

MY POTA Activation

Savi W1SAV

Chino Hills State Park

K-1139 activated on October 27th, 2023

ACTIVATION

27

CONTACTS

22

P2Ps

1

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

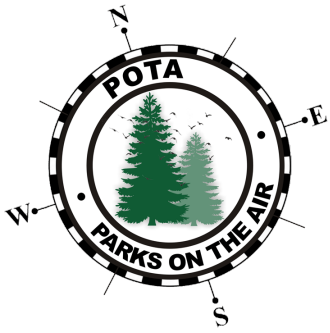
50W using a 30Ah
Bioenno battery and
solar panels.



It was not going to happen again, and I was determined to activate Chino Hills after the stupid human trick I performed last week. As a reminder, I broke my own rule and went QRT after only ten contacts skipping the safety QSOs. As a result, I was unaware of a bogus entry in the log lowering my count to nine contacts. I blew my activation.

My goal for this activation is to get at least thirteen contacts to ensure I cover any bogus contacts, more if I am aware of them during the activation. So, I left the house earlier than needed so I would have more time out at the park. When I left the house there was a nice overcast with cool temperatures. It looks like summer may be on its way out for good. My usual routine is to go to Albert's, a Mexican





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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.

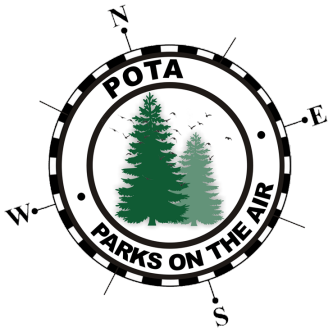


food place, for breakfast and then head out to the park. In the 45-minute drive the overcast looked like it was breaking up just a little.

When I got to the park I was schmoozing with the staff while paying the entrance fee. Call me Mr. Ambassador, as I invited staff to come by so they can see my stewardship of the area I was going to use. That role continued as I spoke to a couple for about 20 minutes on ham radio and POTA. This chat took place after I set up. I don't mind doing this because I try to spread the word, especially to younger folks. In fact, I went to activate K-3534 Pio Pico State Park once and instead ended up talking to middle school kids about ham radio; I never activated.

Of course, I go through my usual routine of setup: solar, antenna, safety, radios, and technology. This time, however, I wanted to ensure a good ground of the an-





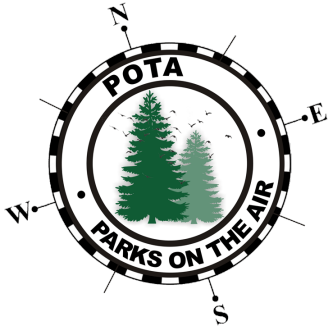
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tenna, so I poured water at the base of the stake trying to up my activation chances. Finally, after being at the park for about 90 minutes, I made my first CQ call on the 10-meter band at 11:42 in the morning. The weather was cool as the overcast was back providing a nice cool environment. However, while setting up the sun was in full display making me break a sweat. The sky would remain bouncing back and forth as the sun peaked in and out through the overcast. I was a nice day for an activation indeed.

After 5 contacts on 10 meters, the contacts seemed to dry up prompting me to QSY to the 15-meter band after 26 minutes. I made one contact there and it also seemed dead, so I tried 17 meters with no joy. I finally ended up on 20 meters, where I made most of my contacts. I usually stay on one band until any casual observer off the street can tell that no more contacts are coming. This leads to my





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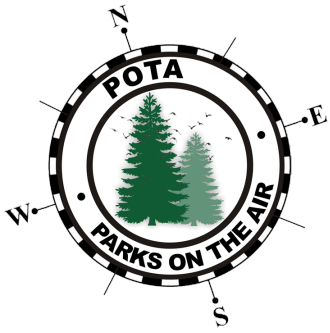


activations being longer than they need to be, I think, because I don't want to lose out on that next contact. There is also that internal fear that I may forget to update HAMRS with the new frequency adding chaos and lost contacts to my post-activation workflow.

