

PROJECTS OF THE VOLUNTEERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY OF ICELAND (UMHVERFISSTOFNUN) 2024

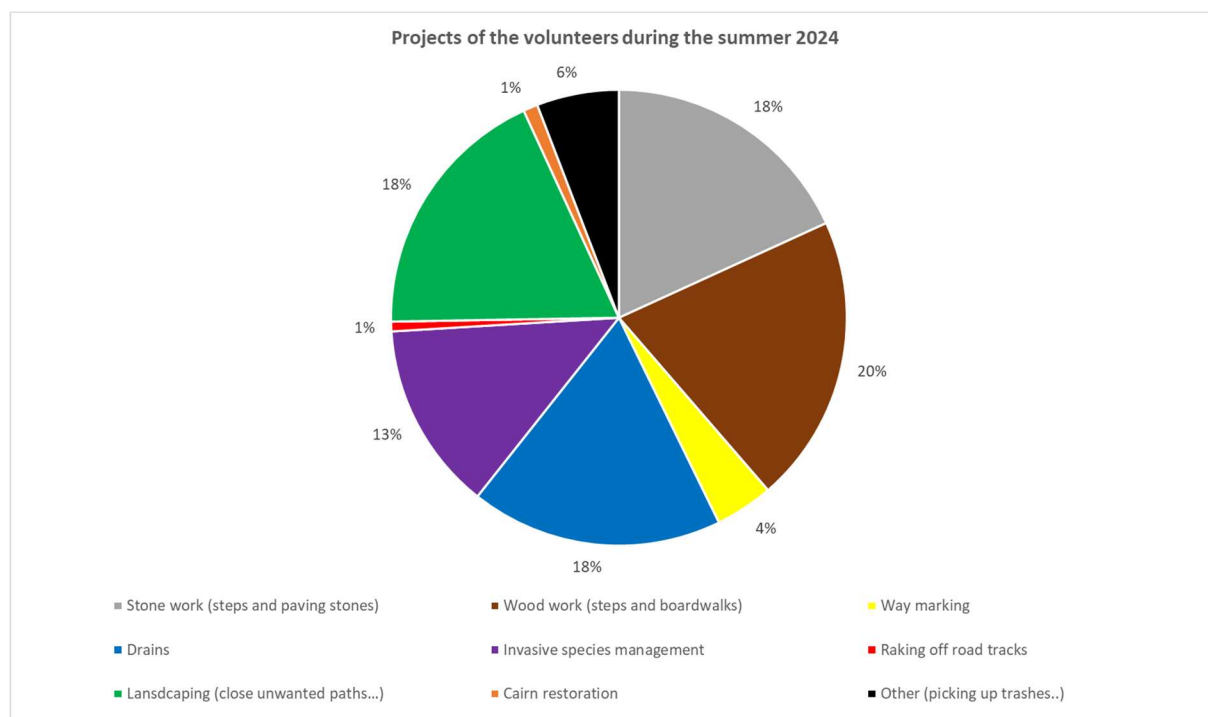


The volunteers of the environment agency worked in 22 protected areas during the summer 2024 all around Iceland, in the National Park of Snæfellsjökull (more specifically in Lóndrangar) and the Vatnajökull National Park (in Hljóðaklettur, Jökulsárgljúfur, Jökulsárlón, Skaftafell, Snæfell), in Mývatn, in the nature reserves of Dyrhólaey, Fjallabak, Geitland, Gróttu, Gullfoss, Herdísarvík, Hólmanes and Vatnsfjörður, in the protected landscapes of Þjórsárdalur and Kerlingarfjöll, in the protected habitat of Andakíll, in the natural monuments of Búrfell, Geysir, Skógafoss, Stóruð and in many other areas registered on the nature conservation register of Iceland (Náttúruminjaskrá) such as Glymur, Heimaey, Hengifoss, Hjallanes, Múlagljúfur and Rauðisandur.

