

SUMMITS ON THE AIR!

W6/NS-355, Jackson Butte

Spencer, KM6SJO

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Disclaimer – I'm not an expert, this is just what I've learned since my first SOTA activation in July 2022



Goal: Get outside, make some QSO's from specified peaks

- ❖ Access to the final part of the summit must not be by motorized transport.
- ❖ A portable power supply has to be used (batteries or solar) – no mains or generators!
- ❖ A minimum of 4 QSOs with different stations is required for the activation to count towards SOTA points
- ❖ Any mode (Voice, CW, Data) is permitted – No use of repeaters though
- ❖ You can use the maximum power allowed by your license – although many work at 5 watts <https://www.essexham.co.uk/sota-basics>



- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= m0e_lP1aG4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m0e_lP1aG4) QSO with me is at 4 minutes in.

**My first activation, W6/SN-047,
Bald Mountain
West of Stumpy Meadows Lake
East of Georgetown, Calif.
QSO w/ KN6IWN who recorded it**



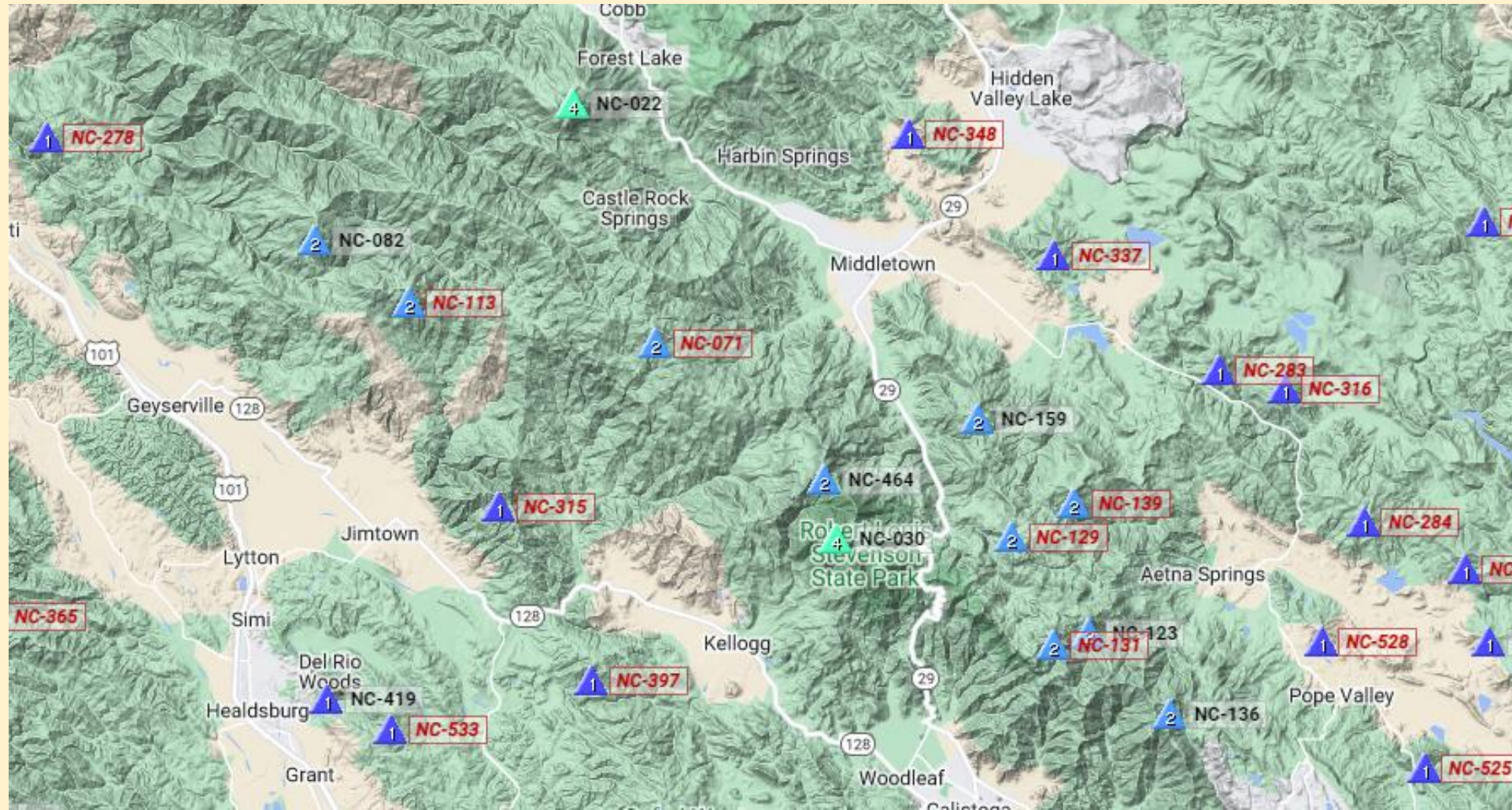
**Let me tell you about this unique stool with glass feet!
In lightning storms, one sits on this 2' x 2' stool in case
the fire observation tower gets struck by lightning.
Can *barely* accommodate two people.**

