfdc.org](http://www.ardfdc.org). A video comparing ARDF and foot orienteering is [available here](#).

A short video created by QOC's Eugene Tcipnjatov detailing ARDF in Maryland is available here. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JnKB1JIEPZ4>