

Pacific Northwest SOTA Newsletter

May-June 2016

Photo by John-VA7JBE

SOTA Oregon Newsletter has become the Pacific Northwest SOTA Newsletter! There will be contributions from Oregon, Idaho, Montana, British Columbia and eventually, Washington. This issue features a banner image of Mount Rogers from John-VA7JBE, who contributed our second page story. The mini-relief map below shows the complexity of terrain that we live with here in the Northwest. Some of those B.C. mountains have never been climbed – by anyone.

SOTA Gathering at SeaPac Join Us! We'll be getting together at 630pm on Friday, June 3 at Pizza Harbor in Seaside, Oregon. Followed by the [SeaPac Hamfest that weekend](#). And the next weekend, June 11-12, is the [June VHF Contest](#) – if you are on a summit, be sure and try 6m and 2m – SSB or FM.

New Summit Information Location – It appears that summit information is moving to the SOTA website at <http://sota.org.uk/>. For example, the summit information pages available from SOTAWatch can no longer be updated. Using the [Summit Listings](#) at sota.org.uk is the definitive way to find and share trip reports and information on peak access.

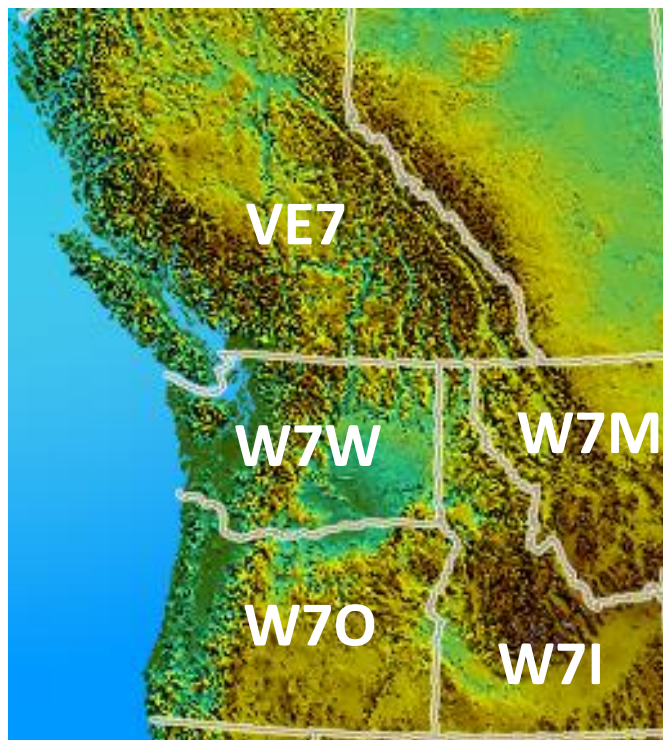
Update for the PNW VHF Society Microwave Challenge –

The Microwave Challenge is for Northwest SOTA activity on 900 MHz and up. Doug-AC7T leads in Washington as Activator and Chaser and Jen-K7GEN leads in Oregon as Activator and Chaser. No one has yet logged a Microwave SOTA contact in British Columbia or Idaho. Summer is coming - log your Microwave contacts and earn a certificate at the October PNW VHF Society 2016 Conference in Bend, Oregon (October 7-8). Information on the PNWVHFS Microwave Challenge, microwave tips and equipment can be found [here](#).

Spring Summit-to-Summit Party After Action Report – Here in Oregon for our (soggy! damp!) Spring Summit-to-Summit Party on April 23 we had seven operators on seven summits:

Dave-N7LKL on Mount Sylvania
Grover-KG7O on Larch Mountain (WA)
Phil-NS7P on Marys Peak
Etienne-K7ATN on Bald Peak

Guy-NS0TA (op N7UN) on Nicolai Mountain
Jason-NT7S on Sheridan Peak
Roger-ND7PA on Black Butte



Most S2S QSOs were on 2m FM, with a few folks trying out NVIS 40m SSB and 23cm FM. All agreed that they would welcome a warmer and drier Summer Summit-to-Summit Party. Stay tuned and join us next time around during the Western North America Summit-to-Summit Party, August 6 and 7, 2016.

