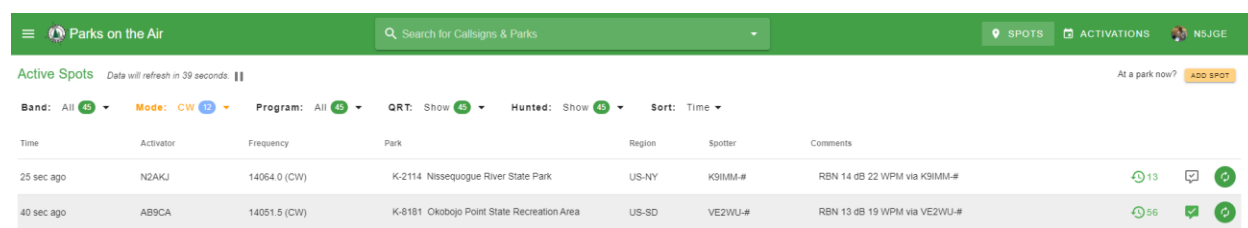


# A New Web Tool for POTA Hunters

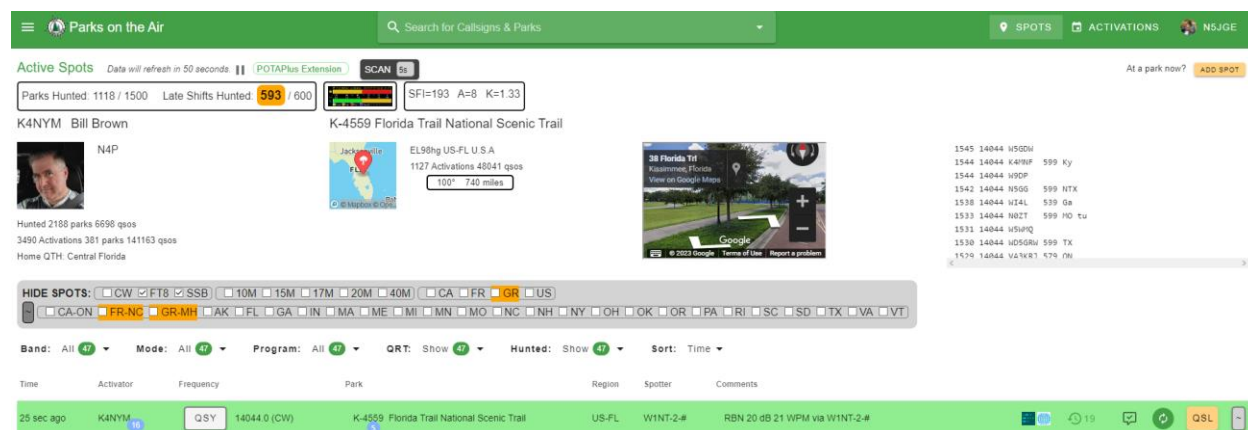
Jim Edmondson, N5JGE

During one of my recent web searches, I happened across something called POTAPLus. POTAPLus is a browser extension for any Chrome-based browser (Chrome, Edge, Opera, etc.). It was developed in early 2022 and is still under development, although the last update was in December 2022. There are some bugs present, but overall, this is a very useful tool for the POTA hunter.

When the [POTA spots page](#) is opened with the extension installed in the browser, many enhanced features are added to the page. The two screenshots below show the differences and I will explain some of those later in this article.



**Note:** POTA.app page **without** POTAPLus



**Note:** POTA.app page **with** POTAPLus

In addition to the page enhancements, POTAPLus can also provide rig control with the use of a small helper application and it can log your POTA QSOs to several popular logging programs. Details of the features and use of POTAPLus can be found at the following links:

[POTAPLus Browser Extension](#); and

[POTAPLus Options](#).

The first link provides a link to download the extension and helper application. The extension is not in the Chrome store, so installation is a bit of a process. If want to try this extension and need help installing it, let me know. Once downloaded, unzip the file and note the file location. In your browser find the settings page to manage extensions and you will see a button labelled "load unpacked" or

something similar. You may have to turn on a switch labelled “developer options” or “advanced”. Point the browser to the file location noted above and click OK - your done with that step. If you want to try rig control and logging, you will also need to download ham-app-proxy.exe from the first link above. There is no installation, just start the program and leave it running minimized while using POTAPlus. There are multiple ways to control your rig via the helper application. More details on how I did rig control are given below.

