

BeActive... BeOutdoors... BeSustainable...



A report into broader
sustainability issues for
outdoor sports



SEE

SUSTAINABILITY AND
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
IN OUTDOOR SPORTS



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ENOS
European Network
of Outdoor Sports





Project Partners



Generalitat
de Catalunya



Authors

Mike McClure
Barbara Eigenschenk
Estela Farias
Benjamin Billet
Jeanette Uner
Alberto Robles

Supplementary
information
provided by:
Tilman Sobel
Ywann Le Marie
Hans Stoops
Jean Esselström

Project Partners

Leave No Trace Ireland (Ireland) (*Lead partner*)
CREPS Rhone Alpes (France)
EUROPARC Federation (Germany)
Folkungaland (Sweden)
INEFC (Catalonia, Spain)
Sport Northern Ireland (UK)
Surf Clube de Viana (Portugal)
Tara Mountain Club (Serbia)
Technical University Munich (Germany)
IMBA Europe (Netherlands)

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INTRODUCTION

The SEE project – Sustainability and Environmental Education in outdoor sports - will promote education in and through sport with special focus on skills development for outdoor sports professionals such as outdoor sports trainers, guides or instructors.

The project seeks to understand the impacts that outdoor sports can create in natural and protected areas as well as more globally with respect to climate change etc. It also seeks to identify good practice from within the sector and then develop resources and methodologies to share knowledge and develop skills to support greater environmental responsibility by outdoor sports practitioners.

The project has been divided into 4 key work packages as well as the administration of the project (WPO).



WP1 involves research into the current situation in sustainability and environmental education in outdoor sport federations in Europe.



WP2 is the development of a toolkit targeted towards those who train outdoor sports leaders, coaches and guides. It will share good practice and include dynamic and interactive methods for education on the environment that have been developed through an exchange programme.



WP3 is the testing of the toolkit using real life projects; based on this knowledge the toolkit will be revised and updated.



WP4 is the dissemination the outputs and share the lessons learned widely across the outdoor sports sector in Europe.

This report outlines some of the initial findings from Work Package 1.



CONTEXT

THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL

The European Green Deal is a set of policy initiatives and goals with the aim to make Europe sustainable, achieve no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use. It also aims to protect, conserve and enhance the EU's natural capital, and protect the health and well-being of citizens from environment-related risks and impacts.

The Green Deal is an integral part of this Commission's strategy to implement the United Nations' 2030 Agenda and the sustainable development goals¹. As part of the Green Deal, the Commission will refocus to put sustainability and the well-being of citizens at the centre of economic policy, and the sustainable development goals at the heart of the EU's policymaking and action.

Outdoor sports and physical activity in natural settings have the ability to connect people to nature and create strong empathy for environmental issues; however, outdoor sports enthusiasts can also have impacts on the local and global environment. Other aspects of the SEE project have been dealing with the issues that outdoor sports can create on the natural environment and especially protected areas at a local level and so this report will look at those broader / global issues often but not solely associated with emissions of greenhouse gases and associated climate change.

It would be incongruous to reduce and mitigate our impacts on the natural environment at a local level if we are driven by consumerism and the desire to travel and show little consideration for our larger global impacts.

¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>



There are nine key areas where outdoor sports practitioners can have impacts (although this is not exhaustive) and each of these will be examined in the report:



- ① Mobility and Travel



- ② Equipment and Consumption



- ③ Waste and use of unsustainable materials



- ④ Infrastructure



- ⑤ Food and drink



- ⑥ Social media and communication



- ⑦ Events – problem or opportunity+



- ⑧ Environmental and nature connectedness



- ⑨ Championing climate action, being nature advocates and using the power of outdoor sports for education for sustainable development



Mobility and Travel

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Outdoor sports enthusiasts are often dedicated travellers to landscapes or water environments that are remote or “special” to climb higher mountains, paddle exciting rivers or participate in competitions. In addition, there is a desire to travel beyond our own borders to climb higher altitude mountains, experience different landscapes. Travelling by air produces the largest emissions while by ferry / train produces significantly lower levels as per table 1. Obviously the most energy efficient way to travel to your destination is by foot, bicycle or other human powered mechanism.

Table 1

✉ Transport Method	↗ Unit	☁ Emissions
Domestic / short haul	passenger.km	0.255 kg CO ₂ e ²
Long-haul	passenger.km	0.15 kg CO ₂ e
Train	passenger.km	0.041 kg CO ₂ e
Bus	passenger.km	0.105 kg CO ₂ e
Coach (long distance)	passenger.km	0.028 kg CO ₂ e
Ferry (foot passenger)	passenger.km	0.019 kg CO ₂ e
Ferry (car passenger)	passenger.km	0.13 kg CO ₂ e

Getting to such locations without using cars can be challenging as often they are in more remote or rural locations with minimal public transport connections. Furthermore, the type of vehicle that outdoor sports enthusiasts use can tend to be larger (to carry equipment) and with associated large engines.

