

Klewenalp Region

HB/NW-012 / NW-014 / NW-016 / NW-017 / NW-018 / UR-074

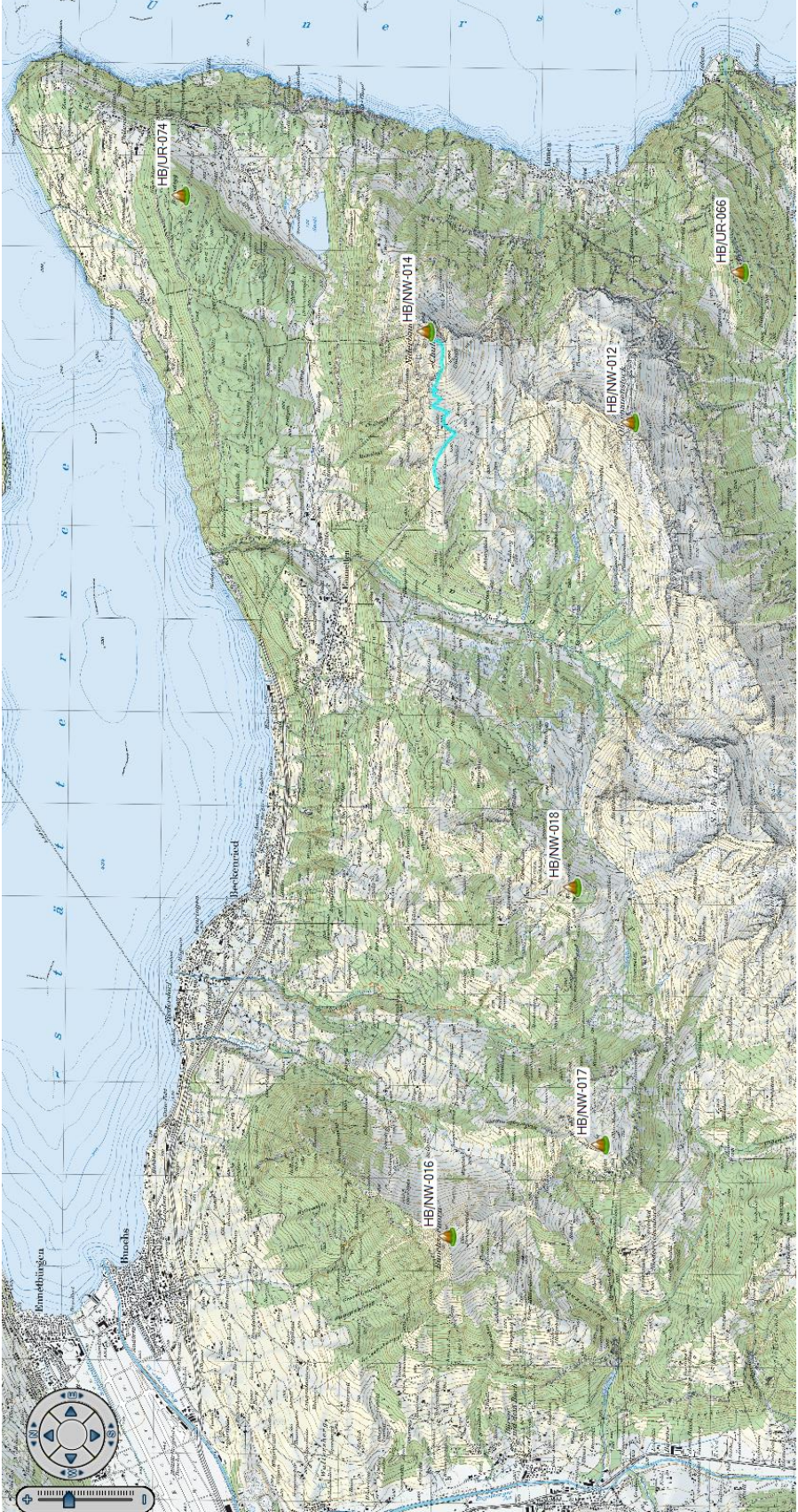
by Paul HB9DST

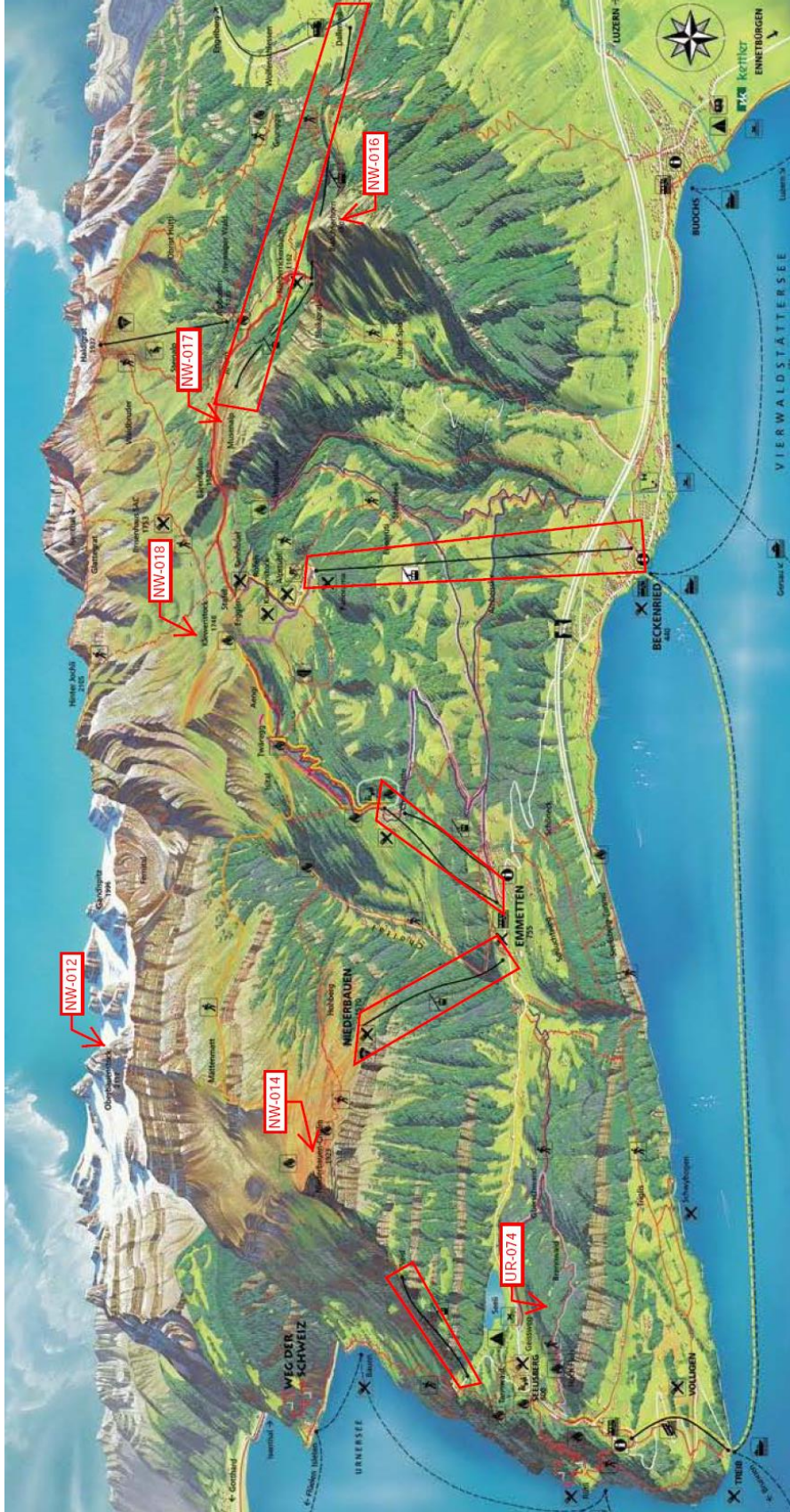
Visitors to Lucerne will frequently hear about Mount Pilatus, which dominates the city skyline, and for SOTA activators Pilatus' nearby summit of Tomlishorn (HB/NW-011) is quite easy. However, about half an hour southeast of Lucerne you will find the attractive Klewenalp Region. It offers a number of SOTAs that are also quite accessible, including two counting for the difficult to activate Canton of Uri (HB/UR-XXX). In addition, on the way there you pass by two additional famous and family-friendly SOTA summits: Stanserhorn HB/NW-015 (which involves riding up a "convertible" open-air gondola) and Bürgenstock HB/NW-019 (where you can ride up Europe's highest open-air elevator).

