

# Summits on the Air

## U.S.A. W4A - Alabama

### Association Reference Manual



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<b>Summits-on-the-Air</b>	an original concept by G3WGV and developed with G3CWI

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### Change Control

Date	Version	Details
1 September 2018 December 2016	1.2	Added Ron LaGrone/N4SFR as AM Updated ARM as noted below: a) Replaced “requested” with “strongly urged” in the last paragraph of Section 1.4. b) Made several minor spelling, page numbering, and paragraph corrections
1 December 2016	1.1	Added Dave Dostie/AE9Q as AM Updated ARM doc to NA 2016 verbiage: a) Disclaimer, Final Access, and P150m changes b) Prominence criteria changed from 500ft to 492ft (150m) c) Activation zone changed from 80 ft to 82 ft (25m)
1 <sup>st</sup> September 2013	1.0	First formal issue of this document

### Disclaimer

Hiking and mountain climbing are potentially hazardous activities. Activators take part in the Program entirely at their own risk, and the Program and its volunteers in their entirety shall accept no responsibility for injury, loss of life or any other loss. Activators are reminded that hill climbing is an inherently hazardous activity. Accidents can and do happen in the mountains and the risk is neither increased nor mitigated by the SOTA Program.

The inclusion of a summit in this Reference Manual does not indicate that it is safe, legal or even possible to climb to the summit. The Summit Reference data is not guaranteed to be accurate and sole reliance should not be placed upon it. All participants must be sure to check applicable local, state, and federal laws to be sure that a hike or climb up to any of the summits listed in this manual is legal and safe. Some summits may reside in private hands and all activators must respect private property rights. Other summits are located on restricted government owned land (e.g. military bases, gunnery ranges and bombing ranges) where trespass is not only illegal but could result in death. Under no circumstances

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should a summit be activated without the requisite permissions. Participation in the SOTA Awards program is at your own risk.

### **Copyright Notices**

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### 1 Association Reference Data

Association	Alabama (W4A)		
Commencement date	1 September 2013		
Revision 1.1	1 December 2016		
Revision 1.2	1 September 2018		
Regions: 4	<b>Region</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Summit Count</b>
	PT – Piedmont	PT	9
	HR – Highland Rim	HR	14
	VR – Valley & Ridge	VR	26
	CP - Cumberland Plateau	CP	22
	<b>Summit Total</b>		<b>71</b>
Association parameters	See <a href="#">General Rules</a> at SOTA website for definitions		
Summit operation criteria	Operation must be within 25m (82ft) vertically of the summit within the “activation zone”.		
Band 1, score 1 point	Summit altitude less than <1500 ft. ASL		
Band 2, score 2 points	Summit altitude between >=1500 ft. ASL and <1800 ft. ASL		
Band 3, score 4 points	Summit altitude between >=1800 ft. ASL and <2100 ft. ASL		
Band 4, score 6 points	Summit altitude between >=2100 ft. ASL and <2400 ft. ASL		
Band 5, score 8 points	Summit altitude >2499 ft. ASL		
Band 6, score 10 points	No Band 6 summits		
Seasonal bonus	None		
Bonus rationale	No summits above 2500 Ft.		
Min. height for bonus			
Bonus period dates			
Association sponsored awards	None		
Association Manager	Ron LaGrone, N4SFR		
Email address	ronlagrone@hotmail.com		

#### 1.1 Program Derivation

The Alabama W4A SOTA is an extension of similar programs already active in other countries and other regions of the United States. Much of the list of summits for W4A was derived from the USGS and sourced from John Kirk, as published on the <http://www.listofjohn.com> website. The W4A Association scoring scheme is based on the relative height of summits of 150M (492ft) elevation from the surrounding saddle in order to qualify.

Summits are qualified for inclusion in the W4A SOTA program on the basis of [topographic prominence](#) which requires a minimum of 150 meters (492 feet) of vertical rise “for the lowest [contour line](#) encircling it

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and no higher summit” in order to qualify. Summit scoring is based upon the summit’s height above sea level.

Both activators and chasers are encouraged to visit SOTA’s website and read the *General Rules* and *Activator Guidelines*. You may find these documents, along with links to the official summit database, at <http://www.sota.org.uk/Joining-In/General-Rules>.