The projects of the volunteers in nature protection and habitat restoration are diverse:

- Marking, maintaining and restoring natural trails by way marking, building steps and drains with stones or wood.
- Restoring landscapes and ecosystems (closing unwanted paths, raking off road tracks made by off road driving).
- Landscaping (restoring hiking trails in a way that they fit naturally in the landscape).
- Restoring vegetation for example where there were some unwanted paths
- Biodiversity: eradication of invasive species.
- Restoration of historical cairns (with the supervision of an expert from Minjastofnun, the Cultural Heritage Agency of Iceland).
- Cleaning natural and untouched areas (Hornstrandir, Reykjanes).
- Assisting the staff of the protected areas (from which lessons are learned) for example by assessing the conditions of natural hiking trails, counting guests in protected areas, assisting the ranger in fauna / flora inventories.
- Diverse educational work or nature interpretation
- Presentation and training (volunteers with a lot of experience share and thus pass on their knowledge to the new volunteers, e.g., in terms of team management).

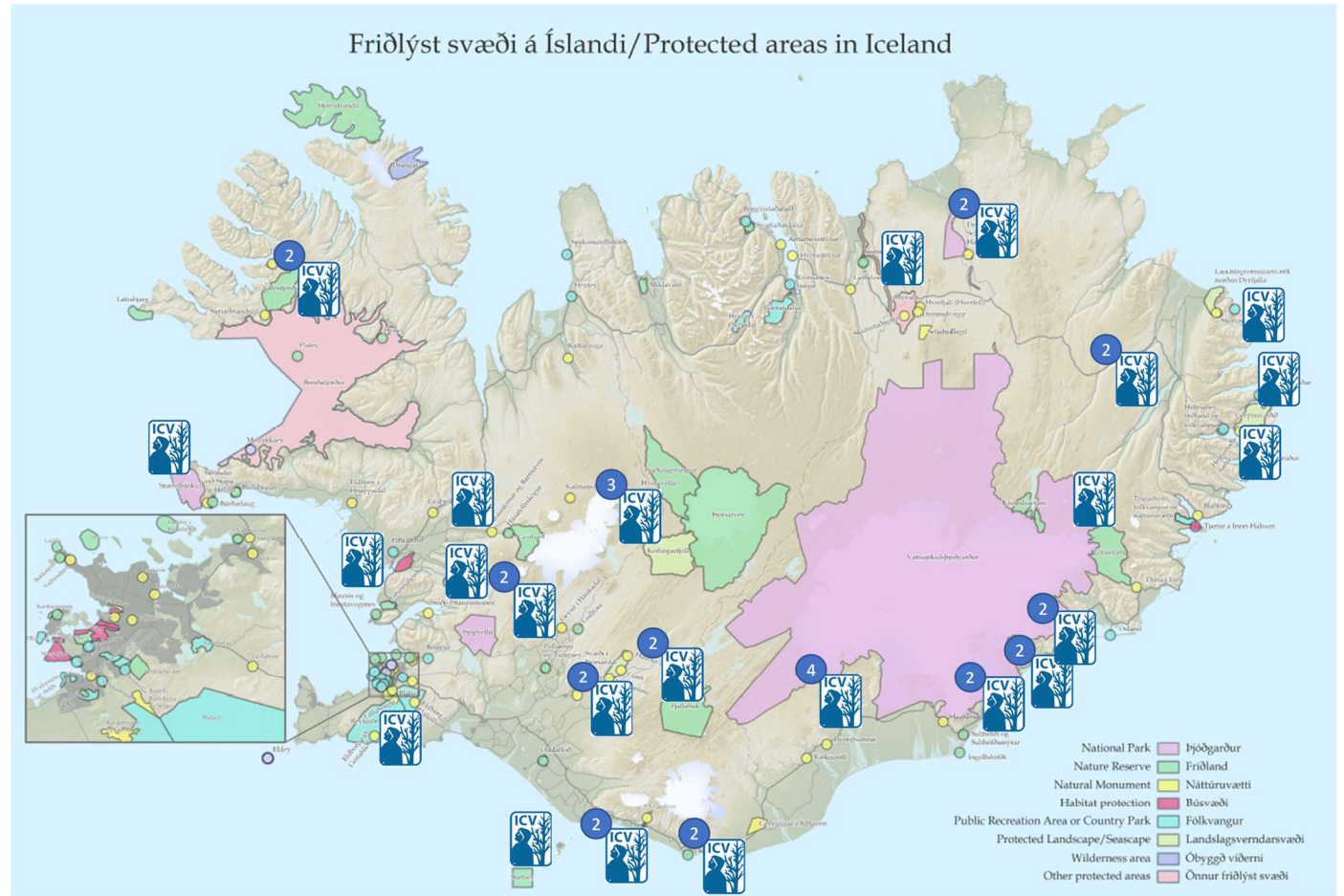
This report is describing the volunteers’ work during the summer 2024. The chart below is presenting the type of work the volunteers has been doing.



