

## Summits on the Air

# SOTA holidays in the Oberallgäu region in summer 2019

July 13 to 20, 2019

by Markus, HB9DIZ

Where to go after [Bregenzerwald in 2017](#) and [Montafon in 2018](#)? **Oberallgäu** was our choice for 2019, located east of the Bregenzerwald, so not far from home. The Oberallgäu is on the border line between the lower summits of the pre-alps and the top alpine mountains up to about 2,600 m.a.s.l. It's also a border count(ry) in southern Germany, nearby the border to Austria.

The main village is Oberstdorf, an internationally well-known resort and hotspot for ski jumpers. We decided to keep away from the masses and found a nice hotel in Obermaiselstein. This beautiful village is located on a terrace above the valley, so you can see all summits from there, but you are away from any traffic on the main road B19.

Obermaiselstein and the Oberallgäu county are linked by the Riedbergpass col to the Bregenzerwald, so we had a short journey from Bregenz. They had heavy construction work on this road but kept it open on the weekends, this saved us a detour of 60 minutes.



Appetizing view from the balcony of our hotel in Obermaiselstein. The farmer just had cut the grass so it smelled of hay for two days – simply great! Unfortunately he spread manure two days after. That is healthy, but not for our noses, hi.

The SOTA summits are not frequently activated. There are apparently no domestic activators, so the mountains wait for tourists like us . . . or you!

This was the final agenda for our Allgäu holidays:

1. Sun, July 14
  - T2 DL/AL-111, Weiherkopf
  - T2 DL/AL-110, Ochsenkopf
  - T3 DL/AL-108, Riedberger Horn
  - T2 DL/AL-109, Wannenkopf
2. Mon, July 15
  - T4 DL/AL-118, Sipplingerkopf
  - T2 DL/AL-115, Bleicherhorn

3. Tue, July 16 ■ T2 OE/VB-353, Grünhorn  
■ T2 OE/VB-376, Walmendinger Horn
4. Wed, July 17 ■ T4 OE/VB-277, Hoher Ifen
5. Thu, July 18 ■ T4 DL/AL-077, Grosser Daumen
6. Fri, July 19 ■ T2 OE/VB-376, Walmendinger Horn  
■ T2 DL/AL-097, Fellhorn

The difficulty marks ■ (walking, T1 grade, Swiss hiking scale), ■ (mountain hiking, T2/T3 grade) and ■ (alpine hiking, T4/T5/T6 grade) have been determined based on our research resp. personal subjective local experience and express the highest level met.

Subtitles and positions contain clickable web links.



Some sign post fun on the way down from [Hoher Ifen, OE/VB-277](#) – see day 4.



Driving home to Obermaiselstein on day 4 and discovering little paradises like this one here in . . . psst, it's [here](#).

**. . . but first things first now!**

# Day 1

[DL/AL-111, Weiherkopf](#) | [DL/AL-110, Ochsenkopf](#) | [DL/AL-108, Riedberger Horn](#) | [DL/AL-109, Wannenkopf](#) ■ T2 (except T3 for the ascent to Riedberger Horn)

This 4-summits-tour looked easy, but it took its time. The summits are located on a ridge around the Bolgental valley and promised a constant up and down. Since public transportation from the end point Grasgehren back to our hotel was possible only on a Sunday due to roadworks, this was our starter hike. No car today! We even hiked from our hotel to the neighbor village of Bolsterlang to take there the Hörnerbahn lift (3.7 km, 45 minutes).



Activating on #1 Weiherkopf and #2 Ochsenkopf . . .

The trails from the upper station of the lift to Weiherkopf and Ochsenkopf were forest tracks with lots of roots slowing us down. But we had summer temperatures and estimated the shadow. The forest disappeared after leaving Ochsenkopf and made room to marsh areas. There are several nature reserves here and around Wannenkopf. These are place to open your eyes and observe the nature, unless you are busy with SOTA! The marsh reserves are definitely worth coming back later.



. . . and continuing on the summit meadow of #3 Riedberger Horn and with some raindrops just below #4 Wannenkopf.

The ridge from the saddle after Ochsenkopf up to the Riedberger Horn is the wildest part of the hike, steep and rocky in parts. We met a couple with a dog asking us if the trail was suitable for the dog. We saw them later on: the dog was happy, but the couple looked exhausted, hi. There is an easier lower trail, so you can bypass this ridge. But you would miss the marvelous outlooks to the Nagelfluhkette ridge then where we had hiked for SOTA [two years before](#). The Riedberger Horn is the

culminating point of the hike. You can see the Lake of Constance from there and even the Swiss mountains around Säntis. The trail to the last summit Wannenkopf is easy but 3 kilometers long.

