

Iceland Conservation Volunteers (ICV) Long-term volunteers Summer 2017 – Trail Teams Programme Outline

Group A: 3rd June (Sunday)– 4th August 2018 (Saturday)

Group B: 10th June (Sunday) – 11th August 2018 (Saturday)

The ICV Trail Team programme is organised by the Environment Agency of Iceland (*Umhverfisstofnun*). Trail Teams take care of a wide variety of nature protection tasks and natural trail maintenance projects **throughout the country's national parks and nature reserves**, often staying in camps within these areas.

Volunteers are divided in small teams and travel between sites to complete a series of practical projects. The programme runs for **9 weeks and the teams usually spend one or two weeks in each location**.

No previous experience in this field is necessary as all training will be provided; however, **enthusiasm and team spirit** are essential. Due to the strenuous natural environment, participants must be **physically fit**. Applicants should have some experience of **outdoor practical activities, camping and hiking**. The remoteness of worksites and Iceland's notoriously changeable weather make the volunteer programme both an adventure and a challenge. Applicants must be **over 20 years of age**.

Upland footpath repair projects are a very important part of the management of Iceland's national parks and nature reserves. Trail repair involves handling with timber and stones that available locally: it includes the repairing of light bridges, boardwalks, drains and steps in **remote locations**. Other tasks may include path clearance, drainage.

The tools most relied upon are iron bars for rock moving, picks and shovels for loosing the ground. Other trail tasks include way-marking, survey work and sign installation.

The Trail Teams support the local rangers on many other aspects of practical management in the protected areas. In some projects volunteer teams may also be involved in **removing of invasive plant species**, mainly lupin (*lupines nootkatensis*). Efforts are now being made to control its spread in national parks and nature conservation areas. Alongside the actual plant removal itself, our teams collect data to help monitor the extent of the problem and the success of the removal operations.

ICV Trail Teams are now also taking a leading role in wilderness **restoration, transplanting moss** in damaged highland areas within the nature reserves. **Obliterating tracks made by illegal off-road driving** may also be part of the set of projects. Techniques are currently being developed to help restore areas that have been damaged by the impact from visitors.

The possibility of gaining experience in aspects related to nature conservation, especially in tasks related to the impact of human beings, are immense. This is one of the reasons why the ICV programme is reknown in Europe and beyond.

Project costs

The agency do not require its volunteer to pay registration fees. However the Trail Team volunteers need to cover the cost to and from Iceland, but upon joining the team (at the meeting point), and throughout the programme, food, transport and accommodation are provided. Participants cover their own costs during the holiday week.

Programme structure

Our Trail Team projects runs for 9 weeks and this summer there are two possible start dates available (3rd June and 10th June).

The first week of the programme is our training week. Following this, our volunteers will join projects for one or two weeks in different locations throughout the country.

Participants have a one week holiday built into the middle of the programme (week fifth).

Volunteer teams

Teams are usually made up of five volunteers including a trained volunteer team leader. Responsibilities for planning and organising and carrying the projects, as well as domestic duties, are shared among every member of the team.

Our ICV Trail Teams may sometimes be joined on the field by other international volunteer groups, local volunteers and local staff.

Weeks	Activity	Group A	Group B
Week 1	Training week project:	3/5 – 9/6	10/6 – 16/6
Weeks 2-4	First 3 projects:	10/6 – 1/7	17/6 – 8/7
Week 5	Holiday week:	1/7 – 7/7	8/7 – 14/7
Weeks 6-7	Second 3 projects:	8/7 – 28/7	15/7 – 4/8
Week 9	Final week project:	29/7 – 4/8	5/8 – 11/8

Our work and project sites

The work schedule for each team is prepared during the spring.

This is a list of our main project sites planned for **2018**.