Getting to the Klewenalp Region is easy with either a car or public transportation (via train, bus or even commercial ferry boat on Lake Lucerne). For most of these summits you are well advised to take one of the cable cars that service the area. These are indicated on the second map below with the red polygons. They vary in seating capacity and frequency, and on a nice day you might spend a bit of time waiting for your turn to ride. In addition, you might elect to enjoy the scenery and do some extra hiking by "mixing and matching" various combinations of summits and cable cars, going up and down from different spots.

The summits to be discussed in this article (in this order) are:

- HB/UR-074 Brandegg (1108 meters)
- HB/NW-014 Niderbauen Chulm (1923 meters)
- HB/NW-012 Oberbauenstock (2117 meters)
- HB/NW-018 Klewenstock (1748 meters)
- HB/NW-017 Musenalper Grat (1785 meters)
- HB/NW-016 Buochserhorn (1807 meters)



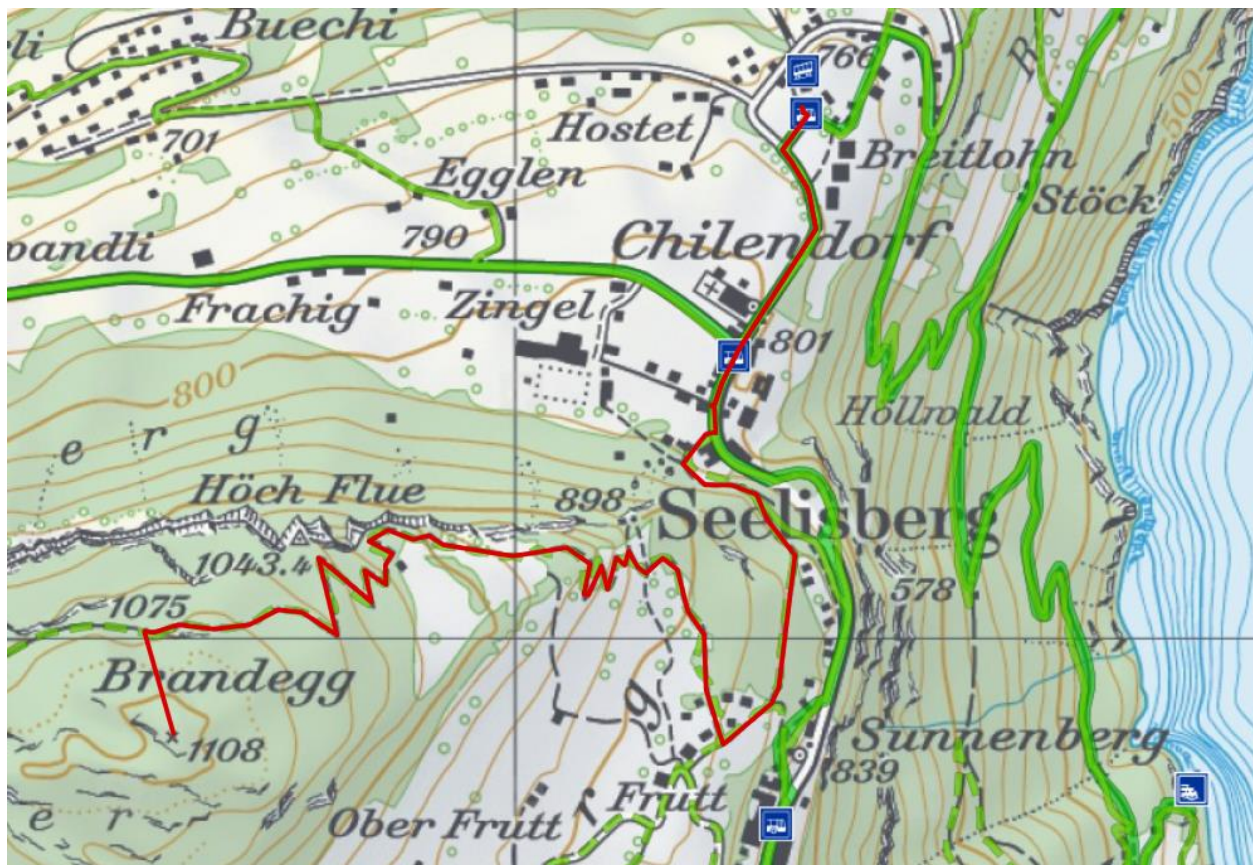


HB/UR-074 Brandegg (1108 meters)

Activation date: May 9, 2013

If you are working on the HB9SOTA Edelweiss certificate/cowbell, you will find that there are few summits in the Canton of Uri that are possible without considerable effort and difficulty. HB/UR-074 is one of them and thus has been activated numerous times.

I did this joint activation with Peter HB9TVK. Our point of departure was Seelisberg, which can be reached by bus or with a funicular railway from the lakeside town of Treib. I took the bus here, and Peter drove his motorcycle to the parking lot for the funicular summit station. The hike up was relatively easy. From Seelisberg you