

FL STATE PARKS ON THE AIR 2026 / ARRL OPEN HOUSE EVENT

1. EVENT:

2026 Florida State Parks On The Air

4-day POTA Contest sponsored by the Tamiami Amateur Radio Club this year.

Coincident with additional state POTA efforts in several states, usually held on first weekend of April but moved this year due to Easter.

Specific details of their event: <https://tamiamiarc.org/events/event/florida-state-parks-on-the-air-contest/>

LOCALLY -- Ron Lewis KN4ZUJ, our local POTA champion, plans to go "all out" and operate from multiple parks during this 4-day contest.

The ARES(R) group plans to join him SATURDAY APRIL 18th, at San Felasco Hammock Start Park Trail (address and map below) in Alachua -- where he will **mentor and assist by spending the day there**. Ron plans to assist stations, possibly with printed log sheets etc.

All amateurs are invited. Come to join in, or bring a station, too! You can watch, be part of POTA, be part of FL POTA CONTEST, and/or be part of our OPEN HOUSE -- whatever you please.

ADDITIONALLY: The ARRL sponsors ARRL Ham Radio Open House 2026 this same day for all clubs. <https://www.arrrl.org/open-house>

LOCALLY -- Earl Sloan KI4OXD, becoming our local "promotion guru" plans to put up a table at the San Felasco Hammock as well and greet the public and help explain amateur radio. Earl has kindly REGISTERED us on the ARRL Map for an event starting at 0800 (park opening) local time at the park. A volunteer has offered to reimburse the first TEN cars from visiting public to the event, their \$4 park entrance fee.

2. DATE/TIME:

Saturday April 18th 2026, beginning at 0800 local. Expect activities to continue at least through lunchtime, and some folks may say the whole day. San Felasco Hammock Preserve State Park is open from 8AM-Sundown, 365 days per year. \$4/vehicle entrance if you don't have the Florida State park pass. For more information:

<https://www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/san-felasco-hammock-preserve-state-park>

3. MAP



Address: 13201 Progress Blvd, Alachua, FL 32615 Progress Blvd also known as NW 133rd Terrace, heads EASTWARD from CR241 appears to change name to Progress Blvd and the connects from the south to US 441 / FL 20 just east of downtown Alachua. The San Felasco Hammock Preserve State Park can be reached easily from its entrance on the south side of Progress Blvd, coming south from 441 or east from CR241. See the MAP on this page.

On their website, the park shows a mailing address: 13201 San Felasco Parkway, but that is NOT the address you will go to, in order to find their entrance.

4. Health and Safety

Weather at this point is expected to be full sun and reach into the 90's in the afternoon. There is a restroom on the premises. Shelter is available under the Pavilion, for which we have requested electricity. Bring a hat, and sunscreen, and plenty of water! This is a PARK and there can be insects. I have not seen wasp nests at the Pavilion in the times I have been there, however

The Park does not allow ropes or lines through trees. Plan your antennas accordingly. There is PLENTY of space and multiple places to park your vehicle, as there is a trail head a bit farther into the area past the pavilion as well.

5. Plans

Legalities: Gordon registered our event with the Park:

Hi Gordon,

This email is sufficient for your groups. We'll get this on the park's calendar, and make sure that someone gets the power turned on for ya on those weekends.

Thanks,

Heather Goston

C: 352-957-7982

0800 (Park opening) Earl Sloan plans to arrive and begin setting up for OPEN HOUSE VISITORS. Expect Earl to have a BANNER for our group.

Gordon KX4Z will arrive shortly with a travel trailer / mast / refrigerator / station / canopy

Gordon will bring brochures

RON LEWIS -- **Contact for the FL STATE POTA** -- see his message here:

<https://groups.io/g/NF4RC/message/10313> The park designation is

US-3651

A signup list for the POTA event was passed around at the March meeting
<https://groups.io/g/NF4RC/message/10462>

- Ron Lewis -- heading up the event
- Jeff Capehart - not bringing a station
- Susan Halbert -- likely not bringing a station
- Angela Basham - bringing a handheld and marked "afternoon"
- Manish Sahni -- bringing a station
- Gordon Gibby -- bringing a station -- I will also bring the high-bands multiplexer so we will have some bandpass filters. Possibly bringing a trailer but definitely some kind of MAST to allow additional antenna.

