

Pacific Northwest SOTA Newsletter

November-December- 2016

In this Issue – We welcome fall and continue to hear from Pacific Northwest Associations – this time from Jim-K7MK about his experience with three SOTA summits in Idaho. Jim also provided the awesome banner panorama above from the summit of Peak 7420, W7I/SR-069.

Bonus Season in the Pacific Northwest – Starting 1 December here in the Pacific Northwest SOTA Activators get an extra three points on the higher summits. **For W7O, W7I, W7M and VE7 the bonus period dates are 1 December to 31 March inclusive. For W7W, the winter bonus is 1 December to 15 March inclusive** (this may change with updates to the ARM). See your Association Reference Manual for elevation bands where bonus points apply. Remember that the bonus period starts and ends on the UTC day.

How to use PNWSOTA.ORG – Our Own Trip Report Resource. PNWSOTA is by far the best resource that any SOTA region could hope to have (in the world, truly). But there are currently some "workarounds" required to successfully post trip reports. In addition, the automatic link to SOTA summit pages no longer works with the new SOTA website, so trip reports need some help to be a global resource. Here's how to make things work.

"Blogs" are for trip reports for times you make to a summit - or something you know about a particular summit, like that it's posted "No Trespassing." A title with clarity for summit name and state is a useful way to start, as is the month and year of activation. There are many summits with the same name, and the state can help ease confusion, and the month indicates the season and the year would tell folks if this is recent information or something that may not be current. A descriptive trip report title might be, "**Larch Mtn, WA | October 2016.**"

The content of a trip report should help others activate the peak. Directions to the trailhead, condition of the road, necessary permits are a great start. Then information about the trail distance and elevation gain, any issues with following the path, and what one will find in the activation zone for antennas, views, etc.

Enter **ONLY** the title, summit reference and the text body the first time you create a blog. And then save it. Summit references, photos, and other details are not retained the first time you save a blog on PNWSOTA.

Next, click on Edit, re-enter the summit reference, information about cell service, APRS, trail information and upload any photos. Once this version is saved, the blog is complete.

You'll want to link your report with the new [SOTA summit pages](http://www.sota.org.uk). Copy the URL of your trip report blog to the clipboard, then click on the summit reference in your blog – it will take you to the summit page. You'll need to log into www.sota.org.uk and then you can select an external link with your trip report URL. You might add "- from pnwsota" to the title. I added about a dozen trip reports to the SOTA summit pages in five minutes.

SOTA General Rules – Let’s review a few things about our radiosport. The [SOTA General Rules](#) helps everyone to be on an even footing when accessing summits and they help keep us on the right side of the public too.

“All Expeditions must use legitimate access routes and comply with any local rules regarding use of the land. In particular, Activators must ensure that they have any necessary permission to operate from their chosen Summit, or that access is customary.”

This means that you will need permission, permits, or passes, to access some summits, and that some peaks on private land, military reserves, watersheds, and Indian reservations will always be off limits.

“Both Activators and Chasers must at all times operate within the terms of their licence.”

If you are a Tech, you need to operate under your own Tech privileges, even if there is an Extra Class Control Operator standing next to you – contacts under the Extra’s privileges accrue to the Extra.

“At least one QSO must be made from the Summit to qualify it as an activation. In order for the activation to qualify for the points attributed to that Summit, a minimum of four QSOs must be made, each of which must be with a different station.”

Yes, even as some contests allow two QSO on different bands (or different modes) with the same station to count as two contacts, SOTA requires QSO with four different stations for points. And note that just one QSO will allow you to claim an activation of a summit – so log even just one, two or three contacts because it counts as an activation, even if you don’t get the points.

Some Recommended items – Now that we are moving into the Soggy Season for much of the Pacific Northwest, let me recommend waterproof logbooks. An umbrella can also make things much more pleasant – and importantly, keep your radio dry. And there’s a LiFePO₄ battery discount that you might want to consider.

[Bioenno Power Batteries for SOTA](#) – The folks at Bioenno Power make LiFePO₄ that are lightweight, are nominal ~13V, have Anderson PowerPoles already installed, and are chemically more stable than Lithium Polymer or Lithium Ion. Chargers bundled with batteries are also reasonably priced. Through the end of the year there is a 10% discount for SOTA folks with the checkout code: **PNWSOTA2016**.

[Amateur Radio Water Proof Log Books](#) – available in several versions of seven entries per page or three per page, these miniature logbooks are made with a paper that won’t give up when wet. Test them out with your writing implement of choice (I like a mechanical pencil).

