



McGyvering – It’s Part of the SOTA Experience!

Do you have what it takes to go on the air when something breaks? When something is still back in the car? Or left on the workbench? Several of us take two HF antennas (and often two VHF antennas) because that’s one of the items that gets the hardest use and might fail. Do you have a way to put up an antenna without a tree? Without a pole? Most of the issues describe below are ways to go on the air when things go wrong. Back in 2019 Steve-WGØAT shows his [extensive list of items that may save your activation – take a look!](#) ***Consider: what’s in your pack?***



← K7ATN was tugging on the feedline – it was underneath the dog – and the BNC pulled off (shoulda got the dog to move, of course). A hair tie took care of the feedline shield and the center conductor was carefully inserted – activation successful!



← Steve-WGØAT forgot a feedline – hemostat and a bit of wire saved the day.



← James-NØIPA forgot his key – here he is tapping out CW with a couple of clip leads.



← Tim-N7KOM pulled the clip off the end of a fiberglass pole – a pink hair tie was enough to secure the antenna wire to complete his first HF activation.

Darryl-WW7D was doing a couple of activations in a day, and he left his home-made paddle on the first summit. When he got to the second summit and realized what had happened, his thoughts were, "what can I use for a key?" He realized there was a switch in his KX3 microphone. AND it had a 1/8" plug on it. He was reluctant to destroy the mic with an attempt to rewire it. Then it occurred to him, "If I designed the KX3, I would have made it so that the mic switch acts like a key if you plug the mic into the key jack." So, he plugged it in, set the menu from paddle to key...AND IT WORKED! (For those with FT-817, note that the 'up' and 'down' mic buttons can act as a keyer by selecting it in the menus.)

K7ATN ended up on a summit → without a feedline jumper from the radio to the matchbox – time to shorten the counterpoise a few inches and wire it up!



Out and About with SOTA by Charlie-W7RTA – read his [detailed account here](#) and his pnwsota.org trip [report here](#).

Last summer, I had been seeing a pain psychologist. He told me to replace the things that I was no longer able to do since my brain injury diagnosis. So, I purchased an off-road scooter to replace my mountain biking activities. The scooter has been a lot of fun and has taken me to areas I would no longer be able to experience. He gave me another homework assignment to replace other activities. I struggled all winter trying to find something and I realized that I still had my Technician ham license. I began playing with the radios and realized that I had to upgrade my license to enjoy the hobby. An upgrade would require me to study and pass a General Class test. The studying was very difficult for me. I could only study a half hour per day. It was all my brain could handle. I worked for nearly two months and at the end, I

took practice tests but was not doing well. Out of 400 possible questions, I would have to get 26 out of 35 correct to pass. When I finished the test and clicked the "submit" button I could not believe what the result was. I got 35 out of 35. I cried. It was very emotional for me.

I love the Metolius area and found a summit to activate there – W7O/CN-100. It looked very simple and had potential for my scooter to get me close. I reviewed maps and satellite photos in preparation.

I attempted to get near the summit from the east but found myself bushwhacking through thick Manzanita. I attempted to walk up the hill as far as I could and going very slowly – one, because of the thick brush. Two, because of my brain injury. I turned back after about 100 yards. The Manzanita was like a cheese grater on my legs. I regrouped and studied the maps and saw that there was a road on the west side that might get me closer to the summit. I rode my scooter that way but there were downed trees blocking me from getting to another primitive road heading towards the summit.

Climbing over the downed trees, I moved up the road. At first it looked clear of Manzanita, but that changed quickly. I was going very slowly and resting often. I had set my goal and I was not going to fail. I had lots of time to complete this. I used Google Satellite view to give me an idea if I



was headed the right direction. After over an hour of pushing through the brush, I made it to the summit. If I wasn't so tired from the climb, I would have cried.

