

**Iceland Conservation Volunteers (ICV) Long-term volunteers
Summer 2014 – Trail Teams Programme Outline**

Group A: 1st June – 16th August

Group B: 8th June – 23rd August

The ICV Trail Team programme is organised by the Environment Agency of Iceland (*Umhverfisstofnun*). Trail Teams work on a wide variety of trail construction projects and other conservation management tasks **throughout the country's national parks and nature reserves**, often staying in camps within these areas.

Volunteers work in small teams and travel between worksites to complete a series of practical projects. The programme runs for **11 weeks and the teams usually spend one or two weeks in each location**.

No previous experience of this work is necessary as all training will be provided; however, **enthusiasm and team spirit** are essential. Due to the strenuous nature of our work, participants must be physically fit. Applicants should have some experience of practical work, camping and hill walking. 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 work is a very important part of the management of Iceland's national parks and nature reserves. Trail repair work involves working with timber and stone and includes the construction of bridges, boardwalks, drains and steps. Other tasks include ground clearance, drainage work and a great deal of digging!

The tools most relied upon are iron bars for rock moving, picks and shovels for ground work (machines are however used to make the work easier where possible). Other trail tasks include way-marking, survey work and sign installation.

An important role of the Trail Teams is to support the work of local rangers and in addition to trail work our teams are involved in all other aspects of practical management in the protected areas. In some projects volunteer teams may also be involved in GPS mapping, data collection and the removal of invasive plant species. Although lupin (*lupines nootkatensis*) now grows throughout Iceland, 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 work, transplanting moss in damaged highland areas within the nature reserves. Techniques are currently being developed to help restore areas that have been damaged by the impact from visitors.

Project costs

Trail Team volunteers pay their own travel costs to Iceland, but upon joining the team, and throughout the programme, food, transport and accommodation (often camping) are provided. Participants cover their own costs during the holiday week.

Programme structure

Our Trail Team projects runs for 11 weeks and this summer there are two possible start dates available (1st June and 8th June).

The first 10 days of the programme are training and induction. Following this, our volunteers join the practical projects. These usually run for one or two weeks in each location and include

sites throughout the country. Participants have a one week holiday built into the middle of the programme (week six). The final week will be within the Vatnajökull National Park.

Volunteer teams

Teams are usually made up of five volunteers including a trained team leader. Responsibilities for planning and organising the work, as well as domestic duties, **are shared between** the group.

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

Weeks	Activity	Group A	Group B
Week 1	Training week:	1/6 – 7/6	8/6 – 14/6
Weeks 2 and 3	First Project:	8/6 – 21/6	15/6 – 28/6
Weeks 4 and 5	Second project:	22/6 – 5/7	29/6 – 12/7
Week 6	Holiday week:	6/7 – 12/7	13/7 – 19/7
Weeks 7 and 8	Third project:	13/7 – 26/7	20/7 – 2/8
Weeks 9 and 10	Fourth project:	27/7 – 9/8	3/8 – 16/8
Week 11	Final week:	10/8 – 16/8	17/8 – 23/8

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 2014.

Please note that project location details are confirmed in May.

[Snaefellsjökull](#) National Park

[Skaftafell](#) (Vatnajökull National Park)

[Jökulsárgljúfur](#) (Vatnajökull National Park)

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

[Lónsöræfi Nature Reserve](#) (East of Iceland)

[Mývatn Nature Reserve](#) (North of Iceland)

[Fjallabak Nature Reserve](#) (Highland, South)

[Hornstrandir Nature Reserve](#) (Western fjords)

[Vatnsfjörður Nature Reserve](#) (Western fjords)

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

Work times

ICV Trail Teams work from Monday to Friday and the working day normally runs from 9.00am – 6.00pm, however this schedule can vary due to the nature of some of the projects. Participants must also be prepared for some flexibility in these working hours due to Iceland's changeable weather. The programme is designed to allow 2 days off during each work week.

Food

Once participants have made their own way to Iceland and joined the team, 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 Skaftafell National Park at 4pm on Sunday (travel details provided later). Please arrange your flights according to this time. In order to arrive in Skaftafell National Park 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 worksites throughout the duration of the projects.

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

The placement ends on Saturday evening at 8pm as our ICV Trail Teams usually travel back to Reykjavík then. Please arrange the outgoing flight according to this.

Accommodation during the placement

Trail Teams usually stay at camps close to the work sites. Facilities are 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 work takes our groups to wilderness areas where there are very few facilities.

Holiday week

The schedule includes a holiday week in the middle of the placement (week 6). This is an opportunity for our volunteers to rest from the project work, to travel more around Iceland, and meet friends/partners. Participants pay for their own costs during holiday week. The Environment Agency provides transport to Reykjavik at the start of the holiday week and participants will be picked up again in Reykjavik at the end of the week to begin the second half of the placement.

Equipment

The Environment Agency will provide gloves and waterproof jackets and trousers for working as well as any additional safety equipment that is required. Participants will need to bring their own personal equipment. A full [equipment list can be found on our website](#).

Essentials include:

- A sturdy tent
- Walking boots
- Safety work boots (with steel toecaps)
- Waterproofs and warm clothes

Insurance

Volunteers must organise their own travel and health insurance for their trip.

Application form and deadlines

You can apply by completing the online [ICV Long-term volunteer application](#) form or use the [PDF version](#) and return it to us at by email as scanned copy or by post using the following addresses:

Email volunteer@ust.is /

Postal address:

To the volunteer coordinator:
Umhverfisstofnun,
Suðurlandsbraut 24,
108 Reykjavík,
Iceland

Please note that there are limited places and the recruitment process begins in January and includes also a Skype interview.

Applications must reach us before 1st March, to be considered for a place in 2014.

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.