[Lightweight Reflective Umbrella](#) – This can work year-round as a sunshade or to shed the rain (or snow) in our Northwest weather. It is lightweight and I’ve used it to push aside wet branches while bushwhacking.

[Donate to SOTA!](#) – Summits on the Air is run by volunteers and all revenue to maintain the websites comes from sales of awards, trophies, tee-shirts and such. HOWEVER, you can also make a direct donation to SOTA by clicking [here](#) and looking for the “DONATE” button at the bottom of the page – please consider SOTA as an end of year contribution to organizations that provide you with valuable and enjoyable service.

Three Idaho Summits – Close Together but still Unique by Jim Cullum-K7MK



About twelve miles northwest of the resort town McCall Idaho, there is a nice selection of SOTA summits. Having a cabin near McCall makes this area a nice day trip for us. However, like most Idaho SOTA summits, you need to work for the points! This is a story of three peaks in the same area with three different experiences. The big one (Granite) is a nice trail with impressive views, the medium one (Peak 7420) is a pleasant trail-less bushwhack and the small one (Peak 7384) is a challenging bushwhack despite it being the shortest hike.

Granite Mountain W7I/SR-138

On the west side of Goose Lake sits the impressive Granite Mountain W7I/SR-138. The upper reaches of this peak are mostly granite that gives it its name. Luckily, it is low angle granite in this area so it turns out to be just a great trail hike all the way. My wife and daughter and I did the first activation of this summit in 2015. It is such a great hike that we went back in [2016 for a second activation](#).



Granite Mountain is a classic double summit. There are a fair number of these that you may have run into. The main trail or road goes to a place that everyone calls the "summit." However, there is another connected peak that is a half mile away and 10 feet higher! Granite and its nearby sister peak Brundage Mountain, are like this. Coming up the trail you will reach a saddle where the trail turns left and heads to the fire lookout. Once you get to the lookout you can look back down the trail and see the SOTA summit that is a short, but easy bushwhack. Impressive views are seen in all directions from the SOTA perch. It appears the saddle is low enough that the fire lookout side is outside of the activation zone.

In the end, Granite Mountain makes for a great day hike and a very impressive SOTA summit with a round trip trail of about 6 miles and 1800 feet of climbing. There is nice parking at the trailhead and cell service and APRS good on the hike and on the summit.

[Peak 7420 - W7I/SR-069](#)

After we activated Granite twice I decided to investigate other peaks in the area that are essentially along the ridgeline on the west side of Goose Lake. The second peak we activated along here was Peak 7420 - W7I/SR-069. This peak looked easy enough on Google Earth, but I was expecting the worst. With no trail I assumed we would end up in a constant bushwhack, fighting for the summit. In the end, the road to get close to the mountain was in good shape and the trail-less slopes turned out to be easy. Mostly hiking up grassy slopes with only an occasional need to hop over a downed log. A pleasant surprise! My wife and I were almost saddened when we reached the summit as it turned out to be a nice hike. We wanted more, but were satisfied with a nice summit to set up radio gear and views in all directions. This hike is 1.4 miles round trip and 582 feet of climbing. There was good cell and APRS coverage on the hike and at the summit.



[Peak 7384 W7I/IC-159](#)

To finish off this trifecta, we did Peak 7384 - W7I/IC-159. This little peak, although trail-less, appeared to be an easy activation. Google Earth showed a road leading to its base and then a fairly short hike. However, driving to where this "road" was supposed to be, we were greeted by a cow trail. Only the cows were happy about this fact. So we parked and set off along this cow trail trying not to annoy the mom cows with their babies.

Eventually we left the safety of the cow trail and were presented with ongoing bushwhacking and deadfall. This led to just general bleeding and cursing. During the winter of 2015-2016, this area was hit with heavy snowfall that toppled trees that had burned in a previous wildfire. Thick brush, endless downed logs and a summit with no views made this one of my least favorite summits! If the Forest Service does some clearing out of the downed timber it may see another activation, but we won't be rushing back!



This "small" peak turned out to be quite the effort with 3.4 miles round trip, almost 1000 feet of climbing and a lot of physical/emotional scarring! There was decent cell coverage and APRS on the hike and summit.

So, there you have three summits, all in the same area with three distinct experiences. Granite Mountain and Peak 7420 may be yearly activations for us. But it may be a while before Peak 7384 sees another activation. In the end, SOTA always makes for great reasons to get out and explore!