

Pacific Northwest SOTA Newsletter

October-November-December 2021

Mount Scott from Dutton Ridge, OR

“Follow the river until it turns to ice. Follow the ice until it turns to rock. Follow the rock until it turns to sky. Then we will be there.” – Woodrow Wilson Sayre – from his story, “Four Against Everest.”

Duplicate SOTA Accounts – don’t do it!

For those that “forgot their password” or “got a new callsign” – do NOT be tempted to open a new account for SOTA. It causes difficulty for our volunteer Management Team and for those who want to confirm a contact with you. If you know that you have more than one account or need to change your callsign, please work with Josh-WU7H (email at QRZ) to get it down to just one account that includes everything you’ve chased and activated, plus good entries for your Summit-to-Summit contacts.

“It’s a round trip. Getting to the summit is optional, getting down is mandatory.” – Ed Viesturs

<https://proactiveoutside.wordpress.com/2015/07/16/seven-signs-its-time-to-bail-on-a-summit/>

Inside the Summit-Obsessed World of Ham Radio – from Outside Magazine

<https://www.outsideonline.com/outdoor-adventure/exploration-survival/ham-radio-hobby-summit/>

Update Your pnwsota.org Profile – Although they are not likely viewed all that often, some folks may find you via www.pnwsota.org and look at your profile. Most of you completed your profile at the beginning of your SOTA career, and so might have something like, “Just getting started,” “Looking forward to activating a few summits,” or “Only chasing for now...” that might not be your current story. This fall would be a good time to have your public persona reflect what you are actually doing with our Radiosport. And this might be a time to update your QRZ.com profile as well. Note that QRZ has a “nickname” feature that will post your “on the air” name along with your legal “FCC” name.

Many Antenna Connectors – Here’s a Guide: <https://www.diamondantenna.net/pdfdocs/connectorguide.pdf>.

How to CQ for SOTA – Different Approaches

Darryl-WW7D has covered this (and many other aspects of [Care and Feeding of Chasers](#)), but let's focus on how to CQ. It's different depending on the band and frequency.

When you are operating HF (phone or CW) you have a small signal and hundreds of operators are tuning the band (especially on 20m and 40m) constantly looking for something interesting OR an open frequency to use. In this case, on HF keeping the frequency "busy" by only waiting three to five seconds to listen for calling stations makes sense. A CQ long enough to make it clear that you are calling CQ, that you are operating SOTA, and giving your call at least once with clearly spoken standard phonetics and also slowly without phonetics. And as Darryl mentions, being consistent in your calls so that even with QSB, the calling station will know when you have finished to give you a call.

For 2m FM, things are different. There are not hundreds of stations listening. There may be just a few, depending on your proximity to an urban area. And that few may change slowly as mobile ops come into range. You don't need to "hold" the frequency, so calling every minute (or maybe better, every two or three minutes) should be enough. If you need to use the National Calling Frequency of 146.52, a very occasional short call mentioning "mountain-top portable" rather than SOTA should get you the fourth contact without annoying those that would prefer that the National Calling Frequency be used for...calling. If you are spotted, chasers showing up on 146.56 or 146.58 already know your SOTA Summit Reference, so there's no need to offer it.

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>

Trail Maintenance – it takes Volunteers – SOTA Volunteers...

It used to be that the Forest Service would actually have crews that cleared and maintained trails in our region – a lot is now done by volunteers. A couple of our own, Matt-KF7HIZ and Guy-N7UN are regulars for the hard work of trail maintenance. Matt and Guy were on the Salmon River Trail for a few days recently. [Here are some photos/videos including clearing a 34" tree and a root ball they cut and pulled off the trail.](#)

There is a form people can use to report trail issues ([See Step 1, Step 2 and the Tutorial](#)). Trail Keepers collects these and works with the different land agencies to prioritize trail maintenance. Sometimes, the decision makers just aren't aware that there is a major problem on a trail. It helps if GPS coordinates and photos are included.

[And here's a news story talking about how trails are kept clear](#) for your hiking enjoyment.

SOTA, A Family Affair – by Troy KF7SEY



When I started SOTA nearly ten years ago, most of my trips revolved around taking the family with me. During this time I have learned on what I can and cannot get away with. Now, if your family enjoys using the radio maybe some of them have their license...then it may be different on how you handle your trips. My family does not want to be on the radio, they just want to be outdoors and spend-time together. So first one, and maybe the most important one, is they are generally not as eager as I am to get summits. Which is why I try to find summits that are easier so we can do it together. Compromises are regularly made.