Table 2 Differences in greenhouse emissions from a range of vehicle sizes³

Type	Diesel kg CO ₂ e per km	Petrol kg CO ₂ e per km	Hybrid kg CO ₂ e per km	Plug in hybrid kg CO ₂ e per km
Small car	0.142	0.154	0.105	0.029
Medium car	0.171	0.192	0.109	0.071
Large car	0.209	0.283	0.132	0.077
Campervan	0.265	0.313	No data	No data

2 The term kg CO₂e relates to the total quantity of greenhouse gases emitted whereas kg CO₂ without the “e” would just be the quantity of CO₂

3 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/greenhouse-gas-reporting-conversion-factors-2021>



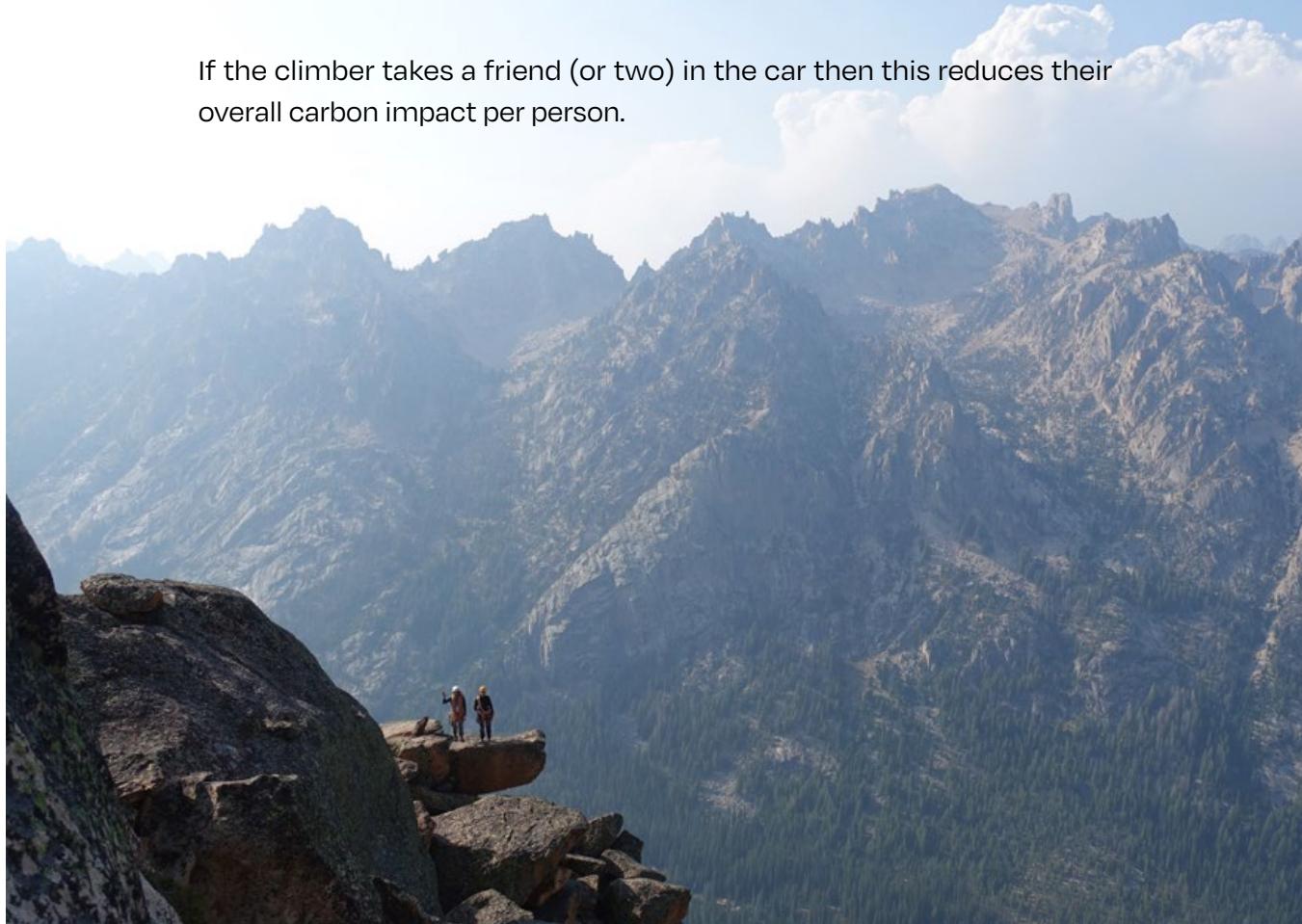
EXAMPLE 1

A climber who lives in Brussels decides to go to Chamonix for climbing in the Mont Blanc Massif would create very different carbon emissions depending on their choice of transport. It is approximately 850km from Brussels to Chamonix and this would equate to potential carbon impacts for a return trip as per table 3.

Table 3

Method of travel	Distance and kgCO ₂ per km	Total kg CO ₂ e
Train	1700 x 0.041	69.7kg CO ₂ e
Coach	1700 x 0.028	47.6kg CO ₂ e
Car (medium, diesel)	1700 x 0.171	290.7kg CO ₂ e
Campervan	1700 x 0.313	532.1kg CO ₂ e
Flight to Geneva	1066 x 0.255	271.83kg CO ₂ e
Hire (small, petrol) car from Geneva to Chamonix	164 x 0.154	25.26kg CO ₂ e
		Total: 297.08kg CO ₂ e

If the climber takes a friend (or two) in the car then this reduces their overall carbon impact per person.





EXAMPLE 2

A sea kayaker who lives in Brussels decides to go to Vancouver Island (approximately 7827km one way from Brussels to Vancouver) for sea kayaking in the Inside Passage would create the carbon emissions for a return journey as per table 4.

