POTA

Parks On The Air

POTA

- Parks On The Air – one of many activities for radio amateurs

- SOTA – Summits On The Air

- IOTA – Islands On The Air

- BOTA – Boats On The Air

- VOTA – Volunteers On The Air

- Many more

POTA

Parks On The Air – History

Parks on the Air® (POTA) started in early 2017 when the ARRL's National Parks on the Air special event ended. A group of volunteers wanted to continue the fun beyond the one-year event, and thus, POTA was born.

General information about the program is available at parksontheair.com, so it is highly recommended checking out the information there. You may also want to join the POTA Slack Channel or the POTA Facebook group, where you can easily interact with the POTA community online. POTA also maintains accounts on Twitter and Mastodon if you prefer to interact on those social media platforms.

POTA

- ## Parks On The Air – What does it consist of?

  – Activators and Hunters

  – Has really good website, easy to navigate, can find the rules, maps, registration, Code of conduct, etc.

  – https://docs.pota.app

  – POTA is not a contest, may take place on any amateur band including the WARC bands

  – Repeaters not allowed

POTA

- ## Parks On The Air – What does it consist of?

  - Simple - going to one of the many parks, wildlife areas, National Forests, National Monuments, etc, on the POTA website setting up a temporary station and activating the park

  - Possible to activate more than one entity at the same time

  - Possible to activate many parks during the day

  - Can have multiple operators using the park

  - All parks have a unique identifier

    - EG: Idaho Panhandle National Forest = K-4477

POTA

- Lets start with the activation
  - Minimum of 10 QSO's for a successful activation within a single day (Zulu)
  - Can be done using any HF/VHF/UHF radio equipment, does not require massive deployments, can be as large or as small as one wants
  - Is great practice for emergency communication deployment
  - Multiple modes – Voice, CW, Digital
  - Possible to hunt activators from your armchair :-)

POTA

- ## Rules for activation
  - How is it possible to activate many parks during the day?
    - The rules for activation on the website allow activation of multiple entities

Example: Mount Rushmore, K-0786, is contained within the Black Hills National Forest, K-4524. An activation within the boundaries of Mount Rushmore would be a 2-fer

  - How is it possible to activate multiple parks during the course of the day even if not near each other?
    - The rules require making at least ten contacts to complete an activation, then you can move to the next

POTA

- Rules for activation
  - Activators must keep accurate logs
  - Only activators submit logs (hunters get credit only after activators submit)
  - Follow guidelines of park - antennas, generators, etc.
  - No power limit
  - Special consideration for QRP stations & Park 2 park
  - Fully automated QSO's not allowed

POTA

- ## Rules for Hunters

Activators like the following for their log: Callsign, Signal Report, and State

Activators like to receive **actual** signal reports.

Be sure to use phonetics when first giving your callsign. It is best practice to use the NATO phonetic alphabet.
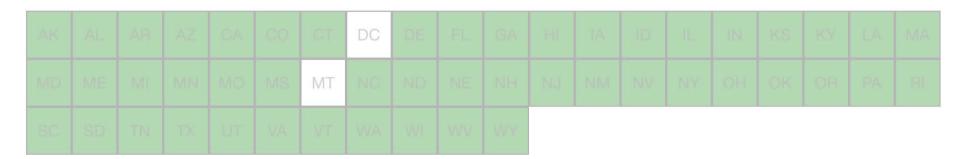
Sometimes the activator will be quick with the QSO, as they may have a pileup to return to.

They may also give you information about their portable setup at the park. This is an open invitation to share your station information with them. Be open that they may want to get back to calling CQ, as most activators are on battery power and have a limited time to operate, and some are exposed to challenging weather conditions.

POTA

- ## Rules for Hunters

As a hunter, you do not submit any logs to POTA. However, it would be best if you still kept a log for your station. It is also recommended to upload your log to LoTW, QRZ, ClubLog, eQSL, or any other online confirmation service. In particular, **LoTW** is used by most award hunters.
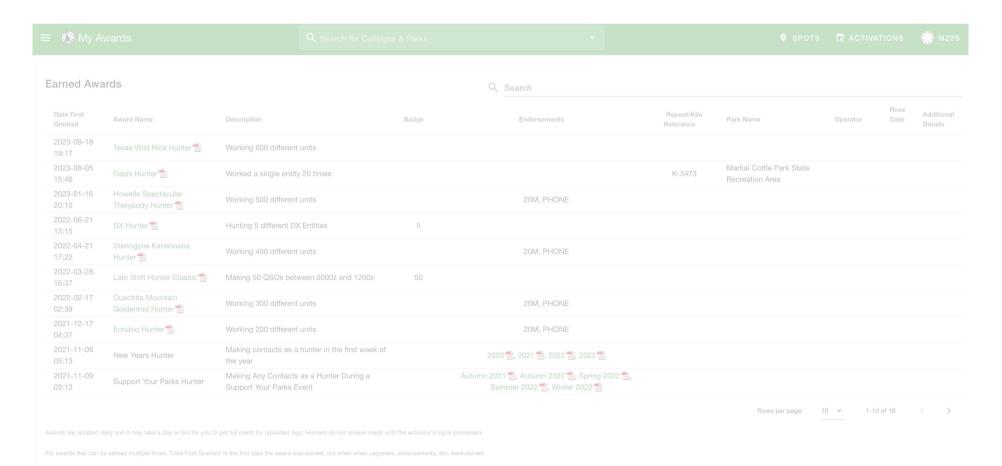
Hunted US States