won't find hiking signs going to Brandegg because there is no official hiking trail going to this nondescript summit. Instead, first follow the signs to Höch Flue, continue on the path and then look for the highest point. Having a GPS along will help you know when you are in the activation zone. In our case, we fought through some brush until we were safely within the activation zone. The hike was roughly 3 km with an ascent of 344 meters and took just under an hour.



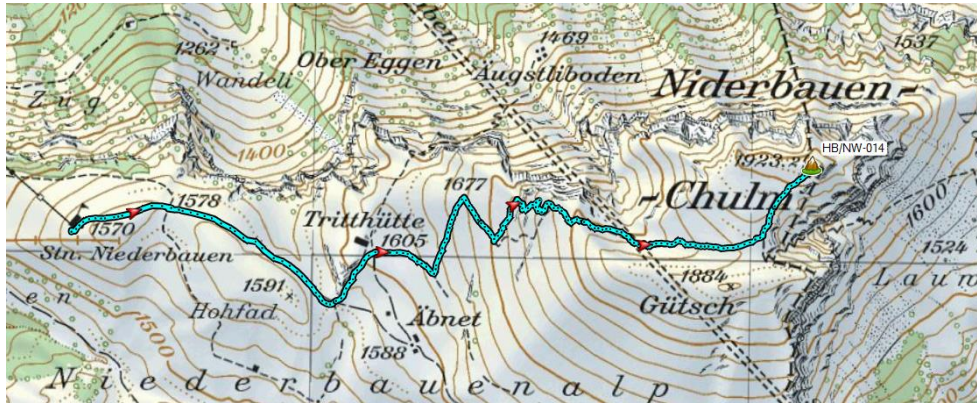


Near Höch Flue on the way to the summit, which itself is in a wooded area with no views at all. To the left in the background: Bürgenstock HB/NW-017, in the middle Vitznauer Stock HB/SZ-036. (photo courtesy of Peter HB9TVK).

HB/NW-014 Niderbauen Chulm (1923 meters)

Activation date: October 1, 2015

This is a very pleasant and only moderately difficult summit -- except if the wind is blowing 50 km/h with gusts exceeding 70 km/h as on the day I chose. The 2.6 km hike has an ascent of 397 meters and took me just a few minutes over an hour. It's a very popular (even on a very windy day), but the activation zone is quite large with plenty of room for antennas.



First you ride the Emmetten/Niderbauen cable car. It holds only 8 people at once, and on a nice day there will be a considerable waiting line (also given the fact that this leads to a popular hang-gliding takeoff point). From the summit station the first half of the hike has only a little gain in elevation, most of the work is in the second half.



Niderbauen gondola valley station, has limited parking and is easily accessible by bus.