### 1.2 General information

All participants (activators and chasers) in the SOTA Program must have an amateur radio license from the FCC or similar authority of other countries.

The SOTA Regions were based on four geographical regions within the state of Alabama, namely those shown as Piedmont, Highland Rim, Valley & Ridge and Cumberland Plateau. Each summit location was verified using the County location provided from the ListsofJohn.com and matched to the corresponding **Region** as shown on the state map below. For simplicity each region was given the following code system, **PT** (Piedmont), **HR** (Highland Rim), **VR** (Valley & Ridge) and **CP** (Cumberland Plateau). There are no mountains qualifying in the Coastal Plain. The mountains within these four areas are located in 14 counties.

All regions do have the same points scoring scheme. If additional summits are added to this W4A Association, they must comply with this scoring scheme.

In order to qualify for SOTA, a summit has to meet the following requirements:

- The summit must be listed on USGS topo maps or [Geonames](#) database.
- The summit must have at least 150m (492 ft) of prominence

In the case of doubt regarding compliance to qualification criteria, the SOTA Management Team reserves the right to decide whether or not the Summit will be added to the list.

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### **1.3 Final Access, Activation Zone, and Operating Locations Explained**

The SOTA General Rules state that the method of final access to the radio operating location must be non-motorized. The General Rules do not specify the distance, either vertical or horizontal, that this final access must cover. The use of non-motorized vehicles (e.g. bicycle) or pack animals to enter the Activation Zone (AZ) is permitted.<sup>1</sup>

Operations must not be in, or in the close vicinity of a motor vehicle, cannot use a permanent electrical power source, nor use a fossil fuel generator in any fashion. No part of the station may be connected in any way with the motor vehicle. All equipment must be operated from portable power source (batteries, solar cells, etc.)

The SOTA general rules also state that radio operations must take place within a summit's Activation Zone which, in the case of the W4A association, is an area within 25 vertical meters (82 feet) of the actual physical summit point. The Activation Zone is a single "unbroken" area that can be visualized by drawing a closed shape on a map following a contour line 25 meters (82 feet) below the summit point. The operating position must be within this zone but antennas may extend well beyond.

Activators should feel free to contact the Association Manager should further clarification be deemed necessary or if any doubt exists in an activator's mind as to whether their activation will be valid for SOTA credit

### **1.4 Rights of way and access issues**

Many W4A SOTA summits are located on public land but many others are not. Any activator must be sure to check applicable local, state and federal laws to be sure that a hike or climb up to any of the summits listed in this manual is legal and safe. Some summits may reside in private hands and all activators must respect private property rights. Other summits are located on restricted government owned land (e.g. military bases, gunnery ranges and bombing ranges) where trespass is not only illegal but could literally result in one's death. Under no circumstances should a summit be activated without the requisite permissions.

Peaks are located in [National Parks](#), [National Forests](#), and various state managed lands as well as private property. Many peaks are located on or near major [Alabama trails](#) for relatively easy access. Others, although located on public land, have difficult access due to lack of adequate trails or roads and yet other peaks located on private land have no legal public access.

As a particular caution to European hikers, please note that "everyman's right", "freedom to roam", or "right of way" does not exist in the USA. Permission to cross private lands must be expressly granted and cannot be assumed.

Motorized vehicle use is limited to designated routes in all national forests but cross-country travel by foot is generally permitted. If you plan to use forest service roads to access a trailhead, obtain a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) from the particular national forest so as to assure that your planned route is legal for the type of vehicle that you intend to use (some routes are only designated for motorcycle use, vehicles 50" wide or less, etc.). Note that a MVUM is **not** the same as the less detailed and more generally available national forest map. You should also review the current forest orders for the forest and area of interest. Forest orders may implement temporary closures of areas or impose special rules for access. These maps and forest orders are available at the national forest's ranger stations and administrative offices and are sometimes also available online.

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<sup>1</sup> See SOTA General Rules 1.20, Section 3.7.1.3 (30 Mar 2015)



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State Parks, National Parks, and nature preserves are usually quite restrictive concerning use. Use only designated parking to access designated trails for travel to designated locations. Obtain all necessary entrance, hiking and camping permits.

