POTA

Clay Couger

West Valley Amateur Radio Association (WVARA)

January 10, 2024

Agenda

- What is Parks on the Air (POTA)?
- The Hunters
- POTA Awards
- Activating parks
- N5YJZ Ops Details

Please ask question during the presentation

What is Parks on the Air (POTA)?

What is POTA?

“Parks on the Air (POTA) is an international radiosport award program that encourages licensed amateur radio operators to visit, enjoy and operate portable equipment in a variety of parks and public lands, always respecting other park users and local regulations.[1][2] POTA issues awards to participants based on a wide range of criteria including the total number of radio contacts made, number made on each amateur radio band, and for different modes of communication including voice, Morse code or FT8 (Digital).[3][4][5]” from Wikipedia

History of POTA

- 2008 creation of World Flora and Fauna (WFF) by the Russian Robinson Club (RCC)
- 2012 relaunched as World-Wide Flora and Fauna (WFF) adding most of Europe, North America and many other parts of the world
- 2016 ARRL ran National Parks on the Air (NPOTA) for the whole year
- Late 2016 US WWFF management group (WWFF-KFF) added POTA to its name
- 2018 WWFF and POTA split into different groups
  - A lot of US hams want to change the activation count from 44 to 10 contacts
  - Unintended consequence of the ARRL NPOTA program

Status

N5YJZ Status for 2013:

- 29 Qs per hour
- Min 14; Max 47 Qs per hour
- 41 activations

Park	Accepted QSOs	Hrs	Q/Hr
K-3399 Asilomar State State Beach (US-CA)	11	0.23	47
K-3522 New Brighton State Beach (US-CA)	30	0.73	41
K-3471 Marina State Beach (US-CA)	54	1.33	40
K-6452 Carmel River State Beach (US-CA)	10	0.25	40
K-3469 Manresa State Beach (US-CA)	38	0.97	39
K-1207 Wilder Ranch State Park (US-CA)	37	0.98	38

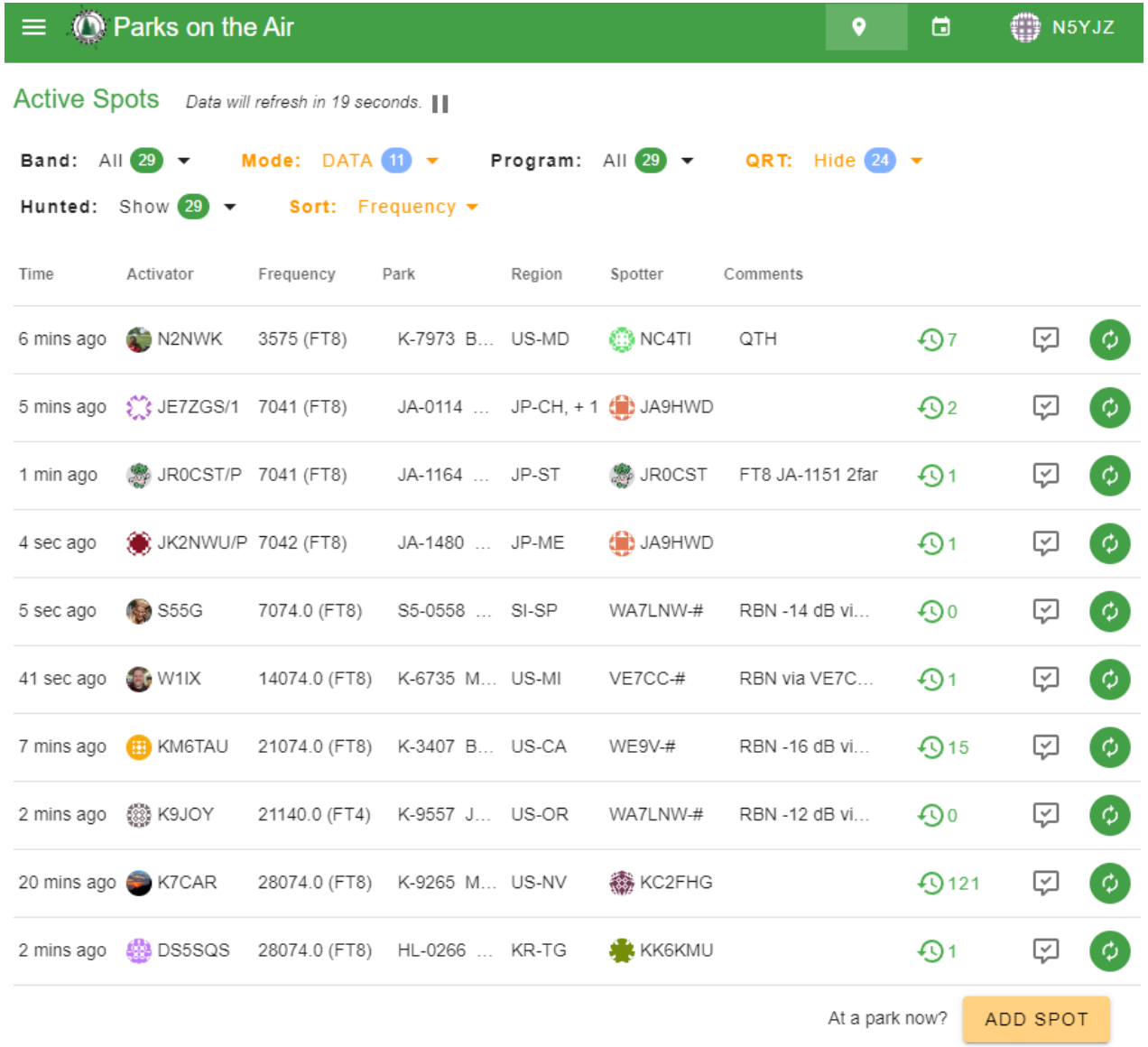
Q1 2023 POTA:

