

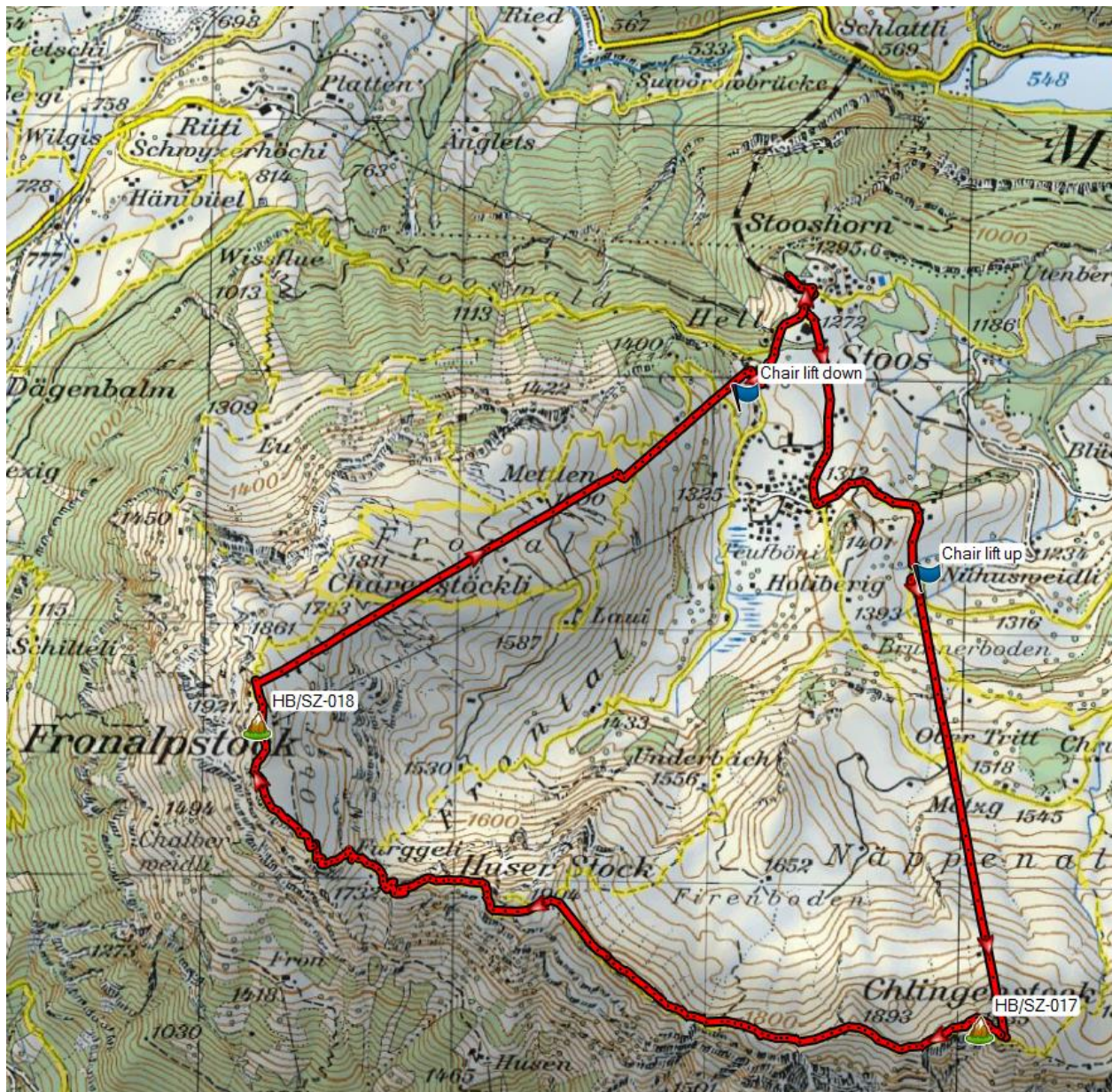
Chlingenstock (HB/SZ-017) and Fronalpstock (HB/SZ-018)

September 2, 2014

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SUMMARY: Highly recommended hike across a ridge from one SOTA to another. It's not overly difficult, yet you get the full Alpine feeling with spectacular views. Visitors love it!

This is one of Switzerland's most popular ridge hikes and attracts plenty of people even if the weather is not the very best. However, if it is rainy I would not recommend going because the rocks can be slippery. While the trail is not normally dangerous at all and is suited for anyone who is reasonably fit, when wet it can be dangerous.



For this activation, you hike for half an hour to the first chair lift which takes you up directly to one activation zone (Chlingenstock), hike for two hours to another activation zone (Fronalpstock), then take a chair lift down to where you started in Stoos. The fact that you start and end in the same place makes this ridge hike particularly attractive to visitors and locals alike, especially if you got there by car. Most ridge hikes take you from Point A to Point B, but then you have to somehow get back to Point A to get to your car again.