Points – scale of 1 to 10 – it's ranked from easy to tough

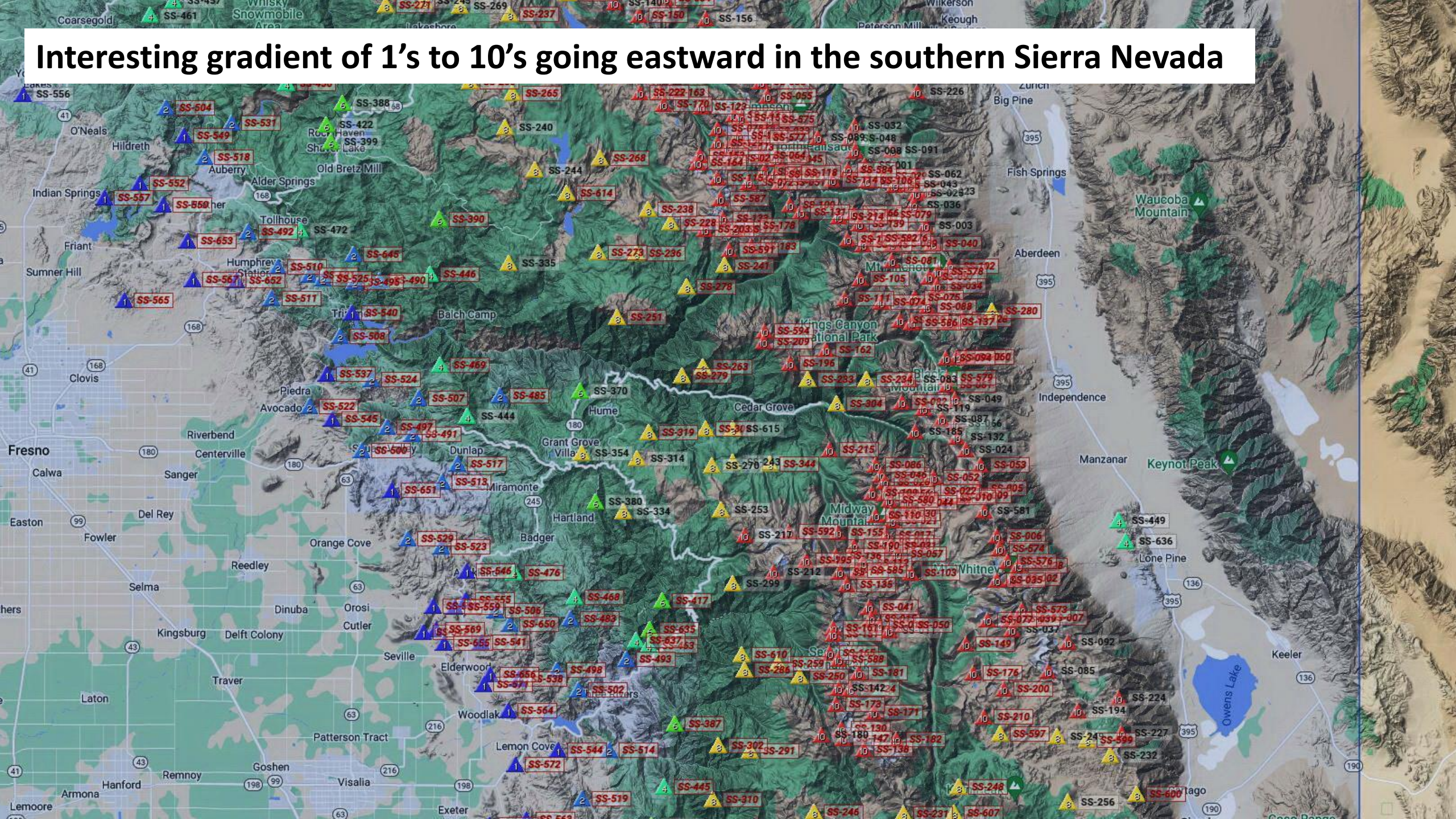
1 = easy & drive-up; then walk a few yards