We had managed to escape from some black clouds so far, but finally had some raindrops keeping the last activation short. The descent to the ski station Grasgehren is steep in parts. We had to be there by 1700 hours to catch the last bus down to Obermaiselstein. Yep, we managed to be there 15 minutes earlier. And the bus stop in the village was just nearby our hotel. Happy tourists!

Facts & figures (distances and time are always "one-way", measured in the mentioned direction):

- Activations so far: Weiherkopf: 4; Ochsenkopf: 4; Riedberger Horn: 16; Wannenkopf: 10.
- Waypoint: parking lot of the Hörnerbahn lift in Bolsterlang: [47.462732](#), [10.227586](#).
- Waypoint: bus stop and parking lot at Grasgehren: [47.443108](#), [10.176128](#).
- Hiking parameters of the full tour: ascents of 690 m, descents of 760 m, distance of 10.3 km.
- From Hörnerbahn top station to Weiherkopf: ascent of 150 m, distance of 0.7 km, 20 minutes.
- From Weiherkopf to Ochsenkopf: descent of 150 m, ascent of 150 m, distance of 1.7 km, 60 minutes.
- From Ochsenkopf to Riedberger Horn: descent of 150 m, ascent of 230 m, distance of 2.5 km, 85 minutes.
- From Riedberger Horn to Wannenkopf: descent of 200 m, ascent of 160 m, distance of 3.1 km, 60 minutes.
- From Wannenkopf to Grasgehren, bus stop: descent of 260 m, distance of 2.3 km, 50 minutes.

## Day 2

**[DL/AL-118, Sip\(p\)lingerkopf](#)**  
and **[DL/AL-115, Bleicherhorn](#)**

■ T4

■ T2

The weather forecast for day 2 suggested to go north from our headquarter in Obermaiselstein due to uncertain weather around Kleinwalsertal. So we opted for Siplingerkopf and Bleicherhorn today. There is a car park nearby Höllritzer Alpe, accessible via a toll road behind Gunzesrieder Säge (day fare for all roads behind the gate: EUR 8, 2019). There are many curious cows around the car park, but the cars are behind a solid rope.



Siplingerkopf from Obere Wilhelminenalpe, and HB9DIZ on the narrow trail to the summit.

The Siplingerkopf is one of these summits in the marvelous molasse ridges around the nature park Nagelfluhkette. So we were sure to hike also with our eyes. The first part to Obere Wilhelminenalpe is a good alp road, but I was surprised a bit to see the trail marked blue-white. The last part of about 30 minutes is a narrow zig-zag trail within a grassy slope, viable without any problems in my opinion, but you should not stumble and not hike there when wet, so don't hurry there. The landscape opens to a meadow with the summit and you will be surprised to meet again cows there! We were happy to see the dark clouds elsewhere. There are many fence posts and a sign post to attach your mast.



The summit zone of Siplingerkopf.

The trail to the Bleicherhorn branches off between the car park and Obere Wilhelminenalpe already. It is an easy trail but with log stairs in the steeper parts. We had a stiff breeze on this summit, so I mounted the antenna mast nearby some trees. Beautiful views from Siplingerkopf and Bleicherhorn to many other summits to be visited during these holidays.



Liseli, Betty and Josephine obviously have their own trail to the Siplingerkopf – I hadn't seen them on the blue-white trail!

#### Facts & figures:

- Activations so far: Siplingerkopf: 4; Bleicherhorn: 4.
- Waypoint: parking lot at Höllritzer Alpe: [47.475328](#), [10.151216](#).
- Waypoint: gate for the toll road nearby the village of Gunzesried (take coins for EUR 8 with you): [47.505267](#), [10.185619](#).
- Hiking parameters of the full tour: ascents 690 m, descents 760 m, distance 10.3 km, 100 minutes to Siplingerkopf, 75 minutes from Siplingerkopf to Bleicherhorn.

