

HB/VS-110 Eggishorn

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Paul, HB9DST

Summary: I don't generally write reports on activations that simply involve a cable car ride, but in this case I'm making an exception because of the view: you sit overlooking the largest glacier in the Alps, the Aletsch Glacier, which has been named a UNESCO World Heritage site. It is thus a special destination for any visitor as well as a unique SOTA activation.



View of the Aletsch Glacier with HB/VS-110 Eggishorn on the right.

Transport: Once you get to the town of Fiesch (which you can reach by train through Brig), follow the crowds to the nearby cable car station. There is parking available there for those driving. You purchase a round-trip ticket to the top station (Eggishorn, CHF 42.80 round trip), making sure not to get off at the intermediate Fiescheralp station.



Trail from the cable car station, looking up towards the summit. Most of the way it consists just of boulders, so wear good shoes! Hiking poles are also nice to have for balance.

From the summit station, the SOTA is 0.5 km away with an elevation of 75 meters. Much of the way is not really a trail; you make your own way over very large boulders. It's not terribly tricky, but just be prepared, and sturdy footwear is of great help.



The trail up the summit, which is popular destination for families.

The activation zone is relatively large, but because it is made up of a pile of large boulders, it's not easy to set up a dipole. If you can find a place between boulders to jam in a mast you can try to set up a vertical antenna, or you can use a magnetic loop as I did.



My operating position with the Aletsch Glacier in the background. The perfect spot for an activation on a hot summer day. The boulders that make up the summit present a challenge for setting up an antenna.



Looking back at the cable car station from the summit.

There are plenty of other SOTAs in this region, but most of them are not easy summits. However, one interesting combination with Eggishorn is HB/VS-111 Riederhorn. It is just above Riederalp, a car-free town on the mountainside near the mouth of the glacier, but the views aren't as spectacular as from Eggishorn. If you have the time and/or inclination, Riederalp might make not just a second SOTA but a pleasant overnight stay -- do one leisurely activation one day, do the next on the following day and still have plenty of time to get to other destinations.

To get to Riederalp, take the train from Fiesch back towards Brig several stops and get off at Mörel. Then take the cable car through the middle station at Ried-Mörel the whole way up to Riederalp (round trip: CHF 18.80). This is only a sports-based village, not terribly large, but there are a handful of pleasant hotels and you will not have trouble finding a place to eat. And believe me, it will be quiet (i.e. dead still) at night, the only sounds being cowbells. The SOTA summit VS-111 is southwest of the village itself and is a popular hiking destination; it is almost a 2 km hike with 300 meters of elevation and takes approximately an hour to get there. There is a large activation area suited for all types of antennas.