Table 4

Method of travel	Distance and kgCO ₂ per km	Total kg CO ₂ e
Flight (long haul)	15654 x 0.041	2348.1kg CO ₂ e
Ferry (foot passenger) to Nanaimo (Vancouver Island)	164 x 0.019	3.1kg CO ₂ e

Outdoor enthusiasts therefore need to think quite carefully about how they travel to their chosen destinations, how often they are travelling and how long they will stay. However, they should consider what destinations are suitable and sustainable. We can act to lower our travel impacts by:

- Travelling overland as much as possible using buses, coaches and trains.
- Travelling together in cars by sharing the journey with as many other people as possible.
- Finding great opportunities for your chosen sport near to home.
- Making the journey to the adventure part of the adventure – perhaps by extending it with a cycling adventure!

In Outdoor Sports we often think of cycling as a recreational activity but it is important to reconsider the use of bicycles as means of transportation.

However, while these examples showcase the issue of "holiday trips" there is also a very extensive amount of after work excursions, day trips and short break / weekend travel associated with outdoor sports.

Approximately one third of the distances covered in passenger traffic in Germany are due to leisure activities (Hänel & Witting, 2016)⁴. Between 50-60% of traffic in the Alps is dedicated to recreational activities and a previous (2014) study on mobility of members of the German Alpine

⁴ Hänel, A. & Witting, M. (2016). Klimawandel und Verkehr. Mobilität zukunftsfähig gestalten. Deutscher Alpenverein: München. Available online: https://www.alpenverein.de/chameleon/public/02f0df73-8758-2614-0af0-00c63aead96f/DAV-Broschuere-Klimawandel-und-Verkehr-Mobilitaet-zukunftsfaehig-gestalten_27005.pdf



Club⁵ showed that only 17% use public transport to reach their mountain destinations, with 71% using individual motorized transport, only 6% using bicycle, 4% using air transport and 2% using a bus/coach. However, the majority of the DAV members were car sharing rather than going alone.

The average distance for arrival and departure is 144 km for day trips and 472 km for multi-day trips.

The average mountain enthusiast undertakes 18 day trips, 4 multi-day trips and 1.4 stays of >7 days every year.

The average DAV member thus covers around 5,456 km per year and emits 537.9 kg of CO₂ per year. 82% of these emissions are generated by car journeys.

The reasons for the selected means of transport are varied: Approximately 66% of those surveyed still believe that the journey time and pricing of the train operators are not competitive with their own car. Poor or missing connections (c. 43%) and difficulties in transporting heavy luggage (c. 47%) were cited as important reasons for car travel. However, the main reasons highlighted for travelling by car were a lack of mobility on site, poor accessibility to remote mountain regions and the lack of independence (almost 74%) when travelling by train.

⁵ Deutscher Alpenverein (2015). Wie wir Bergsportler in die Berge kommen. Retreived from: https://www.alpenverein.de/natur/mobilitaet/ergebnisse-der-dav-mobilitaetsumfrage_aid_16102.html





A spreadsheet to help calculate your travel impacts is available at <https://see-project.eu/resources>

A study undertaken by the Institut Nacional d'Educació Física de Catalunya (INEFC) in partnership with the Serra de Montsant Natural Park showed that the total number of visitors to the area generates a total of 3,722,880 KgCO₂ equivalent through their travels and much of this is by car transport.

To get a feel for the quantity of this – it is equivalent to about 1600 return flights between Brussels and Vancouver. To understand this in offsetting terms if it is assumed that 1 hectare of forest holds approximately 500 trees and each offsets 24KgCO₂ per annum⁶. Therefore 1-hectare offsets approximately 12,000 KgCO₂ per annum. Therefore 310 hectares of trees (approximately 15,500 trees) would be required to offset this.

⁶ 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories Volume 4, Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use. <https://www.ipcc-nngip.iges.or.jp/public/2006gl/vol4>

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Equipment and Consumption

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Outdoor sports use the natural environment, often in situations where having the right equipment can ensure not just safety but also greater enjoyment of the activity. Many outdoor sports rely on this equipment for their activity. Equipment can range from tools for the activity such as kayaks, paragliders, surfboards or mountain bikes through to clothing to keep warm and insulated or to keep dry in wet environments. There can also be safety critical equipment either worn or applied including helmets, life jackets, ropes and belay protection devices.

As outdoor enthusiasts, we are at risk of being "gear freaks" – always aiming to have the latest and most up to date equipment and often with a garage or roof space full of less used but not obsolete, older equipment. Therefore, consideration as to how much equipment we need and its realistic lifespan is important if we are to promote greater sustainability. Passing equipment on to others (who are perhaps starting in the sport), creating community opportunities to share or reuse old equipment can all help to reduce impacts. The level of consumerism within the outdoor sports sector is likely similar to all other sectors and possibly even more so due to the technical nature of some equipment.

Promoting and using older, functional but perhaps not the latest and new outdoor gear and equipment can help to reduce our impacts.

The manufacturing of this equipment has the potential to have a significant carbon footprint, be resource hungry for raw materials, have unethical supply chains and cause harmful pollutants in the manufacturing process.

The European Outdoor Group (which is the voice of the outdoor sports industry in Europe) has five sustainability categories⁷ within its charter for members:

- Responsible resource use
- Safe emissions
- Ethical supply chains
- Care for consumers
- Fair business

A number of leading outdoor brands are very transparent about how they do their business and are leading the way in terms of sustainable use of resources, ethical practices and limiting their climate impacts. Also, there are a number of outdoor brands that are offering business models to repair and share and therefore seek to reduce the production of new materials. Good examples are the Patagonia campaigns of worn wear

⁷ <https://www.europeanoutdoorgroup.com/sustainability>



stories⁸ ReCrafted⁹ or the Vaude initiative of "IRentit¹⁰".