Still noticing the weather conditions bouncing between warm and cool, I got a response from a DE station. I responded several times with, "DE?", to no avail. In fact, I heard the station twice, but it was a "necken", or a tease in German, something Mother Nature is want to do. I think I heard the full call but am not yet skilled enough to catch something that fast. Oh well, this calls for more practice and more activations.

Now came the point where my activation could have ended in ruination, simply





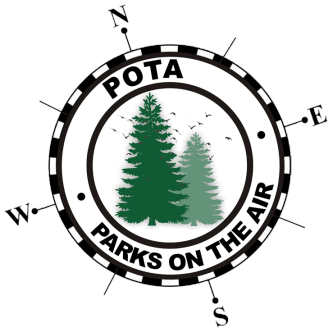
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by the letter “Q”. I heard a call, let’s say, whose suffix was TQ. I verified the call with my infamous di-di-dah-dah-di-dit and received confirmation of what I thought the call was. Not seeing the data populated in HAMRS, I made an entry in my notebook that it may be a bad call. I checked because, depending on connectivity, HAMRS may not make a connection with QRZ. However, once the contact is entered into the log no more connections are made with QRZ. During this time, I was logged into Discord, Telegram, and RBN. My first mistake was to delete the entry from the log.

One thing I was not prepared for was a hunter that not only acknowledged my POTA activation, but also sent Park-to-Park and LICW Challenge information. A competent Morse Code operator would have caught this. I did not. There was nothing wrong with the sending, but the short-circuit between my ears locked up





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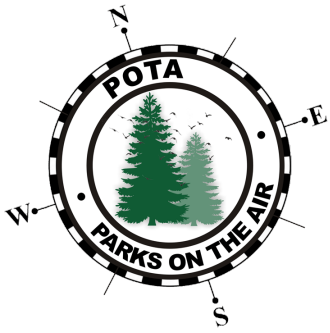
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my decoding slowly realizing I had a P2P and an LICW member number. I wrote these two items down in my notebook but was so derailed at this point that I took the newbie approach and sent 73, my call, and a dit-dit. Slowly I started to become aware that I should have continued to try to get the info sent to me and enter it the log as a P2P contact, instead of during the post-activation workflow. Something for next time.

I was feeling pretty good about the number of contacts, especially considering my previous activation. During one of the lulls, I checked my other comm channels and read a comment by TMA (the suffix) that they were glad of making two contacts with me today. Then it hit me. The original call of TQ was actually TMA! Somebody fell into one of the Morse Code traps where if there is not enough separation between an "M" and an "A" it sounds like a "Q". I said to myself, "oh... crap". Especially after last week, every contact is precious, and I did not want to lose this one. I would check it later once I went QRT. Additionally, there was one call that came up bogus and even a ULS license search came back negative. There is nothing I could do but drop the call from my log. I have the pertinent info in case I can recover the contact later.

I went QRT after getting a lull in responses on 20 meters; 1hr 46min between the first and the last contact. It was now time for a break and a little breather as operating on CW still gets my heart beating a little fast. It was now time to rehabilitate the TMA contact I deleted earlier. I made the entry but forgot what time we made contact and on what band. Here is where I made my second mistake. I sort-



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ed my log by callsign and started to “correct” frequencies on multiple entries. In the field. When tired. And stupid. Once I realized I was on a road to perdition, I forced myself to stop and correctly thought that I would fix it during my post-activation workflow. The funny thing is I am just now learning this, and not through my previous 20 activations. To be fair, however, all those were sideband activations without the high level of communications skills needed while communicating in Morse Code.

Almost every time I go to a park, I learn something new. When I don’t it’s because I didn’t make any mistakes. The downside here is that the only way to learn is by making mistakes. Just ask your teachers, professors, or your mentors...hell, just ask Elon Musk! Some lessons are hard while others are easy. Some of the things I learned are the little things, like what to do first. Other times it’s the follow through, like not stopping at ten contacts because you never know when a call was copied incorrectly resulting in not activating. So yes, I successfully activated the park. My mission was now accomplished. But still...