What Are Beacons and Why They Matter

On VHF and UHF, **beacons** are fixed, unattended transmitters that continuously send out identification signals—usually in CW or simple tones—on known frequencies. Think of them as RF "lighthouses." By listening for these signals, operators can instantly determine if a band is open and how well signals are propagating between locations. Because VHF/UHF propagation can change rapidly due to tropospheric enhancement, ducting, or sporadic E, beacons provide real-time insight into band conditions, helping operators decide **when to get on the air, where to aim antennas, and which bands are worth working**. Simply put, if you hear a beacon, there's a path—and that's your invitation to make contacts.

Texas Beacon List

6 Meters (50 MHz)

- 50.060 – EM01rk – Goldthwaite, TX – **K5AB** – Active
- 50.069 – EM10hm – Taylor, TX – **K5TRA** – Active
- 50.070 – EM13sj – McKinney, TX – **W5HN** – Active
- 50.072 – EL00ta – Blanco, TX – **KF5KOI** – Active
- 50.074 – DM91sk – San Angelo, TX – **W5RP** – Active
- 50.0785 – DM91sk – Spring, TX – **KD5ITM** – Active

2 Meters (144 MHz)

- 144.281 – EM13sj – McKinney, TX – **W5HN** – Active
- 144.289 – EL09um –San Antonio, TX – N5XO – Active
- 144.295 – EM10hm – Taylor, TX – **K5RMG** – Active

1.25 Meters (222 MHz)

- 222.060 – EM13s3 – McKinney, TX – **AA5C** – Active
- 222.060 – EM10hm – Taylor, TX – **K5TRA** – Active

70 cm (432 MHz)

- 432.345 – EM10hm – Taylor, TX – **K5RMG** – Active
- **432.360 - EL09um - San Antonio Tx - N5XO - Active**
- 432.380 – EM13kf – Denton, TX – **W5HN** – Active

33 cm (902 MHz)

- 902.350 – EM10hm – Taylor, TX – **K5RMG** – Active
- 902.361 – DM80nv – Ft. Stockton, TX – **NN5DX** – Active
- 902.380 – EM13kf – Denton, TX – **W5HN** – Active

23 cm (1296 MHz)

- 1296.360 – EL07wu – Alice, TX – **K5DYY** – Active
- 1296.375 – EM13kf – Denton, TX – **W5HN** – Active
- 1296.400 – EM10hm – Taylor, TX – **K5RMG** – Active
- **1296.420 – EL09um – San Antonio, TX – N5XO – Active**

13 cm (2304 MHz)

- 2304.045 – EM10hm – Taylor, TX – **K5RMG** – Active
- 2305.001 – EM13s3 – McKinney, TX – **AA5C** – Active

9 cm (3456 MHz)

- 3456.325 – EM13qd – McKinney, TX – **W5HN** – Active

5 cm (5760 MHz)

- 5760.150 – EM10hm – Taylor, TX – **K5RMG** – *Inactive*
- 5760.325 – EM13kf – Denton, TX – **W5HN** – Active

3 cm (10 GHz)

- 10368.151 – EM10hm – Taylor, TX – **K5RMG** – *Inactive*
- 10368.225 – EM10ch – Austin, TX – **K5TRA** – Active
- 10368.238 – EM13kf – Denton, TX – **W5HN** – Active
- 10368.889 – EM00ja – Kerrville, TX – **K0MHC** – Active

1.25 cm (24 GHz)

- 24192.100 – EM13kf – Denton, TX – **W5HN** – Active
- 24192.260 – EM13kf – Denton, TX – **AA5C** – Active

Quick Takeaway

Those N5XO beacons in EL09 aren't just something to listen to—they're one of the fastest and most effective tools you have for **tuning and testing antennas**. Point your antenna at the beacon, note the signal strength, then make quick adjustments—height, direction, polarization, or even swap antennas—and watch what happens in real time. Within minutes, you can compare designs, verify feedline performance, and optimize your station far more accurately than with SWR alone. If the signal gets stronger, you're improving—if it drops, you just learned something. That's instant, real-world feedback you can't fake.