



Public Views on the Central Highland National Park:

Conditions for a consensus among recreational users

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60 ECTS thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of a
Magister Scientiarum degree in Geography and Tourism Studies

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Abstract

The establishment of a National Park in the Central Highland of Iceland, now on the forefront of the political agenda, would set a milestone in the nature conservation history of Iceland and constitute the largest national park in Europe. While this project enjoys a broad public support, underlying expectations and reluctances have not been documented. Using a nation-wide quantitative survey, the general aim of this research is to provide a more comprehensive overview of the public attitudes towards the proposed national park and related land-use issues. The results confirm that the park is widely supported by the public and reveal that their views on road and accommodation development are however much more divided. These divergences point to potential conflict areas that should be addressed while establishing the National Park. Beyond conservation objectives, supporters of the park put a strong emphasis on its ability to manage tourism in the area, while the opposition is concerned by the reduction of opportunities for public outdoor recreation, the operational cost of the park and governance issues. The users of the area expressed more polarized views than non-users towards the park and road developments, and differences among them were observed in regard with their recreational profiles. From a management perspective, this study concludes that stakeholder consultation is of a vital importance to address their expectations and secure a broader consensus among the users of the area.

Keywords: Attitudes, Outdoor Recreation, Nature Conservation, Central Highland, National Park, Stakeholders

Útdráttur

Stofnun þjóðgarðs á miðhálandi Íslands myndi marka tímamót í sögu náttúruverndar hér á landi og jafnframt verða stærsti þjóðgarður Evrópu. Þrátt fyrir víðtækan stuðning almennings til fyrirhugaðs þjóðgarðs, er enn sem komið er lítið vitað um undirliggjandi væntingar almennings til þjóðgarðs, sem og andstöðu við hann. Meginmarkmið þessarar rannsóknar var að meta viðhorf almennings til þjóðgarðs á miðhálandinu, sem og til ágreiningsmála vegna nýtingar lands á svæðinu sem hann mun ná yfir. Niðurstöður sýna mikinn stuðning við fyrirhugaðan þjóðgarð, en leiða jafnframt í ljós að skiptar skoðanir eru á uppbyggingu vega og annarri þjónustu á svæðinu. Niðurstöðurnar gefa til kynna mögulega átakapunkta sem mikilvægt er að taka tillit til á meðan á undirbúningi stendur. Fyrir utan verndun leggja þeir sem styðja stofnun þjóðgarðs mikla áherslu á að með þjóðgarði verði auðveldara að stýra uppbyggingu ferðaþjónustu á miðhálandinu, en andstæðingar þjóðgarðs hafa á hinn bóginn áhyggjur af minnkandi tækifærum almennings til útivistar á svæðinu, ásamt rekstrarkostnaði garðsins og miðstýringu. Núverandi notendur svæðisins eru andvígari þjóðgarði og uppbyggingu vega en þeir sem ekki nýta svæðið. Rannsóknin áherslu á mikilvægi samráðs við alla hagsmunaaðila til að takast betur á við væntingar þeirra og tryggja breiðari sátt meðal notenda svæðisins um ókomna framtíð.

Lykilorð: Viðhorf, útivist, náttúruvernd, miðhálandið, þjóðgarður, hagsmunaaðilar.

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Abbreviations

ALAI = Association of Local Authorities in Iceland

CBD = Convention on Biodiversity

CH = Central Highland (of Iceland)

DMO = Destination Management Organization

DMP = Destination Management Plan

GOI = Government of Iceland

IEA = Iceland Environmental Agency

IME = Icelandic Ministry for the Environment (later replaced by IMENR)

IMENR = Icelandic Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources

MII = Icelandic Ministry of Industries and Innovation

MPEUNC = Master Plan for Energy Utilization and Nature Conservation

INLS = National Land Survey

INPA = National Planning Agency

INPC = National Power Company

IRCA = Iceland Road and Coastal Administration

ITA = Icelandic Travel Association

ITB = Icelandic Tourist Board

IUCN = International Union for Conservation of Nature

NGS = National Geographic Society

NP = National Park

OECD = Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

TTF = Tourism Task Force

UIIE = University of Iceland Institute of Economics

UNEP = United Nations Environment Program

UNESCO = United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

VNP = Vatnajökull National Park

WCMC = World Conservation Monitoring Centre

WCPA = World Commission on Protected Areas

WDPA = World Database on Protected Areas

WWF = World Wildlife Fund

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Icelandic Central Highland National Park Project

The Icelandic Central Highland has been subjected to land-uses conflicts over the past few decades, in relation with the growing energy sector, tourism development, grazing, nature conservation, and outdoor recreation (Huijbens & Benediktsson, 2015; Ögmundardóttir, 2011; Sæþórsdóttir, 2012). This vast region, covering about 40% of Iceland, is currently being considered for the establishment of a national park by the current government (GOI, 2017a). A total of 86% of the area is under a public ownership regime and has throughout the ages mainly been used as common grazing lands (Ögmundardóttir, 2011; Stefansson, 2018). Consequently, there is a significant history of public right of use and access, as in other Nordic countries. The whole region is rather difficult to access from October to May since roads are closed and not maintained during the winter (IRCA, 2017). For its remoteness, naturalness, and primitiveness attributes it is sometimes referred to as a “wilderness”. Over the past centuries, it has been depicted in folk tales and songs as home of outlaws, revenants, trolls, and other creatures (Sæþórsdóttir, Hall & Saarinen, 2011). After being somewhat mystified, the area was gradually re-discovered, in particular in the latter half of the twentieth century with the use of motorized vehicles, the development of adventure tourism and increased access for hydropower purposes. All this cultural heritage, land-use history, and other characteristics are the pillars of the social identity of the whole area and of the Icelandic wilderness (Sæþórsdóttir et al., 2011).

In terms of planning, the Central Highland overlaps with the boundaries of 21 different municipalities (INPA, 2018). Although a section of the National Planning Strategy (INPA, 2016) is dedicated to the area, there is no comprehensive land-use plan or zoning for the region. Energy developments beyond a certain scope are subjected to the Master Plan for Energy Utilization and Nature Conservation, a framework ranking energy options based on various criteria by specialist groups. Tourism development in the area remains largely uncoordinated, with infrastructure proliferation in popular sites, projects of high-capacity hotels and access improvement (e.g. INPA, 2019b; Landslag, 2016; Mannvit, 2018; Gíslason et al., 2014). In parallel, natural attractions have during the last decade become subjected to increased pressure from visitation. Failure to address these issues does not only pose a threat to sensitive sites but also to the natural character of the region.

In this context, a joint campaign of environmental NGOs, recreational organizations and representatives from the tourism industry called for the establishment of the Central Highland National Park in spring 2016. Preparatory governmental work was initiated by the appointment of a committee later that year to investigate the prerequisites of such a park. Following their conclusions (IMENR, 2017), a cross-political committee was appointed in 2018 to look into potential boundaries, regional division, and levels of protection within the park (IMENR, 2019c). The committee also worked on a draft of a parliamentary bill which is expected to be introduced in fall 2020. Throughout the process, various public meetings and consultation of municipality representatives were undertaken, and comments from numerous stakeholders and organizations were collected. Nevertheless, further stakeholder consultation would be desirable while the project is still taking shape, as advocated by the IUCN

(IUCN, 2016). Consultation of recreational users of the area is legitimate and appropriate to document their expectations and provide decision-makers with material for the park to meet them. This is essential to reach a common ground with other interest groups and secure a wider acceptance of the project. The establishment of a national park in the Central Highland constitutes a historic opportunity to bring environmental decision-making a step further in Iceland.

1.2 Research Aims

Public opinion research on land-use in the Central Highland include two major reports: A nation-wide survey on the public perceptions and experiences of the area (Ólafsdóttir et al., 2016) and two focus groups on the wilderness attributes of the region seen by the public and recreational stakeholders (Gústafsdóttir, 2018). A nation-wide survey focusing on outdoor recreation and views on the proposed National Park would make a significant contribution to the existing research. This study seek to achieve this purpose through the following aims:

- To collect nation-wide data on domestic outdoor recreation in the Central Highland.
- To document the views of the public on the proposed Central Highland National Park and related land-use issues.
- To explore the characteristics and preferences of the supporting and opposing group.
- To compare the views of the users of the area with those of the rest of the population.

These elements will help to answer two important questions regarding nature conservation and land-use management in the Icelandic Central Highland: Are there synergies or divergences of opinions among recreational groups? How do these opinions match those of the general population?

This research seeks to provide inputs for decision-makers, who have an opportunity to innovate in the field of environmental governance. It is also addressed to the Icelandic public, and in particular all Central Highland enthusiasts, whether they support or not the establishment of the National Park. As the first nation-wide research project dedicated to the Central Highland across the recreational spectrum, this work will provide a foundation to better understand the views expressed by public in relation with the proposed National Park.

1.3 Thesis Structure

This introduction chapter is followed by the background material for this research, introducing the concept of National Parks in Iceland, presenting an overview of land-use planning, and background knowledge on the proposed Central Highland National Park. Chapter three is dedicated to contextual elements on the study area, both related to its natural or ecological dimension in relation with human settlements and society. Chapter four covers the methodological aspects of the research, detailing methods, software, statistical tests, and data collection aspects. The results are presented in the fifth chapter and are critically discussed and interpreted in the sixth and final chapter, discussion and conclusions.

2 Background

2.1 National parks in the Icelandic context.

The core of this research is the potential creation of a national park in Iceland's Central Highland. But what is a national park, and how does it differ from other protected areas? This section aims to answer these questions by presenting protected areas and in particular national parks across the world before exploring the conservation history in Iceland, leading to the proposed Central Highland National Park

2.1.1 Management and Governance of Protected Areas

Protected Areas in the World

A protected area is defined by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as a “clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values” (Dudley, 2008, p. 8). As of March 2020, the World Database on Protected Area (WDPA) included about 245000 protected areas (UNEP-WCMC and IUCN, 2020). Along with few other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), they cover about 15,1% of the world's land surfaces and 7,4% of the oceans (UNEP-WCMC, IUCN and NGS, 2020). This coverage should increase to reach 17% of terrestrial surfaces and 10% of the oceans by the end of 2020 to meet the 11th Aichi Target (CBD, 2010). However, protected areas present a wide array of levels of protection, governance, purpose, management, operation, planning and conservation outcomes. An attempt to define levels of protection was conducted by the IUCN, resulting in seven management categories (Phillips, 2004), used by about 70% of protected areas in the WDPA database:

- Category Ia: Strict Nature Reserve,
- Category Ib: Wilderness Area,
- Category II: National Park,
- Category III: Natural Monument or Feature,
- Category IV: Habitat/Species Management Area,
- Category V: Protected Landscape/Seascape,
- Category VI: Protected area with sustainable use of natural resources.

It is common for multiple levels of protection to be used within a single protected area; in which case these categories are used to distinguish between sensitive and inhabited areas in terms of management. This allows protected areas to be more specific and tailor-made to the context in which they are established, and supposedly more effective. In those cases, the category is based on the management objectives that apply to about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the area (so-called 75% rule - Dudley, 2008). This zoning is not necessarily fixed over time and space, given that it would prevent resource overuse (for example in the case of summer pastures or fishing areas).

IUCN Category II: National Parks

Category II areas (National Parks) are probably the best known to the public, despite representing only 3% of all assigned protected areas (UNEP-WCMC and IUCN, 2020). However, they represent 19% of all protected surfaces, meaning that they usually cover large areas. The IUCN Guidelines for Applying Protected Areas Management Categories (Dudley, 2008) defines Category II protected areas as:

[...] large natural or near natural areas set aside to protect large-scale ecological processes, along with the complement of species and ecosystems characteristic of the area, which also provide a foundation for environmentally and culturally compatible spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities. (p. 16)

The most distinctive feature of this management category lies in the inclusive of recreational and visitation opportunities, in addition to nature conservation objectives. National parks across the world became increasingly popular for tourism, leading the “national park” designation to be a well-established brand, comparable to UNESCO’s World Heritage Sites according to Wall Reinus and Fredman (2007). Interestingly, less than a third of protected areas labeled as “national parks” are assigned to IUCN category II (UNEP-WCMC and IUCN, 2020). While the first objective of a protected area is the conservation of nature, they can also be used as a tool for local development, e.g. through tourism and outdoor recreation. Within their boundaries, interests shown by visitors then become a resource, managed to enhance economic opportunities, and improve life quality while protecting natural and cultural heritage (Eagles et al., 2002).

Governance in Protected Areas

Over the past century, the development of protected areas across the world was accompanied by significant changes in their functions and role in society, summarized by a “new paradigm for protected areas” (Philips, 2003). As access to information was facilitated by technological progress, public involvement in decision making increased substantially, in particular through grassroot organizations (Da Silva & Chennault, 2018). Protected area governance shifted from a centralized system to more complex decentralized structures. Overall, governance of protected areas can be classified in four categories (Dudley, 2008):

- Governance by government,
- Shared governance,
- Private governance,
- Governance by indigenous peoples and local communities.

Shared governance protected areas are usually most favorable to public involvement, from consultation to more active forms of participation (Worboys et al., 2015). To a certain extent, public participation in decision-making is perceived as a way to increase the acceptance of the incentive and anticipate, if not prevent, conflicts (Depraz, 2005).

The Green List Standard developed by the IUCN to evaluate the effectiveness of protected areas includes good governance among its baseline components (Figure 1 - IUCN & WCPA, 2017). A set of indicators were also defined and grouped within three criteria based on previous work in that field (Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2013): 1. Guarantee legitimacy and voice, 2. Achieve transparency and accountability, 3. Enable governance vitality and capacity to respond adaptively. These governance aspects are further developed in the IUCN Environmental and Social Management System (IUCN, 2016a), with a few further considerations in a separate guidance note (IUCN, 2016b). This management system suggests that the more a stakeholder is negatively affected by decision-making, the deeper his/her involvement in decision making should be (IUCN, 2016a, p.13). This approach furthermore seems to have been developed primarily with local communities in mind, rather than industry representatives. Protected areas are not only about nature conservation, but also about meeting community needs in a sustainable way.

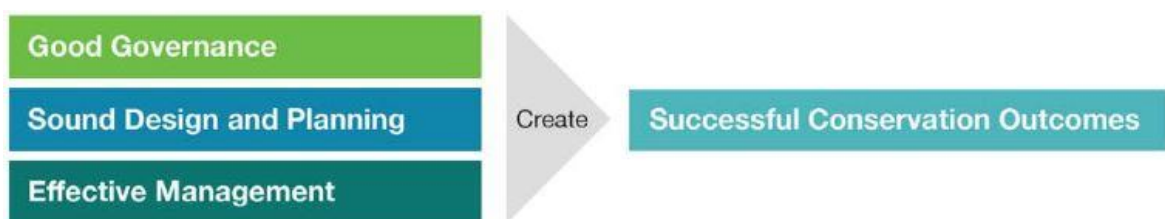


Figure 1: The four components of the IUCN Green List Standard. Reprinted from IUCN & WCPA, 2017

With the prospect of establishing new protected areas, the issue of their social acceptance gets increasing attention. Enhancing public participation in environmental decision-making is therefore legitimate to deliver successful conservation outcomes. In addition, stakeholder and public involvement enables them to take ownership in the project if conducted appropriately. Among the approaches suggested by the IUCN to improve protected area governance, deliberative and inclusive approaches are to be promoted (e.g. through citizen juries, future search and consensus conferences, opinion polls, referendums), along with direct democracy and participatory research and planning (Worboys et al., 2015).

2.1.2 National Parks in Iceland

The three current Icelandic National Parks (Figure 2) cover in total about 15% of the country's land surface. Þingvellir National Park was the first to be established in 1928, primarily for its high historic value and presence of important cultural remains. It was followed by the establishment of Skaftafell National Park in 1967, Jökulsárgljúfur National Park in 1973, and by Snæfellsjökull National Park in 2001. In 2008, Skaftafell and Jökulsárgljúfur National Parks merged into the new Vatnajökull National Park. More recently, the idea of a National Park in the Central Highland has reached decision-making spheres and might become a reality. However, these national parks are very different one from the other (Hallgrímsdóttir, 2011), along with the context in which they were established.

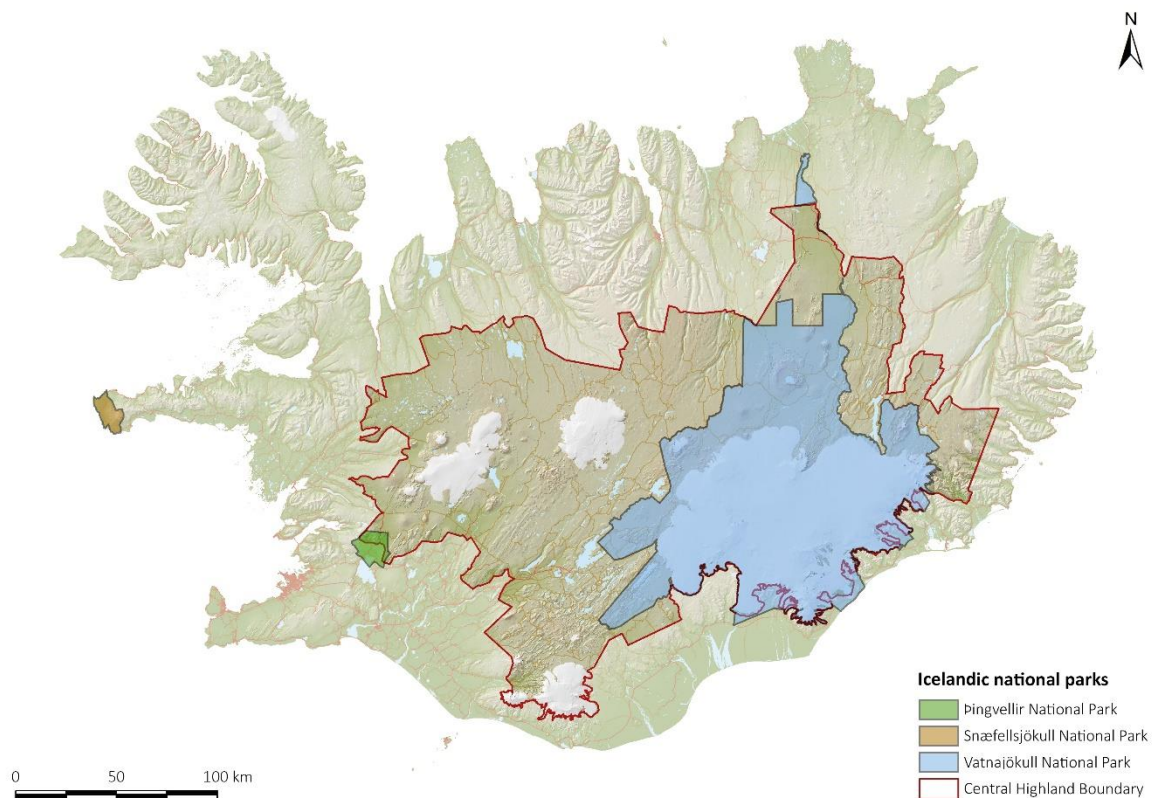


Figure 2: Icelandic National Parks and Central Highland Boundary. Data for protected areas obtained from INLS and data for the Central Highland boundary from INPA.

Þingvellir National Park

The establishment of the National Park in Þingvellir in 1928 was an important event, intended to mark the 1000th anniversary of the Icelandic parliament. As such, its establishment was primarily done for the historic and cultural values of the area, although it is also a place of high geological and biological interest. It was established with a site-specific legislation as Iceland did not have any comprehensive nature conservation law until. In 1956, the first Nature Conservation Act was passed (Lög nr. 48/1956), which created an advisory council (later becoming the Icelandic Environment Agency), and identified five protected area categories: National Parks, Nature Reserves, Natural Monuments, Country Parks, and Protected

plant or animal species (Waage, 2013, p. 37). Þingvellir became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2004 and a new act on the national park was subsequently passed (Lög nr. 47/2004).

Skaftafell, Jökulsárgljúfur and Snæfellsjökull National Parks

The idea of national parks in Skaftafell and Jökulsárgljúfur was formulated in the early 1960s but their implementation was delayed by a complex land ownership regime according to Guttormsson (2011). Back then, national parks could only be established on public lands while for private lands, nature reserves were preferred. Financial support from the World Wildlife Fund contributed to land acquisition by the Icelandic State in 1967 and to the establishment of Skaftafell National Park (Ives, 2007). The first real development of the park only started in 1972 (Guttormsson, 2011). According to Ives (2007), the complex ownership regime of the land and negotiations with landowners resulted in several misunderstandings and personal conflicts, possibly explaining the park's delayed beginning of operations. Jökulsárgljúfur National Park also required some land acquisition for its establishment in 1973 (Guttormsson, 2011). The 1971 Nature Conservation Act (Lög nr. 47/1971) played an important role in conservation development in Iceland as it led to the creation of numerous new protected areas. Jökulsárgljúfur was enlarged in 1978 to include Ásbyrgi, and Skaftafell National Park was enlarged in 1984 to include Grímsvötn central volcano. The Nature Conservation Act was revised in 1996 (Lög nr. 93/1996), mostly to modify administrative aspects according to Waage (2013:34) and in 1999 (Lög nr. 44/1999). In 2001, Snæfellsjökull National Park was established in the Western part of the country, on the tip of Snæfellsnes peninsula, although the original idea was already formulated back in 1972. Skaftafell National Park was further extended in 2004, covering a large part of the Vatnajökull ice cap and including Lakagígar. The last major revision of the Nature Conservation Law was made in 2013 (Lög nr. 60/2013 – Figure 5), following the publication of a White Paper on nature conservation in Iceland (Óskarsdóttir, 2011). The revised Nature Conservation Act came into effect in 2015.

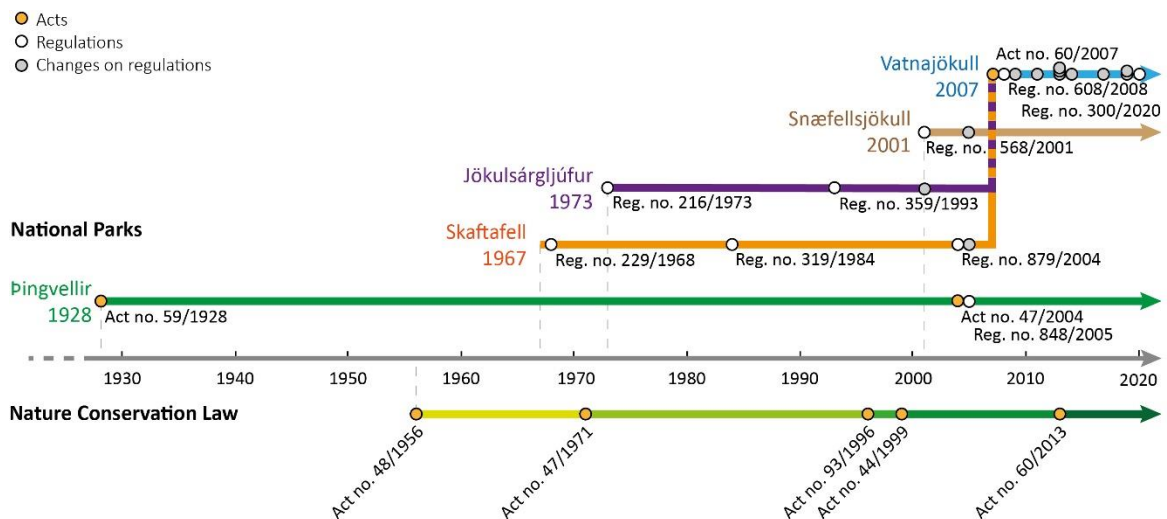


Figure 3: Timeline of Nature Conservation Law and National Parks in Iceland. Data on nature conservation law from Óskarsdóttir (2011) and Waage (2013). Data on national parks from Acts no. (Lög nr.) 59/1928; 47/2004; 60/2007; 60/2013 and Regulations no. (Reglugerð nr.) 229/1968; 216/1973; 319/1984; 359/1993; 568/2001; 879/2004; 608/2008; 300/2020. Date of the establishment of Skaftafell N.P. from Óskarsdóttir (2011:216)

Vatnajökull National Park

In 2008, Skaftafell and Jökulsárgljúfur National Parks were merged under Vatnajökull National Park. It was established through site-specific legislation (Lög nr. 60/2007; Reglugerð 608/2008), allowing for a more “tailor-made governance” according to Pétursson et al. (2016). Four administrative regions were defined, each of them with a manager and an advisory board of 6 representatives from local governments and NGOs. Four representatives from these regional committees sit on the board of directors, along with a Chairman and Vice Chairman nominated by the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources and a representative of environmental NGOs (Lög nr. 60/2007). In addition to these 7 voting members, representatives from recreational NGOs and the tourism industry have an observer status (Baldursson et al., 2018). Decisions are therefore taken through a form of shared governance as defined by the IUCN. When the park was established in 2008, the ownership status of the land was not fully determined. As work to assess land ownership progressed, public lands were gradually added to the National Park, especially in the northern part (Figure 4). Nearly all the land in the park is now under a public ownership regime, few sectors are state-owned (Skaftafell, Jökulsárgljúfur, Heinaberg, and some part of the east side of Jökulsá á Fjöllum), and a small portion is under a private ownership (Hoffellsfjöll, Hjallanes). Around 2/3 of Breiðamerkursandur was added in 2017 to the National Park, when the Icelandic state used its preemptive right to acquire the land of Fell.

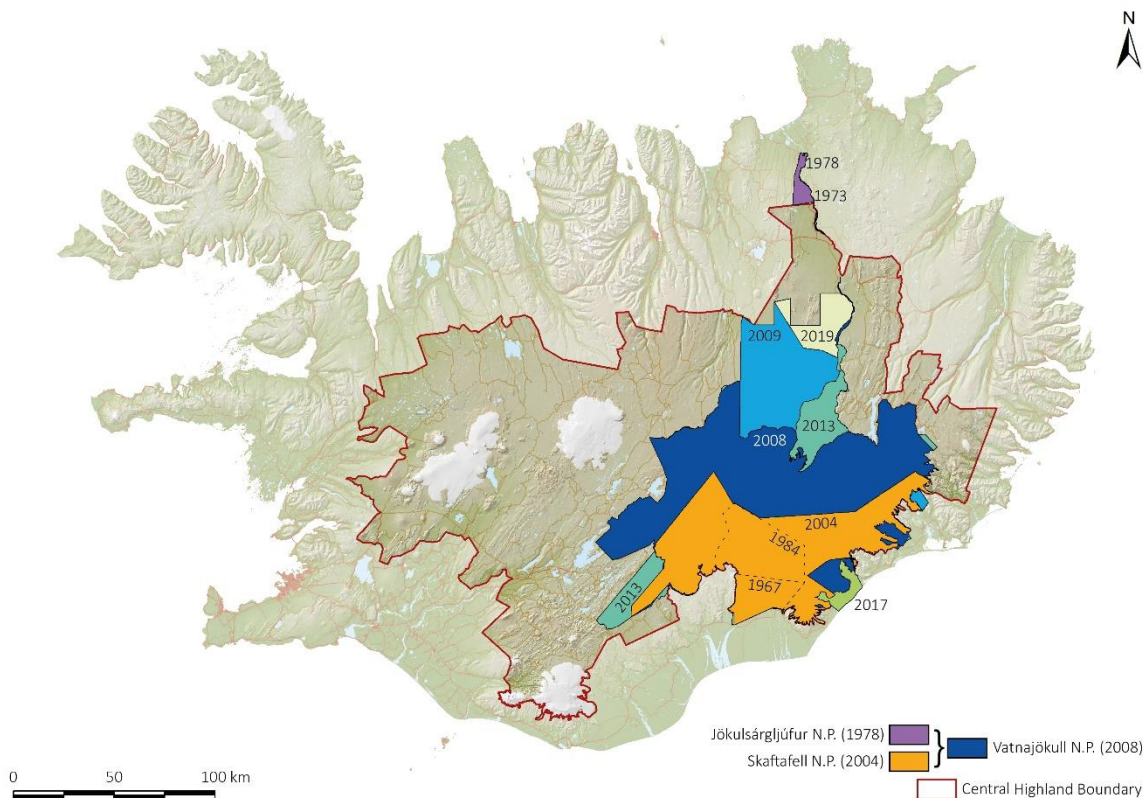


Figure 4: Map of Vatnajökull National Park's boundary changes. Data for protected areas obtained from IEA and data for the Central Highland boundary from INPA. 1967 and 1984 boundaries reproduced from Ives (2007) and Sæþórsdóttir et al. (2001).

