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Research permit – Friðland að Fjallabak

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from Michael Bishop dated 29.5.2023, for a research permit within Friðland að Fjallabaki nature reserve.

Fjallabak is protected as a nature reserve, cf. regulation no. 354/1979. Construction work, extraction of minerals, disturbance to geological formations, vegetation and wild animal life in the protected area is prohibited. Filming, photography and events must not disturb wildlife within the reserve and the disturbance they cause to other guests must be kept to a minimum. Filming, photography, and events that involve the risk of landslides, disruption to wildlife, traffic, or effect to the experience of other guests is subject to a permit. The organization is authorized to set conditions when such licenses are granted.

Description of the project:

The objective is to install two timelapse cameras in Landmannalaugar and Hrafninnusker, which will capture the seasonal changes in conditions and document the level of wilderness tourism traffic in the area. In some cases, rocks may need to be displaced temporarily to stabilize the tripod. Footprints may temporarily affect the vegetation and soil during installation, but mitigation efforts will be implemented. These efforts align with the "leave no trace" ethics, ensuring lightweight location scouting and minimal disturbances to the biological and geological features.

In terms of motorized equipment, they will not be used within the protected area, so there are no concerns in this regard. No sampling activities will be performed during the installation process. The focus will solely be on installing the camera, which will be mounted on a tripod. The camera model selected for this project is the self-sufficient solar-powered Tikee camera from Enlaps. Furthermore, the goal is to reinstall the camera in a few years to observe and analyze changes in infrastructure, snow cover, and vegetation.

Impact assessment:

The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project to be minimal and not likely to have negative impact on the reserve. The project could have minimal impact to guest's experience since the equipment will be placed in the area for around three months.

Conclusions and conditions:

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants Michael Bishop permission on its behalf to conduct this research within Friðland að Fjallabak as described above from mid-June-mid-September on the following conditions:

- **The equipment should be placed in an area that will have the most minimal effects on guest's experience.**
- **All traces due to the research should be removed.**
- Keep this letter with you on site during the project. The permit conditions should be introduced to the staff of the project before work begins.
- The applicant shall inform the Environmental Agency advisor in the area about their arrival and departure. This is to be done 24 hours before entering the area and again before leaving it.
- If the project dates or description changes the Environment Agency shall be notified as soon as possible. The project's staff is required to prevent all disturbance to the environment and make sure that all litter is removed from the sites.
- Every measure should be taken to avoid damage to the sites and unnecessary disturbance while conducting the research.
- All disturbance to animals and wildlife is strictly prohibited.
- Off-road driving in Iceland is strictly prohibited.

Permission fee:

Environment Agency of Iceland charges a fee for processing applications for permits in protected areas based on Article 92 of Act no. 61/2013 on Nature Conservation. The fee for research is 39.400 ISK according to art. 24. b. in the agency's tariff no. 535/2015.

Supervision:

The Environment Agency will supervise the project. The supervisor will be a ranger from the Environment Agency.

Sincerely

Daníel Freyr Jónsson
Specialist

Þórdís Björt Sigþórsdóttir
Team leader