

David Ahnholz

Reykjavík, 24. ágúst 2023  
UST202308-118/P.V.B.  
09.04.00

**Subject: permit to fly a drone - Fjallabak og Kerlingarfjöll**

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from David Ahnholz, dated August 16<sup>th</sup> 2023, for a permit to fly a drone within Fjallabak and Kerlingarfjöll.

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 15<sup>th</sup> – September 15<sup>th</sup> is subject to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland.

Kerlingarfjöll is protected as an area of landscape, cf. Regulation no. 822/2020. Disturbance to geological formations, landscape, hot springs, other springs and ecosystems in hot springs in the protected area is prohibited. Permission must be obtained from the Environment Agency of Iceland for organized events and projects that need facilities, labour force or use of equipment within the protected area such as filming, at events and ceremonies.

***Description of the project:***

Within Fjallabak it is requested to fly the drone at 8 locations: Bláhylur at Hnausapoll, Red craters, Ljótípollur, Bláhnúkur, Landmannalaugar, Frostastaðarvatn, Kýlingavatn and Jokulgilskvisl at intersection of road F208. In Kerlingarfjöllum it is requested to fly the drone at two locations: Snækollur and Hverdalir. There would be two flights at each location except in Hverdalir wher they would be three. Flight time at each location would be 30 min and alltitude 40-120 meters. The drone would fly upp take the drone will take a 360° view of the suronding area and straigth down at each location. Flights would take place between August 25, 2023 and September 11, 2023 (dependent on weather). Takeoff and landing would occur as far away from any people as possible – at least 500 meters away from anyone, preferably much further. Flights would occur before 9 am and after 6 pm at all areas, unless area is empty of other visitors at other times. Two per persons would be involved in the flights.

***Impact assessment:***

The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project not likely to have negative impact on nature and conservation value of the sites if conditions of the permit are followed. The project might have negative effect on other visitors experience of the site but if conditions of the permit are followed the Environment Agency considers that the effect can be reduced.

***Conclusions and conditions:***

After revision of the application, regulations for the sites it is concluded that no permission is needed to fly the drone in Kerlingafjöll in the period requested if the flight does not disturb wildlife and other visitors experience.

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants David Ahnholz permission on its behalf to fly a drone within Fjallabak nature reserve as described above in the period August 25<sup>th</sup> -September 11<sup>th</sup> 2023 on the following conditions:

- 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 rangers 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.
- Applicant should always stay on authorized paths/tracks/roads.
- If any complications occur during the project, please contact the ranger or the Environment Agency of Iceland, tel. +354 591 2000.
- Off-road driving in Iceland is strictly prohibited.
- If the material is meant for public viewing it must be noted in the video/subtext that permission from the Environment Agency was obtained for the filming/photography.
- The applicant should be conscious of other guests on the sites and make sure that droneflight causes as little disturbance as possible to other visitors.
- 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.
- Flight time should be kept to a minimum and flight should be avoided during the area's busiest times of the day.
- 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.
- For safety reasons, the pilot of an unmanned aerial vehicle must wear marked clothing so that the person can be identified.

If the applicant 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.

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:***

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 droneflight for recreational flight in up to two areas is **38.000 ISK** according to art. 29. b. in the agency's tariff no. 206/2023.

***Supervision:***

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

Sincerely

Daníel Feyr Jónsson

***advisor***

Pórdís Vilhelmína Bragadóttir

***advisor***