

Iceland Conservation Volunteers (ICV) Long-term volunteers Summer 2026 – Trail Teams Programme Outline

Group A: 31st May (Sunday) – 8th August 2026 (Saturday)

Group B: 14th June (Sunday) – 22nd August 2026 (Saturday)

The ICV Trail Team programme is organised by the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland (*Náttúruverndarstofnun*). Trail Teams take care of a wide variety of nature protection tasks and natural trail maintenance projects throughout the country's national parks and nature reserves, often staying in camps within these areas.

Volunteers are divided in small teams and travel between sites to complete a series of practical projects. The programme runs for **10 weeks** and the teams usually spend one or two weeks in each location.

No previous experience in this field is necessary as all training will be provided; however, **enthusiasm and team spirit** are essential. Due to the strenuous natural environment, participants must be **physically fit**. Applicants should have some experience of **outdoor practical activities, camping** in a tent and **hiking**. 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 projects are a very important part of the management of Iceland's national parks and nature reserves. Trail repair involves handling with timber and stones that are available locally: it includes the repairing of light bridges, boardwalks, drains and steps in **remote locations**. Other tasks may include path clearance, drainage.

The tools most relied upon are iron bars for rock moving, pickaxes, spades, big forks and shovels for losing the ground and landscaping. Other trail tasks include way-marking, survey work and sign installation.

The Trail Teams support the local rangers on many other aspects of practical management in the protected areas. In some projects volunteer teams may also be involved in **removing invasive plant species**, mainly lupin (*Lupinus nootkatensis*). Efforts are now being made to control its spread in national parks and nature conservation areas. Alongside the actual plant removal itself, our teams may 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, transplanting moss or endemic vegetation and landscaping** in damaged highland areas within the nature reserves. **Obliterating tracks made by illegal off-road driving** may also be part of the set of projects.

Techniques are currently being developed to help restore areas that have been damaged by visitors.

The possibility of gaining experience in aspects related to nature conservation, especially in tasks related to the impact of human beings, are huge. This is one of the reasons why the ICV programme is renown in Europe and beyond.

Cost

The agency does not require its volunteers to pay registration fees. However, the Trail Team volunteers need to cover the cost to and from Iceland, including the visa fee (if applicable) and the resident permit fee (if applicable – see chapter* below). Upon joining the team (at the meeting point on day 1), and throughout the programme, food, transport and accommodation are provided. However, participants will have to cover their own costs during the holiday week.

Programme structure

Our Trail Team projects runs for 10 weeks and this summer there are two possible start dates available (31st May and 14th June). **The applicant must ensure that he/she will be available for the whole programme.**

The first week of the programme is our training week. Following this, our volunteers will join projects for one or two weeks in different locations throughout the country.

Participants have a one-week holiday built into the middle of the programme (week 6 (sixth)).

Volunteer teams

Teams are usually made up of five volunteers including a trained volunteer team leader. Responsibilities for planning and organising and carrying the projects, as well as domestic duties, are shared among every member of the team.

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

Weeks	Activity	Group A	Group B
Week 1	Training week project:	31/5 – 6/6	14/6 – 20/6
Weeks 2-5	First 4 projects:	7/6 – 4/7	21/6 – 18/7
Week 6	Holiday week:	5/7 – 11/7	19/7 – 25/7
Weeks 7-9	Second 3 projects:	12/7 – 1/8	26/7 – 15/8
Week 10	Final week project:	2/8 – 8/8	16/8 – 22/8

*the final dates will be confirmed in March 2026

Possible project sites

The schedule for each team is prepared during the spring.

For **2026** we are planning projects in the following protected areas.

Snæfellsjökull National Park (West of Iceland)

Vatnsfjörður Nature Reserve (Western fjords)

Mývatn Nature Reserve (North of Iceland)

Storúrð, Landscape protection area (East fjords)
Skógafoss, Nature monument (South Iceland)
Fjallabak Nature Reserve (Highland, South of Iceland)
Þjórsárdalur, Landscape protection area (Highland, South Iceland).
Kerlingarfjöll, Landscape protection area (Highland, South of Iceland)
Jökulsárgljúfur, Vatnajökull National Park (North Iceland)
Askja, Ódáðahraun and Krepputunga, Vatnajökull National Park (Mid-Highland)
Skaftafell, Vatnajökull National Park (South-East Iceland)
Jökulsárlón, Vatnajökull National Park (South-East Iceland)

Please note that project location details are confirmed during the training week in June.