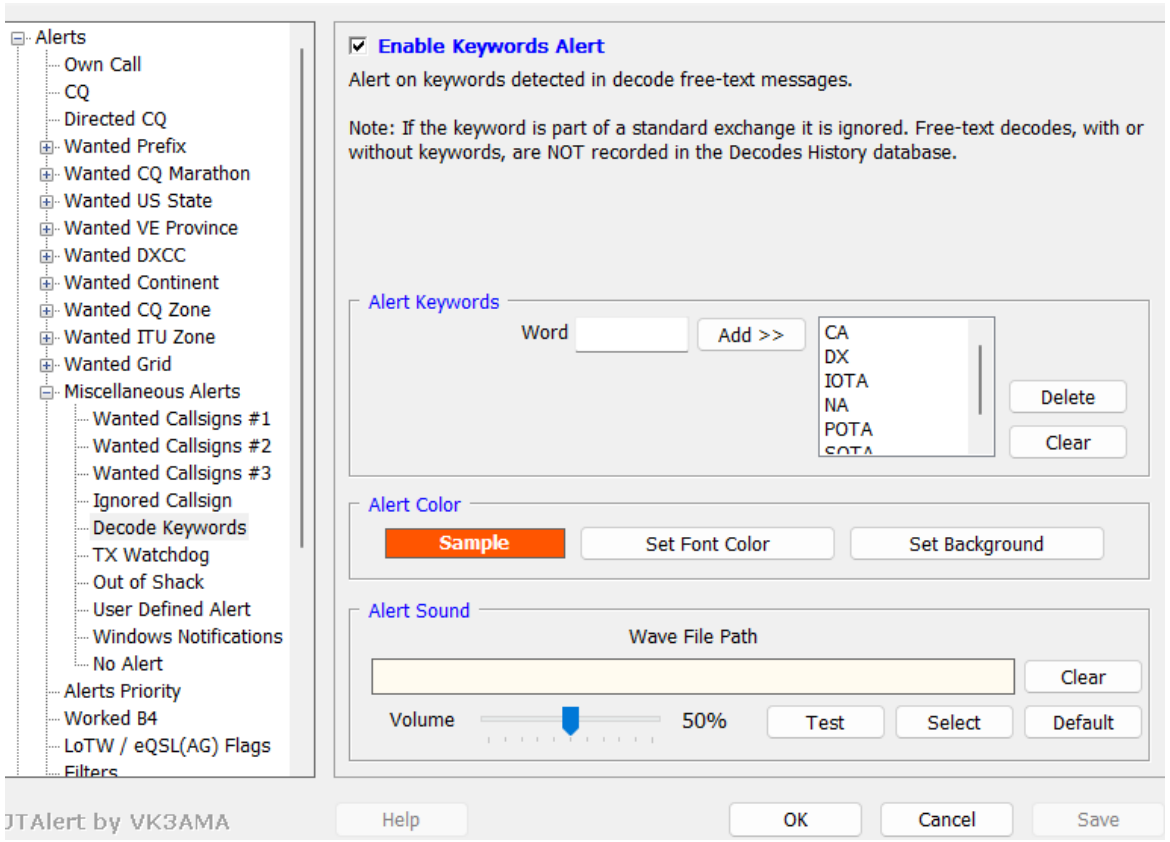
- Activations 45,745 1.7x
- Activators 4,547 1.7x
- DX Entities 62 1.5x
- QSO 2,259,494 1.8x

- POTA members 3600
- Over 350K callsign in DB

The Hunters

Hunter FTx tools





FTx tips

- Always work split
- If you are chasing a call and can’t get through, try changing freq
- Be watchful for rare DX on the band. This can have a negative or positive effect

POTA Awards

What is required for POTA awards

- For the Activator to receive credit
  - A POTA account
  - Upload you park log for each activation