Some large corporate landholders such as timber, utility and oil companies do allow public use of their land. Some will issue a permit in exchange for a signed waiver of liability. Others allow open access. Always follow posted terms of use.

If an activator does manage to receive permission from a private landowner to activate a private summit, the activator must remember he/she may be the landowner's only contact with SOTA or ham radio and the activator must adhere to the highest standards of politeness and professionalism in his activation so as to pave the way for future activators to be authorized.

A word of caution for peaks located in state wildlife management areas (WMA); these areas are maintained by the State of Alabama primarily for hunting and fishing activities. Big game hunting seasons occur during the months of January, February, September, October, November and December. A Spring Turkey season occurs during May. If you travel in these areas during this time period, dress conspicuously. **Hunter Blaze Orange is a good choice.** Consult the Alabama Department of Natural Resources at <http://www.outdooralabama.com/hunting> for complete information.

Activators are strongly urged to post comments regarding access, trails and other information about a summit on the [sotadata.org.uk](http://sotadata.org.uk) website for the benefit of other activators. Navigate to the summit record and use the 'Add New Article' link. Please respect intellectual property law when adding information to the SOTA website.

### **1.5 Maps and navigation**

A GPS receiver is not a substitute for maps of sufficient resolution and a compass as well as the ability to use them. A GPS device should be carried only as a secondary source of navigation information.

US Geological Survey (USGS) maps are considered the standard for backcountry travel. USGS topographic maps accurately represent the natural and manmade features of the land to stringent National Map Accuracy Standards.

USGS maps of the 7½ Minute Series (covering 7½ x 7½ minutes of geographic arc) show most maintained trails and contour intervals of 40 ft. at a scale of 1:24,000. Carrying these maps as a primary or backup source of navigation information is strongly recommended even if you are familiar with the terrain.

Also useful are US Forest Service, National Park and State Park maps showing parking, camping, toilet, trash and other visitor facilities. A Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) is highly recommended if traveling via motor vehicle within a national forest. See the "Rights of way and access issues" section above for more information. USFS MVUM's can be downloaded [here](#).

USGS maps are available at map retailers and outdoor outfitters throughout the state or check online at [USGS MAPS](#). USGS Headquarters may be contacted at:

USGS National Center  
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive Reston,  
VA 20192, USA Phone: 703-648-  
5953

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[Caltopo](#) is an online source for topographic maps. The Forest Service layer often shows archaic roadbeds that do not appear on other maps.

National Forest and National Park maps are usually available at the forest or park entrance or visitor's center.

The Grid reference system used in this ARM will be Latitude and Longitude expressed in [Decimal-Degrees](#). All Latitudes are positive and all Longitudes are negative for the W4A ARM. This system has been chosen for its compatibility with [Google Maps](#). Potential activators and chasers need only enter a summit's decimal coordinates into Google Maps to see a topographic, satellite or road map of a summit or to find driving directions to the closest roads.

The Association Manager suggests that the potential activator conduct internet searches for the specific regions and summits he is interested in. Such internet searches may yield links to hiking, biking, and climbing groups that share intimate local knowledge of a summit, its access, and nearby resources. In addition to the reference material with the SOTAwatch system, the SummitPost [website](#), and Lists of John [website](#) are also good references.

### **1.6 Safety considerations**

The majority of W4A SOTA summits are relatively accessible by experienced mountain hikers. However, mountaineering and backcountry hiking are inherently risky endeavours. While the risks you assume by participating in SOTA activities can never be dismissed, they can be greatly minimized through knowledge, preparation and experience. REI and the Sierra Club offer a number of outdoor hiking, map navigation, and emergency survival courses.

Mountain roads are often unstable and subject to temporary closure. The condition of access roads through forest, park or BLM lands should be confirmed by contacting the managing agency. Some Forest Service road closures are posted at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/conf/alerts-notice>.