Most of the park is considered as being under the IUCN Category II, except Esjufjöll which is under a stricter form of protection (Ia according to Vatnajökull National Park, 2018; Ib according to Baldursson et al., 2018), and few areas are categorized as VI (Skælingar, Hafræfelli, Heinaberg, Hjallanes, and Hoffellsfjöll) in relation with sustainable sheep grazing and tourism (Figure 5). Driving off road or tracks is only allowed when the ground is frozen and covered with snow, except at Hvannadalshnjúkur (Iceland's highest summit) where it is completely forbidden and on Örafajökull and Kverkfjöll where seasonal restrictions apply. Extractive recreational activities are subjected to zoning and regulations. Fishing and hunting of birds or reindeer is allowed within most of the park, hunting mink is allowed regardless of zones, and hunting of foxes is only prohibited in Skaftafell, Jökulsárgljúfur, and Esjufjöll (GOI, 2017b). Management of the park has sometimes resulted in tensions or even conflicts between managers and recreational stakeholders, with the most notorious case being the closure of a jeep track in 2010 at Vonarskarð (Huijbens and Benediktsson, 2015).

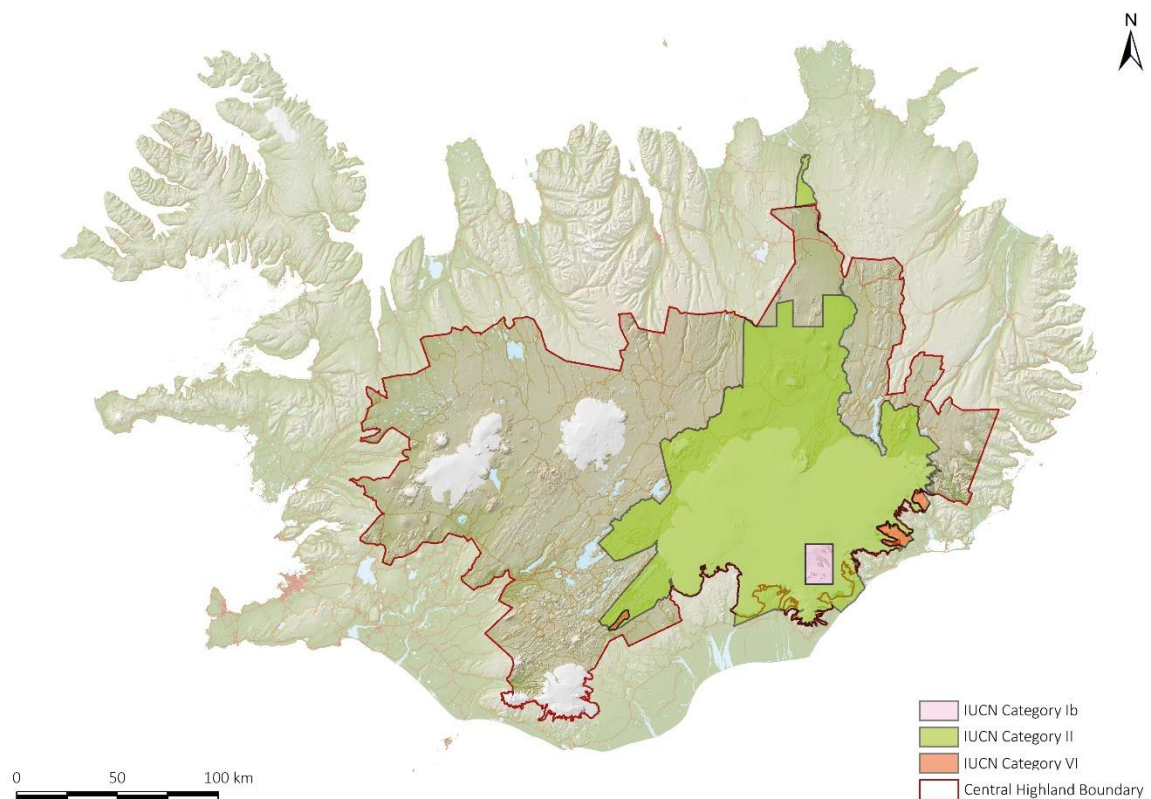


Figure 5: Management categories in Vatnajökull National Park. Data for Vatnajökull National Park obtained from IEA and data for the Central Highland boundary from INPA. Zoning reproduced from Baldursson et al. (2018). Note that Hafræfelli should be in cat. VI.

The project of national park in the Central Highland is introduced in section 2.3.2. Initiated by a consortium of environmental and recreational NGOs, the project has been examined by a cross-political committee and a parliamentary bill is expected to be introduced to the parliament during the autumn of 2020. Nation-wide opinion polls estimate the level of support from the Icelandic public around 50-60%, versus 15-20% of opposition (Isaksen & Jónsdóttir, 2015; Sverrisdóttir et al., 2011)

2.2 Planning Land-Uses in the Central Highland

With about 40% of Iceland's land surface, the Central Highland is divided among 21 municipalities (INPA, 2016). In the absence of regional entities, decisions are either taken by the Icelandic state or by the municipalities. However, there are several planning tools to which decisions must be consistent with, either in a broad sense (National Planning Strategy), or on specific land-uses (Master Plan for Energy Utilization and Nature Conservation). Planning tourism requires increasing attention but faces significant challenges in practice.

2.2.1 National Planning Strategy and Regional Plans

Land-use planning in Iceland is divided in two administrative units, i.e. the government and parliament at a national level and the municipalities at a local level. At the national level, the National Planning Agency (*i. Skipulagsstofnun*) oversees the preparative work for the National Planning Strategy (*i. Landsskipulagsstefna*) (INPA, 2016). This comprehensive land-use plan is then expected to be implemented in local planning documents (regional, local, and detail plans). The current strategy spans over 2015-2026, following the first one from 2011-2013 (INPA, n.d.). A regional plan covering the Central Highland was adopted in 1999 and was effective until 2015 (IME & INPA, 1999) when it was incorporated in the National Planning Strategy. However, the lack of specifications, precise definitions, and zoning leaves much place for interpretation, weakening the potential of the planning strategy (Sæþórsdóttir & Ólafsdóttir, 2017). Recent research commissioned by the National Planning Agency undertook a mapping of wilderness (Árnason et al., 2017) and man-made structures in the Cen-

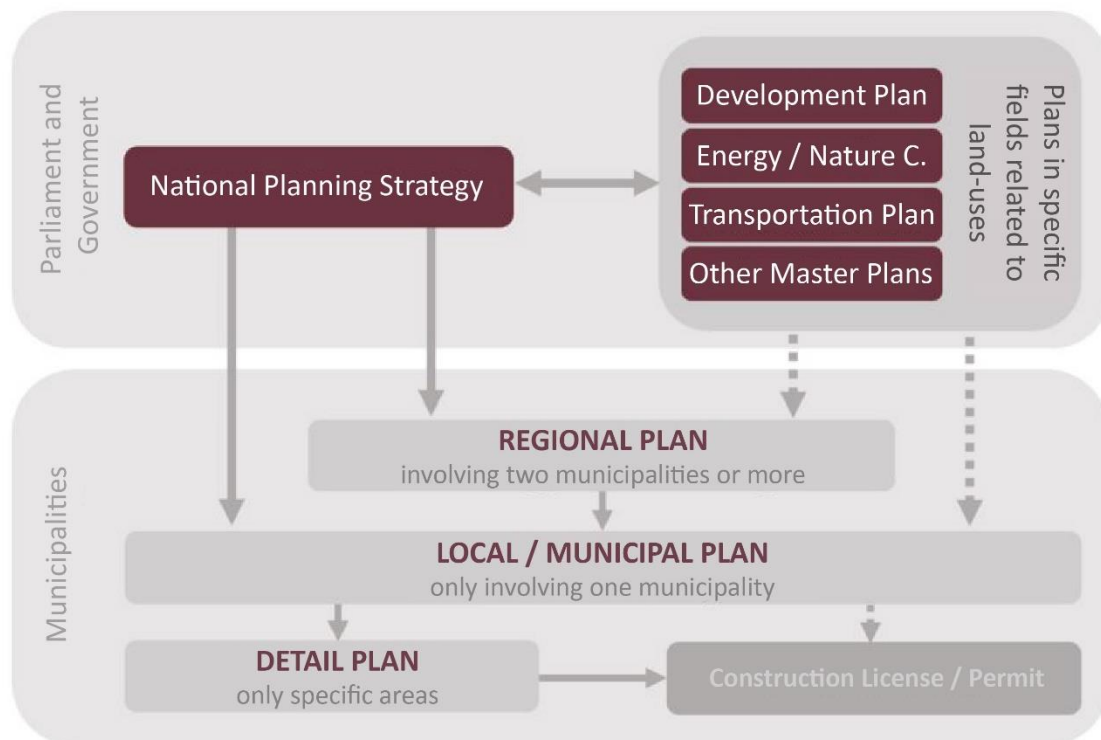


Figure 6: Articulation of land-use plans in Iceland. Adapted from INPA, 2019b
tral Highland (INPA, 2018), which might support a more detailed regional plan in the future.

Additional plans are to be considered by local authorities, within specific land-use fields such as transportation, development, energy utilization and nature conservation, etc. Their elaboration usually involves various expert committees, institutions, or agencies.

Local plans are of three types depending on the scale (Figure 6). If two municipalities or more are concerned, it is a Regional Plan (*i. Svæðisskipulag*); if it covers one municipality it is Local/Municipal Plan (*i. Aðalskipulag*); and if it only covers a specific part of a municipality, it is then a Detail Plan (*i. Deiliskipulag*). With a total of 72 municipalities in 2018 (ALAI, n.d.), and 21 partly within the Central Highland (INPA, 2018), planning can be a complex and costly task but not least important for rural municipalities.

Other executive authorities are to be mentioned in regard with land-use plans, among which the Soil Conservation Service (*i. Landgræðslan*); the Forestry Service (*i. Skógræktin*), the Environmental Agency (*i. Umhverfisstofnun*), the National Parks, and other protected areas.

2.2.2 Master Plan for Energy Utilization and Nature Conservation

Initiated in 1999, the Master Plan for Energy Utilization and Nature Conservation (*i. Rammaáætlun*) was directly inspired by a similar framework developed in Norway in 1984 and started to be operational in Iceland in 1999 (Björnsson et al., 2012). The purpose of this master plan is to assess and classify power plant options, both hydroelectric, geothermal and wind power to prioritize between them based on the needs of society, and the related values and impacts (Þórhallsdóttir, 2002, 2007a, 2007b; Björnsson et al., 2012). These energy proposals used to be mostly submitted by the National Power Company (*i. Landsvirkjun*) and the National Energy Authority (*i. Orkustofnun*), but increasingly originate in private companies. Each energy option is then evaluated by four expert groups in relation with their field of research (MPEUNC, n.d):

- Natural and cultural historical values
- Utilization of natural resources other than the exploitation of energy resources
- Social impact and public health issue with regard to power plant options
- Economic aspects of power development

Based on these assessments, power options are then classified by the steering committee in three categories, which are: Utilization category, Protection category, and On Hold category (Lög nr. 48/2011). Due to the large number of proposals, the work was segmented in several phases in which a selection of these proposals is evaluated and ranked. The first phase lasted from 1999-2003, the second from 2004-2011, the third from 2012-2017, and the fourth from 2017-2021.

Since the Master Plan Act was adopted in Iceland (Lög nr. 48/2011), the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources and the Minister for the Industries and Innovation are expected to submit to the parliament the outcome of each phase as a parliamentary resolution. Once approved, the categorization becomes legally binding. In 2013, the second phase was adopted by the Icelandic parliament (Parliamentary document 892 – 89; 2013), but the work undertaken during the third phase has not yet resulted in a parliamentary resolution. Within the Central Highland, only two power options from the third phase were included in the utilization category (Figure 7). However, being classified in the utilization category does not mean that the project is approved, it only means that it can undergo further research, but

Environmental Impact Assessments are still required. In 2018, catchment areas of five rivers (Tungnaá, Jökulfall/Hvítá, Hólmsár, Markarfljóts and Jökulsá á Fjöllum) were formally protected from further energy perspectives (IEA 2018a; 2018b; 2018c; 2018d – Figure 7).

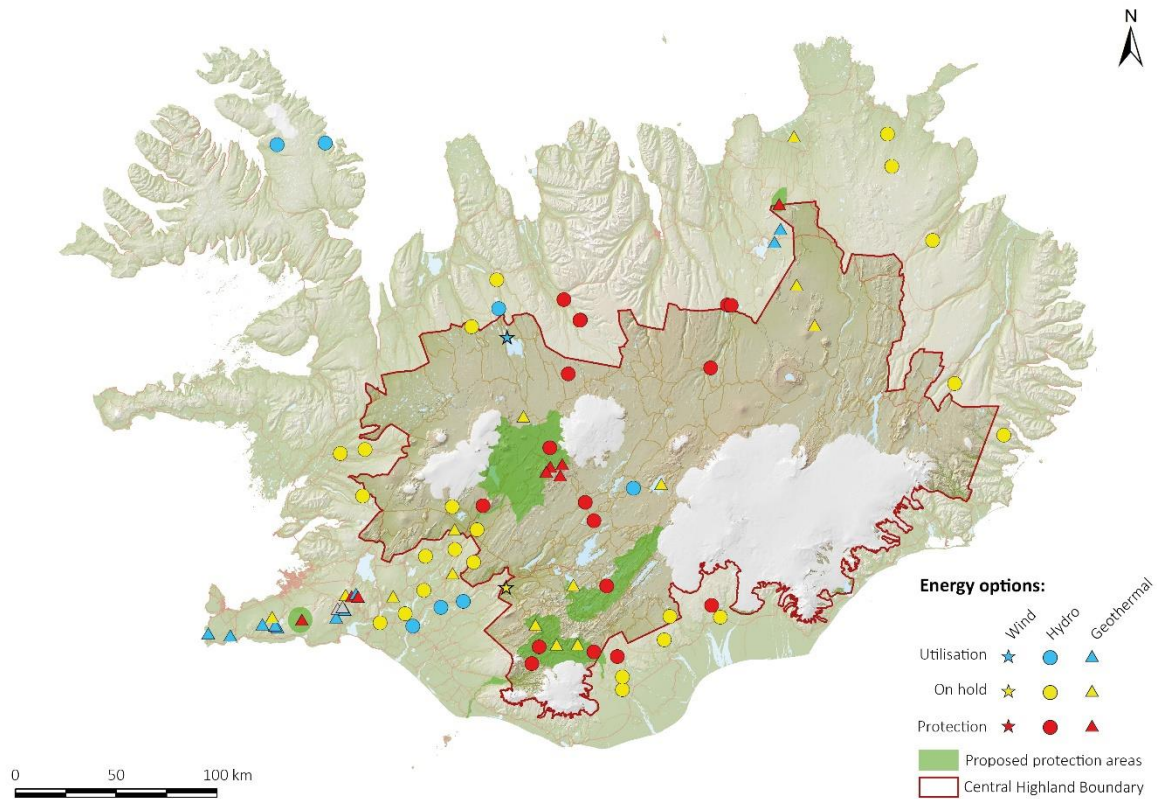


Figure 7: Energy options classified at the end of the third phase of Rammaáætlún (and location of the proposed areas to be protected from energy use). Data for the Central Highland boundary from INPA, data on power options categories from Gíslason (2016), data on proposed nature protection areas from IEA.

One of the main tasks of the expert groups consist of identifying gaps in the existing research and conducting appropriate data collection for the assessment. The outcome provides particularly relevant background data on the Central Highland, documenting the values and heritage of each area while investigating alternative land-uses, such as tourism (e.g. Sæþórsdóttir 2010, 2012, 2013; Sæþórsdóttir & Ólafsson 2010a, 2010b). The main concerns are primarily related to tourism and outdoor recreation as these land-uses tend to be perceived as mutually exclusive with energy development (Sæþórsdóttir, 2010b; 2012). In particular, the induced impacts on wilderness and the natural character of the area are problematic as tourism relies on these attributes. By investigating these impacts, some argue that land-use conflicts might be better anticipated or prevented (Couillard, 2011).

2.2.3 Tourism Strategy and Planning

The number of foreign visitors to Iceland has been multiplied by four since 2010, reaching over 2 million in 2017 (ITB, 2018). The 2017 OECD Economic Survey focusing on Iceland acknowledged the economic benefits generated by the tourism industry while stressing the importance of preserving the attraction of nature (OECD, 2017). Tourism strategies developed for 2006-2015 and 2011-2020 consider environmental issues without providing a framework for action according to the OECD (2014, p. 128). The upcoming tourism strategy is expected to be more action oriented, as the Tourism Policy Framework for 2020-2030 strongly emphasizes sustainability according to Øian et al. (2018). A new Tourism Impact Assessment Model is also expected to investigate carrying capacity issues in respect with the environment, infrastructure, society, and economy according to the OECD (2020).

The coordination and planning of tourism is primarily conducted by two bodies: the Icelandic Tourist Board (ITB), under the Ministry of Industry and Innovation and the Tourism Task Force (TTF), including representatives from various ministries (industry and innovation, finance, environment and natural resources, and transport and local authorities). The ITB is responsible for coordinating research, implementing tourism policies and licensing of tourism services, and has initiated the development of Destination Management Plans (DMP). The TTF was established with the objective of implementing a Road Map for Tourism in Iceland (MII & ITA, 2015) until 2020, where it will be replaced by a Tourism Council which will coordinate action to address the impacts of tourism. A new National Park Institute might also be established and coordinate tourism management within the Icelandic National Parks (IMENR, 2019b)

Funding for tourism infrastructure is provided by the National (tourism) Infrastructure Plan (2018-2029) through 3-year plans and by the Tourist Site Protection Fund administrated by ITB. The National Infrastructure Plan “defines and zones for tourism development and nature protection, securing the necessary investment in infrastructural improvements and the outlining of a policy about the accessibility of natural attractions” (Øian et al., 2018:25).

The National Planning Strategy stresses that tourism services in the Central Highland should be operated in harmony with nature and the environment, while ensuring that travel experiences are not negatively affected by man-made structures or the number of visitors. It also emphasizes the “necessity of diverting visits toward the edges of the Highlands and at certain zones adjacent to the main roads crossing the area... [and] ...of ensuring that tourists have access to proper accommodation and services” (Øian et al., 2018:23). Increased access and services seem, however, contradictory with the preservation of the wilderness in the area, advocated by the National Planning Strategy, as pointed out by Sæþórsdóttir & Ólafsdóttir, (2017). The 2018 report on Tourism, Nature and Sustainability edited by the Nordic Council of Ministers (Øian et al., 2018) identifies as one of the main challenges for Iceland the search of ways to utilize nature and wilderness for tourism sustainably while preserving its qualities. Management of visitor numbers is also more complex in Iceland than other countries due to the public right of access to the land. In this context, the use of access fees and permit systems to control access is widely seen as conflicting with this public right. This increases the importance of planning as access improvement cannot be easily compensated with visitor number management.

2.3 Proposed Central Highland National Park

For over half a century, hydropower developments Central Highland have been the subject of significant debates and even led to land-use conflicts. Conservation has been perceived as a viable alternative that would preserve the landscape and wilderness, while maintaining opportunities for tourism and outdoor recreation. The idea for a National Park in the area made its way to decision-making spheres and is expected to be submitted to the parliament during the fall of 2020 (Valsson, 2020). Despite a large public support for the project (Isaksen & Jónsdóttir; 2015; Sverrisdóttir et al., 2011), multiple challenges lie ahead to secure a broader consensus among stakeholders.

2.3.1 A History of Land-Use Conflicts in the Central Highland

Significant land-use conflicts occurred in Iceland, in particular with hydropower developments. The most iconic cases took place at Gullfoss, Laxá valley, Þjórsárver, and Kárahnjúkar. While Gullfoss and Laxá valley are adjacent to the Central Highland, Þjórsárver and Kárahnjúkar are much farther inland. Together, these cases contributed to shape the conservation movement, and led to the idea of a Central Highland National Park.

In 1907, a hydropower project which would have resulted in the submersion of Gullfoss waterfall and the gorges of river Hvítá was proposed. This waterfall was one of the early attractions of the country, and Sigríður Tómasdóttir (the daughter of one of the landowners), would sometimes guide visitors to the waterfall. She became strongly opposed to the project and made multiple trips to Reykjavík to defend her case. The project was eventually abandoned. Gullfoss became protected in 1979 and is now among the most visited sites in Iceland (ITB, 2017). Further documentation of this case was conducted by Karlsdóttir (2010). Sigríður is sometimes referred to as one of the first environmentalists in Iceland.

In 1970, a proposed dam became particularly debated in Laxá valley in the North, known for salmon fishing. The reservoir area was inhabited, and there was strong local opposition, both from local farmers and other landowners. According to Ólafsson (1981), the project was first heard of by a farmer whose request of a loan for a barn extension was rejected on the ground that his land would soon be under a reservoir. A petition gathered 1600 signatures and several protests were organized. At the peak of the tensions, a small dam by lake Mývatn was blown up with dynamite, bringing the issue under the national spotlight. The public opinion favored landowners and locals and the supreme court eventually ruled in their favor, leading to the abandonment of the project. The site was then protected in 1974 and became a Ramsar site in 1977. This conflict became a symbol and was covered by researchers, with a publication from 1981 (Ólafsson, 1981), a master's thesis in 2013 (Sigurjónsdóttir, 2013) and a documentary called *"The Laxá Farmers"* (i. *Hvellur* - Hákonarsson, 2013).

Another conflict took place in Þjórsárver, south of the Hofsjökull ice cap. The idea of a reservoir in the area originated in 1959 but was announced by the National Power Company in 1968. The first concrete plan was from 1970 with a 200 sq.km reservoir in an area used as summer pastures (Ögmundardóttir, 2011) and which is also an important breeding ground for pink-footed geese (Crofts, 2004). A strong opposition to the proposal came out of a municipal meeting in 1972 (Ögmundardóttir, 2011). The initial project was abandoned in 1981 when the area became a nature reserve, but a clause would allow damming perspectives under certain conditions. The project was subsequently readjusted and downsized, until it

lost support in 2006 from Reykjavik City Council, shareholder in the National Power Company. This conflict involved stakeholders from the local to the international level with the WWF, the International Council for Bird Preservation, the IUCN, and the International Wildfowl Research Bureau protesting the damming plans to the Icelandic government. Further hydropower proposals were submitted until the option was classified in the protection category during the second phase of Rammaáætlún (Gíslason, 2016). Þjórsárver was listed in 1990 as a Ramsar Site, and the Nature reserve was quadrupled in size in 2017.

Early discussions on a hydro-power complex in the North East started in the 1980's, and led to a large-scale proposal in 2000, as it was intended to supply a new aluminum smelter in the area. The National Planning Agency rejected the Environmental Impact Statement of the National Power Company due to irreversible environmental impacts and insufficient information (INPA, 2001), but the decision was overturned by the Minister for the Environment (OECD, 2005). The case was brought to the supreme court which later ruled in favor of the National Power Company and the Icelandic State (INPC, 2004). The construction started in 2003 and the plant was activated in 2007 (INPC 2007). This development was one of the most controversial to take place in Iceland according to Guðmundsdóttir (et al., 2018), and has affected the whole hydrological system with significant impacts, in particular on the biosphere of the river Lagarfljót by Egilsstaðir. Numerous protests, site occupation, petition, campaigns, and fundraising events took place throughout the process. The conflict was documented in the book, later documentary "*Dreamland*" (i. *Draumalandið* - Guðnason and Magnason, 2009). It also raised concerns on the efficiency of planning tools and lack of legal authority of the National Planning Agency according to Cook et al. (2016:110). Newson (2010) points out that it is an interesting case of environmental conflict as local support for the project was stronger than in the capital area, on the opposite side of the country.

Several other conflicts related to the energy sector can be mentioned, such as Búrfellslína (Ögmundardóttir, 2011), Blönduvirkjun, Bjarnarflag in Mývatn area (Sigurjónsdóttir, 2013), and Sprengisandslína in 2015, or even Hvalárvirkjun in the North-West. All these conflicts testify of the public level of concern and care for the land, even in remote uninhabited areas of the Central Highland. Land-use conflicts also reflect a certain vitality and healthy society (Laslaz, 2015), where public opinion matters to decision makers. As pointed out by Depraz & Laslaz, "conflict is not only the consequence of rational cost-benefit estimates, but the tool that will hopefully open, for those who initiate the conflict, a productive readjustment in the balance of powers between stakeholders" (2017:46).

2.3.2 The Central Highland National Park

Hjörleifur Guttormsson introduced a proposal at the parliament for four national parks in the interior of Iceland, which would be around the main glaciers (Icelandic Parliament, 1999). The land-use conflict of Kárahnjúkar a few years later and other large-scale projects led to a joint campaign in 2012 known as Protect the Park (i. *Gætum Garðsins*) or the Heart of the Land (i. *Hjarta Landsins*). In 2016, the Highland campaign (i. *Hálendið*) was officially started and gathered over 20 recreational and environmental groups along with travel industry associations around a mission statement for the establishment of a national park in the Central Highland. The idea made its way to the forefront of the governmental agenda (GOI, 2017a) and a committee was appointed in August 2016 to investigate its prerequisites (IMENR, 2017).

Based on this preparatory work, a cross-political committee appointed in 2018 investigated potential boundaries, regional divisions, and levels of protection within the park (IMENR, 2019c). The proposed boundaries include all existing protected areas and public land within the Central Highland, with a possibility to include privately owned adjacent land. The park would be divided in six administrative units, each including 1-7 municipalities. Each region would have a committee and one of their representatives would be on the board of the park. The committees and the board will include representatives from farmers and other rightsholders, outdoor recreation organizations, nature conservation group and from the tourism sector. The board of directors would have 10 members and a chairman, appointed by the minister for the Environment and Natural Resources. The levels of protection within the park have not been presented in detail in the committee's final report. Areas within Vatnajökull National Park would still be managed as they are today, but there is some uncertainty about the rest of the Central Highland, in particular for areas used as summer pastures (potentially under category VI - IMENR, 2019d) and for hydropower purposes (incompatible with IUCN categories - IMENR, 2019c). Three categories of "service centers" were also defined: "National Park Gate" in periphery of the area (14 units, IMENR, 2019d). "Highland Centers", along the main roads crossing the area, in the most popular destinations of the Highland and "Service Center" in remote locations such as mountain huts.

