

San Clemente State Beach APE and POTA Activation

Goal: Gain enough contacts to qualify for an August PSK Expedition (APE) endorsement and Parks On The Air activation (POTA). Try and become more comfortable with my portable setup. Have fun.

Location: San Clemente State Beach in San Clemente California. 22 statute miles from home QTH. Park has both RV and tent camping sites. Plenty of day use parking and access to the beach. Park is adjacent to the freeway with only a frontage road between the park and Interstate 5.

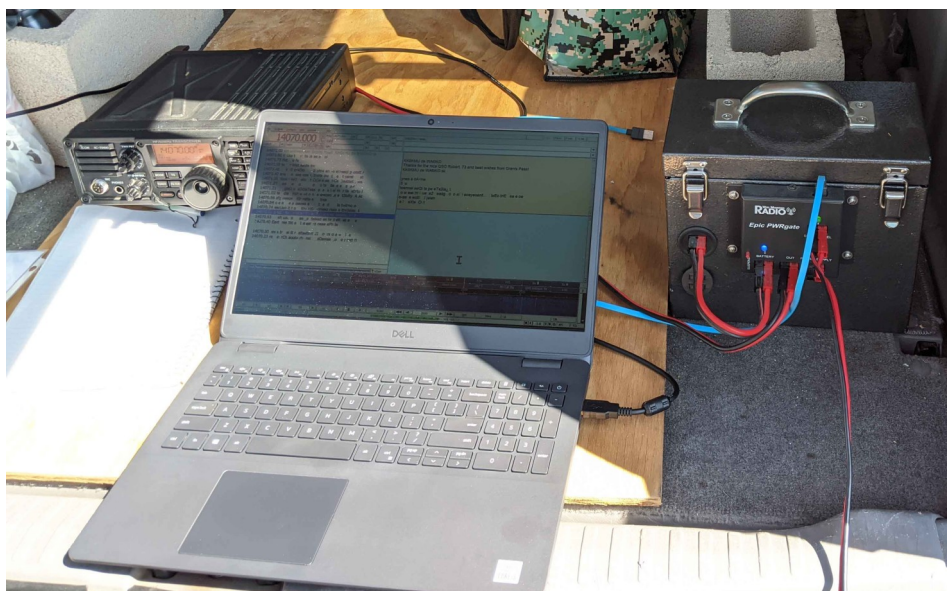
Equipment: Icom IC-7200, Shark 20 Meter Hamstick, Magnetic Antenna Mount, Toroid Core FT240-31 Ferrite used on antenna coax to limit RF interference with computer, custom battery box with 30 Amp-Hr Bioenno battery and West Mountain Epic PWRgate for battery charging, 100 watt Bioenno solar panel, MFJ antenna analyzer, Dell Inspiron 1305 touchscreen laptop computer Intel i5 @ 1GHz with 8GB of memory, USB interface cable to rig, Anderson power pole connectors for power interface. Cell phone used to self spot on the POTA web site.

Software: FLRIG and FLDIGI. I like FLRIG so I can adjust and monitor my rigs performance. I also used FLDIGI for my logging.



Arrived at San Clemente State Beach about 1800 UTC and positioned my van in the day use area keeping the position of the sun in mind. I wanted to have shade at the rear of the van. Weather was foggy at first but burned off quickly. Air temperature was very comfortable. First I installed the ham stick antenna in the magnetic mount. I don't drive with it installed. I measured the SWR with my antenna analyzer before connecting it to the rig. SWR measure

1.6:1 at 14.070 MHz. It took me about 30 minutes to get everything setup. Got my lunch ready so I wouldn't have to search for it later.



The above picture shows IC-7200 upper left, Dell laptop computer and custom battery box. The blue USB cable allows the user to monitor battery charging status. I used it in the beginning of the activation to make sure the battery was charging from the solar panel correctly. I remove it later to lessen the burden to the computer processor. During operation I slid the plywood out to over hang the back of the van. It created a table for me so I could sit at the back of the van. The beach chair I used was the greatest for my back.



Located the solar panel right behind my chair

I started the operation a little early about 1830 UTC. Band conditions at that time looked good. I noticed some local interference that seemed to come and go. Not sure what it was

but became an issue receiving at least two times. I kept my power level about 60 watts to prevent any RF from locking up my software. John KC3FL was my first contact. His signal was great. Good band conditions didn't last long. The noise level kept rising.

I stayed on one frequency for most the operation until someone started calling CQ on my exact frequency. Rather than fighting for position I moved. Several contacts I copied fine but they could not hear me. I must have tried six times responding to JoAnn AB8YZ until I was finally heard. Thank you for your patience. I even heard Dave KB3RAN/1 one time but couldn't get a response.

Nineteen of my twenty-six contacts were PODXS members. I know some of you are POTA members too but I couldn't have done this POTA activation without you loyal PODXS members. Thank You. I also used my cell phone to self spot on the POTA web site.

I finally stopped operation about 2300 UTC. The laptop battery was getting low and the sun started to shine on my computer screen. I didn't want to reposition the van and was pretty tired anyway.

Log of APE

Call	Mode	Band	Date	Time UTC	State / Prov
AB8YZ	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	220918	TX
VA7AQ	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	220052	BC
NU4N	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	214608	KY
KI5GX	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	213909	AL
KN6NSK	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	211953	CA
WB7AEA	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	205934	OR
KZ4KX	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	205032	KY
KA5VZG	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	203817	TN
N7RI	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	202552	WY
W3WDK	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	200824	PA
VA7GEM	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	200330	BC
KC0JQO	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	194504	MN
VA3TPS	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	194026	ON
K8TOM	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	193500	WA
N7WE	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	192905	FL
N9AVY	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	192458	IL
N7AME	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	192145	WA
KE7JHA	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	191951	NV
KN4FRG	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	191028	MO
K4VBB	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	190309	CO
W7NEV	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	185500	NV
W9SMR/9	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	185044	IN
KZ6B	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	184707	CA
K4VBM	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	184200	GA
N5SLY	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	183721	GA
KC3FL	PSK31	20 meters	20210804	183341	FL



View of the day use picnic area at San Clemente State Beach

Conclusion: Achieved all planned goals. Computer preformed great. Looks like I can get about 5 hours or more of battery life during a portable operation. Rig battery and solar panel setup also preformed great. The rig always had sufficient power from the battery solar panel combination. I really need to find a more comfortable chair. I may try another portable operation in the near future. Thank you to all.

Bob Motyl
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