Mountain weather in Alabama can vary from blazing heat and humidity to the rare winter storm during the summer and winter seasons. Be prepared to travel and to stay for 1 unplanned day in any type of weather you may encounter. NOAA forecasts should be checked at <http://www.noaa.gov/weather> before any travel commences. Current conditions and any local hazardous weather warnings should be monitored on NOAA Weather Radio, with frequencies available at <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/coverage/stations.php?State=AL>

Spending time in the wilderness can be rewarding. However, the environment can be harsh and capricious. Heat dictates ample water, cold dictates ample clothing and strenuous exercise dictates food to recharge yourself. Make sure you have access to what you need in the middle of nowhere. Hiking alone represents a unique set of challenges and even with a team you could become separated, so having maps to navigate back to your ride home or camp site are essential. The wilderness can be a wonderful place, but rains can lead to unexpected floods, a sun drenched trail can twist into an icy skate rink further along. Think Boy Scouts...Be Prepared!

A bear will destroy your car for a morsel of food left inside. A rattlesnake will bite and kill you. Understanding the range and behavior of these animals and adapting yours accordingly will greatly decrease your risk.

Of particular concern to hikers in the Alabama mountains are black bear and two poisonous snakes: the Copperhead and Eastern Timber Rattler. Poison Ivy, Oak and Sumac are plants to be avoided in the Alabama wilderness. There are well established recommendations to avoid bear encounters in camping and hiking instructional and reference material. The sayings "Never put your hands or feet where you can't see" and "woe unto thee, leaves of three" goes a long way towards avoiding dangerous snakes

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and plants. A good source of information on North American plants, reptiles, mammals and birds is the National Audubon Society. Information can be found at <http://www.audubonguides.com/index.html>. Excellent field guides from the society are available in print at major book retailers.

The approaches to many W4A (Alabama) summits vary from easy to technical. Assess your skill and fitness levels realistically and travel well within your limitations.

### **1.7 Foreign amateur radio operators in Alabama**

Foreign amateurs that are citizens and licensees of countries that participate in operating agreements with the United States of America are encouraged to consult the ARRL or FCC website for full details of operating within Alabama.

### **1.8 Awards**

There are no W4A Association awards at this time. However, several awards are available from the SOTA parent organization. Consult the SOTA website for details.

### **1.9 Process to maintain summit lists**

If the reader finds a summit which he/she believes to meet the qualifications of the SOTA program, or if a mistake is found in the summit data, please contact the Association Manager. If an activator wishes to see a particular summit included in the W4A SOTA Association, please provide the Association Manager with the following information:

1. Name of summit as named on the USGS [Geonames](#) database.
2. The Latitude and Longitude of summit.
3. The elevation of the summit above sea level.
4. The summit's prominence value along with a citation of the source for this data.

The Association Manager will check whether the summit meets the qualification criteria and, if it does, will forward this information to the SOTA Management Team for inclusion in the SOTA database. The decisions of the Association Manager and the Management Team are final regarding the interpretation of the criteria and the inclusion or exclusion of a summit. Summits cannot be counted for points in the SOTA program until a reference number has been issued in the SOTA Summits database.

Petitions are to be reviewed and appropriate action taken at least once per calendar year.

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### 2 Summit Reference Data

#### 2.1 Region Reference – W4A – Piedmont Mountains (PT)

<b>Association</b>	<b>W4A Call Area</b>
Region	<b>PT-</b> Piedmont Mountains (W4A/PT-xxx)
Region manager	Refer to Association Manager

##### 2.1.1 Regional notes

The PT region lies in the North Central and Eastern portion of Alabama bordering Georgia to the east. It consists of the following 2 counties: Cleburne and Clay.

##### 2.1.2 Table of summits

Ref. No.	Summit name	Alt (m)	Alt (ft)	Latitude	Longitude	Valid from dd/mm/yyyy	Valid to dd/mm/yyyy	Score
W4A/PT-001	Cheaha Mountain	734	2407	-85.8085	33.4856			8
W4A/PT-002	Dugger Mountain	652	2140	-85.5872	33.8824			6
W4A/PT-003	Oakey Mountain	594	1950	-85.5149	33.8802			4
W4A/PT-004	Augusta Mine Ridge	570	1871	-85.5028	33.9386			4
W4A/PT-005	1850	564	1850	-85.9548	33.3516			4
W4A/PT-006	Turkey Haven Mountain	527	1730	-85.4667	33.5475			2
W4A/PT-007	Rattlesnake Mountain	509	1670	-85.6224	33.756			2
W4A/PT-008	Tater Hill Mountain	497	1631	-85.7714	33.4043			2
W4A/PT-009	Mercer Mountain	458	1502	-85.455	33.9524			2