Outdoor sports enthusiasts should be discerning about the equipment that they purchase and seek out companies and brands that are reputable and openly transparent about their sustainability standards.

Also equipment for certain outdoor sports such as ski wax or chain lube for bicycles can contain harmful pollutants called Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS chemicals) which can then leach into water or soil systems and then via the food chain into humans. They have unknown effects and also are incredibly durable products with no known environmental degradation.

When purchasing new outdoor clothing there is a debate on what type of materials to buy and whether to purchase synthetic or natural materials.

Many outdoor products are made from synthetic fibre textiles that release plastic particles into the wastewater during the washing process. From the wastewater, the particles then find their way into all water cycles and finally into the ocean. There it acts as a carrier for hazardous substances, gets eaten by fish and finally will also return to the plates of human beings. A report in 2016 from the World Economic Forum has estimated that by 2050 there will be more plastic than fish in the ocean¹¹.

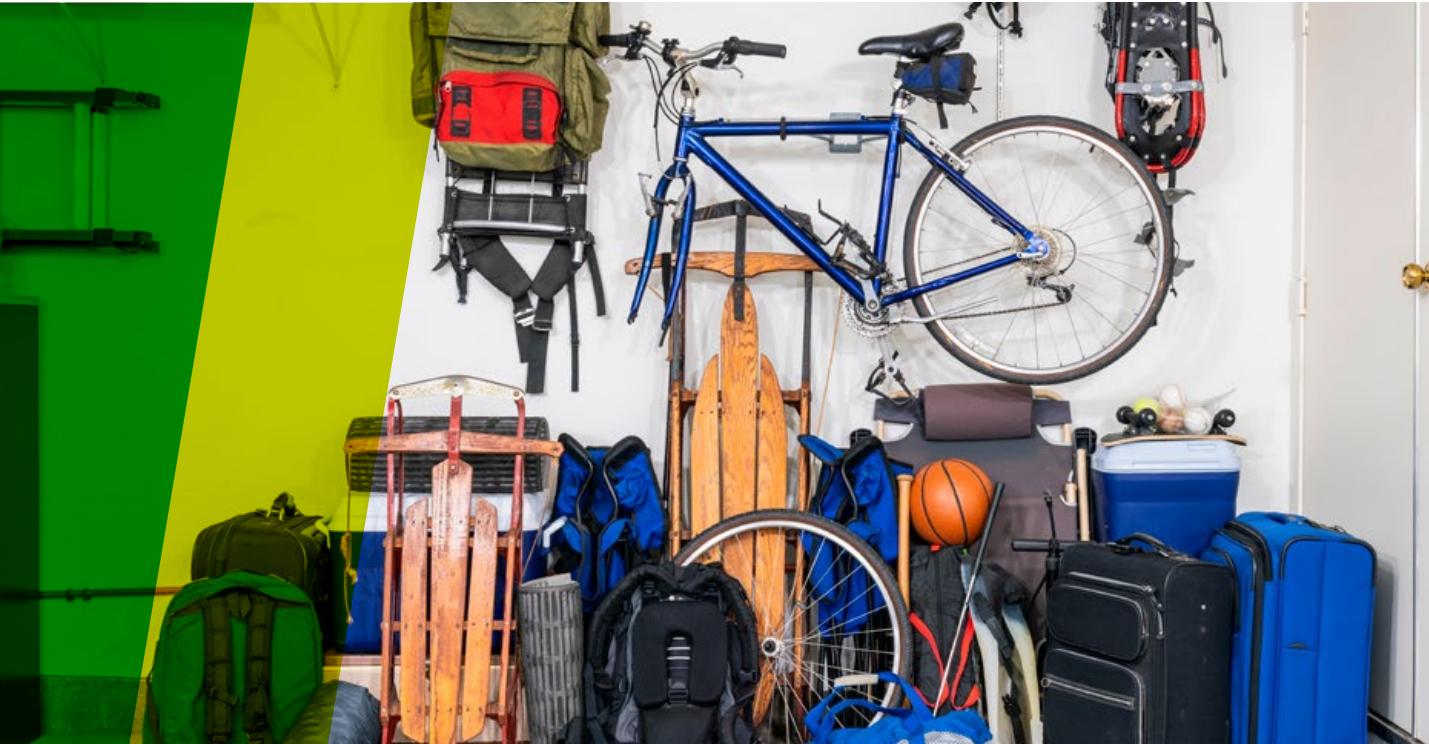
8 <https://eu.patagonia.com/gb/en/stories/worn-wear/>

9 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBpSzIExmA8>

10 <https://csr-report.vaude.com/gri-en/product/iRentit-gear-rental.php>

11 "The New Plastics Economy – Rethinking the future of plastics" https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_The_New_Plastics_Economy.pdf

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Outdoor sports enthusiasts can avoid this problem by choosing products made from natural plant based fibres and the outdoor sport industry has also started to work on this problem for example with new materials like bio-pile, a fleece fabric that should no longer release micro plastics.

Further when it comes to washing existing synthetic clothing, mechanisms, such as the Guppyfriend¹² washing bag, collects the plastic fibres during the washing process and prevents them from getting into wastewater.

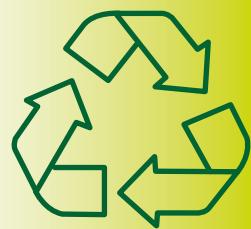
Regardless of the material we choose, we have to acknowledge the carbon footprint and environmental impact of both the production, the ongoing usage, management and the end of life considerations of the goods and products we buy. The responsible outdoor enthusiast therefore needs to make considered choices in relation to:

- How much do we need – especially of new products?
- What type of products do we buy?
- How do we use them as sustainably as possible?
- How can we use the products for as long as possible?
- What do we do with them after usage?

