

W70 – SOTA Oregon Newsletter

January–February 2015

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Gear Idea for Activators – Snowshoes! As a skier, I used to turn my nose up at those that use snowshoes but have learned that are a great way to get around for winter activations in the snow zone. They are easy to carry on the snow-free parts of a trail and not too expensive to buy or rent. Best of all, the ones with modern strap-in bindings are easy to use with little training or practice needed. Pretty much like taking a walk in the woods. Poles with snow baskets go a long way to keep you stable and help push you up steeper slopes.

Activator Idea – Sno-Park passes are needed to park in places in the mountains where there is regular snow removal – it's nice to think that your payment goes directly to making it possible to pull off the road at trailheads. In Oregon, an annual pass is \$25 and daily is \$4, although most sales agents charge a bit extra for handling. See www.oregon.gov/odot/dmv/pages/vehicle/sno_park_permits.aspx.

Note that several years ago Washington ended thirty years of reciprocity with Oregon on their Sno-Park programs so you'd need to purchase a pass for both states if you activate in both. In Washington, an annual pass is \$42 and daily is \$20, and again, sales agents charge \$2 more. See www.parks.wa.gov/134/Permits and check out www.pnwsota.org to search for possible winter activations.

Upcoming Events – For those with 6 meter and up SSB capability, heading out on January 24-25 has an extra fun factor – the ARRL January VHF Contest. There will be bunches of folks willing to work you on 50.125 and 144.200 MHz, and it's also possible to work other bands too. From any summit there's not much need to have fancy antennas even with 5W – I've used a 2 meter 5/8 wave vertical for both 2 meters and 6 meters with good success even when most VHF folks are horizontal – take what you have handy if you don't have time or resources for a fancy antenna. This is a great time to consider activating a summit where putting up an HF antenna is challenging – like some of the busy summits in urban areas. See the rules at www.arrl.org/january-vhf and consider entering a log for the contest – people have gotten first place in their ARRL

section with just a few contacts! Note that you should know your GRID SQUARE as that's the typical exchange for VHF/UHF.

Resources – Winter brings special challenges to know what trail conditions are like in the mountains and what weather you might experience. Using highway or ski area webcams can give you some ideas of the snow level at higher elevation – Here's a summary of the webcams around Mount Hood www.timberlinelodge.com/webcams/ and here is mountain pass information for Washington www.wsdot.com/traffic/passes/ and some webcams for Crystal Mountain near Mount Rainier: <http://crystalmountainresort.com/the-mountain/about/webcams/>.

And here's another awesome tool put together by Dan-KK7DS – the ability to generate custom query files for your GPS or Google Earth for **every** SOTA association: www.pnwsota.org/sotatool. Google Earth is a fun planning tool to check out roads and access to summits, and putting summit coordinates directly into your GPS helps you know where to go...and when you've arrived.

This newsletter is brought to you by Etienne-K7ATN, SOTA W7O Association Manager. To subscribe or unsubscribe, please email climb2ski at gmail. Thanks.