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### 2.2 Region Reference – W4A – Highland Rim Mountains (HR)

Association	W4A Call Area
Region	HR – Highland Rim Mountains (W4A/HR-xxx)
Region manager	Refer to Association Manager

#### 2.2.1 Regional notes

The HR region lies within North Central to the North Western part of Alabama. Tennessee is to the north and Mississippi to the West. It consists of the following 2 counties: Madison and Morgan.

#### 2.2.2 Table of summits

Ref. No.	Summit name	Alt (m)	Alt (ft)	Latitude	Longitude	Valid from dd/mm/yyyy	Valid to dd/mm/yyyy	Score
W4A/HR-001	High Top	558	1830	-86.3353	34.9418			4
W4A/HR-002	Monte Sano Mountain	503	1650	-86.5078	34.7413			2
W4A/HR-003	Chestnut Knob	491	1610	-86.4789	34.7244			2
W4A/HR-004	Keel Mountain	472	1550	-86.3635	34.6444			2
W4A/HR-005	Backbone Mountain	472	1550	-86.3728	34.9165			2
W4A/HR-006	Wade Mountain	456	1495	-86.6164	34.8164			1
W4A/HR-007	Drake Mountain	442	1450	-86.4722	34.7020			1
W4A/HR-008	Lewis Mountain	437	1435	-86.4273	34.8634			1
W4A/HR-009	Reed Mountain	430	1410	-86.4167	34.7496			1
W4A/HR-010	Lemley Mountain	395	1295	-86.4581	34.5282			1
W4A/HR-011	Madkin Mountain	376	1235	-86.6438	34.6671			1
W4A/HR-012	Hill Mountain	375	1230	-86.3866	34.5695			1
W4A/HR-013	Christian Mountain	369	1210	-86.4311	34.6174			1
W4A/HR-014	Pate Mountain	351	1150	-86.6728	34.4233			1

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### 2.3 Region Reference – W4A – Valley & Ridge Mountains (VA)

Association	W4A Call Area
Region	VR - Valley & Ridge Mountains (W4A/VR-xxx)
Region manager	Refer to Association Manager

#### 2.3.1 Regional notes

The VR region lies in between the Cumberland Plateau and Piedmont regions with Georgia to the east. It consists of the following 5 counties: Cherokee, Saint Clair, Talladega, Shelby and Calhoun.

#### 2.3.2 Table of summits

Ref No.	Summit name	Alt (m)	Alt (ft)	Latitude	Longitude	Valid from Dd/mm/yyyy	Valid to dd/mm/yyyy	Score
W4A/VR-001	Morton Hill	629	2063	-85.7387	33.6935			4
W4A/VR-002	Big Oak Mountain	625	2050	-85.7303	33.7381			4
W4A/VR-003	Flagpole Mountain	600	1968	-85.4253	34.0304			4
W4A/VR-004	Horn Mountain	586	1924	-86.0746	33.2980			4
W4A/VR-005	Weisner Mountain	577	1894	-85.6744	34.0265			4
W4A/VR-006	Hurricane Mountain	572	1876	-85.6747	33.8709			4
W4A/VR-007	Coldwater Peak	521	1709	-85.8902	33.6273			2
W4A/VR-008	Bogan Peak	509	1670	-85.4987	34.2696			2
W4A/VR-009	Rock City	509	1670	-85.8195	34.1794			2
W4A/VR-010	Bald Rock Mountain	486	1594	-86.4218	33.6042			2
W4A/VR-011	Flagpole Mountain	479	1570	-86.2075	33.4118			2
W4A/VR-012	Signal Mountain	479	1570	-86.5813	33.3974			2
W4A/VR-013	Sand Mountain	466	1530	-86.5474	33.4224			2
W4A/VR-014	Cahaba Mountain	461	1514	-86.5258	33.7465			2
W4A/VR-015	Double Oak Mountain	460	1510	-86.6015	33.4285			2
W4A/VR-016	1510	460	1510	-86.0067	33.3335			2
W4A/VR-017	Chandler Mountain	454	1491	-86.3011	33.9179			1
W4A/VR-018	Colvin Mountain	406	1332	-85.7391	33.9434			1

