

Mountaineering Charter

Preamble

For more than one hundred years the CAA alpine clubs have been involved with all the topics relating to mountaineering and the other activities which take place in the mountains. They are important partners for the questions regarding conservation of the alpine region.

According to their statutes they promote the development of mountaineering, they are committed to the conservation of nature and support the efforts for sustained development of the alpine region.

Currently the following clubs are merged in the Club Arc Alpin (CAA): the German Alpine Club (DAV), the Club Alpino Italiano (CAI), the Austrian Alpine Club (OeAV), the Club Alpin Français (FFCAM), the Swiss Alpine Club (SAC), the Planinska Zveza Slovenije (P.Z.S.), the Alpine Club South Tyrol (AVS) and the Liechtenstein Alpine Club (LAV). The alpine clubs of the CAA should work closer together and co-ordinate their working methods. The alpine clubs of the CAA regard themselves as committed to responsible alpinism which brings the interests of the mountaineers in line with the needs of circumspect use and sustained development of the alpine region and its life forms.

The CAA alpine clubs represent in total 1,700,000 members, manage 1,500 shelters and maintain hundreds of thousands of km of footpaths.

In addition, since January 1996 the CAA has observer status in the alpine convention.

The CAA alpine associations therefore want to make a contribution with their own behaviour

- to the conservation of the mountains and sustained development of the alpine region, taking account of the needs of the people who live there,
- to conserve unspoiled mountain regions (wilderness areas),
- to reject one-sided regulations and official restrictions with respect to mountaineering activities,
- to safeguard free access to the alpine landscape and to promote mountaineering as a unique type of experience, including for future generations.

Therefore, in the knowledge of

- the increasing threat to the alpine region as a result of further development,
- the progressive damage of the natural basis of the livelihood of the local population,
- the endangering of the diversity of the species,
- the increasing impairment of the unique experience as well as the recreational value of the alpine landscape and
- the endangering of the scope for development for future generations,

they agree the universally valid Principles of Mountaineering, which, above all, concern the alpine region. In this charter not only are they themselves entering into an obligation, they are also appealing to politicians, authorities and the general public.

CAA - Principles of Mountaineering

1. Free access to the mountains with no charge has top priority. Together with this demand we are obliged to conserve the heritage of nature and culture of the mountains.
2. Conscious risk is an essential component of mountaineering. Important cultural components of mountaineering are above all in the frame of the risk of a roped party, a risk jointly taken and shared and the endeavour to avoid resulting grounds for criminal law disputes. Knowledge about and respect for the mountains are essential requirements for mountaineering which is as safe as possible.
3. We demand and promote the standardised responsible conduct of all mountain climbers, starting from the handling of materials, travel to their destinations and conduct in their accommodation and in the mountains. In the mountains conservation of plants and wildlife is a priority as well as consistent discipline with regard to waste disposal, the avoidance of noise and consideration for the resources and culture of the local population.
4. The restriction and control of the technical means of access as well as the use of all kinds of motor vehicles for mountain sport we regard as part of our efforts for conservation of the environment in the mountains.
5. Marking and signposting routes and paths in the mountains should be effective but discrete. Appropriate account should be taken of safety, however, the aim cannot be to totally remove responsibility from the individual. In areas or on routes whose wildness and naturalness are of special importance, it can be desirable to dispense with the markings.
6. Limits should be set for the development of the mountains with technical alpine equipment; the unspoiled high mountain region with its outstanding value in terms of experience must not be subject to development with equipment. The construction of via ferratas, canyon routes, climbing gardens, etc., should be restricted to areas close to the valley which are developed in terms of traffic engineering and can deal with pollution in ecological terms. The description of routes in guides and topos should be carried out with the necessary consideration for the specific local cultural and ecological features.
7. Existing classic and historically important climbing routes shall be preserved with their original character. The securing of new routes shall be in conformity with the usual standard in the area. Initial inspections must be carried out exclusively from below. Fixed rope tracks and storage/depots on expedition mountains shall be removed.
8. The existing density of huts and bivouacs in the alps is regarded as sufficient. New shelters shall only be constructed in well justified exceptions. A development of hotels in the actual high mountain region is not desirable. Comfort climbs should above all be compatible with the ecological framework – the huts of the alpine associations should be exemplary in ecological terms. Modern technology should also be used to achieve this goal.
9. Competitions held in the undeveloped area of the mountain must be restricted to areas which can deal with the problems of heavier pollution without difficulty; they must not be held in conservation areas. The use of aircraft must be restricted to rescue operations and terrestrial transport must only be driven on the pistes or roads. Waste or other consumer materials must be disposed of or removed immediately.
10. The members and the responsible parties of the CAA are requested to exercise extreme vigilance and to intervene by contacting the respective competent corporate body to prevent projects which either restrict free access without justification or damage the nature and landscape of the mountain in an inadmissible way.

Resolved by the general assembly in September 2008 in Malbun/Liechtenstein.