Report of the volunteers’ projects 2024

Location of the work done by the volunteers during summer 2024		
SITES	w.w	w.d.
Preparation/coordination	2,4	12
Leaders' training	0	0
SNÆFELSJÖKULL ÞJÓÐG.	5,4	27
HERDÍSARVÍK	2,4	12
GRÓTTA	1,2	6
BÚRFELL OG BÚRFELLSGJÁ	4	20
SANDVATN / MÝVATN	9,8	49
VATNSFJÖRÐUR	8,8	44
GEITLAND	5,4	27
ANDAKÍLL	5	25
ÞJÓRSÁRDALUR	10	50
KERLINGARFJÖLL	15,2	76
GEYSIR	10,8	54
FJALLABAK	12,8	64
SKÓGAFOSS	10,8	54
DYRHÓLAEY	10,8	54
STÓRURÐ	5,4	27
HÓLMANES	5,4	27
RAUÐISANDUR	2	10
GLYMUR	5,4	27
HENGIFOSS	10,8	54
HEIMAEY	5,4	27
MÚLAGLJÚFUR	10,8	54
SKAFTAFELL	29	145
JÖKULSÁRLÓN	10,8	54
HJALLANES	10,8	54
DETTIFOSS	5,4	27
HLJÓÐAKLETTAR	4,4	22
SNÆFELL	5,4	27
Working weeks/days	226,2	1131,0
UST SITES	123,6	618
OTHER SITES	100,2	501

LOCATIONS OF THE VOLUNTEERS' PROJECTS 2024



Snæfellsjökull National Park

Number of volunteers' teams: 1
Working days: 27
Team leader(s): Rebecca Campbell
Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Hákon Ásgeirsson
30.06 – 06.07



Assessment/problem

Malarrif - Lóndrangar: Work was done on the hiking from Malarrif to Svalpúfa. The problem is that the path can be wet, and the visitors often get off the path.

Project

- Steps made out of stone were repaired and added to the existing path between Svalpúfu og Malarrifs.



Andakíll, protected habitat

Number of volunteers' teams: 1

Working days: 25

Team leader(s): Rebecca Campbell

Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Þórhildur María Kristinsdóttir

16.06 – 22.06



Assessment/problem

There is a lot of invasive species in the area that is spreading (lupine...).

Project

- Lupine and cow parsley were trimmed and removed with roots, in collaboration with the Agriculture University of Iceland



Geitland, natural monument

Number of volunteers' teams: 1

Working days: 27

Team leader(s): Danny Lake

Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Þórhildur María Kristinsdóttir

30.06 – 06.07



Assessment/problem

A lot of lupines is spreading and needs to be cut.

Project

- Lupine was cut in Geitland.
- Drains and channels were built along the hiking trail in Hraunfossar.



