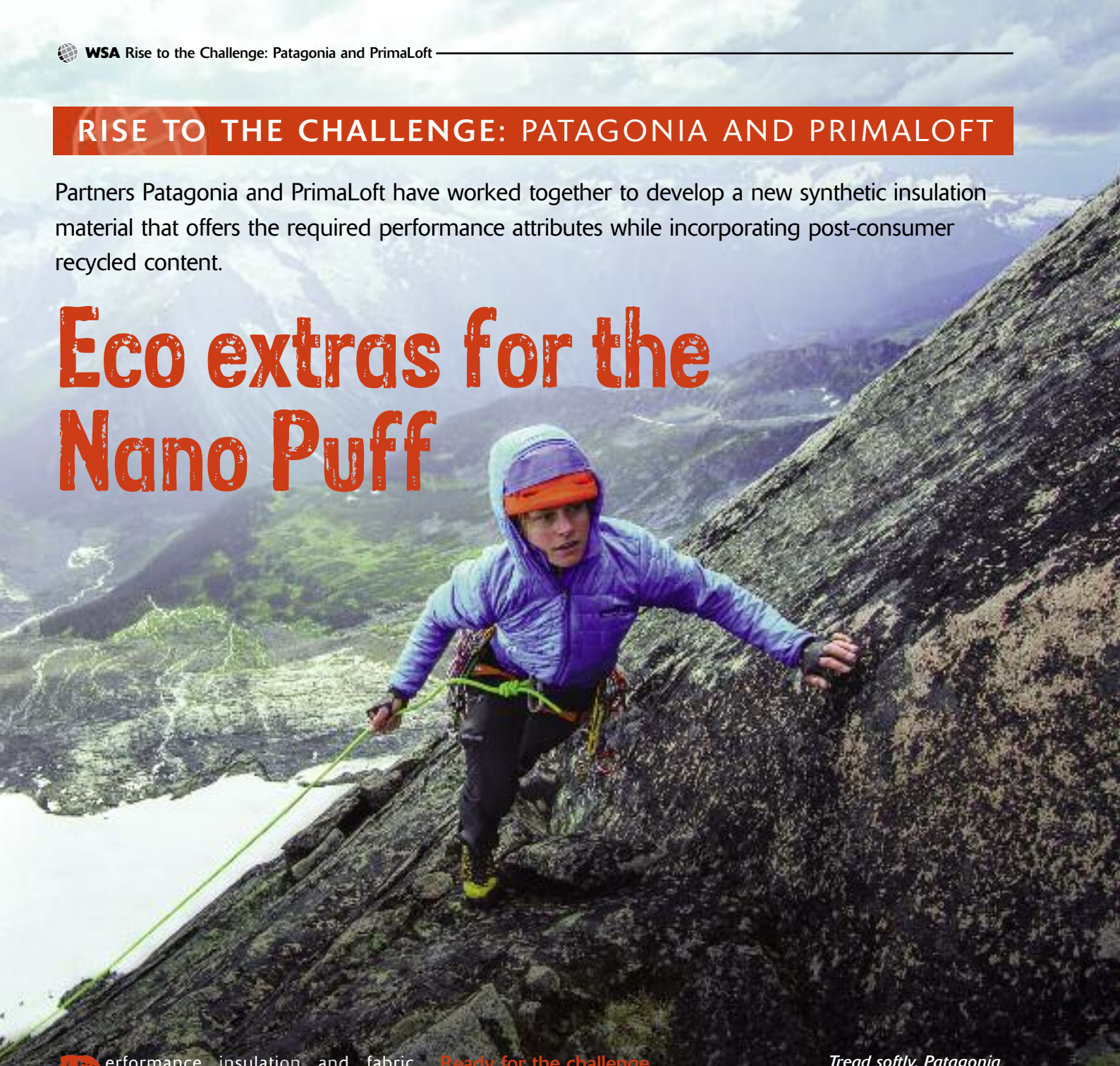
RISE TO THE CHALLENGE: PATAGONIA AND PRIMALOFT

Partners Patagonia and PrimaLoft have worked together to develop a new synthetic insulation material that offers the required performance attributes while incorporating post-consumer recycled content.

Eco extras for the Nano Puff



Tread softly. Patagonia was keen to lighten the environmental impact of its Nano Puff jacket.