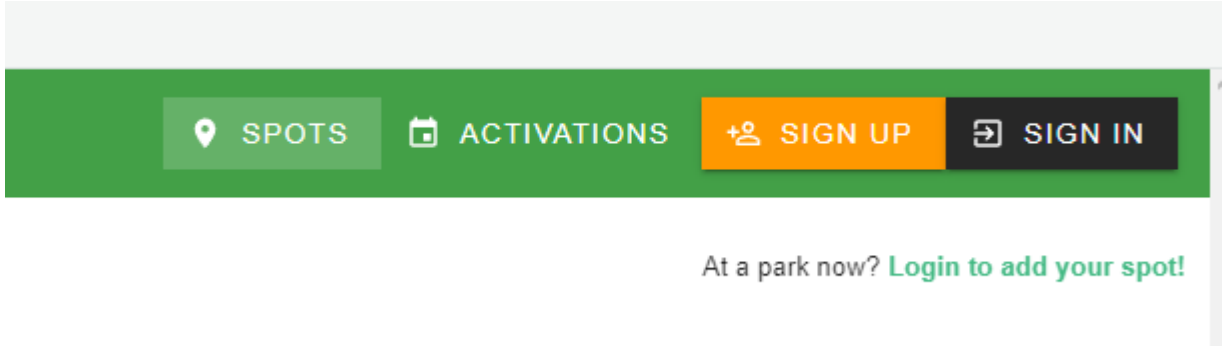
- For a Hunter to received credit
  - A POTA account
  - Entry in the Activator’s logs that are uploaded to POTA site

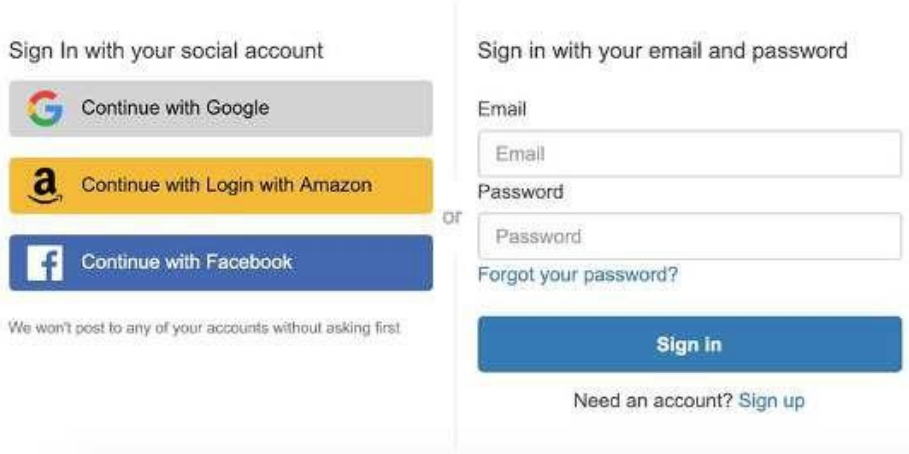
- There no card checking
- Hunters do not have to upload their logs
- No special exchange required

How to join the POTA

Creating an account is fast and easy.

