

MY POTA Activation

Savi W1SAV

Rio de Los Angeles State Park

K-3548 activated on September 15th, 2023

ACTIVATION

18

CONTACTS

12

P2Ps

None

PREVIOUS ACTIVATIONS

4

MODE

CW

RADIO

Yaesu FT-891

TUNER

MFJ 939Y Autotuner

ANTENNA

Chameleon MPAS 2.0 in the vertical configuration staked in the ground.

POWER

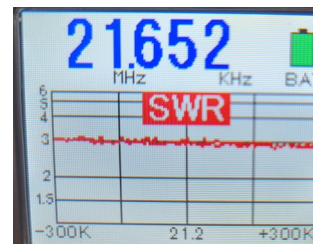
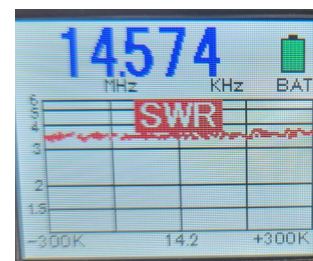
50W using a 30Ah Bioenno battery.

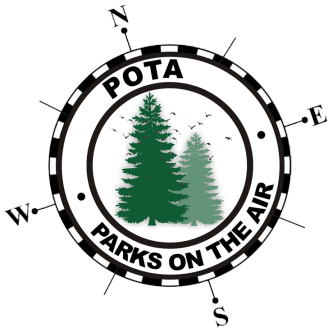


It's funny how we make things harder on ourselves, and I am no exception. On my 18th park activation, I went to Rio de Los Angeles State Park. This was my 5th outing there as it is just over six miles from my house. Even so I can count on an almost 20-minute drive there because...Los Angeles. At the extreme southern end of the park across from two soccer fields and parking, stands a metal roof that covers one well-used cement picnic table. It's a state park run by the county, so their issues about putting a stake on the ground are non-existent. I am away from crowds, kids, and noise. The surroundings are not the prettiest as other parks, but I am generally alone except for people out on a hike.

My excuses ran out on this day. Like most operators, my CW sending skills outshine my copying skills. The fear that I would fail copying incoming code, and its accompanying stress, had me finding excuses for not calling CQ in Morse Code. Although I am not yet at the rag chew level, I have over 2,400 CW contacts and over 51% are confirmed by eQSL, LoTW, or QRZ. These contacts were ones I answered someone else calling CQ; be it special events, contests, state QSO parties...you get the picture. I was not key-shy, I was CQ-shy.

My time at the park started out no differently than other times. However, as my time drew nearer to call CQ POTA, I became less aware of my environment. MY SWRs on 20 and 15 meters were about 3.1:1. I did have the presence of mind to take a picture of both sweeps, but nothing





Rio de Los Angeles State Park

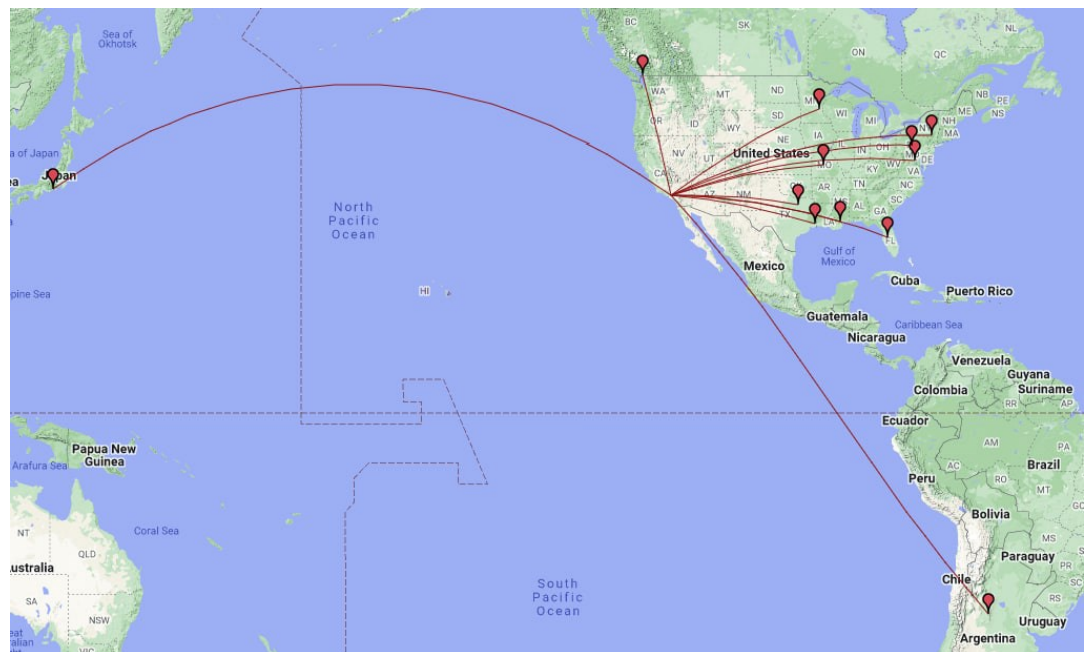
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About K-3548