In addition, you could instead do the hike going counterclockwise (Fronalpstock to Chlingenstock), but I recommend going clockwise for three primary reasons. First, when hiking along the trail, you get better scenery. Second, there is a restaurant at Fronalpstock, so after doing two activations you certainly deserve a beer (or if it's a windy, chilly day a coffee or hot chocolate and a chance to warm up -- and if you come with others who are not hams, they have a nice place to stay while you're on the air). Third, and as noted, the hike from Stoos to the Chlingenstock chair lift is roughly half an hour while the hike from the Fronalpstock chair lift to Stoos is less than half that; at the end of a hard day, you appreciate a shorter hike.

As mentioned, the trip starts at the car-free village of Stoos, which is an active winter resort. To get to Stoos, you can either take the funicular train from Schlattli (north of Stoos, bus service and some parking), or you take a cablecar from Morschach to the east of Stoos (bus service, parking). Note, the funicular is free if you have a SwissRail pass or equivalent. Also be aware that work is proceeding on a new funicular from Schlattli to replace the existing one. It will be ultra modern with cylindrical cars where the occupants are always level no matter how steep the funicular is traveling -- and that will be necessary because the new route will be as steep as 110 degrees -- claimed the world's steepest. This new funicular is scheduled to go into operation for the 2015/2016 winter season.



Chair lift up to Chlingenstock (SZ-017).

From Stoos you hike to the Chlingenstock chair lift. The price for an all-day ticket that is also good for the ride down with the Fronalpstock chair lift costs CHF 38.00 (or CHF 20.00 if you have a SwissRail pass or equivalent).



View of the SZ-017 activation zone (the cross barely visible at the summit) a few minutes from arriving at the summit station.

On the chair lift to Chlingenstock, you get a good view of the activation zone, which is literally two minutes from the summit station. There is a summit cross for lashing an antenna mast, but be aware that this summit can get very crowded, making it difficult to string an antenna. I lashed my mast to the end of a large picnic table and then strung my wire down the slope away from the people.



HB/SZ-017 activation zone. I was there on a rare weekday with relatively few people. I lashed my antenna mast to the far right side of the picnic table to keep out of their way.

Next you start the 2-hour hike to the other SOTA at Fronalpstock. The trail goes up and down, up and down. Over the entire route you go up/down 350 vertical meters, and most of this comes at the very end: the final stretch before you reach the top is an ascent of 200 vertical meters. This is a very pretty

hike with wonderful views of Lake Lucerne and many other mountain peaks. One of them is Grosser Mythen, HB/SZ-019, which is another of my top recommendations for visitors (see separate PDF report I wrote on that activation). In addition, there are several absolutely lovely spots with picnic tables where you can have a snack and enjoy the scenery.



View of the ridge hike as seen from Chlingenstock. Towards the right you can see a tiny dot on a summit; this is the chair lift/restaurant at SZ-018 Fronalpstock. In the foreground is one of the volunteers who maintains the trail, which is always in very good shape.



One of several spectacularly placed picnic tables along the ridge route.



Two of the visitors I took along this trail, Paul KB9ILT and his XYL Chris, taking a break along the trail and enjoying the scenery. They spent a week in Switzerland, Paul activated a number of summits, but he said "This hike was the highlight of the entire trip."



The trail goes up and down...here a section starting back up...



...and here's the final ascent (roughly 200 vertical meters) to get to SZ-018 Fronalpstock.

The activation zone at Fronalpstock is quite large, and you will have no problem finding a place to stretch out an antenna. The only possible hazard consists of curious cows who might be grazing in the activation zone at the same time and who won't hesitate to come visit you.



My operating position in the activation zone of HB/SZ-018 Fronalpstock; in the background the chair lift station and the restaurant.



A curious cow checking my SWR while operating on Fronalpstock.

After the activation, enjoy a beer or snack at the restaurant that is right next to the activation zone (it's probably even in the activation zone, but overrun with people). Then ride the chair lift back down to Stoos (note: you have to change from one chair lift to another in the middle of the ride down, all included in the price). Hike back to the funicular station, ride it down, and either hop in your car or wait for the bus (runs every half hour in the mid to late afternoon). This double-activation is an all-day trip, but well worth it! And it's even a good one to bring your spouse or partner along. It doesn't get much better than this in terms of beautiful SOTAs.



View of Lake Lucerne from the Fronalpstock restaurant deck.

Switzerland offers several very attractive ridge hikes from one summit to the next. Two that immediately come to mind are Brienzer Rothorn (OW-010) to Arnihaaggen (OW-024), and Stätzer Horn (GR-105) to Piz Danis (GR-104). The one described here, though, is perhaps my favorite.