Select the Sign Up link in the up right at POTA.APP





info@parksontheair.com if you need assistance

POTA Awards

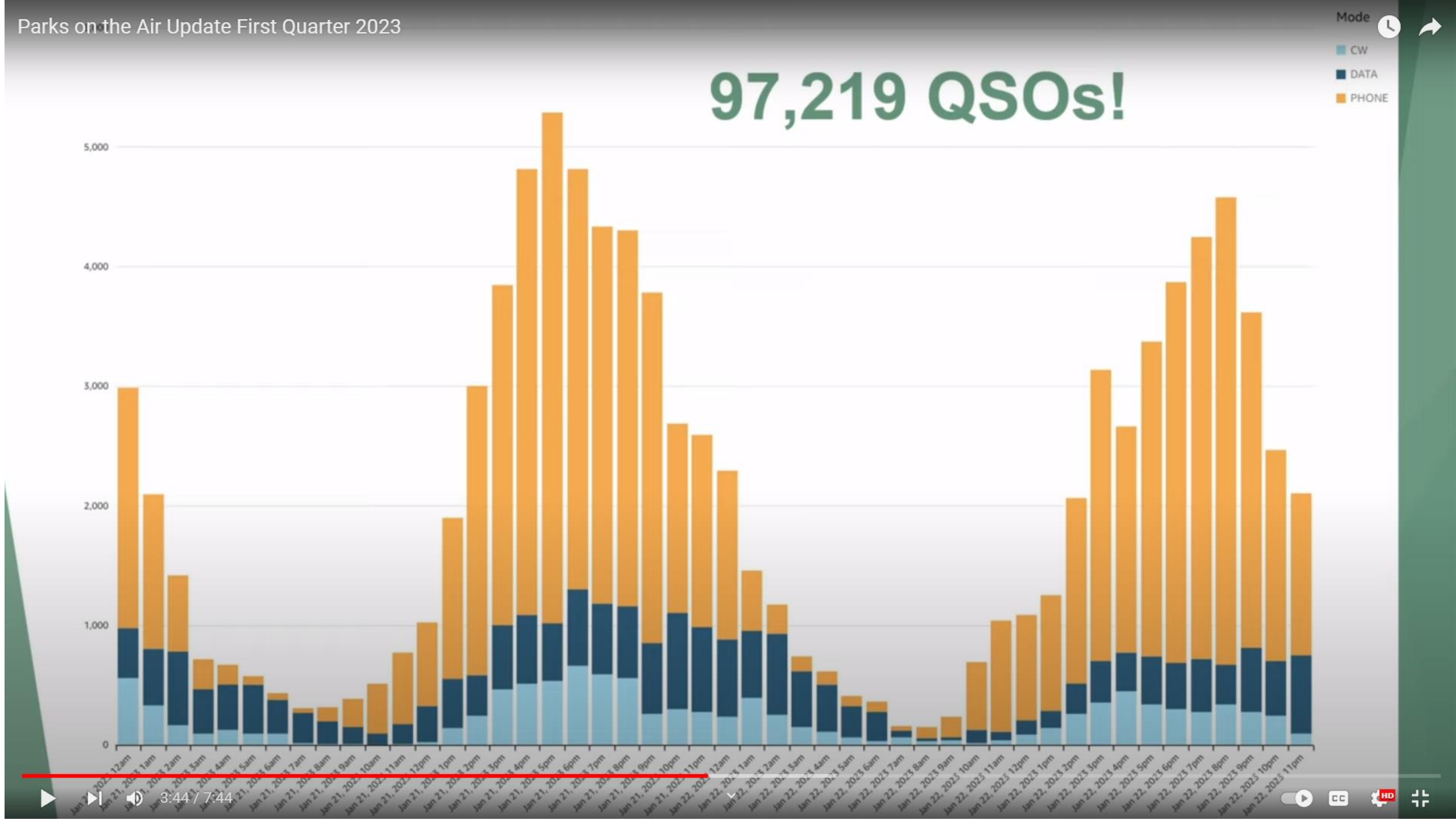
- References Awards received at 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 75, 100, 200, …
- POTA Rover Awards received at 5, 10, 15, …, 30 references in single UTC day
- Early Shift/Late Shift Awards based on time zone
- All States/Provinces/Prefectures etc. Awards
- Repeat Offender Awards for operator or reference

