

# W7ZOI Field Day, 2011

w7zoi, June 27, 2011



Our operating position.

This was a complicated year for Field Day. It seemed that folks were busy and it was difficult to put a trip together. But in the end, Roger (son, KA7EXM) and his son Peter were able to join me for a walk in the woods. As in the past, I really wanted to go to the mountains rather than do anything on the flats next to a car. I'm a perpetual sucker for the integration of some adventure with my amateur radio. In addition, I figure that I should do these mountain walks while I can still navigate the hills, for geezerism marches on.

This year was one with a heavy snowpack in the mountains. Much of the winter precipitation had been close to average. But it continued raining and snowing as spring arrived. Snow often creates a challenge in the Pacific Northwest for those who want to hike to a mountain

FD location, and it was even more extreme this year than most seasons.

The FD location we picked was one that we suspected would have a lot of snow, but would still be relatively easy. We selected Mirror Lake, a tarn just south and west of Mt. Hood. The hike to this location is especially easy and is, hence, popular with families. Continuing to climb beyond the lake takes one to the top of a neighboring ridge that offers good views and hopefully, better propagation.



Mirror

Lake with the highest summit of Tom, Dick, and Harry Mountain in the background.

We reached the lake in just over an hour of easy hiking. The snow appeared as soon as we left the lake. We continued to the point where we hit the ridge top where we ate a bit of lunch before continuing through the woods toward the summit. By now the snowpack in the trees was continuous at a mean depth of a few feet. We got to the top of the first peak of Tom, Dick, and Harry Mountain in another hour or so of moderate hiking. (Who knows which peak is which!)



This is yours truly on the summit ridge of Tom, Dick, and Harry Mountain (TD&H Mtn) with Oregon's Mt. Hood in the right background. The distant peak just over my right shoulder is Mt. Adams in Washington. We operated from the summit of Adams in August of 1967 in a memorable adventure.

Our elevation on TD&H Mtn was only 4920. The rock on the ridge top absorbs enough sun light to melt much of the adjacent snow.



Looking at the highest of the TD&H Mountain summits. Peter's feet can be seen at the lower right corner of the photo.

While it might not have been difficult to go on to the other summits, they are listed as being "off limits" to protect peregrine falcon habitat. (See Sullivan, William L., "**100 Hikes in Northwest Oregon**," Navillus Press, 1993, revised and updated in 1996.) I don't know if this restriction is still in effect.

Upon reaching the top, Roger and I started getting an antenna up while Peter relaxed. A short tree on the ridge line begged to support a 40 meter dipole.



Some of the junk that we hauled up the hill. Mt. Jefferson can be seen about 40 miles to the south. A short piece of rope is used to tie the transmission line off to keep it out of the way during operation.

As usual, we took more stuff than needed. A 1 Watt output superhet transceiver is the main rig for 40M CW. A keyer sits on top of that rig and a small transmatch is available to guarantee a reasonable antenna match. Three paper pads were used for this effort. One was a log, another was a scratch pad, and a third was a cross-check sheet. Paper clips are a must to hold the sheets in place in the almost constant wind. A second rig carried up the hill was Roger's Yaesu FT-817. He carried a small folding 3 element Yagi for 2M. Several contacts were made on 2M SSB, plus a few more on 40 M SSB. But most activity was on 40 M CW. It was dramatic how difficult the 40M SSB contacts were compared with the CW contacts. It was also dramatic to again observe the low noise and strong signals available in a remote location.



This view,  
almost due north, shows Mt. St. Helens.



Mirror Lake as seen from our ridge top location, framed by Mt. Hood in the background. Part of the highway can even be seen along the left edge of the photo. Our location was 1500 ft elevation above the trailhead at the highway.



This shot shows Roger relaxing after having operated 2M SSB for a while. I goofed and didn't get a photo of that set up. (Oh well, that means we will have to another trip to get a good photo.) That antenna was all packed by the time I thought of it. Mt. Jefferson, about 40 miles to the south, is in the background.

We operated for just a couple of hours and then decided to pull up stakes to head back down the hill.





A

leisurely hour or so brought us back to Mirror Lake where this photo was taken. It shows the ridge where we operated. The markings on the photo show the group of trees that we used to support our antenna.

This was a great location, although it lacked some features. We didn't find good places to camp near the ridge top. I suspect that more exploration would yield something. The location was a bit more effort (greater elevation gain) than some of our FD destinations, although it is certainly not a difficult hike. It would be much easier in normal years. The ridge top might even work for a winter destination. We have often been to Mirror Lake in winter on snowshoes and have even been to the ridge top. Roger and I both agree that we should have taken bivouac gear along and stayed on the ridge overnight.

This was a magnificently scenic place. Not only was Mt. Hood "in your face" close, but four other major glaciated peaks could be seen. It was also a good place to look for other potential, even more remote locations.

[Click here to see a larger discussion of portable operations from w7zoi.](#)