



Vestfjardarvegur (60) road project: Complaint on stand-by no. 2017/6 -OSA request

Government of Iceland

Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources



BACKGROUND

Building of a new primary road in the Westfjords of Iceland

Replacing an old gravel road that does not fulfill safety requirements as a primary road

All routes proposed for the road would increase road safety and save transportation time

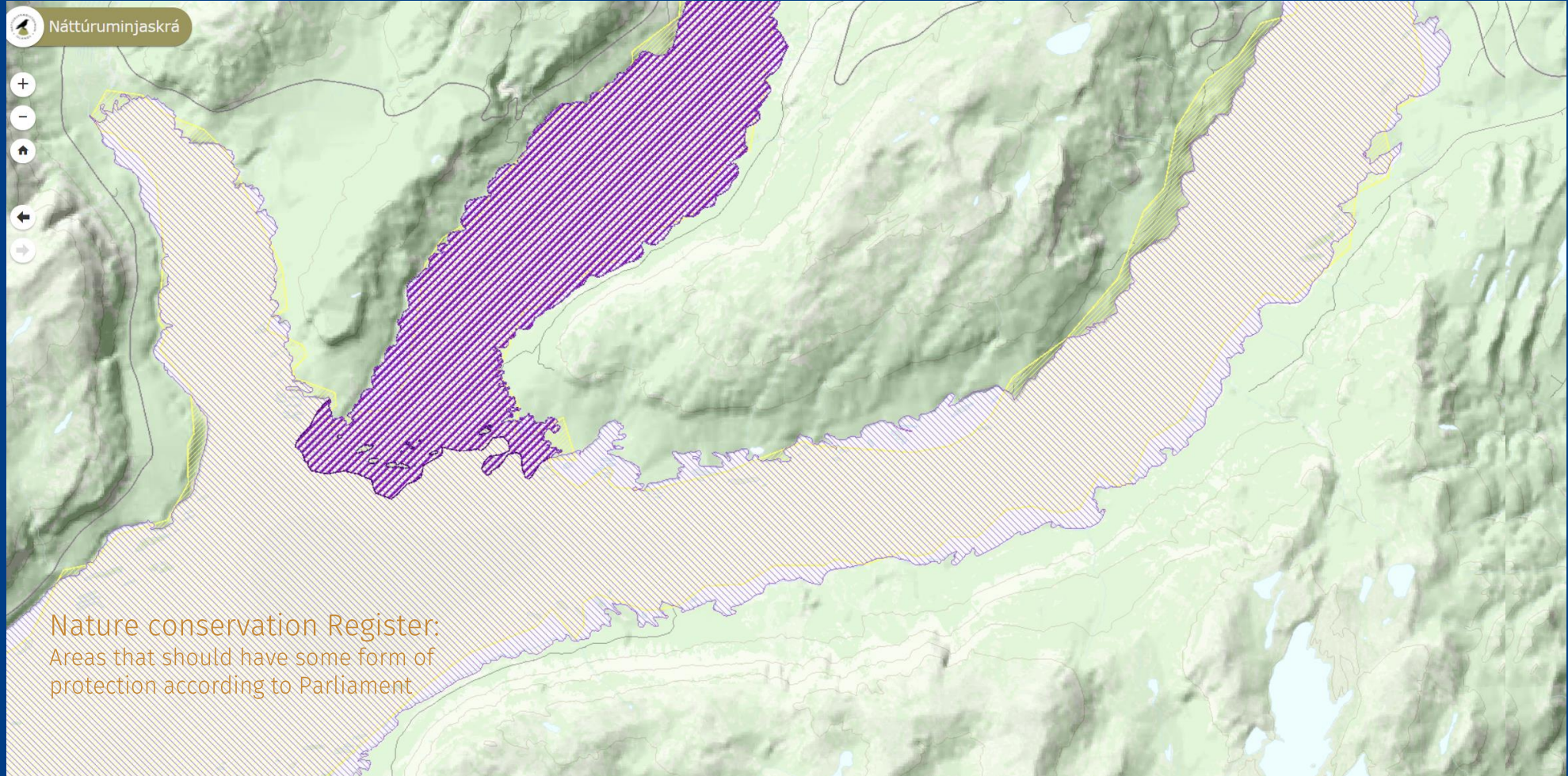
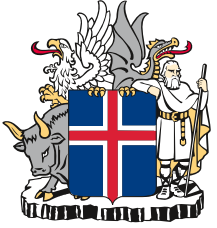
All routes proposed would have negative impact on the environment

Selected route has worse impact on the environment than alternative routes

According to The Icelandic Road Administration the selected route is the most economically feasible and one of the best adjusted to road safety requirements

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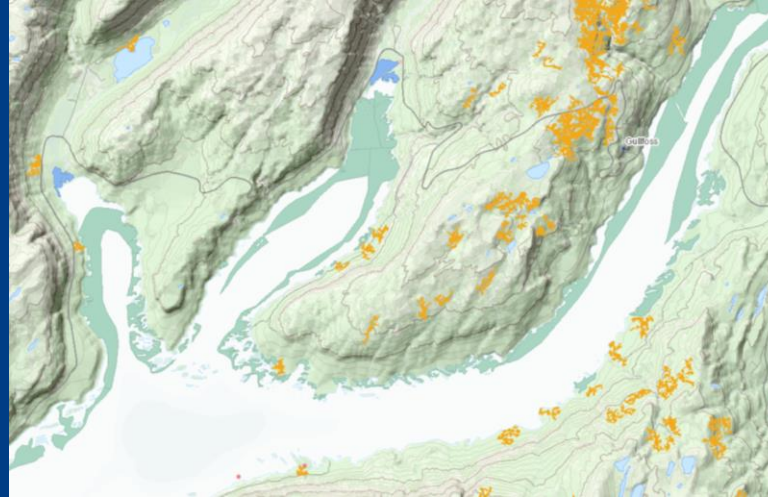
Nature conservation Register:
Areas that should have some form of
protection according to Parliament

Article 61 of The Icelandic Nature Conservation Act –

Several habitats and geological formations shall enjoy special protection and their disturbance shall be avoided if at all possible.