POTA official Events

Starts at 0000 UTC and ends 2359 UTC on the days listed

- New Year's Week Jan 1-7, 2024
  - First full week of the new year

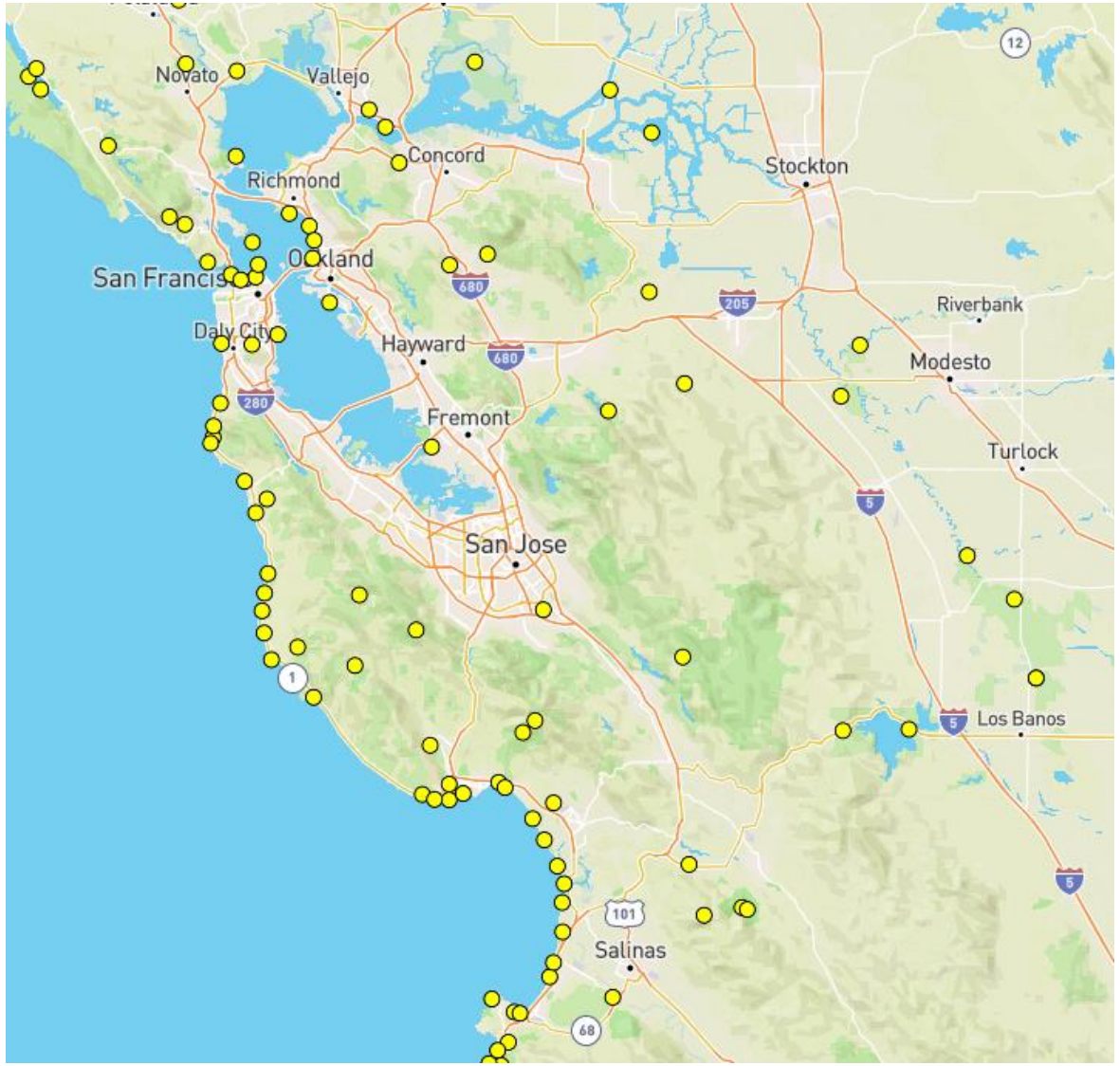
- Support Your Parks
  - Winter - 3rd Full Weekend of January. January 20-21, 2024
  - Spring - 3rd Full Weekend of April. April 20-21, 2024
  - Summer - 3rd Full Weekend of July. July 20-21, 2024
  - Autumn - 3rd Full Weekend of October. October 19-20, 2024

