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Subject: permit to take samples within Myvatn and Laxa

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from University of Wisconsin – Madison, Department Forest & Wildlife Ecology, dated June 7th, 2021, for a research project within Myvatn and Laxa Nature Conservation area.

Myvatn and Laxa Nature Conservation area is protected by law 97/2004 to support nature conservation in the area with the goal of sustainable development and to ensure that the ecological resilience of the area will not be endangered by man. Furthermore, geological features and landscape is protected.

Permission from the Environment Agency of Iceland is needed for construction work and all activity that can affect wildlife, geological formations, vegetation and landscape in the area.

Description of the project:

According to the application the objective of this work will be to collect foliar samples of the dominant vegetation types concurrently with NASA airborne flights where airborne imagery will be collected in order to analyze geological, hydrological, terrestrial vegetational and aquatic ecosystems. Handheld spectrometer measurements will be taken for chemical analyses which will be used to validate the analyses from the NASA imagery. The samples collected will be 5-10 g of foliage (10-15 leaves) from approximately 1-5 species that are present at the site with greater than 10% cover. The sampling will have minimal impact on vegetation, and no impact on soils or geology.

Review:

In accordance to art. 17. in regulation 665/2012 the Environment Agency of Iceland requested a review from the Icelandic Institute of Natural History, the Lake Mývatn Research station and landowners on June 15th. The review from Icelandic Institute of Natural History was received on June 24th. The review from the Lake Mývatn Research station was received on June 24th. Both reviews were without remarks on the application.

Impact assessment:

The project is based on researching and taking vegetation samples at the same time as aerial photographs are taken. The project is not considered to affect the conservation value of the area, but the results can be of a great value.

Conclusions and conditions:

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants the University of Wisconsin permission on its behalf to collect samples within Myvatn and Laxa Nature Conservation area as described above 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.
- The crew must follow rules of conduct that apply to the 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.
- Every measure should be taken to avoid damage to the sites and unnecessary disturbance while collecting samples.
- Samples should be collected where any resulting disturbance to soil, vegetation or geological formations is not visible to other visitors.
- 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.

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.

A permission from the landowners and/or the municipality might be needed for the project.

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

The Environment Agency of Iceland wishes to receive, free of charge, a copy of all reports and scientific articles that result from the research project.

Sincerely

Arna Hjörleifsdóttir
advisor

Davíð Örvar Hansson
advisor