The second link above describes how to set the many options for POTAPlus. In addition to the standard POTA.app buttons to sort and filter spots, POTAPlus ads checkboxes to hide spots by active mode, band and / or region (see gray-shaded area in figure above). The orange highlighting on the enhanced POTA spots page indicates entities for which you have no confirmed contacts. In the figure above, I have no parks confirmed in Greece and none in the “NC” region of France. Depending on the options that you select, this highlighting can be applied to operators, parks, US states and N1CC award totals. Blue badges are used to show the number of confirmed QSOs with a particular entity. Another option is to show operator and park details when you QSY to a spot. Operator photo, POTA stats, callsign(s), QTH are shown along with park number, name, location, POTA stats and a map.

The above features are useful by themselves, but the real power of POTAPlus is when you enable rig control. I initially tried to control my FTdx10 and IC-7300 using the ham-app-proxy to interface between the browser and ALog. However, ALog did not change the mode when I tried to QSY on POTAPlus. I then tried Omni-rig and it worked perfectly. Omni-rig is a free program with “ini” files for many common ham transceivers. It offers basic rig control functions such as setting the frequency and mode. The ini files are text files that can be edited to control other rig functions such as filter selection, attenuators, preamps, etc. depending on the rig. (Omni-rig has settings for two rigs, but only Rig 1 is active from POTAPlus.) The basic ini files worked well for me. Now when you click on a QSY button in the POTA spots list, your rig tunes to that mode and frequency as set in the POTAPlus options and you can make your call. This feature can also be used to scan all of the listed spots with the transceiver changing mode and frequency as required. The rig will stay on each spot for a length time that you choose in steps between 5 and 55 seconds. This useful to see if you can hear each station and if there is a pileup before choosing which stations to work.

The third major feature is QSO logging and spotting. Once you complete your POTA QSO, simply click the QSL button to bring up the dialog box shown below. Most of the pertinent information is pre-populated. You can change signal reports if needed, add multiple operators or multiple park numbers. POTAPlus will then generate the QSO records for those entities. I found that there were bugs in the implementation of logging into ALog. Park number is not populated into the ALog QSO form, comments are not transferred into the form and the time off is always 00:00:00. Multiple parks and operators do not generate additional log entries. It is fairly easy to correct these errors in ALog. The developer is reportedly working on fixing these problems. I considered switching to Log4OM or DXKeeper, which reportedly work very well with POTAPlus. I decided that the learning curves were not worth the effort compared to editing ALog POTA QSOs.

A good 5-minute discussion of how avid POTA hunter, WD4DAN used POTAPlus during the recent “Plaque Event Weekend” can be found from ~22:00 to ~27:00 of the video at link [WD4DAN with AA0Z - POTAPlus](#).

POTAPlus is another example that could have been included in my list of “active ham radio software development” in last month’s “Why I Think That Ham Radio is Such a Great Hobby” article. I have only been working with this tool for a few days, but in my opinion, if you actively hunt POTA QSOs, POTAPlus is well worth the time to install and get configured the way that works best for how you like to operate.

## Re-Spot

Activator Callsign W1RCP	Spotter Callsign N5JGE		
Frequency (kHz) 14057.0	Park Reference K-3636 Madison Blue Spring State Park		
<b>Comments</b>			
RST Sent (ctrl-# for 5#/5#9) 599	RST Rcvd (ctrl-# for 5#/5#9) 599		
TX PWR 100	RX PWR	Other Ops (comma/space-delim)	
Park Ref #2	Park Ref #3	Park Ref #4	Park Ref #5

**Wrong mode?** Mention a mode in the Comments field to change the mode for this spot (e.g. "QSY CW", "RTTY" or "Switching to FT8").

**Mention QRT** if this activator is no longer on the air to mark this spot as finished. This spot will be **marked hunted** for this band and mode.

CANCEL SPOT SPOT+LOG LOG W1RCP