Further support and advice is provided in the SEE project toolkit.

12 <https://en.guppyfriend.com/pages/ueber-uns>





Waste and use of unsustainable materials



© Lydia Verjopp / Unsplash



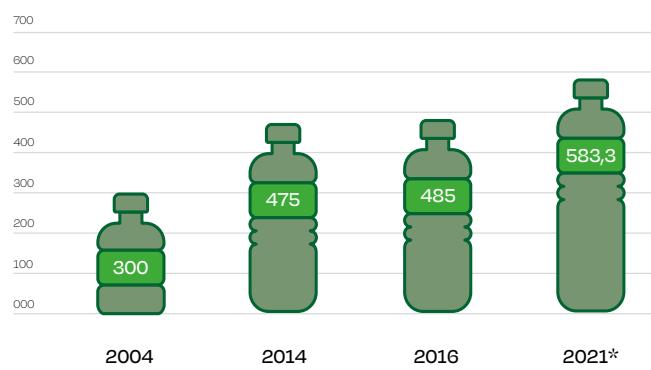


Approximately 380 million tons of plastic are produced every year, and up to 50% of that is for single-use purposes. Further, estimations indicate that 10 million tons of plastic are dumped in the ocean annually¹³. The production of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles worldwide from 2004 to 2016 has been measured and the figures show significant increases as per chart 1.¹⁴

13 Geyer, Jambeck, Law Sci. Adv. 2017;3: e1700782 "Production, use, and fate of all plastics ever made"
https://plasticoceans.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Production_use_and_fate_of_all_plastics_ever_made.pdf

14 "Plastics - the Facts 2021 An analysis of European plastics production, demand and waste data"
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/723191/production-of-polyethylene-terephthalate-bottles-worldwide/>

Chart 1: Production in billion units of PET bottles



Only about 30% of plastic is recycled in Europe and globally this reduces to about 10%¹⁵. Therefore, there is a need to rethink about consumption and use of materials in the first place. Plastics for packaging account for about 60% of post-consumer plastic waste so trying to purchase products that provide minimum waste should be a priority for the environmentally conscious outdoor enthusiast.

The mantra for sustainability formerly involved three elements of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle, however this should now have three additional elements as follows:

- Rethink – what things do you really need?
- Refuse plastic and packaging.
- Restore ecosystems and habitats by giving back.

When camping and undertaking expeditions, minimising waste is an essential element of preparation by removing unnecessary packaging to reduce bulk and weight. Such principles can apply to everyday life or simple day trips into the hills, on the trails or on the water. Even simple things like boiling water for a meal or for coffee on the trail can make a difference. When on day trips bring a flask with hot water boiled at home or if using a stove only boil up the amount of water that you need. Consider some innovative equipment that reduces the energy needed to heat up the water such as the jet boil or the old fashioned yet functional Kelly Kettle that simply uses a few twigs.

15 EuRIC AISBL – Recycling: Bridging Circular Economy & Climate Policy https://circularconomy.europa.eu/platform/sites/default/files/euric_-_plastic_recycling_fact_sheet.pdf#:~:text=Between%202006%20and%202018%20the%20quantity%20of%20plastic,Europe%20have%20plastic%20packaging%20recycling%20rates%20above%2040%25



Infrastructure





The European Network of Outdoor Sports has defined outdoor sports as activities:

- that are normally carried out with a (strong) relation to nature and landscape and the core aim is dealing with natural elements rather than with an object;
- it may include activities that have their roots in natural places but use artificial structures designed to replicate the natural environment.
- where the natural setting is perceived by users, as at most, only minimally modified by human beings*;
- that are perceived as (at least minimally) physically demanding;
- that are based on man or natural element power and are not motorized during the sport itself;
- that may use some form of tool (for example a surf board, bicycle, skis etc.) or just involve the human body.

* Does not have to be wild, just perceived as natural.

The SEE project has adopted this definition as the basis of the work, nevertheless, there are times and locations where some level of infrastructure can be important. These can include mountain bike and hiking trails that curtail people within set areas in a designated habitat, or the provision of sustainable access to a river rather than causing bank erosion or changing areas for outdoor swimming.

The principle behind any infrastructure developments for outdoor sports should be that they should minimise our impacts in an area rather than increase them. Using recognised sustainable design and construction techniques that utilise natural materials found within the locality is also important. There are a number of critical components that must be considered when developing trails including the gradient of the slope, how the trail aligns with the slope, drainage features, and the type of trail substrate as well as the habitats and ecosystem that it runs through. A generic rule developed by the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) is that trails with a slope of more than 10% have the potential to cause greater erosion of soil, but much depends on other factors. Ecological impact surveys also are critical when developing trails to ensure that they do not impinge on any protected species. IMBA (Europe) has done some significant work in the area of developing understanding of sustainable trails through the DIRRT project (Developing Intereuropean Resources for Trail building Training). This project helped to empower volunteers



and organisations in understanding the requirements for sustainable trail development. The report on the project is available to download from the IMBA Europe website.¹⁶

Furthermore, when such infrastructure developments take place there should be efforts made to optimise and enhance biodiversity aligned to these.

