

## Rediscover and feel the wilderness with the campaigns «Soft mobility” and “Obsolete facilities”

### Background

The French population shows, in 2015, strong sensitivity to the environment: 85% of them declare being sensitive to it, 38% announcing being « very sensitive » (survey by Crédoc in May 2015). Nevertheless wilderness is still often perceived as dangerous, threatening, to be tamed<sup>1</sup>.

### Vision

Free from economic and political interests, Mountain wilderness is a registered organization working for environmental protection, which has been recognized as promoting the public interest. The organization defends a global approach of the mountain environment in which “conservation of the natural environment” and “improvement of the local economy” are a common challenge. Its aim is **to fight against the increasing deterioration of mountain wild places, to keep their relaxing and healing features for human beings.**

Awareness campaigns, relations with public authorities, the publications of brochures and outreach materials, and field actions involving the population, are amongst the main means used by Mountain Wilderness to change behaviours related to wilderness.

The campaigns “soft mobility” and ‘obsolete facilities” have therefore been thought to mobilize the general population and to give this audience the possibility to gain a different look on wilderness.

### Historical background

The soft mobility campaign launches every year for the last 10 years a competition motivating mountain outdoor people in using public transportation to reach the trailhead. This campaign involves every year 1000 participants who contribute to popularize this new approach through pictures and movies that are shown during the award ceremony of the competition. It also constitutes of daily outings using public transportation organized for a large public, which are led by professionals.

Obsolete facilities started in 1999 with an inventory of the facilities to dismantle on the Mont-Blanc range and went on since 2001 with the yearly organization of one to several dismantling events, mostly within protected natural areas (national parks such as Ecrins, Mercantour, regional parks such as Bauges, Chartreuse, Queyras) but also in the mountain range of Mont-Blanc.

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### Aim

To bring a fundamental change in the public attitude towards natural areas by proposing and enabling a different look on wilderness.

### Target

General public: general audience, organizations’ followers, professionals as well as non-professionals.

### Means of communication towards the target audience

Communication campaigns on the website, usual advertisers, newsletter, and mountain magazines.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.lavie.fr/blog/mahaut-herrmann/le-chamois-et-les-brebis-le-regard-francais-sur-la-nature-sauvage>,4198



## Objectives

- Reinforce the wilderness feeling in mountain areas by decreasing the impact of cars and obsolete facilities
- facilitate exchanges between general public and professionals
- enable the emergence of the concept of wilderness and its appropriation

## Educational methods

- Competition to mobilize the largest number of participants with rewards
- Communication campaigns and award ceremony in the presence of political representatives
- Website with an interactive platform of itineraries sharing and public transportation schedules <http://changerdapproche.org/>
- Dismantling events in the mountains fostering exchanges between professionals working in protected natural areas and general public
- Exchanges between participants during events
- Support and pedagogical content dispensed by professionals

## Impact evaluation

- Questionnaire of the end of the event for the participant to fill in to evaluate what they learnt from it
- Report of the day by the organizers and professional staff
- Evaluation of the number of requests to participate to the events

## Programme: Soft mobility and obsolete installations

These complementary trainings aim to make know, appreciate and respect wilderness to the general public. The first approach aims at promoting the use of public transportation for mountain outings, enabling hence to look differently at the natural areas that are crossed. The other approach includes the participation of the general public in the rehabilitation of wilderness areas by removing from the natural environment the obsolete facilities that make them lose their natural value.

### *Soft mobility: outings with public transportation*

Soft mobility means adopting a softer approach, by using transportation means that are different from private cars. Accessing to wilderness areas with public transportation allows immersing oneself more in the natural environment by taking time to taste what is produced along the way and by contributing to the local economy. Taking the bus or the train implies to accept being transported, to take time; it also fosters longer traverses and not only the daily return outings, which enables to fully appreciate and understand the scope of the wilderness that is visited, to explore unknown corners, to take time to bivouac or sleep in a hut and furthermore meet those who live in the mountains. This campaign is built on different tools and actions allowing diffusing this different approach to the mountains, in particular through outings promoting access to wilderness without a car, as well as encouraging experience sharing between professionals and volunteers of Mountain Wilderness. These outings, when they happen in protected areas, are also a good opportunity to exchange on the key themes of wilderness protection: functioning of protected areas, large predators, better knowledge of wildlife ... the competition "change your approach" mobilizes the general public on this theme. Furthermore, professionals in the secondary education are organizing outings with public transportation for their students.

### *Dates and locations*

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### June, 27th 2015 - Discovery of medicinal and eatable plants using public transportation

Arzelier Pass, Vercors- Trièves area,

Access with public transportation from Grenoble.