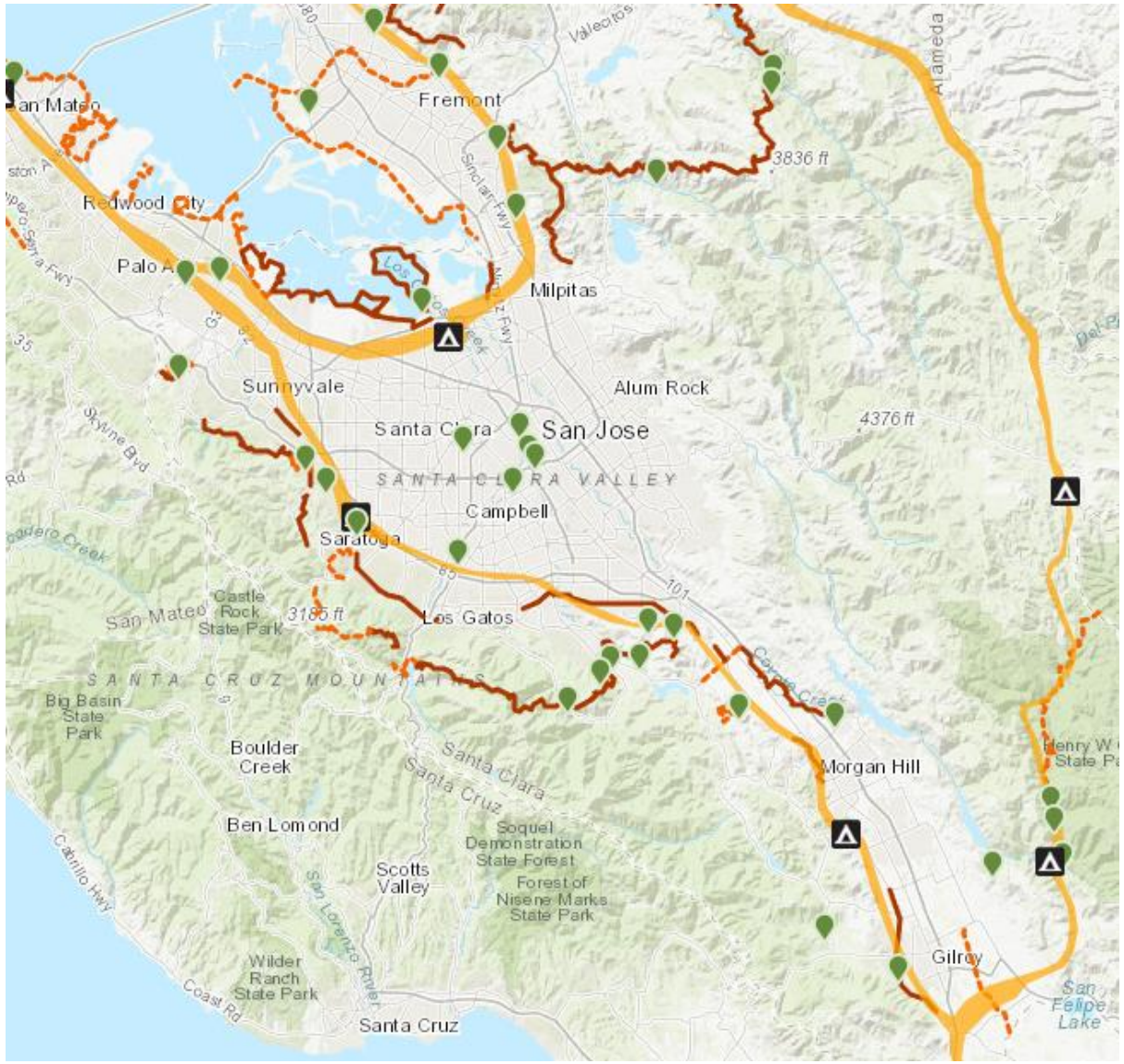

Parks on the Air Update First Quarter 2023
97,219 QSOs!
Mode
CW
DATA
PHONE
5,000
4,000
3,000
2,000
1,000
0
3:44 / 7:44

Activating parks

Activation Location and Access

- A park is considered open when the public has civil and legal access, or a special permission/permit to the public lands
- The activator and all equipment must be within the park's boundary and on public property
- If a trail system or a river is designated as a POTA entity by itself (not as parts of a land park having a defined boundary), the activator and the station equipment must be on public property within 30.5 meters (100 feet) from the edge of the trail corridor or river
- Activations of multiple references ("Multi-loc" or "two-fer," "three-fer," etc.) are permitted with POTA

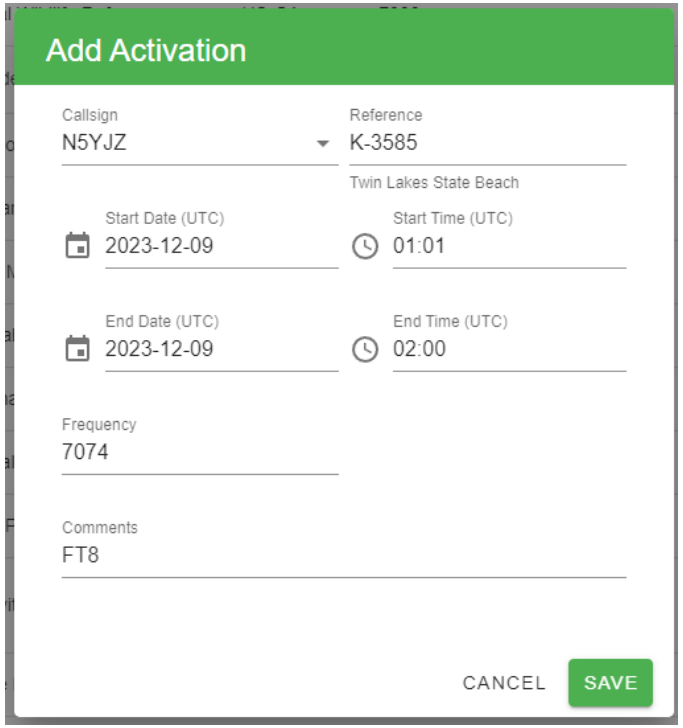

Novato
Vallejo
Concord
Richmond
Stockton
San Francisco
Oakland
Riverbank
Daly City
Hayward
Modesto
Fremont
Turlock
San Jose
Los Banos
Salinas
12
680
205
280
5
101
1
68


Fremont
Redwood City
Palo Alto
Milpitas
Sunnyvale
Alum Rock
Santa Clara
San Jose
SANTA CLARA VALLEY
Campbell
Saratoga
Los Gatos
Castle Rock State Park
3185 ft
SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS
Big Basin State Park
Boulder Creek
Ben Lomond
Scotts Valley
Soquel Demonstration State Forest
Forest of Nisene Marks State Park
Morgan Hill
Gilroy
Wilder Ranch State Park
Santa Cruz
3836 ft
4376 ft

What is required to activate a park?

- The call that is being used needs an account on POTA.app
- Before leaving you can enter activation details on the POTA.app site
  - If you to this and run CW or FTx RBN will auto spot you

