



ARRL National Parks on the Air Rules

www.arrl.org/npota

1) Duration of National Parks on the Air

The ARRL National Parks on the Air (NPOTA) event runs in parallel with the National Park Service's centennial. The program runs from 0000 UTC January 1, 2016 through 2359 UTC December 31, 2016.

2) Goals of National Parks on the Air

- a) Promote the capabilities of Amateur Radio to the general public through operations at eligible NPS Administrative Units.
- b) Promote the NPS Centennial and the heritage of the National Park System through Amateur Radio.
- c) Encourage portable Amateur Radio operation from as many of the officially-listed National Park Service administrative units and recognized Affiliated Areas as possible.

4) Eligibility

The ARRL National Parks on the Air program is open to all licensed radio amateurs.

5) Administration

The ARRL National Parks on the Air Program will be administered only through Logbook of The World. No paper logs or QSLs will be allowed for award credit. [Register for LoTW here.](#)

6) NPOTA Units, QSOs, Bands and Modes

The complete list of NPOTA units and their alphanumeric designators is available at <https://npota.arrl.org>.

Units eligible for the National Parks on the Air event are based on the [NPS published list](#) of officially recognized "NPS Administrative Units" and recognized "Affiliated Areas." As of December 26, 2015, there are 409 NPS Administrative Units and 72 recognized Affiliated Areas. Units not on this NPS list are ineligible for NPOTA credit.

QSOs made on all Amateur Radio bands are permitted, except for 60 Meters. Cross-band QSOs, QSOs made through repeaters, digipeaters, Echolink, or IRLP do not count. A specific exemption is granted for QSOs made through the recognized Amateur Radio satellites and through the International Space Station.

Only one QSO per NPS Administrative Unit will be credited for NPOTA award credit. There will be no tracking of QSOs by band or mode.

7) Certificates

Three awards certificates will be available:

a) **Activator Award:** Awarded to any Amateur who makes a minimum of one accredited operation from an NPS Administrative Unit. The total number of qualified activations will be printed directly on the certificate.

b) **Chaser Award:** Awarded to any Amateur who confirms QSOs with a minimum of one accredited operation from an NPS Administrative Unit. The total number of NPS units worked will be printed directly on the certificate.

c) **National Parks Honor Roll:** Awarded to any Amateur who confirms QSOs with 75% of the 59 National Parks that have accredited operations in 2016. Note this does not mean 75% of all 59 National Parks. It is the responsibility of the Chaser to stay informed of operations that could affect their National Park's Honor Roll status throughout the year.

d) **“Five Star Activator”:** Special recognition on Activator certificates for Activators who engage in exceptional outreach during activations throughout the event. Activators must perform a minimum of five items on the Five Star Activator list and provide documentation (photos, video, electronic media, etc) of those activities to ARRL HQ upon request. Five Star Activator actions include:

§ **Media Publicity:** Send a press release of your activation to the local media. It is not necessary to send ARRL a copy of the press release, or a copy of the actual media publicity received (newspaper article, etc.); however, ARRL reserves the right to ask for proof of claimed activities.

§ **Public Information Table:** Promote Amateur Radio during your activation by making appropriate handouts and information available to the visiting public at the site (note: distributing literature in an NPS unit may require a special use permit).

§ **Youth/Scouting Involvement:** Activate an NPS unit with a youth group or Scouting program.

§ **Radio E-Message:** Transmit at least one electronic message via Amateur Radio to a third party. Any digital messaging format may be used to earn this bonus. The message must leave the NPS unit via RF on an Amateur Radio frequency.

§ **Digital Modes:** Demonstrate Amateur Radio using any of the digital modes available to radio amateurs to an audience of at least one person not familiar with the digital modes.

§ **Satellite Contact:** Make a minimum of one QSO through an Amateur Radio satellite or the ISS. QSOs must be between two Earth stations.

§ **Green Power:** Make a successful Activation using solar, wind, water or non-fossil fuel power. Includes batteries charged using “green” power.

§ **Battery Power:** Make a successful Activation using battery power. Batteries may be charged using commercial mains.

§ **Social Media:** Promote your activation, post video or photographs of your activation on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or any other social media platform (not your website)

§ **Intrepid Traveler:** Activate at least five different NPS units.

§ **Stamp Collector:** Participate in the NPS Passport program.

§ **Share The Mike:** Have a non-ham or new ham make a contact. (Similar to Field Day’s GOTA operating)

§ **Moonbounce:** Make at least one QSO via EME. Please use discretion when selecting your operating location.

8) Valid Activations of NPS Units

a) For an operation from an NPS Administrative Unit to be considered valid, the following criteria must be met:

1) The Activator and all components of the Activator’s Amateur Radio station must be physically present on the property of the claimed NPS Unit, unless specifically exempted by ARRL in advance. Activations from parking lots, visitor’s centers and other property maintained by the specific NPS unit are acceptable.

2) The Activator must make a minimum of ten (10) QSOs during their activation.

3) The Activator must upload their log to Logbook of The World as soon as practical.

b) Aeronautical mobile QSOs are not valid for NPOTA program credit.

c) Activators must exit an NPS unit for 24 hours before an operation from the same NPS unit is considered a separate activation.

d) In the event an Activator fail to make the required 10 QSOs for a valid activation, any QSOs made will still count for the stations who worked the Activator.

