

Arctic Adventures

Garðabær, 18. september 2025

202509-0070/p.V.B.

10.03.01

Efni: permit to slightly modify two tunnel passages in Falljökull

The Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland has received an application from Arctic Adventures and Tröll, dated September 10th 2025, for permit to slightly modify two tunnel passages in Falljökull within Vatnajökull national park.

Vatnajökull National Park is protected according to act no. 60/2007. According to art. 14, it is prohibited to cause damage or disturbance to the wildlife, geological formations, landscape, and cultural heritage sites within Vatnajökull National Park. All activities within the park must align with the conservation objectives of the park according to the provisions of these laws, regulations set in accordance with them, and the park's management and conservation plan. According to paragraph 7 of art. 7 of regulation no. 300/2020 on Vatnajökull National Park, the construction of buildings, road construction, and any form of material extraction within Vatnajökull National Park is only permitted if it is assumed for in the management plan for the national park. According to art. 15(a) of act no. 60/2007, it is prohibited to conduct commercial activities within the national park without a temporary usage agreement for such activities with Vatnajökull National Park.

Description of the project:

It is requested to slightly modify two tunnel passages. Both tunnels are located in Falljökull lower plateau and are oneway configurations, serving as both entrance and exit. The modification would include 1) widening of the tunnel passage by chopping and trimming the internal ice walls to create sufficient clearance for safe access and movement. Ensuring consistent width throughout the tunnel to reduce bottlenecks and allow guided groups to pass without hazard. 2) Roof Stabilization and Rock Removal by cleaning and removing loose rocks from the ceiling of the tunnel to prevent potential rockfall. Inspection and ongoing monitoring of overhead stability would be done throughout the project duration. 3) Slight Enlargement at Tunnel End by modest widening of the tunnel's end section to improve circulation and visitor safety. This work would be kept to the minimum necessary and carried out with consideration for the natural ice formations, ensuring low environmental impact 4)

River-Flow redirection by temporarily redirect surface meltwater/river flow away from the tunnel entrance and approach path to maintain free drainage away from the tunnel to avoid ponding, undercutting, or internal flooding. Further information about location's of the tunnels and description of the project were included in the application. At this stage, the request is limited strictly to access work. The applicants are not seeking authorization to bring visitors or guided groups into the cave. They understand that a thorough risk assessment will be required before any guided access can be considered.

Impact assessment:

The Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland considers the project not likely to have negative effect on nature or conservation value of the site if conditions of the permit are followed.

Conclusions and conditions:

The Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland hereby grants Arctic Adventures and Tröll permission on its behalf to slightly modify two tunnel passages in Falljökull within Vatnajökull national park as described above on from the date of this of this letter until September 30th 2027 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 when the project starts and when it is finished. This is to be done 24 hours before entering the area and.
- If the project dates or description changes the Nature Conservation Agency shall be notified as soon as possible.
- The crew must follow rules of conduct that apply to the area.
- If any complications occur during the project, please contact the ranger or the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland, tel. +354 556 6800.
- The project's staff is required to prevent all disturbance to the environment and make sure that all litter is removed from the sites when project is over.
- All traces of the modification should be as minimally visible on the surface of the ice as possible.
- All traces of the modifications must have disappeared one year after they are done, based on glacier melting (7-12 meters).
- Thorough risk assessment must be done before any guided access can be considered to the tunnels.

Supervision:

The Nature Conservation Agency will supervise the project. The supervisor will be a ranger from the Nature Conservation Agency.

Hákon Ásgeirsson

director

Hrafnhildur Ævarsdóttir

park manager