

# 2016



## National Parks ON THE AIR

[www.arrrl.org/NPOTA](http://www.arrrl.org/NPOTA)

Amateur Radio's Contribution to the NPS Centennial

July 2016

### July Stats: 490,000 Contacts -- 8,285 Park Activations -- 431/485 NPOTA Units Activated

We are halfway through the NPS Centennial, and National Parks on the Air continues to help raise visibility of NPS units! Nearly half a million two-way radio contacts have been made from 8,285 ham radio operations, with all fifty states and nearly 100 different countries. As the year progresses, we're hearing from more and more NPS staff who are jumping on the NPOTA bandwagon.

#### Thanks to these units for their support of NPOTA:

- Manhattan Project National Historical Park
- Ebey's Landing National Recreation Area
- Herbert Hoover National Historic Site
- Vicksburg National Military Park
- Big Cypress National Preserve
- Fort Scott National Historic Site
- Ninety Six National Historic Site

*...and many others!*



Ham Radio meets the Revolutionary War at Ninety Six National Historical Site.

## NPOTA Ready to Help Your Park on August 25



Ranger Jim Clark, Jr, enjoys making a NPOTA contact from his post at Marsh-

With the biggest birthday party of them all coming to NPS on August 25, there will certainly be a lot of activity from all 412 units. Many units are planning formal involvement from other groups in their community. Amateur Radio operators participating in NPOTA across the country would be happy to help raise visibility of your unit on August 25. It promises to be a high-volume day on the radio! If you would like an NPOTA presence at your unit on August 25, contact ARRL's NPOTA Administrators soon; we can put you in touch with hams in your area.

*"National Parks on the Air has afforded us the opportunity to connect with a much larger and more diverse audience than we could have ever*

Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park in June. NPOTA will be a part of the park's Centennial activities on August 25.

*imagined. We are pleased and proud that the world of Amateur Radio is helping us celebrate 100 years of service to the nation.”- Jim Clark, Jr., Park Ranger, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Site*

## NPOTA Lights Up the North Country Trail for National Trails Day



### Light Up the Trail!

As part of National Trails Day, several NPOTA participants took on a challenge: activate as much of the North Country Trail as possible. This became known as the “Light Up The Trail” event, coordinated by Jon Forslin, KC8ULE. Over 40 different ham radio operations from sites in all seven states of the North Country Trail were established. Notes of encouragement were received from local and regional associations all along the Trail, including from NPS North Country Trail Superintendent Mark Weaver, who has been one of NPOTA’s strongest advocates in the NPS system. John was able to get good coverage of the event in the North Star, the magazine of the North Country Trail Association.

*“The Rangers at Saratoga National Historical Park were exceedingly nice today. When I walked in the Visitors Center they were overwhelmed with tourists and really didn't have time to talk with me. But when they saw my ARRL NPOTA T-shirt, I got a big smile and a "Are you activating today?" I nodded and told them I would be at the picnic area and they were fine with that.” – Larry Makoski, Amateur Radio License W2LJ July 11, 2016*



Saratoga National Historical Park Ranger Bill Valosian makes Amateur Radio contacts during ARRL Field Day, as part of the Saratoga County RACES Association. ARRL Field Day is the largest Amateur Radio on-air event in North America, with over 45,000 participants on the last full weekend in June.

## Tweet Out



These NPSunits have engaged with NPOTA on Twitter. Thanks!

[@BadlandsNPS](#), [@GulfIslands NPS](#), [@StonesRiverNPS](#), [@MissionsNPS](#), [@NPS HydePark](#)

Follow [@ARRL NPOTA](#) on Twitter!

## Did You Know?

Last time, we told you how radio waves use a part of the atmosphere called the ionosphere as a sort of mirror, which is what makes worldwide communication via Amateur Radio possible. Sometimes, though,

the ionosphere isn't feeling cooperative, and atmospheric conditions limit the distance some radio waves can travel.

One way hams get around an uncooperative ionosphere is to use orbiting ham radio satellites as an intermediary. There are around a dozen satellites in orbit that are designed to relay ham radio signals on certain frequencies in the VHF-UHF portion of the radio spectrum. With only a few watts of power and a handheld directional antenna (as seen in the photo), radio amateurs can communicate through these satellites for as long as the satellite is above Earth's horizon, which is usually around 10-15 minutes per pass. Each satellite makes about five passes over the US each day.



Fernando Ramirez-Ferrer, NP4JV, uses a handheld antenna with his ham radio walkie-talkie to make contacts from Grand Canyon National Park earlier this month. He has used ham radio satellites from six different NPS units this year, and talked to other NPOTA Activators at 23 different NPS units through a satellite.

Learn more about ham radio satellites at [www.AMSAT.org](http://www.AMSAT.org)

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**Questions about NPOTA? Want to be featured here?** Drop us a line at [npota@arrl.org](mailto:npota@arrl.org), or call 860-594-0200 Monday-Friday 8A-5p Eastern Time.

