

Pacific Northwest SOTA Newsletter

July-August-September 2026

SOTA Pup Torrin with Stuart-K7STB on Lookout Mountain, W7O/CN-008

W7W SOTA Campout, August 14-17 2026, Washington

The 2nd Annual W7W SOTA Campout has changed locations due to wildfire activity. It will now be held at Valley Camp in North Bend, which also hosts SalmonCon every year. Dates are Friday August 14 to Monday August 17. There is a group potluck dinner Friday evening at 6pm. If you'd like more information or to register, please email Corrinne-KK7ULL at corrinnehenderson@hotmail.com.

A Reflection on the W7O PNW SOTA Campout, July 2026 near Bend, Oregon

After five years of organizing and hosting the ever-growing W7O/PNW SOTA Campout, there are some aspects that are to be expected and some that are a nice surprise. This year was definitely filled with both. I had never been to the chosen location for our camp, Crane Prairie Reservoir near the town of LaPine in Central Oregon. The campground, all the summits, roads and local towns would be new to me, just as they would to many other campers coming from afar. I reached out to a few locals to check out the campground for a suggested section to use and what a beautiful location they chose! Randi-N7OLE, Chris-W7MTB, and Tim-N7KOM picked an area at the edge of the reservoir with a perfect view of South Sister, the highest summit in the region, with other mountains at her shoulders, including the skiing destination, Mt. Bachelor. An abundance of waterfowl joined us each day, including the young mergansers entertaining us as they succeeded in snatching fish then chasing each other for the bounty up onto the shoreline. The Golden-mantled ground squirrels and chipmunks provided lasting entertainment (especially for our pup) trying to find any forgotten crumb. Each early morning sunrise started with a cool, misty fog over the lake and finished at sunset with brilliant amber and pink colors.

The summits were all foreign to me, but that has never stopped me from seeking a good adventure. Etienne-K7ATN helped provide vital info to all by making a spreadsheet sorted in order of number of activations of each mountain, from the most popular to the ones that have yet to be done. He included notes, when known, whether the summit was a drive-up, had a trail or a bushwhack, and if a trip report was available. This played a crucial role in where those of us that were new to the area decided to spend our days playing radio. Randi also put together a binder of summit activation

summaries of the nearest mountains and a handy map with color-coded pins based on their point category. All of these aids helped operators plan their days, preparing for regions with low cell service area.



The Campout is now developing traditions! It is getting common for operators to try to achieve their Mountain Goat title (reaching 1000 activation points) at the annual Campout. What better way to celebrate than with 50+ SOTA ops in the evening after your achievement?



Brian AB6D, Jarod NE7ET, and Clinton KJ7LLS each became Mountain Goat during the event

This year to our surprise, we had three who achieved Mountain Goat, all on the same day. For their final points, Brian AB6D chose Mt. Bachelor, and Jarod-NE7ET Royce Mountain, and they were able to have a MG to MG QSO. While Jarod was still finishing up his MG activation, Clint KJ7LLS joined him on Royce Mountain for his own MG title! They both took the opportunity of a “herd” on the mountain and sent out SSTV images for one of a kind S2S QSOs to the Moto-SOTA crew who were on another mountain. Back at camp Saturday evening I surprised them with a personalized cake to celebrate their outstanding achievement.

The Moto-SOTA course was a new addition to this year's event arranged by Chris-W7MTB. It was a motorcycle loop consisting of five summits being activated by half dozen ops on motorbikes. They enjoyed motoring through the volcanic dust of Central Oregon, and like many of us, bringing much of it back with them!



The MotoSota gang on Pringle Butte (CM-094). From left to right: Rex KE6MT, Josh WU7H, Don N3TET, Chris W7MTB, TJ KK7LVA, and DJ WW7D.

Each evening all are invited to the hosting campsite and enjoy eyeball QSOs with numerous ops. This has become a traditional annual "family" reunion, being able to see so many of our teammates each year. There was a gentle breeze keeping the mosquitoes at bay which made for very pleasant evenings. Robin N7HAP has been very helpful each year bringing dozens of chairs and extra tables for all to relax, have a snack and drink after a busy day in the mountains. The crowd is a roar of discussion and laughter until it slowly diminishes as the stars start to twinkle. A unique opportunity to share such a fabulous hobby we all love and grow with. Saturday evening, we gathered for the traditional group photo of which Josef-KD7QOW did a professional job of capturing not just of the crowd but the outstanding background of Crane Prairie and the mountains beyond at sundown. The photo shot was followed by our SOTA theme song sing-a-long, Little Black Buzzer by Ivon Cutler, led by K7ATN. That still needs some brushing up but we have a year to improve, right?

