

Pacific Northwest SOTA Newsletter

January-February 2019

Photo by John-VA7JBE Brandywine Mountain VE7/SL-091

Upcoming Events – Besides **BONUS SEASON** that started in most of the Northwest on December First, the next significant upcoming event is the [ARRL January VHF Contest](http://www.arrl.org/january-vhf). It's a chance to help your fellow hams make a few contacts on bands 6m and up, and allow activators to use just a HT from many summits. 2-meter FM can work of course (146.52 & 146.58) and be prepared to give out contacts on 70cm as well (446.00). The exchange is grid square. January 19th and 20th, starting at 1900Z: <http://www.arrl.org/january-vhf>.

Also KOTA! [Kids on the Air Day](#) is January 5th. If you hear "CQ Kids Day" give them the thrill of working someone on a mountaintop! Suggested exchange is name, age, location and favorite color.

Key and Paddle Maker Palm Radio is Out of Business – Proprietor Dieter Engels, DJ6TE, announced on the company's website, "For health reasons and after the passing of Brunhilde, DK7SN; Uli, DL2BAT, and Klaus, DL9SKE, I am not able to continue Palm Radio in its current form," Engels wrote. Marshall Emm, N1FN, of Morse Express -- a carrier of Palm Radio products -- said that Engels, "Has been unwell for some time."



FWIW – Palm Paddle Cable Available...

Let me know if you could use this:

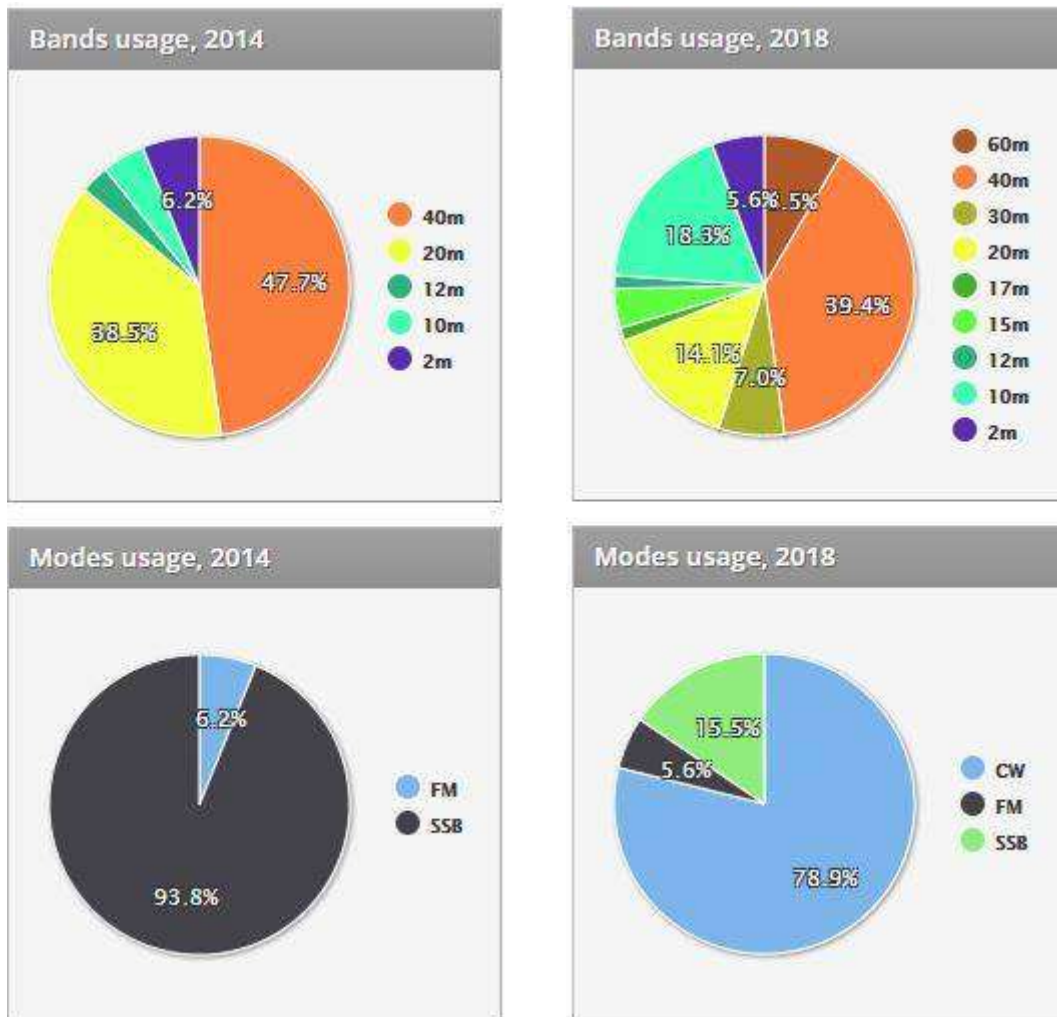


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Some New and Cool Features to Show Your SOTA Activity – Dave-AE9Q (Arizona) was digging around on SOTAMaps and found some graphing tools that are downright awesome. There’s also an updated SOTAData beta site to try.

Dave found some features on the SOTAMaps website that provide details for chasing and activating. Below he compares his chase activity in 2014 (the year of his SOTA discovery) and 2018. Quite a change between modes and bands chased. He’s happy that he re-learned Morse code so that he can chase despite the propagation!



Here’s the link for the beta version of SOTAData: <https://newsotadata.sota.org.uk/>.
The SOTAMaps features that Dave has shown us above: <https://www.sotamaps.org/activations>.

Does Winter Weather Have You Homebound? Can't get out to Activate? – Phil-NS7P encourages you to still do SOTA – chase from home! Those folks in Arizona are now enjoying some great weather (contrast with their miserable summer) and you can hear and work them. If you don’t feel like going out on a chilly January day, tune the bands and hand out contacts to those who either like the cold, or live where it’s warm! Here are a few of his hints for success...

It goes without saying, use SOTAWatch! Keep it on and check it often for new summits popping up. If you are a big gun station (QRO and a beam antenna), you’ll probably get the QSO as long as you can hear them. Little pistols (QRP and wires) will require a bit more finesse; but you will likely be able to snag the summit as the “pileup” thins.

The bands are quite a bit different from how they were a couple of years ago. Propagation on 20 meters will generally give you a good path from 1000 to 1500 miles away, but working those in your “hood” often requires a shift down in frequency.

We used to say that stations out to 500 miles or so just required a QSY to 40 meters - including that band typically allowed your in-Association neighbors to connect. This helped those in the PNW to get local stations in the log. For my station in west central Oregon, this means southern BC, AB, ID, western MT, WA, OR, northern CA and most of NV are too close to work on 20 meters, or even 30 meters. And these days 40 meters too may skip over these areas. We are seeing 60 meters (often on 5.332 MHz for CW) coming into play, and sometimes even down to 80 meters. The down side to this is that for the activators, these lower bands can mean low efficiency antennas for these NVIS contacts.

Don't forget that CW is much more dB efficient than SSB. When conditions are marginal, CW may get through when SSB won't. If you are not a CW op, this gives you a good excuse to hook up those paddles and become more proficient at this fun mode. Don't feel intimidated - SOTA ops will usually be glad to slow down and give you a shot, and the exchanges are easy to pick up as your CW ability improves. Any longer, there are also more CW than SSB SOTA stations (see Dave-AE9Q's note above).

One final note, if you can put a decent signal toward the west, look for Pacific path summits in the late afternoon to early evening - occasionally ZL and VK, but frequently JA.