In its policy position paper on the green deal¹⁷, ENOS has highlighted that the development of outdoor sports infrastructure aligned with biodiversity is a genuine opportunity to create a win, win situation for wildlife and communities. The creation of buffer zones with associated trails along river corridors and on the edges of agricultural land has the potential to have very positive rather than negative impacts.

Although most outdoor sports use natural settings there might be infrastructure that is linked to the activity like mountain huts or clubhouses. Any new buildings should be built to recognised sustainable standards and be highly energy efficient but many of these facilities may be older and have limited efficiency systems. Clubs and outdoor sports businesses should therefore seek to refurbish such facilities with the latest sustainable and energy efficiency upgrades without detracting from any aesthetic and vernacular characteristics.

The management of the facilities should also be undertaken to reduce environmental impacts and this can include everything from housekeep-

16 <https://www.imba-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Stakeholder-and-consumer-report-DIRTT-Project.pdf>

17 <https://www.outdoor-sports-network.eu/>





ing to energy supply, from food on courses and to clients and down to the type paper used. Outdoor sports facilities should be champions of sustainable practices. This becomes even more critical in remote areas where connectivity to the electric grid or to sewage systems is not possible. Low energy and minimal water consumption is especially important and should be considered the norm for such facilities rather than trying to imitate the standards of hotels. By teaching clients to be efficient in the use of resources and encouraging simple and sustainable living can bring a significant influence on encouraging frugality in everyday life.

Outdoor sports are often connected to tourist infrastructure including hotels and other accommodation, restaurants and transport systems. Large hotel complexes for winter tourism such as is found in the Alps demonstrates the positive economic impact these activities can bring to rural areas. However, there is also a need to explore more sustainable, reduced infrastructure driven, good mobility concepts that have a focus on ecology and culture. There are now some examples such as Alpine Pearls¹⁸ that are demonstrating how outdoor sports can help to foster more sustainable tourist solutions.

18 <https://www.alpine-pearsls.com/en/>





Food and drink





We all need to eat and drink to stay alive but when participating in outdoor sports our calorific requirement can be higher and this is especially true when operating in cold, high altitude or other extreme environments.

The IPCC's Special Report on Climate Change and Land (2019)¹⁹ estimates that agriculture is directly responsible for up to 8.5% of all greenhouse gas emissions with a further 14.5% coming from land use change (mainly deforestation in the developing world to clear land for food production). Further the production of meat causes twice the pollution of producing plant-based foods.²⁰

Food is now very much a global commodity with pre-packaged foods travelling the globe for consumption especially by the more affluent in the West.

There are opportunities for local outdoor sports clubs, groups and businesses to make a stand and support suppliers of locally produced, organic and seasonal foods. Developing a sense of community pride in produce can bring many positive benefits as well as reducing the carbon footprint of our food and drink. Those who opt for local seasonal products that also come from the region significantly reduce the carbon footprint of their purchases and in addition, the local economy is supported.

Seasonal products fresh from the field require only natural energy from the sun although irrigation can be a significant drain on energy. However, the year-round production in a heated greenhouse creates significantly more emissions than outdoor production.

Avoiding food waste is also a critical issue and designing menus and purchasing to exactly match need: Around a third of all food worldwide ends up in the trash with almost 60% of this estimated to come from private households!

Many food products are packaged in single use plastic which ends up in land fill or worse, discarded in the environment. Unprocessed foods such as fruit and vegetables are readily available unpackaged so have a cotton bag dedicated to buying your local vegetables and bread.

When looking at the carbon footprint of food, it is not only important to prefer local and seasonal products, there are also big differences between vegan, vegetarian and meat based food.

¹⁹ https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/4/2020/02/SPM_Updated-Jan20.pdf

²⁰ Xu, X., Sharma, P., Shu, S. et al. Global greenhouse gas emissions from animal-based foods are twice those of plant-based foods. *Nat Food* **2**, 724–732 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43016-021-00358-x>



Table 5 Comparison of CO₂e emissions for different food²¹

Food type	Emissions per kg Food	Water usage per kg Food
Beef	20,65 kg CO ₂ e	Approx. 15,000 Litres
Pork	7,99 kg CO ₂ e	Approx. 6,000 Litres
Cheese	7,84 kg CO ₂ e	Approx. 3,200 Litres
Vegetables & Fruits	0,94 kg CO ₂ e	Approx. 350 Litres

As previously highlighted, excessive plastic waste is often associated with packaging – especially of food so choose to buy loose fruit and veg and consider making your own energy bars for out in the hills or on the water and wrapping in bees' wax paper or have a lunch box that is dedicated to your activity!

Always using refillable water bottles seems like such an obvious choice but yet there are still a lot of outdoor sports events and activities that supply individual single use plastic bottles of water. It should be a policy of all clubs and events to only use tap water or provide large containers for filling up reusable bottles. Tap water is of excellent quality in most European countries and can be easily accessed in most locations.

Sustainable nutrition in a nutshell: Eat local and seasonal, organic food with less meat and avoid unsustainable packaging and food waste!

²¹ https://www.wwf.de/fileadmin/fm-wwf/Publikationen-PDF/Climate_change_on_your_plate.pdf

Ralph Ravi / Unsplash ©





A great recipe for SEE honey flapjacks energy bars for your activity is:



200g
local butter



100ml
local honey



200g
rolled oats



50g
desiccated coconut



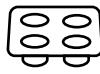
Nuts, cherries
or other fruit to taste



① Melt the butter in a small saucepan and stir in the honey.
Remove from the heat and set aside.



② In a large bowl, mix the oats and coconut then slowly drizzle the butter mixture into the oats while stirring.