2.3.3 Challenges and Debates on Nature Conservation

Protected area establishment can result in debates and contentious among a broad range of stakeholders, including economic spheres (e.g. energy sector, tourism, grazing) as such land-uses may be incompatible with conservation goals; political spheres (e.g. local governments) who might see it as a loss of governance and planning power (as seen on comments to the proposed National Park - IMENR, 2019a); or recreational spheres which are here presented.

Outdoor recreation is regulated by the Nature Conservation Law (Lög nr. 60/2013), but additional zoning and regulation are used in protected areas. Access restrictions in Vatnajökull National Park focus on specific activities and are enforced through zoning (e.g. driving on Hvannadalshnjúkur), sometimes on a seasonal basis (e.g. driving on Öræfajökull and Kverkfjöll; reindeer hunting - Baldursson et al., 2018; GOI, 2017b; VNP, 2016). Alternative track-related approaches are also used, as it has been the case for jeep-tracks which were closed to traffic around 2010. Two tracks were particularly debated: Vikrafellsleið and Vonarskarð (Ólafsson et al., 2013a; 2013b). The first track remained open while the second was closed, leading to a strong opposition from jeep users (Huijbens & Benediktsson, 2015). A memorial cross was even erected with the "Travel Freedom 874-2010" inscription (*i. ferðafrelsi*). The Organization of Outdoor Associations (*i. Samtök Útivistarfélag*a) advocated to reopen Vonarskarð track and submitted a proposal for an alternative itinerary. This conflict spanning over a decade probably reduced the acceptance of conservation incentives among motorized recreationists might have been anticipated with more consultation.

Another relevant aspect to keep in mind is that from a management perspective, conventional methods to control visitor numbers such as the use of access fees or equivalent methods appear nearly impossible in Iceland as it would conflict with the public right of access to the land according to Øian (et al., 2018). An alternative approach was found using service fees for parking or use of sanitary facilities in various locations (e.g. Þingvellir, Skaftafell, Kerið, Stokksnes, Faxi), but this implies that there are very few leverages to avoid crowding and congestion issues once a destination has become more accessible.

3 Study Area

3.1 The Icelandic Central Highland

The study area for this research is the Icelandic Central Highland, which covers about 40% of Iceland's land surface (Figure 8). The area was formally delineated by a regional plan in 1999 (IMENR & INPA, 1999) and is still used in the National Planning Strategy (INPA, 2016). The boundaries were defined within each municipality as the limit between private rangelands (*heimalönd*) and the common grazing lands (*affréttir*). Hence, the area has a specific role, both in terms of land-use and ownership regime. This section seeks to present the main characteristics of the Central Highland in terms of historic land-uses, ownership regime, and in relation with nature- and wilderness-based tourism.

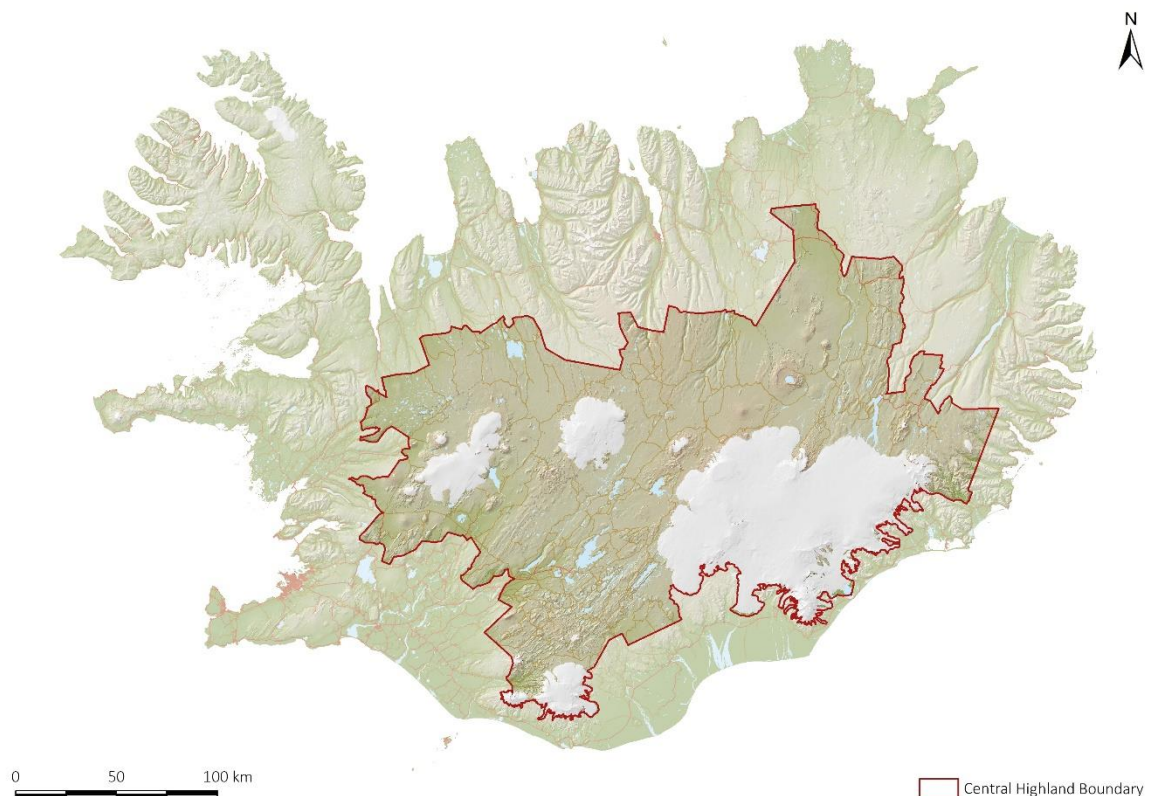


Figure 8: The Icelandic Central Highland as defined by the 1999 regional plan. Data for the Central Highland boundary from INPA.

3.2 Characteristics and Land-Use Trends

The Icelandic Central Highland is a vast uninhabited area in the interior of the country (IME & INPA, 1999). There are rather few infrastructures and upbuilt roads (INPA, 2018), and according to the Icelandic legal definition of wilderness, most of it is distributed in the CH (Ólafsdóttir & Runnström, 2011). Geologically, the area is very dynamic and encompasses over 10 central volcanoes. It also includes several ice caps such as Vatnajökull which is the

third largest in the world (following Antarctica and Greenland). Due to the unique interplay of “fire and ice”, there is a great geodiversity, with a wide range of sub-glacial and post glacial features, leading to the nomination of Vatnajökull National Park to the UNESCO World Heritage List (UNESCO, 2019), and the establishment of Katla UNESCO Global Geopark. Large parts of the Central Highland are poorly vegetated due to the elevation (Dugmore et al., 2009), active volcanism, past climate, and overgrazing (especially during the late 19th and early 20th century - Þórhallsdóttir et al., 2013). Access conditions are limited in the area, with nearly all roads being unpaved and unbridged (Figure 9), without any maintenance during the winter months (October to May - IEA & IRCA, 2019). Winter travel is only possible with the use of specifically modified vehicles.

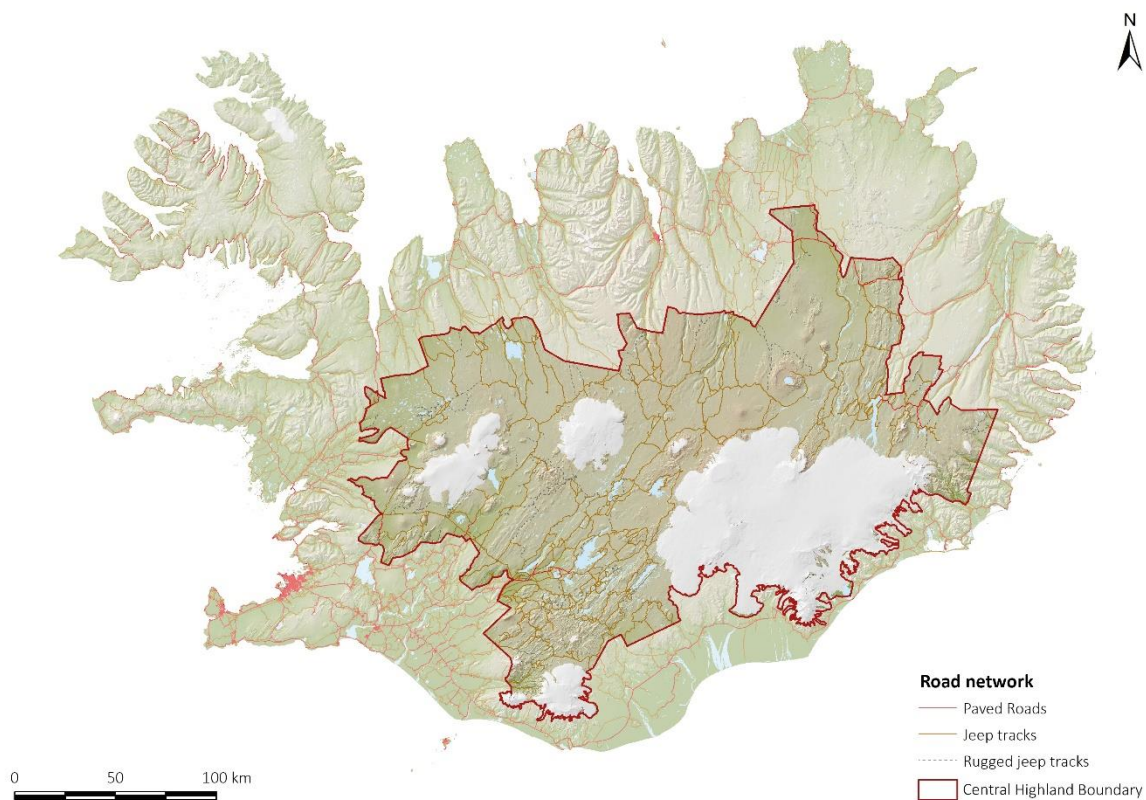


Figure 9: Road network in the Central Highland. Data for the Central Highland Boundary from INPA, road network data from INLS.

At the time Iceland was settled, the Central Highland were supposedly more vegetated than today according to Þórhallsdóttir (2002), and human settlements were mostly in coastal or low-land areas. At that time, the Central Highland were probably not much used as grazing lands, but sometimes crossed (e.g. the supposed north-south crossing of the settler Gnúpa Barður), especially to go to the yearly assembly in Þingvellir from 930. As Iceland lost its independence in 1262, the assembly became less important and strict trading rules were in effect. Gradually, the area became less travelled and tales of trolls, outlaws, and ghosts contributed to mystify the area. Between the 16th and 18th century, some bishops crossed the island through Sprengisandur, avoiding large glacial rivers around Vatnajökull. Natural scientist followed during the 18th and 19th century, to document the natural features of the area and expose the myths about outlaws. Over these centuries, grazing intensified and soil degradations required getting the sheep further inland (Þórhallsdóttir et al., 2013).

During the 20th century, motorized transports made the Central Highland much more accessible, in particular after World War II, as four-/all-wheel drive vehicles from the army became more popular. The period extending until the early 1960's was a time of exploration, "drafting a new chapter in the history of highland travel" as formulated by Huijbens and Benediktsson (2007). In the following decades significant hydropower development took place to supply the country in electricity and meet the needs of the industry. As power plants were built, access was improved, and this further opened the area to vehicles. Glacial rivers thus became the main economic resource of the interior, along with early developments of the tourism sector offering so-called "highland safaris". The number of sheep in Iceland reached a historical peak in 1977 according to Arnalds & Barkarson, (2003), culminating at 900,000 versus 450,000 in recent years. In parallel, overgrazing impacts were recognized according to Marteinsdóttir (et al., 2017), leading to the adoption of livestock quotas in 1985.

Technological progress since the 1970's consolidated the tourism sector and diversified the range of outdoor activities and practices. Super-jeeps that are widely used in the tourism industry appeared around that time, and other activities became increasingly popular, such as snowmobiling, motorcycling, mountain biking, river rafting, backpacking, angling, hunting, etc. Several recreational organizations were created during this period (e.g. the Icelandic Snowmobiling Association – *i. LÍV* in 1984, Útivist in 1975, Horseback riding club *i. LH* in 1987, etc.), and many mountain huts were built in the late 1980's (Sæþórsdóttir et al., 2011) and contributed significantly to infrastructure development in the area (Figure 10). Tourism became particularly important and is now one of the major land-uses in the Central Highland, providing a viable alternative to hydropower development.

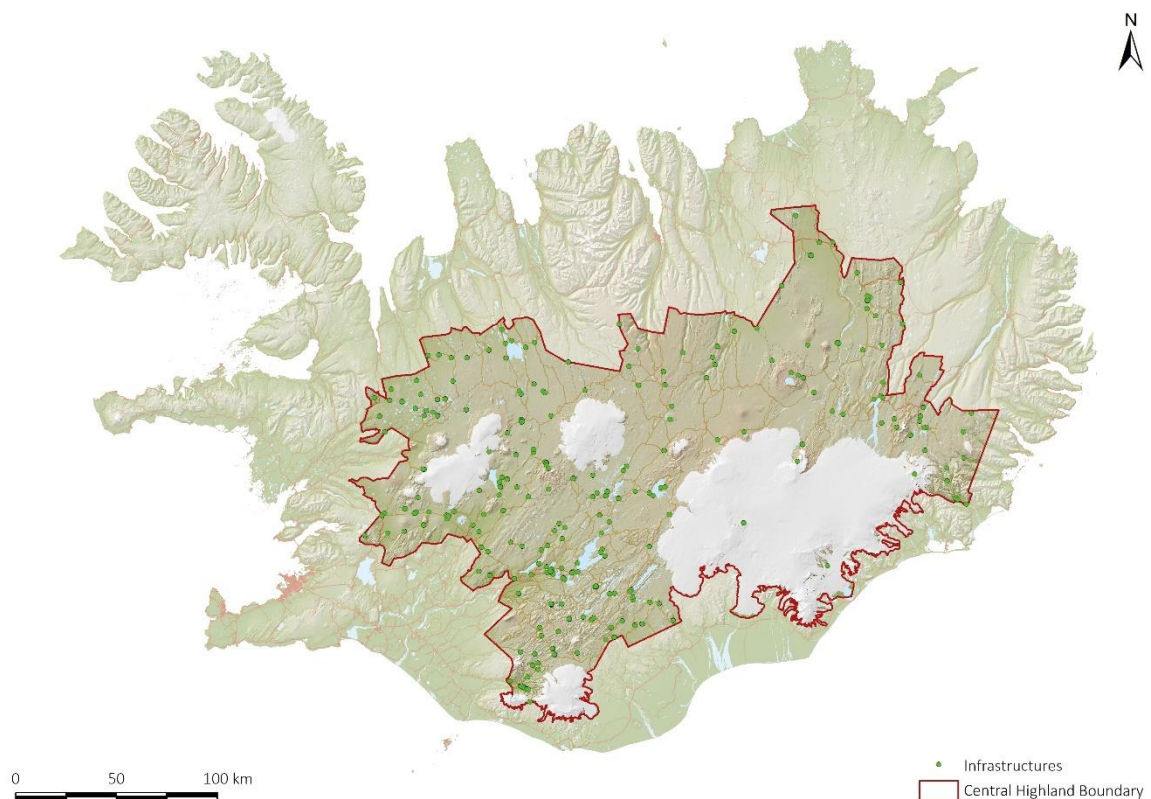


Figure 10: Infrastructures in the Central Highland. Data for the Central Highland boundary from INPA, infrastructure data adapted from INPA (2018).

3.3 Ownership Regime and Public Right

In 1998, a committee was appointed by the prime minister office to assess the ownership status of the land in Iceland. The Committee of the Uninhabited Areas (*i. Óbyggðanefnd*) is still active over 20 years later and has nearly fulfilled its task. The most recent estimation is that almost 86% of the land in the Central Highland is under a public ownership and about 14% are privately owned (Figure 11). These two categories are the only official ownership status, land being either owned by an individual or by the whole nation (Law no 58/1998). Ögmundardóttir (2011, pp. 263-286) considers that land which does not belong to an individual can fall in two categories: the commons of a specific municipality (*i. afréttur*) or the commons open to anyone, whose use is not restricted to any particular municipality (*i. almenningur*). In this process, communal ownership was “seen as a fact on the local level, but an impossibility on the national level, since it goes against national interests to allow a subdivision of the nation, the municipality, to have rights to a piece of land which override that of the nation’s” (Ögmundardóttir, 2011, p. 274). Criticism mostly came from farmers, who then had to “prove their ownership against the claims of the state and not vice versa” (p. 284). And it was apparently challenging to provide appropriate evidence to justify the land-ownership. Hence, significant disputes over the ownership of the land have occurred over the past decades. Prior to this process, a case went to court twice, in 1955 and 1981, and concerned *Landmannaafréttur*, in relation with its ownership status and user rights. Behind land ownership lies a range of interest which load politically such decisions.

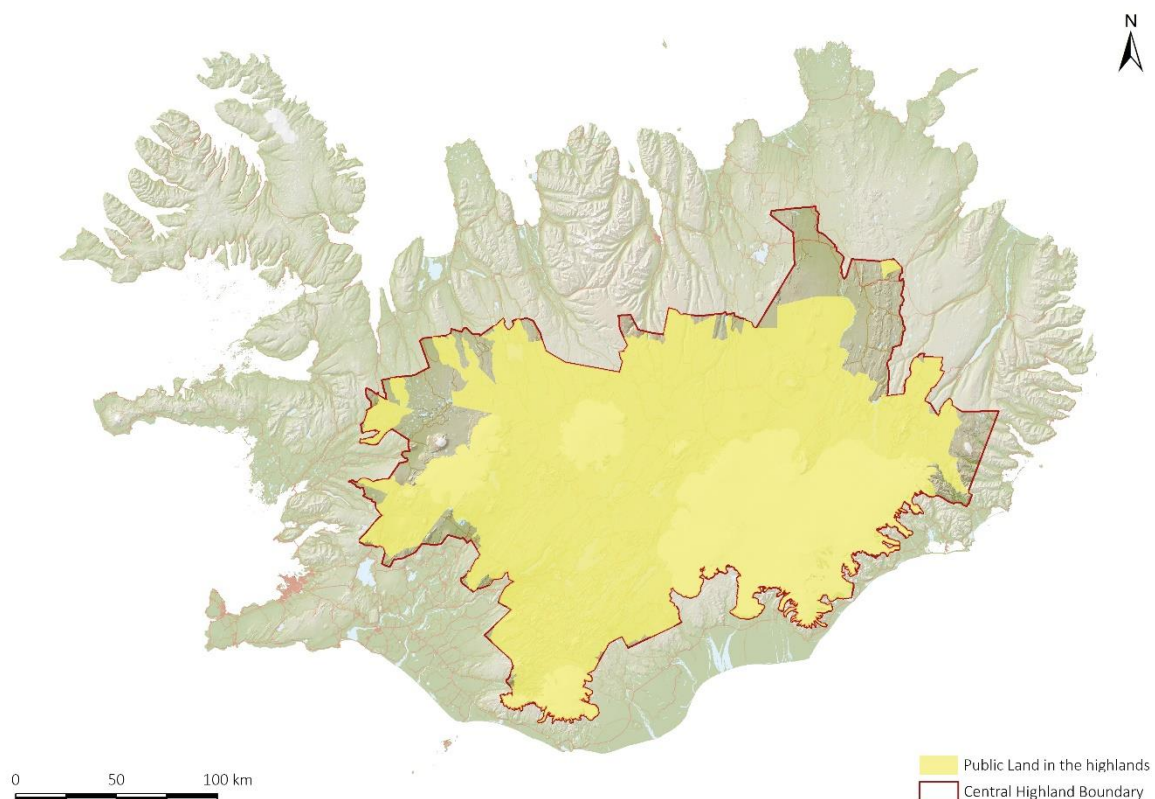


Figure 11: Public land in the Central Highland. Data for the Central Highland boundary from the INPA, data on public land reproduced from Óbyggðanefnd (2020).

Independently from land ownership, the Icelandic public has a right of access to the land, as in many other countries, in particular in Scandinavia. In Iceland, it is called every man's right (*i. almannaréttur*) and can be found in the Nature Conservation Act no. 60/2013 (Lög nr. 60/2013). It grants the public a set of basic rights to circulate, rest and feed themselves if the land is uncultivated, along with a responsibility to ensure that impact and disturbance to the land is minimal. Marked paths, roads or tracks should however be followed where possible. This public right of access also applies for cyclists and equestrians, but not for motorized vehicles. However, when the ground is frozen and covered with snow, motorized vehicles are allowed to drive on rural land in Iceland (Robertson, 2011). According to Øian (et al., 2018:42) which provides an overview on the public right of access in Iceland, fences cannot block a traditional route, and a gate must be installed.

These rights are believed to contribute to the quality of life of residents (social equality, welfare, well-being, public health, and place attachment - Øian et al., 2018:66) and are anchored in the culture and identity of the population. Therefore, access management in protected areas is not well accepted as it is perceived to be incompatible with this public right. The debates on restricted access areas, the disputes related to access fees, nature pass, and the conflict following the closure of the jeep track in Vonarskarð, provide different expressions of the cultural importance of the public right of access to the land in Iceland.

3.4 Wilderness and Nature-Based Tourism

Wilderness is defined in the Nature Conservation Act (Lög nr. 60/2013) as: an uninhabited area which is usually at least 25 km² in size or so that one can enjoy solitude and nature without disturbance from man-made structures or traffic of motorized vehicles and that is at least 5 km away from man-made structures or other evidence of technology such as power lines, power stations, reservoirs or upbuilt roads (own translation). The term uninhabited area (*i. svæði í óbyggðum*) can also be translated as unbuilt or undeveloped area. Upbuilt roads (*i. uppbyggðir vegir*) probably refers to roads that are maintained with the use of road maintenance machinery, or that are elevated, as opposed to tracks that form through repetitive driving on the same itinerary. On the basis of this definition of the wilderness, Ostman & Árnason (2020) produced a wilderness map, using buffers of different sizes depending on the type of infrastructure and road (Figure 12). Other approaches to wilderness mapping in Iceland include the use of viewshed analysis (Ólafsdóttir & Runnström, 2011), solitude criteria using geotagged photography and distance from infrastructures (Tims, 2014), or map-me methods in a nation-wide survey (Ólafsdóttir & Sæþórsdóttir, 2020). According to this nation-wide research, nearly all of the Central Highland is perceived as wilderness by the Icelandic public. Some of this research and mapping approaches are used for planning purposes (e.g. INPA & IEA, 2019).

Wild and unspoiled nature has been identified as the main attraction of the Central Highland (Sæþórsdóttir 2010, 2013, 2014), with wilderness being commonly mentioned by interviewees describing their experience in the Central Highland (Sæþórsdóttir & Saarinen, 2015). Sæþórsdóttir (2010) conducted surveys of visitors in wilderness areas and identified the following components of the wilderness experience: unspoiled, beautiful nature and unique landscape was the most commonly mentioned; followed by the freedom from a busy, hectic life; and not being in a crowded place. Anthropogenic infrastructures generally have a negative impact on the perceived value of wilderness among the public in Iceland (Ólafsdóttir

& Sæþórsdóttir, 2020), which lies in the opportunity to experience “tranquility, quietude, and solitude in areas with simple and primitive infrastructure” (p. 15). In particular, hotels and asphalt roads are among the structures perceived as the least appropriate in a wilderness setting, in opposition with gravel roads or mountain huts (e.g. Sæþórsdóttir, 2014; Tverijonaite et al., 2019).

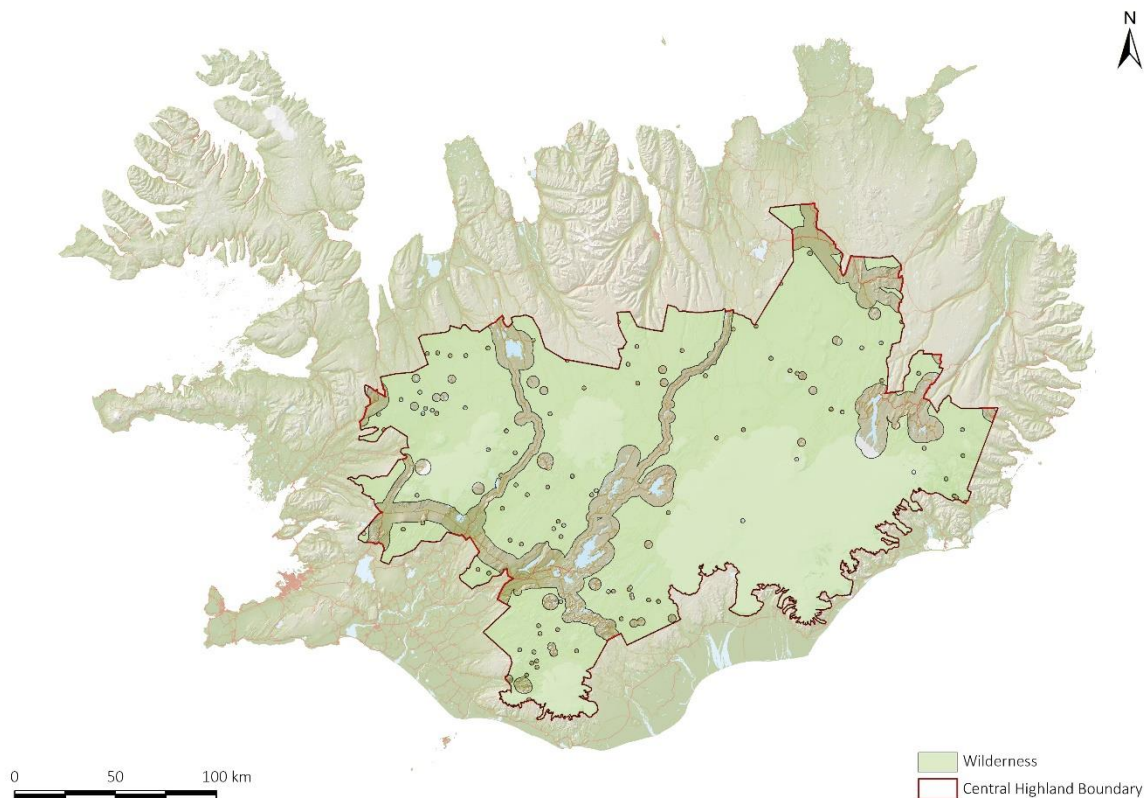


Figure 12: Map of the wilderness in the Central Highland. Data for the Central Highland boundary from the INPA, wilderness extent adapted from Árnason et al., 2017.

