



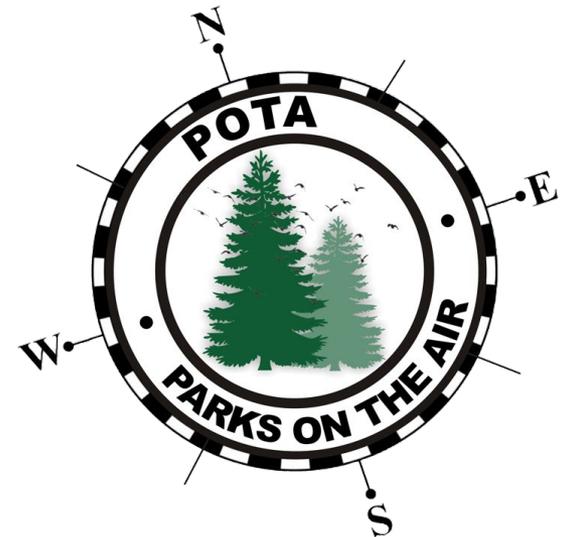
Agenda

- Why POTA
- Getting Started
- Getting ready to activate your first park
- During the activation
- Finding a frequency to operate on
- Eligible POTA QSOs
- Typical POTA QSO exchange
- After the activation
- Hints for Maximizing your QSOs

Parks On the Air

Why POTA

- Get outside, there are some great parks out there.
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- Lower noise, You will make some great contacts.
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- Practice portable setup and operation
 - Every time I go out I get a little more efficient at set up and take down.
 - Get better at adapting my setup to the park
 - More time playing radio.
-
- Researching the park activation point to be successful is part of the fun.
 -
- It's fun to track your progress on the POTA.app page. Plan your next adventure
 -
- It's an adventure



Parks On the Air - Your first activation

Things to consider when getting started

- Read the rules, watch some YouTube videos to see setups and QSO flow
 - https://docs.pota.app/docs/activator_reference/activator_guide-english.html
- Equipment - Use what you have, No need to buy anything until you figure out your operating preferences. Ask to team up with another experienced TARC member.
- Go to a local POTA park on a weekday. Bands are less active and there are always enough hunters. You should be able to get the required 10 contacts in 1 hour or less. 20m is the most active POTA band during the day.
- Try activating the park by hunting. Less stressful pace. Look at the POTA spotting page, dial into that frequency and throw out your call sign. The exchange will be covered later. Activation via WSJT-x / FT8 is another low stress way to test the waters.
- Where to activate from - a picnic table in a palavlian or in the shade normally works best but from your car or anywhere with a place to set your radio will work.
- Set up away from high traffic area where your coax, ground radials, antenna and other equipment are unlikely to be a hazard to others.

Parks on the Air Step by Step

Getting Ready to Activate a POTA Park

- Create a POTA Account: Register an account on the [POTA website](#) to manage your logs and activities.
- Find a Park: Use the interactive map on the [POTA website](#) to locate a valid park, identifying its official number and boundaries. Only State and Federal Parks are on the list.

The screenshot displays the 'Parks on the Air' website interface. On the left is a navigation sidebar with the 'Map' option highlighted. The main content area shows a map of Florida with a callout for 'Myakka State Forest' (US-4632). A red box highlights the 'Map' menu item, and another red box highlights the 'MORE INFO' button on the map callout. A third red box highlights the 'More Info' link in the park details panel.

Myakka State Forest Details:

- Reference: US-4632
- Entity: United States of America
- Location(s): US-FL
- Latitude (Longitude): 26.99, -82.2008 (8186W)
- Early Mth Award Time: 7:00 UTC to 13:00 UTC
- Late Mth Award Time:
- Website: <https://www.floridaparks.com/Forest/Wildlife/Our-Forests/State-Forests/Myakka-State-Forest/>
- Access Methods:
- Activation Methods: Activation POTAStation
- Is Active?: ACTIVE
- First Activation: K8BNR/ on 2019-02-05
- State: 356 activations / 356 attempts (25179 QSOs)

Park Leaders:

Rank	Call Sign	Activator QSOs	Itemer QSOs	Score
1.	W1ERU	85	8322	202
2.	N7JIM	70	6475	130
3.	NV4H	49	2678	119
4.	NS4P	21	2045	106
5.	KD4M2M	9	1109	94

Activations Table:

Date	Call Sign	QW	QSOs	Phone	Total QSOs
2025-09-08	N7JIM	0	0	114	114
2025-09-04	K4900C	18	0	0	18
2025-09-02	N0VGA	11	0	4	15
2025-09-01	K7ONE	0	22	0	22
2025-09-31	N7JIM	0	0	34	34
2025-09-28	N7JIM	0	0	40	40
2025-09-28	W2QX	49	0	0	49
2025-09-20	N2ZY	49	0	0	49

Parks on the Air Step by Step

Getting Ready to Activate a POTA Park

- Check Park Rules: Verify any specific rules or restrictions for the chosen park, especially regarding antenna use, as these may vary. Most parks don't allow hanging an antenna from a tree. Some don't allow the ground to be disturbed.
- Prepare Your Gear: Gather your radio, antenna, and a power source. A simple, portable setup is recommended for beginners.
- I have a checklist of everything I need and make sure I have it. I have left things behind when I didn't use the checklist.