Our total number of operators exceeded the past campouts with many who showed up by surprise for the weekend or just for a day. My informal count is 77 licensed operators. For some these were their first SOTA activations. This year we also had a great presence of young licensed operators ranging from 9 to 17 years. The Henderson Clan joined from WA, which includes Soren KK7UKE and Niels N1ELS, the two youngest Mountain Goats in the Americas, now 17 and 14. We all enjoyed listening to the young operators display their expertise in radio operation on the busy summits and over the air. Gabriel-AJ6X, activated several with his



two kids Sophie-KO6MFP, and Alex-KO6MFO. They were a great clan to find if looking for a quick activation-an instant three QSOs in the log towards the needed four. Alice-KO6KZO, proudly wore "33" on her sweatshirt in honor of YL ops. Unfortunately, her dad Tony-KM6AM, was under the weather for part of the event but with the aid of other ops she was able to reach some great summits including a First Activation. Jeff-WX7OR and Katrina-KE7HUP, stepped in and offered to continue with the hiking plan they had in place and took Alice to Charlton Butte for its FA. Alice-KO6KZO said it was easy...only six miles! The camaraderie is not rare. It is seen throughout the weekend. Be it a simple carpool, sharing equipment, or people like Brian-NR7Y spending the evening showing kids how to build 3D paddles and program radios. The support in SOTA is incomparable!

As usual, 2m was lit up on several frequencies and modes. With the 2m SSB/CW Challenge in place, all modes were utilized. Most took advantage of the easy to obtain 2m FM contacts, nearly always a S2S, or 2m SSB or CW contacts

using their modified Quansheng HT. Some tried to get as many summits as they could in a day. Yet others hung out on one or two mountains, enjoying the beautiful scenery and frequent SOTA ops coming and going, accumulating numerous S2S QSOs near and far throughout the day.

On our final day, Sunday, all the YLs still present went to Lookout Mountain for a drive-up activation. Trying to get the tradition going! I was a bit rushed due to the campground vacate time but it was still a great quick activation and visit during the carpool up.

I left on my trip with the intent to take it easy and just do some drive up summits. However, I left a day and a half early and all these new mountains everywhere! By the third day I think I already had close to 20 miles of hiking in and by the end of the event I had activated 18 summits, all new to me. What a week!

It was a terrific event that displayed what a great organization SOTA is and the stellar character of the SOTA operators. There's what's to be expected at each campout--chaos on the bands, great company, lots of activations, but also some great surprises of unexpected guests, new operators, and new achievements. Thankfully this year there were no surprise vehicle breakdowns or injuries, all the unexpected was quite positive...even with HT left behind on a summit (see below). It takes us all to form this team. If you haven't joined the W7O Campout, give it a try. It is a great opportunity to meet many who you have likely met via radio waves many, many times. See ya all next year! de Amy-AG7GP

Tony-KM6AM & Alice-KO6KZO and the Lost and Found HT

Alice and I were using two HTs on Paulina Peak and got distracted by the beautiful views and ended up leaving one of the HTs on the summit. KB7CIN (not part of the Campout!) kindly left it at the ranger station. He then contacted Dave-N7LKL who was on Round Butte near Madras, who was able to contact me, I think via our spot from the summit!! I can't tell you how lucky we were to get it back and so much thanks to the radio community at large! We ended up singing Little Black Buzzer much of the way home and we will continue to try to spread the good word :-)

100 vs. 1 Watt

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkM5VIEYqe4>

REMCO Transceiver – Awesome!!

https://www.youtube.com/shorts/H_SF0V_gCI0

Where did UTC come from?

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/k3AGMwSkpcU>



Norovirus on the Trail

<https://ktla.com/news/california/norovirus-outbreak-pacific-crest-trail/>

Quansheng HT - Two Truths and a (White) Lie – by Brian-NR7Y

Similar to the ubiquitous Baofeng radios, the Quansheng UV-K5 and UV-K1 models are inexpensive dual-band handhelds that cost \$20 to \$40 on Amazon or AliExpress. What distinguishes them from the Baofengs is that the firmware for these radios has been rewritten as an open-source project, providing new features and functionality.

One of these new features is transmission of CW.



Truth: With the NR7Y firmware mod for the K5 and K1, the radio gains a mode for CW receive and transmit. This is a real CW transmission with an unmodulated carrier, which can carry on a QSO with another multimode radio like an IC-705 or FT-817 in CW mode. It can hear CW transmissions, albeit with a fairly wide audio-frequency passband. The firmware also includes an iambic keyer with a variety of keyer modes supported. There are even macro recording and playback functions, and a code practice oscillator mode.

Truth: The radio can connect to an external key for CW sending. One option is to open the radio and perform a simple rework, which will allow it to connect a straight key or paddle directly. The other

option is to use a custom cable, which is easy to assemble. This cable can then connect to a key or paddle. There are even some maker amateurs creating cable adapters that can be used directly on a radio without a rework.