AK	AL	AR	AZ	CA	CO	CT	DC	DE	FL	GA	HI	IA	ID	IL	IN	KS	KY	LA	MA
MD	ME	MI	MN	MO	MS	MT	NC	ND	NE	NH	NJ	NM	NV	NY	OH	OK	OR	PA	RI
SC	SD	TN	TX	UT	VA	VT	WA	WI	WV	WY									

Hunt a park in 50 states (DC is a wildcard) to earn this award.

POTA

- ## Awards for everyone

  POTA has awards for everything and everyone no matter what you do there
  are realistic awards that one can achieve, unlike some other award programs.

POTA

- Awards for everyone

Here are just a few

POTA

- Awards for everyone

POTA

- Awards for everyone

Repeat Offender Hunter

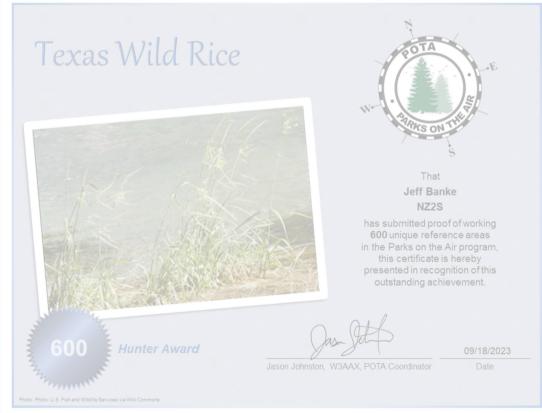| Park	Contacts ↓	Next Award
Martial Cottle Park State Recreation Area (K-3473)	20	0 / 20
Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge (K-0189)	16	16 / 20
Spring Creek Forest State Preserve (K-4423)	10	10 / 20
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (K-0648)	7	7 / 20
Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area (K-8303)	7	7 / 20
Ray Roberts Lake State Park (K-3051)	7	7 / 20
Pike National Forest (K-4404)	7	7 / 20
Old Spanish National Historic Trail (K-4575)	6	6 / 20
Oregon National Historic Trail (K-4576)	6	6 / 20
Cherry Creek State Park (K-1213)	6	6 / 20

Rows per page: 10 1-10 of 24

That
Jeff Banke
NZ2S

has submitted proof of having contacts from the same Parks on the Air entity more than 20 times.

OASIS
AWARD LEVEL

(K-3473) Martial Cottle Park
State Recreation Area

Entity

08/05/2023
Date
Jason Johnston, W3AAX, POTA Coordinator

Photo: By Sfivat (Own work) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

POTA

- Awards for everyone

POTA

- How to find current activations

POTA

- How to find parks to activate?

POTA

- How to find parks to activate?

POTA

- How to activate?
  - Send an adi file to the website
  - NZ2S@K-3234-WA-20121018.adi

POTA

- POTA combined with SOTA

  One other activity that can be combined with POTA is also joining SOTA (https://www.sota.org.uk) and doing a combo activation.

  - For example Mt Spokane State Park (K-3234), has inside it several peaks that are also listed on the SOTA site, Mount Spokane (W7W/WE-006), Quartz Mountain (W7W/WE-012) and Ragged Mountain (W7W/WE-014).

POTA

- A little on the equipment
  - First there is no real difference between a POTA setup and any emergency radio communication setup
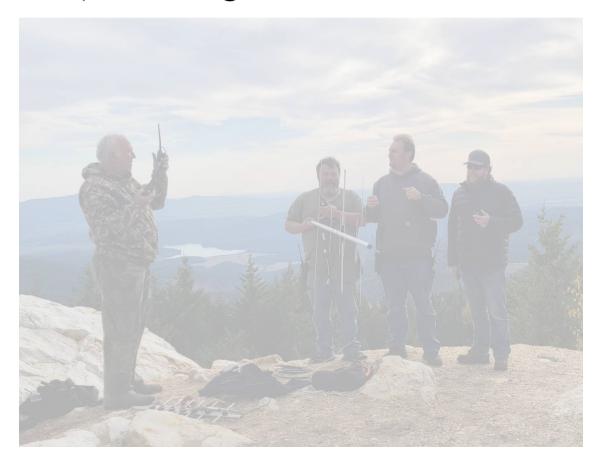
POTA

- Equipment – Transcievers
  - You can use any transciever
    - Really depends on how much gear you want to tote
    - How big of an event you want to make it

POTA

- Equipment – going small
  - It can be done with nothing more than an HT and a good antenna (or nothing more than a rubber duck)

POTA

- Equipment – going small
  - It can be done with nothing more than an HT and a good antenna (not the rubber duck)

POTA

- Equipment – more typically

  - It is done with a mobile radio, either battery, solar or possibly even generators driven.