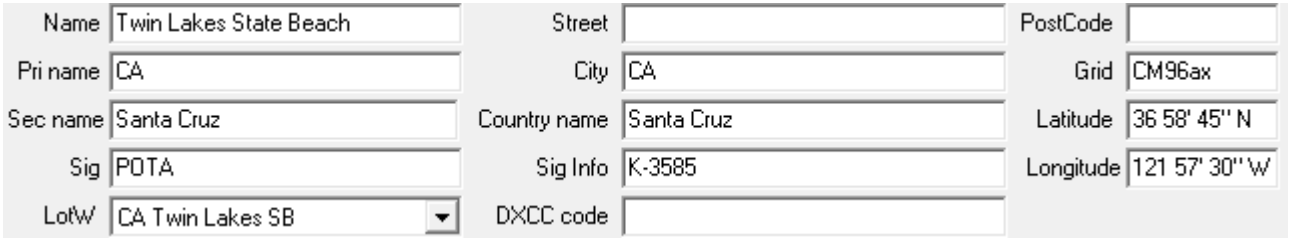
Start (UTC)	End (UTC)	Activator	Park	Location	Frequencies	Comments
2023-08-15 00:00	2023-12-15 23:59	VO1AA	VE-4825 Sign…	CA-NL		SONRA club station in Cabot Tower - sporadic operation
2023-09-16 09:00	2023-12-10 16:01	VK2FSLC	VK-3171 West…	AU-NS	7144	(Future Planning), 40m, Voice, Possible CW.
2023-10-13 00:00	2024-01-15 00:00	BG9IYV	BY-0001 大槐…	CN-SX	14074	很好
2023-10-13 00:00	2023-12-15 00:00	BG9IYV	BY-0328 甘肃…	CN-GS	14074	FT8
2023-12-04 00:00	2024-01-31 23:00	KI5ZDQ	K-3019 Huntsv…	US-TX	Various	Will be here in the park for a couple of months, activating most days.



What is required to activate a park?

- Fields required for logs are **CALL** (callsign you receive) **QSO_DATE**, **TIME_ON**, **MODE** and **BAND**. No other fields are needed but may be in it without harm.
- By setting SIG to POTA and Sig Info to reference ID in your logging SW

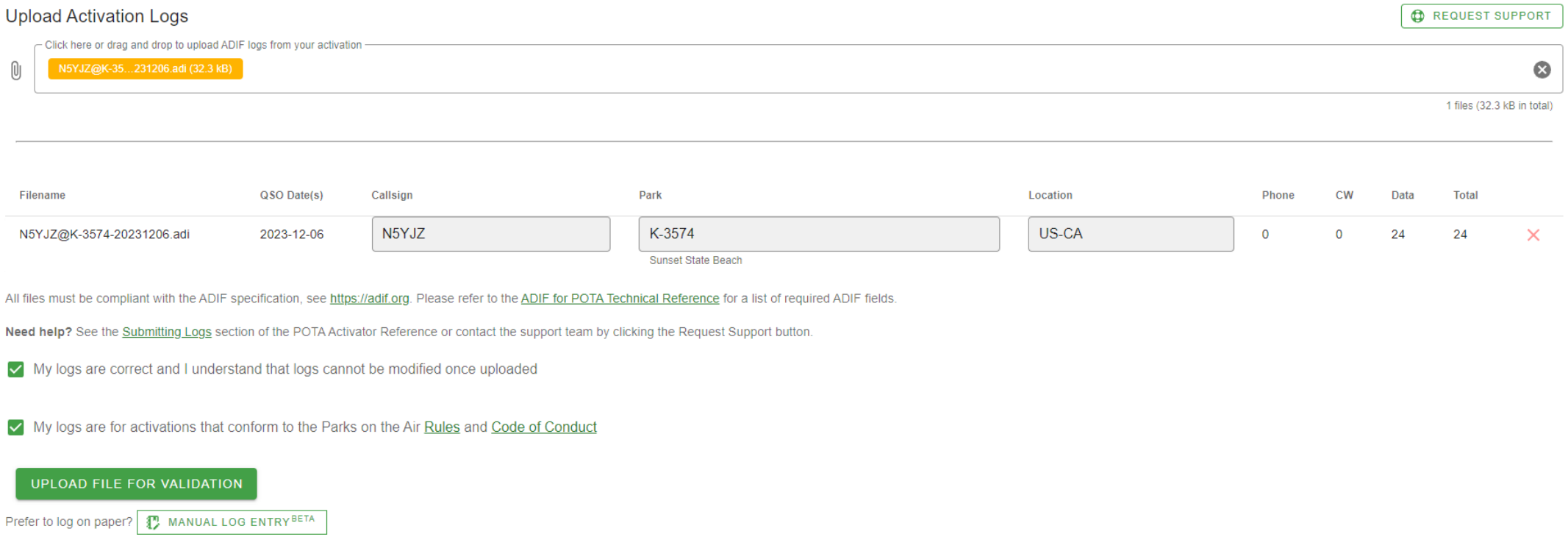
  The web app will pull out park info



- At the park
  - Setup up station
  - If you have internet access auto spot yourself on POTA.app site
    - Note for CW and FTx your spot will be auto updated as you change bands or modes
    - For phone you will need to self update or ask for spot update
  - Make contacts and have fun
  - If you have internet access, please update your spot with QRT when you are finished
    - Your spot will autotimer out in about 15 minutes (I think)