## Day 3

[OE/VB-353, Grünhorn](#)

■ T2

and [OE/VB-376, Walmendinger Horn](#)

■ T2

Weather conditions were much better for the Kleinwalsertal valley on the next day, so we opted for Grünhorn and Walmendinger Horn. A double activation is easy here under general conditions, since the Walmendinger horn is the top station of a cable car based in the village of Mittelberg, so one summit should be plus-minus for free, hi.

We started for Grünhorn from the top station of Walmendinger Horn. You descend about 200 m first and follow the flank of the northern ridge of the valley for several kilometers. The trail is not difficult, but you need some shape to do the five kilometers on both directions. We did the ascent from the trail node Ochsenhofer Scharte via Starzeljoch and descended from Grünhorn directly back to the Ochsenhofer Scharte. The ridge between Starzeljoch and Grünhorn is a bit narrow in parts, but well viable for general hikers and really beautiful, with outlooks to the adjacent Bregenzerwald valley and summits. Due to the Flysch ground, the region is grassy and full of flowers, so this activation is also for your eyes.



Final ascent to the Grünhorn summit from Starzeljoch.

There is a sign-post on the summit beside the summit cross, so I was happy there with my 10-m-mast and the EFHW. I was number 2 on this summit, and one of my chasers was Paul, DL6FBK, who had been the first activator of Grünhorn, so this was a special SOTA complete for him with the minimum of the first two activations. The ridge trail could be continued towards Steinmandl and Kreuzmandl, but this is only for experienced hikers and a blue-white trail.

The direct descent to the east, aside a remaining snow patch, was steep in the first part but saved some time back to the trail head resp. to the other summit. Consider that you have to master a final ascent of >200 m at the end, and the 5.8 km back to the trail head take their time.

The activation of the Walmendinger Horn itself started well, but I remained at 3 chaser contacts on the first band despite longer CQ calls. Unfortunately, SOTAwatch had a failure just then, no spots made it to the spotting website display any longer, despite trying all possible means: website, spotter, APRS2SOTA or SMS. We had finally to leave the summit with 3 contacts only, since the last gondola would leave the summit in 10 minutes . . . so désolé: Switzerland, 0 points! The summit itself offers great views to all sides, especially on [Hoher Ifen, OE/VB-277](#), the funny summit of our next day.



#### Facts & figures:

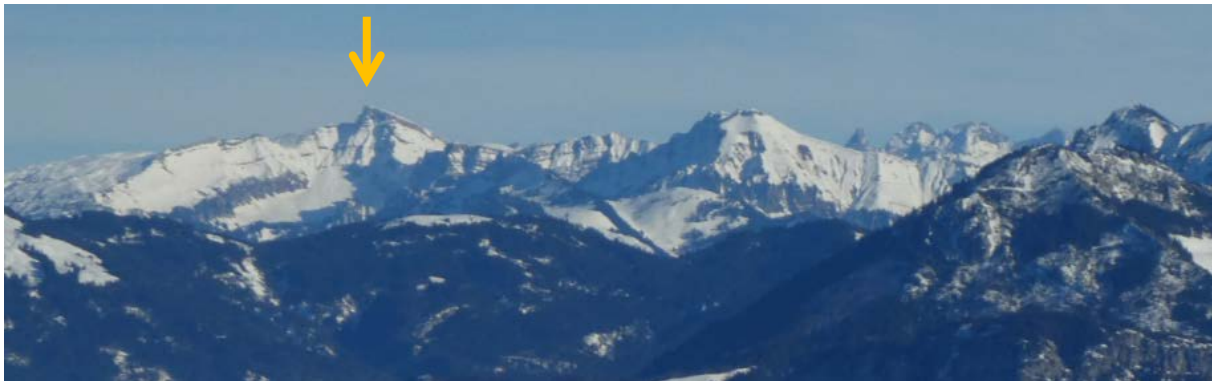
- Activations so far: Grünhorn: 2; Walmendinger Horn: 12.
- Waypoint: parking lot of Walmendingerhornbahn in Mittelberg, Kleinwalsertal: [47.322940, 10.151920](#).
- Hiking parameters from the top station of Walmendingerhornbahn: for Grünhorn: ascent/descent of 560 m, distance of 5.8 km, 2.75 hours up; for Walmendinger Horn itself: ascent/descent of 25 m, distance of 280 m, 7 minutes up.

## Day 4

### OE/VB-277, Hoher Ifen

■ T4

Hoher Ifen is the name of a funny mountain located in the Kleinwalsertal valley. You can recognize it from far from any direction. It looks like an elevated table or an emerging submarine, and someone named it even an inclined lasagne, hi.