I took in the scenery while eating a snack and drinking water. I set up my Xiegu G90 and a 41' endfed random wire. My first contact was a S2S to Arizona. My second contact was a shock. The ham gave me S57S call sign. I repeated his call sign and he confirmed. He was in Slovenia! Here I am sitting on top of this summit with a wire talking to a guy in Slovenia. Wow! I was so excited. I made nine other contacts. I did not realize that one of the nine was with France. I wrote down all the call signs and when I was logging them on my computer, I realized I made contact with F4WBN! Sitting on that summit I made contact with folks in Slovenia, France, Alaska, Washington, California, Montana, Arizona and Utah. I stayed on the summit for a bit longer just taking in the beautiful views. I was successful in completing my goal, but with a price. My brain was hurting. I had to rest often on the way down as I was getting light headed and dizzy. I took it easy going back to my camp on my scooter. Would I do this again? Nope. But I had to do it to prove to myself I could do it. It does give me hope that some much easier walks to a summit might be possible. I will do much more homework in planning on doing future summits. Charlie-W7RTA



Too Many of These Stories as of Late—May They Never Be for SOTA

Seven lost hikers were rescued Monday after spending the night in the woods while trying to get to Ramona Falls near Mt. Hood, according to the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office.

The hikers, all of whom were in their 20s, left for a day hike to the waterfall around 2pm Sunday. **They ended up on the wrong trail after reading some inaccurate information online.**

As they hiked along, believing they were going the right way, they ran into an "obstacle course of downed trees," CCSO said in a Facebook post. They started to head back, but it was getting dark and by 10pm, they were exhausted.

The hikers decided to set up a makeshift campsite for the night. After a sleepless night, one of the hikers was reportedly **too tired to keep walking**, so four of the hikers went to find help while the other three stayed behind.

A Clackamas County Search and Rescue (CSAR) crew found the hikers' cars at a trailhead around 9am Monday, and a group of about 20 volunteers went to find them.

The crew located all seven hikers by 1pm and led them to safety, carrying one of them on a specialized wheeled stretcher.

<https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/oregon/ramona-falls-trail>

The hikers and crew made it out safely around 8pm Monday. The hikers had spent about 30 hours in the woods.

How Do You Measure Mountains? Did You Actually Summit? Thankfully, SOTA Has the Activation Zone!

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/sports/tallest-mountain-summit.html>

The HAM CENSUS is gathering information about involvement in our hobby.

What do amateur radio operators worldwide think of their passion? What do we wish for? What are we frustrated about? How many of us are active, versus those that are taking a break? Do we have favorite radios, antennas, or even favorite CW paddles? Do we prefer one contest over another? Take the Ham Census and make your voice heard! Note that the survey is rather involved – on average people take around 45 minutes to complete. You get to see the full results when you complete all six portions. <https://hamcensus.org/>

Common Summit Names – A Cautionary Tale by Bill-K7WXW.

Per Nathan, KJ7WXN:

Coming fresh off the heels of my first SOTA activation of Rogers Peak, I decided to try to bag Elk Mountain (W7O/NC-022). It's no slouch of a hike, climbing steeply to the summit from the parking lot. An hour in, I took out my phone to assess my distance from the activation zone...I was 30 miles south! Having come this far, I decided to spend my time on the summit, meditating on lessons learned for the next attempt.

As KJ7WXN discovered, there are a lot of Elk Mountains in Oregon, and six of which are SOTA summits. Should we be surprised the same names are used again and again?

Not really. European explorers and settlers named the hills to reflect what they saw in them, their homelands and heroes, and sometimes, themselves. So, we have Clark, Cooks, Cooper, and Coos Mountain; are surrounded by Black, Red, and Green summits; have our choice of Wolf Benchmark, Mountain, Peak, Point, or Rock; and can climb nine Bald Mountains and eleven kinds of Saddle. People didn't worry much whether there might already be a Dog Mountain in Oregon if the peak in front of them reminded them of a dog.

Then there are the numbered peaks, named for their summit elevation, a convention from the USGS mapping effort begun in 1879. W7O has 642 numbered peaks with at least 70 duplicated numbers. The most common are 1660, 2260, and 3900 with five peaks each. To avoid numbered peak confusion, stick to taller hills; there are no doubles after 6490.

What about the named peaks? Here are a few of the common names:

Bald and Baldy – if we combine these two and count the names that have an adjective in front, Bald(y) is the winner with 26 entries: nine Bald Mountains, two Baldy Mountains, two Bald Peters and a passel of Craters, Knobs, Mounts, Peaks and Ridges. And that's just Oregon.

