

W7O – SOTA Oregon Newsletter

July-August 2015

What a Party! Actually, two Summit-to-Summit Parties – In May we enjoyed Summit-to-Summit (S2S) contacts across the Willamette Valley in Oregon while another group exchanged contacts across Washington's Puget Sound. Read about the fun here and join us for the next one on August 1 and 2!

www.pnwsota.org/node/554 &

www.pnwsota.org/content/willamette-valley-s2s-party-after-airwaves-cooled

Upcoming Event – CQ World Wide VHF – Okay, so I'm nutty about carrying small antennas to summits. But for July 18 and 29, the "Hilltopper" category is perfect for SOTA as you are limited to QRP and six hours of operation and activity is only on 6m and 2m. Last year I got a certificate for being number three in the US after operating just three hours. Exchange is grid square and try 50.125 and 144.200 on SSB: http://www.cqww-vhf.com/2015_cq_ww_vhf_contest_rules.pdf.

Upcoming Event – August UHF – For those with 222MHz and up on SSB or FM, consider being on a summit August 1 and 2 for some extra fun – the ARRL August UHF Contest. 223.5-fm or 446-fm from a high point could find you some folks very excited about an extra contact. Know your grid square for the exchange and see here for details: www.arrl.org/august-uhf.

Upcoming Event – W7 Summit-to-Summit Party – Okay, here's something for the HF in all of us. Also on August 1 and 2, it's the W7 Area S2S Party. All are welcome, but we especially encourage folks from the Mountain Time Zone and west to get out and activate this weekend. Informally organized with ideas from Phil-NS7P, it's a time to get on a summit and stick around, focused on working other activators. See some operating ideas here: www.pnwsota.org/content/w7-s2s-party-1-2-august-2015.

Activation Idea – Three-fers and Two-fers – With the long days of summer upon us, there are some "Three-fers" and "Two-fers" – multiple activations to be considered from the same trail or trailhead. There are also some that can be done with short drives, but this list focuses only on hiking connections.

- W7W/LC-101 - Three Corner Rock + W7W/LC-094 - Dipole Peak + W7W/LC-104 - Greenleaf Peak
(Best done as a two-party traverse with vehicle and key exchange at Dipole)
- W7W/KG-115 - Tiger Mtn + W7W/KG-116 - West Tiger Mtn + W7W/KG-121 - South Tiger Mtn
(This would be a fun one with a mountain bike, otherwise, really long!)
- W7W/KG-073 - Bandera Mtn + W7W/KG-043 - Mt Defiance
(Be sure to get into the AZ on Bandera, see www.pnwsota.org for trip reports)
- W7W/LC-058 - Silver Star Mtn + W7W/LC-085 - Discriminator Peak
- W7O/WV-003 - Bachelor Mountain + W7O/WV-005 - Coffin Mountain
- W7O/CN-028 - Barlow Ridge + W7O/CN-086 - Peak 4925

The Idaho Nine – Scott-W7IMC has outlined the highest nine peaks in W7I (Idaho). With 2,461 SOTA summits, W7I presents a vast opportunity for virgin activations with over 90% of hills yet unactivated. A great reference for those planning a trip to W7I is ***Idaho, a Climbing Guide***, by Tom Lopez. There are nine peaks in W7I above 12,000 feet, eight of which are SOTA peaks, five of which are still unactivated and almost all require a 5,000-foot ascent from the trailhead. See details on each peak here www.pnwsota.org/content/idaho-nine-scott-w7imc.

Operating Tips – 2m FM Activations – Chris-KG7OFQ has had good luck in qualifying SOTA summits using a 2m FM HT and simplex (not everyone has). Here are a few of his tips:

- Post an alert on www.sotawatch.org. This is one tool I use so people to know about my activation. Hams in the Seattle area are learning about SOTA as more folks are active.
- Upgrade your antenna. A quarter wave after-market whip is almost always better than the factory rubber duck, and a 5/8 wave or halfwave vertical will be awesome. Some folks use easy to make tape measure yagis or commercial versions from Arrow or Elk.
- Use the National Calling Frequency – 146.52. So far this has usually got me at least one contact from someone mobile during each activation. You can try other simplex frequencies such as 146.55 and 146.58 that may be monitored also.
- Try local repeaters and ask folks to move to 146.52. These frequencies should be programmed into your radio anyway before heading into the backcountry. Puget Sound Repeater Group and Kittitas County Repeater Association have gone out of their way to support SOTA activations.
- I have also done a few "pre-announcements" on various nets and it certainly helps to raise awareness and encourage folks to give you a contact.
- Tell your friends to look out for you. Keep in touch with them on the repeater during your hike up, and then ask people to switch over to simplex for your qualifying contacts.
- I use a narrative such as "QST QST QST, this is KG7OFQ with a SOTA Activation of XXXX Summit. Any station hearing this, please come back with your call sign". Sometimes I elaborate a little bit about SOTA, but the idea is that it sounds official and people can usually ascertain that you are doing something important and they can help by simply responding to your call. Making short "CQ SOTA" calls on 146.52 can work also.

Prizes for SOTA Chasing – Three new Idaho SOTA-addicts: Mark-KT5WX, James-K7MK and Scott-K7ZO have a challenge for Chasers in 2015. See the details here and find them on the air: www.pnwsota.org/content/announcing-2015-idaho-kool-aid-kids-chaser-challenge.

And a Final Note – Safety, Safety, Safety, aka, don't be this guy. Although ham radio saved his bacon, being out alone in a whiteout can't be recommended and is never worth a SOTA activation: <http://kdvr.com/2015/05/17/littleton-snowshoer-rescued-after-falling-off-icy-ledge/>

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