POTA Registration -- Ron Lewis asks you to register yourself with the POTA group. As an "activator" of a park you have to have an account with the <https://parksontheair.com/> group: you can register your account (and also make spots for yourself) here: <https://pota.app/#/>

To just do POTA contacts, you can use any band (participation in FL POTA CONTEST is more restricted, see below) and there is no specific exchange. ACTIVATORS however must submit a log with 10 contacts or more to have "activated" the park. See: <https://docs.pota.app/docs/rules.html#eligible-qsos>

Getting Started for Activators

Activators are the individuals that pack up their portable gear and head out to a park, and set up a station. After you've done some hunting, you might want to take a shot at activating. The rules for activators are still fairly simple:

- Follow the law
- Follow the [DX Code of Conduct](#)
- Follow the Golden Rule
- Leave no trace
- Follow any instructions from park rangers you encounter
- Be courteous of the public space you are using
- You must have an account registered at <https://pota.app>
- You and all your equipment must be within the boundaries of the park(s)
- You must submit an ADIF log after your activation is complete.
- Follow the [Rules](#) (See: <https://docs.pota.app/docs/rules.html>)

There is NOT a specific requirement for information to be exchanged in a contact.

Hunters do not submit logs to the POTA group.

LOGGING FOR ACTIVATORS must reach 10 contacts at a site for it to be considered "activated" and must submit a log with the required information in ADIF type format. See: <https://docs.pota.app/docs/rules.html#logging-requirements> There are multiple logging programs to easily accomplish this, and you can start with a paper log and later enter it into a computer log. I think Ron Lewis likes HAMRS -- <https://hamrs.app/> For my purposes, I've used LOG4OM <https://www.log4om.com/>

Ron indicates he will have paper logs -- so bring a PEN or PENCIL

LOG SUBMISSIONS FOR FL POTA CONTEST: The FL POTA people require you to submit a log to THEM for consideration in their contest. They have a pretty simple WORKSHEET for you to fill in to compute "points": <https://fspota.org/wp-content/uploads/ScoreWorksheet-2026-1.pdf> Their page to fill your worksheet and upload your ADIF log (same basic thing you do to submit your activation to the national POTA group) is here: <https://fspota.org/logging/>

FL POTA - SPECIFIC CONTEST RULES -- for those entering this

The FL POTA group have some more specific rules for the CONTEST.

Because it is considered a contest, the WARC bands are not allowed for their entries

Hunters to not need to submit a log (same as normal POTA) but activators DO.

They request activators to issue a signal report as their exchange

They request hunters to issue a signal report and state (or DX for the state is out of the country)

They allow FT8 and other digital modes, so the requirement for "state" does not seem to be rigid.

Each band/mode/operator counts as a separate contact.

QRP mode is 10 waatts or less

Low Power mode is 10-100 Watts

More information on their specific rules can be found here:

https://fspota.org/wp-content/uploads/2026_FL_POTA_Rules_v_1_3.pdf

LUNCH: As of this writing we don't have a specific plan for LUNCH.

You might bring a sandwich or lunch (Gordon will have a refrigerator or you could use a cooler)

You could zip out of the park and pick up something at Taco Bell, McDonalds, Wendy's, or any of multiple sandwich stands in Alachua.

ENDING TIME: There is not a specific ending time. The Park closes at sundown, which is around 7:30 local.

6. ORGANIZATION

Contact Ron Lewis KN4ZUJ for more information on the FL POTA effort.

Contact Earl Sloan KI4OXD for more information on the ARRL Open House effort, which will leverage the operators there as an example of amateur radio hobby.

7.RESOURCES

There will likely be open stations for you to jump in and make contacts with others mentoring you! Items you may wish to bring include:

- Hat to protect from sun
- Sunscreen
- Water / other refreshment
- Snacks / Lunch
- Bug Spray (I haven't had much of a problem there)
- Amateur Radio Station (while you can make VHF contacts, most people do HF) Note that voice and digital get 1 point in the FL POTA effort, while CW gets 2 points
- Antenna -- remember you cannot use trees. A ground-based vertical is a good idea, or a mast of some sort with an end-fed or inverted or vertical antenna. You can also use a vehicle-mounted antenna, and of course a balloon is always possible, or even a kite!
- Transmission Line -- it is a great idea to get your antenna well away from others so that your radio doesn't experience OVERLOAD from other transmitted signals. Several hundred feet is not too little at all!
- Band Pass Filter -- These are great for allowing you to reduce interference from other stations -- Gordon will bring the Antenna Multiplexer that allows multiple stations even on a single (well behaved multiband antenna) and also some bandpass filters.
- Power Source -- we may well have AC power, so you might wish to bring an extension cord; however battery operation works great and we have found that radios go a LONG time on 20-100 AHr LIFEPO batteries
- Scratch Paper for helping with your contacts
- Consider a CLIPBOARD so things don't fly away
- Pen/Pencil to write with
- Napkins etc for messes
- Leave the site with no trace of your presence!

APPENDICES -- A paper log that might be useful is attached.

Park		Reference	
Location		County	
Date		Grid Square	

Notes

Time	Callsign	Band	Mode	RSTs	Notes