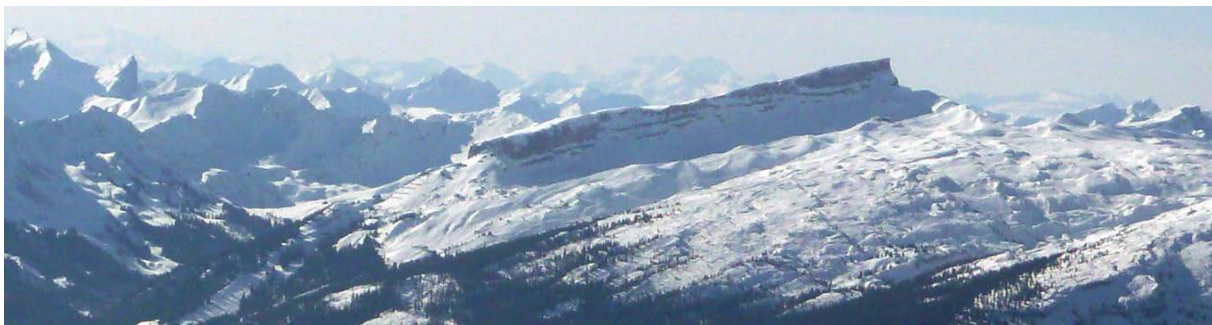
View from the west, from St. Anton Oberegg, Switzerland.



View from the south-east, from the Walmendinger Horn summit, [SOTA OE/VB-376](#), Austria.



View from the west, from the Diedamskopf summit, [SOTA OE/NB-473](#), Austria.



From the north-east, from the Nebelhorn summit (no SOTA), Germany.

Doing SOTA now, it was only a question of time for a hike to the summit of Hoher Ifen. It offers 10 points, and the views from the top, but also from the ascents, merit also 10 points. We started at the big car park nearby Auenhütte, just aside the village of Hirschegg, and took the Ifenbahn gondola to the hut Ifenhütte. This safes you 300 m of ascent, but still 650 m resp. 2 hours of hiking remain since only the lower section of the Ifenbahn gondola is run during the summer period. There is a sign-post for Hoher Ifen nearby the top station, so no chance to get lost.



Looking back after 20 minutes. The hikers aiming to Hahnenköpfe and Gottesackerplateau are still on the same path.

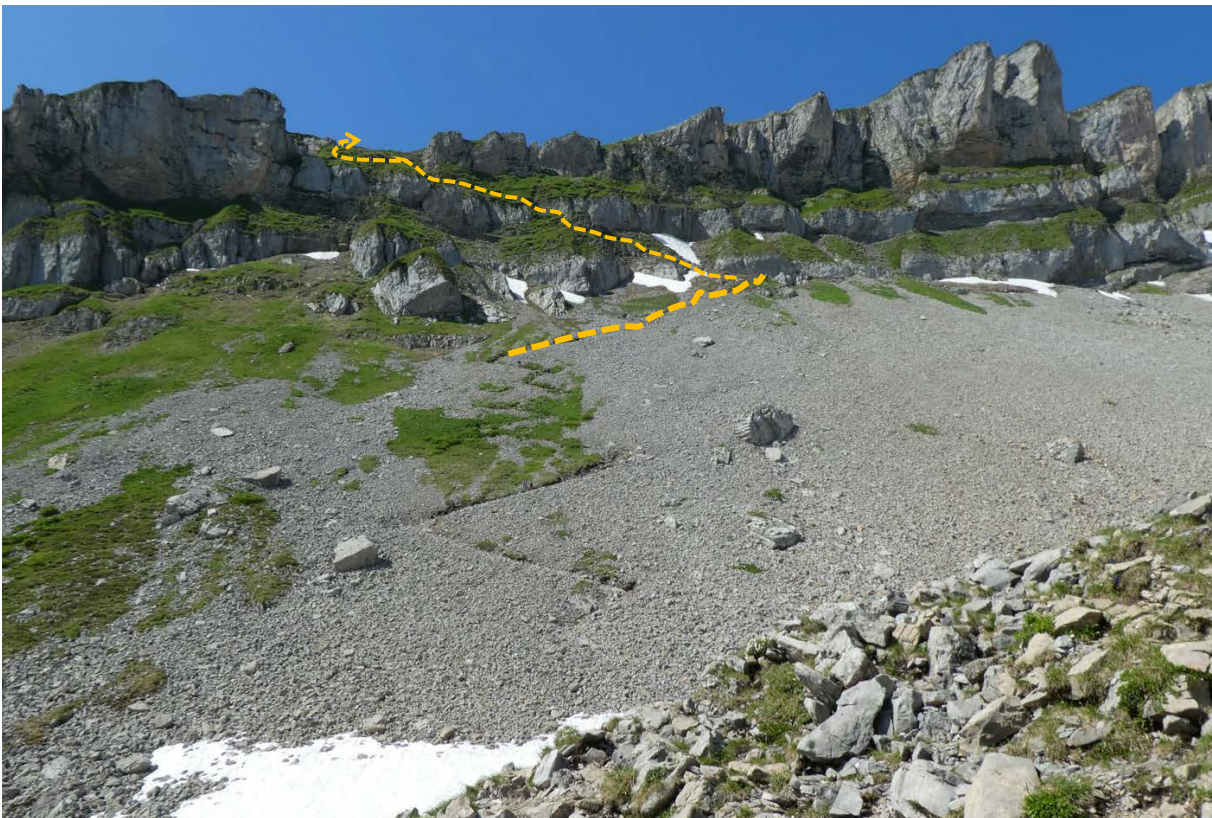
There is another reason for not getting lost: consider that you won't be alone, this hike is very popular, despite the spicier parts in the side wall of this mighty table. The trail is an alpine trail with blue-white signs, but it is very well maintained and viable. Just be careful and hike or take pictures, but not both at the same time. I've even rated the part with the steel ropes more comfortable than the slippery lower part through the pebble.