See you on the (low) bands! 73, Phil-NS7P

New Activators for 2018 – What they Accomplished – In 2018 in the Northwest we enjoyed a bunch of activations from folks that started their SOTA “careers” this year. In this case “a bunch” is 52 new Northwest activators that got a signal out on 159 summits.

| | Association | 2018 New Activators | Summits Activated |
|-----|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| VE7 | British Columbia | 7 | 11 |
| W7I | Idaho | 4 | 16 |
| W7M | Montana | 8 | 20 |
| W7O | Oregon | 12 | 73 |
| W7W | Washington | 21 | 39 |

It's true that W7O had a good number of new activators on a LOT of summits, and W7W had a LOT of new activators, but if you look at things on a *per capita basis*, it's W7M that is out in front of the PNW SOTA Associations with the most activity in both categories. A fundamental argument for folks joining in SOTA is that our Pacific Northwest has some of the most amazing and beautiful summits – from glaciated peaks, to remote fire lookout towers, to glorious forest hikes, to urban walk-ups – we are a great corner of the world to play radio from mountaintops. It's rewarding to see that SOTAWatch shows that our Northwest is “on the air” most every weekend.

Below are the top 20 most active folks in 2018 across the Northwest. If you have a chance to reach out to a newbie, work one on (or from) a summit, run into one at a club event, or hear them chatting on 146.52 – encourage them, answer their questions and help them make four contacts!

| VE7 | W7I | W7M | W7O | W7W |
|---------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| JP-VA7NMD | Brad-KF6CRW | Lance-W7GJ | Ryan-W7RMR | Dan-KA7GPP |
| Qi-VE7QIN | Scotty -K5PSN | Jim-W2RUN | Jordan-N7IOS | Travis-K7PLC |
| Halden-VE7UTS | Jonathan -KG7KMOV | Rahn-W7DOA | Allan-K7GT | Jess-AF7QD |
| Dan-VA7DFB | Louann-W5LDX | Charlie-KI7WBJ | Loren-K7IW | Kevin-N7FX |

How Much Snow in the Mountains Right Now? –

When can you plan for that snowshoe hike? Do you think there's enough coverage? There are a couple ways to check online. Each SOTA Association has road webcams that can give you a picture of roadside conditions. If you can also determine the approximate elevation and compare that to your destination, you can get a start on how much snow you'll find on your trail or forest road for some snowshoeing or cross-country skiing. Ski areas also have webcams and snow depth reports – although those are usually higher than you are able to drive. Another resource, especially for late in the season is the NRCS – the National Resources Conservation Service. They operate a series of back country “snow pillows” or SNOTEL sites that can give accurate snow depth in locations that can't be reached easily. If you consider the elevation of the SNOTEL and your destination, you can get a feeling for what you might find, before you head out.

For British Columbia:

<http://www.drivebc.ca/mobile/webcams/index.html>

For Oregon: <https://tripcheck.com/>

For Washington:

<https://www.wsdot.com/traffic/Cameras/>

For Idaho:

<https://lb.511.idaho.gov/idlb/cameras/routeselect.jsf>

For Montana:

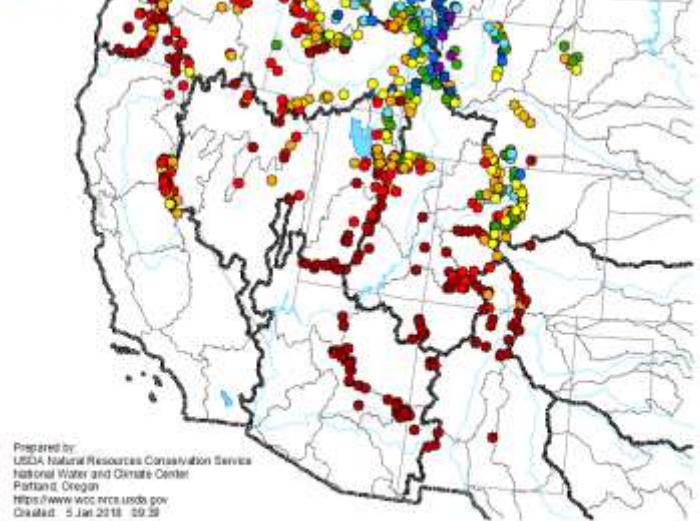
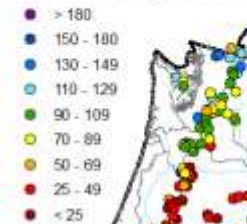
https://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/weather/rwis_google.shtml