Checklist example

Radio and microphone	Notebook and Pencil
Charged battery	Laptop, Phone, logging
Radio power cable	software
Antenna	Band Plan
Ground Radials	Bug Spray
Coax	Water

Parks on the Air Step by Step

During the Activation

- **Be Within Park Boundaries:** Ensure you and all your equipment are completely within the designated park boundaries. Be within 100' of a trail or river being activated.
- **Make Contacts:** Use your ham radio to make contact with other operators ("hunters"). You'll need to complete a minimum of 10 valid contacts on the same day (in Coordinated Universal Time, UTC) to qualify the park.
- **Spot Yourself:** Use the POTA website to "spot" yourself, letting other operators know you're active in the park.
- **Log Your Contacts:** Keep a record of your contacts, including the callsign, date, time, mode, and band.

Parks on the Air Step by Step

Finding a Frequency to Operate on

1. Make sure everything is in its place and you can hear other stations.
2. Based on time of day, band conditions and your antenna select a band to operate on.
3. Set up your log with the park number ect.
4. Make one or more Park to Park QSO as a way to confirm everything is working and log those QSOs, they count towards your activation.
5. Look at the spotting page to find a potential open frequency that another POTA activator isn't on. Its best to stay in the general portion of the band. 10m technician portion of the band will open up additional hunters.
6. Find a open frequency listen and check above and below to make sure your 3MHz away from another operator.
7. Transmit on the open frequency "(your call sign) Is the frequency in use" 3 times
8. Spot yourself with the open frequency you found
9. You may need to move due to another set up close to your frequency or a net starting up. Just spot your self as QRT on that frequency and find another.
10. You may run into a "sad ham" or "Lid" interfering with your operation or "you need to move we have a net starting" Its best to not acknowledge them, mark yourself QRT and find a new frequency.

Known Net frequencies to avoid

14.230 - SSTV

14.300 - Maritime Network

14.332 - YL Network

HF WARK Bands - 12n, 17m, 12m

Its ok to operate on these bands but you may / will run into a "sad ham" or two when calling CQ POTA. The simple way to avoid this is to simply call CQ or just hunt these bands

Parks on the Air Step by Step

Eligible POTA QSOs

1. Bands/Modes: All Bands and Modes available to the participants, based on their license class, may be used in Parks on the Air, according to the details specified in the logging requirements section of this document.
2. Note: POTA is not a contest; POTA QSOs may take place on any amateur band, including the WARC bands (30m/17m/12m).
3. Land repeaters are not allowed: Contacts made via land repeaters are not permitted.
4. Refer to Parks on the Air's glossary for the definition of a Land Repeater as it pertains to POTA.
5. You may use a repeater to request direct contacts, but the QSOs submitted for activator credit should not be via a land repeater.
6. Satellite repeaters are allowed: Satellite contacts are permitted.
7. Refer to Parks on the Air's glossary for the definition of a Satellite Repeater as it pertains to POTA.
8. Logs should be submitted with the band information for the activator's transmit frequency.
9. Spotting: You may self-spot yourself on the POTA spotting page; anyone (including hunters) can also spot/respot you, regardless of whether they are working that activator.
10. Spots will disappear from the spotting page approximately 30 minutes after the last spot or if the spot comment marks QRT.
11. If you are activating a park but also leveraging the QSOs for getting credit for other programs, e.g., operating from a park for ARRL Field day, there may be rules against self-spotting in the other program. Please operate in the spirit of the programs.
12. Power limits: POTA does not have a power limit. However, you must still adhere to legal limits based on your license class/band plans and use the minimum transmitter power necessary to carry out the desired communications.
13. Fully automated QSOs are prohibited: Each contact must include direct action by both operators making the contact. Fully automated contacts are prohibited.
14. Relays are prohibited

Typical Parks on the Air QSO Exchange

Activator Calling CQ

Short CQ call example

CQ POTA this is (your call) from US-4632

Long CQ call example, more air time so a hunter to find you

CQ POTA this is (your call) from US-4632, Myakka State Forest West Central Florida

Wait 4-5 seconds and call CQ again. You want to be heard by anyone scanning the band

Activator Responding to a Call

Repeat **their Call sign** back and then **QSL** (did I copy your call sign correctly)

After they confirm you have the call sign correct respond with **Roger Roger**

Your a (signal report) into West Central Florida

They respond with their signal report, park number if they are in a park

Thanks for hunting, have a great day, 73

Sometimes there will be other information exchanged, Radio, Antenna, Weather, audio quality

Receiving a Park to Park Call

Same as above, you will need be ready to copy their park numbers and provide yours if requested.