Green – a close second. There are 11 Green Mountains and an assortment of Buttes, Peaks, Craggies, Ridges, Peaks, Points, Prairies, and Springs for a count of 24. The W7O/CC region alone has three Green Mountains.

Lookout – in any duplicate discussion, Lookout comes up, but there are only eight Lookout Mountains, along with a Butte and Point, totaling ten. Don't worry, W7W has thirteen!

Sugarloaf – honorable mention, with eight mountains and, oddly, no Buttes, Peaks, etc.

Black – there are more Black Buttes (six) than Mountains (three), which combined with a Crater, two Rocks and a Top gives us 13 Blacks.

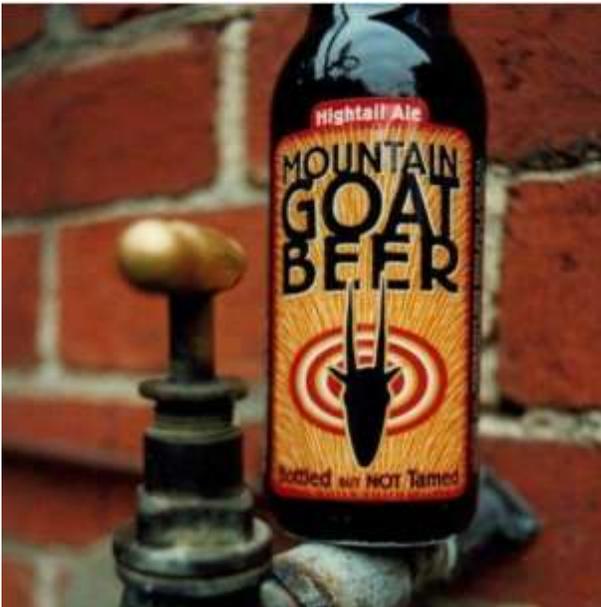
Round – with nine Tops, five Mountains, and two Buttes, Round is a serious duplicates contender.

Of W7O's 1990 peaks, roughly 155 names are shared by more than one summit. Duplicates within a region are fairly common, too. Just three examples: there are two Rocky Tops and two Huckleberry Mountains in WV, two Red Mountains in NE and another two in SE, and three Round Tops in CS. And none of these duplicates include all the hills in Oregon that aren't "SOTA" but share a name with a SOTA summit.

We should remember that these weren't the first names given these hills. There were more than a dozen large indigenous communities here when the first known European explorer arrived in 1738 and they had already named many prominent peaks and ranges, names that the newcomers never learned or ignored. The maps and names we use now obscure a history that extends much further back than the mid-1700s. Find a copy of McArthur's Oregon Geographic Names to learn more. And don't feel left out if your home Association isn't W7O – the entire Pacific Northwest is full of common summit names – although Oregon may have the corner on less imaginative naming.

Is there an upside to all this sameness? Sure! Activate all the Lookouts or Greens, set up a Bald-only S2S party, or do all the "twins." Duplicate names are a treasure trove of weird and fun challenges.

So, ending up on the wrong Elk (or Bald or Green) Mountain isn't that hard after all. But if it happens, no worries! Summiting a hill with the right name but no activation zone, like spending hours trying to find a way around locked forest road gates or leaving your rig battery at the wrong end of a five-mile hike is just part of what makes SOTA, SOTA.



Salmoncon XVI will be the weekend of July 10 and 11, 2021

<https://sites.google.com/site/pnwqrpgroup/salmoncon>

Salmoncon is an annual gathering of low power (QRP) ham radio operators held at beautiful Valley Camp in North Bend, Washington. Usually held the first full weekend after July 4th, except when the 4th falls in the middle of the week, the event provides a venue for QRP operators to share knowledge and experiences related to low power operating.