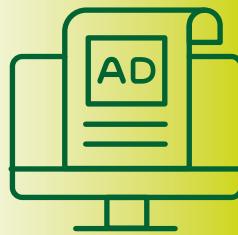


③ Pour the oat mixture in a 20x20cm baking tin and flatten evenly with the back of a wooden spoon.



④ Bake for 20 minutes at 180°C until golden brown.

Mmmmmm... Enjoy!!!



Social media and communication





Doing good and talking about it is great if we are motivating people to act more responsibly. Individuals, clubs or NGO's can use modern communication techniques to spread the news on good behaviour and initiatives like clean-ups or restoration programs. However, social media can also have perhaps unintended consequences and create non-sustainable behaviour. This can be by promoting unsustainable travel to remote or far afield destinations or publishing trails, routes and sights that may not have the appropriate carrying capacity for a large influx of visitors or even be in areas not open to the public. Another major issue can be the sharing of photos with scenes of sunset and sunrise or night time excursions thereby creating a demand for others to do the same. Dusk, night time and dawn are especially important times for wild animals to be active and the increasing disturbance in that times caused can be an issue for wildlife feeding and reproduction.

Two of the 10 principles jointly developed by ENOS and the EUROPARC Federation²² are about keeping secret places secret rather than having to promote them and posting selfies there and leaving the night for animals to be alone. There are a number of examples of how the demand for such photos and selfies have created significant impacts on the environment.

- ① The trail to the infinity pool at the Königsee in the Berchtesgaden National Park has had to be closed to everyone following Instagram influencers promoting it leading to erosion, accidents, wild camping and littering.
- ② Doan Mountain is in the central Mourne Mountains in N. Ireland and was promoted through a guide book and social media as a 5 star route and perfect for seeing sunrise. The numbers accessing and now camping on this mountain have exploded leading to very significant erosion of the route up to it.
- ③ Between 2009 and 2014, visitors to the famous Trolltunga rock in Norway increased from 500 to 40,000 through social media driven tourism. It is a demanding hike to it and is a challenging environment. Sadly in 2015, a 24-year-old Australian student lost her footing and fell to her death while trying to re-create the iconic shot at it.



Events – problem or opportunity





Prior to the impact of Covid, across many protected areas in Europe there had been an increase in the popularity of organised outdoor challenge events. By their very nature, outdoor challenge events are often held in remote and rural areas that may not have purpose built facilities but that contain sensitive flora and fauna within fragile habitats landscapes, which are managed and, in many cases, protected by statutory designations. It is therefore imperative that event organisers give careful consideration to the impact of events and activities and how to reduce and mitigate them at the local level but also how to encourage sustainable transport to the event and how they supply sustainable resources during it.

Engagement and collaboration with the protected area managers is an essential element to being able to organise an event that is both sustainable and responsible.

There are 3 fundamental steps to managing outdoor events in natural areas:

- ④ Planning and research into the nature of the area and how many participants you will have, where they will come from and how you will manage them
- ⑤ Development and management of the event itself to include route choice, waste management and stewarding
- ⑥ Restoration and review – its essential that there is minimal impact from your event and in fact it is recommended that you go beyond minimising impact but seek to enhance the biodiversity or quality of the habitat when you are finished

However, on a positive side, such events can provide an opportunity to engage people who may not normally be in nature to become more aware of both local and global sustainability issues. This can be capitalised on in events as there is the opportunity to share such information and promote good practice in pre-event documents and at registration and when rules are being disseminated and information imparted at briefings,. Many outdoor sports users are normally independents and not necessarily connected to a club and so events can provide a mechanism to engage with such independent users.

A survey of protected areas that was also carried out through the SEE project highlighted that of the range of benefits that a protected area gains from outdoor sports is that the area is more valued (65% of respondents) and that it helps with awareness of nature and environmental issues (66% of respondents).



Environmental and nature connectedness





A previous project that has been developed by ENOS was the “Benefits of Outdoor Sports for Society”- BOSS project²³. This project examined the range of benefits that have the potential to be accrued from participating in outdoor sports and one that came out quite strongly was nature connectedness and a greater sense of empathy for the natural world.

Outdoor sports rely on nature and often bring people into natural settings where a sense of awe and wonder at the beauty of the natural world can be instilled. Maximising opportunities for this and helping people to better understand ecosystems and habitats along with the diversity of life they contain is very much a driver of this SEE project.

The project will aim to create mechanisms to help in this process along with educational tools to support learning. However, it is important that we do not lose sight of the ability of nature to do the talking by immersing people (sometimes literally) in wonderful natural settings. Taking time out during a climb, a paddle or a bike ride to stop and engage all of your senses with your setting can be a very positive and engaging process.

People will protect and seek to preserve that which they love and so connecting people with their local habitats can be a great way to engender a pride and desire to conserve them. Involving outdoor sports in volunteering projects that enhance these habitats can bring even stronger connections and therefore, developing partnerships with local environmental organisations can be very beneficial.

Finally, outdoor sports enthusiasts can also help to “police” their local patch by being eyes and ears and reporting interesting wildlife but also any pollution, littering or anti-social behaviour issues.

²³ <https://outdoorsportsbenefits.eu/>



Championing climate action,
being nature advocates and using
the power of outdoor sports
for education for sustainable
development





In 2015 all United Nations Member States have adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries in a global partnership (United Nations (n.d.). The 17 Goals).