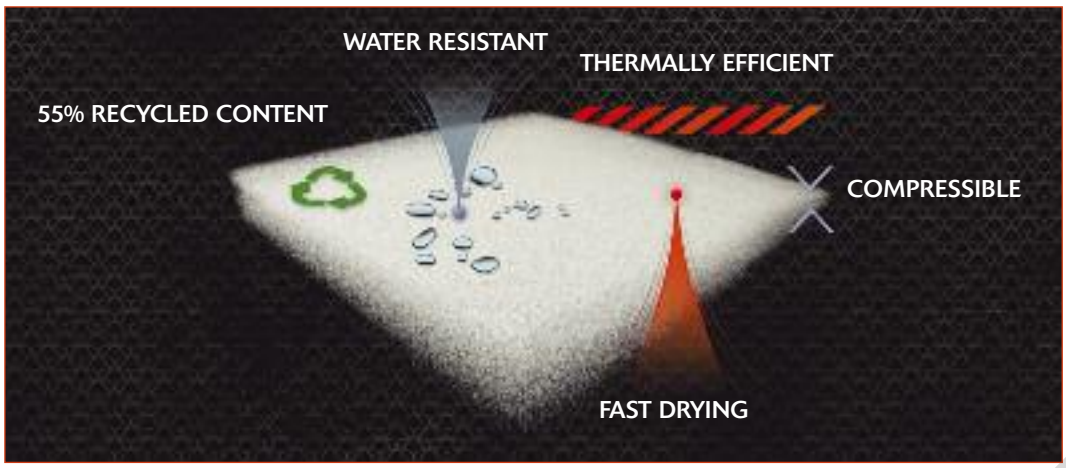
Patagonia, Inc

Performance insulation and fabric developer PrimaLoft presented a new line called Gold Insulation Eco at industry exhibitions throughout summer 2016, pointing out that this development is the result of a challenge from outdoor brand Patagonia; about two years ago it asked PrimaLoft to add post-consumer recycled components to its existing Gold Insulation material, which Patagonia has used in its Nano Puff collection of jackets.

Gold Insulation Eco has 55% post-consumer recycled content (from plastic bottle chips) and Patagonia immediately began to use it in all its Nano Puff styles. "It's not easy to lighten the environmental impact of a trusted technical piece like the Nano Puff without sacrificing performance," Patagonia said at the time, "but we never stop trying."

Ready for the challenge

According to PrimaLoft, the new Gold Insulation Eco matches exactly the performance characteristics of the original insulation material, offering high levels of warmth-to-weight ratios, both wet and dry performance ratings, softness, dry times, compressibility and durability. According to Ken Fisk, who works in PrimaLoft's communications team, Patagonia's challenge was one his company was ready for. Its in-house research and development team had already been working for some time to find ways of using recycled content; 30% of PrimaLoft products contain some eco content now and a plan to increase that percentage will be in place by the end of this year. "Everyone wants 'eco'," Mr Fisk explains, "but a lot of the time it's hard to introduce an eco component without compromising on performance and without



PrimaLoft Gold Insulation Eco offers the same efficiency as previous versions but uses 55% recycled content.

PrimaLoft

raising the price. One of our core brand guidelines is to strive to be sustainable and environmentally conscious and, since becoming a private company in 2012 we've been able to ramp that up."

Goodbye to the old way

While not wishing to "go into the specifics of the conversation", he insists that the development of the new insulation material was a real partnership, that the two companies came up with the new product together, with Patagonia's interest and support providing PrimaLoft with what he calls "an added push" to bring in post-consumer recycled content. Early feedback on the performance of Gold Insulation Eco has been positive enough for the manufacturer to have decided already to phase out the original.

The key to being able to do this is sourcing the required material from PrimaLoft's own supply chain partners. "We've worked with them a lot," Mr Fisk says. "We had to secure material that is pure enough because our fibres are so fine. It took time and effort."

An end to the search

The Nano Puff jacket first became available to Patagonia customers in 2009; it has used, and continues to use, shell and liner fabrics woven from 100% recycled polyester yarns since the start. Since 2014, the woven label on the jacket uses 85% recycled polyester content. And, in addition to Gold Insulation Eco, the latest version of the Nano Puff includes zippers that are made partly from recycled polyester (between 52% and 62%). Kristo Torgersen, alpine and snow product line director at Patagonia, has described the jacket as "a uniquely sustainable product" and said the partnership with PrimaLoft is part of a continuing effort on his company's part to reduce its environmental impact. His own company has said that it had been searching for a synthetic insulation product that could meet its performance standards while playing fair by the environment too. "Our partners at PrimaLoft have put an end to that search," Patagonia says.

One-year exclusive

It's an exclusive arrangement for the first year beginning with the autumn 2016 collection. The material will become available to the rest of the industry from autumn 2017 onwards. "That's not such a long time," Ken Fisk points out, "and we are able to talk to other brands already to help them plan for next year; they're just not able to launch any product before then."

He says other brands understand why Patagonia, as the original partner, has a one-year start on everyone else and there has been no negative reaction to this. On the contrary, the wider reaction to the use of a high-performing insulation material boosts brands' environmental profile by incorporating post-consumer recycled content and is seen as a positive. In this first year alone, and supplying the product only to Patagonia for the Nano Puff, demand for Gold Insulation Eco will divert more than two million plastic bottles from landfill.

PrimaLoft and Patagonia worked together on the development of Gold Insulation Eco. As a result, the outdoor brand has the exclusive right to use the material for one year.

Patagonia, Inc



COPYRIGHT WTP