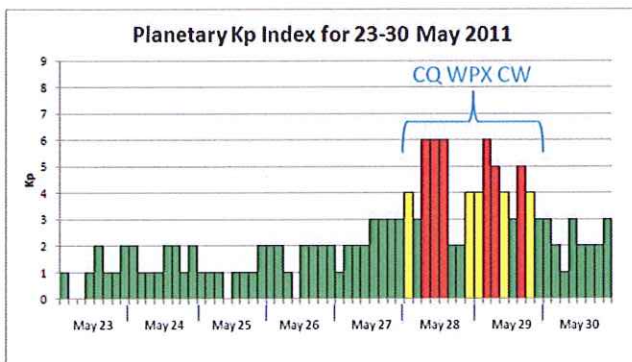


## The Sun Disrupts WPX CW

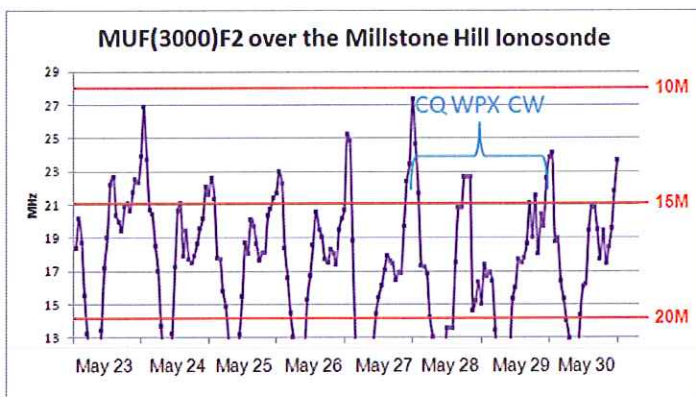
Carl Luetzelschwab K9LA

Old Sol played a nasty trick on the 2011 running of the CQ World Wide WPX CW contest on May 28 and 29. For the days up to the contest, the K index was at or below 2. And with the 10.7 cm solar flux in a steady rise, propagation was expected to be very good.

But then a CME (coronal mass ejection) from an earlier solar eruption interacted with the Earth's magnetic field. This drove up the K index on both days. On the Monday after the contest the geomagnetic field was already returning to normal.



Thankfully this wasn't a major geomagnetic storm, but it did impact the ionosphere enough to drive the MUF (maximum useable frequency) down at least one band (most noticeably from 15M to 20M) during the contest period. For example, the Millstone Hill (Massachusetts) ionosonde showed a 3000 km maximum MUF of about 23 MHz early in the first day of the contest (the 28<sup>th</sup>), but then it took a significant nose dive for the remainder of the day. The F<sub>2</sub> region began its recovery at the end of the contest.



Hopefully this year's event will fare better!