Sport in general and outdoor sport in particular can be seen as an enabler for reaching the goals, addressing issues ranging from health and education to climate action. But the power and motivation for outdoor sports can also be used for education for sustainable development and to advocate for the sustainable development goals.

One of the ways to take action is to have your organisation or federation sign up to the UN FCCC Sports for Climate action framework which contains 5 key principles:

Principle 1: Undertake systematic efforts to promote greater environmental responsibility

Principle 2: Reduce overall climate impact;

Principle 3: Educate for climate action;

Principle 4: Promote sustainable and responsible consumption;

Principle 5: Advocate for climate action through communication.

There is a significant need for champions for climate action and nature and those in influential roles and leadership within the outdoor sports sector can create a powerful voice for nature and the environment. As part of the SEE project we have been examining the websites of outdoor sports federations and there are now some very good examples of federations that are communicating on these issues but interestingly there is some great work going on by the international federations at European or World level. You can access more information on this at www.see-project.eu/resources

There are also some great examples of outdoor sports athletes or adventurers who are now putting their energy and resources into climate or environmental action. One of these is Killian Jornet but it would be great to see more like this emerging.



Killian Jornet

www.kilianjornetfoundation.org

"I have been climbing mountains and crossing glaciers my whole life, and I could observe how the effects of the climate change have been devastating. We all have a role in reversing this tendency and ensure that the next generations are able not only to play in the mountains but to live in a healthy planet. High mountains and glaciers are an essential part of the planet life, from the water cycle to the biodiversity, and my foundation is aiming to work for the protection of this regions and its role in the planet health."





CONCLUSION

The SEE project was developed through ENOS who have developed a policy position paper in relation to the European Green Deal. Many of these issues and others are highlighted in that paper which can be accessed at www.outdoor-sports-network.eu

Within that paper ENOS makes a statement right at the outset

In these chaotic times for our planet, ENOS believes that outdoor activities have a strong role to play to help with sustainability as outlined in the Green Deal. The special bond we share with our surroundings supports our promotion of nature-based solutions and other developments that reduce carbon emissions. However, as outdoor enthusiasts we are well aware that significant reductions in biodiversity, habitats and ecosystem quality through urbanisation, industrialisation (including that of farming and forestry) and pollution are happening at catastrophic rates.

Within ENOS, we believe that sustaining the current depleted environment will not bring the changes required to meet the European Green Deal. Therefore, sustainability itself is untenable and the principle of restoration must be included with sustainability. Re-developing habitats and ecosystems with their associated rich biodiversity must be a priority within the implementation of the European Green Deal. This can foster major benefits for the health and wellbeing of local communities as well as improving the environment and mitigating climate change.

It is recognised that we all have impacts and contribute to greenhouse emissions and must seek to reduce and if possible eliminate these. Where it is not possible to do this we must look at ways to mitigate these as effectively as possible.

The SEE project is focused on developing educational resources for effective communication on the environment and associated sustainability issues. These resources will be focused on supporting the outdoor sports sector in their delivery of leadership, instructor or guides courses.

Follow the SEE project and SEE how you and your sport and federation can be part of the solution that is so desperately needed for our planet and the many special places it contains.



SUSTAINABILITY AND
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
IN OUTDOOR SPORTS





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10 Good Principles for Outdoor Sports in Protected Areas

Plan your visit sustainably

When we enter a Protected Area, we all make an impact on the natural environment no matter how small this might be. It is important not just to care for ourselves but the nature around us. Nature is inviting you into her home, be a good guest!



Come on foot, bike or public transport as a priority.



When using private vehicles, try to share the ride.



Circulate with caution and park in the spaces reserved.

How to make the most out of your visit and to take care of the Protected Area?



1 You are a privileged guest.

Stay in the trails, respect the natural environment and regulations to guarantee the beauty of the place.



3 If you come with a dog,

take extra care of it. Follow the regulations. Dogs can disturb other species.



2

Plan your activity carefully.

Gather the information you need to enjoy your activity and the place; you will appreciate it better.



5 Everyone wants to enjoy the place.

Give way to other users; anticipate that they often do not feel or see you coming, respect speed limits.



4

Take care of yourself and others.

and be prepared to help others, regardless their sport.



7 Night is for species to be alone.

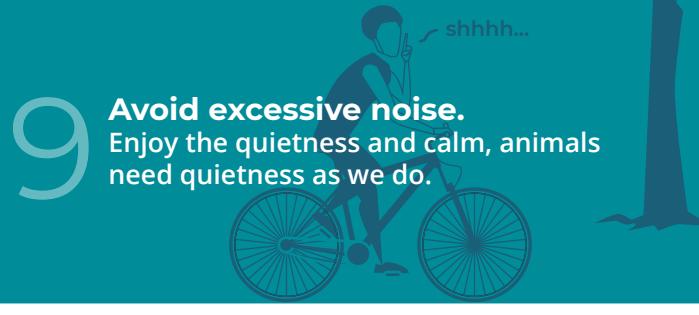
Avoid going in the night for your safety and let the animals live in peace.



6

Help us to keep this place clean.

Leave no trace and take with you the waste you make.



8

Keep "secret places" secret!

Use social media and GPS tracks with responsibility and according to official regulations.



9 Avoid excessive noise.

Enjoy the quietness and calm, animals need quietness as we do.



10

See it, Say it, Sort it!

If you see something wrong, tell the park. Open your eyes, appreciate nature and enjoy!

Get Out & Get Into Nature

www.outdoor-sports-network.eu
www.europarc.org



ENOS
European Network
of Outdoor Sports



EUROPARC
FEDERATION



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