HABITATS IN THE AREA (UNDER ARTICLE 61)

Mudflats **Wetlands** Salt marshes



Map: Icelandic Institute for Natural History

Birch woods



Map: Icelandic Forestry Service

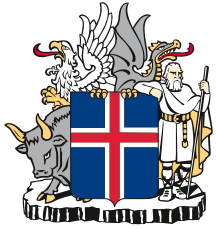
SELECTED ROUTE (BLUE)

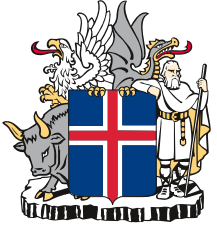


Map: Icelandic Road Administration

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Timeline:

Environmental impact assessment I

December 2003: The Icelandic Road Administration (IRA) submits an EIA proposal.

February 2004: The National Planning Agency (NPA) accepts the proposal but recommends several additions to the EIA.

November 2005: IRA submits an EIA report, that the NPA introduces for public consultation.

February 2006: NPA introduces its decision on the EIA, where route through Teigsskógur birch woods is rejected. NPA's decision was appealed to the Minister for the Environment.

January 2007: The minister decides that route through Teigsskógur birch woods should be allowed under certain conditions. The case goes to court.

September 2008: The District Court of Reykjavík overrules the minister's decision. The court's decision is appealed to the Supreme Court.

October 2009: The Supreme Court confirms the District's court decision to reject the route through Teigsskógur birch woods.

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Timeline:

Resubmission of EIA

December 2014: IRA requests a resubmission of the EIA (regarding route through Teigsskógur).

May 2015: IPA grants the resubmission.



Environmental impact assessment II

September 2015: IRA submits an EIA proposal.

December 2015: NPA accepts the proposal with requirements.

October 2016: IRA submits a preliminary EIA report, that the NPA introduces for public consultation.

February 2017: IRA submits an EIA report.

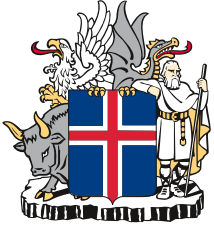
March 2017: NPA introduces its opinion on the EIA.

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Timeline:

A change to Reykhólahreppur General Plan (GP)



September 2017: Reykhólahreppur municipality introduces a change to its GP.

2017 Complaint filed

June-August 2019: Reykhólahreppur introduces the change to GP for public consultation.

October 2019: Reykhólahreppur confirms the change to the GP.

November 2019: National Planning Agency confirms the new GP.

Development Permit

February 2020: Reykhólahreppur decides to grant IRA a development permit
-The decision is appealed to The Environmental and Natural Resources Board of Appeal (ENRBA).

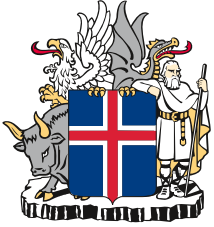
October 2020: The appeal is overruled by the ENRBA.

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Timeline:

Steps taken after development permit granted



November 2020 IRA documents requirements and actions necessary according to the development permit issued by Reykhólar municipality

-IRA requests a report from The Natural Science Institute of the Westfjords (NSIW) on what monitoring-, mitigation-, and research measures are necessary to fulfill the requirements of the development permit.

April 2021 NSIW submits the report to IRA

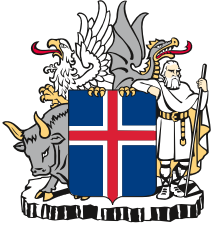
-IRA signs a contract with NSIW and the Icelandic Marine & Freshwater Research Institute (IMFRI) to conduct the monitoring and research detailed in NSIW's report.

Agreement with landowners

July 2021: due to ENRBA's decision to overrule the appeal, landowners at Gröf, the only landowners that IRA had not reached an agreement, decide to allow the project to go ahead on their land under specific requirements that focus on mitigating the impact of the project at Gröf.

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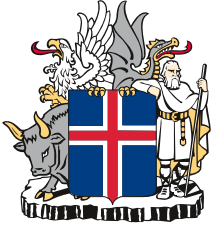
OSA Request

Considering the timeline presented;
Considering that all legal procedures are exhausted;
Considering that the development of the road has started;

- The Ministry for the Environment welcomes online meetings
- Agrees that the subjects of these meetings should take note of the terms of reference (ToR) of the Standing Committee's request
- Suggests that the focus of the meetings should be on the following point:

Identify mitigation measures to ensure the conservation of affected habitats and species, and concrete monitoring plans for the use of the road and its effects

OSA Request

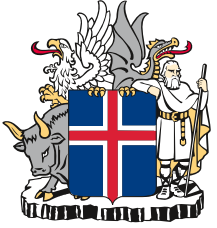


Online-meetings regarding mitigation and monitoring plans with:

- Icelandic Road Administration
- Icelandic Planning Agency
- The Icelandic Environment Agency
- The Natural Science Institute of the Westfjords
- The Icelandic Institute for Natural History
- Reykhólar municipality
- NGO's (Birdlife Iceland, Icelandic Environment Association)
- other relevant specialists and stakeholders that will be necessary to meet with and consult with

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Thank you

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