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

Day organisation

ICV Trail Teams execute projects from Monday to Friday, and the project normally runs from 9.00am – 5.00pm, however this schedule can vary due to the nature of some of the projects. Participants must also be prepared for some flexibility due to Iceland's changeable and moody weather. The programme is designed to allow 2 days off during each week, usually the weekend. Note that during these days, the teams are travelling between locations and enjoying activities around Iceland.

Food

Once participants have made their own way to Iceland and joined the team at the meeting point, food will be provided for the duration of the project except for the holiday week. Our volunteers take part in preparing meals and share all other domestic tasks. Note that allergies and dietaries (vegetarian, vegan...) are taken into consideration.

Travel

The Trail Team programme begins in Reykjavík (this meeting point will be confirmed to the participants in spring 2026) at **9am** on Sunday (31st May and 14th June 2026). Our volunteers are asked to arrange their flights according to this time. In order to arrive in time, volunteers **must reach Reykjavík the day before**. Upon initial arrival at the meeting point, the Nature Conservation Agency will then provide transport to and from project locations throughout the duration of the programme.

At the start of the holiday week, the Nature Conservation Agency provides transport to Reykjavík.

The placement ends on Saturday (8th of August and 22nd of August) at 20:00 in Reykjavík as our ICV Trail Teams usually travel back to Reykjavík that day. **The volunteers need to arrange the outgoing flight according to this time.**

Visa and residence permit

Volunteers coming from outside the Schengen area must sort out themselves the visa requirement to come to Iceland. The Nature Conservation Agency will assist the volunteers with the required documentation linked to the volunteering programme.

Note that if you have been travelling to the Schengen Area before coming to Iceland, you will need to make sure you are following the rule of not travelling more than 90 days within a 180 days' period. If the volunteer is reaching the 90 days, he/she has to apply for a residence permit for volunteering (see information: <https://island.is/en/permits-for-volunteers>).

Note that every volunteer coming from outside the Schengen area has to show a proof of his/her stay in Iceland, meaning the flight tickets to and from Iceland, as well as an agreement with the Nature Conservation Agency for the duration of the volunteering programme.

Accommodation during the placement

Trail Teams stay 95% of the time in average at camps close to the project sites and in their own tents. Facilities may be sometimes basic, but volunteers usually stay in campsites in their own tent. Volunteers have access to hot showers and washing machines and teams have their own cooking tents. In some other locations, our volunteers stay in shared rooms in staff accommodation. Please note however, that some locations may be very remoted, and our groups may need to do wilderness camping (thus it is not common).

Holiday week

The programme includes a holiday week in the middle of the placement (week 6). This is an opportunity for our volunteers to rest, to travel more around Iceland, meet friends and receive family. Participants pay for their own costs during holiday week. The Nature Conservation Agency provides transport to Reykjavík at the start of the holiday week, and the volunteers will be picked up again in Reykjavík at the end of the holiday week. Note that the dates may vary due to the location of the projects but it will be confirm as soon as the volunteers receive the confirmation of their participation to the programme.

Equipment

The Nature Conservation Agency will provide gloves and waterproof jackets and trousers for executing the projects as well as any additional safety equipment that is required. Participants will need to bring their own personal equipment.

Essentials include, a sturdy tent, walking boots, **safety work boots (with steel toecaps)** and waterproofs and warm clothes. A full equipment check-list can be found on our website.

Insurance

Volunteers must take care of their own travel and health insurance for their trip. Please read the Health and Safety notice on our website.

Application form and deadlines

You can apply by completing the ICV Long-term volunteer application form (Word version) and return it to us at by email as scanned copy exclusively by email using the following address: nattura@nattura.is

The recruitment process begins at the beginning of February and includes also an online interview (preferably over Teams) usually from mid-February until the beginning of March.

Applications must reach us before 15th February, to be considered for a spot in 2026.

Once the volunteer has been accepted (usually within the beginning of March), he/she will receive a registration form which will include the understanding of the terms and conditions (also available on our website). The deadline for registering is at the end of March 2026.

More news and pictures on our Facebook Page

Everybody is encouraged to follow us on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ICV.is>

Feel free to contact our office:

volunteer@nattura.is