As tourism is being developed in the Central Highland, proposals to improve road conditions (e.g. Kjalvegur – INPA, 2019c), build walking bridges (e.g. Þórsmörk - Csagoly et al., 2019), or large accommodation resorts (e.g., INPA 2019a; Landslag, 2016; Mannvit, 2018) increase pressure on the wilderness. In a nation-wide survey conducted in by Ólafsdóttir et al. (2016), hotels were seen as inappropriate in the Central Highland by 67% of the public (p. 95), and paved roads by 51% of the public (p. 112). Access improvements and increased capacity would increase the traffic in the area, which would become less attractive for nature-oriented visitors and solitude seekers. Visitors to the Central Highland have been estimated to represent 30% of summer visitors and 10% of winter visitors in 2016 (ITB, 2017:19). At a nation-wide level, 23% of the public has been estimated to visit the Central Highland several times per year (Ólafsdóttir et al., 2016:93). Management of tourism in popular destinations of the Central Highland must be carefully operated to preserve the authenticity and character of the area, but remains a challenging task (Sæþórsdóttir & Ólafsdóttir, 2017).

4 Methodology

4.1 Sampling Criteria

To document the views of the Icelandic public on the proposed Central Highland National Park and their preferences on its management it was decided to apply a quantitative research design. The data was collected through an online survey in order to reach a larger sample than is possible with other methods, mostly comprised of pre-defined multiple-choice questions. A few open questions were also included, to collect complementary content allowing for some qualitative research and so that the survey could be improved in case of future use.

The sample was obtained through a pre-recruited nationwide net panel from the Social Science Institute of the University of Iceland (*i. Félagsvísindastofnun*). Recruitment only concerns Icelandic citizens over 18 years old, randomly selected from the national register, of which about half accept to receive surveys. From this panel, 1500 members were randomly selected to constitute a sample with similar demographic characteristics as the general population. The survey was sent to the sample and the answers collected were weighted to better match nation-wide demographic characteristics. The weighted data obtained then allows statistical inferences (i.e. to generalize to the general population).

4.2 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire largely consisted of multiple-choice questions and 5-point opinion scales questions to reduce the time needed to fill out the survey and to facilitate data analysis. Three open-ended questions were further included to collect complementary qualitative data. Respondents sometimes had the possibility to submit another answer in a textbox if desired. Conditional “jumps” were used to ask more questions to those with more knowledge of the study area while the others would then save time and remain interested in the survey. After each opinion scale, a follow-up question would collect some details or justifications from those who agreed or disagreed with the statement. Respondent were therefore presented with between 17 and 30 questions, depending on the answers provided (Figure 13). Additional pre-filled demographic data was also provided.

4.3 Questionnaire Content

The questionnaire content can be subdivided in four categories: Outdoor Recreation, Tourism Management, Nature Conservation, and Background/Demographic data (Figure 13). The precise wording of each item in Icelandic can be found in Appendix A.

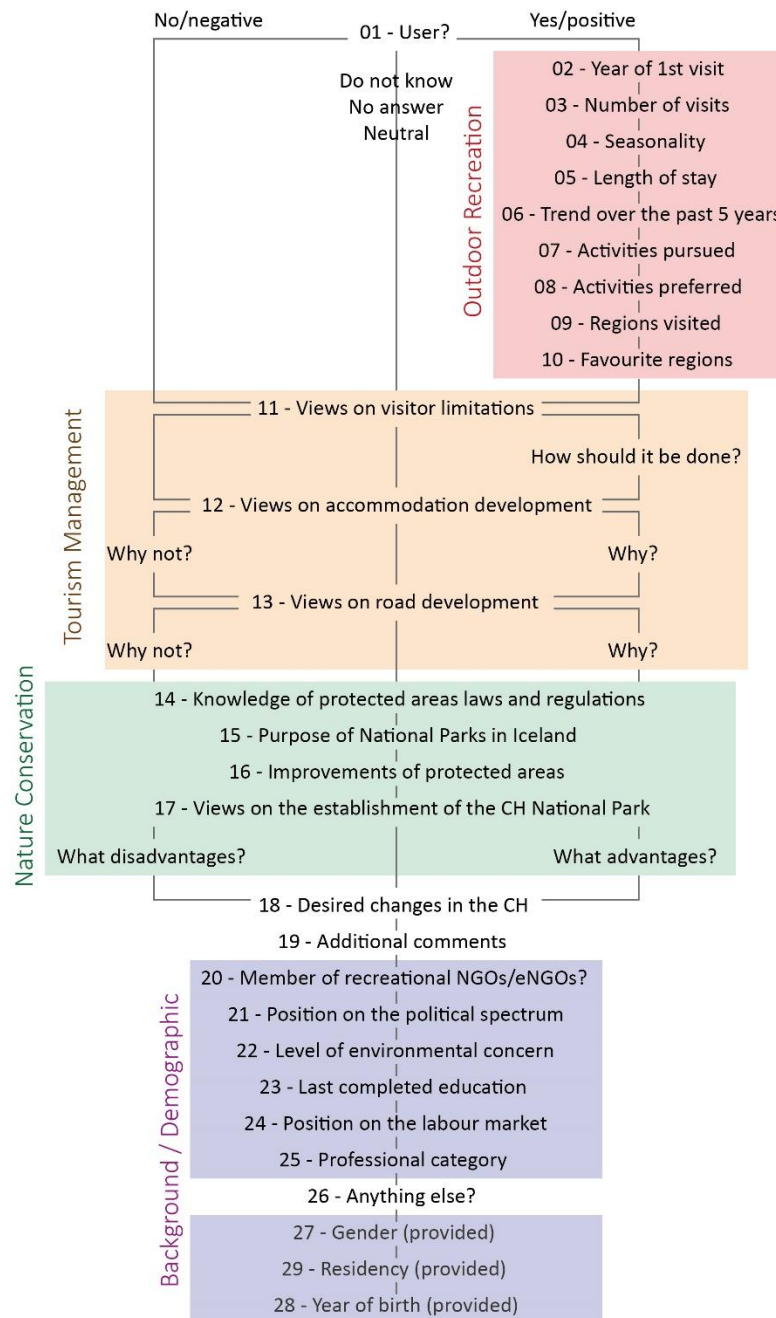


Figure 13: Structure of the online survey, showing conditional jumps; follow-up items and the four main themes of the questionnaire.

The following section present in detail the purpose of each of these categories; their content; the type of survey item, and other information related to the questionnaire content.

4.3.1 Outdoor Recreation

The section dedicated to the respondent's recreational profile was first filtered by asking respondents whether they had visited the Central Highland or not; only those who had done so were subsequently asked about their recreational behaviors in the area. Questions related

to that topic concerned: the year of their first visit, the number of visits, their average length of stay, the season at which they would travel, the trend in their visits, the activity type and regions that they visited. All these variables were categorical, with pre-defined response items from which the respondent could choose.

The activity type was approached by listing 24 choices (gathering 36 activities in total), of activities which are known to be undertaken in the Central Highland. Respondent would then select the ones they pursue, and a follow-up item would ask them to rank the 3 most important activities that they pursue. Some activities which could qualify as passive outdoor recreation were not included (e.g. camping, bathing, enjoying nature, sightseeing, etc.) and other, very specific activities were also excluded (e.g. recreational flights, jet-ski). However, motorized activities (jeep-trips, motocross, snowmobiling) were included as the area is a popular venue for such enthusiasts.

The Central Highland was further demarcated into travel regions, based on previous work undertaken by expert group 2 in the Master Plan (Sæþórsdóttir and Ólafsson, 2010). As a part of their work, travel regions were identified in the Central Highland. These were then merged into larger units by the present author to be more easily identified by the public. Some of the boundaries between regions were furthermore adjusted to include glaciers or fit with natural barriers (e.g. large rivers). The resulting travel regions were then named after of their most prominent features or best-known travel destination. In total, 16 regions were identified in this manner (Figure 14). Data on visitation and preference was collected with the same method as for activities (multiple item question and follow-up ranking question).

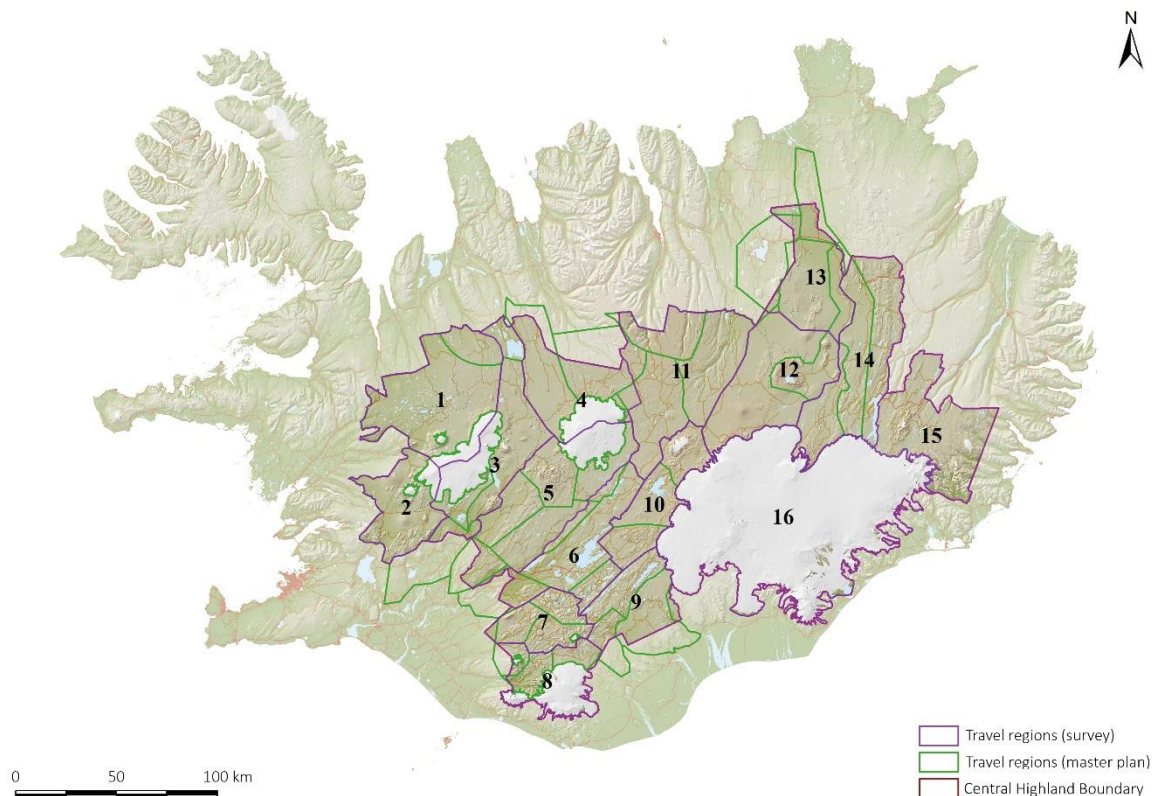


Figure 14: Map of travel regions for the survey. Data for the Central Highland boundary from the INPA; travel regions adapted with permission from Sæþórsdóttir and Ólafsson (2010).

4.3.2 Tourism Management

Views on tourism management were approached through Likert-type statements with 5-points ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*, with a middle item *Neither Agree nor Disagree*. The three key issues identified in relation with tourism management were: Visitor Limitations, Road Development, and Accommodation Development. Each of these aspects was approached through a 5-points opinion scale, and a follow-up multiple choice question to investigate the specific reason why respondents agreed or disagreed with each respective statement. In the case of the statement on Visitor Limitations, the follow-up questions concerned how such limitations should be implemented. Participants furthermore always had the possibility to add another answer to justify their opinions.

4.3.3 Nature Conservation

A 5-point opinion scale introduced this section, asking respondent to make an estimation of the extent of their knowledge of Icelandic nature conservation law. Following this, two multiple choice questions asked what the purpose of national parks and other protected areas in Iceland should be, and how their management could be improved. The next question was a statement about support for or opposition to the proposed Central Highland National Park, with a 5-point opinion scale ranging from *Strongly Opposed* to *Strongly Supportive*. After answering this question, a multiple-choice question investigated participants' views of the main advantages and disadvantages of the proposed national park.

4.3.4 Background Demographic Variables

A set of basic demographic variables were included to be able to perform a weighting procedure. They include gender, age, residency, last completed education, position on the labour market and professional category. In addition to these variables three other background variable were included. One was dedicated to the respondent's political views, by asking to position oneself on the political spectrum, ranging from *Left* to *Right*. Another variable measured the level of environmental concern, from *Not Concerned at All* to *Very Concerned*. The last item inquired about belonging to a recreational or environmental group.

4.3.5 Other Content

An open-ended question at the end of the survey asked about the desirable changes in the Central Highland for the respondent (What changes would make the area more attractive for the type of recreational activity that you pursue in the Central Highland?).

Another open-ended question asked respondents if they wanted to add anything to their answers concerning the Central Highland; and the last item asked whether they have any feedback on the survey itself.

4.4 Data Analysis

4.4.1 Data Preparation

The software used by the Social Science Institute to host the survey was Qualtricks, and each panel member received a unique link to the survey. The survey was online for four weeks, between the 10th of April and the 7th of May 2018. The response rate was of 46%, with 693 valid answers out of 1500 net-panel members. Based on the sample demographic characteristics, the data was subsequently weighted by the Social Science Institute to reflect more accurately the views of the general population (Table 1 – full report available in appendix B).

Table 1: Net panel demographics, showing both weighted and unweighted counts.

	Counts		Proportion	+/-	Histograms
	Unweighted	Weighted			
Sex					
Male	346	341	49%	3,7%	<div></div> 49%
Female	347	352	51%	3,7%	<div></div> 51%
Total	693	693	100%		
Age group					
18-29 y/o	81	154	22%	3,1%	<div></div> 22%
30-44 y/o	152	182	26%	3,3%	<div></div> 26%
45-59 y/o	216	178	26%	3,3%	<div></div> 26%
60+ y/o	244	180	26%	3,3%	<div></div> 26%
Total	693	693	100%		
Residency					
Capital area	438	446	64%	3,6%	<div></div> 64%
Countryside	255	247	36%	3,6%	<div></div> 36%
Total	693	693	100%		
Education					
Primary education or less	73	193	30%	3,5%	<div></div> 30%
Apprenticeship or eq.	174	139	21%	3,1%	<div></div> 21%
Secondary education	101	110	17%	2,9%	<div></div> 17%
University (undergraduate)	186	128	20%	3,1%	<div></div> 20%
University (graduate)	117	82	13%	2,5%	<div></div> 13%
Number of answers	651	651	100%		
Non-response	42	42			
Total	693	693			

The data analysis was performed using XLSTAT statistical analysis software. Most of the analysis was done through descriptive statistics, using weighted data to produce frequency tables. Due to the use of weights, “sum of weights” are used instead of “counts” in the frequency tables (abbreviated “ Σ of weights”). Since these numbers are rounded, they do not always correspond to the sum of weights for the total (n). Based on frequency tables, the variables were simplified by merging some categories from recreational variables as follow:

Q2a (Year of first visit to the Central Highland):

- Before 1960 / 1960-1969 / 1970-1979
- 1980-1989 / 1990-1999
- 2000-2004 / 2005-2009 / After 2010

Q3 (Number of visits to the Central Highland):

- 1-5 times
- 6-10 times / 11-15 times / 16-20 times
- over 20 times

Q5 (Average length of stay in the Central Highland):

- 0 nights (daytrip)
- 1-2 nights
- 3-5 nights / 6 nights and more

4.4.2 Statistical Tests Selection

Demographic data was provided as a set of variables, with a different number of categories each time (e.g. data on residency was provided through 4 variables, with respectively 2, 3, 6 and 9 categories; data on age as 4, 6 and 7 categories). The analysis was done by using systematically the simplified variables to be able to meet statistical tests requirements. Only the variables “gender”; “age” and “residency” were used for the analysis. The chi-square test of independence was the main statistical test used, as it is well suited for categorical variables arranged in contingency tables (Agresti, 2007; Bryman, 2012). In the case of 2x2 tables, Yates’ continuity correction was applied. For the analysis of opinion scales, categories 1-2 and 4-5 were systematically merged for the tests (making a 3-points scale instead of a 5-points scale) to ensure that the tests’ assumptions would not be violated. If despite this data reduction, low theoretical counts were detected, the categories were then further merged, with categories 1-2-3 would be merged or categories 3-4-5. In such cases, the table’s caption would specifically mention it. To identify within a single category if the proportion differed between two groups z-tests for two proportions were computed.

4.4.3 Network Visualization

Recreational data on activities pursued and preferred in the Central Highland was combined in dummy variables, by coding all pursued activity with 1, the most important one with a higher number (4 in this case), and the non-pursued with 0. Recreational activities gathering less than 5% of recreationists were excluded, resulting in 14 activities. The resulting matrix was then imported in Gephi network visualization software and displayed using the Force Atlas spatialization algorithm. The repulsion strength was set to 2500 and both the attracted distribution and the adjustment by size were enabled. In the visual output, the two most important activities (jeep-trip and day-hiking) were displayed next to each other.

5 Results

The result section is subdivided in three parts:

- Characteristics and views of the sample on issues related to the Central Highland
- Comparisons of the users (i.e. those who visited the area) and non-users of the area.
- Comparisons of the views of those who support the Central Highland National Park and those opposing it.

5.1 Characteristics and Views of the Sample

5.1.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics

In addition to basic demographic data (e.g. age, gender, residency), nation-wide political views, level of environmental concern and third sector involvement were documented. The most distinctive characteristics are that:

- political views are evenly distributed, with slightly more individuals on the left side of the spectrum (Figure 15),
- there is a high level of environmental concern, with about 80% of the respondents feeling rather or strongly concerned about the environment (Figure 16), and
- 14% of the respondents are involved in the third sector, either in an environmental or recreational organization (Table 3).

Political Spectrum

Respondents were asked to identify their position on a 0-10 Left-Right political scale. The political left accounts for 39% and the political right 36% (Figure 15). Extreme political positions (rank 1-2 & 10-11) gather 5% of the respondent for the left, and about 9% for the

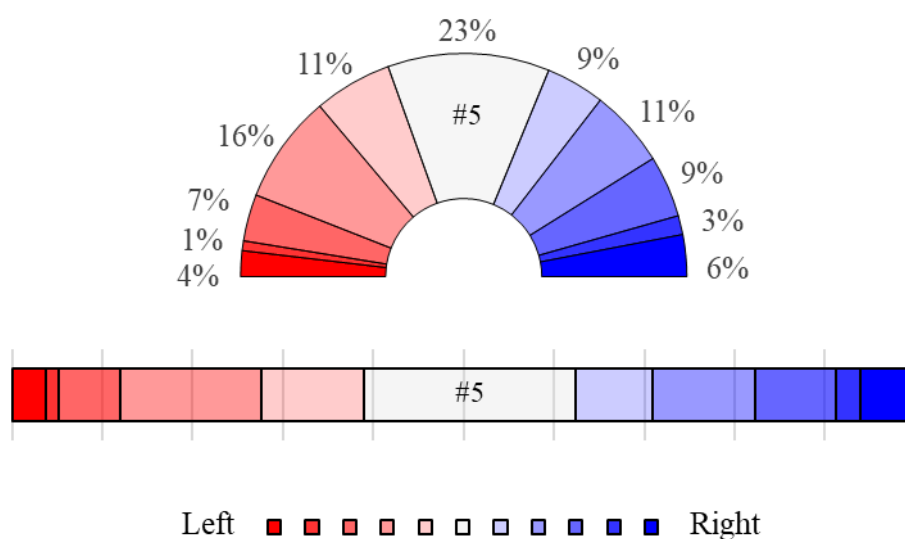


Figure 15: Sample distribution on the left-right political spectrum, based on an 11pts scale. $n=558$; $\bar{x}=5.1$; $s=2.4$

right. Non-response accounts for 19%, with 9% of respondents answering: “don’t want to answer” and 10%: “don’t know”.

Level of Environmental Concern

Respondents were asked to position themselves on a 0-10 scale of environmental concern, ranging from “Not concerned at all” to “Very concerned”. Less than 9% of the respondent do not consider themselves to be concerned about the environment, while almost 80% are concerned or very concerned (Figure 16). Non-response accounts for 7%, with 6% of respondents answering: “don’t want to answer” and 1% answering: “don’t know”.

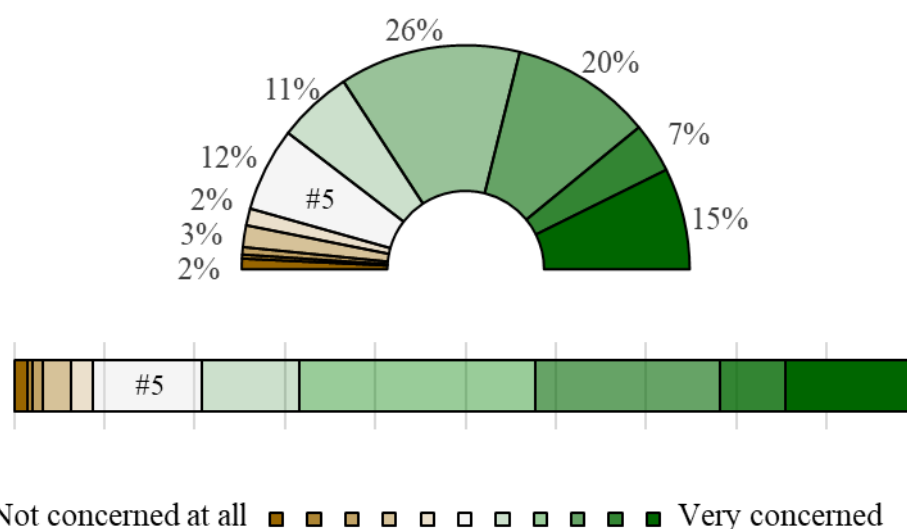


Figure 16: Sample distribution along the environmental concern spectrum, based on an 11pts scale. $n=643$; $\bar{x}=7.0$; $s=2.1$

Third Sector Involvement

About 10% of the respondents claim to be members of a recreational organization and 7% members of an environmental group (Table 3). 2% of respondent are involved in both recreational and environmental groups. About 7% of the participants did not answer this item. A fourth of those involved in an environmental organization also indicate that they are members of a recreational group, compared to a tenth at a nation-wide level.

Table 2: Involvement of the public in recreational and environmental NGOs

Variable	Category	Σ of weights	Histograms
<i>Are you in any organization involved in outdoor recreation or environmental issues?</i>			
<i>n=636</i>	Yes, recreational only	49	8%
	Yes, environmental only	31	5%
	Yes, both recreational and environmental	11	2%
	No, neither recreational nor environmental	556	87%



5.1.2 Overview of Outdoor Recreation in the Central Highland

Ten items in the questionnaire were used to gather data on recreation, by documenting which proportion of the nation has visited the area, the modalities of their visitation (length of stay, season), the extent of their experience (number of trips, year of first visit), type of activities pursued, and regions visited.

Demographic Profiles of the Central Highland's Users

Visitation to the Central Highland is not as uncommon as one might think as over two thirds of the participants have visited the area at least once in their lifetime. Based on visitation, two sub-groups of participants can be defined: those who have visited the Central Highland before (68% - Table 3) are referred to as “users” of the area and the remaining ones (32%) as “non-users”.

Table 3: Visitation rate of the Central Highland among the public

Variable	Category	Σ of weights	Histograms
<i>Have you visited the Central Highland?</i>			
<i>n=678</i>	Yes	464	 68%
	No	214	 32%

Analyzing the differences between users and non-users was done by using them as sub-samples and comparing their demographic characteristics (Table 4).

Table 4: Comparison of demographic characteristics between Users and Non-Users of the Central Highland.

Variable	Category	Σ of weights for each group			
		Users (<i>n</i> =464)		Non-Users (<i>n</i> =214)	
<i>Gender**</i>					
	**Male	245	<div><div></div></div> 53%	88	<div><div></div></div> 41%
	**Female	220	<div><div></div></div> 47%	126	<div><div></div></div> 59%
<i>Age Group</i>					
	*18-29 y/o	90	<div><div></div></div> 19%	57	<div><div></div></div> 27%
	30-44 y/o	127	<div><div></div></div> 27%	49	<div><div></div></div> 23%
	45-59 y/o	119	<div><div></div></div> 26%	59	<div><div></div></div> 27%
	60+ y/o	128	<div><div></div></div> 28%	50	<div><div></div></div> 23%
<i>Residency</i>					
	Capital Area	291	<div><div></div></div> 63%	141	<div><div></div></div> 66%
	Countryside	173	<div><div></div></div> 37%	74	<div><div></div></div> 34%
























A chi-square test of independence was computed for each variable and a test for two proportions for each category within these variables. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$

This revealed that only the gender variable could be linked with visitation. The proportion of male individuals among users is thus higher than among non-users (53% versus 41%). In contrast, the category 18-29 y/o contains a lower proportion of users than non-users (19% versus 27%).

Modalities of Recreation in the Central Highland

The participants who had visited the Central Highland (“users”) received a few additional questions to further document their outdoor recreation in the area. This included data on their average length of stay, preferred time of the year for visitation, number of visits, year of first visit, recent trend in the number of visits over the past five years (Table 5), pursued activities (Table 6-7) and travelled regions (Table 8-9).

Table 5: Modalities of outdoor recreation in the Central Highland (CH) for the domestic users of the area.

Variable	Category	Σ of weights	Histograms
<i>What year was your first visit to the CH?</i>			
<i>n=443</i>	Before 1960	10	 2%
	1960-1969	36	 8%
	1970-1979	68	 15%
	1980-1989	80	 18%
	1990-1999	100	 23%
	2000-2004	71	 16%
	2005-2009	35	 8%
	After 2010	44	 10%
<i>How many times have you been to the CH?</i>			
<i>n=447</i>	1-5 times	207	 46%
	6-10 times	84	 19%
	11-15 times	61	 14%
	16-20 times	16	 4%
	Over 20 times	79	 18%
<i>At what time of the year do you usually visit the CH?</i>			
<i>n=446</i>	Summer (May-September)	368	 82%
	Depends on years	45	 10%
	Winter (October-April)	33	 7%
<i>For how long do you usually visit the CH?</i>			
<i>n=445</i>	0 nights (Day-trip)	174	 39%
	1-2 nights	190	 43%
	3-5 nights	65	 15%
	6 nights or more	15	 3%
<i>Over the past few years, your visit to the CH...</i>			
<i>n=444</i>	Increased	26	 6%
	Stayed the same	113	 25%
	Decreased	305	 69%





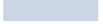







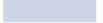









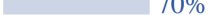
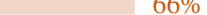
These results clearly show that there is a wide range of ways to pursue outdoor recreation in the Central Highland, with varying levels of experience and intensity of recreation. Five observations can be made to summarize the modalities of outdoor recreation in the area:

- About 80% of the users of the Central Highland visited the area for the first time between 1970 and 2010, leaving only 10% before 1970 and 10% after 2010.
- Two thirds of the respondent have visited the Central Highland and over half of them went there more than 6 times.
- The vast majority of users (82%) usually visit the area during the summer (from May to September), while only 7% do so during the winter (October to April).
- Most trips are short (82% of the users usually visit the area for 2 nights or less).
- Over the two thirds of the users (69%) answered that their visits to the area had decreased over the past few years, while only 6% claimed that their visits had increased.

Number of Visits to the Central Highland

Users of the Central Highland were further segmented in 2 groups to explore the effect of repeated visitation on their travel behavior. One sub-group was composed of those who visited the Central Highland between 1-10 times, and the second group of those who visited the area over 10 times.