4-6 = may include some hiking and dirt roads;

10 = major hike, trails only, crazy elevation, etc.



Interesting gradient of 1's to 10's going eastward in the southern Sierra Nevada



Main SOTA web sites

- Main SOTA site: <https://summits.sota.org.uk/>
- SOTAmaps - <https://www.sotamaps.org/> (mapping summits)

Organizational structure: **Association** (Calif. = W6) -> **Region** -> **Summit**

For example, W6/CC-045 = Mt. Diablo South peak, in the Coastal Ranges

Black = has been activated, Red = never before activated

- SOTA Database – where you log your activities, look for alerts, and spots
<https://www.sotadata.org.uk/en/>

- Blank SOTA log can be downloaded here
<https://vk2qr.wordpress.com/2015/02/25/sota-chaseractivator-name-sheet-and-log/> and click on **SOTA LOG.doc** toward bottom of page.

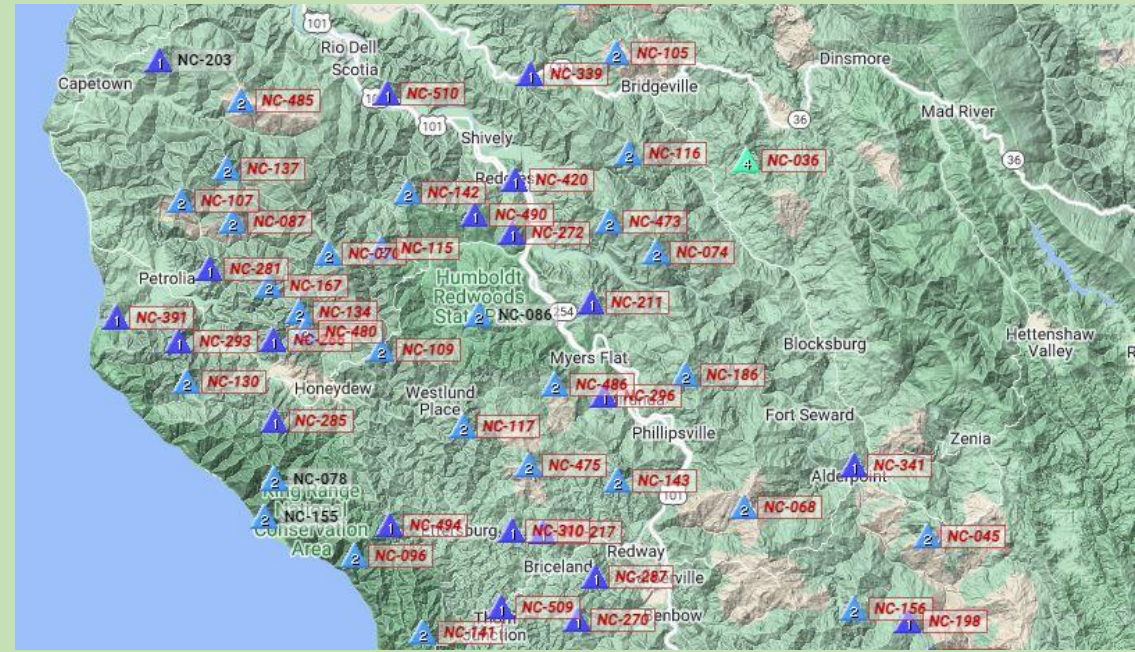
Access and Safety

Access: note some peaks may be on private property, so permission should be sought before attempting an activation on private property. Make sure your vehicle can handle dirt or gravel roads, and don't forget some may need added clearance for rocks or plants.