View of the summit after getting off the cable car (it's the one in the left rear)



Much of the steep part of the trail is paved with these stones. To the upper right is the summit station of the cable car.



The last third of the hike goes up this slope and then on the ridge to the left.



The activation zone is quite large, which is good because this summit is a popular destination in good weather.

HB/NW-012 Oberbauenstock (2117 meters)

(Not yet activated by HB9DST)

This is the most difficult SOTA of all those in the Klewenstock region. As of late 2015, it has been activated just once, and the reports published on hiker.org give it a rating of at least T4. The logical starting point is once again the summit station of the Niderbauen cable car.



According to wanderland.ch, this hike is 4 km in distance with an ascent of 627 meters. The estimated time required is just over 2 hours. To repeat, however, it is of above average difficulty.

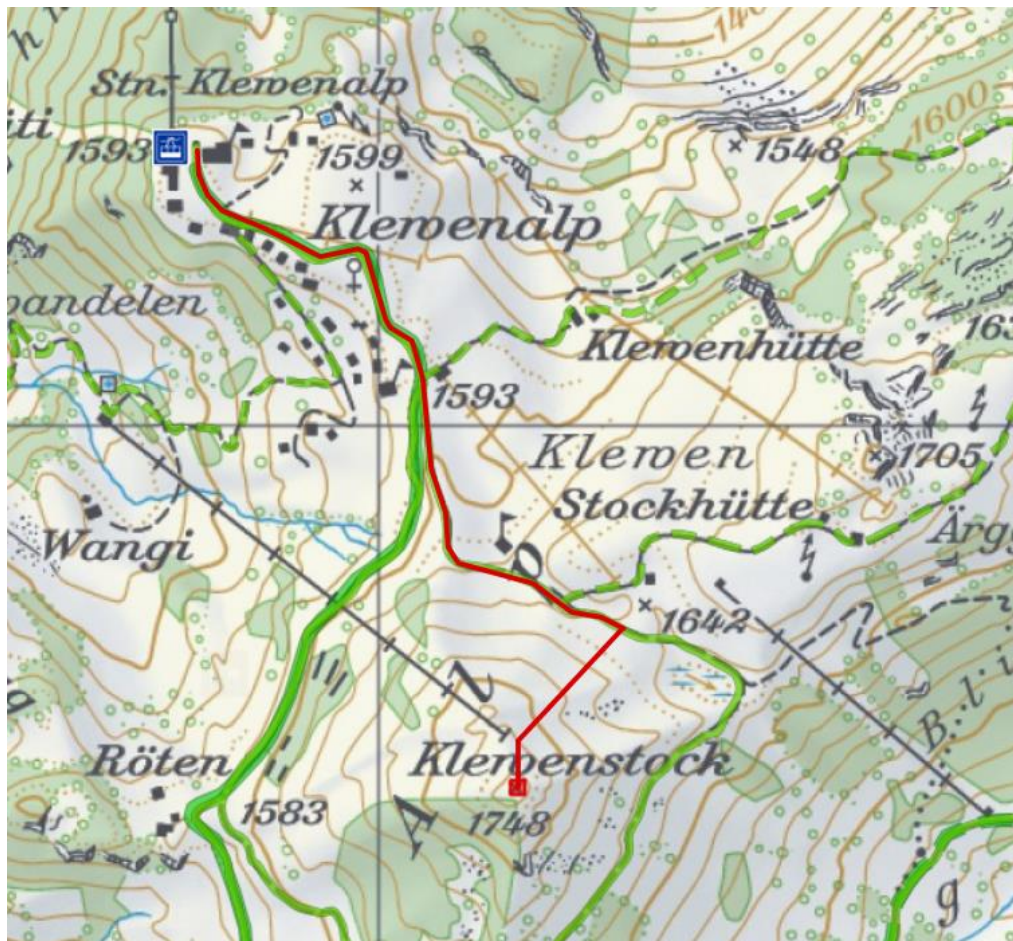


Oberbauenstock as seen from Niderbauen Chulm. You hike up the ridge in the center and approach the summit from the right side in this photo.

