

Smithsonian Institution National Air and Space Museum
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Washington, DC 20560
United States

Reykjavík, 28. maí 2024
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Subject: permit for a use of drone as part of a research project

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from Smithsonian Institution National Air and Space Museum, dated May 7th 2024 for a permit to fly a drone in Fjallabak nature reserve as a part of a research project that the Environment Agency approved on April 17th 2024.

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. The use of unmanned aircraft (drones) within the nature reserve from June 15th - September 15th is subject to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland.

Description of the project:

Drone would be used as part of the research to take images of the local geology and alluvian fans. Aerial photo showing the research site the drone would fly over was included in the application. The drone would fly at altitudes under 300 meters, typically between 150-250 meters if allowed. If that is not possible the maximum altitude would be 120 meters. The droneflight would take place in the period of July 6th - 9th 2024.

Impact assessment:

The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the droneflight not likely to have negative impact on nature and conservation value of the site if conditions of the permit are followed. The research site is not near any facilities or near hiking trails so impact of the on other visitors will be minimum.

Conclusions and conditions:

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants Smithsonian Institution National Air and Space Museum permission on its behalf to fly a drone within Fjallabak nature reserve as described above on July 6th -9th 2024 on the following conditions but in addition conditions in the permit letter issued on April 17th regarding this research project apply:

- An unmanned aircraft should never be flown in close proximity to people. Please take precaution not to disturb people's experience, their safety or personal privacy nor the general peace of the protected areas being filmed if other visitors are near the research site.
- Flight time should be kept to a minimum.

- If the use of unmanned aircraft causes disturbance to wildlife in the area, its use should be ceased at once.
- The conductor of the unmanned aircraft is responsible for the aircraft within the protected area. This includes taking responsibility of any possible risk of harm to people, fauna and nature and leaving no permanent marks on the site in question. Should the aircraft crash, all components from it must be collected and removed from the area.

If the developer causes damage to nature, according to art. 87 in the Nature Conservation Act no. 60/2013, the Environment Agency of Iceland can, according to the Nature Conservation Act, f.e. order the licensee to fix damage to nature and vegetation and/or stop the project.

The Environment Agency of Iceland can according to art. 89 in the Nature Conservation Act no. 60/2013 change conditions of the permit, add new conditions or withdraw the permit in order to prevent damage to nature if environmental conditions change.

According to art 89. in the Nature Conservation Act no. 60/2013 the Environment Agency can withdraw the permit if conditions of the permit are not complied to.

For exemption from drone regulation regarding maximum flight altitude the applicant needs to apply directly to The Icelandic Transport Authority <https://island.is/en/application-for-exemption>

Unmanned aircraft should take off and land in a safe distance from other visitors according to regulation 990/2017 on unmanned aircrafts.

The usage of a drone shall be according to regulation no. 990/2017 on the operation of remotely piloted aircraft (<https://www.icetra.is/aviation/drones/>).

Please note that according to the regulation all drones used for commercial flight need to be registered at the Icelandic Transport Authority.

Permission fee:

The Environment Agency has already charged a fee from the applicant for processing the application for research permit in the area. Since the droneflight is part of the research we will not charge for processing this application.

Supervision:

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

Sincerely

Daníel Freyr Jónsson
advisor

Þórdís Vilhelmína Bragadóttir
advisor