Rio de Los Angeles State Park and nearby Los Angeles State Historic Park serve the local communities and provide a unique State Park experience. Rio de Los Angeles (LA River) State Park is surrounded by industrial and residential areas, yet restoration of the park's natural river wetlands allows a serene opportunity to all visitors who enjoy hiking trails, being surrounded by native plants and viewing returning wildlife. The park also encompasses sports fields, a children's playground and a recreation building. A site once used mainly to repair and maintain railroad

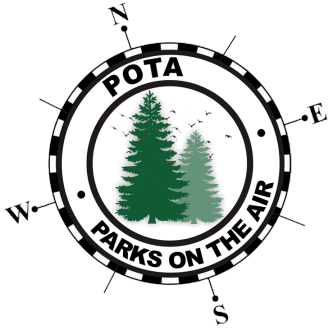
else. The new tuner I used for the first time (MFJ 939Y) worked flawlessly with a resulting SWR of 1.4:1 on both bands.

It was time. My worst fear came true on my first QSO! A park-to-park call. The signal was strong, I felt good that I copied the callsign, and made my first response. I am not sure he heard me as another station faded in and ended the QSO. I did have a clear frequency, but Mother Nature changed it for me scrubbing my QSO. It was not a bad thing, however, as it was a lot easier to copy incoming than I expected. I changed frequency, called CQ for about five minutes with no bites. I ended up on 15 meters and half an hour after my worst fear I had my first QSO in the log.



It was not nearly as bad as I thought! Don't get me wrong as I was still nervous and stressed as I was doing this solo. But, hells bells, it was not as bad as I thought. My surroundings became muted, but of no consequence. I saw people and kids playing sports, but I was detached somehow. I was solely focused on copying the next incoming callsign. What I wasn't focused on was taking pictures! Not one. Not even my Begali Traveler bought for this express purpose. So, all you'll get to see is one shot of me, from the last time I was there, and my QSO map.

The remaining 13 QSO's were stress peaks punctuating the calm seas of anticipation. Still waters... My new friend, actually an old friend, that came to the rescue



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cars now offers visitors the chance to restore and replenish their inner needs. Rio de Los Angeles State Park is currently managed in partnership with the City of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation.

was di-di-dah-dah-di-dit. I used it to verify any callsigns of which I was not sure of (maybe 90%). The hardest call for me to copy and send was LU4HK from Argentina as I checked it four times. Not as hard was JR2IUB FROM Japan. There was a lot of stuff he sent I did not copy. This is the thing of which I was afraid. It was happening! Just like my dog when he hears us speak, everything is a jumble until he hears "outside", then he perks up. My Pavlovian response to hearing UR got me ready to copy my signal report from him. It was 589, not bad. The Japanese are very precise. In any case, aside from not copying a lot of what he sent, including after my signal report, he faded prompting me to send SRI QSB TU 73 DE W1SAV. I did hear his return di-dit.

Of the 14 QSOs I made, two did not check out. One was an expired call, and the other did not show up anywhere. I knew enough to get extra contacts in case one did not pan out. I am glad I did because the first bad QSO was my second contact. The other one was 12th.

Forty-five minutes after my first good contact I went QRT with 14 contacts. I was elated, walking a foot off the ground, and just absolutely jazzed. I first called my son, who is a ham but has no interest in ham radio and told him of my bested challenge with international contacts. "Good, dad, that's nice", he said. Did I mention he is not into ham radio? An overwhelming feeling of tiredness came over me. Suddenly I had no energy to pack up my equipment and go home. I realized then that I was coming down from an adrenaline high.

I bested my fear, activated a park, and pulled a muscle patting my own back. A day later while writing this I realized that it is just a rite of passage. There is always a first time you do something and this was mine in my Morse Code journey, the equivalent of compressing two hours of cardio workouts into 45 minutes.