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Research permit - Geysir

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from The Open University, dated 4th of July 2022, for a research permit in the Geysir area.

Geysir is protected as a natural monument, cf. regulation no. 660/2020. All disturbance of geological monuments is prohibited, incl. any inscriptions and disturbance of the activity and water level of the hot spring area, disturbance of hot springs, hot springs, soils, and rocks, without permission. Helicopters and other manned aircraft may not land within the area without the permission of the Environment Agency. Operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the protected area is subjected to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland.

Description of the project:

This project aims to sample aerosols (airborne droplets) generated by geysering and bubbling of geothermal springs, in order to understand dispersal mechanisms of microorganisms, inorganic and organic compounds from the springs. Water samples will be taken from the springs, and aerosol samples acquired at one upwind and two downwind locations from the Strokkur spring using a battery-powered air sampling device. Sampling at Geysir will require a maximum of three full days, to take place during the date window 26th of July–10th of August. Matís ohf. is a project partner and holds the necessary permit from the National Energy Authority (Orkustofnun) for sampling in geothermal areas in Iceland for research purposes.

Impact assessment:

The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project to be minimal and not likely to have negative impact on the area. Furthermore, it is not likely that guests will be disturbed by the project.

Conclusions and conditions:

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants The Open University permission on its behalf to carry out research within the Geysir area as described above in the data window 26th July-10th of August on the following conditions:

- If the project dates or description changes the Environment Agency shall be notified as soon as possible.
- 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.
- For security reasons and because of the vulnerable silica crust and vegetation, the ranger in the area or the specialist will take the research team to the sample area.
- This permit is only valid for research purposes. It does not include permit to utilize the samples for commercial purposes. The samples cannot be signed over to third party for commercial use.
- 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.
- Every measure should be taken to avoid damage to the sites and unnecessary disturbance while collecting samples.
- Damage on vulnerable crust and vegetation in the area is forbidden.
- All vehicles used during field exploration must be labelled with the identity of the researcher's institute. All participants in the project must wear high-visibility clothing during field work, labelled with the identity of the researcher or the research institute.

Permit from the National Energy Authority is needed for research in geothermal areas (www.os.is).

If you wish to export samples from Iceland a special permit is needed from the Icelandic Institute of Natural History (www.ni.is).

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

Valdimar Kristjánsson
advisor

Pórdís Björt Sigþórsdóttir
Team leader