Park Radio Activation (POTA/VKFF)

Scouts VICTORIA

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Sections

Joey Scouts | Cub Scouts | Scouts | Venturer Scouts | Rover Scouts

Challenge Areas

COMMUNITY | CREATIVE | OUTDOOR | PERSONAL GROWTH

Scout Method Elements

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT | LEARNING BY DOING | NATURE AND THE OUTDOORS | PROMISE AND LAW | PERSONAL PROGRESSION | PATROL SYSTEM | SYMBOLIC FRAMEWORK | YOUTH LEADING, ADULTS SUPPORTING

SPICES Growth Areas

CHARACTER | EMOTIONAL | INTELLECTUAL | PHYSICAL | SOCIAL | SPIRITUAL

The Adventure

A park activation is an activity to go out into a park with that is registered with an amateur radio programme such as POTA or WWFF and setup a radio station. The intent is to make contact with other licensed radio operators to “activate” the park. Making a minimum number of contacts specified in the particular programme. Those at the part are "activators" and those trying to make contact with them are called "hunters", each party accumulates points that build up to achieve a range of awards.

Plan

The planning takes two streams, firstly planning as you would a regular hike through a park or bushland. They key planning tasks overlayed on a regular hike should include.

- Reviewing the two main programmes https://pota.app and https://www.wwffaustralia.com to determine
  - Which park to activate
  - Understand the rules
  - Know how over the air operational procedures Suggested On-air exchanges
  - Practice of how to make calls, record contacts and manage lots of hunters trying to talk at once using QSO Practice activity
  - What frequencies to use, what modes to use, e.g. voice or data (FT8, Olivia, SSTV, CW/Morse code)
- What equipment might be needed to setup radio station (will vary depending on configuration) try using a planning activity
  - Radio(s), Power, Antenna(s), Cables, Tuner
  - Shelter (radios don't normally like to get wet)
  - Mast, Throwline & weight, Guys
- Risk assessments for setup and use of radio station

See leaders guide

Do

Hike into the selected park and search out a good location to setup the radio station which will vary based on the terrain, antenna type, access and rules for the park.

- Locate site & check its safe to setup
- Setup antenna and radio station
- Start calling over the air for hunters to make contacts referring to the band plan summary
- Spot the frequency you are using of have a hunter spot for you
- Listen carefully to the communications making notes on laminated whiteboards can help younger youth
- Log details of all of the contacts made on paper logs

On return to home transfer log into a form ready to upload for the programme (e.g. ADIF file) and follow the instructions for the specific programme.

Review

After returning to home base following hopefully a successful activation there are a number of key areas to consider when reviewing

- How was it getting to into the park and to location of radio station?
- How did setting up the antenna go?
- Were you missing anything or had anything that you didn't need?
- How many contacts did you make? how far away were they?
- How did you feel calling out on the radio when you first started? and how about now?
- How did you find it listening to the hunters over the radio?
- Is there anything you'd do differently for a future activation?
- Any advice to anyone planning to do an activation in the future?

Safety

On top of the general safety considerations on going for a hike the following should also be considered.

- Weight of radio equipment? (e.g. battery can be heavy)
- Setting up antenna so that members of the public trip over it or get caught in it
- Assessing distance that people (or animals) need to be away from the antenna when transmitting (RF exposure assessment)

- Weather can impact use of radio/station in other ways than would normally be considered for a hike (e.g. thunderstorm, need to be aware to have time to dismantle radio station before heading off to safety)