Rauðisandur and Vatnsfjörður, nature reserve



Number of volunteers' teams: 2
 Working days: 54
 Team leader(s): Daniel Averill & Rebecca Campbell
 Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Edda Kristín Eiríksdóttir

23.06 – 29.06
 28.07 – 03.08

Assessment/problem

Rauðisandur: Lupine is spreading in the area.
Vatnsdalur: the hiking trail needs improvement by waymarking, moving vegetation to close wild trails, mowing, building steps and installing two simple footbridges.

Project

- Lupine was cut down and removed with roots in Rauðisandur.
- Off-trails were closed off with landscaping.
- Small bridges were built and put in place to cross the river.



	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Mývatn and Laxá, nature reserve</h2> <p style="text-align: center;"> Number of volunteers' teams: 2 Working days: 49 Team leader(s): Rebecca Campbell & Grace Taylor Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Dagbjört Jónsdóttir </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> 23.06 – 29.06 14.07 – 20.07 </p>
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<p>Assessment/problem</p>	<p>Lupine and cow parsley are spreading in the protected areas of Mývatn, the river Laxá and Sandvatn.</p>
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<p>Project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lupine was trimmed on the north bank of Sandvatn and in Geiteyjarströnd in Mývatn. • The hiking trail was repaired in Dimmuborgir and Vindbelgjarfjall. • Some vegetation was transplanted in Kálfaströnd. • Lupine was cut by Goðafoss.
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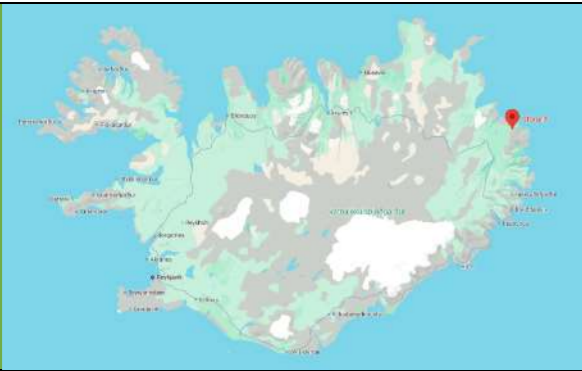
	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Hólmanes, nature reserve</h2> <p style="text-align: center;"> Number of volunteers' teams: 1 Working days: 27 Team leader(s): Aline Boer Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Lára Björnsdóttir </p> <p style="text-align: center;">07.07 – 13.07</p>
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<p>Assessment/problem</p>	<p>Invasive species (especially lupines) are spreading in the area, it is important to eradicate the patches that are present in the Hólmanes nature reserve and that have developed in recent years.</p>
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<p>Project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lupine was removed with the roots in the nature reserve. • Some lupine and other invasive species plants were cut down or trimmed.
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Stóriröð, natural monument



Number of volunteers' teams: 1
Working days: 27
Team leader(s): Lyn Evans
Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Lára Björnsdóttir

14.07 – 20.07

Assessment/problem

A lot of trash has accumulated on the shore.

Project

- Beach cleaning in Stapavík.
- Wooden bridges were built and installed.
- Small bridges and drains were built and installed on the hiking trails in Stóriröð.



Skógafoss, natural monument

Number of volunteers' teams: 2

Working days: 54

Team leader(s): Daniel Smith & Lea Matscheroth

Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Ragnheiður Björk Sigurðardóttir

