



## REGULATION

### on the Thingvellir National Park, its protection and management

#### Article 1

##### *Purpose and Scope*

The purpose of this Regulation is to promote the conservation of the National Park at Thingvellir, a hallowed shrine of the Icelandic nation, and the protection of its natural features, biota and historical remains with a view to preserving the appearance of the National Park and maintaining its original natural features.

The Regulation is also intended to promote the edification of tourists, both Icelandic and foreign, about the national park and the interaction of history and nature.

The national park at Thingvellir has been included in the World Heritage List and has obtained international recognition as a conservation area owing to its unique cultural landscape.

#### Article 2

##### *The Thingvellir Commission*

The national park at Thingvellir is under the management of the Thingvellir Commission. The offices and legal venue of the Thingvellir Commission are at Thingvellir, but the Commission also has an office in Reykjavík.

The Thingvellir Commission is an administrative committee and reports to the Prime Minister's Office; its decisions can be appealed to the Office. The Thingvellir Commission is composed of seven members elected by the Althing and seven alternate members. Their mandate remains effective until a new Commission has been elected. The Minister shall appoint a chairman and vice-chairman from among the principal members; in other respects the Commission shall allocate tasks among its members.

The Chairman of the Thingvellir Commission shall call meetings of the Commission as necessary. The chairman is required to call a meeting at the request of the warden of the national park or three members. The chairman shall preside at meetings of the Commission. The Commission shall meet on a quarterly basis, at a minimum. A majority of commission members attending a meeting constitutes a quorum. The outcome of issues shall be decided by majority vote. In the event of an equality of votes a motion shall be regarded as rejected. The remuneration of commission members shall be decided by the Prime Minister.

The signature of the chairman and national park warden are required to bind the commission.

#### Article 3

##### *Role of the Thingvellir Commission*

The statutory functions of the Thingvellir Commission are the following:

1. To preserve the appearance of the national park and maintain its original natural features and wildlife.
2. To promote the conservation of Lake Thingvellir and its biota.
3. To supervise development work within the national park.
4. To make decisions on the purchase or expropriation of individual properties in accordance with budget allocations.
5. To appoint a warden for the national park.

The Thingvellir Commission shall organise the activities of the national park in accordance with legislation on the park and the status of Thingvellir as a World Heritage site.

The Thingvellir Commission shall establish the general strategy of the national park for the long term and make decisions on the use and conservation of the park.

#### Article 4

##### *National park warden and other staff*

The Thingvellir Commission shall appoint a warden for the Thingvellir National Park. The warden shall report to the Thingvellir Commission. The Commission shall draw up an employment contract with the warden in consultation with the Prime Minister's Office.

The warden shall appoint the staff of the national park in accordance with the needs of the park and budget allocations at any time. The warden shall submit to the Thingvellir Commission an organisation chart for approval.

All matters that concern the statutory functions of the Thingvellir Commission and the use of the national park shall be submitted to the Thingvellir Commission for decision.

The warden has the authority to respond to communications relating to matters where a clear policy has been established by the Thingvellir Commission.

The warden shall prepare and attend meetings of the Thingvellir Commission with the right to speak and submit motions. The warden shall enter the proceedings of meetings and decisions of the Commission in a book of minutes and ensure that the decisions of the Commission are carried out.

#### Article 5

##### *Role and duties of the national park warden*

Role and duties of the national park warden are as follows:

- a. The role of the warden is to care for the national park at Thingvellir and take responsibility for its operation.
- b. The warden is responsible for the finances of the national park and shall prepare financial, operating and development budgets for the national park at the beginning of each financial year. All budgets shall be submitted to the Thingvellir Commission for approval.
- c. The warden shall forward the budget proposals to the Prime Minister's Office and report to the Office with regard to the resolution of specific matters at any time.
- d. The warden shall act as an intermediary between the public, site lessees, tenants and the Thingvellir Commission.
- e. The warden shall act as an intermediary between the municipality of Bládkógabyggd and the Thingvellir Commission.
- f. The warden acts as an intermediary between the Archaeological Heritage Agency, the Environment Agency, the Nature Conservation Agency and other agencies entrusted with statutory functions in matters that concern the national park.

- g. The warden shall preserve and keep records of all communications received by the Thingvellir Commission.
- h. The warden is responsible for all contracting with site lessees and shall supervise the collection of rent and compliance by site lessees with their obligations under site lease agreements. The warden is also responsible for the collection of charges, e.g. for camp sites and fishing permits.
- i. The warden is responsible for services to tourists and other visitors and shall organise educational work and walking tours for visitors at the national park. The warden is responsible for the construction and maintenance of pathways which shall be designed to ensure the safety and access of visitors to the national park.
- j. The warden shall undertake other tasks entrusted to the warden by the Thingvellir Commission which fall within the scope of his work according to the job description in his employment contract.

#### Article 6

##### *Revenues of the Thingvellir Commission*

The revenues of the Thingvellir Commission are the following:

- a. Allocation from the State Treasury pursuant to the State Budget.
- b. Income from site leasing pursuant to the provisions of site lease agreements.
- c. Income from the operation of a service facility in the national park and the Visitors' Centre at Hakid.
- d. Sales of information and promotion material on the national park at Thingvellir.
- e. Visitors' charges for services, fishing permits and camping in the national park. The Prime Minister shall confirm rules on visitors' charges proposed by the Thingvellir Commission.
- f. Other incidental revenues.