A common app used by off-roaders is Gaia <https://www.gaiagps.com/>
You can see who the owner of each land parcel is, in case you want to reach out to see if you can work SOTA from their land.

Safety: pack food, water, sunscreen, a hat, first aid, cell phone, paper & pencil, etc.

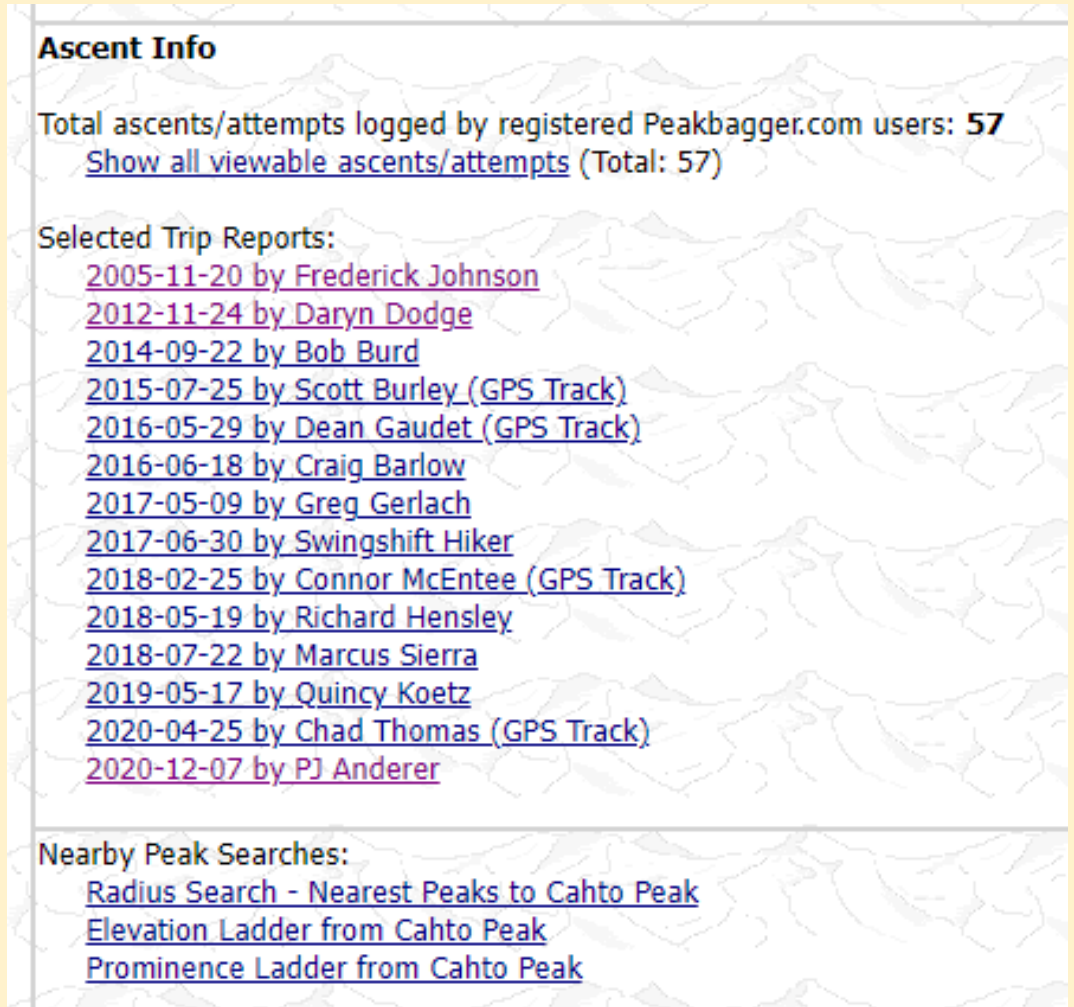
I wondered why so many peaks in Humboldt County are not yet activated. Might be private timber land, could even be private for other types of agriculture so I will personally steer clear of these sites.