The last part on top of the table is quite easy, and you could even forget the breathtaking ascent. There are only few possibilities to attach a mast beside the summit cross like some border stones of the Austrian-German border. The activation on 20 m, 40 m and 2 m provided nice contacts, and I was happy to catch Sylvia and Peter on their summit somewhere in Styria.





Marvelous views northwards from Hoher Ifen over the Gottesacker plateau to the Obere Gottesackerwände ridge, with SOTA summit Sonnenberg, [DL/AL-101](#), in the middle. There were still some snow patches on the plateau at the end of July, so it was a good decision to prefer Hoher Ifen to this karst labyrinth.



View of the zigzag ascent through the wall (about 130 vertical m from this location, elsewhere up to 350 m). It looks awkward from far, but it was well viable for me despite limited ibex abilities.

We took the same way back to the trail head, except for a short detour to visit Ifenhütte for a dessert.

### Facts & figures:

- Activations so far: Hoher Ifen: 6.
- Waypoint: parking lot nearby Auenhütte, located north of Hirschegg, Kleinwalsertal: [47.342881, 10.138497](#).
- Hiking parameters from the intermediary station Ifenhütte of Ifenbahn ascent/descent of 615 m, distance of 3.3 km, 2 hours up.

## Day 5

### DL/AL-077, Grosser Daumen

■ T4

This hike to the "Big Thumb" is a solid ■ T3 under regular summer conditions, but we rated this T4 because a big snow mound covered the saddle between the exit of the Hindelanger ferrata and the last ascent to the Daumen summit, so we had to bypass the snow over rockier terrain without any trail traces. We had to cross more than ten smaller or bigger snow patches on this hike.

We took our car and drove down from Obermaiselstein to the nearby main village Oberstdorf. We took there the Nebelhorn cablecar and left it at the intermediary station Höfats located at 1932 m.a.s.l.

Don't get fooled by an ascent of only 340 m and a distance of 4.6 km. It took us 2.5 hours up and 2 hours down. The trail is a constant up and down over a stony ground in a very stony valley, so you have to be careful where to place your feet. But the views are great! Watch the climbers on the very long ferrata Hindelanger Klettersteig moving from the Nebelhorn summit eastwards to the Grosser Daumen. Doing the ferrata would enable you to activate also the [Wengenkopf summit, DL/AL-076](#), but this is certainly a tough combination.



Zooming up to the horizon with a group of hikers on the ferrata on an intermediary section of the Hindelanger Klettersteig.

The summit zone is surprisingly wide and offers a sign-post as your mast support. The terrain is quite open to the valley in the north, so I started the activation on 2 m FM. But only Mike, DJ5AV, caught me here, no other takers, so I had to erect the big tools. 13 further contacts came into the log. The summit was very peaceful, with playing marmots (and a playing radio operator, hi).



