



POTA

Parks On The Air

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What is Parks On The Air (POTA)

- POTA is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization that supports the use of amateur radio in US state and national parks as well as international parks. POTA has several goals:
 - Encourage people to discover and enjoy the great outdoors
 - Develop and practice emergency communication skills
 - Expose the public to Amateur Radio
 - Earn awards
 - **Have Fun!!!**









POTA History

Back in 2016, the ARRL sponsored a year long event called National Parks On The Air or 2016 NPOTA. The success of this event spawned the creation of the current Parks On The Air program by a handful of HAM's. Since then it has grown to include state, national parks, and trails in the US as well as parks in 50 other countries.

Who can participate?

- There are two types of POTA participants, **Activators** and **Hunters**.
- **Activator** – A HAM or HAM group that has registered with the POTA website and sets up a station in a registered park with the purpose of making POTA contacts.
- **Hunter** – Everyone else! The person trying to make contact with an Activator. You do not have to be registered with POTA to have a POTA QSO. Your contact will count for the activator and be logged with the POTA organization. However, you will not be able to participate in the awards program without being a POTA registrant.

How Do I Start?

- Answer a POTA CQ call!
- POTA web site lists activation schedules as well as current activation sightings known as spots.
- If you want to earn awards or activate a park, you must register with the POTA website www.parksontheair.com

Basic Rules

- Beyond standard amateur radio on air protocol, the POTA Code of Conduct adds a few specific items. You will be removed from the program for any of these violations.
 - No Threatening or abusing members of the Admin team or any other POTA participant.
 - No discourteous, offensive, argumentative, copyright infringing, or advertising posts on the POTA site/forum.
 - No offensive or derogatory callsigns allowed to participate in POTA.
 - Do not attempt to hack the POTA website.
 - No behavior that discredits the integrity of the POTA program.
 - No operating outside of the ARRL operating ethics or the DX Code of Conduct

Hunter Rules

- Register on the POTA website
- Respond to a POTA activation
- POTA does not require a formal exchange but typically callsign, signal report and location are the minimum. A QSO may be quick or the activator may want to talk for a bit depending on if they have a pile up.
- Hunters do not submit logs to POTA (you can still log it as a personal QSO). The contact is credited to the hunter when the activator submits their log.
- If you have access to the POTA website, help the activator by spotting his station after a successful QSO.

Activator Rules

- Register with the POTA website.
- Schedule your activation on the POTA website(suggested).
- The park must be open and you must be allowed to be there.
- All park rules must be followed. Discuss with park staff your intentions and any concerns you or they may have. If you have a question, ask. Some parks don't allow things like stringing ropes/wires from trees, etc.
- You can use commercial park power but all equipment used must be physically in the park barriers, except for trails (which must be within 100ft).
- There are no restrictions on bands or operating modes.
- You must make a min of 10 QSO's for the activation to count.
- You can spot yourself on the POTA website.

Logging

- The activator must submit the logs in ADIF format via email to the POTA regional coordinator even if the activation was unsuccessful.
- Only submit one log per park. If activating a different park in the same day, you must submit a separate log. However, the same park activation over several days can be in the same log.
- It is recommended to use logging software but paper logs can be used, they will just have to be input into a logging program before submission.
- When operating a special event or club, the club and the individual operator will get credit for the QSO's.
- Currently with COVID-19 issues, POTA is asking folks to wait for 1 month before asking about log status. But typical processing time is 1-2 wks.

What is ADIF?

- **A**mateur **D**ata **I**nterchange **F**ormat (www.adif.org)
- Open standard for exchange of data between ham radio software packages available from different vendors
- ADIF 1.0 was developed by Ray Ortgiesen IV (WF1B) and Dennis Hevener (WN4AZY) and introduced in 1996.
- Widely accepted by most Amateur radio software publishers
- Current version is 3.1.2

Logging Software Example

HAMRS Logbooks Settings Profile ▾ Help ▾

UAARC POTA QSOs 1

THEIR CALLSIGN	RST SENT	RST RCVD	FREQUENCY	BAND
<input type="text" value="W5BWC"/>	<input type="text" value="59"/>	<input type="text" value="59"/>	<input type="text" value="14.300"/> MHz	<input type="text" value="20m"/>
THEIR PARK	COMMENTS		POWER (W)	MODE
<input type="text" value="Comma separated"/>	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text" value="100"/>	<input type="text" value="SSB"/>
TIME	DATE	Clear	MY PARK	MY CALLSIGN
<input type="text" value="19:13"/>	<input type="text" value="12/20/2021"/>	<input type="button" value="Clear"/>	<input type="text" value="K-3023"/>	<input type="text" value="KG5SVM"/>
OPERATOR	STATE	COUNTY	QTH	GRID
<input type="text" value="JOHN L KEITH"/>	<input type="text" value="TX"/>	<input type="text" value="Upshur"/>	<input type="text" value="GILMER"/>	<input type="text" value="EM22mr"/>
			MY GRID	CLUB CALLSIGN
			<input type="text" value="EM23kb"/>	<input type="text" value="K5UAR"/>

Entries 1 QSO Map POTA Spots

TIME ON	CALLSIGN	RST ↑	RST ↓	STATE	FREQUENCY	BAND	MODE	THEIR PARK	
19:13	KI5BHT	59	59	TX	14.300	20m	SSB		

Awards! Awards! Awards!

- POTA has many awards for Activators and Hunters in 4 general categories: Standard, Advanced, Geographic, and Special. Below are just SOME of the awards available.
 - Standard Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum, Diamond, and Sapphire awards based on reference areas (unique parks) up to 75 total.
 - Advanced awards are for 100-7500 total reference areas (yes there really are that many registered parks! VE3LDT has hunted 7493 parks)
 - RaDAR (Rapid Deployment Amateur Radio) awards for multiple park activations in 24 hours. Awards based on distance and number of activations.
 - Worked All States, Worked All Parks in a state
 - Repeat Offender award for the same park
 - Park to Park awards (activator to activator QSO)
 - 6 Pack award (6 parks on 6 meters)

Summits On The Air (SOTA)

- SOTA is an award scheme for radio amateurs that encourages portable operation in mountainous areas.
- Visit sota.org.uk for more information

Islands On The Air (IOTA)

- IOTA promotes radio contacts with stations located on islands around the world to enrich the experience of all active on the amateur bands. It is administered by Islands On The Air (IOTA) Ltd in partnership with the Radio Society of Great Britain (RSGB)
- Visit iota-world.org for more information

Resources

- Parksontheair.com
- [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com) – Search for POTA Matt Heere and watch his instructional videos on POTA
- Facebook POTA private group

Questions?