And yes, sometimes there is bribing that occurs. One and two-point summits are generally what we do as they are more easily accessible for everyone. Not that we have not done others, just not the norm. I generally gauge this by how difficult the summit is. If it is a long hike, then there has to be some encouragement to keep it fun, and if that doesn't work then the bribes come out [Hi Hi]. Sometimes it takes a lot longer than it would be if I was by myself, so I give extra time on the alerts just to be safe. When we are on the summit, I try to keep it short so they don't lose interest but allows enough time for chasers, usually about an hour. I enjoy CW but they do not enjoy it like I do. So running phone can help as they can hear the other stations and be a part of the action.

Having my family help me with setup and tear down is one thing we regularly do together. We sometimes leave markers like spelling out SOTA with pine cones or rocks and the XYL and daughters paint rocks to leave. Maybe you have come across some of them. We would love to hear from you if you have.



Getting a souvenir like a rock from a summit to take home and add to a collection. In the end family first, points second, has been my philosophy. Sometimes you may have to just turn around and try another day.



Quick Logging for Chasers – There's been a feature on the SOTAWatch page for a while now that allows easy logging for anyone that has a spot. In the left image below is a small  symbol by every spot that, when clicked, will have your browser display the pop-up on the right. You can adjust the time and the frequency to your actual chase.

14:24	G0WPO/P on G/LD-045 	7.160 ssb
	Neil calling cq now. (by 2W0FLW)	
14:16	MM0PYG/P on GM/SS-280 	145.500 fm
	(by G400E)	
14:10	VE6JTW/P on VE6/RA-090 	14.338 ssb
	On summit [sotLas] (by VE6JTW)	
14:07	K7AHR on W7O/CM-001 	146.58 fm
	good 53 on Bald Peak (by )	
14:00	M5RJC/P on G/WB-018 	145.5 fm
	Calling CQ [SOTA Spotter] (by M5RJC)	
13:55	G8TMV/P on G/SE-013 	7.0320 cw
	[RBNHole] at DM6EE 10 WPM 8 dB SNR (by RBNHOLE)	

Log Chase

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Callsign logged:

Callsign used:

Time (UTC):

Band:

Mode:

Summit:

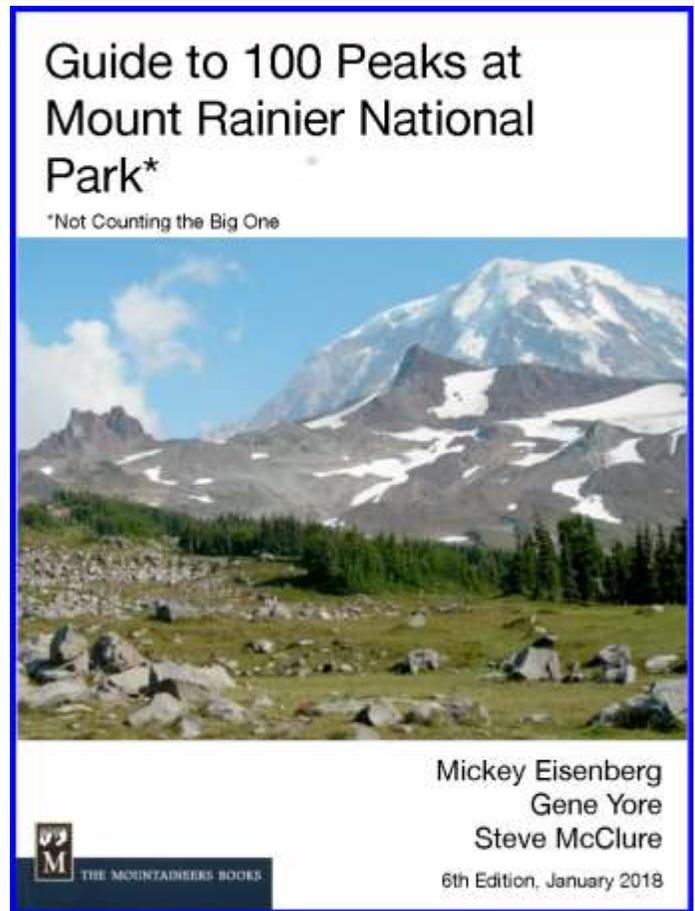
Comments:

DeOxIt – For Paddle Maintenance. I've had some issues with paddles not ditting and dahing the way they should. Dan-N7YY had suggested DeOxIt for cleaning contacts - I got the smallest tube I could find on Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0015A5AAY/> and went after the troublesome contacts in my Palm Paddle. With a small amount of DeOxIt on a small slip of regular paper, I ran it through the Palm contacts. Dirty. Dirty. Dirty – dark streaks on the paper. And no longer was I missing dahs. It looks like paddles and other contacts, need maintenance.

REMINDER – Blaze Orange is THE in color for Fall in the Mountains...



