OSPOTA – FAQ's

What if a friend and I want to run a Multi-Operator station from a State Park but we are not affiliated with any particular club?
   Please join in the activity. You can still submit your entry under one call sign.

What if my club is located in another state?
   Hop in the car and head to Ohio! One of the goals of the Portage County Amateur Radio Service in sponsoring this contest is to encourage as many clubs as possible to have club stations entered in this event. You do not need to be an Ohio club to enter. Just get out there and join us for some ham radio *FUN*! An event like this is designed to give club members an event that they can participate in together. If you must stay in your own state, then you can still participate as a station outside of Ohio - just get on the air and have FUN!

I am not an Ohio resident. Can I be an Operator in an Ohio State Park entrant?
   Absolutely! Many of Ohio's State Parks are easily accessible to hams from neighboring states. Even better, if you are a ham who is planning to be visiting Ohio on OSPOTA weekend you are welcome to bring your gear and operate from an Ohio State Park. Check the ODNR web site for information on a park that you may be interested in.

If I am in Ohio, can I only operate from an Ohio State Park?
   Negative. You are more than welcome to compete in the category of an Operator Inside Ohio, you may operate from your home QTH as an Ohio State Operator or operate portable any where inside Ohio, not at a State Park.

If I am an Operator who is not operating from an Ohio State Park, who may I contact for points?
   You will receive one point for each station that you contact located in an Ohio State Park, no matter whether you are operating from inside or outside Ohio. So, for example, if a station outside Ohio contacts a station inside Ohio that is not operating from a State Park, neither station receives a point for that QSO.

If I am operating from inside an Ohio State Park, who can I contact for points?
Ohio State Park stations can work other stations located in Ohio State Parks and any station inside or outside Ohio including DX stations.

Can there be more than one station at each Ohio State Park?
You bet. All of the Ohio State Parks can accommodate multiple stations (stations using different call signs). No one will have the exclusive right to operate from any particular Ohio State Park. For example: K8BF is operating as a single op near the pavilion, K8ABC is operating with his neighbor K8XYZ as a multi-op near the ball field, and there's another Rover station (K8ZZZ/R) operating near the parking lot. That's three different stations operating at the same Ohio State Park - The more the merrier!

If there are 75 parks, How can I get all 75 if I'm in one of them?
Three ways -
1. Another entrant OSPOTA station is operating in the same park and you contact each other.
2. Another ham radio operator (**NOT** part of your team or entry) *drives into the park* and contacts you while they are mobile.
3. Starting in 2020 - you can put YOUR park in as a multiplier on your summary sheet. That does not count as a contact, but as a multiplier.

If I am operating a multi-station how do I score multiple contacts with another station?
You receive one point for each QSO per station per band. For instance, if AA8AA works AB8BB on forty meters SSB, they could duplicate that contact on other bands for additional points. If you contact AA8AA twice on 40 meters, only one counts. **Please remove duplicates.**

Can I use a spotting network?
Yes - we encourage the use of spotting networks or clusters in order to make more contacts and to spread the word about the contest. With today's technology, spotting networks are easy to access from smart phones or wi-fi hot spots. We want you to make as many contacts as you can. Self spotting is not encouraged, but you can ask another operator to spot you.

What are the future dates for OSPOTA?
15th OSPOTA - September 10, 2022   16th OSPOTA - September 9, 2023
17th OSPOTA - September 7, 2024   18th OSPOTA - September 6, 2025
19th OSPOTA - September 12, 2026   20th OSPOTA - September 11, 2027
21st OSPOTA - September 9, 2028   22nd OSPOTA - September 8, 2029
Always the first Saturday after Labor Day

Are computer generated logs (Cabrillo files) acceptable?
The log file **must** be a standard **Cabrillo** format log with your call as the title (ie: K8BF.log), **not a PDF or jpeg (picture) copy**. As long as the log contains all of the contact information (UTC time, Band, Mode, Call Sign Contacted, State/DX, and Ohio State Park Identifier received) contained in the official log it will be accepted. PCARS is encouraging the publishers of commercial software to incorporate the Ohio State Parks On The Air format into their contest logging software. **Note:** ONLY Cabrillo logs will be accepted - no paper logs can be submitted. The scoring mechanism requires only Cabrillo logs.

However, an official OSPOTA <u>Summary Sheet</u> is still required for each entry.

What is the format for an OSPOTA Cabrillo file?

- **Note:** ONLY Cabrillo logs will be accepted - no more paper logs can be submitted. The scoring mechanism requires only Cabrillo logs.