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Ref No.	Summit name	Alt (m)	Alt (ft)	Latitude	Longitude	Valid from Dd/mm/yyyy	Valid to dd/mm/yyyy	Score
W4A/VR-019	Dirtseller Mountain	399	1310	-85.4821	34.3756			1
W4A/VR-020	Kahatchee Mountain	393	1290	-86.3604	33.2274			1
W4A/VR-021	1290	393	1290	-86.1618	33.4477			1
W4A/VR-022	Barker Mountain	387	1270	-86.3497	33.7764			1
W4A/VR-023	1208	368	1208	-85.5279	34.3380			1
W4A/VR-024	Canoe Creek Mountains	351	1150	-86.1908	33.8681			1
W4A/VR-025	Andeluvia Mountain	338	1110	-86.2263	33.2514			1
W4A/VR-026	Sulphur Spring Mountain	308	1010	-86.4319	33.1066			1



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### 2.4 Region Reference – W4A – Cumberland Plateau Mountains (CP)

Association	W4A Call Area
Region	CP - Cumberland Plateau Mountains (W4A/CP-xxx)
Region manager	Refer to Association Manager

#### 2.4.1 Regional notes

The CP region lies between the Highland Rim to the north and the Valley & Ridge to the south with Georgia to the east. It consists of the following 5 counties: Jackson, Marshall, DeKalb, Etowah and Blount.

#### 2.4.2 Table of summits

Ref No.	Summit name	Alt (m)	Alt (ft)	Latitude	Longitude	Valid from Dd/mm/yyyy	Valid to dd/mm/yyyy	Score
W4A/CP-001	Fox Mountain	605	1984	-85.5705	34.7294			4
W4A/CP-002	Johnson Top	570	1870	-86.3128	34.9757			4
W4A/CP-003	Brooks Mountain	515	1690	-86.2558	34.8296			2
W4A/CP-004	1650	503	1650	-86.3431	34.7427			2
W4A/CP-005	Summerhouse Mountain	485	1590	-85.7786	34.9631			2
W4A/CP-006	Round Knob	472	1550	-86.2284	34.8146			2
W4A/CP-007	Blount Mountain	472	1550	-86.3222	33.9326			2
W4A/CP-008	Splitrock Mountain	466	1530	-86.2916	34.6427			2
W4A/CP-009	McCoy Mountain	460	1510	-86.2100	34.6595			2
W4A/CP-010	Russell Mountain	460	1510	-85.9134	34.8488			2
W4A/CP-011	Wornock Mountain	436	1429	-86.6979	33.9968			1
W4A/CP-012	Poorhouse Mountain	430	1410	-85.9764	34.7676			1
W4A/CP-013	Gunters Mountain	424	1390	-86.1770	34.5660			1
W4A/CP-014	1390A	424	1390	-86.0597	34.7089			1
W4A/CP-015	1390B	424	1390	-86.3117	34.0849			1
W4A/CP-016	July Mountain	411	1350	-86.0925	34.6476			1
W4A/CP-017	McPherson Mountain	405	1330	-86.6737	33.9995			1

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Ref No.	Summit name	Alt (m)	Alt (ft)	Latitude	Longitude	Valid from Dd/mm/yyyy	Valid to dd/mm/yyyy	Score
W4A/CP-018	Merrill Mountain	381	1250	-86.4098	34.4752			1
W4A/CP-019	Cotton Mountain	381	1250	-86.1317	34.6648			1
W4A/CP-020	Pine Mountain	381	1250	-86.1229	34.6102			1
W4A/CP-021	Dunaway Mountain	378	1239	-86.0845	33.9180			1
W4A/CP-022	Bryant Mountain	357	1170	-86.8351	33.8930			1