

Before the contest perform the following

1. [Required for real-time distance/time estimates to county lines] Use a mapping program such as Streets and Trips (S&T) to plan your route and locate each of your county crossings. Build and save the file of county crossing information as described in the on-line help and use **QPTools | Build Plan From Crossings** to import the crossing information into the program. Save the (S&T) trip file for use during the contest. It is helpful to provide a link to the trip file by defining an item under **Options | Configure User-Supplied Help**. You can, of course, save these files in any convenient location and with any names that are easy to remember. In my use of the program I have found the maps subdirectory associated with the QSO Party to be a good place to store these files. This is an optional step but is required if you desire real-time estimates of the distance and time to the next county.
2. [Required for real-time distance/time estimates to waypoints] Use the mapping program to define any waypoints and build a file of these waypoints as described in the on-line help. This step is also optional but is required if you desire real-time estimates of the distance to important waypoints.
3. If desired use **QPTools | Post Route Plans** to connect to the County Hunter website to post your route and any comments using cut and paste.
4. Use **Keyer | Edit Message Template** to define the format of your messages. Insert embedded symbols in the messages by first positioning the cursor at the desired point of insertion and right-clicking and selecting the desired symbol from the pop-up menu. Once you are satisfied with your messages Update the Template. The messages are now ready to be changed as you advance through the counties and work stations.
Note: It is important to perform this step even if you plan to operate only SSB since the program obtains logging information from these messages.
5. Use **Keyer | Assign Function Keys** to assign tasks to the function keys.
6. If you wish to have strip maps available for viewing within the program use a mapping tool and a screen capture tool to capture images and save them as bmp files. Then use either the **QPTools | Associate Maps** menu item to associate each image file with a county or use the **Options | Configure User-Defined Help** menu item as described in the on-line help. Note: If you plan to use real-time tracking in a mapping program strip maps do not offer much advantage and you may wish to omit this step.
7. Use **Radio | Connect/Disconnect** or **Keyer | Connect/Disconnect** to assign the radio, keyer and GPS to their respective ports. Be sure to connect and test each device. The next time you close the application be sure to answer Yes to the question "Save New Port Assignments" so that you can easily reconnect all devices to their proper ports. It is also a good idea to have a diagram handy showing which devices are attached to which ports.

On Startup/Restart of the program - The configuration wizard will prompt you through most of the following steps or you can skip the wizard and perform them without the prompts.

1. Use **Radio | Connect/Disconnect** to connect devices to their respective ports. If you have saved your port assignments you can use the button labeled "Restore from Previous Session" to restore all devices and then use Connect All to connect all of the devices.

2. Use **GPS | GPS Advises County Change** to set the desired GPS Advisory mode. If you choose AUTO the program will automatically change your messages to correspond to the current county and will locate the next county crossing if you have defined one for the current county. If there is more than one crossing defined for the current county the program will ask you to resolve the uncertainty. (Use **GPS | Resolve Multiple County Crossings**)
3. Use **GPS | Set Parameters** to define and/or import any waypoints and to set up pass through of GPS information to a mapping program such as Streets and Trips. You can also set up any GPS logging features at the same time (e.g. CQ/X QSL-Ready logging).
4. If you are using Streets and Trips you can use **QPTools | Start Interactive Map** to startup Streets and Trips and select the desired trip *.est file. If using another mapping program start it up from the desktop. Another approach to using real-time mapping is to define the mapping program in the User-Defined Help and then to start it from the Help menu. This latter approach avoids the problem of having to remember where the file defining the trip is located. See on-line help for how to set up User-Defined help.
5. In the mapping program connect it to GPS information for real-time position tracking by specifying a port that is connected via a null modem to the GPS Pass Through port defined in step 3 above. Consider using virtual serial ports to save two physical ports (see on-line help for details on where to obtain virtual serial port drivers)
6. Use **QPTools | Build Route From Crossings** to import the county line crossing information. This information will be used to calculate the distance and time to the next crossing and, if the AUTO mode is not in use, the resulting sequence will be used to sequence through the counties.

During the contest

1. Send CQ (in CW mode using the key you assigned to the CQ message)
2. Enter call of responder and press Enter to send your exchange info
3. Enter received exchange information separated by spaces in any order, referring to the Check grid, if desired, to insure proper interpretation
4. Press Enter to log the contact and send the CQT message. If the contact won't log refer to the Check grid to see what might be missing.

After the contest

1. Before finalizing the log it is a good idea to close and restart the program to ensure that all changes are recorded correctly in the scoring.
2. Use **File | Finalize Logs** to convert the internal log (...\\CQxClientLogView.log) to Cabrillo format. Enter any soapbox comments including statistical results and then use the Browse button to specify the file where the final log is to be kept.
3. If a separate summary sheet is required use **QPTools | Prepare Summary Sheet** and the Browse button to specify the file where it is to be saved. It is good idea to create a separate directory in which to save all results from each contest.
4. If desired, or required by the contest, use **QPTools | Prepare County Logs** to prepare individual logs for each county.
5. Use **File | Post to 3830 Reflector** to connect to the site to file your 3830 report.
6. Of course, don't forget to also submit your log to the sponsor!

After after the contest

1. It would be greatly appreciated if you would provide feedback regarding your experience (good or bad) using the program including any suggestions for improvements. Provide comments to no5w@consolidated.net.
2. If you have developed a county crossing file for your trip consider sharing it with others for use in future parties by submitting it to no5w@consolidated.net. I will collect these files into a database and add a feature to the program for accessing this data. Better still, if you know of a readily available (i.e. free) source of county crossing information please share information regarding that source.
3. If you are interested in using this program but find that your state QSO Party is not supported in the version you are using, contact NO5W to see if that support is available in the latest version or to find out how you can participate in the development of the necessary files to add that support. Also refer to the “How to Contribute” item under Help.

Have a safe trip and enjoy the party,

73/Chuck/NO5W