Here's a sample cabrillo file that works fine for OSPOTA:

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START-OF-LOG: 3.0
CREATED-BY: Ohio State Parks On The Air
CALLSIGN: <Contest Call Sign>
LOCATION: <Two-letter State abbreviation, DX, or Three-letter Ohio State Park Identifier>
CONTEST: OSPOTA
CATEGORY-OPERATOR: <category>    (MML, MMH, MSL, MSH, SL, SH, R, INOH or OUT)
CATEGORY-POWER: <LOW or HIGH>
OH-STATE-PARK: <three letter park designation>
CLUB-NAME: <name of your club> - does not affect your score.
CLAIMED-SCORE: <QSOs x PARKS>
NAME: Joe Ham
OPERATORS:  <list ops if multi-op>
ADDRESS: 123 Main Street
ADDRESS-CITY: Yourtown
ADDRESS-STATE-PROVINCE: OH
ADDRESS-POSTALCODE: 44255
ADDRESS-COUNTRY: USA
E-MAIL: k8bf@portcars.org
SOAPBOX: Had a great time
QSO:  7000 PH 2020-09-12 2111 K8BF       ILK      N4NY       SC
QSO:  3500 PH 2020-09-12 1946 K8BF       ILK      K8BLP/R    GLK
QSO:  3500 PH 2020-09-12 1929 K8BF       ILK      K8IV       TCK
                 ( more contacts here  )
QSO:  3500 PH 2020-09-12 2034 K8BF       ILK      VE3CAN     DX
QSO:  3500 PH 2020-09-12 2035 K8BF       ILK      KH6RE      HI
QSO:  3500 PH 2020-09-12 2036 K8BF       ILK      GB4RLE     DX
END-OF-LOG:

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Categories:
MML  -  Multi-op Multi-Transmitter operating from one Ohio State Park - Low Power
MMH  -  Multi-op Multi-Transmitter operating from one Ohio State Park - High Power
MSL  -  Multi-op Single-Transmitter operating from one Ohio State Park - Low Power
MSH  -  Multi-op Single-Transmitter operating from one Ohio State Park - High Power
SL   -  Single Operator operating from one Ohio State Park - Low Power
SH   -  Single Operator operating from one Ohio State Park - High Power
R    -  Single or Multiple Operators - Single Radio from multiple Ohio State Parks - Low Power
INOH -  Operator - Inside Ohio not at an Ohio State Park
OUT  -  Operator - Operating from outside Ohio
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Typical Log Entry Line:

QSO:  3500 PH 2017-09-09 1929 K8BF    ILK K8IV    TCK
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QSO:..< 4 digit freq>.<2 digit mode>.<10 digit date year-mo-da>.<4 digit UTC time>.<your call sign up to 7 digits/letters>.<3 letter park designator, or your two digit State abbreviation or DX>. <Call sign of station contacted - up to 7 digits/letters>.<their 3 letter park designation, or 2 letter state abbreviation, or DX>

Freq: 3500 = 80m,   7000 = 40m,   1400 = 20m,   2100 = 15m,   2800 = 10 meters
Mode: PH = SSB

Is there a list of Ohio State Parks that are going to be Activated?

Each year we request potential participants to send in to us what Ohio State Park they will be activating. This helps others plan for their contest activity as well. So, if you plan on going to an Ohio State Park and operating during the contest, please let us know (email to PlannedParks@ospota.org) and we'll post the Planned Activities page on both the OSPOTA IO site and the official OSPOTA website.

Note: Just because someone plans to go to an Ohio State Park, we realize things happen and plans change. Please send us updates. Also, just because Joe Ham is going to be at Punderson State Park, that does NOT mean other entrants can't go there - **there are no exclusive rights to any Ohio State Park**.

What if I go to a State Park and the Rangers will not let me set up?

Be **POLITE** - don't argue. That's the best way to get kicked out. Explain what you are doing and that **you are just a visitor to the park**. This is **NOT** an 'event' - for some reason they may think you are having an 'event' which puts you in a whole different category as far as Park Rangers are concerned. Explain that you're a ham radio operator practicing your emergency communications set up and operation. Make a copy and show the ranger the other OSPOTA documents available on the OSPOTA web site that explain the contest and what we are doing. We strongly encourage you to pick a park before the contest - go visit the park - talk with the Park Rangers so they are aware of what you plan on doing.

What's with Little Miami State Park?

Little Miami State Park - which if you look at it, it is nothing more than a very l-o-n-g trail (about 75 miles) and in most areas the trail is about 15 feet wide which would make setting up on the trail not a good idea. Unlike the 'traditional' Ohio State Park, there are no camp grounds. *HOWEVER*, in speaking with ODNR, the access points that have a parking lot - which is also owned by Ohio - the parking lot would be considered part of the Little Miami State Park for OSPOTA. Take a look at the Little Miami State Park Map - you'll find all the maps in the files section of the OSPOTA IO group or the ODNR web site - look for the car symbol which is next to a picnic table symbol - there are about 9 of them to choose from.

Can I operate from more than one Ohio State Park?

Rovers can go to multiple Ohio State Parks and activate them. Rovers must submit a Summary Sheet for each State Park they activate (inside the boundaries of each park). Rovers will send their call sign with a /R at the end (example: K8BF/R). Rovers must follow minimum contacts rules. When their logs are scored by the OSPOTA committee - Rover scores will be reported as a total score of all Ohio State Parks activated by the Rover. Yes, you can operate from more than one Ohio State Park and not be a Rover. You must submit a log and Summary Sheet for each part you work from.

What if I don't find the answer to my question here?

No problem. Send your question via e-mail to: INFO@OSPOTA.org
Also, check out the OSPOTA IO Group at: https://groups.io/g/OSPOTA

OSPOTA is sponsored by the
Portage County Amateur Radio Service, Inc. (PCARS)
http://www.portcars.org