Exploration of the Vercors through discovery-hiking of eatable and medicinal plants supervised by a mountain guide and followed by a meal made of plants. This outing teaches how to identify plants, how to collect them, to store and prepare, to heal usual ailments and to stimulate tasting senses. The participants will touch, smell, taste and learn surprising stories.

### Septembre, 26th 2015 - « no car » outing organized by Mountain Wilderness in the occasion of the colloquium 'Climate change and mountains » colloque

Starting from Grenoble. Chartreuse mountain range: Mont Rachais and Bastille

The stakes of the day hike are to raise awareness of climate change on mountain wilderness thanks to an access to the trail with public transportation. Are planned a hike in the Mount Rachais and its secret trails, its vegetation with the first autumn colours and the mysteries of the forest. The hike will also tackle the question of heritage and offers landscape interpretation through the Bastille fort's fortifications.

### Fall 2015/ Spring 2016 - « no car » outing organized by Mountain Wilderness with secondary educational schools

Starting from the lyceum. Place to choose.

The students will be supervised by a mountain guide who raises their awareness to natural environment and its protection.

### Number of participants

10 to 15 participants for each outing supervised by a mountain guide and a facilitator of Mountain Wilderness.

### End of the year 2015- beginning of 2016 Award ceremony of the campaign Soft Mobility

The award ceremony rewards the most beautiful outings using public transportation from November 2014 to Fall 2015.

### Obsolete facilities

Many facilities, mostly for tourism, but also with an industrial, agricultural or military purpose, are now abandoned in the French mountains. These facilities that are not used anymore are often real scars in the natural landscape. They are obsolete and should disappear. Pollution is not only visual, but can represent a danger for hikers and wildlife. Above all, they destroy the feeling of wilderness of the places where they have been set up.

Since 2001, Mountain Wilderness has started a three-pronged work to solve this problem and give back these areas to nature:

- Inventory
- Dismantling
- Awareness raising

The awareness campaign for the general public is done through various communication media, and above all through the invitation to participate to dismantling events on the field.

Mountain Wilderness hence demonstrates the feasibility of the dismantling process. It shows to the general public and to the concerned stakeholders that it is possible to get rid of ruins impacting the mountain landscapes and that it has to be done because of the natural value of these areas. These events enable also to incite developers and planners to budget the dismantling process of any new equipment since the very beginning of the planning and construction process. Furthermore the

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dismantling events are happening in protected areas, which offers the opportunity of direct interactions between the park rangers and the general public : these events create a rich place of exchange on the themes of wildlife, return of large predators, functioning of protected areas....

### *Dates and locations*

#### **June, 7th- UBAYE : Dismantling operation of a shepherd hut in a natural area**

**Location:** Séolane Pass, town of Méolans-Revel, next to the Great Randonnée (GR) trails number 6 and 56, and next to a protected area (Natura 2000).

**Duration :** half day

Dismantling of an unused agricultural facility: the facility is a shepherd hut brought with an helicopter in 1993 and barely used.

The town covers the heliport costs planned on July, 1st; we will also take benefit of the use of the helicopter by the shepherds to bring the salt up to carry the compacted waste resulting from the dismantling back down.

The dismantling consists in separating, selecting and conditioning the hut and preparing the charges for the evacuation on July, 1st.

#### **August, 21 - 24th : "BARBED WIRES OF MONT VISO"**

**Location:** National natural reserve of Ristolas Mont Viso (Queyras), this site has been recently classified as a biosphere reserve by UNESCO.

**Duration:** 4 days et 3 nights

**Lodging:** Hut of Mont Viso (2 460m)

Barbed wires have been noticed on the border crests at several locations.

This dismantling event is implemented in partnership with the National natural reserve of Ristolas Mont Viso and the Regional natural park of Queyras. It is only possible at the end of the summer season because of its high altitude and late snow fields. During the working days, one task will be to inform and control the going and coming of hikers on itineraries that are exposed to rockfalls.

#### **October, 10 - 11th: REHABILITATION OF THE WASTE DUMP « LA SAGNE »**

**Location:** regional natural park of Préalpes d'Azur

**Duration:** 2 days

The town is situated in the heart of the park; the hamlet is traversed by the Roman way linking Castellane to Entrevaux. The former dump is around 20m3 of big objects and is situated in the lower part of the GR in a small valley when exiting the hamlet, next to a Gallo-Roman headstone. The waste dump is very visible.

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#### **Number of participants**

It varies according to the dismantling site, according to the location, the difficulty of access, and the nature of the facility to dismantle. The general supervision of the operation is done by a supervising volunteer from Mountain Wilderness and a representative of the partner (according to the site : officers of the regional natural park; of the natural reserves and of UNESCO biosphere reserves), plus one facilitator from Mountain Wilderness for each working sub-group of 5 to 10 people.

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