



INTERSECTION OF SOTA AND VHF MOUNTAIN TOPPING

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SOTA & VHF Mountaintopping

- Introduction to Summits on the Air (SOTA)
- Look at some important differences between SOTA and VHF Contesting & Mountaintopping
- Some examples of both
- Encouraging crossover between these two radiosports

WA7NYI circa 1971



K7ATN circa 2012

South Sister, Oregon – 3157m



K7ATN

SOTA

W7/CM-001

Introduction to SOTA

- SOTA was launched in 2002 in England and Wales, followed by Scotland
- Currently about 90 SOTA Associations around the world, with about 63,000 summits – only 16,800 have ever been activated!
- ~2000 summits in OR, ~2700 in WA – just 450 have been activated

One bottom line – define “portable”

- For ARRL VHF Contests, gear just needs to be movable (a general definition of portable)
- For SOTA, gear needs to be carried (a special definition of portable)
- There are ways to connect SOTA and VHF contesting and mountaintopping with benefits to both radiosports

More about SOTA

- There are 3,300 registered Activators and 3,400 Chasers worldwide, with perhaps 500 of each fairly active
- ~10 active Activators in OR, WA, ID
- 2.2 million QSOs in the SOTA database
- About 27% of QSOs are VHF+ (World)
- For me, about 7% QSOs VHF+
- Point based system

SOTA Rules for Activations

- ⦿ Must be a SOTA Summit - minimum of 500 feet prominence (independence)
- ⦿ Public access to peak or with permission
- ⦿ Activation within 80 vertical feet of peak
- ⦿ **Battery or solar powered equipment**
- ⦿ **Not in or in vicinity of a motor vehicle**
- ⦿ **Final approach is non-motorized**

Even More SOTA Rules

- Simplex contacts (no relays either)
- Four QSO for Activation points
- One contact per station (not per band)
- No power or band limitations
- On your own schedule

SOTA Practices

- Internet spots are standard practice
- Coordination by any means Ok (cell, text)
- Multiple locations Ok
- Honor system for logging

VHF Rules

- ⦿ One location only (unless Rover)
- ⦿ Spots makes you multi-op/assisted
- ⦿ Power and band limits
- ⦿ “Portable” liberally defined
- ⦿ One contact per band per station
- ⦿ Fixed schedule
- ⦿ Logs are checked and “adjusted”

Peter-W7/HG1DUL Mission Ridge, WA (Jan VHF)



SOTA Activation Zone



Etienne-
K7ATN Bald
Peak, OR
(Jan VHF)



Etienne-K7ATN Dutton Ridge, OR (SOTA & Aug UHF)



Mike-KD5KC Franklin Mtn, TX (SOTA & Jan VHF)



Bruce-KI6JA South Mtn, ID (Sep VHF)



Joyce-KØJJW Humboldt Peak, CO (Colorado 14er)



Kyle-KD5EU0 Rover, TX (Jan VHF)



Rich-KR7W
Tolmie Peak, WA
(SOTA)



James-KDØMFO Mt. Herman, CO (June VHF)



Dave-KB5WIA Brokeoff Mtn, CA (Sep VHF)



Stu-WØSTU Mt. Herman, CO (Jan VHF)



Zach-K1ZK Mt. Hunger, VT (June VHF)



Ways VHF & SOTA don't quite work

- SOTA is often QRP

vs.

- VHF Weak Signal mostly QRO

- SOTA Activators use FM HT

vs.

VHF Weak Signal use SSB+CW

- SOTA Activators use vertical polarization

vs.

- VHF Weak Signal use horizontal

Ways VHF & SOTA don't quite work

- SOTA Activators use small antennas

vs.

- VHF Weak Signal use big antennas

- SOTA requires four QSOs anytime

vs.

- VHF Weak Signal primarily active during contests

Ways it could work

How to bring SOTA and VHF Contesting Together
– even a little

- ⦿ Why I am here – KI7JA, KB7ME, WW7D, K7YDL
- ⦿ How often VHF Contesters could claim SOTA points
- ⦿ How often SOTA Activators could submit VHF contest logs
- ⦿ Encourage SOTA to do VHF activations
- ⦿ Encourage SOTA activations during VHF contests

Ways it could work

- Attention to SOTA activations using FM?

SOTA Microwave Challenge + UK Microwave Group

- 23cm to 24 GHz
- One station must be on a SOTA summit
- Based on distance (lat/lon or 6 digit grid)
- Effective 1 July 2014

2014 Activities

- **SOTA Activators** encouraged to do VHF
- **W7 Summit –to-Summit (S2S)**
Weekend: 2-3 August + UHF Contest
+ KØNR's Colorado 14er event
- **NA SOTA Weekend:** 13-14 September +
September VHF Contest
- 1.2 GHz activations for Microwave
Challenge

Thanks for listening...

– and for the QSOs!

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References

- SOTA main site: www.sota.org.uk
- Spots & Alerts: <http://sotawatch.org>
- SOTA logging: www.sotadata.org.uk
- Northwest SOTA site: www.pnwsota.org
- Yahoo SOTA North America Group
- SOTA Association Reference Manuals
 - www.sota.org.uk/docs/ARM-W7-Oregon.pdf
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