04.08 – 10.08

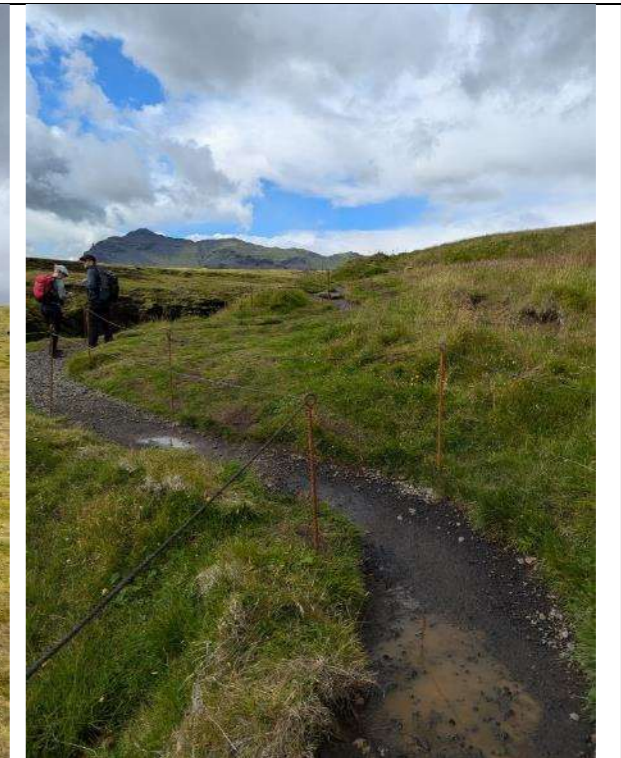
11.08 – 17.08

Assessment/problem

Skógaheiði: Work needs to be continued on the hiking path by closing off unwanted paths and repairing the path itself. Drainage and landscaping around the new path on Skógaheiði are needed.

Project

- A new fence was installed along the path to avoid the visitors to go off the path.
- Seeds were sowed in the most damaged areas.
- Some vegetation was used from donor sites to repair the most damaged areas.



Dyrhólaey, nature reserve



Number of volunteers' teams: 2

Working days: 54

Team leader(s): Rebecca Campbell & Grace Taylor

Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Ragnheiður Björk Sigurðardóttir

21.07 – 27.07

11.08 – 17.08

Assessment/problem

The hiking trail needs to be widened to improve the safety of the visitors.

Project

- Some stone steps were built by the existing steps to widen the path. The 2 teams that worked on the trail succeeded in making a wider and safer path from Láey to Háey.



Geysir, natural monument



Number of volunteers' teams: 1
Working days: 54
Team leader(s): Jacob Williams & Danny Lake
Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Valdimar Kristjánsson

16.06 – 22.06
23.06 – 29.06


Assessment/problem

Repairs need to be made on the path in Laugarfell, especially new drains.

Project

- Drains were built on the path to Gullfoss in several places.
- Lupine was trimmed.



	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Þjórsárdalur, protected landscape</h2> <p style="text-align: center;"> Number of volunteers' teams: 2 Working days: 50 Team leader(s): David Millar & Callum Nicol Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Daníel Freyr Jónsson </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> 21.07 – 27.07 04.08 – 10.08 </p>
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Assessment/problem	The protected area needs a lot of repairs and to be restored in several areas.
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Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large drains were built by the waterfall Haífoss. • Repairs on the footpaths.
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Fjallabak, Nature reserve

Number of volunteers' teams: 2

Working days: 64

Team leader(s): Rebecca Campbell & Callum Nicol.

Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Daniel Freyr Jónsson

18.08 – 24.08



Assessment/problem

Maintenance of footpaths and other infrastructure needed in Landmannahellir, Rauðufossar, Stútur, Laugahraun, etc. there is also a need for painting of posts on Laugavegur.

Project

- Work was carried out on repairs and restoration of an old footpath on the slopes of Suðurnám. Due to the weather, work was done for one day, but the results of that day's work were excellent. The first step was taken to close a long and large erosion in the mountainside.
- The erosion was filled with rocks and soil, a drain was made to drain water away from the path.
- A ford over a hot stream was repaired at the beginning of the footpath up to Laugahraun.



Kerlingarfjöll, protected landscape



Number of volunteers' teams: 3

Working days: 76

Team leader(s): Nicky Kraft, Kelly Powell & Callum Nicol
Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Valdimar Kristjánsson

14.07 – 20.07

11.08 – 17.08

Assessment/problem

Steps need to be repaired in Hveradalir.

