

Progress on the “Save the 30-foot Parabolic Dish Antenna Project”

by Elaine Hambly K0ARR, 1-July-2024

On Sunday, June 23, 2024, a group of eight people* arrived in Ignacio, CO to begin work on a three and a half day project, which was one of the most challenging that (DSES) Deep Space Exploration Society has worked on off site for years. The project named “Save the 30 Foot Dish Project” was to complete the mission of rescuing a privately owned 30-foot parabolic dish antenna before a scrap yard took it. Myron KL7YY spearheaded the project for DSES with organizing fund raising, dismantling, transportation, crane rental, and arrangements for accommodations and crew meals.

When we first arrived in the late afternoon on Sunday the take down crew saw what they thought might be an impossible feat with the dish parked in a sideways position instead of a bird bath position. Brandon from Head Crane Service had his doubts, too. Adding to the difficulty level, the weather each day was an oppressive 90+ degrees with not a cloud in the sky until early evening. The rest of Sunday evening they spent planning how to disassemble the dish and tower.



They found a way. Every salvageable nut and bolt were marked with paint markers and saved in plastic tubs. The dish assembly including the struts, tower, counterweights pedestal, Rohn 45, and more was documented with hundreds of photographs to make reassembly easier. A man lift was rented to raise Ray and Myron to an appropriate height on the antenna so they could safely remove parts, such as the feed and the counterweights. The crane then brought those parts safely to the ground. Once the dish was safely on the ground, the crew all climbed in to work on the jungle gym of struts.



Paul NOOT said “Scariest moments were when the dish became totally disconnected from the pedestal and held by the crane; and also when the crane was taking the pedestal in that air above the dish on the ground. If it slipped, it was all over.”

Three trailers loaded with every piece of the 30-foot dish are now safely back in the Colorado Springs area and will soon make their way to Haswell for reconstruction. We will have a lot more excitement at DSES in the near future.



Every dollar of your generous contributions has let us acquire this dish antenna. We thank you. Your future contributions to this project will allow us to enhance our educational programs to interest and motivate future generations of radio astronomers and citizen space scientists.

Participants in the acquisition: Myron Babcock KL7YY, Chas Barrett WD0C, Richard Hambly K0GD, Roger Oakey W3MIX, Paul Sobon NO0T, RC Teal AI0RC, Ray Uberecken AA0L and Elaine Hambly (photographer) K0ARR.