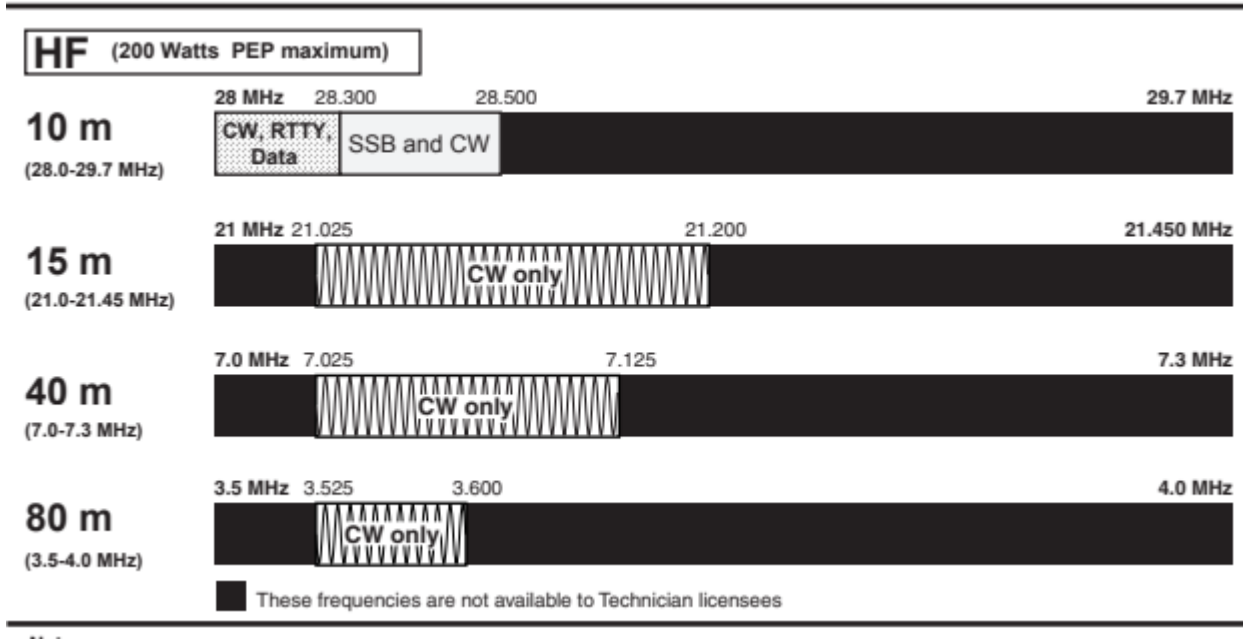
Submitting you log to POTA

- Export you log as adi using filename format of callsign@parkNumber-activationDdate.adi ex N5YJZ@K-3574-20231206.adi
- Goto My Log Uploads on the POTA.app site
- Drag file into website and click the two checkbox and hit the upload



Great times for Technician's to activate a park

- Jan 20-22 ARRL VHF contest and Winter Support your Parks event
- Maybe Jan 27-28 Winter Field Day
- June 8-10 ARRL VHF contest
- June 22-23 ARRL Field Day
- Sept 14-16 ARRL VHF contest
- Anytime
  - VHF / UHF Satellites
  - 10M CW, Data or SSB
  - 15M, 40M or 80M CW



N5YJZ Ops Details

SW Tools I use for park activation

- Dxkepper (logger)
- BktTimeSync by IZ2BKT (time sync via internet, GPS or manual adjustment)
- OutSpatial (iPhone / Android) CA Park info and boundaries
- Where Am I (iPhone) address of current location
- Ham Square (iPhone) Grid Square of current location
- FTx
  - WSJT-X Improved
  - JTAleart

My FT8 operation guidelines for POTA Ops

- Don’t transmit on the same frequency as me. If everyone transmits on my frequency, I will only hear one or two you. Someone can easily cover you up an you may miss a contact with me. WSJT-X was designed to be used in split mode. Select the option “Hold Tx Freq” and select an open portion of your waterfall before calling.
- Skip sending your grid square when hunting an activator when using FT8/FT4
- Once you send RR73, you might not receive a 73 in return if I am working a pileup. If I send you R-## you are in my log. Do not worry about getting a 73 from me.
- If you can’t decode my signal two consecutive passes, please stop transmitting until you can hear me again. I follow a rule of 2. I will only repeat a message before moving to another contact, change time slot or frequency.

How I deal with online logging

- After POTA activation, I export my log for my laptop
- Upload log to POTA site
- Use TQLS to sign and update to Logbook of the Word from Home PC
- Import log in to my master log on my Home PC
- Sync my Home PC with Logbook of the Word
- Then sync QRZ.com log from Logbook of the Word
  - QSL sync for JTAlert of DXKepper will not send the county info
  - eQSL is a nightmare for setting different location

If you hear or see a CQ POTA

Call the activator back and make a Q!

POTA members 3600 and over 350K callsign in DB for Q1 of 2023