

Niv'OSE

Niv'OSE is a non-profit-making organisation, which studies snow cover in the Vosges Mountains, in north-eastern France.

The Hohneck

This is the third highest summit of the Vosges Mountains, reaching 1361 m above sea level. Situated at the centre of the mountain range, and due to the direction of the west-side valleys, the summit shows specific climatic conditions. High snowfall, violent storms and avalanches regularly occur. Archives hold tales of numerous victims around the Hohneck, as until the middle of the 19th century it has been an important route for crossing the mountains.

The Chalet Universitaire: A secondary weather station

Daily weather recording at the Chalet Universitaire at the Chitelet started in 1976. It is situated at 1220 m above sea level and is 1.5 km away from the summit of the Hohneck. Since 1976, surveys have been carried out by a group of volunteers, consisting of mountain workers, climate scientists, historians and ecologists.

Growing outdoor activities

The growing popularity of outdoor winter activities and their under-estimated inherent risks is progressively causing more and more accidents. Backcountry skiing was practiced at the end of the cold season, in settled spring snow. Nowadays, the mountains are frequented from the first snowflakes onwards, regardless of the weather.

It appears that a high proportion of mountaineers have a limited knowledge of snow conditions. Amongst sports clubs, professionals and group leaders, there is a desire for improved knowledge and understanding of snow conditions. There is a high demand for training concerning these specific conditions in the Vosges Mountains. For this reason, a dedicated organisation has been created.

Niv'OSE is a non-profit making organisation, which surveys all winter climate phenomena, notably the snow in high visitor frequentation areas of the Vosges Mountains. Its aim is to collect and share multidisciplinary knowledge about snow and avalanches.