NRCS SNOTEL Sites:

<https://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/cgibin/westsnow.pl>

Mountain Snowpack as of January 1, 2018

Percent of
1981-2010 Median (US)
1981-2010 Average (Canada)



Prepared by:
USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
National Water and Climate Center
Portland, Oregon
<https://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>
Created: 5 Jan 2018 10:35



Introduction to Lightweight

SOTA – Here's a nice presentation by Fred-KT5X, Mike-AD5A and Steve-WGØAT on lightweight to ultra-lightweight SOTA gear. [You know it's lightweight, when the whole kit is about one pound](#) (shown at right). A lightweight setup makes it easier (for Fred) to run up the hills – the rest of us are happy to walk!

Snowshoe Activations for Winter – Many mountain hikes can be turned into a snowshoe or cross-country ski activation once winter arrives and snow accumulates. Most of the summits below have had a winter activation at some point – do your own research to see if conditions are good for snow travel. In addition to all the “be prepared for winter” caveats, consider that instead of perhaps covering ground at around 2 mph, you may be only achieving 1 mph in the snow...and thus what was in summer a four trip could become an eight hour exit after dark. Some of these summits will accumulate little snow in some years – check the snow depth with the article above or check roadside traffic cameras. A “Snow Park” is a daily or annual permit that pays for clearing snow from parking lots for our winter fun – be sure and participate! If there are ski tracks and you are on foot or snowshoes, be thoughtful and keep off the ski tracks – they’ll appreciate it.



Mark-K7MAS on Amabilis Mountain

British Columbia:

[GV-011 Hollyburn Mountain, BC](#)

[GV-006 Mt. Seymour, BC](#)

[GV-013 Black Mountain, BC](#)

Oregon:

[CN-032 Tom Dick & Harry Mtn, OR](#) (ambitious hike to the true summit)

[CN-078 Peak 6001, OR](#) (very ambitious winter hike)

[CE-188 Lava Butte, OR](#) (snowshoes may not be needed for road walk)

[CN-024 Frog Lake Buttes, OR](#) (road shared with snow machines in winter)

[CN-062 Mud Creek Ridge, OR](#) (one of the best for snowshoeing in W70)

[CN-043 Eureka Peak, OR](#) (challenging ascent in deep snow)

[CN-090 Peak 4620, OR](#) (hike the roads from Highway 26)

[CN-086 Peak 4925, OR](#) (travels along the PCT part way, then cross-country)

[CM-011 Tumalo Mountain, OR](#) (GPS recommended for finding the parking lot coming down)

[CM-094 Pringle Butte, OR](#)

Idaho:

[Peak 5740, ID](#)

[Peak 5505, ID](#)

[Shafer Butte, ID](#) (better for downhill skiing until the resort closes in the spring, then maybe snowshoes)



Etienne-K7ATN, Roland-K7FOP and Kevin-KE7K on Peak 4620

More snowshoe possibilities:

Montana:

[Granite Butte, MT](#)

[University Mountain, MT](#)

[South Helena Ridge, MT](#)

[Strawberry Butte, MT](#)

Washington:

[CW-071 Old Pass Hill, WA](#)

[CW-076 Amabilis Mountain, WA](#)

[CW-017 Mission Peak, WA](#)

[RS-049 Elizabeth Ridge, WA](#)

[NO-086 Hurricane Hill, WA](#)

[LC-103 Larch Mountain, WA](#)

[LC-136 Bells Mountain, WA](#)

[WE-006 Mt. Spokane, WA](#)

[KG-125 Lions Mane, WA](#)

[KG-118 Taylor Mountain, WA](#)



Tim-KG7EJT on Amabilis Mountain

From Zero to Two-thousand...in One Year –

Jarek-SP9MA (Poland) achieved double in one year what we here in the PNW would like to do in four or five years – he activated 266 summits for a total of 2,088 points – a Double Mountain Goat and ALL unique summits (of course). His message: “We did it 😊;) Me and you my dear chasers. We achieved double MG within one year, during 2018 only. Thanks a lot for your such a strong support ! 73, Jarek SP9MA”



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