  - If batteries are used, bigger the better. LIPO's are better as they are lighter, and last longer.

  - If solar panels are used, it is a good way to provide power to boost batteries.

  - If Generators are used, an inverter generator is better as it provides consistent voltage.

POTA

- More on the equipment – If you go big
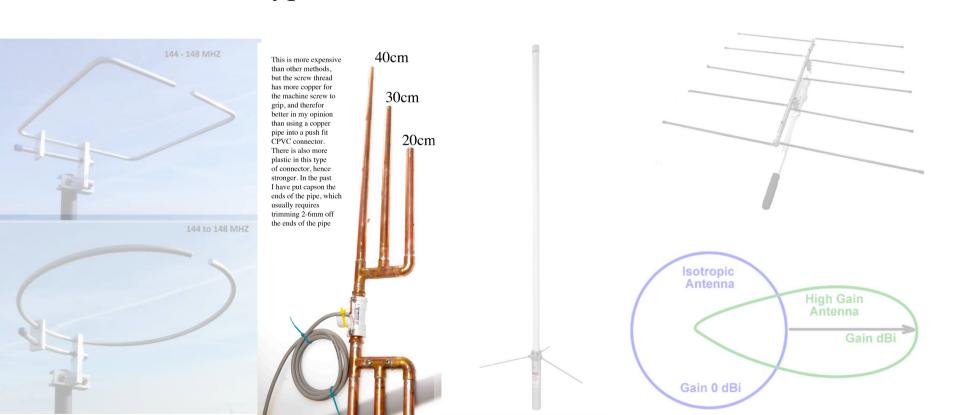 - You need a big power source!

POTA

- More on the equipment – If you go big

  - You need a **big** power source!

POTA

- ## More on the equipment – antennas

  - ### You need good antennas

    - VHF/UHF you can go to easily manipulated yagi antennas or other types

Elk Antennas 2M/70cm VHF/UHF Dual-Band Log Periodic Handheld Directional Antenna - 2M/440L5

144 - 148 MHZ

144 to 148 MHZ

This is more expensive than other methods, but the screw thread has more copper for the machine screw to grip, and therefor better in my opinion than using a copper pipe into a push fit CPVC connector. There is also more plastic in this type of connector, hence stronger. In the past I have put capson the ends of the pipe, which usually requires trimming 2-6mm off the ends of the pipe

40cm

30cm

20cm

Isotropic Antenna

High Gain Antenna

Gain dBi

Gain 0 dBi

POTA

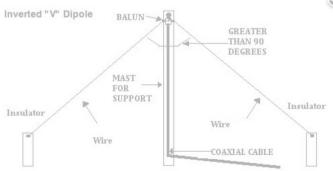- ## More on the equipment – antennas

  - You need good antennas

    - HF you can use, end-fed wires to inverted "V" or sloper dipoles, or OCF dipoles to Wolf River coil verticals, Buddiepoles or a variety of others.

POTA

- ## More on the equipment – antennas
  - – But wait you need to get HF antennas in the air
    - This can be done using a variety of types of masts and methods to keep them upright.
    - Push-up poles are good start but need either a tripod, custom stand, guying, or a drive on plate system to hold them.
    - Trees work well with some kind of launcher to get the wire up there **(*make sure it is OK in the park to do so*),** some launchers use .22 blanks, some use compressed air, and therefore are noisy.

POTA

- ## More on the equipment – Mounting systems

  - ### But wait you need to get HF antennas in the air

    - This can be done using a variety of methods to keep them upright, from guying to hitch mount systems to drive-On plate systems.

POTA

- ## More on the equipment – Poles

  - I have used the following

    - 33ft fiber push-up pole

    - Metal push-up poles

    - Military 4ft fiber (also aluminum) section poles
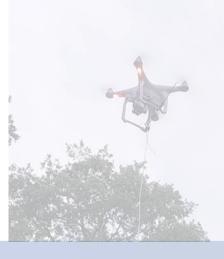
POTA

- ## More on the equipment – Launchers

  - I have used the following

    - Compressed air launcher
    - Bow and fishing arrow
    - Drone with weight, line and release
    - Slingshot & Dog Training launcher

POTA

- **More on the equipment – Logging software**
  - My friends and I use the following on a laptop
    - N3FJP
    - N1MM
  - My friends have used the following on a smart phone
    - Hamrs
    - Others are "Ham Radio Logger" from Google Play
    - "HamLog" for the ipad
    - "Parks & Peaks" for the iphone and ipad

POTA

- POTA: https://parksontheair.com

- BOTA: https://www.boatsontheair.com

- IOTA: https://www.iota-world.org

- SOTA: https://www.sota.org.uk

- JOTA: https://www.scouting.org/international/jota-joti/jota/

- VOTA: https://vota.arrl.org

Questions?