An Online Mount Rainier Guide – 100 Peaks of the National Park (and an unrelated but interesting sign found on BC's Mt. Finlayson). <https://sites.google.com/site/guideto100peaks/home/route-descriptions>



Southwest Idaho SOTA Party – a Report by Amos-KT7WW

Southwest Idaho is a wonderful place for Summits on the Air. There are so many summits, sometimes the hardest part is deciding which one to activate. For VHF and above, the region is all you could ever ask for- high elevations- 6,000 to 9,000 feet with the valley floors around 3,000 feet elevation. Any summit with a clear line of sight to the Boise area can be activated with a 5-Watt handheld as there is a very large and active group of hams in the area that monitor VHF and UHF simplex. There are many summits in the area where this is possible, and many close enough to other summits to make a multi-activation day easy to accomplish.

Leading up to my planned activation on Saturday July 10, 2021, with the help of K7ATN, I worked to coordinate to have multiple activators on multiple summits in the area. By the morning of the activation, we had K7MK heading to W7I/BC-083, KG7VLX heading to W7I/BC-059 and moving later in the day to do a first activation of W7I/BC-081. I (KT7WW) headed to Sunset Mountain W7I/BC-062 with my twelve-year old son KT7WWW, and KG7DO with plans of heading to Pilot Peak later in the day.





The road from Mores Summit on Highway 21 to Sunset Mountain was in good shape, and typical of most of the dirt forest roads in the region. After winding our way from the highway to the parking area just below the summit and fire lookout, KG7DO and I unpacked the gear, and loaded it in a cart. The cart made the trip to the top with equipment very easy, and I may refine this some for future summits that are short walks, or near drive-ups to speed up deployment. After getting the equipment to the top, I started deploying a UHF and VHF station while KG7DO worked on setting up the HF station. KG7DO didn't activate either summit. He just wanted to go along for the ride to see what all this SOTA was all about and to test an HF antenna and a couple of LiFePo4 battery packs he had built.

As soon as I had the VHF station up and running, I made several S2S contacts, as did my son KT7WWW. First KG7VLX on W7I/BC-059, then K7TPH on W7I/SR-042, then K7MK on W7I/BC-083. Then, one of the locals from Caldwell – KJ7BJS put out his call at the top of Thorn Creek Butte- W7I/BC-066. He didn't know much about SOTA, but KG7VLX was able to find his summit reference, and we were able to turn his nice motorcycle ride into a SOTA activation for him. As the contacts came in, we would ask if they had worked the other activations, and then hand them off to the other activators.

KT7WWW was happy to make the minimum number of contacts, and then ventured off to read a book, eat some snacks, and chase butterflies and grasshoppers around the mountain. I continued to make contacts on VHF, UHF, 20-meter SSB, 40-meter SSB, and then one contact on 15-meter SSB for a total of 56 contacts including five S2S contacts.

We then packed up the station, hauled everything to the car, headed down to Mores Summit, crossed the road, and headed up to Pilot Peak. By this time it was early afternoon, and starting to get a bit warm. With the amount of motorcycle and OHV traffic, we decided to go just below the summit in a clump of trees for shade, and to be a little more out of the way. Once the VHF station was operational, I made contact with KG7VLX on his second summit for the day; W7I/BC-081. KT7WWW made 5 contacts on VHF, then went back to his book. I made nine contacts on VHF, 15 contacts on 20-meter SSB with an S2S contact with AG7GP on W7O/CS-012 Pelican Butte, and even one contact on 10-meters SSB. By then the heat, dust, and biting flies won out, and we decided to pack up and head back to home.

It was a great day on the mountain. The fun factor was multiplied greatly by having several simultaneous activations. I hope that in the future this becomes an annual or semi-annual event for SOTA in Idaho.

PNW SOTA Newsletter – SOTA Arts Editor Welcome

For those that read this far in the newsletter, thanks. Mostly in this newsletter we share a lot of applied science and practical information about our Radiosport. But this human endeavour, like others, can also be expressed through art.

For this issue, we have the banner a watercolour of Mount Scott from Dutton Ridge in Crater Lake National Park. From literature, there is the newsletter opening quote from "Four Against Everest" and as a reminder, there's always the semi-official SOTA song by Ivor Cutler: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtlYIHvMEvk>. If anyone would like to collect or recommend any art in regards to SOTA chasing or activating, please let me know.

This PNW SOTA Newsletter focuses on Summits on the Air activity for British Columbia, Idaho, Oregon, Montana and Washington. Your ideas for this newsletter are welcome. Subscribe for notification by registering on www.pnwsota.org and checking the box for the PNW SOTA Newsletter. This newsletter is brought to you by the Oregon Association Manager, Etienne-K7ATN. Find back issues here: www.pnwsota.org/content/pacific-northwest-sota-newsletters.