HB/NW-018 Klewenstock (1748 meters)

Activation dates: November 2, 2015 / March 13, 2013 (on snowshoes for the Winter bonus)

This is one of the easiest summits in the group. Most efficient is to take the large gondola from Beckenried on the lake up to the Klewenalp summit station. From there, the hike up the summit is about 1.2 km with an ascent of 165 meters and takes roughly half an hour. Note that there is no formal trail for the final approach up the summit, you just hike up a steep grassy slope, but it not the least bit dangerous. In the winter you can even take a chair lift that brings you almost directly to the summit peak, and snowshoes are not necessarily needed.





The activation zone is not huge but has enough space for several antennas, and there are many posts to which you can lash a mast.

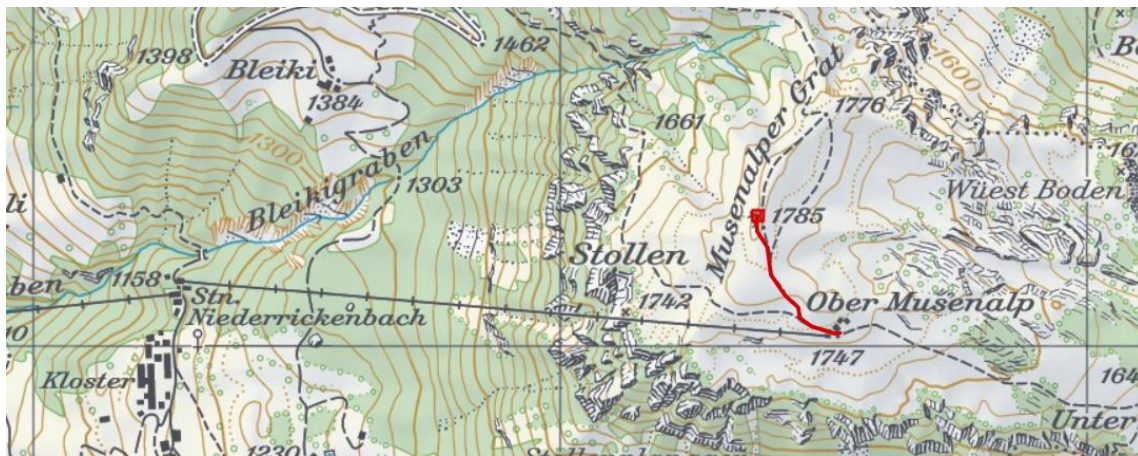


Taken from the summit, the activator here is Uli HB9CGA. In the background you can see the Klewenalp summit station where the hike starts.

HB/NW-017 Musenalper Grat (1785 meters)

Activation date: October 5, 2012

This SOTA is without doubt the easiest of all the ones in the Klewenalp region. You first take the 30-occupant gondola from Dallenwil (on the far western side of the region, just south of Stans) to Niederrickenbach station. You then transfer over to the smaller 4-person Musenalpbahn gondola (meaning possible wait times) that does not run on a set schedule but rather on demand. But on a nice day you don't worry about sufficient demand but instead a long waiting line. This brings you to the Ober Musenalp summit station, where there is a pleasant restaurant for a coffee, beer or small meal. From there, the Musenalper Grat is a trivial hike of 300 meters long, 38 meters ascent and takes less than 10 minutes. Unfortunately, the second cable car runs only until November 1, so snowshoe activations are difficult.



Niederrickenbach (valley) station of the Musenalpbahn, the second cable car which brings you all the way up to the Musenalp summit station. It holds 4 people, so there can be long waiting times on a nice day.