After they provide their park numbers **I copy (their Park Number) QSL**

US parks begin with US-, Canada begins with CA-

Hunter contacting an activator from a POTA Park

After the activator calls CQ or QRZ respond with

Your call sign and Park to Park

The activator will respond with your call sign or “The Park to Park Station”

Respond with

If the operator responded with your call correct

- Your **call sign** again and “**I am at park US-4632, that is 4632**”
- You may want to add your General location Florida or West Central Florida, Sarasota Florida
- Your a signal report “ **your signal report is 59**” or “**your a 59**”

If the operator doesn't have your your call correct or responds with “the park to park station”

- Your **call sign** again with “**park to park**”. This lets the operator know your the park to park station.
- Confirm the operator has your call correct by saying “**QSL**”
- “**I am at park US-4632, that is 4632**”
- You may want to add your General location Florida or West Central Florida, Sarasota Florida
- Your a signal report “ **your signal report is 59**” or “**your a 59**”
-

Parks on the Air Step by Step

What does the POTA log Need as an Activator

- UTC Time and Date - Your logging software will take care of this
 - record the UTC time of your paper logging
- Your call sign
- Call sign or who your worked
- What band you were operating on - logging SW pick this up from the frequency you are operating on
- Mode - SSB, FT8, CW...
- Location grid square ie EL87 - Your logging software will take care of this based on the grid square your in
- Park your located in - enter this into the logging software
- Signal reports, frequency and grig square - Not critical but needed if you log your calls into LoTW, QRZ, others

	Date/Time	Station	Operator	Worked	Band	Mode	Location	Park
Activator P2P	2025-04-15 17:24	N7JIM	N7JIM	WD8ORB	20M	PHONE (SSB)	US-FL	US-4634 Picayune Strand State Forest
Activator P2P	2025-04-15 17:21	N7JIM	N7JIM	K3SDM	20M	PHONE (SSB)	US-FL	US-4634 Picayune Strand State Forest
Activator P2P	2025-04-15 17:21	N7JIM	N7JIM	K3SDM	20M	PHONE (SSB)	US-FL	US-4634 Picayune Strand State Forest
Activator P2P	2025-04-15 17:20	N7JIM	N7JIM	K3SDM	20M	PHONE (SSB)	US-FL	US-4634 Picayune Strand State Forest

Parks on the Air Step by Step

After the Activation

- **Submit Your Log:** Submit your ADIF-formatted log file to the POTA organization through their website.
- **Follow the Rules:** Adhere to the DX Code of Conduct, the Golden Rule (treat others as you'd like to be treated), and the Leave No Trace principles to minimize your impact on the environment.

Hints for Maximizing your QSOs

- If you cannot self-spot, ask your first contact on the air to spot you, and repeat your request once in a while to keep your spot fresh.
- Be patient - calls tend to come in a group after calling CQ for some time and then slow again.
- Hunters will pile up / all at once, pick out the call sign or part of a call sign you could hear
 - Station ending in India Mike come on back,
 - Station beginning with November 7 come on back
 - Operators will usually take Park to Park calls first because it counts as activation and hunting QSO
- As I hear the call sign , I type it in and read back from the screen what I typed in or wrote down. It's a good way to make sure you copied what you heard.
- Speak slowly, clearly and use the correct nato phonetic alphabet.
- You will get your rhythm down and become a better listener over time
- 20m has the most POTA station and can get overcrowded. Depending on band conditions and time of day other bands can have a lot of activity. The bands are more crowded on weekends and when there is contest going on.
- Know what frequencies you can operate on based on your privileges. It can be easy to wonder off.
- In general don't activate in the the Extra portion of the band. There is no rule for this but the Sad Hams can get worked up.
- Set time aside to hunt POTA stations during your activation. They count towards your activation and a Park to Park
- **Other**
Call "Last Call" a few times before / as you QSY or QRT.
- Listen for "Park to Park" in response to your CQs.
- Double-dip with other OTA programs where qualified. Make sure you know the rules for other programs in advance. Some programs may not be compatible with the park location, QSO exchange, or the station. Some other events, such as QSO parties, may prohibit an activator from self-spotting. Some programs, such as Summits On The Air (SOTA), require a human-portable station. Understanding all rules and making a good plan is the key to success.

Rules

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EE24VoRUkcM>

Research

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBXt1eslxjY>

Set Up

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkv2bn84Kp0>

Activating a park

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOOLuQ0TOW4>

