

Arctic Yeti ehf.
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Spain

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Permit to hold an ultramarathon in Fjallabak and Þjórsárdal nature conservation areas

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from Arctic Yeti ehf., dated April 16th 2021, for a permit for a ultramarathon going through the nature conservation areas Fjallabak and Þjórsárdalur.

Fjallabak is protected as 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. According to the management plan regulations no. 15 permission must be obtained from the Environment Agency for organized events and projects that pose a risk of disturbance to geological formations or guests in the area. Operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the protected area is subjected to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland.

Þjórsárdalur is protected as landscape area and Hjálparfoss, Gjáin, Háifoss and Granni are protected as natural monument, cf. regulation no. 110/2020. Disturbance to geological formations, vegetation and wild animal life in the protected area is prohibited. Permission must be obtained from the Environment Agency for organized events and projects that pose a risk of disturbance to geological formations, wildlife or guests in the area. Operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the protected area is subjected to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland.

Description of the project:

Part of the ultramarathon will go through Fjallabak and Þjórsárdalur nature conservation areas. The race route is a combination of the main road, dirt roads and trails through the highlands. Map that shows the route was attached to the application. Official camps will be set up with in Fjallabak nature reserve at Landmannahellir and Landmannalaugar. No camps will be within Þjórsárdalur. Participants will stay in tents in the camps and the staff will stay in guesthouses. Toilets will be used on site at guesthouses and extras will be transported in when necessary via roads. All runners will be required to carry organic waste bags and packaging for toilet needs which will be disposed out of sites. There will be simple aid stations along the route. The route will be marked with biodegradable topographic tape every 100-500 meters. The route will also be signposted with the organization's event signs at intersections, trail crossings, or where other important information is considered necessary to guide the runners. Once the participants have passed all markings will be removed. The marathon will take place June 26th – July 3rd 2021. It is estimated that 50 participants will take part in the marathon and number of staff is 10-15 people.

Impact assessment:

The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project not likely to have negative impact on the protected areas or guests in the area if conditions of the permit are followed.

. The participants will run only on roads and trails.

Conclusions and conditions:

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants Arctic Yeti ehf. permission on its behalf to hold an Ultramarathon within Fjallabak nature reserve and Þjórsárdalur as described above on June 26th – July 3rd 2021 on the following conditions:

- Organizer of the event must fill in a report at least one week prior to the event/race starts with a schedule on how the event/race will take place. Information that need to be in the report are for example final number of contestants and how clean up of the event will take please.
- At least 3 days before the marathon takes place the organizers will need to place information signs at the route and at the main tourist information centres nearby to inform guests about the marathon and possible effect on other traffic in the area.
- Keep this letter with you on site during the project. The permit conditions should be introduced to the staff and participants of the ultramarathon before it begins.
- The applicant shall inform rangers in the area about their arrival and departure. This shall 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.
- Maximum number of participants in the marathon is 50 persons.
- Contestants should show consideration to other guests are in the area when paths cross on site and on roads and paths where the event takes place.
- Organizers must inform participants on the importance of staying on marked race routes to prevent damage to fauna and geological formations.
- All traces of the project must be removed carefully from the site by the end of the marathon.
- In areas where paths are not well marked organizers need to add markings to make sure participants stay on the right path. This is very important where the path crosses fragile areas like, moss, vegetation, geothermal areas and wetlands.
- Drinking and first aid stations should be located where the area can handle increased traffic like parking lots near huts.
- Camping is only allowed in designated camping sites.
- The crew and participants must follow rules of conduct that apply to the area.
- Organizers of the event must guarantee that no litter will be left behind at site and on race routes.
- All markings of the route must be removed as soon as the event is over.
- It is not allowed to run off road and off paths
- 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.
- Competitors and staff members should stay on marked paths the whole time.

- If travel toilets are used within the sites, the disposal of the content should be done in authorized discharge site outside the protected 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.

A permission from the municipality might be needed for the project.

Permission fee:

Environment Agency of Iceland charges a fee for processing applications for permits for construction and events based on Article 92 of Act no. 61/2013 on Nature Conservation. The fee is 39.400 ISK according to art. 24. a. 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

Hákon Ásgeirsson
team leader

Þórdís Vilhelmína Bragadóttir
advisor