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ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

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Revision History

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Version	Date	Author	Remarks
1.0	2022-06-14	SM	Environmental policy split off as separate document
1.0.1	2022-08-25	SM	Human waste policy added to comply with VAKINN criteria

Overview

It is our conviction that as a tour operator we act as ambassadors for the world we live and work in. Therefore, we have a particularly strong responsibility to protect the local environment and educate our guests both about its unique characteristics and the more global challenges we are facing with the changing climate.

Some of the following guidelines should go without saying and are in fact also set in law, but we are including them anyway to underscore our support for these measures and their importance.

General Principles of Sustainability

The following Five R's are our guiding principle towards environmentally friendly and sustainable operation:

Reduce new material to go into circulation – this includes choosing rechargeable batteries instead of disposable ones, ensuring that clothing remains serviceable for longer time by good care, only printing paper receipts if asked for, etc.

Reuse items that have served their original purpose but are still be usable in other ways (for example, we are reusing old climbing ropes for many purposes around the farm once they are no longer deemed safe for mountaineering).

Repair items whenever possible (clothing with patches may not look as “fancy” as new, but we wear them with pride).

Recycle all materials properly.

Recover disposed items found during tours, whenever possible.

Accurate and Valuable Information

Our clients are usually not coming to Iceland specifically to be “schooled” about environmental protection and climate change, but these topics often naturally present themselves during our tours. Guides should take the opportunity to deepen clients' understanding of these topics, and answer related questions, with succinct, scientifically accurate but easily understandable information.

Motivate Change

Our tours are a great opportunity to forge an emotional connection for our clients with the unique landscapes we visit. Glaciers, which may have only been an abstract concept read about in the news or books, become places of treasured memories that now have an emotional value. We believe that this, and the desire to enable future generations to have the same experiences, is a much stronger motivation towards enacting change than anonymous laws.

As a result, we believe that the obvious environmental impact of driving large vehicles as a part of our tour – even with carbon offsetting – is an investment that will hopefully be outweighed by encouraging our clients to become both more environmentally conscious, and also act as multipliers within their community, once they return back home.

Unspoilt Experiences – Leave No Trace

Iceland is famous for its vast wilderness and untouched nature, and this is how we aim to present it to our customers, and to preserve it for future customers. We always aim to leave no trace. This includes keeping noise and light pollution at a minimum, both from vehicles and hand held. Special care must be taken that any aerial drone use does not impact the experience of other visitors.

Hiking follows established paths and keeps soil or vegetation damage to a minimum (taking care of moss and other delicate plants).

On glaciers, the use of temporary ropes and anchors are preferable over fixed lines (unless safety concerns dictate otherwise), and chopping large steps or similar structures is only done where necessary for safety.

Our motto of Leave No Trace also applies to solid human waste. We use established toilet facilities where available, and pack waste out if we can't (guides will carry suitable bags).

Responsible Driving and Vehicle Use

All vehicle use must be strictly in accordance to the Icelandic laws and regulations and should generally be aimed towards low fuel consumption. This includes avoiding any unnecessary driving, preferring the use of electric, hybrid, or more fuel efficient vehicles if possible, and appropriate driving style. Driving at slightly lower speeds (75-80 kph) can greatly reduce fuel consumption and is preferable whenever it does not obstruct other road traffic.

In rough terrain and on snow, tire pressure is often substantially reduced to increase traction and comfort. The tires should always be inflated back to proper on-road pressure levels before re-entering paved or smooth gravel roads, to reduce fuel consumption and tire wear.

Vehicles should never be left idling unnecessarily (only for example for a short duration while inflating tires with a high current air compressor).

Maintenance and Repair

Proper vehicle maintenance increases longevity, fuel consumption, and the need for repairs or replacement parts. Maintenance fluids and other substances should be biodegradable and/or made from non-fossil sources wherever possible.

Repairs made in the field must be made in a way that assures no harmful substances enter the environment

Carbon Offset, Community and Related Activities

All vehicle fuel consumption is recorded and fully carbon offset through the Iceland Carbon Fund. In addition, we have set aside approximately 20.000 m² of land formerly used for grazing to be returned to its natural state (by reinstating as wetlands or reforestation).

Whenever possible, we will participate in environmental community activities such as beach clean-ups, repairing soil damage caused by off-road driving, and similar events. One day per month is set aside for such activities.