Table 6: Comparison of recreational characteristics between users of the Central Highland with 1-10 visits, and those with over 10 visits.

Variable	Category	Σ of weights for each group	
		1-10 visits (<i>n</i> =291)	>10 visits (<i>n</i> =156)
<i>What year was your first visit to the CH?****</i>			
	****Before 1979	48  17%	63  41%
	*1980-1999	101  36%	72  47%
	****2000 and later	128  46%	19  12%
<i>At what time of the year do you usually visit the CH?****</i>			
	****Summer (May-Sept.)	245  89%	111  71%
	****Depends on years	15  5%	29  18%
	Winter (Oct.-April)	16  6%	17  11%
<i>For how long do you usually visit the CH?****</i>			
	***0 nights (Day-trip)	129  45%	42  27%
	1-2 nights	122  43%	68  44%
	****3 nights or more	33  12%	45  29%
<i>Over the past few years, your visit to the CH...</i>			
	Increased	12  4%	13  8%
	Stayed the same	71  26%	40  26%
	Decreased	192  70%	103  66%























*A chi-square test of independence was computed for each variable and a test for two proportions for each category within these variables. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$*

The group with more visits had their first visit earlier than other, they usually stay longer in the area, and are more prone to visit the area outside of the summer season (Table 6).

Recreational Activities Pursued in the Central Highland.

Respondents in the user group were asked to select all activities that they pursue in the Central Highland from a list, and to rank their 3 favorites. 13% of them indicate that they are not involved in outdoor recreation and 5% did not reply, leaving 82% of users that can be considered as recreational users of the area.

Table 7: Participation in selected outdoor activities in the Central Highland for recreational users of the area. Activities are ranked by popularity.

Variable	Category	Σ of weights	Histograms
<i>Which of the following outdoor activity do you pursue in the Central Highland?</i>			
<i>n=382</i>	Jeep trip	217	 57%
	Day-hikes	154	 40%
	Mountain hikes	112	 29%
	Flyfishing, net-fishing	62	 16%
	Longer hikes, backpacking	58	 15%
	Foraging (berries, mushrooms, etc.)	52	 14%
	Snowmobiling	41	 11%
	Hunting	36	 10%
	Horseback riding, horse tour	35	 9%
	Caving	34	 9%
	Gathering the sheep	32	 8%
	Bird-/Wildlife viewing	22	 6%
	Glacier-hiking	21	 6%
	ATVs	17	 5%
	Skiing, ski-touring	16	 4%
	Motocross, Enduro	12	 3%
	Biking, Mountain-biking	7	 2%
	Trail-running, orienteering	6	 2%
	Rockclimbing, Iceclimbing	6	 1%
	Snowshoeingtrip	2	 1%
	Canoeing, Kayaking, River-Rafting	1	 0%
	Dog-sledding	0	 0%
	Diving	0	0%
	Paragliding, parachuting	0	0%

The outcome shows that the most popular activities pursued are related to driving and hiking (Table 7), followed by more specific activities such as fishing (16%), snowmobiling (11%), hunting (10%), horseback riding (9%), caving (9%) or even gathering the sheep (8%). On average, a recreational user pursues 2,1 activities.

A complementary indicator to the popularity of recreational activities is their importance. For each activity, the proportions of participant ranking it as “Most important”, “Second most important” or “Third most important” were calculated (Table 8).

Table 8: Ranks of importance attributed to each recreational activity by those pursuing it. Activities are ranked by popularity (see histogram on the left side).

Variable	Category	\sum of weights for rank:				Histograms			
		#1	#2	#3	...	#1	#2	#3	not selected
<i>Among the activities that you pursue, rank the 3 most important:</i>									
<i>n=354</i>	Jeep trip	108	40	29	40				
	Day-hikes	87	28	9	30				
	Mountain hikes	29	38	17	28				
	Flyfishing, net-fishing	24	16	4	18				
	Longer hikes, backpacking	18	14	11	16				
	Foraging (berries, mushrooms, etc.)	14	9	6	23				
	Snowmobiling	13	10	7	11				
	Hunting	10	14	6	6				
	Horseback riding, horse tour	17	7	4	8				
	Caving	3	10	5	16				
	Gathering the sheep	10	3	4	16				
	Bird-/Wildlife viewing	1	4	8	9				
	Glacier-hiking	2	3	2	14				
	ATVs	3	4	2	9				
	Skiing, ski-touring	4	1	5	6				
	Motorcross, Enduro	5	2	1	4				
	Biking, Mountain-biking	3	1	2	1				
	Trail-running, orienteering	2	2	1					
	Rockclimbing, Iceclimbing			0	5				
	Snowshoeingtrip				2				
	Canoeing, Kayaking, River-Rafting				1				
	Dog-sledding	0							
	Diving								
	Paragliding, parachuting								

This shows that even if some activities are not pursued by many, they can be very important for those who do so (e.g. horseback riding, mountain biking), and despite the popularity of a certain activity, its importance may be relatively secondary (e.g. foraging).

Activity participation and preference data were combined to produce a conceptual map by positioning each activity near related ones (Figure 17). This layout highlights that activity combination patterns are very diverse among respondents, but also permit the identification of groups of respondents, such as those only connected to a single activity (e.g. day-hiking; jeep trips; horseback-riding; skiing, ski-touring), or those that are only pursuing two activities (e.g. between day-hiking and jeep trips).

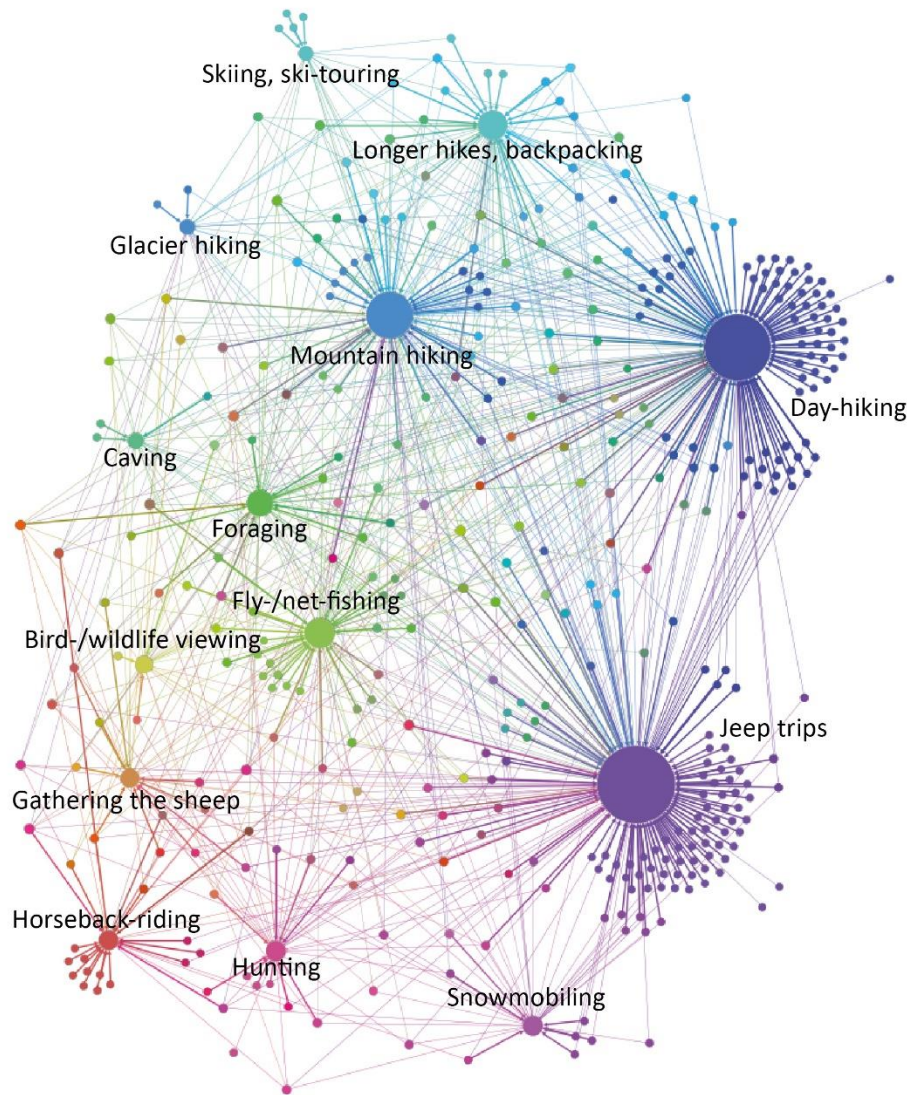


Figure 17: Conceptual mapping of recreational activities. Each respondent is represented as a dot connected to all activities pursued. The thicker lines represent a connection to the respondent's "most important" activity. The size of the activity node increases with the popularity the activity. Weighted data could not be used for the visual output.

Visited Regions in the Central Highland.

Participants were asked which travel region(s) of the Central Highland they have visited before (Table 9), and to rank the ones they considered to be the 3 most important (Table 10).

Table 9: Visitation rates in travel regions of the Central Highland (ranked by popularity)

Variable	Category	Σ of weights	Histograms
<i>Which of the following travel region have you visited before?</i>			
<i>n=423</i>	8 - Þórsmörk-Mælifellssandur	296	70%
	3 - Kjalvegur	281	66%
	11 - Sprengisandur-Laugafell	226	53%
	2 - Kaldidalur	211	50%
	6 - Þjórsá-Tungnaá-Veiðivötn	197	47%
	7 - Hekla-Torfajökull	161	38%
	9 - Langisjór-Lakagíggar	161	38%
	13 - Mývatnsöræfi	159	37%
	14 - Möðrudalsöræfi-Kverkfjöll	150	35%
	12 - Askja-Gæsavatnsleið	131	31%
	5 - Svæðið V. Þjórsárvera	127	30%
	15 - Snæfell-Lónsöræfi	126	30%
	1 - Arnarvatnsheiði	122	29%
	16 - Vatnajökull	104	24%
	4 - Svæðið N. Hofsjökuls	86	20%
	10 - Jökulheimar-Vonarskarð	69	16%

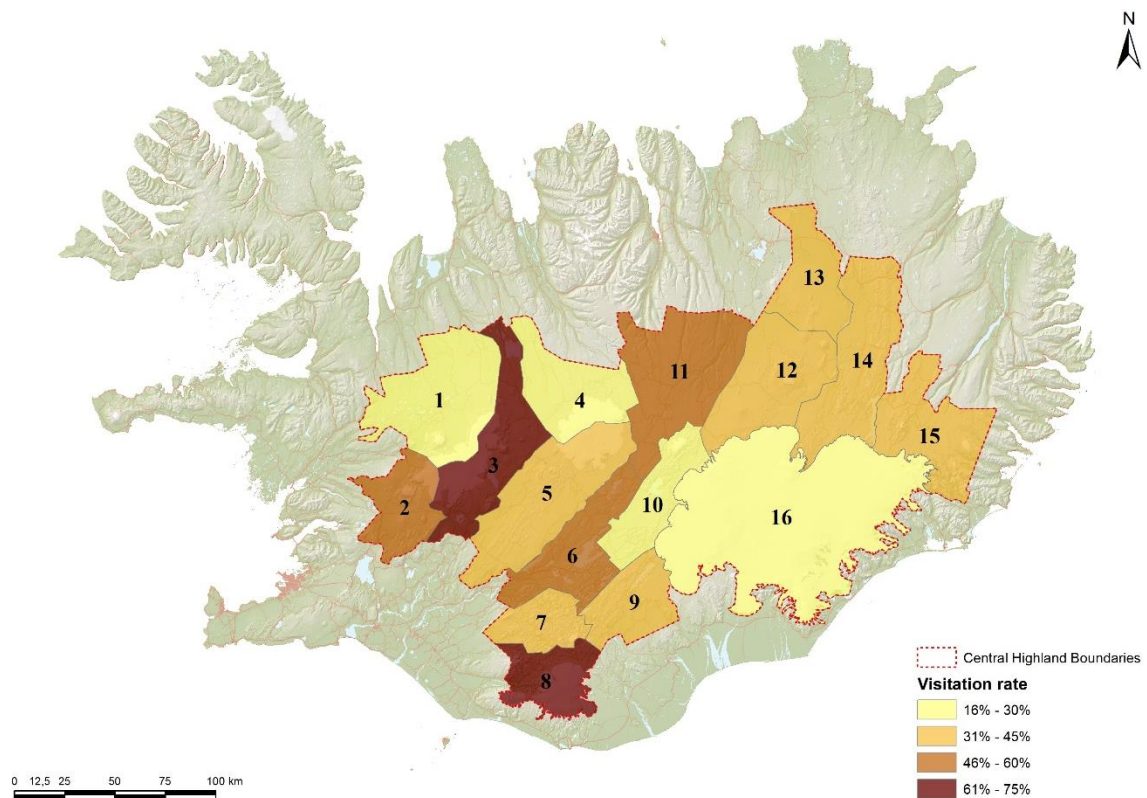


Figure 18: Map of regional visitation rates in the Central Highland.

The most popular travel regions are Þórsmörk-Mælifellssandur, visited by about 70% of the users of the Central Highland, followed by Kjalvegur with 66% of them, Sprengisandur-Laugafell with 53%, and “Kaldidalur” with 50 %. On average, respondents have visited 6,2 of these regions.

Table 10: Ranks of importance attributed to each travel region by those who visited it. Regions are ranked by popularity (see histogram on the left side).

Variable	Category	Σ of weights for rank:				Histograms			
		#1	#2	#3	...	#1	#2	#3	not selected
<i>Among the travel regions that you have visited, rank the 3 most important:</i>									
n=423	8 - Þórsmörk-Mælifellssandur	128	49	30	89				
	3 - Kjalvegur	33	33	34	182				
	11 - Sprengisandur-Laugafell	19	24	16	167				
	2 - Kaldidalur	16	13	22	160				
	6 - Þjórsá-Tungnaá-Veiðivötn	28	33	18	117				
	7 - Hekla-Torfajökull	12	21	15	112				
	9 - Langisjór-Lakagígar	19	21	19	101				
	13 - Mývatnsöræfi	7	20	18	114				
	14 - Möðrudalsöræfi-Kverkfjöll	17	22	14	97				
	12 - Askja-Gæsavatnsleið	27	14	17	73				
	5 - Svæðið V. Þjórsárvera	14	6	4	102				
	15 - Snæfell-Lónsöræfi	18	13	16	78				
	1 - Arnarvatnsheiði	15	15	8	84				
	16 - Vatnajökull	6	18	14	65				
	4 - Svæðið N. Hofsjökuls	11	8	6	61				
	10 - Jökulheimar-Vonarskarð	4	2	7	57				

With regard to preferred areas, Þórsmörk-Mælifellssandur clearly stands out, with nearly half of those travelling there considering it as the most important area (Table 10), and 70% ranking it among the 3 most important ones. It also shows that less visited areas such as Askja-Gæsavatnsleið are nevertheless very important for a large share of those who have been there (about 40% of them ranked it among the 3 most important).

Due to the large number of regions visited by respondents on average (6,2), the analysis of relations between these travel regions is even more complex than between recreational activities. Consequently, network visualization methods were not sufficiently satisfactory to be reported here.

5.1.3 Land-Use Management and Nature Conservation Perspectives.

Views on land-use management and nature conservation were collected through four opinion scales of 5 points each, from “Strongly disagree/oppose” to “Strongly agree/support”. The key issues explored are visitor limitations, accommodation development, road development, and the proposed national park (Table 11). This was done with the following statements:

- The number of visitors should be limited in the Central Highland,
- There is a need for increased accommodation in the Central Highland,
- Roads in the Central Highland should be upbuilt,
- Do you support or oppose the establishment of a National Park in the Central Highland?

In addition to these items, follow-up questions were used to better understand the views of respondents, documenting how visitor numbers should be limited, the reasons for supporting or opposing accommodation and road development, and the advantages/disadvantages of the proposed national park. Two other items investigated the perceived purposes of Icelandic national parks and ways to improve the management of national parks and other protected area in Iceland.

Table 11: Overview of opinion scales on land-use management and nature conservation. Mean scores were color-coded depending on whether they would be over or below 3.

Variable	Category	Opinion scale (%)					Mean					Σ of weights
		Disagree	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	Agree	1	2	3	4	5			
Visitor limitations												
<i>n=621</i>		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	7	24	37	28						621
Accommodation development												
<i>n=588</i>		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	11	22	37	24	7					588
Road development												
<i>n=617</i>		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	15	21	31	21	11					617
National Park												
<i>n=606</i>		<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	5	5	28	32	31					606

The results clearly indicate a strong support for visitor limitations within the sample (65% of support and 11% of opposition). Accommodation development is in comparison much more debated (31% of support and 33% of opposition). Road development is slightly more a dividing issue (33% of support and 36% of opposition). As with visitor limitations, the establishment of the National Park in the Central Highland is also broadly supported (63% of support and 10% of opposition).

Views on Visitor Limitations in the Central Highland

Table 12: Views on visitor limitations in relation with demographic data.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

"The number of visitors should be limited in the Central Highland"

Variable	Category	Opinion scale (%)					Mean					Σ of weights
		Disagree				Agree	1	2	3	4	5	
Total												
n=621		4	7	24		37						621
Gender*												
n=621	Male	6	8	26		37						313
	Female	1	6	22		37						308
Age group												
n=621	18-29 y/o	6	8	29		33						127
	30-45 y/o	5	5	29		39						167
	45-59 y/o	1	8	21		37						162
	60+ y/o	3	8	18		40						165
Residency												
n=621	Capital Area	4	7	25		34						392
	Countryside	3	7	21		44						229

A chi-square test of independence was computed for each variable. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$

The results indicate that views on visitor limitations are related to the gender variable (Table 12). Female individuals are more supportive than male individuals, but no statistically significant difference was observed for the other demographic variables.

Table 13: Preferences to limit visitor numbers in the Central Highland according to those in favor

Variable	Category	Histograms
What would you consider as the best way to limit the number of visitors in the CH?		
n=416		
	By controlling the number of visitors in sensitive areas	72%
	With a fee on tourism companies operating in the area	63%
	By keeping the road network unchanged i.e. not making upbuilt roads	25%
		0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

The participants in favor of visitor limitations indicate in the follow-up question (Table 13) that the best way to do so would be by controlling visitor numbers in sensitive areas (72%), and with a fee on tourism companies operating in the area (63%). Only a quarter of the respondents consider that keeping the road network unchanged would be the best way to limit visitor number. For all follow-up variables in the survey, other propositions submitted can be found in appendix C in Icelandic.

Views on Accommodation Development in the Central Highland

Table 14: Views on accommodation development in relation with demographic data.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

"There is a need for increased accommodation in the Central Highland"

Variable	Category	Opinion scale (%)					Mean					Σ of weights
		Disagree				Agree	1	2	3	4	5	
Total												
n=588		11	22	37	24	7		2,9			588	
Gender												
n=279	Male	12	20	35	25	8		3,0			309	
	Female	11	24	39	22	5		2,9			279	
Age group												
n=588	18-29 y/o	5	20	43	30	1		3,0			119	
	30-45 y/o	14	15	44	23	3		2,9			156	
	45-59 y/o	12	26	31	19	11		2,9			153	
	60+ y/o	12	24	31	23	10		2,9			161	
Residency												
n=588	Capital Area	12	21	36	25	6		2,9			377	
	Countryside	11	23	38	21	7		2,9			211	

A chi-square test of independence was computed for each variable. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$

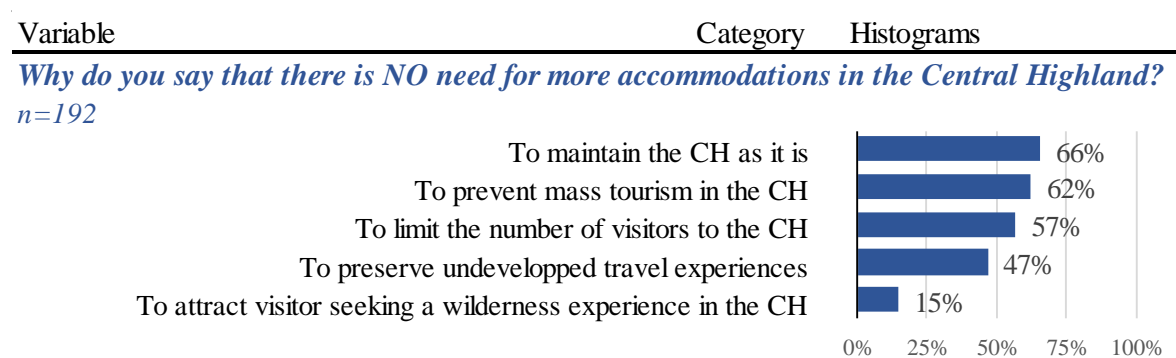
The analysis did not identify any statistically significant relation between the views on accommodation development and demographic data (Table 14). A follow-up question was sent to those in agreement (Table 15) or disagreement (Table 16) with the statement.

Table 15: Motivations behind *favorable* opinions on accommodation development in the Central Highland.

Variable	Category	Histograms
Why do you say that there is a need for more accommodations in the Central Highland		
<i>n</i> =174		
	To have more services when travelling in the CH	50%
	To cope with increasing visitor numbers in the CH	49%
	To increase the diversity of the accommodation offer in the CH	41%
	To release pressure from popular tourist attractions in the lowlands	31%
	To attract wealthier travelers to the CH	23%

The item most commonly selected by those in favor of increased accommodation in the area is that “it would provide more services” (50%), followed by “to cope with increasing visitor numbers in the Central Highland” (49%) and “to increase the diversity of accommodation offer in the area” (41%).

Table 16: Motivations behind **unfavorable** opinions on accommodation development in the Central Highland.

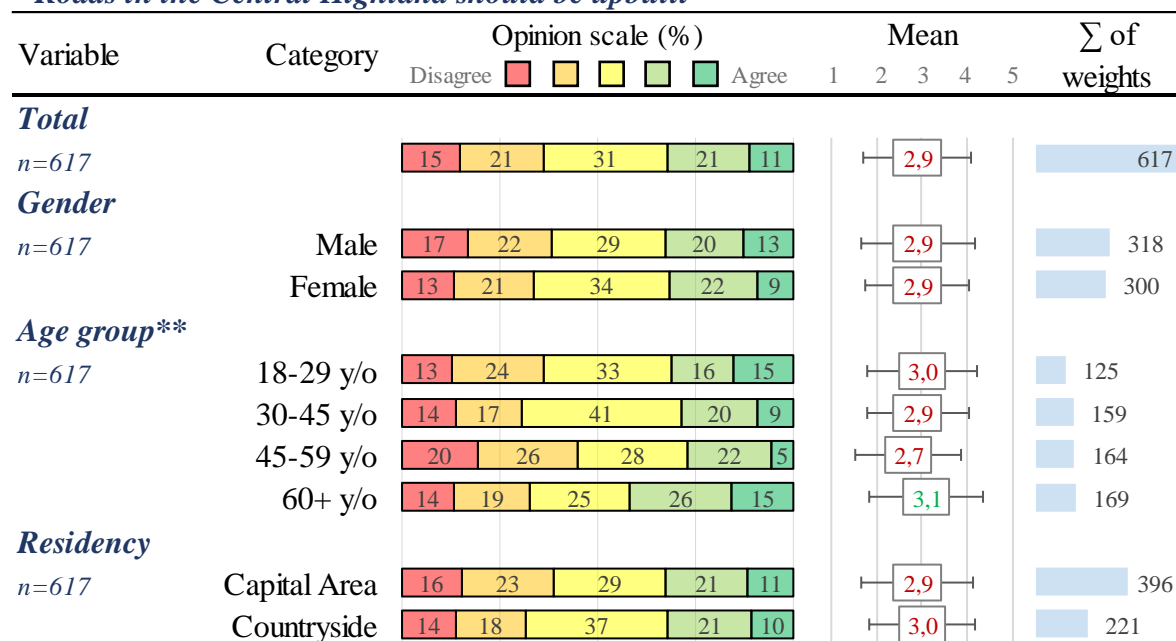


The most common reasons for those expressing unfavorable opinions on accommodation development in the Central Highland are “to keep the area as it is” (66 %), “to prevent mass tourism” (62%) and “to limit the number of visitors” to the area (57%).

Views on Road Development in the Central Highland

Table 17: Views on road development in relation with demographic data.

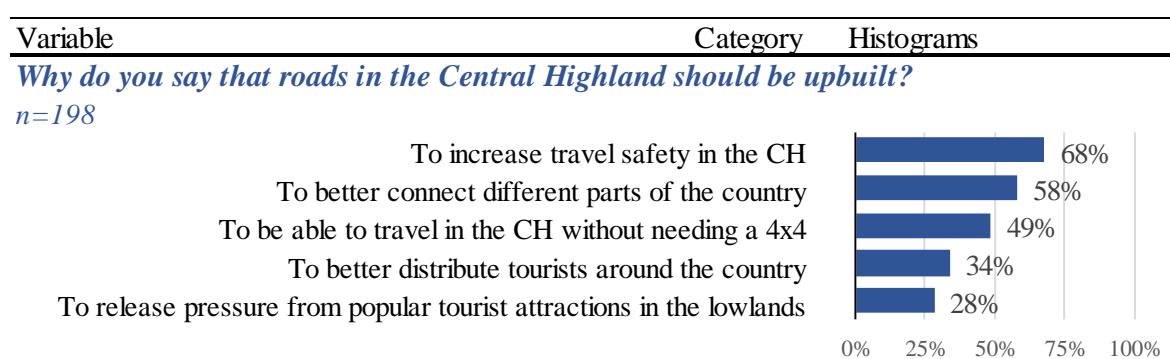
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
"Roads in the Central Highland should be upbuilt"



A chi-square test of independence was computed for each variable. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$

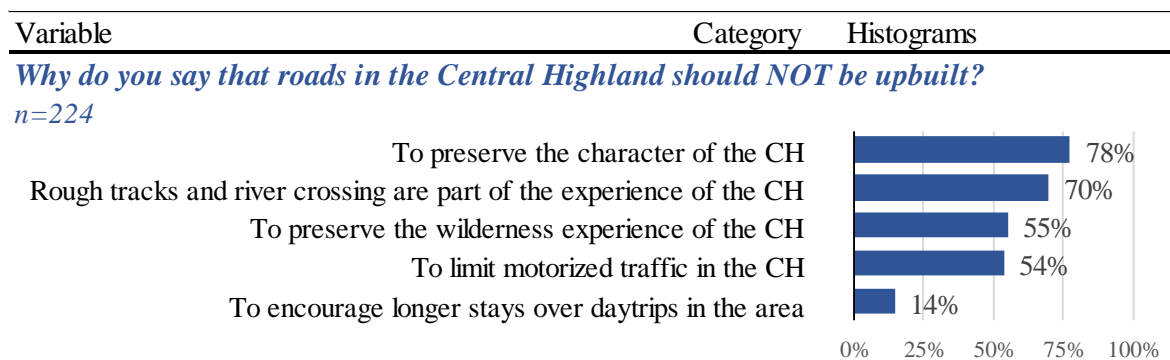
The analysis provides statistical evidence of a relation between the age group variable and the views on road development (Table 17). Additional z-tests for two proportion confirmed that the 30-45 y/o segment is significantly more undecided (41%; $p < 0,05$); the 45-59 segment is more in disagreement with the statement (46%; $p < 0,05$); and the 60+ y/o segment is more in agreement with the statement (41% $p < 0,01$).

