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News

# New River Valley Rocketry searching for new launch site

RADIO IQ | By [Craig Wright](#)  
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Thomas Weeks

Model rocket launches at one of NRVV events in Blacksburg.

Over the summer, a club for rocket enthusiasts lost

Over the summer, a club for rocket enthusiasts lost access to the Blacksburg launch site they'd been using for over a decade. The search to find a new site is proving to be a challenge. All Things Considered host Craig Wright has the story.

New River Valley Rocketry's home for launches had been Virginia Tech's Kentland Farms since 2012. But in July, [NRVR President Thomas Weeks](#) was informed that they would no longer be able to fly from that location.

Weeks was ready for the news, "It wasn't unexpected. It had been coming for a while."



*Thomas Weeks*

NRVR President Thomas Weeks talks about the ongoing search for a new launch site with All Things Considered host Craig Wright.

Once a sparsely populated area, a continuing influx of people and agriculture groups has made using that location infeasible due to safety concerns.

"Once it became obvious that the dairy farm could be a potential uncontrolled landing site, then that wasn't an acceptable risk to Virginia Tech", explains Weeks.

So, the group is now in search of a new site. Many of the rockets they fly are not your backyard-variety model rockets. They are sophisticated machines capable of reaching altitudes of nearly two miles. Being such, they require lots of room. Weeks outlines the specs for potential sites:





NRVR members prepare high-powered rocket for launch.

"We need about a half-mile by half-mile square and we cannot be within fifteen hundred feet of any occupied dwelling, fifteen hundred feet of any trafficked road, within five miles of any airport. So you put all these variables together, and it becomes difficult to meet all those requirements."



Thomas Weeks

Virginia Tech alum and author Homer Hickam has inspired many students.

Weeks also notes that Virginia Tech alum and "October Sky" author Homer Hickam's connection to the region, made the decision for a local rocketry club "a no-brainer".

Weeks is hopeful there is someone out there with land to offer as a new site for launches - and that they will [reach out through social media](#) or [via email](#).

Learn more about [New River Valley Rocketry](#) and see photos from previous launches [here](#).

Visit [NRVR's Facebook page](#) here.

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### Craig Wright

Craig Wright hosts All Things Considered on Radio IQ and produces the weekly Full Disclosure Briefing with Roben Farzad.

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