9) Accreditation Criteria

a) While it is unlikely ARRL will ask for documentation, ARRL reserves the right to ask for verification of any claimed operation from an NPS Administrative Unit at any time. Activators of NPS units should secure as much documentation as possible, to verify the operation did

indeed take place at the claimed unit on the claimed date. This documentation includes, but is not limited to:

- 1) An official "cancellation" from the NPS unit's "NPS Passport Program." This is a free date/location ink stamp available at most NPS units, available at each unit's main Visitors Center or Ranger Station. This is the preferred method of verification and should be sought out by Activators first. More information on the NPS Passport Program is available at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Park_Passport_Stamps
- 2) A photo of the Activator in front of the NPS unit's main sign or distinguishing landmark.
- 3) Image of GPS latitude/longitude coordinates.

10) QSO Exchange Requirements

Valid QSOs must exchange a signal report and the alphanumeric designator for each NPS Administrative Unit.

11) Modifications to the List of NPS Administrative Units.

Should NPS create or remove a unit from their official Administrative Unit list during 2016, the National Parks on the Air program will recognize the addition or deletion of that entity and adjust the number of NPS units accordingly, effective on the date of the activation or deletion by NPS.

If NPS removes or de-activates an Administrative Unit during 2016, all QSOs made before the official de-activation date will count for NPOTA credit.

12) Sensitive Areas

All Activators are reminded that several NPS Administrative Units are sensitive areas, such as the units in and around Washington, DC. Discretion and respect of the location and other visitors to these NPS units cannot be overstated. Every effort must be made by an Activator attempting an operation from these units to be discreet and cooperative with any park officials or law enforcement agency. Units deemed to be sensitive for security or cultural reasons are designated on the ARRL NPOTA units list.

13) Miscellaneous

- a) All entrance fees to NPS Administrative Units are the responsibility of the Activator.
- b) All contacts for a Chaser award must be made using call signs issued to the same station licensee.
- c) All QSOs for the Chaser Award or National Parks Honor Roll must be made from the same DXCC entity.
- d) QSOs made with a club call count only for the club, not the operator.

e) The use of remote stations is permitted for Chasers. Activators and all Amateur equipment used during an activation must be physically present within the grounds of the NPS Administrative Unit being claimed. An Activator may not leave any communications equipment at an NPS unit unattended for the purpose of establishing a remotely controlled Amateur Radio station.

f) Exemplary conduct is expected of all Amateur Radio operators participating in the National Parks on the Air program. Evidence of intentionally disruptive operating practices or inappropriate ethical conduct in any aspect of the National Parks on the Air participation may lead to disqualification from all participation in the program by action of the ARRL Awards Committee.

Actions that may lead to disqualification include, but are not limited to:

- 1) The submission of forged or altered confirmations.
- 2) The presentation of forged or altered documents in support of an activation.
- 3) Participation in activities that create an unfavorable impression of Amateur Radio with NPS authorities. Such activities include malicious attempts to cause disruption to or negatively affect the accreditation of an activation, or blatant disregard of NPS or FCC regulations.
- 4) Not submitting activation logs to Logbook of The World in a timely manner.

g) ALL Activators are reminded that they are ambassadors of Amateur Radio to NPS staff and the general public, and should do everything possible to present Amateur Radio in a positive light when operating within an NPS Administrative Unit. NPS Administrative Staff have the right to enforce NPS rules at NPS Administrative Units as they see fit and all NPS staff should be afforded every possible cooperation, courtesy and respect.

h) If an Activator is physically present in/on two NPS units simultaneously, credit for both units may be given with one QSO. Example 1: The Rio Grande National Wild and Scenic River runs through Big Bend National Park. Example 2: The Appalachian National Scenic Trail runs through Shenandoah National Park.

i) Operations from National Rivers or National Wild and Scenic Rivers and Riverways must be conducted either on the water itself, or within one hundred (100) feet of the body of water being activated.

j) In the spirit of the event, operating sites on National Scenic Trails should be reached under human power. Operations from National Scenic Trails should be conducted as close to the trail as possible, no further away than 50 yards from the trail itself. Operators should use discretion when choosing their operating location to maximize safety and to limit inconvenience to other trail hikers. Operating from a vehicle, or having any portion of your station attached or connected to your vehicle, is not allowed.

k) Operations from National Historic Trails may be conducted within one hundred (100) feet of the trail itself. Operations from private property are prohibited, unless permission has been received.

l) Operations from roads (National Parkways, Routes and Highways) may be conducted as a mobile station while travelling on the road, or from rest areas and scenic lookouts directly

attached to the route. Parking on the shoulder of the road itself to conduct an activation is dangerous and should be avoided.

m) Activations of National Historic Trails, National Scenic Trails, National Parkways, National Rivers and National Wild and Scenic Rivers may not be conducted from fixed-location, permanent stations ("home" stations).

15. Each NPOTA participant, by applying, or submitting documentation, stipulates to:

- a) Observing all pertinent governmental regulations for Amateur Radio in the United States.
- b) Observing all National Park Service rules.
- c) Being bound by the NPOTA rules.
- d) Being bound by the decisions of the ARRL Awards Committee.

16. Waiver of Liability

Participants in the National Parks on the Air event do so at their own risk. All participants are on notice that some risk is involved with any portable Amateur Radio operation in the wilderness. Participants activating any NPS Administrative Unit agree to take all safety precautions, including, but not limited to, avoiding power lines, following all rules and regulations of the NPS and instructions of NPS staff; choosing an operating site wisely; avoiding interactions with wildlife; disturbing other guests of NPS Administrative Units; and by maintaining a general awareness of their personal condition when undertaking portable amateur radio operation from an NPS Unit.

ARRL and NPS assume no liability for any Amateur Radio operator participating in the National Parks on the Air event and participants agree to assume all risk and liability for damage to personal property and injury to persons that may result from such operation, and to hold NPS and ARRL harmless therefrom.