Table 18: Motivations behind *favorable* opinions on further road development in the CH.



Among the reasons to support road development, increasing travel safety is the most common (68% - Table 18), followed by improving connections between different parts of the country (58%) and not needing a 4x4 to go to the Central Highland (49%).

Table 19: Motivations behind *unfavorable* opinions on further road development in the CH



Among reasons to oppose road development, the most commonly chosen item is “to retain the character of the area” (78% - Table 19), followed by “rough tracks and river crossing are part of the travel experience” (70%); the preservation of the “wilderness experience” (55%) and “limiting motorized traffic” (54%).

Views on the Establishment of a National Park in the Central Highland

Table 20: Views on the proposed National Park in the Central Highland in relation with demographic data

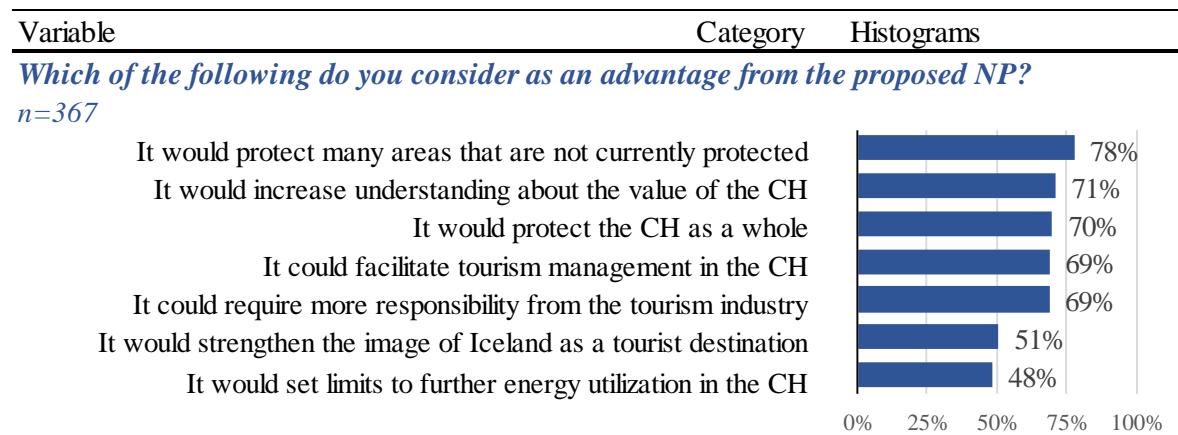
Do you support or oppose the establishment of a National Park in the CH?

Do you support or oppose the establishment of a National Park in the Olympos National Park?												
Variable	Category	Opinion scale (%)					Mean					Σ of weights
		Oppose				Support	1	2	3	4	5	
Total												
n=606		5	5	28	32	31				3,8		606
Gender												
n=606	Male	6	6	26	31	30				3,7		319
	Female	4	4	29	32	32				3,8		286
Age group*												
n=606	18-29 y/o	4		40	32	25				3,7		122
	30-45 y/o	3	5	24	36	32				3,9		155
	45-59 y/o	5	4	27	26	38				3,9		157
	60+ y/o	7	9	23	33	29				3,7		171
Residency****												
n=606	Capital Area	3	3	24	35	36				4,0		401
	Countryside	9	8	36	25	22				3,4		205

A chi-square test of independence was computed for each variable. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$

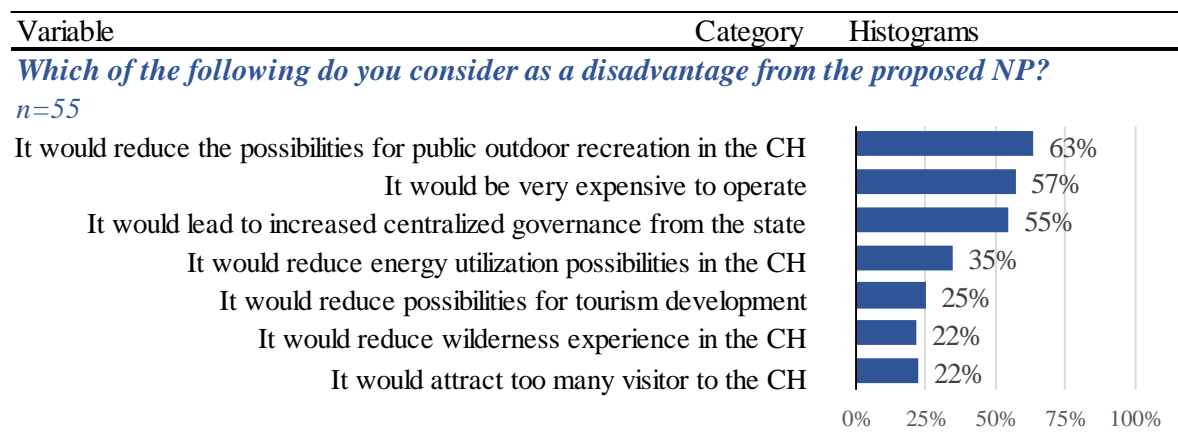
The results provide a statistical evidence of a relation between both age groups and residency and opinion toward the establishment of the National Park (Table 20). The youngest age segment (18-29 y/o) has a higher proportion of undecided opinions than others (40%) and only gathered 57% of support and 4% of opposition. In terms of residency, views are more supportive among residents of the capital area (71% of support and 6% of opposition) than in the countryside (47% of support - 17% of opposition).

Table 21: Perceived **advantages** from the proposed National Park in the Central Highland according to those supporting its establishment.



Those in favor of the proposed National Park consider among the advantages of the park the protection of many areas that are not currently protected (78% - Table 21), that it would increase understanding of the value of the area (71%) and that the Central Highland would be protected as a whole (70%). Other perceived advantages are that it would facilitate tourism management (69%) and that it could require more responsibility from the tourism industry (69%).

Table 22: Perceived **disadvantages** from the proposed National Park in the Central Highland according to those opposing its establishment.

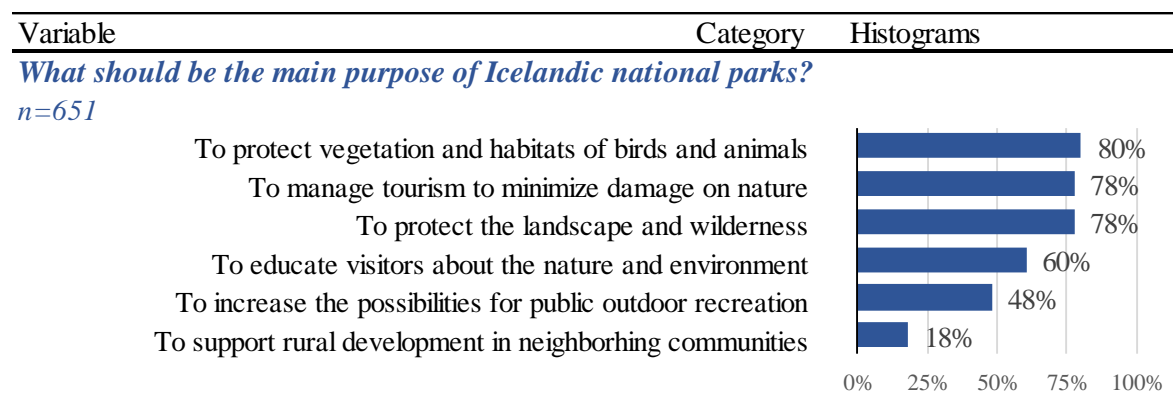


Those in opposition to the proposed National Park consider that the disadvantages of the park are that it would reduce opportunities for public outdoor recreation (63% - Table 22), that it would be very expensive to operate (57%) and that it would lead to increased centralized governance from the state (55%). Other perceived disadvantages are related to reduction of possibilities for energy development (35%) and tourism development (25%). Only 22% of them consider that it would attract too many people in the Central Highland.

Views on Conservation Purposes and Improvements

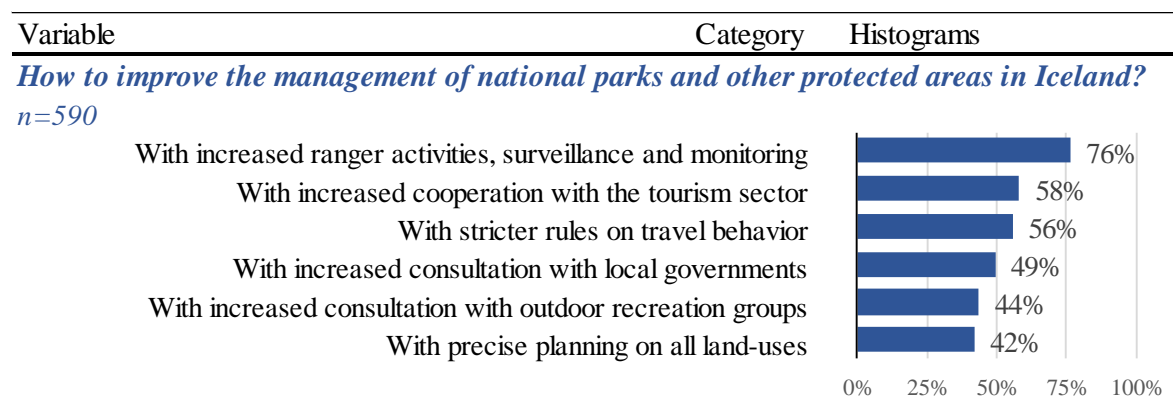
Two survey items collected data on perceived purposes of Icelandic National Parks and ways to improve organization and management of protected areas.

Table 23: Perceived main purposes for Icelandic national parks.



Nature conservation is perceived as the main purpose of Icelandic National Parks by the participants (vegetation and habitat protection: 80%; landscape and wilderness protection: 78% - Table 23), followed by a role to manage tourism impacts (78%) and educate visitors (60%). Increasing the possibilities for public outdoor recreation is seen as a main purpose

Table 24: Perceived ways to improve management of national parks and other protected areas in Iceland.



for about 48% of the respondent, and 18% consider the national parks' role as a tool for local development as a main purpose.

In terms of improvements of protected areas management and organization, increasing ranger activities, surveillance and monitoring was selected by 76% of respondents (Table 24), followed by increased cooperation with the tourism sector (58%) and stricter rules on travel behavior (56%). The remaining items were increased consultation with local governments (49%); increased consultation with outdoor recreation groups (44%); and a precise plan on land-uses came last (42%).

5.2 Views of Recreational Segments

As a starting point, the views of the people who have visited the Central Highland are compared with the views from those who have not been there before. These groups will be referred to as “users” and “non-users” respectively, as introduced in section 5.1.2. This is then followed by the analysis of the results based on activity participation.

5.2.1 Users and Non-Users of the Central Highland

Table 25: Opinion on land-use issues between users and non-users of the CH.

Variable	Category	Opinion scale (%)					Mean					Σ of weights
		Disagree				Agree	1	2	3	4	5	
Visitor limitations												
n=611	Users	5	7	25		33					3,7	419
	Non-users	7		23		45					3,9	193
Accommodation development												
n=582	Users	11		23		35					3,0	407
	Non-users	12		19		42					2,9	176
Road development***												
n=608	Users	18		23		26					2,8	418
	Non-users	9		18		42					3,1	190
National Park**												
n=594	Users	6	6	25		29					3,8	412
	Non-users			34		34					3,8	182

A chi-square test of independence was computed for each variable. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$

The comparison of the views of users and non-users indicates that their views on road development and on the establishment of the National Park in the Central Highland are different at a statistically significant level (Table 25). In both cases, the level of opposition of the users is higher than non-users' (41% and 27% for road development; 12% and 4% for the National Park). However, the proportion of supporters on the proposed park is very similar in both cases.

Based on these findings, follow-up questions were examined for the National Park and road development. Due to low numbers of non-users opposed to the park ($n=7$), the related follow-up item was not included as no significant difference was found.

Table 26: Motivations behind **opposing** views on road development in the Central Highland according to users and non-users of the area.

Variable	Category	Σ of weights for each group			
		Users (<i>n</i> =172)		Non-Users (<i>n</i> =51)	
<i>Why do you say that roads in the Central Highland should NOT be upbuilt?</i>					
To preserve the character of the CH.*	140	<div><div></div></div> 81%	33	<div><div></div></div> 65%	
Rough tracks and river crossing are part of the experience of the CH.**	131	<div><div></div></div> 76%	25	<div><div></div></div> 50%	
To preserve the wilderness experience of the CH.*	102	<div><div></div></div> 60%	20	<div><div></div></div> 39%	
To limit motorized traffic in the CH.	88	<div><div></div></div> 51%	31	<div><div></div></div> 60%	
To encourage longer stays over daytrips in the area.*	28	<div><div></div></div> 16%	3	<div><div></div></div> 6%	

A proportions test (z) was computed for each category. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$

In four out of five statements received by those opposed to upbuilt roads, a higher proportion of users was found (Table 26), two of which are related to travel experiences of the area.

Table 27: Motivations behind **support** for the establishment of National Park in the Central Highland according to supporting users and non-users of the area.

Variable	Category	Σ of weights for each group			
		Users (<i>n</i> =253)		Non-Users (<i>n</i> =104)	
<i>Which of these items do you consider as an advantage of the proposed National Park?</i>					
It would protect many areas that are not currently protected	203	<div><div></div></div> 80%	77	<div><div></div></div> 74%	
It would increase understanding about the value of the CH**	192	<div><div></div></div> 76%	62	<div><div></div></div> 60%	
It would protect the CH as a whole	185	<div><div></div></div> 73%	68	<div><div></div></div> 65%	
It could facilitate tourism management in the CH	178	<div><div></div></div> 70%	67	<div><div></div></div> 65%	
It could require more responsibility from the tourism industry*	184	<div><div></div></div> 73%	61	<div><div></div></div> 59%	
It would strengthen the image of Iceland as a tourist destination	133	<div><div></div></div> 52%	53	<div><div></div></div> 51%	
It would set limits to further energy utilization in the CH**	137	<div><div></div></div> 54%	38	<div><div></div></div> 37%	

A proportions test (z) was computed for each category. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$

Regarding perceived advantages of the park, three items received significantly higher scores among users than non-users (Table 27): it would increase understanding about the value of the area (76% versus 60%); it could require more responsibility from the tourism industry (73% versus 59%); and it would limiting energy utilization (54% versus 37%).

Table 28: Perception of the main purposes of Icelandic National Parks according to users and non-users of the Central Highland

Variable	Category	Σ of weights for each group			
		Users (n=435)		Non-Users (n=203)	
<i>What should be the main purpose of Icelandic National Parks?</i>					
To protect vegetation and habitats of birds and animals**	362	<div><div></div></div> 83%	148	<div><div></div></div> 73%	
To manage tourism to minimize damage on nature	345	<div><div></div></div> 79%	153	<div><div></div></div> 75%	
To protect the landscape and wilderness*	350	<div><div></div></div> 80%	144	<div><div></div></div> 71%	
To educate visitors about the nature and environment	265	<div><div></div></div> 61%	119	<div><div></div></div> 59%	
To increase the possibilities for public outdoor recreation*	220	<div><div></div></div> 51%	85	<div><div></div></div> 42%	
To support rural development in neighboring communities	82	<div><div></div></div> 19%	36	<div><div></div></div> 18%	

A proportions test (z) was computed for each category. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$

More users than non-users select the protection of vegetation, habitat (83% and 73% - Table 28), landscape and wilderness (80% and 71%) and to increase the possibilities for public outdoor recreation (51% and 42%) as a main purpose of Icelandic National Parks.

Table 29: Perceptions of the ways to improve the management of national parks and protected areas in Iceland according to users and non-users of the Central Highland.

Variable	Category	Σ of weights for each group			
		Users (n=401)		Non-Users (n=179)	
<i>How to improve the management of NP and other protected areas in Iceland?</i>					
With increased ranger activities, surveillance and monitoring	308	<div><div></div></div>	77%	136	<div><div></div></div> 76%
With increased cooperation with the tourism sector	229	<div><div></div></div>	57%	105	<div><div></div></div> 59%
With stricter rules on travel behavior**	205	<div><div></div></div>	51%	119	<div><div></div></div> 67%
With increased consultation with local governments*	210	<div><div></div></div>	52%	76	<div><div></div></div> 42%
With increased consultation with outdoor recreation groups**	190	<div><div></div></div>	47%	63	<div><div></div></div> 35%
With precise planning on all land-uses	178	<div><div></div></div>	44%	68	<div><div></div></div> 38%

A proportions test (z) was computed for each category. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$

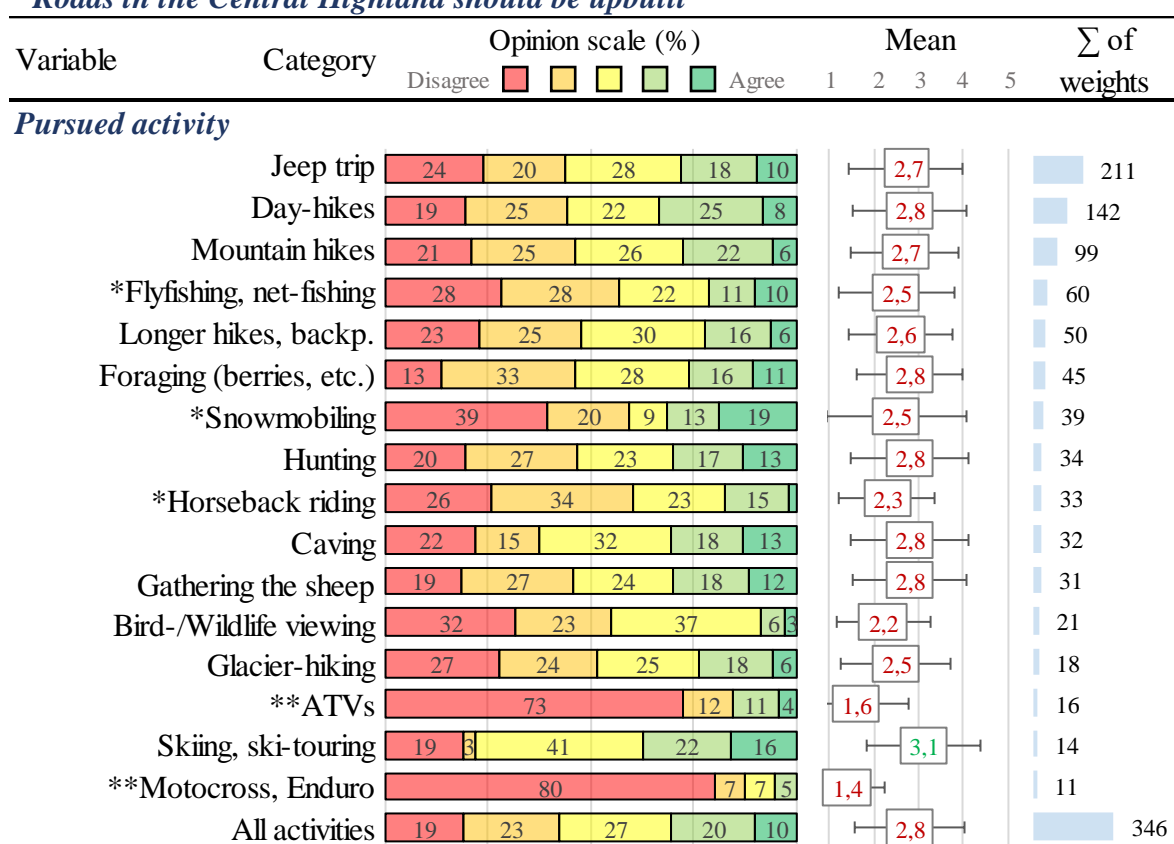
More users than non-user consider that consultation with local governments (52% and 42%) and recreational groups (47% and 35%) would improve the management of Icelandic protected areas (Table 29), while relatively fewer consider that stricter rules on travel behavior would make such an improvement (51% and 67%).

5.2.2 Activity Participants

As views of users and non-users appear to differ on road development and the project of National Park, it is legitimate to question whether among users, the type of activity pursued in the area could be related with their views on these issues.

Table 30: Opinions on road development according to pursuant of recreational activities.

*Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
"Roads in the Central Highland should be upbuilt"*



A chi-square test of independence was computed on the level of opposition of each category (opinion scale levels 1-2 and 3-5 merged for the test). * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$

Views towards road development in the Central Highland differ significantly depending on the activity type (Table 30). The level of opposition is significantly higher among pursuants of fishing; snowmobiling; horseback-riding; ATVs; and motocross activities compared with those who do not pursue such activities.

Table 31: Views on the establishment of the National Park in the Central Highland according to pursuant of recreational activities.

Do you support or oppose the establishment of a National Park in the CH?

Variable	Category	Opinion scale (%)					Mean					Σ of weights
		Oppose				Support	1	2	3	4	5	
<i>Pursued activity</i>												
	****Jeep trip	9	7	32	26	27			3,6			203
	***Day-hikes	3	7	15	33	41			4,0			137
	Mountain hikes	6		23	26	43			4,0			104
	*Flyfishing, net-fishing	10	5	36	23	26			3,5			59
	***Longer hikes, backp.	3	12	24		59			4,4			57
	Foraging (berries, etc.)	10	9	29	12	40			3,6			49
	**Snowmobiling	17	11	34	20	18			3,1			39
	Hunting	5	15	28	17	35			3,6			35
	Horseback riding	22	7	16	24	31			3,4			31
	Caving	3		37	33	25			3,8			28
	****Gathering the sheep	9	16	47	4	23			3,2			31
	Bird-/Wildlife viewing	12		27	30	31			3,8			21
	*Glacier-hiking	5	10	28		57			4,2			20
	ATVs	16	5	28	46	5			3,2			16
	Skiing, ski-touring	13	10	34		43			4,1			15
	Motocross, Enduro	18		28	47	7			3,4			11
	All activities	7	6	26	28	33			3,8			340

A chi-square test of independence was computed on the level of support of each category (opinion scale levels 1-3 and 4-5 merged for the test). * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$

When it comes to the establishment of a National Park in the Central Highland (Table 31), the level of support is significantly lower for those pursuing jeep trips; fly-fishing, net-fishing; snowmobiling; or gathering the sheep, compared with those who do not pursue these activities. In contrast, pursuants of day-hikes; longer hikes, backpacking; or glacier hiking express a significantly higher level of support compared with those who do not pursue these activities.

5.3 Support and Opposition to the National Park

5.3.1 Demographic Characteristics

Table 32: Demographic composition of supporting and opposing groups.

Variable	Category	Σ of weights for each group			
		Supporting (<i>n</i> =379)		Opposing (<i>n</i> =59)	
<i>Gender</i>					
	*Male	196	<div><div></div></div> 52%	39	<div><div></div></div> 65%
	Female	183	<div><div></div></div> 48%	21	<div><div></div></div> 35%
<i>Age Group*</i>					
	*18-29 y/o	69	<div><div></div></div> 18%	5	<div><div></div></div> 8%
	30-44 y/o	104	<div><div></div></div> 27%	13	<div><div></div></div> 22%
	45-59 y/o	101	<div><div></div></div> 27%	14	<div><div></div></div> 24%
	**60+ y/o	105	<div><div></div></div> 28%	27	<div><div></div></div> 46%
<i>Residency****</i>					
	****Capital Area	283	<div><div></div></div> 75%	24	<div><div></div></div> 40%
	****Countryside	96	<div><div></div></div> 25%	36	<div><div></div></div> 60%

A chi-square test of independence was computed for each variable and a test for two proportions for each category within these variables. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$

The supporting and opposing groups present significant differences in terms of age groups and residency (Table 32). The opposing group presents a higher proportion of residents of the countryside (60% versus 25%), more individuals from the upper age segment (46% versus 28%) and less from the lowest (8% versus 18%).

Table 33: Environmental views and political views of supporting and opposing groups.

Variable	Category	Σ of weights for each group	
		Supporting (<i>n</i> =379)	Opposing (<i>n</i> =59)
<i>Position on the political spectrum*</i>			
	***0-3 - Left	104 <div><div></div></div> 31%	5 <div><div></div></div> 11%
	4-6	140 <div><div></div></div> 42%	26 <div><div></div></div> 57%
	7-10 - Right	93 <div><div></div></div> 28%	15 <div><div></div></div> 33%
<i>Level of concern for the environment**•</i>			
	*0 - 3 Not concerned at all	12 <div><div></div></div> 3%	8 <div><div></div></div> 15%
	4-6	85 <div><div></div></div> 23%	16 <div><div></div></div> 30%
	**7-10 Very concerned	272 <div><div></div></div> 74%	29 <div><div></div></div> 55%

A chi-square test of independence was computed for each variable and a test for two proportions for each category within these variables. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$; °=cat. 0-6 merged.

A higher proportion of the supporting group identify with the political left (31% versus 11% - Table 33) and express a strong level of concern for the environment (74% versus 55%).

5.3.2 Recreational Characteristics

The recreational data of supporting and opposing users was also analyzed to assess whether any differences would be observed between them.































Table 34: Recreational characteristics of supporting and opposing groups (who visited the Central Highland before).

Variable	Category	Σ of weights for each group	
		Supporting (n=257)	Opposing (n=52)
<i>What year was your first visit to the CH?</i>			
	Before 1979	71 <div><div></div></div> 28%	20 <div><div></div></div> 38%
	*1980-1999	113 <div><div></div></div> 45%	16 <div><div></div></div> 31%
	2000 and later	68 <div><div></div></div> 27%	16 <div><div></div></div> 31%
<i>How many times have you been to the CH?*</i>			
	*1-5 times	111 <div><div></div></div> 44%	15 <div><div></div></div> 30%
	6-20 times	100 <div><div></div></div> 40%	19 <div><div></div></div> 38%
	*over 20 times	40 <div><div></div></div> 16%	16 <div><div></div></div> 32%
<i>At what time of the year do you usually visit the CH?*****</i>			
	****Summer (May-Sept.)	223 <div><div></div></div> 91%	30 <div><div></div></div> 59%
	*Depends on years	17 <div><div></div></div> 7%	10 <div><div></div></div> 20%
	**Winter (Oct.-April)	6 <div><div></div></div> 2%	11 <div><div></div></div> 22%
<i>For how long do you usually visit the CH?</i>			
	0 nights (Day-trip)	87 <div><div></div></div> 35%	18 <div><div></div></div> 35%
	1-2 nights	108 <div><div></div></div> 43%	27 <div><div></div></div> 53%
	3 nights or more	54 <div><div></div></div> 22%	6 <div><div></div></div> 12%
<i>Over the past few years, your visit to the CH...</i>			
	Increased	17 <div><div></div></div> 7%	4 <div><div></div></div> 8%
	Stayed the same	57 <div><div></div></div> 22%	16 <div><div></div></div> 31%
	Decreased	181 <div><div></div></div> 71%	32 <div><div></div></div> 62%

A chi-square test of independence was computed for each variable and a test for two proportions for each category within these variables. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$

In terms of outdoor recreation in the Central Highland, the supporting and opposing users differed on two variables: the number of visits and the usual season of visitation (Table 34). The supporting group has a significantly higher proportion of users who have visited the area 1-5 times (44% versus 30%), and during the summer (91% versus 59%). The opposing group is composed of a higher proportion of users who have visited the area over 20 times (32% versus 16%); and at different seasons depending on years (20% versus 7%) or usually during winter (22% versus 2%).

