

POTA BASICS

Parks On The Air



POTA

IS

A ham radio activity

POTA IS NOT

A contest

An event

A competition

Not restricted by day or time

IT'S JUST FUN!

ACTIVATORS

Work stations from inside a registered POTA park

HUNTERS

Hunt activators from anywhere, home location for the most part but could be from a shopping centre parking lot!

An activator can also be hunter

HUNTERS and ACTIVATORS earn tiered personal accomplishment awards



Bronze Hunter



Silver Hunter



Arizona Agave Hunter



Support Your Parks Hunter

HUNTING

Choose your method of communicating whether CW, SSB, or Digital (FT8/FT4)

SSB and CW – choose your band, find Activators using the POTA Spots page then hunt them down!

Some Activators don't or can't spot themselves so as a courtesy, spot them by using "Add Spot" on the POTA page

HUNTING

FT8 and FT4

Requires WSJTX

Search received signals for POTA Activators, double click on them and wait for the QSO to complete

Move on to the next Activator!

Keep an eye on the POTA Spots page because some Activators don't/can't put POTA in their CQ line

HUNTING

Only POTA activators submit logs to the POTA system ○ Hunters do not submit logs to POTA

Any logging you do as a hunter is for your own personal satisfaction

Log if you want to, or not if you don't!





ACTIVATING

HF Radio

Antenna - End Feds, Dipoles, Links, Verticals, whatever works!

Great opportunity to experiment!

Power Source

Something to log (computer + logging app, or pen & paper) if you're logging
FT8 and other digital modes very common – will need a computer connected to radio



ACTIVATING

Where?

picnic tables, pavilions, setting up right on the ground on a picnic blanket, in your camper, in your car, bring a fold up table and chair, unlimited options

Be reasonable with your antenna

Practice safety



ACTIVATING

Practice Hunting POTA before you leave your backyard!

TEST EVERYTHING - radio, tuner, antenna/radials/counterpoise, coax, batteries and power cables, laptop, CAT and other data cables, headphones

Make sure everything works

Make sure batteries are charged

Know your setup. Not just so you know you have it all, but so that setup is speedy

ACTIVATING

Be familiar with your logging software

Have a log file created with the park number

WRITE DOWN your park number. This is just in case you don't have internet to spot yourself.

Saying your park number as part of the CQ call allows your hunters to spot you

ACTIVATING WITH ANOTHER OP or USING CLUB CALL

With "2 ops" (sometimes several, I believe the most I've heard is 6) you're providing hunters with easy multiple park contacts at once and you'll be very sought-after, especially from other parks

Get ready for pile-ups

With a CLUB CALL, all operators use the club callsign over different bands and using different modes, the POTA Spot page will identify the operator

Once the log is uploaded to POTA page, both the club and the operator are credited for the activation

TIPS

POTA uses UTC/Zulu time.

A lot of activity right before and after 8pm EDT since that's the crossover to a new "day"

Use the POTA Page to check the park's information for such things as boundary maps, open and closed schedule, and helpful information added by other activators

Have a backup logging plan in case of unexpected technical difficulties

Have a reference handy for band plans and any other information you might find handy in the field - RF Spotting message protocol, Specific mode frequencies, anything useful

Have a backup plan for everything

If you're operating alone, have a security plan and tell someone where you're going

SSB QSOs are super fast, but in poor propagation FT8 will shine!

My Setup

Icom 7300

MacBook Air (easiest WSJTx setup)

Chelegance 750 100-watts portable HF vertical (JNCRadio)

12V 100AH lifepo4 battery

Coax

Cables

In my bag I also keep a tablecloth, headphones, a mic, and a variety of accessories that may be needed in an emergency. I don't pack light and I'm not on a mission to pack light, if you are, it is possible to bring nothing more than an HF radio, antenna, mic, and paper for logging.

When I go alone to activate a park, I charge everything the day before, as well as update my logging information. I also check out the park online and read other activators tips and tricks.

When everything works as it should, I can be setup and running in 20 minutes!

It's as simple as that!



- **Icom 7300**
- **Laptop**
- **Jackery 240 (4-6 hrs laptop)**
- **Laptop**
- **Running phone as a hotspot**
- **Buddistick on magnetic mount**
- **Power Supply for radio**



