

# MY POTA Activation

## Savi W1SAV

Chino Hills State Park

K-1139 NOT activated on October 21st, 2023

### ACTIVATION #

Did Not Activate

### CONTACTS

9

### P2Ps

None

### PREVIOUS ACTIVATIONS

2

### MODE

CW

### RADIO

Yaesu FT-891

### ANTENNA

Chameleon MPAS 2.0  
in the tactical delta  
loop configuration  
staked to the ground.

### TUNER

MFJ 939Y Autotuner

### POWER

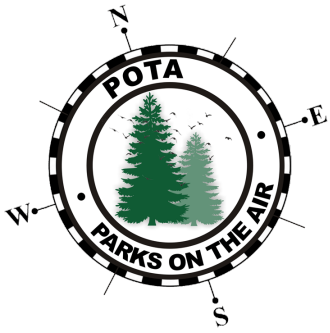
50W using a 30Ah  
Bioenno battery and  
solar panels.



As is my habit I generally decide to activate a park either the day before or the morning of. This time it was no different. However, this time going to Chino Hills State Park, I decided to activate near the Discovery Center on the western side of the park. I normally activate at a spot called Horse Park, the highest part of the park with excellent propagation potential. The Horse Park sits at 239 meters in altitude, whereas the Discovery Center sits at 142 meters in altitude according to Google Earth. So, I activated 97 meters, or 315 feet, lower in elevation than at the Horse Park. The spot I chose does not look like it on Google Earth, but I was surrounded by hillsides at least 100 to 150 feet higher than me. I was in a pretty tight bowl, and I was going to thumb my nose at Mother Nature. Because of my surroundings I did not expect to activate, but I was going to try.

When I arrived at the Discovery Center, I checked in with the staff to let them know what I was doing. I was told I could not set up because the only place allowed was at Horse Park. I let





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### About K-1139

Chino Hills State Park is nestled in the foothills surrounded by the communities of Corona, Chino Hills, Yorba Linda, and Brea. The State Routes 57, 71, 91, and 142 border or are the near the park for easy traveling and accessibility from almost anywhere in Southern California.

The 2 most common rattlesnakes you will see here are the Southern Pacific Rattlesnake and the Red Diamond Rattlesnake. The SoPac is the one you will most likely run into in the park. If you do see a rattlesnake while hiking, stop and wait until it leaves the area.

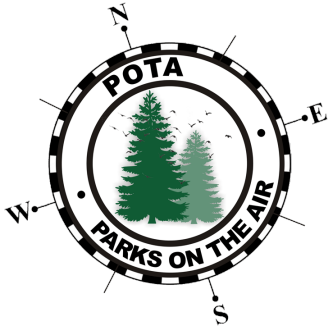


them know the other side of the park told me about this spot and that it was okay. Once I parked and paid for parking, I struck up a conversation with the staff and educated them on POTA. They seemed interested so I invited them to come by once I was set up for a little show and tell. I always try to be a good POTA ambassador so the next activator going to that spot has an easier time.

I almost turned around once I got to the activation spot. I was in a bowl and was truly concerned about my signal getting out. My decision to stay was prompted by my antenna's modularity. A while back I bought add-ons to my MPAS 2.0 so I could configure it as a Tactical Delta Loop. In this configuration, I still use the spike in the ground, but use an adaptor that allows me to connect two 17-foot whips mounted at 45-degree angles. I then connected the tips of the whips with a 23-ft wire. It looks like a triangle with the apex right at ground level. The spot I chose was immediately next to a hiking trail, and immediately to that was high brush and vegetation. I was lucky because it allowed me to set up the antenna such that the broad sides faced east and west.