Left: Typical terrain again and again on the main parts of this hike. – Right: This snow mound had still covered the regular trail up to the last saddle. DIZ smiled here, but it was tricky for me to bypass it and not too far from the end of my comfort zone.



The ample summit zone of Grosser Daumen with a view to the north. The summit was not only very peaceful but also pleasant due to some marmots goofing around on the meadows. Thumbs up for Grosser Daumen!

We had to check the clock carefully to be back in time for the last cablecar service at station Höfatsblick. Back in Obermaiselstein we had earned two big Germknödels.



#### Facts & figures:

- Activations so far for Grosser Daumen: 6.
- Waypoint: trail head at intermediary station Höfatsblick of Nebelhornbahn, Oberstdorf: [47.414434, 10.347122](https://www.garmin.com/en-US/quickstart/waypoint/47.414434,10.347122).
- Hiking parameters from Höfatsblick of Nebelhornbahn: ascent of 340 m, distance of 4.6 km, 2.5 hours up, 2 hours down.

## Day 6

**OE/VB-376 Walmendinger Horn**

■ T2

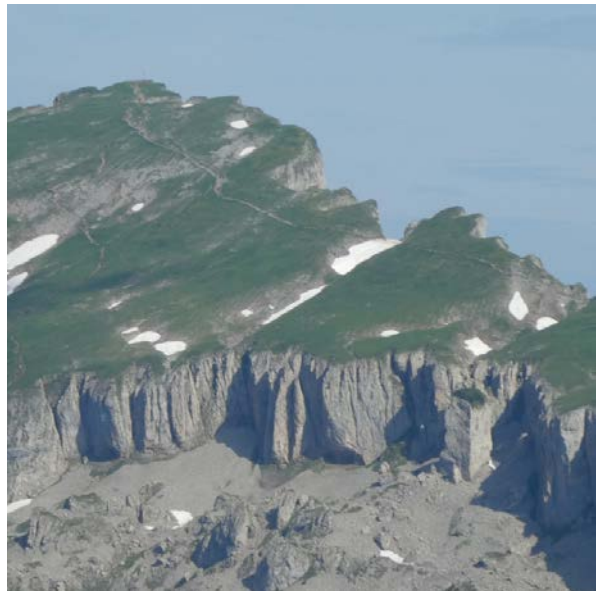
**DL/AL-097, Fellhorn**

■ T2

The proper activation of the Walmendinger Horn brought us back to the Kleinwalsertal valley for a third time. I was successful this time with a collection of 15 frequent chasers on 40 m.



View to the east on the top of the Walmendinger Horn with the cablecar station and the restaurant just below the summit



Activating on a comfy bench on the Walmendinger Horn with splendid views to the core zone of the highest summits of the Allgäuer Alps like from a balcony. On the right side a good insight on the last and easy section of the ascent to the summit of Hoher Ifen after having crossed the side wall two days ago.

We drove back to Oberstdorf and into the next valley to the right side. There is a large access road to the bottom station Faistenoy of the two Fellhorn cablecars. The gondola was not running, so we took the big cablecar and were up after about 15 minutes and two sections.

There is a short and easy trail to the real summit with the cross. So expect lots of people there enjoying the view and the flowers. Like on Grünhorn the ground of Flysch is a good base for meadows full of alpine flowers.