Project

- Wooden steps in Kerlingarfjöll that needed maintenance were repaired - wooden boxes were built.



Búrfell and Búrfellsgjá, natural monument

Number of volunteers' teams: 1

Working days: 20

Team leader(s): Rebecca Campbell

Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): René Biasone, Julie Kermarec, Ásta Davíðsdóttir

07.07 – 13.07


Assessment/problem

Archaeological sites are being damaged up in the crater due to the traffic. Stray paths scattered around the area. Waymarking must be added on a new path.

Project


- Lupine was removed with the roots.
- Self-seeded pine trees were removed with the roots.
- Poles and ropes were installed to close unwanted paths.



	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Herdísarvík, Nature reserve</h2> <p style="text-align: center;"> Number of volunteers' teams: 1 Working days: 12 Team leader(s): Rebecca Campbell Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): René Biasone, Ásta Davíðsdóttir, Julie Kermarec 07.07 – 13.07 </p>
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<p>Assessment/problem</p>	<p>Large nature reserve, important bird area. Herdísarvík always has a lot of trash by the shore. Some invasive species are spreading in the area.</p>
<p>Project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lupine was removed with the roots.



	<p style="text-align: center;">Gróttu, nature reserve</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Number of volunteers' teams: Green Weekend Working days: 6 Team leader(s): Charles Shi Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): René Biasone, Ásta Davíðsdóttir, Julie Kermarec</p> <p style="text-align: center;">01.09</p>
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Assessment/problem	Angelica and cow parsley are expanding in the nature reserve and need to be removed.
Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angelica and cow parsley were removed with roots.



Jökulsárlón, Vatnajökull National Park

Number of volunteers' teams: 2

Working days: 54

Team leader(s): Aline Boer & Lyn Evans

Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Steinunn Hödd Harðardóttir, Anna Ragnarsdóttir Pedersen

23.06 – 29.06

21.07 – 27.07



Assessment/problem

Huge number of visitors every day. Great need for reinforcements to be able to carry out important nature conservation projects to prevent damage and control traffic.

Project

- The hiking trails were way marked.
- The unwanted paths were closed.
- A fence was placed along the trail.
- Many poles were taken down in accordance to the head ranger's instructions.





Hjallanes, Vatnajökull National Park

Number of volunteers' teams: 2

Working days: 54

Team leader(s): Rhiannon Green & Daniel Smith

Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Steinunn Hödd Harðardóttir, Anna Ragnarsdóttir Pedersen