Another aspect of this was that I was not blocking the path for hikers. I also placed my safety cones along the length of the antenna (parallel to the path) and made sure to face the antenna in case anyone came by to shepherd them through if needed. As I was setting up the gubmint called. What? The La Brea Police Department 911 office called me. How nice, I thought. They are welcoming me to the park. Well, you may have guessed their reason, when someone calls and hangs up, they call back to make sure all is well. I assured them I did not call, and it must have been a butt-dial. Good! There would not be any black SUVs,





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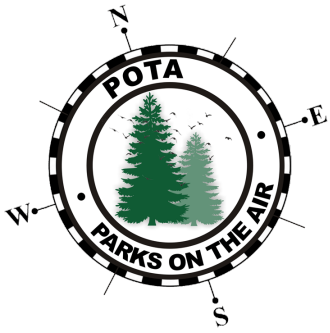


black helicopters, and no assault team decked out in black, kitted out in tactical gear repelling from said chopper today.

The rest of my set-up was my normal routine, except my solar panels were set up after the antenna because of my concern of its placement. I operated on the 15-meter band exclusively and my SWR reading was 1.2:1. I was pleased and ready to get started. I set up my phone as a hot-spot, got HAMRS up and running, got on Discord, QRL-ed a few times, spotted myself, and finally called CQ. I was not expecting much, and to my surprise, a second after I called CQ, I got a 599 signal from KJ7DT in Idaho, over 700 miles away. My surprise was that the tactical delta loop is an NVIS type antenna, which is why I used it to get out of the hilly bowl in which I placed myself. I really did not expect anything over 500 miles and figured I would get contacts in California, Arizona, Nevada, and maybe, maybe, New Mexico and Oregon. Bam! Mother Nature surprised me with unexpected propagation.

In short succession, I got Washington State at almost 1,000 miles, Idaho again at 740 miles, and Arkansas at 1,464 miles. I was blown away, first with the contacts, their signal strength, and their rapidity. Those four contacts came in at a rate of one every two minutes mainly due to my 15 WPM. Unfortunately for me, my copying and sending this morning was not up to par. I was just not copying as well as I could. Then British Columbia came in at over 1,500 miles. I was amazed.

I did have a hiccup in my get-along, however. During the start of the activation, a station from Idaho was calling, and for the life of me I could not copy the call. It was three or four times we went back-and-forth, and I was still not sure of the



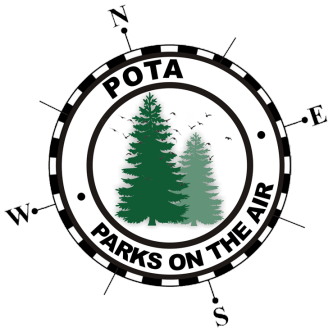
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callsign. Part of that had to do with my copying, QSB, and the sending station. In the process, I cleared out the entry and re-entered the information and finally got the QSO in the log. To what can I attribute this without sounding like excuses? I was sweating, taken aback by getting strong contacts when I didn't expect any, and was already tired. In the end I was rattled. Whah, whah, whah.

Right around this time one of the park staff took me up on my offer and came by to see what I was doing. Right around the time I contacted Long Island, 2,500 miles away, on my delta loop, from inside a bowl. I explained my set up to the gentleman and made sure to point out the safety steps I took in the placement of the antenna. I told him about how activators like to not leave any trace of their activities, disrupt other park users, and consider safety for both people and equipment. He understood and was appreciative of the efforts I made in that regard. He was surprised I was transmitting in Morse Code, asked if he could look over my shoulder, and just listened as I conducted my QSO with the New York station. He was surprised I was communicating with New York. Hells bells, not nearly as much as me!

During my activation, aside from the park staff gentleman, three sets of hikers



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went through the path. The one which concerned me the most was a group of two women and three children. I made sure they saw the cones (obvious) and asked them not to step in the feed line. A gentleman thought the path was blocked and was ready to turn around when I told him the cones were for safety and he went right through. The last group was a pair of women that came through and started asking questions about what I was doing. I was quick to explain and left on their way with a “that’s cool” expression on their faces.