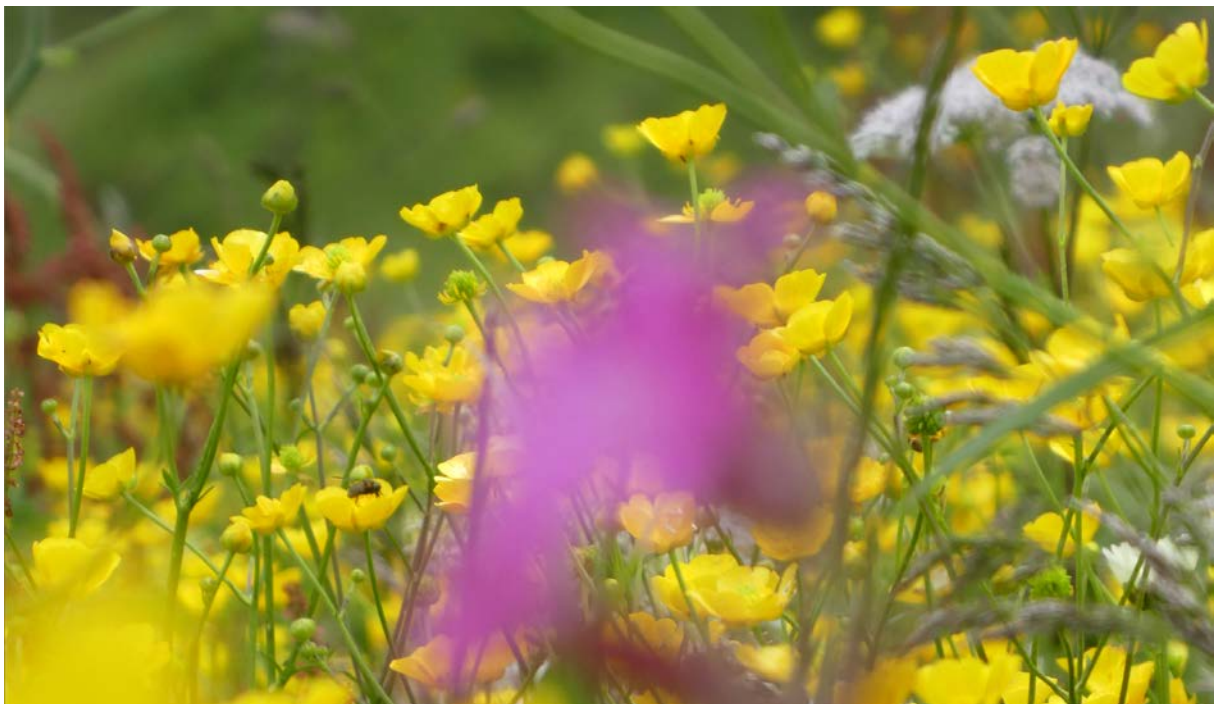
There are many fence posts and a sign post on the top. I erected the mast with the 20 m of EFHW just behind the fence and sat on the border of the trail, just some meters below the summit. This was a good choice, and I didn't catch anyone with my wires.



View from the top of Fellhorn back on the easy trail from the top station of the cablecar in the middle of the picture. This trail is not cleared in the winter period. – The arrow marks the top station of the Kanzelwand gondola starting in Riezlern on the Austrian side of Kleinwalsertal.

#### Facts & figures:

- Activations so far for Fellhorn: 19.
- Waypoint: bottom station of the Fellhorn cablecars, 9 km south of Oberstdorf: [47.352600, 10.263324](#).
- Hiking parameters from the top station of Fellhornbahn: ascent of 60 m, distance of 400 m, 10 minutes.



Flower carpets nearby the trail down to the intermediary station.

**We could not realize all SOTA ideas** due to weather conditions, external circumstances or switched priorities.

Due to the mentioned road construction work we had to cancel an activation of **Besler, DL/AL-105**, a versatile ridge south of Riedbergpass col. There is a very short ferrata to reach the summit that can be bypassed on a regular trail. The ferrata sounded interesting, but we'd have had an additional ascent of 2 hours from Obermaiselstein what I rated too risky for me in addition to the ferrata.



Besler in the background on the left side, seen from Grasgehren ski station, nearby the Riedbergpass col.

The repeated activation of the Walmendinger Horn prevented an activation of the **Kackenköpfe, DL/AL-104**, on the last day – a series of stubborn hills with only one activation so far, nearby the German-Austrian border and no proper way to the summit. Kackenköpfe has sounded funny for us, since this could be translated as “shit heads”, hi, but the word is based on a different linguistic root.



The Kackenköpfe have three heads, the SOTA summit DL/AL-104 is the one on the right side, just above the Alpe Osterberg hut (encircled).

## So we are looking back . . .



. . . on another week of marvelous SOTA summer holidays. We can recommend this region for its variety of easier and (a bit) tougher activations. Our hotel Berwanger Hof was great and offered a supporting infrastructure for the non-SOTA aspects of life like good cuisine and comfy rooms. The owner offers a technical backstage sightseeing to their guests, and that was really interesting!

Touristic information (in German, didn't find it in English, but they speak English and the landscape doesn't need any translation, hi): <https://www.oberallgaeu.de/>.



73 from HB9DIZ – me looking forward and keeping the boots ready for a joyful trip in summer 2020 soon!

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