

2nd Seminar on Protected Natural Areas and Mountain Sports

1st Technical Symposium

“Terminology in Regulations for Protected Natural Areas”

Throughout the 20th century mountain sports were bound up with sports administration. However, in recent decades, the practice of these sports has largely been governed by regulations designed to preserve and protect the environment, primarily through the Plans for Natural Resource Management and Master Plans for the Use and Management of Natural Protected Areas. Communication between the Mountaineering Federations and environmental authorities is today one of the most important elements in the quest for a body of regulation that can reconcile conservation of the environment with the practice of sporting activities in natural surroundings.

The legislation in place for mountain sports therefore shows a fair amount of dispersion. Drawing up regulations for Protected Natural Areas is the province of the regional autonomous government, although in the case of National Parks these powers are shared between the state and regional authorities. The terminology associated with mountain sports has been used by the different administrative bodies for at least a hundred years without conducting any joint analysis of its meaning.

Thus, an agreement was reached at the technical symposium on “Terminology in Regulations for Protected Natural Areas” by the people that practise mountain sports and the managers of Protected Natural Areas to define the meaning of the terms and encourage consistency of use. This will be useful for drafting and interpreting Plans for Natural Resource Management and Master Plans for the Use and Management of Natural Protected Areas, and also in other regulations pertaining to mountain sports.

It is clear that the effects of the document on “Terminology in Regulations for Protected Natural Areas” will have the scope deriving from the decisions taken by the representatives of the mountaineering federations and the managers of Protected Natural Areas. For this reason, those attending the second edition of the Seminar on Protected Natural Areas and Mountain Sports undertake to foment the dissemination of this document and to use these terms both in the regulations enacted for Protected Natural Areas and in other documents either directly or indirectly associated with mountain sports.

Finally, it is the intention of those present at this symposium that this channel of communication should remain permanently open, continuing with the line of communication initiated at the “1st Seminar on Protected Natural Areas and Mountain Sports”, held on the island of Tenerife from 3rd to 6th December 1999, organised by the Canary Islands Federation of Mountaineering, the Canary Islands Government and the Ministry of the Environment. This was prolonged in talks that led to the Picos de Europa Declaration on “Mountain Refuges and National Parks”, signed in Cangas de Onís on 12th May 2001.

In Jaca, on 18th October 2003.

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APPROVED TERMS

Mountain sports

Set of sports activities included in the Statutes of the Spanish Federation for Mountain and Climbing Sports and any others that might be incorporated in these Statutes: climbing, mountaineering, hiking, rambling, mountain trekking, rock climbing, canyoning, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, camping for mountaineering purposes, trials and races.

Mountaineering

Sports activity that involves climbing up mountains or trekking through them, the performance of which requires specific technical know-how. In some cases, technical means of progression and anchorage may be necessary depending on the circumstances and difficulty.
It is also known as climbing or mountain trekking.

Canyoning

Sports activity that involves walking or swimming through canyons or ravines, torrential rivers or mountain streams, using special techniques and one's own resources.

Rambling

Sports and recreational activity that involves walking along preferably traditional routes that may or may not be signposted.
(This is complemented by the definition for waymarked and approved trails.)

Waymarked trails

Trails marked with conventional symbols, signs, paint, milestones, marks, etc. and indications designed to facilitate their use on rambling paths.

Approved trails

Marked trails that have been approved by the autonomous mountaineering federations as meeting the precise demands regarding route and signposting.

Classic climbing

Sports activity that involves climbing up or along walls of rock and ice, steep slopes or other natural environments characterised by their verticality, using holds that are almost entirely recoverable, along with the possibility of using artificial resources to make progress.

Sport climbing

Sports activity that involves climbing up or along walls with routes equipped with fixed holds in the wall to guarantee the safety of the climber.

Vía ferratas

(Italian for 'iron road') Sports and recreational activity that involves climbing up or along walls, minimising the risks and difficulties by means of artificial elements to aid progression along the route, such as ladders, cables, chains or other fixed components.

Vía ferratas are not thought to be very appropriate for Protected Natural Areas.

Cross-country skiing

Sports activity that is characterised by the use of skis, and practised off piste in the mountains, traversing arêtes and valleys, and climbing up mountain tops with the aid of techniques from both mountaineering and skiing.

It is also known as XC skiing.

Freeride snowboarding

Sports activity that is characterised by the use of a snowboard and practised off piste in the mountains, traversing arêtes and valleys, and going up mountain tops with the aid of techniques from both mountaineering and snowboarding.

Overnighting

Activity of spending the night somewhere.

Camping

Stopping to spend the night in a tent in a deserted spot.

Bivouac/Bivouacking

Sleeping or resting out in the open or at the mercy of the elements all through the night, possibly but not necessarily using items providing shelter such as a sleeping bag, or bivouac sack, or using the resources provided by the environment itself without disturbing it in any way.

Overnight camping

Form of overnighting that involves pitching a lightweight tent at nightfall and taking it down again at dawn, normally one hour before the sun sets until an hour after it comes up again the next day.

Mountain hut

Sports facilities for public use designed to offer shelter to people practising mountain sports. Open most of the year, they are accessible to users arriving on foot.

Wardened hut

Mountain refuge available to provide board and lodging to mountaineers in safe, comfortable and hygienic conditions due to its location and in accordance with the infrastructures and guarantees provided for in the applicable legislation. There is a warden to tend to mountaineers, at least during the peak season. In the absence of the warden, there is an open area with the characteristics of a Bivouac Refuge.

Hostel refuge

Building or construction that has the same features as the wardened mountain hut but is accessible to user by road, cable car or any other mechanical means of transport.

Bivouac refuge

Small unwardened mountain hut, open all year round. Accessible only on foot, it may have first aid facilities and emergency telecommunications equipment available.

Mountain shelter

Any open construction, built predominantly for farming purposes, and can be used for shelter or protection overnight in case of emergency.