Table 35: Recreational activity composition of supporting and opposing groups (who visited the Central Highland before). Those not pursuing any activity were excluded.

Variable	Category	Σ of weights for each group	
		Supporting (n=216)	Opposing (n=42)
<i>Which of the following outdoor activity do you pursue in the Central Highland?</i>			
	**Jeep trip	107  50%	32  75%
	Day-hikes	102  47%	14  33%
	Mountain hikes	72  33%	9  21%
	Flyfishing, net-fishing	29  13%	9  21%
	**Longer hikes, backp.	48  22%	3  7%
	Foraging (berries, etc.)	26  12%	9  21%
	*Snowmobiling	15  7%	11  26%
	Hunting	18  8%	7  16%
	Horseback riding	17  8%	9  21%
	Caving	16  7%	2  5%
	*Gathering the sheep	9  4%	8  19%
	Bird-/Wildlife viewing	13  6%	2  5%
	Glacier-hiking	17  8%	3  7%
	ATVs	8  4%	3  7%
	Skiing, ski-touring	12  6%	2  5%
	Motocross, Enduro	6 3%	2 5%

A chi-square test for two proportions was computed for each category within this variable. * $p < 0,05$;

** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$

The analysis of activity data among supporting and opposing users identified four activities for which the participation rates were significantly different (Table 35). A higher proportion of supporting users pursue longer hikes, backpacking (22% versus 7%), while a higher proportion of opposing users pursue jeep trips (75% versus 50%); snowmobiling (26% versus 7%) and gathering the sheep (19% versus 4%).

5.3.3 Views on Other Land-Use Issues

An analysis of data on visitor limitations, accommodation and road development was also performed in regard with the supporting and opposing groups (Table 36).

Table 36: Views on visitor limitations, accommodation and road development according to supporting and opposing groups.

Variable	Category	Opinion scale (%)					Mean					Σ of weights
		Disagree				Agree	1	2	3	4	5	
Visitor limitations****												
n=413	Supporting	34	25		39	30				3,9		354
	Opposing	15	21	21	21	22				3,1		59
Accommodation development												
n=399	Supporting	11	20		36	26	7			3,0		341
	Opposing	12	25		31	19	13			3,0		58
Road development												
n=406	Supporting	16	21		27	26	9			2,9		349
	Opposing		31		18	16	12			2,8		57

A chi-square test of independence was computed for each variable. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$

The difference observed on visitor limitations is statistically significant. Those who support the park expressed more support for visitor limitations, and those who oppose the park expressed more opposition to visitor limitations. No significant difference were found for the variables concerning accommodation and road development. However, a chi-square test of independence computed on unmerged categories (5 instead of 3) reveals that the level of strong opposition and strong support to road development is more important within the opposing group. The opposing group, in other words, has more polarized views on road development than the supporting group.

Table 37: Views on visitor limitations according to those in favor within the supporting and opposing groups

Variable	Category	Σ of weights for each group			
		Supporting (n=234)		Opposing (n=22)	
<i>What would you consider as the best way to limit visitor numbers in the CH?</i>					
By controlling the number of visitor in sensitive areas		172	<div><div></div></div> 74%	11	<div><div></div></div> 51%
With a fee on tourism companies operating in the area		156	<div><div></div></div> 66%	12	<div><div></div></div> 54%
By keeping the road network unchanged i.e. no upbuilt roads		74	<div><div></div></div> 32%	7	<div><div></div></div> 33%

A test for two proportions was computed for each category. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$

None of the differences observed between the preferred ways to limit the number of visitors in the Central Highland were significant at a statistical level (Table 37).

Table 38: Reasons in **favor** of road development in the Central Highland according to those favorable to road development among supporting and opposing groups.

Variable	Category	Σ of weights for each group			
		Supporting (n=124)		Opposing (n=20)	
<i>Why do you say that roads in the Central Highland should be upbuilt?</i>					
To increase travel safety in the CH	86	<div><div></div></div> 70%	13	<div><div></div></div> 66%	
To better connect different parts of the country	66	<div><div></div></div> 53%	15	<div><div></div></div> 75%	
To be able to travel in the CH without needing a 4x4*	53	<div><div></div></div> 43%	14	<div><div></div></div> 67%	
To better distribute tourists around the country*	40	<div><div></div></div> 32%	12	<div><div></div></div> 60%	
To release pressure from popular tourist attractions in the lowlands	33	<div><div></div></div> 26%	7	<div><div></div></div> 37%	

A test for two proportions was computed for each category. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$

The reasons behind the support of road development in the Central Highland differ between the supporting and opposing group on two items: to be able to travel in the area without a 4x4 and to better distribute tourists around the country. In both cases, a higher proportion of those opposed to the establishment of the National Park selected them (67% versus 43% and 60% versus 32% - Table 38).

Table 39: Reasons **against** road development in the Central Highland according to those unfavorable to road development among supporting and opposing groups.

Variable	Category	Σ of weights for each group			
		Supporting (n=131)		Opposing (n=28)	
<i>Why do you say that roads in the Central Highland should NOT be upbuilt?</i>					
To preserve the character of the CH	113	<div><div></div></div> 86%	21	<div><div></div></div> 73%	
Rough tracks and river crossing are part of the experience of the CH	100	<div><div></div></div> 76%	20	<div><div></div></div> 70%	
To preserve the wilderness experience of the CH**	87	<div><div></div></div> 66%	10	<div><div></div></div> 36%	
To limit motorized traffic in the CH*	69	<div><div></div></div> 53%	8	<div><div></div></div> 27%	
To encourage longer stays over daytrips in the area	25	<div><div></div></div> 19%	5	<div><div></div></div> 19%	

A test for two proportions was computed for each category. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$

When it comes to the reasons behind opposition to road development, significant differences were observed for the preservation of wilderness experience (66% for the supporting group versus 36% - Table 39) and the limitation of motorized traffic (53% versus 27%).

Table 40: Purposes of national parks according to the supporting and opposing groups.

Variable	Category	Σ of weights for each group			
		Supporting (n =371)		Opposing (n =55)	
<i>What should be the main purpose of Icelandic national parks?</i>					
To protect vegetation and habitats of birds and animals**	318	<div><div></div></div> 86%	34	<div><div></div></div> 62%	
To manage tourism to minimize damage on nature*	300	<div><div></div></div> 81%	35	<div><div></div></div> 64%	
To protect the landscape and wilderness****	317	<div><div></div></div> 86%	25	<div><div></div></div> 46%	
To educate visitors about the nature and environment	248	<div><div></div></div> 67%	35	<div><div></div></div> 63%	
To increase the possibilities for public outdoor recreation	191	<div><div></div></div> 52%	28	<div><div></div></div> 50%	
To support rural development in neighboring communities**	68	<div><div></div></div> 18%	21	<div><div></div></div> 38%	

A test for two proportions was computed for each category. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$

The perceived purposes of Icelandic national parks received lower scores in the opposition group, in particular the protection of landscape and wilderness (46% versus 86% - Table 40), and except of the role of the park as a tool for local development (38%, versus 18%).

Table 41: Improvements of protected areas according to supporting and opposing groups.

Variable	Category	Σ of weights for each group			
		Supporting (<i>n</i> =349)		Opposing (<i>n</i> =51)	
<i>How to improve the management of NP and other protected areas in Iceland?</i>					
With increased ranger activities, surveillance and monitoring****	283	<div><div></div></div> 81%	26	<div><div></div></div> 50%	
With increased cooperation with the tourism sector	208	<div><div></div></div> 60%	25	<div><div></div></div> 48%	
With stricter rules on travel behavior***	211	<div><div></div></div> 61%	17	<div><div></div></div> 34%	
With increased consultation with local governments	170	<div><div></div></div> 49%	28	<div><div></div></div> 56%	
With increased consultation with outdoor recreation groups	163	<div><div></div></div> 47%	25	<div><div></div></div> 48%	
With precise planning on all land-uses****	169	<div><div></div></div> 49%	8	<div><div></div></div> 15%	

A test for two proportions was computed for each category. * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$; **** $p < 0,0001$

Regarding potential improvements of protected areas, the opposition expressed less support for increased ranger activities (50% versus 81%); stricter rules on travel behavior (34% versus 61%), and land-use planning (15% versus 49%).

5.4 Summary of the Results

5.4.1 A Popular Venue for Outdoor Recreation

The results highlight the importance of the Central Highland as a recreational venue for the respondents as over two third of them (68%) have visited the area in the past, and therefore qualify as users of the area. Over half of these users (54%) have been there six times or more, little more, or 61%, usually visit the area for at least one night, and the large majority (82%) do so during the summer months. The more experienced users (i.e. those with over 10 visits) are more prone to visit for longer period of time and during other seasons. About a third of them usually visit the area for over three nights (29%, compared with 12% for those with 1-10 visits), and not necessarily during summer (29%, compared with 11%). On average, respondents pursue 2.1 activities in the area and have visited 6.2 of the travel regions identified.

The most popular activities pursued in the area are jeep trips (pursued by 57% of those pursuing outdoor recreation in the area); day-hikes (by 40%), and mountain hikes (by 26%), follow by more specific activities, such as fishing (16%), longer hikes, backpacking (15%), foraging (14%), snowmobiling (11%), hunting (10%), horseback-riding (9%), caving (9%) and gathering the sheep (9%).

The regions of the Central Highland that have been visited by most respondents are Þórsmörk-Mælifellssandur (70%, of which 43% ranked it as the most important area), followed by Kjalvegur (66%); Sprengisandur-Laugafell (53%); Kaldidalur (50%); and Þjórsá-Tungnaá-Veiðivötn (46%). Despite being a major destination for foreign visitors, the region “Hekla-Torfajökull” has only been visited by about 38% of the respondents.

5.4.2 General Views on Land-Use Issues

The majority of the respondents (63%) express support for the establishment of a national park in the Central Highland (compared with 10% of opposition). Views are more supportive from residents of the capital area (71% of support and 6% of opposition) than the countryside (47% of support and 17% of opposition). Most respondents also agree that the number of visitors to the Central Highland should be limited (65% agree and 11% disagree), regardless of their residency. Other land-use issues are however much more debated, such as accommodation development (31% of support and 33% of opposition) or road development (33% of support and 36% of opposition).

Half of those considering that there is a need for increased accommodation in the Central Highland want more services in the area (50%) to cope with increasing visitor numbers (49%). Most of those who disagree want to maintain the area as it is (66%), prevent mass tourism (62%), limit the number of visitors (57%), and nearly half of them want to preserve undeveloped travel experiences (47%).

Those in favor of road development consider that such development would increase travel safety (68%), help connect different part of the country (58%) and allow to reach the area without needing a 4x4 (49%). Those in opposition consider that roads should not be upbuilt to preserve the character and experience of the area (78%), as rough tracks and river crossings are part of it (70), and to limit motorized traffic in the area (54%).

The main advantages identified with the establishment of the park by its supporters are related to its abilities to increase understanding about the value of the area (71%), to protect the region as a whole (70%), and to manage tourism in the Central Highland (69%). The main disadvantages identified by the opposition are the reduction of opportunities for public outdoor recreation (63%), its operational cost (57%), and that such a national park would lead to increase centralized governance from the state (55%).

5.4.3 Profiles of Those in Favor of the National Park.

Those favorable to the establishment of a national park in the Central Highland primarily reside in the Capital area (75%), have a higher proportion of 18-29 y/o (18% versus 8% in the opposition), are more concerned about the environment (74% of them with a 7+ rating on 1-10 concern scale, versus 55%), and are politically more oriented to the left (31% of them with a 3- rating on 1-10 left-right scale, versus 11%). Nearly one third of them has not visited the Central Highland, and among those who did, nearly half have been there between one and five times (44%, versus 30%). The vast majority usually visits the area during the summer season (91%, versus 59%). 22% of those among them that are involved in recreation pursue longer hikes or backpacking (versus 7%).

5.4.4 Profiles of Those Opposed to the National Park

Those in opposition with the establishment of a national park in the Central Highland are mostly males (65%), residents of the countryside (60%), and nearly half of them are over 60 y/o (46%). The vast majority of them has visited the Central Highland before (88%, versus 68% for the supporting group), and among those who did, a third has been to the area over 20 times (32%, versus 16%), and nearly a quarter usually visits the area in winter (22%, versus 2%). 75% of the opposition that is involved in outdoor recreation in the Central Highland pursue jeep trips (versus 50%); 26% pursue snowmobiling (versus 7%); and 19% took part in rounding the sheep in the autumn (versus 4%).

5.4.5 Views of the Users of the Area

The users of the Central Highland are significantly more opposed to the establishment of the National Park than non-users (12% of opposition compared with 4%), and to road development in the Central Highland (41% of opposition compared with 27%). Those engaged in jeep-trips, fishing, snowmobiling, or gathering the sheep express a significantly lower level of support for the park than those who do not pursue such activities. Those pursuing other activities, in particular related to hiking, are on the other hand more supportive towards the park than those who do not. Building up roads in the area was particularly opposed by those pursuing motorized activities, such as snowmobiling, ATVs and motocross, along with fishing and horseback-riding enthusiasts. Asked about the purposes of national parks in Iceland, the users are more likely to mention the protection of vegetation and habitats (83% compared with 73% of non-users), the landscape and wilderness (80% and 71%) and to increase the possibilities for public outdoor recreation (51% and 42%). In regard with improving the management of protected areas, they are also more likely to choose increased consultation with local governments (52% versus 42%) and recreational groups (47% versus 35%), but less likely to select stricter rules on travel behavior (51% versus 67%).

6 Discussion

The nation-wide survey conducted in this study provides a comprehensive overview of public attitudes to the proposed Central Highland National Park. Through the collection of data on outdoor recreation in the Central Highland and opinions on land-use issues related to the park, this research built an essential foundation for further studies. First, offering an opportunity to conduct an in-depth stakeholder analysis, focusing on the opinions of the users of the area and comparing them with non-users. Second, approaching the proposed national park among a set of land-use issues related to access, capacity and management of tourism reveals a more detailed vision of the desired conditions for the Central Highland. Third, providing insights on the value of the area in a non-monetary, recreational approach. This discussion chapter is articulated around these three research fields, concluded by research implications and perspectives.

6.1 A Stakeholder Approach to the Proposed Central Highland National Park

The results of this study clearly indicate that there is a strong support for the establishment of a national park in the Central Highland (63% of support and 10% of opposition), which is consistent with previous nation-wide opinion polls (Isaksen & Jónsdóttir; 2015; Sverrisdóttir et al., 2011). All nation-wide surveys carried out measured a significantly lower level of support outside of the capital area (47%, versus 17% of opposition). While there is no simple explanation to this gap in the public opinion, approaching the reasons for supporting and opposing the park provides valuable insights on this matter. The support of the park appears to be primarily driven by conservation goals (i.e. protecting vegetation, habitats, landscapes and wilderness) and by its role to manage tourism and educate visitors. The concerns expressed by the opposition revolve around the reduction of opportunities for outdoor recreation, the operational cost of the park and governance issues. Effectively addressing each of these components will most likely constitute the cornerstone of a broader acceptance of the proposed Central Highland National Park.

The results reveal that the views of the users of the Central Highland are more polarized than those of non-users, bespeaking of their interest in the management of the area and asserting their legitimate qualification as stakeholders when it comes to nature conservation. The recreational characteristics of those among them who support and oppose the park differ in terms of activity participation rates, number of visits to the area and preferred season for visitation. The activities that are more popular within the opposition group (in particular jeep trips and snowmobiling) have been subjected to regulations or restriction in protected areas in the past (Baldursson et al., 2018; GOI, 2017b; VNP, 2016) which even resulted in significant dispute between recreational interests and park managers (e.g. Vonarskarð, see Huijbens & Benediktsson, 2015). On the other hand, the supporting group is significantly more involved in activities such as multi-day hiking and backpacking which are particularly popular among foreign visitors to the Central Highland (e.g. Laugavegur hiking trail). This could indicate that visiting popular destinations in the Central Highland might increase the perceived need for tourism management. Those visiting during the low season or away from

popular destination experience the area in settings which do not require tourism management to preserve the quality of their experience.

6.2 Public Views on Development of the Central Highland

For the proposed Central Highland National Park to meet the expectations of the public, it is of crucial importance to know their preferences regarding the development of the area, and management of tourism. The results show that views on upbuilt roads and increased accommodation in the Central Highland are divided (respectively 33% and 31% of support, versus 36% and 33% of opposition). Interestingly, users of the area express a much stronger level of opposition (41% versus 27% for non-users) towards upbuilt roads in the area. This pattern was already observed in other surveys focusing on improvements of specific roads (Guðmundsson, 2003; 2015). Recurring components for the opposition to such developments include the preservation of the authenticity of the area and related travel experiences, along with limiting visitation/traffic. In this regard the results indicate that the users think about remoteness as a more important component of their travel experience than non-users. Considering that the most visited regions of the Central Highland (with the exception of Þórsmörk-Mælifellssandur) are those with most developed access conditions (Kaldidalur, Kjalvegur and Sprengisandsleið), access improvement is likely to increase visitation, in particular if it would allow small rental cars to reach the area (as it might be with upbuilt roads). Given that limiting access through direct management measures (i.e. visitor fees or permits) is conflicting with the public right of access to the land (see Øian et al., 2018), such improvement would subsequently increase risks of over-tourism, reducing opportunities to experience solitude, hence depreciating wilderness qualities.

Another nation-wide survey suggests that primitive infrastructures in the Central Highland are seen as more appropriated than more developed alternatives (Ólafsdóttir et al., 2016). A decreasing gradient of perceived appropriateness was reported between jeep tracks; upbuilt gravel roads and upbuilt paved roads; as well as between mountain huts and hotels. Other studies investigated public preferences for road improvements (Guðmundsson, 2003; 2015) on the four main roads in the Central Highland, revealing in all cases a majority of opposition to upbuilt roads, although repairs and bridges on largest rivers were more supported. Kjalvegur received most support to be upbuilt (about 45%), followed by Sprengisandsleið (41%), Kaldidalur (33%), and Fjallabaksleið nýðri (26%).

The results further show a strong support to limit the number of visitors in the Central Highland (65% versus 11%). Most of those in favor considered controlling visitor numbers in sensitive areas and setting up a fee on tourism companies operating in the area as the best way to do so. Those in favor of the park were significantly more supportive of such limitation than those in the opposition group. However, no difference was noticed with regard to residency, meaning that although residents of the countryside are favorable to limiting visitor numbers in the Central Highland, some of them do not believe that a national park would be the appropriate tool for it. This strong support for limiting the number of visitors might partly explain the division of the opinion toward upbuilt roads and increased accommodation as such development would attract more visitors to the area. However, the results did not allow to identify whether those opposing upbuilt roads do so to limit the number of visitors the area as the survey used for that purpose only focused on limiting *motorized* traffic.

Increased accommodation (e.g. INPA, 2019a; Landslag 2016; Mannvit, 2018) and improvement of access conditions in the Central Highland as formulated in local planning documents (e.g. Gíslason et al., 2018; Gíslason et al., 2019:47; Rangárþing Eystra, 2015) is inconsistent with a limitation of visitor numbers. Such development would not only increase visitation, pressure on natural attractions, call for man-made structures and decrease wilderness qualities, but also lead to more restrictions of travel behaviors (e.g. forbidding walks outside of marked trails, closing jeep tracks) which would affect in particular domestic users and reduce the acceptance of management. Establishing a National Park in the Central Highland would provide a strong brand for marketing purposes, which might increase attention and attract more visitors to the area in the future (Fredman et al., 2007). The use of indirect management measures (i.e. keeping access conditions and accommodation capacity limited) might appear as a more prudent approach while reducing the need for restrictions, which may lead to a better acceptance from domestic users and wilderness seekers (Gundersen et al., 2015).

6.3 The Social Value of the Central Highland

Conventional land valuing approaches tend to focus on supposedly more objective economic approaches related to land-uses, for example in terms of revenues or jobs generated by tourism, hydropower and grazing. Under such approaches, domestic outdoor recreation might be delegated to a secondary rank, in particular in popular tourism destinations as its monetary contributions are comparatively lower than those of foreign visitors (e.g. UIIE, 2018). This is partly explained by the fact that domestic recreational stakeholders tend to have their own vehicles and stay in summer cottages instead of expensive hotels. Other approaches to the socio-cultural value of an area for conservation sometimes include willingness to pay frameworks (e.g. Cook et al., 2018; Lienhoop and MacMillan., 2007) or alternative surveying methods (King, 2020). Documenting the modalities of domestic outdoor recreation provides an indication of the level of attachment to the area and its importance in the quality of life of these stakeholders.

The findings of this research highlight the importance of the Icelandic Central Highland for domestic outdoor recreation. Not only do users of the area constitute over two thirds of the population (68%), but they also tend to visit the area repeatedly, and most of them (54%) have been there six times or more. The yearly visitation rates however remain undocumented. According to Guðmundsson (2003; 2015), about a quarter of the public would visit the area at least once a year, except that Þórsmörk was not considered as part of the area. Another nation-wide survey estimates that 23% of the public visited the area several times per year (Ólafsdóttir et al., 2016:92), but those who visited the area only once a year were in the category “one visit or less”, totaling the remaining 77%. This high rate of repeated visits denotes a strong level of place attachment among domestic users of the area. Those who travelled the most in the area also tend to do so through longer average stays and are more prone to visit the area during winter. The diversity of recreational activities pursued in the area and the large number of sub-regions visited (average of 6,2 out of 16) are also indicators of the level of place attachment. This overview is also essential for the interpretation of the views expressed by the users of the area. The results clearly indicate that the area is an important venue for domestic outdoor recreationists, independently of the type of activity pursued. Despite the significant diversity in their recreational profiles, users share a certain experience and level of interest in the area, asserting their position as stakeholders of the Central Highland.

6.4 Research Implication and Perspectives

This research is articulated around the proposed Central Highland National Park while covering a much broader range of land-use issues and providing an overview of outdoor recreation in the Central Highland. This permitted to approach users of the area as a single group of recreational users and identify synergies and divergences of opinions among them. Compared to non-users, their views were more polarized regarding the proposed park and upbuilt roads. Securing a broader consensus among users of the area on the proposed national park will require managing tourism effectively while preserving a wide range of opportunities for outdoor recreation. Increased stakeholder consultation also appears as a sensible prerequisite to avoid management-related contentious. The findings indicate that upbuilt roads constitute a particularly sensitive issue among the users of the area. This could be traced to their willingness to preserve the character and experience of the area (naturalness, remoteness, primitiveness, opportunities for solitude); and on the other side to travel safety, better connections to different parts of the country and being able to access the area without a 4x4. Further research is particularly needed on this matter as perspectives of increased access are embedded in local planning documents.

Through this approach the study effectively fulfilled the research aims formulated: collecting nation-wide data on domestic outdoor recreation in the Central Highland; documenting the views of the public on the proposed national park and related issues; exploring characteristics and preferences of the supporting and opposing groups; and comparing the views between users and non-users. Nevertheless, further research could provide complementary insights, in particular by dedicating a closer attention to perspectives about road development in the area. This research emphasizes the relevance of stakeholder approaches, and investigating the views of professional users of the area (e.g. tourism, energy, grazing, research, etc.) would be particularly valuable to develop a better understanding of the interests at stake in the area.

Other nation-wide approaches would benefit from investigating the reasons for non-visitation among those who have never been to the Central Highland (lack of interest, time, transportation mean, etc.), and more could be done to document travel intentions for the next/first visit. In particular, investigating whether popular destinations are avoided due to lack of opportunities for solitude might be relevant to verify whether tourism causes a displacement effect for domestic users. The activity segmentation approach used in this study may be improved by being more inclusive, not only for very specific activities (e.g. geo-caching, droning, cani-cross, etc.) but also for commonly pursued activities (e.g. camping, bathing in hot springs, etc.). A distinction could also be made between primary activities and secondary activities (i.e. differentiating driving as a sightseeing activity compared with driving to reach an area where another more important activity is to be pursued). Transportation means and accommodation types would also deserve more attention. Higher resolution mapping of visitation and recreational activities would also be relevant to complement the data collected by Gíslason (2016:355-367).

The data collected through this research is of a vital importance for longitudinal studies, in particular to analyze trends in recreational patterns. An identical, parallel open survey was conducted by the present author and distributed to all recreational and environmental organizations in Iceland, providing additional exploratory data on the views of high interest groups, along with significant qualitative material for further research (as for Appendix C)

6.5 Concluding Remarks

Over the past decades, the Icelandic Central Highland has become increasingly popular for tourism and outdoor recreation. Traditionally used as summer pastures for sheep grazing, the area is also harnessed by the energy sector, which resulted in significant land-use conflicts. In this context, a citizen campaign driven by environmental and recreational organizations called for the establishment of a large national park in the Central Highland. The issue was brought to the forefront of the governmental agenda and a parliamentary bill is expected to be submitted in the fall session of 2020. Although previous opinion polls indicate a strong public support for the park, underlying public expectations remained largely undocumented. The nation-wide survey conducted in this study provides a more comprehensive overview of public attitudes to the proposed Central Highland National Park than previous surveys. Support for the park appears to be primarily driven by conservation goals, along with its ability to manage tourism in the area and educate visitors. The opposition finds its roots in concerns over reduction of recreational opportunities, operational cost and governance issues. Securing a broader support for its establishment relies on the ability to meet expectations of supporters while addressing concerns of the opposition.

By investigating other issues related to tourism management in the area such as limitation of visitor numbers or road and accommodation development, this research provides highly relevant insights for decision-makers and land-use planners. The support for limiting the number of visitors in the area emphasizes that the national park should not be a catalyst for tourism development but manage it in a suitable and sustainable manner. Views on road and accommodation development indicate a strong divide in the public opinion and point to the need for further consultation on these issues.

The findings also reveal that the area is a particularly important venue for domestic outdoor recreation. The diversity of recreational patterns and the high number of visits to the area testify of a strong level of attachment among recreational users. The characteristics of their views also denote a high level of preoccupation and care for the modalities of its management, in particular when it comes to perspectives of road development and nature conservation. Their divergences of opinion with non-users provide additional reasons to consult them and understand their positions to better meet their expectations. This would contribute to the identification of potential sources of disputes at an early stage of the decision-making process and prevent further escalation.

Additional stakeholder consultation would be beneficial to better document views to the proposed Central Highland National Park and outline its management of land-uses. While this study focused on recreational users of the area, the views of professional users (including guides, hut wardens, park rangers, drivers, sheep-farmers, etc.) also deserve a specific attention.