[Mývatn Nature Reserve](#) (The Environment Agency of Iceland - North of Iceland)

[Fjallabak Nature Reserve](#) (The Environment Agency of Iceland - Highland, South)

[Vatnsfjörður Nature Reserve](#) (The Environment Agency of Iceland - Western fjords)

[Snæfellsjökull](#) National Park (The Environment Agency of Iceland)

[Nýidalur, Vonarskarð and Tungnaöræfi](#) (Vatnajökul National Park - West of Iceland)

[Snæfell / Lónsöræfi Natur Reserve](#) (Vatnajökul National Park/Environment Agency of Iceland)

[Jökulsárgljúfur](#) (Vatnajökull National Park)

[Laki Craters](#) (Vatnajökull National Park)

[Eldgjá and Langisjór](#) (Vatnajökul National Park)

[Askja, Herðubreiðarlindir and Krepputungu](#) (Vatnajökul National Park and EAI – Mid-Highland)

Possible additional project sites are:

[Hornstrandir Nature Reserve](#) (The Environment Agency of Iceland - Western fjords)

[Skaftafell](#) and [Jökulsárlón](#) (Vatnajökull National Park)

Please note that project location details are confirmed during the training week in May/June.

Please take a look also at the: [Map of Protected Areas in Iceland](#)

Day organisation

ICV Trail Teams execute projects from Monday to Friday and the project normally runs from 9.00am – 5.00pm, however this schedule can vary due to the nature of some of the projects. Participants must also be prepared for some flexibility due to Iceland's changeable weather. The programme is designed to allow 2 days off during each week. Usually the weekend.

Food

Once participants have made their own way to Iceland and joined the team at the meeting point, food will be provided for the duration of the project with the exception of the holiday week. Our volunteers take part in preparing meals and share all other domestic tasks.

Travel

The Trail Team programme begins in Hellisandur at the main office of the Snæfellsjökull National Park at **4pm** on Sunday (3rd June and 10th June 2018) (the travel details for reaching this meeting point will be provided later). Please arrange your flights according to this time. In order to arrive in Snæfellsjökul Peninsula in time you **must reach Reykjavík the day before**. Upon initial arrival at the meeting point, the Environment Agency will then provide transport to and from project locations throughout the duration of the programme.

At the start of the holiday week the Environment Agency provide transport to Reykjavik.

The placement ends on Saturday (4th and 11th August) at **20:00** as our ICV Trail Teams usually travel back to Reykjavik that day. **Please arrange the outgoing flight according to this time.**

Accommodation during the placement

Trail Teams usually stay at camps close to the project sites. Facilities may be sometimes basic but hot showers and cooking tents are provided. In some other locations, our volunteers stay in shared rooms in staff accommodation. Please note however, that some locations may be very remote and our groups may need to do wilderness camping (not common).

Holiday week

The programme includes a holiday week in the middle of the placement (week 5). This is an opportunity for our volunteers to rest, to travel more around Iceland, meet friends and receive family. Participants pay for their own costs during holiday week. The Environment Agency provides transport to Reykjavik at the start of the holiday week, and the volunteers will be picked up again in Reykjavik at the end of the holiday week.

Equipment

The Environment Agency will provide gloves and waterproof jackets and trousers for executing the projects as well as any additional safety equipment that is required. Participants will need to bring their own personal equipment.

Essentials include, a sturdy tent, walking boots, safety work boots (with steel toecaps) and waterproofs and warm clothes. A full equipment check-list can be found on our website.

Insurance

Volunteers must organise their own travel and health insurance for their trip. Please read the Health and Safety notice on our website.

Application form and deadlines

You can apply by completing the online ICV Long-term volunteer application form or use the Word version and return it to us at by email as scanned copy exclusively by email using the following address: volunteer@ust.is

The recruitment process begins in end of January and includes also a Skype interview.

Applications must reach us before 15th February, to be considered for a place in 2018. Once the volunteer has been accepted (usually within the beginning of March), he will receive a registration form which will include the understanding of the terms and conditions (also available on our website). The deadline for registering is in the middle of March 2018.

More news and pictures on our Facebook Page

You can also follow us on our facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ICV.is>

If you have any questions feel free to contact our office:
volunteer@ust.is Phone: +354 591 2000.