28.07 – 03.08

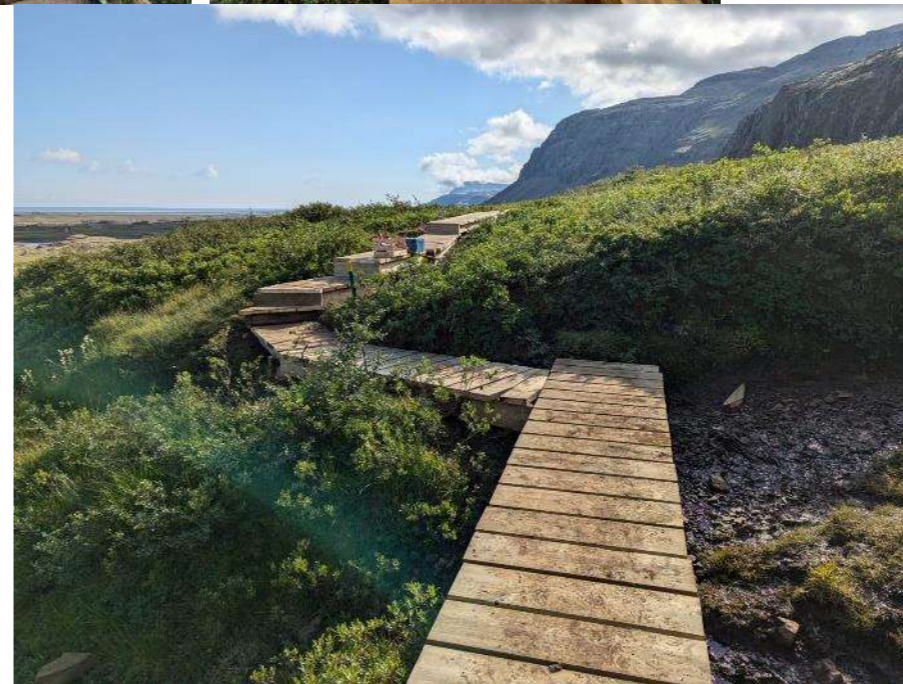
04.08 – 10.08

Assessment/problem

There is a high pressure on the land and a risk of damage to nature and vegetation.

Project

- Boardwalks were built and installed.



Skaftafell, Vatnajökull National Park



Number of volunteers' teams: 4

Working days: 145

Team leader(s): Roger Whyshall, Daniel Averill, Sophie Aziz, Jacob Williams, Rebecca Campbell, Aline Boer & Danny Lake
Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Hrafnhildur Ævarsdóttir, Linda Hallgrímsdóttir

9.06 – 15.06

16.06 – 22.06

Assessment/problem

The most frequented hiking trail in Skaftafell is the path leading to Svartifoss. An estimated 39,000 visitors hiked to Svartifoss in August 2023. Traffic/encroachment is causing damage to the trail that requires maintenance. Weather conditions have increased the stress on the trail.

Project

- Wooden steps were built on the way to Svartifoss.
- Several steps were also built on the path leading to the glacier outlet of Skaftafellsjökull.



Snæfell, Vatnajökull National Park

Number of volunteers' teams: 2

Working days: 27

Team leader(s): Lea Matscheroth

Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Ragna Fanney Jóhannsdóttir, Stefán Frímann Jökulsson

28.07 – 03.08

Assessment/problem

Vegetation erosion near a trail that has been repaired, but erosion and damage still exist along the trail. Old off-road driving and worn-out trails. Trails need to be marked.

Project

- A wet area was repaired on the ascent of Snæfell.
- A hiking trail was marked from Þjófagilsá to Sótavistur.
- Off-road driving in Vatnsdalur and several jeep trails in the area were repaired, for example the trail towards Vestari-Sauðahnjúk.



Dettifoss, Vatnajökull National Park

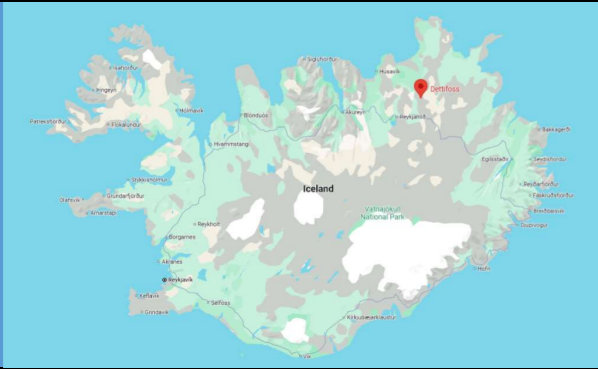
Number of volunteers' teams: 2

Working days: 27

Team leader(s): Nicky Kraft

Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Guðrún Jónsdóttir, Sif Jóhannesar Ástudóttir

