

Pacific Northwest SOTA Newsletter



July-August 2016

Winchester Mountain W7W by Darryl-WW7D

Greetings! Contributions in this newsletter are from Washington-W7W, including the banner image above of the hike to Winchester Mountain (W7W/WH-122) by Darryl-WW7D, who contributed the story on NPOTA and SOTA.

Upcoming Event – Western North America Summit-to-Summit Weekend – On August 6-7 there should be many S2S contacts – see this and post your alerts! www.pnwsota.org/content/6-7-august-2016-western-north-america-s2s-party.

Upcoming Event – August UHF Contest August 6-7 – The same weekend at the Western S2S Party – take a HT with 446.00 simplex and you might be able to work a few folks on the UHF bands. Submit a log to help this independently sponsored contest be successful: www.augustuhf.org.

Entertaining Out-of-town SOTA Guests – Summer is the time for travel and lots of people enjoy visiting our Pacific Northwest – and activating summits in new associations. Your editor has been hosted most graciously by fellow SOTA hams in Greece, Finland, Belgium and California. Sometimes the Association Manager can help host visitors or provide information to those coming through...and sometimes the AM isn't available or doesn't know details of a region. Anyone that would be interested in hosting fellow SOTA folks please let your Association Manager know. And Congratulations to Darryl-WW7D as the new AM for W7W! (QRZ good for all except W7O-find at the end of this newsletter.)

Nathon-VE7ETS BC Rob-AE7AP MT Scott-K7ZO ID Darryl-WW7D WA Etienne-K7ATN OR

SOTA Gathering at the 2016 SeaPac Convention – We had more than two dozen in attendance at the SeaPac SOTA gathering on June 3rd at the gathering – here are a few photos of the gathering:



Mason-K7MWT, Tanner-K7TMT, Todd-W7TAO



Todd-KH2TJ, Guy-N7UN



Darryl-WW7D, Paul-W6PNG, Etienne-K7ATN

Eight and Ten Pointers – This newsletter usually looks forward, but it can also be a chance to recognize some great activations that have been done recently. For your inspiration consideration, here are the 2015 activators for eight and ten point summits (I hope I didn't miss anyone!) Of course, there were other eight and ten point summits activated in the Northwest earlier, and some folks here have done more than one or two. This list may inspire folks to climbing ambitions this summer. And remember to be safe!

John-VA7JBE	BC	John-KC7DM	OR	Péter-AF7GL	WA
Boyd-KF7DDT	ID	Roger-ND7PA	OR	Mark-K7MAS	WA
Jeff-KF7NOZ	ID	Etienne-K7ATN	OR	Tim-KG7EJT	WA
Scott-W7IMC	ID			Rich-KR7W	WA
Rob-AE7AP	MT	Doug-KG7KGL	MT	Howard-NU7A	WA
Barbara-AE7AQ	MT	Wendell-N7WM	MT	Todd-W7TAO	WA

Taking SOTA to the (National) Parks by Darryl-WW7D

2016 is the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service (NPS), and the ARRL is helping celebrate with a year of National Parks on the Air, or "NPOTA" (see <http://www.arrl.org/npota>). Like SOTA, NPOTA offers both chasing and activating. "Chasing" means making a valid exchange with a ham operating from within a NPS entity. "Activating" is rather similar SOTA activations, but the station must be within the boundaries of a NPS property (with exceptions discussed below). The similarities between the two programs make for some interesting joint activation possibilities.

There are 486 entities on the NPOTA list (<https://npota.arrl.org/nps-units.php>). The National Park Service has numerous types of properties, so there are more than just National Parks, including National Battlefields, Historical Sites, Historic and Scenic Trails, Monuments, Preserves, Recreation Areas and more.

Activating an NPOTA entity can be simple – hike, bike, or drive into the entity, set up a station within the boundaries, and let the pile-ups begin. For example, you can drive up to Hurricane Ridge in the Olympic National Park, sit in the parking lot and undertake an activation from your vehicle. Of course, this does not work for SOTA. And, as an aside, the "drive-in" strategy doesn't work for National Scenic and Historic Trails, either, where the "SOTA Principle" must be applied: you cannot operate from a vehicle or with any component attached to a motor vehicle. Rather, you must hike some distance from your car to set up a station.

For SOTA enthusiasts, doing a joint SOTA/NPOTA activation is an interesting possibility. The rules for each activity are such that there are important considerations to ensure valid activations under both programs.

One major difference between the programs is that, under NPOTA, you can activate an entity multiple times for points. Each "re-reactivation" requires you to leave the entity for 24 hours. This means, for example, that you can activate Mount Rainier National Park numerous times this summer as you activate different summits within the park boundaries.



Photo: Darryl-WW7D

Looking backward on the final approach to Elizabeth Ridge (W7W/RS-049) in Mt. Rainier National Park (NP41).

The programs differ in QSO and logging requirements. SOTA requires working four unique calls; NPOTA requires ten. NPOTA requires exchange of the entity identifier(s); SOTA does not.

Another major difference between the programs is logging and crosschecking of QSOs. SOTA uses its own logging system that does not cross-check logs. NPOTA QSOs must appear in both logs to be valid, and this happens through Log Book of the World (LOTW). Because of the log cross-checking, it is bad form to delay submitting your logs beyond about a week. And be sure to submit every valid QSO. If you leave someone out, they will not receive NPOTA credit for the QSO, unlike SOTA. The full requirements for valid QSOs and confirmations can be found in the NPOTA rules on the ARRL web site (<http://www.arrl.org/npota-rules>).

SOTA users post alerts at www.sotawatch.org. The equivalent for NPOTA is <https://npota.arrl.org/register-activation.php>. Alerts end up on the “registered activations” page at <https://npota.arrl.org/nps-events.php>. When posting a NPOTA alert, mention your SOTA activation and point to sotawatch.org for spots. This will clue chasers in that you will be QRP, that your timing isn't precise, and it will help NPOTA chasers find you through sotawatch.org.

I've done a few joint SOTA/NPOTA activations this year. I did a joint activation of Mt. Rainier NP (NP41) and Elizabeth Ridge (W7W/RS-049). This summit required bushwhacking up the east ridge starting near Mowich Lake and that required snowshoeing about five miles up the closed road. The summit itself was relatively easy because I found a clear snowfield up the side of the ridge and worked my way up the 400'. Once on the ridge, the AZ was 100' farther.

I first spent time making VHF and microwave QSOs, making a respectable 34 QSOs in 45 minutes on 20m. A detailed report is at <https://ww7d.wordpress.com/2016/05/22/sota-activating-elizabeth-ridge-w7wrs-049/>.

On a trip through Idaho, I stopped at Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve (NM21 and PV05) and simultaneously activated the two NP entities and Big Cinder Butte (W7I/CI-126). The hike to the summit itself was not difficult, but required finding game trails to avoid vegetation. Although I haven't yet written an activation report, I did put together a short video from the adventure: <https://youtu.be/RLSIJCLiCt8>.



Photo: Darryl-WW7D

View from the summit of Big Cinder Butte (W7I/CI-126) in Craters of the Moon National Monument (NM21) and Preserve (PV05)

In my experience, NPOTA a fun twist to SOTA. But the NPOTA program only exists through the end of this year, so start planning some joint SOTA/NPOTA adventures now! Find the full report here: <https://ww7d.wordpress.com/?p=1745>