The revenues of the Thingvellir Commission shall accrue in full to the statutory operation of the national park at Thingvellir.

#### Article 7

##### *Relations between the Thingvellir Commission and the public*

All communications relating to the operation of the national park shall be addressed to the warden.

Good accessibility, sanitary facilities and public safety shall be assured in the national park. Promotional material on the national park and its history shall be produced. The promotional material shall be available to the public in Icelandic and English on the website of the Thingvellir Commission and shall also be distributed in printed form.

Facilities for visitors to the national park shall be of good quality and access ensured to the principal places of interest in the park. These places shall be signposted in both Icelandic and English. Instruction and promotion shall be made available along the principal footpaths and bridle paths within the national park. All pathways shall be designed, to the extent possible, to make access and accessibility for the public as good and safe as possible without compromising the appearance of the national park.

#### Article 8

##### *Relations between the Thingvellir Commission and parties with interests in the national park*

Communications from persons having interests in the national park, tenants, site lessees and others shall be sent to the warden, who will respond on behalf of the Thingvellir Commission.

In concluding site lease agreements, the Thingvellir Commissions shall provide for a right of first refusal of the State in the event of any change of parties possessing direct or indirect ownership rights within the national park.

#### Article 9

##### *Consent of the Thingvellir Committee pursuant to Article 5 of Act No. 47/2004*

Any disruption of soil or construction work within the national park at Thingvellir is prohibited except with the written permission of the Thingvellir Commission; the prohibition applies, *inter alia*, to house building, road construction, installation of electrical and telephone cables, drilling for water, excavation of minerals and mining for resources from the ground and cultivation activities.

If any construction falling within the scope of the first paragraph is subject to a building permit from the building and planning authorities in Bláskógabyggd, an application for a building permit shall first be addressed to the Municipality of Bláskógabyggd in duplicate. In such cases, the planning and building authorities of Bláskógabyggd shall seek the consent of the Thingvellir Commission pursuant to the first paragraph before a building permit is granted. The authorities shall refuse to issue a building permit if the Thingvellir Commission does not grant its consent pursuant to the first paragraph.

In assessing whether to grant its permission under the first paragraph, the Thingvellir Commission shall take account of environmental viewpoints, public access, soil disruption and original natural features. Also, any development shall comply with the building terms of the Thingvellir Commission at any time and the objectives of conserving the national park stipulated by law and in this Regulation.

#### Article 10

##### *Construction work performed for the Thingvellir Commission within the national park*

The Thingvellir Commission shall obtain the consent of the building and planning authorities of the Municipality of Bláskógabyggd for any construction work undertaken by the Commission which is subject to applicable provisions of law.

#### Article 11

##### *Geological formations, vegetation, wildlife and sites of natural interest*

The public is not permitted to plant any vegetation in the national park. Removing or damaging vegetation or other natural sites in the national park is prohibited. Lighting fires in the national park is prohibited. Care shall also be taken not to disrupt wildlife in the national park.

Within the boundaries of the national park, any action which may contaminate or pollute water in the area, both surface water and groundwater, or which may disrupt the habitat or breeding grounds of varieties of arctic char and trout living in the lake shall be prohibited.

The Thingvellir Commission may take steps to protect fish stocks in the river Öxará and Lake Thingvallavatn.

Filming in the national park for commercial purposes is subject to the approval of the Thingvellir Commission or the warden acting for the Commission.

All traffic of snowmobiles and motorcycles in the national park is prohibited.

All diving in fissures in the national park is prohibited except in areas and seasons specifically designated by the Thingvellir Commission. Divers shall observe the applicable rules set by the Thingvellir Commission.

All shooting in the national park is prohibited; however, the Thingvellir Commission may make arrangements to cull animals as necessary for the conservation of the national park.

All traffic of fuel tanker trucks and/or transport of other hazardous and polluting materials is prohibited in the national park.

All planting of trees and vegetation in the national park shall take into account the native vegetation in the Park; the Thingvellir Commission may have vegetation removed if this rule is not observed.

Permission to for dogs in the national park may be restricted.

The public, whether walking, riding or driving, shall observe the rules of the Thingvellir Commission regarding behaviour and traffic in the national park at any time.

The Thingvellir Commission may derogate from prohibitions by express written permission.

#### Article 12

##### *Sanctions*

Violation of this Regulation is subject to fines, or imprisonment in the case of serious violations. Violations are subject to criminal procedure.

#### Article 13

##### *Entry into force*

This Regulation, issued on the basis of Article 7 of Act No. 47/2004 on the Thingvellir National Park, shall take effect immediately. Concurrently, Regulation No 300/1996 on visitors' charges at Thingvellir, stands repealed.

##### *Transitional provisions*

The current Thingvellir Commission shall retain its mandate until a new commission has been elected in accordance with the second paragraph of Article 2.

The chairman of the Thingvellir Commission is required to call a meeting at the request of the warden of the national park or two members.

Notwithstanding the provision of Article 13, the second sentence of the second paragraph of Article 2 shall not take effect until after the next election to the Althing.

*Prime Minister's Office, 12 September 2005*

**Halldór Ásgrímsson.**

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*Bolli Þór Bollason.*