07.07 – 13.07

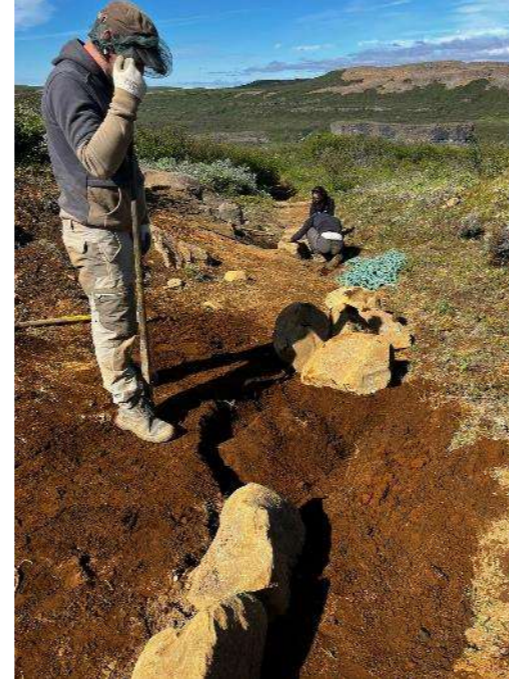


Assessment/problem

The Fosshvammur ring road has become impassable due to flooding and mudslides. Part of the path needs to be changed by adding steps. It is also necessary to find ways to drain the area better.

Project

- Several drains were built on the path.



Hljóðaklettur, Vatnajökull National Park

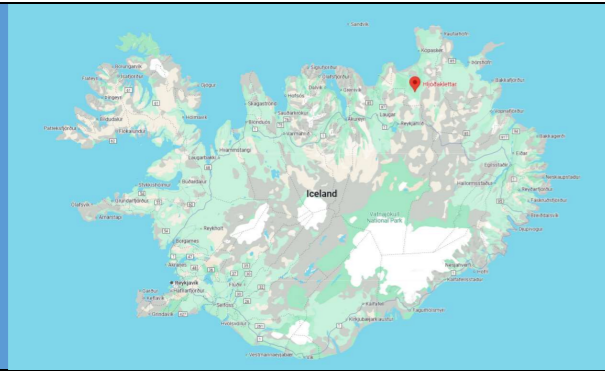
Number of volunteers' teams: 2

Working days: 22

Team leader(s): David Millar

Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Guðrún Jónsdóttir, Sif Jóhannesar Ástudóttir

30.06 – 06.07



Assessment/problem

Part of the path gets submerged in water if it rains a lot and then this hiking trail has to be closed. For this path, the work is to create a rock bed that raises this part of the path and then lay a layer of gravel on top.

Project

- Several drains were built on the path.





Múlagljúfur

Number of volunteers' teams: 2

Working days: 54

Team leader(s): Nicky Kraft & David Millar

Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Árdís Erna Halldórsdóttir

14.07 – 20.07

21.07 – 27.07

Assessment/problem

A very popular area that needs maintenance, drains, steps and landscaping to close off the unwanted paths.

Project

- Several drains were built from stone and timber.
- Unwanted paths were closed.





Hengifoss

Number of volunteers' teams: 2

Working days: 54

Team leader(s): David Millar & Andrew Haines

Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Ragna Fanney Jóhannsdóttir, Stefán Frímann Jökulsson

07.07 – 13.07

28.07 – 03.08

Assessment/problem

Drainage on the trail and paths need to be repaired where there has been a lot of drainage.

Project

- Footpaths were repaired.



Glymur

Number of volunteers' teams: 1
Working days: 27

Team leader(s): Rebecca Campbell
Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Arnheiður Hjörleifsdóttir

04.08 – 10.08

Assessment/problem

The trail up to Glymur waterfall is long and demanding and yet very popular. Maintenance of the trail is necessary. New steps are needed in several places. Some unwanted paths need to be closed with ropes and poles. Markings to protect nature and ensure safety. The goal is to continue this work with an emphasis on safety and nature conservation.

Project

- Several drains and steps were built on the path.
- Unwanted paths were closed.
- Signs put up and guiding tapes.





Heimaey

Number of volunteers' teams: 1
Working days: 27
Team leader(s): Aline Boer
Director of the National Park / Expert (or Ranger): Dagný Hauksdóttir

30.06 – 07.07

Assessment/problem

There is a need for footpath maintenance and building at Eldfell and Hamarinn, land conservation and cutting down the lupine on Eldfellshraun and the old lava field.

Project

- Several wooden steps were built on the path.
- The lupine was cut down.

