



MOUNTAINS IN MOTION

PRESS RELEASE

Ski areas and climate change: professionals to respect environmental commitments to preserve the mountains

Grenoble, October 8, 2020 - Because they are in the front of the line for global warming and are facing radical changes to come, French ski areas and their national association unveiled their environmental roadmap including 16 green commitments to preserve the mountains. During their annual congress in Grenoble, they committed to implementing concrete measures in terms of climate and greenhouse gas emissions, water management, biodiversity protection, and landscape preservation. One of the objectives set by French ski areas is to achieve carbon neutrality by 2037, with zero CO₂ emissions.

The following green commitments, adopted today in Grenoble, will be respected by all companies in the sector.

1 - Climate and Energy

In terms of climate, the cornerstone of these commitments, the companies decided to set an ambitious trajectory: reaching carbon neutrality in ski areas by 2037 with zero CO₂ emissions.

Today, 95% of ski area GHG emissions are linked to the use of diesel-run snow groomers. Ski lifts are decarbonated because they run on electricity. A new energy model for snow groomers must therefore be built. After consulting with manufacturers and scientists, hydrogen has emerged as the only option that meets the extreme operating conditions. Prototypes will be unveiled in three to five years.

This solution implies that elected officials will promote the creation of production sites and green hydrogen distribution systems in the valleys, which may also be used for public transportation and trucks. The air you breathe will be all the better.

In order to measure the progress of this plan, all ski areas will have assessed their carbon footprint within three years.

Within five years, and without waiting for hydrogen technology, all ski areas will have trained their groomer drivers in green driving, reducing diesel consumption and carbon emissions by 5 to 10%.

Ski areas also intend to develop energy sobriety, including in terms of electricity.

- Within two years, all chairlift, gondola lift, and cable car drivers will have been trained in green operations, which will reduce electricity consumption by 10 to 20%.
- Finally, a reasoned operation of the ski lifts will be generalized: outside periods of high activity, redundant lifts will be closed as long as this does not impact the number of open pistes

2 - Water and agriculture

In terms of water management, which is a strategic point as snow production depends on it, ski areas are going to balance withdrawals over time by storing water as soon as the annual snow production requires more than 100,000m³ of water

Because ski areas are aware that water is precious, they are committed to rolling out a plan to save this resource: operators with a fleet of more than six groomers shall measure the height of snow at different points on the pistes to optimize the volume of snow produced throughout the season

Finally, to support alpine pastures in ski areas, whenever there is a drought, ski areas with a stock of water will share the resource with animal farmers in their area but also reserve the stock for fire protection and drinking water if necessary

3 - Biodiversity

In terms of biodiversity, another major ecological issue, professionals will generalize some current measures to better preserve fauna and flora:

Within five years, each operator will have inventoried environmental data for the natural areas in question including fauna, flora, wetlands, wintering areas, breeding areas, and more This inventory will be updated in areas where work is undertaken.

The ski areas also wish to provide greater protection for large birds, in particular the black grouse in the Alps and the western capercaillie in the Pyrenees. These birds sometimes injure themselves when hitting ski lift ropes. Within five years, 100% of ropeway sections where mountain galliformes risk colliding with the ropes will be equipped with visual markers.

4 - Landscapes

In terms of landscapes, ski area operators recognize the role they play in attracting tourists to the mountains. They, therefore, intend to allow nature to flourish after construction work by planting vegetation over 100% of the area where work was carried out. Only endemic seeds will be used.

Dismantling obsolete installations is one of this plan's major projects. Starting in summer 2021, a system will be rolled out to eliminate abandoned ski lifts. The goal is to remove a minimum of three installations per year by 2023.

5 - Waste

Finally, in terms of waste, the 200 members undertake to organize at least one pick-up operation each year at each resort/site. In partnership with associations, they will roll out initiatives to raise skier and hiker awareness to reduce waste.

Alexandre Maulin, President of Domaines Skiabiles de France, France's National Ski Areas Association: *"Ski area managers are in the front of the line to observe the impact of global warming on the mountains: melting glaciers, falling rocks, thawing permafrost, increased variability of snowfall. Our activity plays a key role in mountain development, as our sector provides jobs for 120,000 people, in addition to indirect jobs in the valleys. Our responsibility is to act now and to act collectively because we hold the future of our children, our business, and our regions in our hands. We won't be able to stop global warming on our own. This is a global problem that requires global commitments, but we and all*

our partners—elected representatives, ski schools, accommodation providers, sports shops, technical partners, and all other professionals in the regions—have decided to lead this transition to preserve our Mother Earth. In terms of climate, the cornerstone of these commitments, we decided to set an ambitious date to reach carbon neutrality in our sector by 2037 with zero CO₂ emissions. ”

Anne Marty, vice-president of Domaines Skiabiles de France: *“For the first time, an entire sector is coming together to preserve and maintain their operations. Developing DSF’s environmental roadmap has mobilized all 250 members of our professional organization. It is the result of two years’ work and it applies to all ski lift companies and ski area operators, whether they are public or private entities and regardless of their size and where they are located in France. All members, mountain range by mountain range, have deemed these green commitments to be feasible through a democratic voting process.”*

To review the press conference given on October 2 presenting the 16 green commitments,
go to <https://vimeo.com/463747073>

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Domaines Skiabiles de France (DSF) is a professional organization for ski area operators. Today it has 412 members distributed as follows: 238 active members including ski lift or ski area operators and around 175 correspondent members including suppliers, manufacturers, builders, training centers, and contractors. Ski areas are the main reason why mountain resorts maintain attractiveness. As major players in resort dynamics, they determine the local economy (shopkeepers, accommodation providers, ski and mountain professionals, etc.). Their operations are essential to create jobs and maintain a social life in these rural areas. Called the largest ski area in Europe, France has 250 alpine ski resorts (Data: France Montagnes) and around 200 ski area operating companies. Ski area operations in France represents more than a billion euros in annual revenue, 55 million skier days, 18,000 direct jobs, and more than 120,000 indirect jobs. French ski resorts represent a market estimated at €10 billion in spending by 10 million tourists www.domaines-skiabiles.fr