Glacier-Waterton Hamfest will be July 16 to 18, 2021

www.gwhamfest.org

This is a fun family-style camp out type of hamfest, just across the highway from the less visited south side of Glacier Park between Essex and East Glacier. There are many SOTA summits in the Park and the USFS lands that surround the campground. If you plan to activate, Thursday (15th) and Friday (16th) are great days. Join the Saturday evening BBQ & Potluck! Contact: Rob – AE7AP

REMINDER: 2020 Fire Closures Will Continue this Summer – Be sure and check ahead for trail and road access. Please obey closure orders (it's actually required by the [SOTA General Rules](#)). Willamette National Forest overview:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/willamette/home/?cid=FSEPRD835361&width=full>

Detroit Area Map:

https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd879241.pdf

Holiday Farm (east of Eugene) Map:

https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd879242.pdf

“TESTING-TESTING” SPOTTING SYSTEMS – How to Test Your Spots Without Driving Chasers Crazy – Lots of Chasers and some Activators like to have [SOTA Spotter](#) or [SOTA Goat](#) give a little beep or bleat to alert them to an activation in the neighborhood – like on 2m FM. When you are testing APRS or SMS spot features, or some other app, PLEASE use a non-sensical frequency and mode – for example, “144.000 AM” would do the trick – something that just doesn't make sense – legally or otherwise. That way no one gets out of the easy chair to go over to the rig when you are making sure your spotting system works for your next remote activation. And delete it right after posting, if you are able. Thanks much...



Update Those Trip Reports! – Sharing your summit experiences can be **fun**. Helping others with PNWSOTA summit trip reports so they can also have a good experience – that's **priceless**.

What we can do is post **NEW** trip reports with more recent dates to www.pnwsota.org (helpful trip report titles that use Summit Name, State | Month Year). Recently I've added “No Trespassing” notes to three summits that had been accessible in the past. If you've made a post to the SOTA Summit Pages, you can change your own post or add a new one with a more recent date. If you want to suggest an update to someone else's www.pnwsota.org trip report, let me know. Etienne-K7ATN

[Dan-N7YY](#) has a [SOTABeams Tactical Mini](#) telescopic pole that is surplus to his needs – about 20 feet long. His email is on QRZ if you are interested. →



Can't Do This in Oregon! – 208 Points in Six Days – Arizona's the Place by Scott-K17EMX

My family created an annual tradition some years ago of visiting my son in Gilbert, Arizona in the late winter to ride my bicycle away from the wet and gloomy northwest. Over the last two years purpose the visits have morphed into SOTA



activations. My first SOTA attempt in Arizona was in 2019 which ended in a dramatic fail. The rental car had no business on the rocky roads leading to Arizona summits. The following year my son made the plans, and we were able to activate 13 summits in a week. I thought it was a heroic effort until he planned this May trip. His plan included 28 summits and 246 points in six days. Honestly, I didn't think it possible.

When the trip was over, we (along with my son and daughter) activated 23 summits and accumulated 208 points. With my aggravated plantar fasciitis,

COVID summit closures and active fire watches this was a great result for the six-day visit. I made 152 contacts on 2 meters, 20 meters and 40 meters. As Darryl-WW7D mentioned in the PNWSOTA meeting, 20 meters was the "money" band followed by 2 meters and then 40 meters. There were only five S2S contacts, likely due the weekday activations.



I used a Yaesu FT-60 HT with a roll-up "J" pole antenna for 2 meters. I could hang the antenna in trees on most summits. Many summits had cell towers and other communication equipment causing RF interference. Using a 19" whip oriented parallel with the ground seemed to help. 2 meters was generally ineffective unless close to urban areas.

My go-to mast is an 11-section/17.5 feet bamboo "pattern" Chinese telescoping pole. It was only \$11.00 without shipping (https://www.herlifew.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&products_id=806599). These masts are not robust so if interested, make sure to purchase two of them! I don't use the top two sections which keeps the mast stout enough to suspend the wire dipole.

There were some real heroes in making this trip a success. Thanks to those who chased me from the PNW; Josh-WU7H, Darryl-WW7D, Mike-K6MW, Ronnie-W7HO, Eric-N0WAE, Mike-NW7E, Chris-W6TDX, Phil-NS7P and others.

I can certainly provide details on the summits activated. E-mail if interested (K17EMX@ARRL.net). Scott-K17EMX

This PNW SOTA Newsletter focuses on Summits on the Air activity for British Columbia, Idaho, Oregon, Montana and Washington. Register on www.pnwsota.org and check the box for the PNW SOTA Newsletter. Edited by the W7O Association Manager, Etienne-K7ATN. Back issues: www.pnwsota.org/content/pacific-northwest-sota-newsletters.