White Lie: The radio also enables SSB QSOs. This is true, sort of. Here's the thing: the Quansheng is still an FM transmitter, despite the magic that firmware can perform to create real CW on the air. When in the SSB setting, the receiver operates in a baseband mode that can indeed hear single sideband transmissions. What it transmits in that mode though is actually an FM signal. However, it turns out that an FM modulated voice contains enough amplitude modulation characteristics that a receiver for SSB is still able to hear a voice, even if it sounds rather terrible. Try it with another FM transmitter some time! Use a standard 2m FM radio and speak into it while receiving on a true SSB receiver like an IC-9700 or FT-857, and you will be able to understand the transmission. A standard HT like the FT-60 or IC-51 can't demodulate the SSB response, and that baseband receive mode is what enables the Quansheng to work for an SSB QSO. Unfortunately, because the radio is actually transmitting FM, the signal also isn't able to carry as far as a true SSB signal, since some of the ~5 Watts of power is going into a carrier and second deviation "sideband" lobe. There is some



work ongoing with the firmware to improve the audio quality by adding more amplitude modulation to the signal, but it won't help the power issue.

<photo by Brian-NR7Y

In any case, running modified firmware on the Quansheng is a lot of fun, and well worth a play, especially for CW. These are still cheaply made radios and will incur issues like desense on high-RF peaks, so a 2m BPF is sometimes a must. Quality control is occasionally lacking: one op reported receiving a clearly used and returned radio with

the battery already attached and a memory programmed, others have reported reception issues out of the box. Despite all this, as some like to say, it's the best 2m CW radio you can buy for \$30. They're easy to find on the major vendor sites, and the CW firmware can be found by searching for "NR7Y firmware", or visit <https://briand.github.io/cw-firmware-docs/> to get started. The documentation there explains the differences between radio models, how to pick a firmware and load it onto the radio, and the new menu options and functions you'll find inside. If you prefer watchable content, you'll find videos about the CW mod on YouTube from creators @UtahForrest and @SOTA-plus and others.

The 2m/70cm CW/SSB SOTA Challenge – 2026 Q2 Report

Many ops are enjoying weak signal VHF using SSB and CW that has been encouraged by the 2026 SOTA Challenge. The advantages of SSB over FM are quite clear, literally, with some excellent regional DX. For this issue I have gathered (mostly) Left Coast activator points to give some idea of the activity level. Where there is a concentration of population and summits you find more activity – particularly southern California and the Willamette Valley. Some of the highest scores are supported by making contacts using linear satellites – a mode that was explicitly allowed by the SOTA MT from the beginning. See a summary of the Challenge here: <https://w6sota.org/web/2026/01/01/2026-sota-challenge/>

Association	Callsign	Activator Points
W6	KE6SRN	16,630,000
W6	KE6SRO	8,070,000
W7A	KF7NP	5,090,000
W7O	WJ7WJ	3,350,000
W6	W6LOR	3,200,000
W6	K6STR	2,920,000
W6	N1CLC	2,860,000
W7O	WJ7V	1,870,000
W7O	K7ATN	1,620,000
VE3	VA3VGR	1,410,000
W6	W6TED	1,160,000
W7W	KG7EJT	870,000

Gourmet Radio Hike – by Scott-VA7SNJ

Few things are more pleasant than travelling in the great outdoors, in all its majesty, spending time with good companions, in all their magnanimity, and eating great food, in all its magnificence. So it was on a gourmet radio hike on the Stoney Hills Loop Trail east of Duncan, BC on July 8 with fellow ham Byron VA7BYR and hiking buddy Don (from Nanaimo, BC). Over the last few years, I have tried to improve and expand the food experience during my radio hikes. This has evolved into a kind of pot-luck field charcuterie, where people bring a variety of tasty treats to share. It's always a surprise, as there is no planning. This last outing has certainly set the highest standard for us. I thought I would share our menu with you. Please continue reading here: <https://reflector.sota.org.uk/t/gourmet-radio-hike/41273>.





Crane Prairie is where to go
To get your ducks in a row.
It's all about radios!
Mountain bouncing, Top to top.
Some drive ups,
Some you walk.
Got your radio gear?
Let's see who can hear.
Take note,
We have three new Mountain Goats!
Brian, Clinton, and Jarod.
Clinton & Jarod took pictures on Royce.
Smile and use your best, Goat voice!
Baah!

Robin, the chauffeur,
He's no amateur
With Amy and Onyx
We can't get lost.
Narrow Roads, brush and trees,
But we've got mountains, buttes and peaks to see.
Sophie and Alex are very precise,
Alice thinks we are all quite nice!
33! Alice! 33!
Sunday morning, one last shout
From the ladies on Lookout!
And now we're complete!
Until next year...73!

