

Parks on the Air

It's easier and more fun than you
think!

Parks on the Air benefits

- Parks on the Air is a great excuse for us to go play radio!
- “Deploying”, be it for field day (Winter or Summer) or for a simulated exercise, adds an extra spin on the fun and excitement.
- Planning is half the fun and half the battle.
- Being successful at a POTA activation teaches the muscle memory for potential deployments.

First things first

- Go to Parksontheair.com and do your research
- Create an account
- POTA Parks are State or National Parks only (including some WMA's). American Parks begin with K-****
- Identify a local park you would like to make your first activation site. This could be your “home” base
- Use your home base to practice and/or test different configurations while reducing variables.
- Plan how you are going to log while at the park. More later on that.

Operating Modes

- Depending on your mode of choice, the size and power requirements of your equipment may vary
- Full power operations or QRP? What do you prefer?
- SSB uses MUCH less power than CW/Digital.
 - Digital usually requires more electronic items ie. Computer, sound card, Rasp pi, etc.

Equipment

- This is the area that I believe gets “over thought”.
- Pretty much any radio can be taken to a park
- Just make sure you bring the right power source, cabling and antennas.
- Some folks bring a backpack worth of items.
- Others bring an entire shack.
- Both are fine!



Equipment

A small mobile HF rig can work well supported by an IPAD for logging



Size does not really matter

Even some considered base stations make great POTA rigs and provide more options as far as remote/deployed operations



To tune or not to tune?

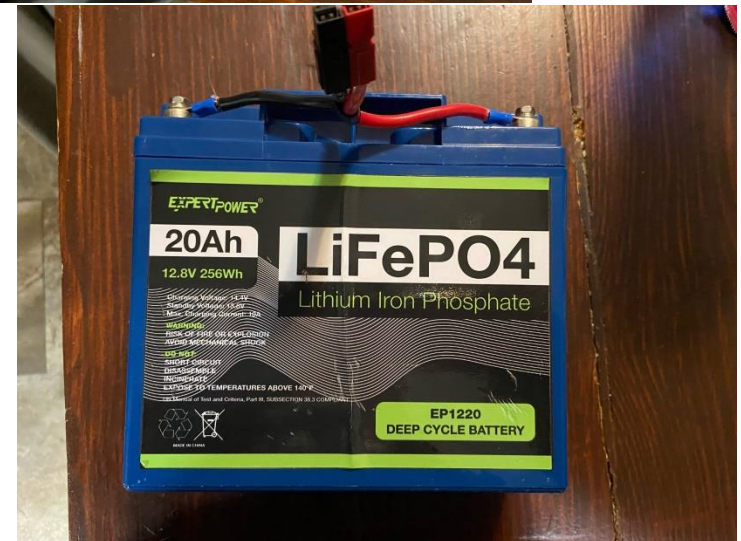
That answer depends mostly on your antenna of choice for remote operations. Notice the band filters? Multiple stations may require some band protection.

Batteries

- The guide lines are;
 - what do you feel like carrying?
 - How long do you plan on operating?
 - What power levels do you expect?
 - What modes will you be operating?

All have an input to your battery needs

If size is not an issue, bring the beast!





Multiple options for power sources.

From using the Tesla as your power source to deep cell marine batteries to Bioenno/Life PO small, “big power” batteries. It is totally up to you what you bring to the field and what power levels your rig of choice requires.

Antennas!

- The biggest thing to think about is what antenna do you want to deploy while out at a park.
- I do not know that there is a bad choice!
- As we all know, antennas are a constant discussion about compromise. What works good in one way, gives something up in another.
- Chose a band or bands you think you will want to operate in. and cut and tune your antenna to those bands.

Antennas (cont.)

- Do the ground work by tuning your antenna at the house. Use an analyzer if you have one. The more you invest here, the better it will pay off in the park.
- Know that elevation changes from the test to the woods will impact the SWR.
- USUALLY the short lengths will not propose as many problems in the park as longer bands. Distance between trees can have an impact.

Common Antenna types

- Vertical
 - Vehicle mounted
 - Tripod/guyed
 - Ground Radials?
 - Mag Loops
 - Table top
 - Tripod stand
 - Wire
 - **Dipoles**
 - OCF or **Center Fed**
 - Inverted V
 - Horizontal
 - Sloper
 - **EFHW's**
 - **Inverted V**
 - **Inverted L**
 - Sloper
- Red are my choices**

Logging Software

- Search the internet, there are several free and even more that are inexpensive
 - HAMRS for IPAD(my mobile choice)
 - QRZ.com works remote as long as you have internet
 - DXKeeper windows based free
- Chances are pretty good you already have the equipment to log.

What to log

- A parks on the Air contact will include
 - Time UTC
 - Contacted station
 - RST both ways
 - Your park
 - Their park if applicable
 - Your frequency or band
 - Mode (SSB, CW, FT-8, etc.)
- In most instances, your logging software if internet connected will auto populate the State for the contacted Callsign
- Comments can also be added but are not required

What is a POTA contact?

- Calling CQ first to start the QSO
 - CQ parks on the air this is KI5EGH standing by
 - Don't fret, it is not a contest, there are no hard and fast rules. Basic FCC ID regs are all that apply.
 - You will far exceed any FCC requirement in the normal transfer of info.
- Be friendly and enjoy talking with folks. After all, we are HAMS!