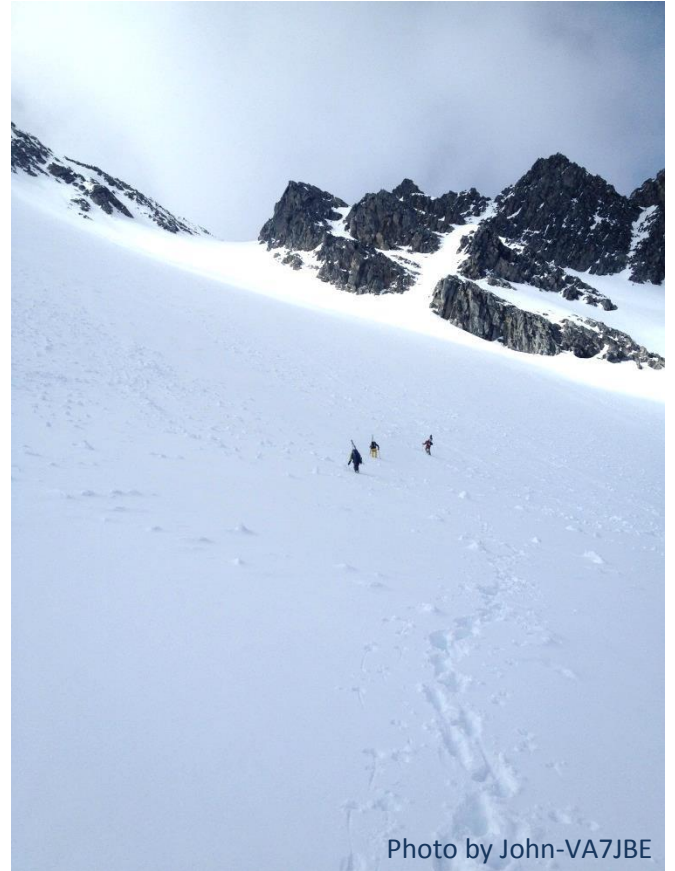
Incident and Evacuation at 3000m – an Attempt on Mount Rogers, British Columbia by John-VA7JBE

The Rogers Pass area provides access to several peaks, including Sifton, Rogers, Swiss, Hermit, and Tupper. Rogers is the highest at 3169 metres (10,396 feet). Terrain involves glacier traverse, scrambling over rock, and snow climbing. Mount Rogers is on our list of soon to be approved SOTA summits, but has yet to go official. Still, I always carry radio gear when climbing – this turned out to be a good decision for our attempt.

Rogers Pass is located in Glacier National Park in southeastern British Columbia, 342km west of Calgary and 643m east of Vancouver. The nearest communities are Golden and Revelstoke, BC. Rogers Pass is easily accessible from the Trans-Canada Highway.

On April 14, 2016 four of us decided to make a late-season skiing attempt to summit Mount Rogers in Glacier National Park, British Columbia. Our day began just after sunrise from the trailhead at 1200m. We climbed through steep trees to reach the alpine before making a sharp turn then up the Swiss Glacier between Mt. Rogers and the Hermit Range. The final approach was too steep and hard to skin up, even with ski crampons, so we strapped our gear to our packs and kicked steps into the snow for the last 400m.

We had decided on a turnaround time earlier in the day, unfortunately that time arrived at the same time that we reached a col 100m below the summit. Deciding not to risk further exposure, we prepared to ski back down the glacier. The FT-817 and 20m dipole I had climbed with for 2000m stayed in my pack, as there was no time.



I skied first and after only a dozen turns suffered an equipment malfunction, sending me tumbling down a 40-degree slope. I was able to self-arrest after about 30m. After checking to see if I was alright, the rest of the group skied down the glacier and confirmed that the ski was unrepairable – the toe binding had ripped out of the ski.

At this point we had several options: 1) walk/ski 1300m of vertical and 5km of horizontal down the glacier, then bootpack 200m back up a ridge to another 900m descent and a 4km hike back along the highway to the vehicle; 2) phone the National Park dispatch office and ask for help, 3) use the National Parks repeater to contact dispatch to ask for help; 4) press the S.O.S. button on my SPOT Messenger.

The first two options were not feasible because of the permit system in the park (out by midnight) and an absence of cellular service. The last option would have mobilized a large number of people, including public safety officers, and seemed like an inefficient use of resources. As I had programmed my VHF handheld in advance with the National Parks repeater, I choose the third option and contacted the Parks dispatcher directly. It allowed us to describe the situation calmly and the proper response to be selected. My group was subsequently plucked off a low-angle section of glacier by helicopter forty-five minutes later. Because being stuck in restricted permit areas after midnight is considered an emergency by National Parks, we were not charged for the flight and only had to fill out an incident report the next day.

See the following for a full report and photos: <https://summitsandradios.wordpress.com/2016/04/19/mt-rogers-binding-failure-and-evacuation/>