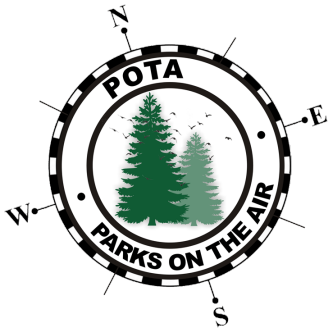


To my continued amazement, I got two more Texas contacts, which rounded out my 10 calls need to activate. In all, I received one 599 and three 559 reports while sending four 599s and one 559. The others were as expected, low reports both ways. Because I was tired and a little flustered, the first

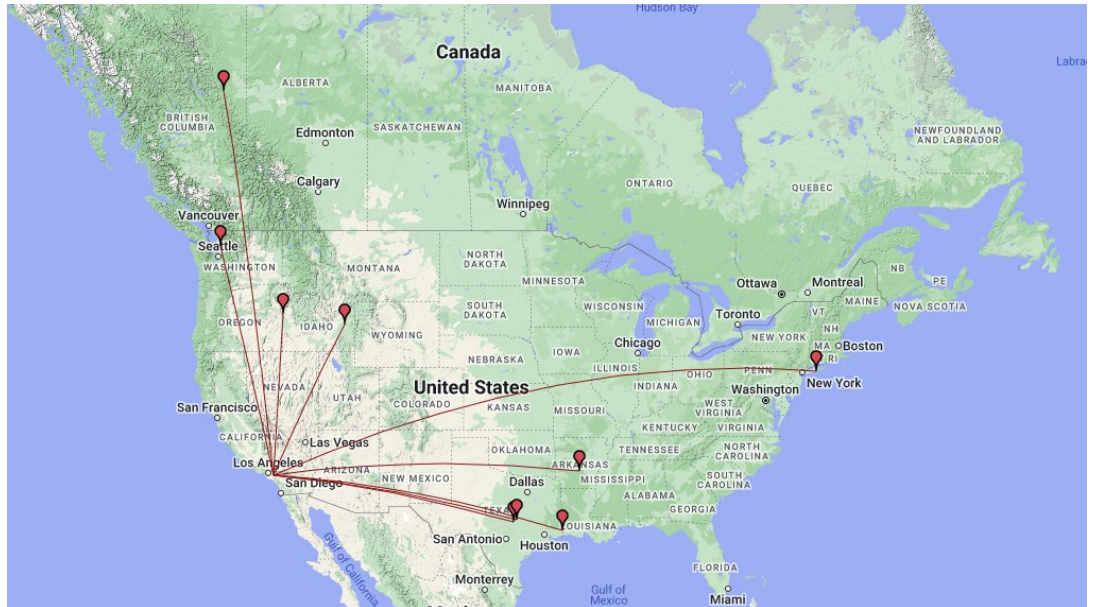
part of the activation got to me, I broke my safety rule. I did not continue my activation after getting ten good contacts. I was, though flustered, none-the-less excited about the performance of the antenna. I wanted to go home as I still had an hour’s worth of SoCal traffic. Yes, even on Saturday.

Once I got home, I realized that disaster struck and that I did not realize it at the time. It happened when I was dancing with the Idaho station. When I thought I cleared the entry in HAMRS, I actually entered it in the log. Because I “cleared” it, I was sure I had nothing but good contacts, when in fact, one was bogus. Confidence is good for you as it allows you to operate with less pressure and enjoy what you’re doing. You can also be wrong with confidence allowing you to erroneously continue. After painfully deleting the wrong entry, I was left with nine contacts. And didn’t activate the park. I. Was. Bummed. Especially since there is no other cause than my stupidity at breaking my own rule: get safety contacts in





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case some fall through.

I was pleased with the interaction with the park staff. I am sure they will be more accepting of other hams in the future. The painful lesson for me is to not break the rules, especially my own. I've done these activations enough times and I know better, especially in Morse Code. If I get to ten, and especially if there were hiccups, I will get the safeties. Next time I will QRX for 10 or 15, reset, and continue so the effort I expend to activate is not wasted. I will return to the same spot, this time to activate. Stay tuned.