

Ohio State Parks On The Air



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 at home or wherever in Ohio, not in a park, my exchange would be “**K8BF, NOT**”

If I am an Operator who is not operating from an Ohio State Park, who may I contact for points?

You will receive points 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?

Yes. 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 multiple park station (K8ZZZ) operating near the parking lot. That's three different stations operating at the same Ohio State Park - The more the merrier!

If there are 76 parks, How can I get all 76 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. Since 2020 - you can put YOUR park in as a multiplier on your summary sheet. That does not count as a contact, but does count as a multiplier.

If I am operating a multi-station how do I score multiple contacts with another station?

You receive one contact point for each QSO per station, per band & Mode. For example, if AA8AA works AB8BB on forty meters **SSB**, they could duplicate that contact on forty meters **CW** - they get 2 contact points. Or you can work them on eighty meters (SSB or CW) for additional contact points. If you make contact to AA8AA **twice** on the **same** band or mode, only one counts.

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. You can ask another operator or ham that you contacted to spot you.

What are the future dates for OSPOTA? *Always the first Saturday after Labor Day*

18 th OSPOTA - September 6, 2025

20 th OSPOTA - September 11, 2027
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19 th OSPOTA - September 12, 2026
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21 st OSPOTA - September 9, 2028

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 Summary Sheet is still required for each entry.**

What is the format for an OSPOTA Cabrillo file?

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

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

```
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, MPO, SL, SH, 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
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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 CW 2020-09-12 1946 K8BF ILK K8BLP GLK
QSO: 3500 PH 2020-09-12 1929 K8BF ILK K8IV TCK
QSO: 3500 PH 2020-09-12 1930 K8BF ILK KB8SZI NOT

(more contacts here)

QSO: 3500 PH 2020-09-12 2034 K8BF ILK VE3CAN DX
QSO: 3500 CW 2020-09-12 2035 K8BF ILK KH6RE HI
QSO: 3500 PH 2020-09-12 2036 K8BF ILK KH6RE HI
QSO: 7000 PH 2020-09-12 2037 K8BF ILK KH6RE HI
QSO: 7000 CW 2020-09-12 2038 K8BF ILK KH6RE HI
QSO: 3500 PH 2020-09-12 2039 K8BF ILK GB4RLE DX

END-OF-LOG:

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Categories:

- MLL - 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
- MPO - Multi-Park Operator(s) operating from multiple parks - one at a time (old "Rover" category)
- SL - Single Operator operating from one Ohio State Park - Low Power
- SH - Single Operator operating from one Ohio State Park - High Power
- INOH - Operator - Inside Ohio but not located 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 PUN

QSO:...< 5 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, CW = CW

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 the OSPOTA IO group site and OSPOTA Facebook page.

Note: Just because someone plans to go to an Ohio State Park, we realize things happen and plans change. Please send us updates. Also, if 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. Ask them if they would like to make a contact - that can really help if the Ranger seems interested in actually seeing what ham radio is about.

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?

Yes you can go to multiple Ohio State Parks and activate them (MPO Category). You must submit a Summary Sheet for each Ohio State Park you activate (inside the boundaries of each park). You must follow minimum contacts rules. When your logs are scored by the OSPOTA committee - multiple park scores will be reported as a total score of all Ohio State Parks activated by the multiple park entrant (MPO). You must submit a log and Summary Sheet for each park you work from. MPO can be single or multi operators.

Is this a POTA Contest?

NO - This is the **Ohio State Parks On The Air (OSPOTA) Contest**. If you are seeking POTA contacts, you can do that, but keep in mind, this contest is **NOT affiliated with the POTA program**. It can be frustrating for those involved in the OSPOTA contest when other hams are only asking for a POTA number. So, please be aware of what activity you are engaging with and be polite and courteous at all times.

Can I use a digital mode such as FT8 or RTTY for contacts?

NO - This is SSB (phone) or CW mode contest only. No RTTY, PSK, FT4/8/etc. digital contacts are allowed.

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)

<https://www.portcars.org/>