Peakbagger can help, especially with previously unactivated SOTA peaks

Although not related to SOTA, www.peakbagger.com has some hiker ascent trip reports detailing road conditions and locations of gates and such, especially for summits not previously activated by hams as part of the SOTA program.

For example, W6/CC-038, Cahto Peak.
<https://www.peakbagger.com/peak.aspx?pid=16802>



The screenshot displays the 'Ascent Info' section for Cahto Peak (W6/CC-038) on the Peakbagger website. It features a list of 12 selected trip reports with dates and hiker names, some including GPS track links. Below this, there are links for 'Nearby Peak Searches' including radius, elevation ladder, and prominence ladder searches.

Ascent Info

Total ascents/attempts logged by registered Peakbagger.com users: **57**
[Show all viewable ascents/attempts](#) (Total: 57)

Selected Trip Reports:

- [2005-11-20 by Frederick Johnson](#)
- [2012-11-24 by Daryn Dodge](#)
- [2014-09-22 by Bob Burd](#)
- [2015-07-25 by Scott Burley \(GPS Track\)](#)
- [2016-05-29 by Dean Gaudet \(GPS Track\)](#)
- [2016-06-18 by Craig Barlow](#)
- [2017-05-09 by Greg Gerlach](#)
- [2017-06-30 by Swingshift Hiker](#)
- [2018-02-25 by Connor McEntee \(GPS Track\)](#)
- [2018-05-19 by Richard Hensley](#)
- [2018-07-22 by Marcus Sierra](#)
- [2019-05-17 by Quincy Koetz](#)
- [2020-04-25 by Chad Thomas \(GPS Track\)](#)
- [2020-12-07 by PJ Anderer](#)

Nearby Peak Searches:

- [Radius Search - Nearest Peaks to Cahto Peak](#)
- [Elevation Ladder from Cahto Peak](#)
- [Prominence Ladder from Cahto Peak](#)

Tips and Tricks

My 2m Yagi is on a 5' boom, so I can use the corners of the cyclone fencing around a radio tower or fire obs. tower to mount the boom, freeing up a hand.



A vintage LCD wrist watch set to UTC, mounted on the clipboard helps with logging; you can see the time in bright sun, as opposed to the power-saving darkening screens of cell phones and smart watches that need “waking up”.



Awards!

- Both Activators AND Chasers play an important role in this program.
- Certificates are awarded at 100, 250, 500, and 1000 points.
- At 1,000 points, you will earn title of Mountain Goat or Shack Sloth
- There are many other awards and categories, details are at <https://www.sota.org.uk/Joining-In/Awards>



List of local Summits near the East Bay:

- W6/CC-045 – Mt. Diablo, South Peak, 2 Points, also counts as POTA
- W6/CC-051 – Mt. Diablo, North Peak, 2 points, also counts as POTA
- W6/CV-017 – Peak 968, Fairfield
- W6/NC-524 – Mulligan Hill, Concord, 1 Point
- W6/NC-300 – Kreiger Peak, Clayton, 1 Point
- W6/NC-323 – Black Point (near Mt. Diablo, Concord), 1 point
- W6/NC-387 – Peak 1272, near Los Vaqueros Reservoir, 1 point
- W6/NC-371 – Briones Hills, off Briones Crest Trailhead, 1 point
- W6/NC-432 – Chabot 2 Benchmark (near lake Chabot), 1 point
- W6/NC-298 – Vollmer Peak, Tilden Park (near Steam Trains), 1 point
- W6/NC-190 – Marsh Benchmark (off Morgan Territory Rd), 2 points
- W6/CC-075 – Mount Caroline Livermore (Angel Island) – counts as SOTA, POTA, IOTA, 1 point



Can't wait to hear you on the air! 73, KM6SJO