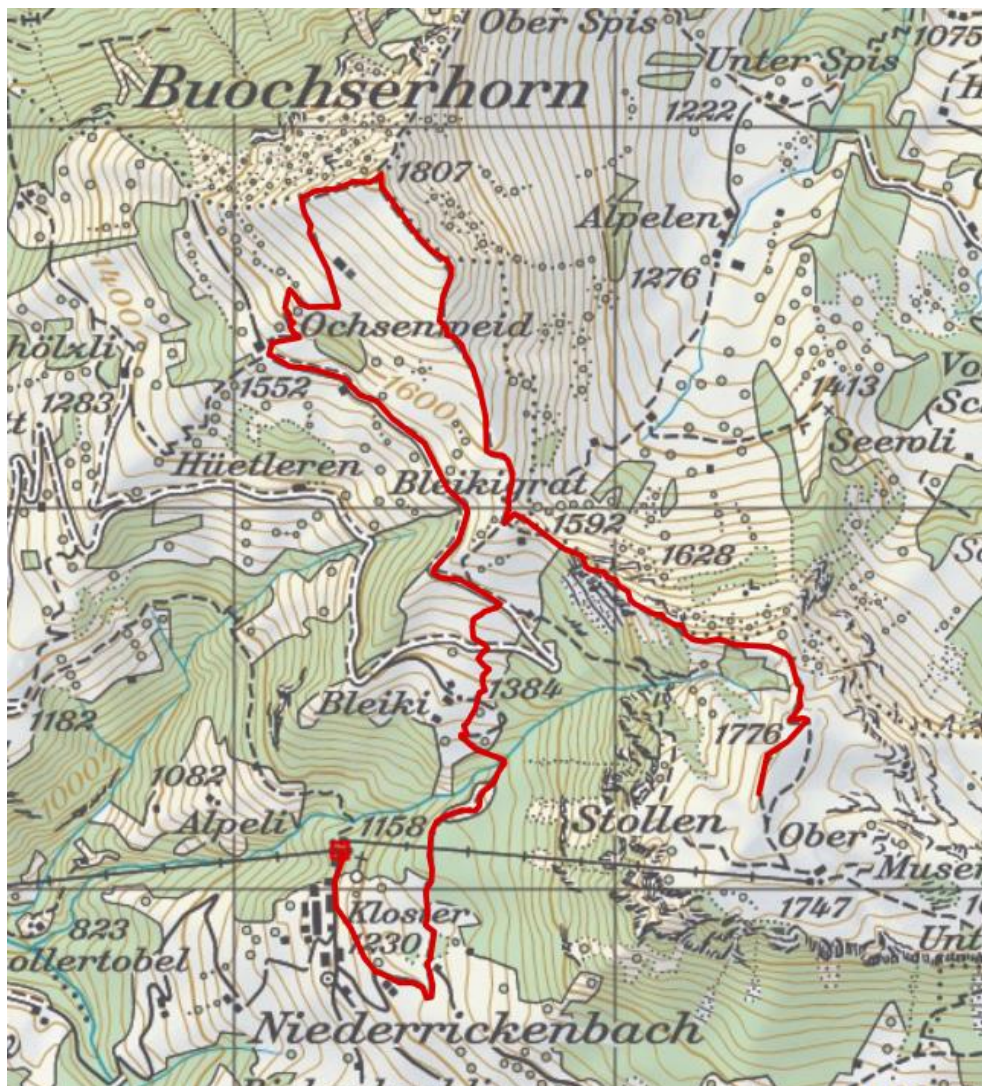
The activation zone on the Musenalper Grat is quite large with room for multiple operators and antennas. Shown is Hugo HB9AFH experimenting with my AlexLoop.

HB/NW-016 Buochserhorn (1807 meters)

Activation date: October 5, 2012

The logical place to depart for Buochserhorn is the Ober Musenalp summit station as described in the writeup for HB/NW-017 Musenalper Grat or, as Hugo HB9AHF and I did, continuing from Musenalper Grat for a double activation on that day. The hike to Buochserhorn is 2.5 km, involving an ascent of 261 meters and takes roughly 75 minutes. Most of the hike is straightforward, but at Bleikigrat there is a rocky section that can be very tricky (do *not* hike across this section when it is wet!).

After the activation, rather than return back to the summit station at Ober Musenalp, we decided to hike down to the middle station at Niederrickenbach. This was just short of 4 km, with a descent of roughly 900 meters and require roughly 2.5 hours. We then took the cable car to the valley where Hugo had parked his car.





View of the Bleikigrat section as seen from Buochserhorn.



One of the trickier sections of the Bleikigrat.



After crossing the Bleikigrat, it's smooth sailing to the Buochserhorn summit seen here.