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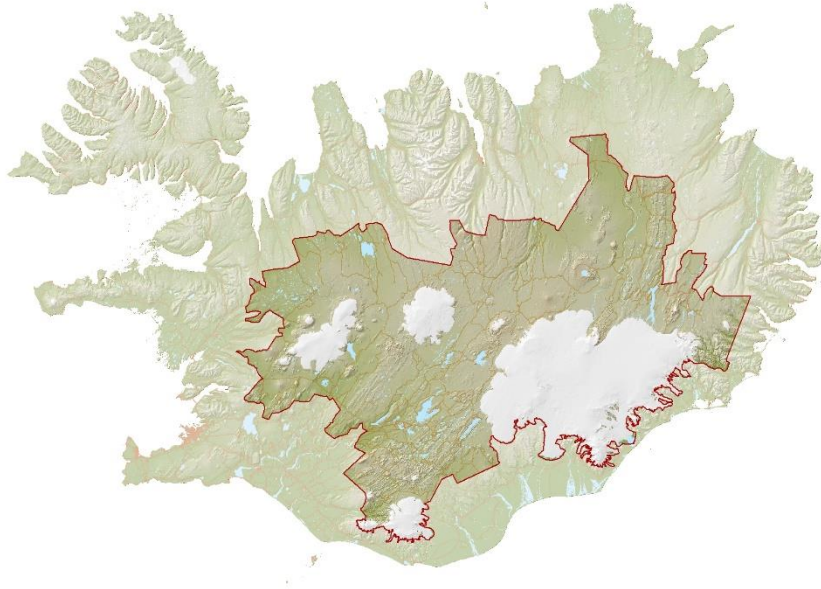
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Appendix A – Questionnaire

- 1- Hefur þú ferðast inn á miðhálandi Íslands? Sjá afmörkun miðhálandisins á kortinu hér að ofan.

Já / Nei / Veit ekki / Vil ekki svara



- 2- Hvenær fórstu í þína fyrstu ferð inn á miðhálandið?

Fyrir árið 1960 / Árin 1960-1969 / Árin 1970-1979 / Árin 1980-1989 / Árin 1990-1999 / Árin 2000-2004 / Árin 2005-2009 / Árið 2010 eða síðar / Veit ekki / Vil ekki svara

(Árið 2010 eða síðar: Hvaða ár fórstu í þína fyrstu ferð inná miðhálandið? 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / 2014 / 2015 / 2016 / 2017 / 2018)

- 3- Hversu oft hefur þú farið inn á miðhálandið?

1-5 sinnum / 6-10 sinnum / 11-15 sinnum / 16-20 sinnum / Oftar en 20 sinnum / Veit ekki / Vil ekki svara

- 4- Á hvaða árstíma ferðast þú helst inn á miðhálandið?

Á veturna (október til apríl) / Á sumrin (maí til september) / Nokkuð jafnt yfir árið / Veit ekki / Vil ekki svara

- 5- Hversu margar nætur að jafnaði dvelur þú á miðhálandinu í hverri ferð?

0 nætur (eingöngu dagsferðir) / 1-2 nætur / 3-5 nætur / 6 nætur eða fleiri / Veit ekki / Vil ekki svara

- 6- Hefur fjöldi ferða þinna inn á miðhálandið aukist, staðið í stað eða minnkað síðastliðin 5 ár?

Aukist / Staðið í stað / Minnkað / Veit ekki / Vil ekki svara

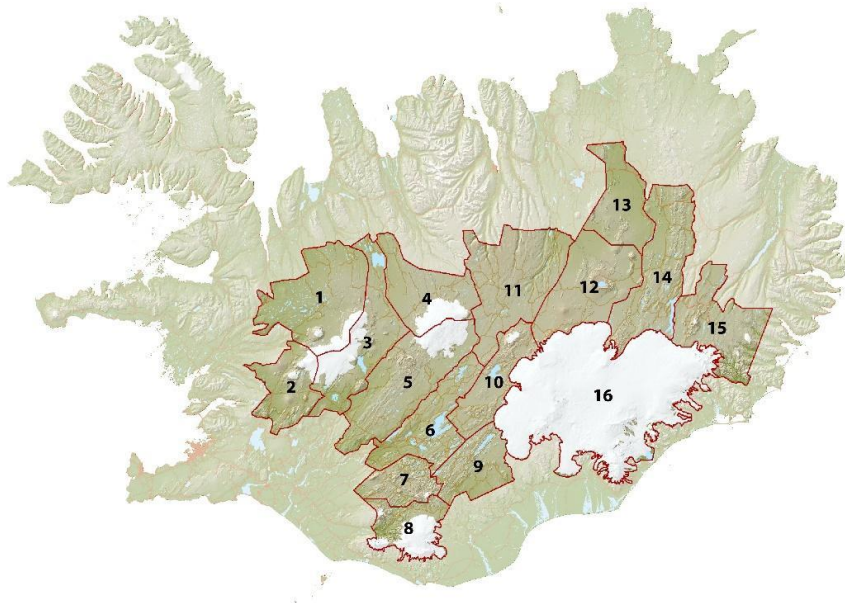
- 7- Hvers konar útivist stundar þú helst á miðhálandinu? Merktu við allt sem við á.

Dagsgöngur / Fjallgöngur / Fjórhljólaferðir / Fugla-/dýraskoðun / Hellaskoðun / Hjólreiðar, fjallahjólaferðir / Hundasleðaferðir / Jeppaferðir / Jöklagöngur / Klettaklifur, ísklifur / Köfun / Lengri göngur, bakpokaferðir / Mótorhljólaferðir, enduro / Reiðtúrar, hestaferðir / Róaferðir, kajakferðir, flúðasiglingar / Skíðaferðir, gönguskíðaferðir / Skotveiðar / Smölun / Snjóþrúgugöngur / Stangveiðar, netaveiðar / Svífvængjaflug / Tínsla (ber, sveppir, o.s.frv.) / Vélsleðaferðir / Víðavangshlaup, rathlaup / Annað. Hvað? / Stunda enga útivist á miðhálandinu / Veit ekki / Vil ekki svara

- 8- Hvers konar útivist er mikilvægust fyrir þig persónulega á miðhálandinu? Merktu við hámark 3 atriði - settu 1 fyrir framan það sem þér finnst vera mikilvægast, 2 fyrir það sem er næst mikilvægast og 3 fyrir það sem er þriðja mikilvægast. Merktu að hámarki við þrjú atriði.

- 9- Hvaða svæði á miðhálandinu, samkvæmt svæðaskiptingu á ofangreindu korti, hefur þú heimsótt? Merktu við allt sem við á.

1 – Arnarvatnsheiði / 2 – Kaldidalur / 3 – Kjalvegur / 4 - Svæðið N. Hofsjökuls / 5 - Svæðið V. Þjórsárvera / 6 - Þjórsá-Tungnaá / 7 - Hekla-Torfajökull / 8 - Þórsmörk-Mælifellsandur / 9 - Langisjór-Lakagígur / 10 - Jökulheimar-Vonarskarð / 11 – Sprengisandur / 12 - Askja-Kverkfjöll / 13 - Mývatnsöræfi / 14 - Möðrudalsöræfi-Kverkfjöll / 15 - Snæfell-Lónsöræfi / 16 – Vatnajökull



- 10- Hver af þeim svæðum sem þú hefur heimsótt eru í mestu uppáhaldi hjá þér? Merktu við hámark 3 atriði - settu 1 fyrir framan það sem er í mestu uppáhaldi, 2 fyrir það sem er í næst mestu uppáhaldi og 3 fyrir það sem kemur þar á eftir. Merktu að hámarki við þrjú atriði.
- 11- Hversu sammála eða ósammála ertu eftirfarandi fullyrðingu? Takmarka þarf fjölda ferðamanna á miðhálendinu.
 Mjög sammála / Frekar sammála / Hvorki sammála né ósammála / Frekar ósammála / Mjög ósammála / Veit ekki / Vil ekki svara
- 12- Hvernig telur þú að best væri að takmarka fjölda ferðamanna á miðhálendinu? Merktu við allt sem við á.
 Með því að halda vegakerfinu á miðhálendinu óbreyttu, þ.e. hafa áfram óuppbyggða vegi.
 Með því að stýra fjölda ferðamanna á viðkvæmum svæðum.
 Með gjaldi á þau ferðaþjónustufyrirtæki sem nýta svæðið í atvinnuskyni.
 Á annan hátt, hvaða?
 Veit ekki
 Vil ekki svara
- 13- Hversu sammála eða ósammála ertu eftirfarandi fullyrðingu? Þjóða þarf upp á aukið gistirými á miðhálendinu.
 Mjög sammála / Frekar sammála / Hvorki sammála né ósammála / Frekar ósammála / Mjög ósammála / Veit ekki / Vil ekki svara
- 14- Af hverju telur þú að auka þurfi gistirými á miðhálendi Íslands? Merktu við allt sem við á.
 Til að auka þjónustu þegar ferðast er um miðhálendið.
 Til að styðja við frekari þróun ferðamennsku á miðhálendinu.
 Til að minnka álag á vinsælum ferðamannastöðum á láglandinu.
 Til að laða efnameiri ferðamenn að miðhálendinu.
 Til að auka fjölbreytni í framboði á gistirýmum á miðhálendinu.
 Önnur ástæða, hver?
 Veit ekki
 Vil ekki svara
- 15- Af hverju telur þú að ekki eigi að auka gistirými á miðhálendi Íslands? Merktu við allt sem við á.
 Til að viðhalda miðhálendinu eins og það er.
 Til að takmarka fjölda ferðamanna á miðhálendinu.
 Til að sporna við fjöldaferðamennsku á miðhálendinu.
 Til að laða ferðamenn í leit að viðernisferðamennsku að miðhálendi Íslands.
 Til að viðhalda óbyggðatillfinningu ferðalanga.
 Önnur ástæða, hver?

Veit ekki
Vil ekki svara

16- Hversu sammála eða ósammála ertu eftirfarandi fullyrðingu? Mér finnst að vegir á miðhálandinu ættu að vera uppbyggðir.

Mjög sammála / Frekar sammála / Hvorki sammála né ósammála / Frekar ósammála / Mjög ósammála / Veit ekki / Vil ekki svara

17- Af hverju telur þú að vegir á miðhálandinu eigi að vera uppbyggðir? Merktu við allt sem við á.

Til að tengja betur saman landshluta.
Til að geta ferðast um miðhálandið án þess að þurfa 4x4 jeppa.
Til að auka umferðaröryggi á miðhálandinu.
Til að dreifa ferðamönnum betur um landið.
Til að minnka álag á vinsælum ferðamannastöðum á láglandinu.
Önnur ástæða, hver?
Veit ekki
Vil ekki svara

18- Af hverju telur þú að vegir á miðhálandinu eigi ekki að vera uppbyggðir? Merktu við allt sem við á.

Til að takmarka vélvædda umferð um miðhálandið
Til að viðhalda upprunaleika miðhálandisins
Til að ýta undir lengri ferðir í stað dagsferða um svæðið
Erfiðir vegir og vöð eru hluti af upplifuninni af því að ferðast um miðhálandi Íslands
Til að skerða ekki víðernaupplifun á miðhálandinu
Önnur ástæða, hvaða?
Veit ekki
Vil ekki svara

19- Hversu mikla eða litla þekkingu telur þú þig hafa á lögum og reglum um friðlýst svæði á Íslandi?

Enga þekkingu / Litla þekkingu / Í meðallagi / Mikla þekkingu / Mjög mikla þekkingu / Veit ekki / Vil ekki svara

20- Hver ættu að þínu mati að vera meginmarkmið íslenskra þjóðgarða? Merktu við allt sem við á.

Að auka möguleika almennings til útivistar.
Að vernda gróðurlendi og búsvæði fugla og dýra.
Að vernda landslag og víðerni.
Að fræða ferðamenn um náttúru og umhverfi.
Að stýra ferðamennsku þannig að hún valdi sem minnstum skaða á náttúrunni.

Að stuðla að byggðapróun í nærliggjandi samfélögum.

Annað, hvað?

Veit ekki

Vil ekki svara

21- Hvernig er að þínu mati mikilvægast að bæta stjórnun þjóðgarða og annarra friðlýsta svæða hér á landi? Merktu við allt sem við á.

Með auknu samstarfi við ferðapjónustuna.

Með auknu samráði við sveitastjórnir í nærliggjandi samfélögum.

Með auknu samráði við útivistarhópa.

Með nákvæmu skipulagi um alla landnýtingu

Með aukinni landvörslu, eftirliti og gæslu

Með strangari reglum um umgengni.

Annað, hvað?

Veit ekki

Vil ekki svara

22- Ertu fylgjandi eða andvíg(ur) stofnun þjóðgarðs á miðhálandinu?

Mjög fylgjandi / Frekar fylgjandi / Hvorki fylgjandi né andvíg(ur) / Frekar andvíg(ur) / Mjög andvíg(ur) / Veit ekki / Vil ekki svara

23- Hvert af eftirtöldu álitur þú helstu ókosti slíks þjóðgarðs? Merktu við allt sem við á.

Hann myndi leiða til offjölgunar ferðamanna á miðhálandinu

Hann myndi skerða möguleika almennings til útivistar á miðhálandinu

Hann myndi leiða til aukinnar miðstýringar af hálfu ríkisins

Hann myndi rýra víðernaupplifun á miðhálandinu

Hann yrði mjög dýr í rekstri

Hann myndi skerða möguleika til uppbyggingar í þágu ferðapjónustu

Hann myndi skerða möguleika til orkunýtingar á miðhálandinu

Annað, hvað?

Veit ekki

Vil ekki svara

24- Hvert af eftirtöldu álitur þú helstu kosti slíks þjóðgarðs? Merktu við allt sem við á.

Hann myndi styrkja ímynd Íslands sem ferðamannalands.

Hann myndi auka skilning á verðmæti miðhálandisins.

Hann myndi auðvelda stýringu ferðamanna á miðhálandinu.

Hann gæti sett kröfur um ábyrgari nýtingu ferðapjónustunnar á náttúrunni.

Hann myndi setja skorður við frekari orkunýtingu á miðhálandinu.

Hann myndi vernda mörg svæði sem ekki njóta verndar í dag.

Hann myndi vernda miðhálandið sem eina heild.

Annað, hvað?

Veit ekki

Vil ekki svara

25- Hvers konar breytingar myndu gera miðhálendið meira aðlaðandi til útivistar fyrir þig sjálfa(n)?

26- Er eitthvað sem þú vilt bæta við í lokin um málefni miðhálendis Íslands?

27- Nú er könnuninni alveg að ljúka, aðeins örfáar spurningar eftir. Ert þú meðlimur í einhverjum samtökum sem láta sig útivist eða umhverfismál varða? Merktu við allt sem við á.

Já, ég er meðlimur í útivistarsamtökum / Já, ég er meðlimur í umhverfisverndar-samtökum / Nei, ég er hvorki meðlimur í umhverfisverndar- né útivistar-samtökum / Vil ekki svara

28- Í stjórnmálum er stundum talað um hægri og vinstri. Hvar myndir þú staðsetja sjálfa(n) þig á kvarða frá 0 til 10, þar sem 0 er til vinstri og 10 er til hægri?

0-Vinstri / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 / 9 / 10-Hægri / Veit ekki / Vil ekki svara

29- Hversu miklar eða litlar áhyggjur hefur þú af umhverfismálum? Notaðu kvarða frá 0 til 10, þar sem 0 stendur fyrir engar áhyggjur og 10 fyrir mjög miklar áhyggjur.

0-Engar áhyggjur / 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 / 9 / 10-Mjög miklar áhyggjur / Veit ekki / Vil ekki svara

30- Hvert er hæsta stig menntunar sem þú hefur lokið?

Grunnskólanám eða minna / Starfsnám / Iðnnám - verklegt nám á framhaldsskólastigi / Bóklegt nám á framhaldsskólastigi / Nám í sérskóla á háskólastigi / Grunnám í háskóla / Meistaránám í háskóla / Doktorsnám / Annað, hvað? / Vil ekki svara

31- Hver er staða þín á vinnumarkaði?

Í launuðu starfi / Sjálfstætt starfandi / Atvinnurekandi / Í námi / Á eftirlaunum / Öryrki / Atvinnuleitandi / Í fæðingarorlofi/foreldraorlofi / Heimavinnandi / Annað, hvað? / Vil ekki svara

32- Undir hvern af eftirfarandi flokkum fellur aðalstarf þitt?

Stjórnendur, kjörnir fulltrúar og æðstu embættismenn / Sérfræðingar með háskólapróf / Tæknar og sérmenntað starfsfólk/ Skrifstofufólk / Þjónustu-, umönnunar-, sölu- og afgreiðslufólk / Bændur og fiskimenn / Iðnaðarmenn og sérhæft iðnverkafólk / Bílstjórar, véla- og vélgæslufólk / Ósérhæft starfsfólk / Annað, hvað? / Veit ekki / Vil ekki svara

33- Er eitthvað sem þú vilt koma á framfæri varðandi könnunina sem heild eða einstaka spurningar? Ef ekki, smelltu á „Áfram“ hnappinn.

Appendix B – Survey report

ÞJÓÐMÁLAKÖNNUN

UNNIÐ FYRIR MICHAËL BISHOP

Maí 2018



FÉLAGSVÍSINDASTOFNUN
HÁSKÓLA ÍSLANDS



LÝSING Á RANNSÓKN

Unnið fyrir	Michaël Virgil Bishop
Markmið	Að safna gögnum um afstöðu Íslendinga til miðhálandis Íslands
Gagnaöflun	10. apríl – 7. maí 2018
Skil á gögnum og samantekt	18. maí 2018
Framkvæmd	Félagsvísindastofnun Háskóla Íslands
Undirbúningur og gagnaöflun	Ævar Þórólfsson
Hreinsun og úrvinnsla	Ævar Þórólfsson

INNGANGUR

Í Þjóðmálakönnun Félagsvísindastofnunar Háskóla Íslands er spurt um ýmis samfélagsleg málefni og það sem efst er á baugi hverju sinni. Í þessari könnun var spurt um afstöðu Íslendinga til miðhálendis Íslands og fleiri mála tengdum náttúru Íslands og ferðamennsku.

Könnunin náði til 1500 meðlima í netpanel Félagsvísindastofnunar HÍ. Netpanell Félagsvísindastofnunar samanstendur af fólki 18 ára og eldra á landinu öllu sem hefur samþykkt að taka þátt í netkönnunum á vegum stofnunarinnar. Netpanellinn byggist á tilviljunarúrtaki úr þjóðskrá. Söfnun í netpanel á sér stað jafnt og þétt og fylgst er vel með samsetningu hans. Meðal annars er þess gætt að dreifing kyns, aldurs, búsetu, menntunar og tekna sé sem líkust því sem hún er meðal allra landsmanna, 18 ára og eldri. Með því að tryggja gæði netpanelsins með framangreindum hætti er möguleiki á að alhæfa um niðurstöður rannsókna sem byggjast á svörum úr honum.

FRAMKVÆMD OG HEIMTUR

Í byrjun var tekið 1500 manna lagskipt tilviljunarúrtak úr netpanel Félagsvísindastofnunar. Úrtakið var lagskipt eftir kyni, aldri og búsetu til þess að það endurspeglaði sem best samsetningu landsmanna. Alls svöruðu 693 könnuninni og er þátttökuhlutfallið því 46,2% (sjá töflu i).

Tafla i. Framkvæmd könnunarinnar

Framkvæmdamáti		Netkönnun
Upplýsingasöfnun	10.04.-07.05 2018	
Fjöldi í úrtaki		1500
Fjöldi svarenda		693
Þátttökuhlutfall		46%

Í töflu ii má sjá dreifingu meðal svarenda og í þýði eftir kyni, aldri, búsetu og menntun. Eins og sjá má er munur á aldursdreifingu svarenda könnunarinnar og Íslendinga almennt, en svörun var lakari í yngsta aldurshópnum en í öðrum aldurshópum. Einnig var munur á hlutfalli svarenda eftir menntun, en hlutfallslega fleiri með háskólamenntun svöruðu könnuninni heldur en meðal þeirra sem höfðu lokið grunnskólamenntun. Gögnin voru vigtuð eftir kyni, aldri, búsetu og menntun til þess að niðurstöður gæfu sem réttasta mynd af þýði.



Tafla ii. Samanburður á dreifingu eftir kyni, aldri, búsetu og menntun svarenda og þýðis

	Fjöldi svarenda	Hlutfall svarenda	Fjöldi í þýði	Hlutfall í þýði
Kyn				
Karl	346	49,9%	130.409	50,4%
Kona	347	50,1%	128.156	49,6%
Aldur ***				
18-25 ára	53	7,6%	39.362	15,2%
26-35 ára	80	11,5%	48.624	18,8%
36-45 ára	116	16,7%	44.905	17,4%
46-55 ára	146	21,1%	42.572	16,5%
56-65 ára	136	19,6%	38.988	15,1%
66-75 ára	91	13,1%	25.777	10,0%
76 ára og eldri	71	10,2%	18.337	7,1%
Búseta				
Höfuðborgarsvæði	438	63,2%	166.120	64,2%
Landsbyggð	255	36,8%	92.445	35,8%
Menntun ***				
Grunnskólamenntun	73	11,2%	71.730	32,6%
Framhaldsskólamenntun	275	42,2%	82.300	37,4%
Háskólamenntun	303	46,5%	66.100	30,0%

Marktækur munur er á hlutfalli svarenda og hlutfalli í þýði; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

BAKGRUNNSUPPLÝSINGAR

Tafla 1. Kyn

	Fjöldi		Hlutfall	Vikmörk +/-	Hlutfall
	fyrir vigtun	efir vigtun			
Karl	346	341	49%	3,7%	49%
Kona	347	352	51%	3,7%	51%
Alls	693	693	100%		

Tafla 2. Aldur

	Fjöldi		Hlutfall	Vikmörk +/-	Hlutfall
	fyrir vigtun	efir vigtun			
18-29 ára	81	154	22%	3,1%	22%
30-44 ára	152	182	26%	3,3%	26%
45-59 ára	216	178	26%	3,3%	26%
60 ára og eldri	244	180	26%	3,3%	26%
Alls	693	693	100%		

Tafla 3. Búseta

	Fjöldi		Hlutfall	Vikmörk +/-	Hlutfall
	fyrir vigtun	efir vigtun			
Höfuðborgarsvæði	438	446	64%	3,6%	64%
Landsbyggð	255	247	36%	3,6%	36%
Alls	693	693	100%		

Tafla 4. Hvert er hæsta stig menntunar sem þú hefur lokið?

	Fjöldi		Hlutfall	Vikmörk +/-	Hlutfall
	fyrir vigtun	efir vigtun			
Grunnskólanám eða minna	73	193	30%	3,5%	30%
Iðnnám - verklegt nám á framhaldsskólastigi	174	139	21%	3,1%	21%
Bóklegt nám á framhaldsskólastigi	101	110	17%	2,9%	17%
Grunnnám í háskóla	186	128	20%	3,1%	20%
Meistaránám í háskóla	117	82	13%	2,5%	13%
Fjöldi svara	651	651	100%		
Svarar ekki	42	42			
Alls	693	693			

Appendix C – Qualitative Data

Qualitative data collected through the survey is compiled in this section as it was obtained (in Icelandic).

“Other” answers

Several survey items provided the option for the respondent to add an “other” answer, in which case, a text box would allow to specify what it would be. The survey items with these other answers were the questions 7, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, and 23. Here are listed all the answers provided for these items:

Q7 – Other recreational activity pursued in the Central Highland:

Ferðast milli landshluta	sem l. ferðamleiðsögumapur með erl
hef verið í hópferð rútuferð og stuttar gönguferðir	skoðunarferð
Jöklaskoðun	Tjaldferðir
Keyra turista og göngufólk á fjalabíl, "Trúss"	Vann á hálendinu árin 1975-1979, Síðan var ég í björgunarsveit og fór ótaldar ferðir á Hálendið.
Laugar, Gróður	Var leiðsögumaður í eitt sumar
Náttúru skoðun	Vinna
Náttúrufarsskoðun, jarðfræði, gróður og dýralíf	Vinna og skoðunarferðir
of gamall	vinna við virkjanir
Ökuferðir	Vinnu
Rall	Vinnuferðir.

Q11 – Other way to limit the number of visitors in the Central Highland

Að ferðapjónustufyrirtæki fái vottun frá umhverfisráðineytninu til að fara um miðhálendið með ferðamenn.

Að fólk þurfi að ganga í gegnum námskeið eða taka próf til að geta fengið leyfi til að fara á miðhálendið. Til að vera viss um hvernig fólk er í stakk búið og til að það geti borið ábyrgð á eigin veru þar. Annars er það bara þannig að fólk á að vita að

hættur búa í veðrum vindum og jöklum og ef maður fer ekki varlega getur farið illa. Byggignar hlið og mannvirki eiga ekki að vera á valdi 300.000 manna þjóðar að byggja upp fyrir margar milljónir manna sem eiga að hafa common sence. Það á ekki að vera eðlilegt að varpa ógæfu sinni eða óheppni í öllum tilvikum yfir á annað fólk.

Aðgangstýra á hvern dag, ákveðinn fjöldi sem má heimsækja á hverjum degi. Gert greinarmun á dagsgestum og næturgestum.

Banna erlendar rútur án íslenskra leiðsögumanna. Banna smábíla.

Banna jafnvel ákv. staði.

fá ferðamenn til að bera virðingu fyrir landinu

Ferðamenn borgi tryggingar og leit og björgun

Lagfæra vegi gera sæmilega færa

lát ferðamanninn greiða fyrir að fara um svæðin

Með að setja kvóta á hvað það geta margir ferðamenn farið út á hálendi og auka gjöld á ferðamanna bransan

með öllu ofangreindu

með samvinnu milli sveitarfélaga og síðan við ferðaþjónustufyrirtæki og skipulagi

Q13 – Other reason for supporting accommodation development in the Central Highland

Gera öllum kleift.

Það þarf að auka gistirými á völdum stöðum, einkum í japri miðhálandisins.

Því fylgir ýmiss þjónusta

Til að auka öryggi ferðamanna

til að ekki sé verið að gista á stöðum sem þola illa mikið álag.

Með því að stýra fjölda fólks inn í landið allt. Banna ferðir ókunnugra án hæfs leiðsögumanns.

með vöktun á viðkvæmum svæðum

natturupassi fyrir erlenda ferðamenn

öxulþungatakmærknir og lármarks dekkjastærð

require tourists to purchase a pass (like US national parks)

Setja kvóta á ferðamenn og skilda ísl. fararstjóra

Þá minnkar geta erlendra ferðamanna til að komast til ákveðinna staða. Ferast sjálfur ekki lengur, kominn á aldur og er öryrki.

Það þarf að hugsa þessa ferðaþjónustu frá grunni og til langs tíma. Umræðan er í öngstræti, þar sem rafveitendur og meintir umhverfissinnar tala tvö framandleg tungumál.

til að stýra betur hvar fólk gistir, það megi ekki gista vhar sem er á miðhálandi Íslands

Til þess að maður fái gistirými án þess að panta ár fram í tímann

vernda gróður með takmörkun tjaldstæða og wc aðstöðu

Q14 – Other reason for opposing accommodation development in the Central Highland

bætt umgengni

Miðhálandið er öræfi. Þar á ekki að koma upp þægindagistingu, slíkt eyðileggur tífíninguna fyrir óbyggðum. Að skál í

kampavíni á öræfahóteli er álíka ólæsi á umhverfi sitt og að naga sviðahaus í kokteilboði

notast við tjöld

Stuðla að skipulagi sem tekur tillit til
þolmarka hvers svæðis

Q16 – Other reason for supporting road development in the Central Highland

Auka öryggi	Reyna að hindra utanvega akstur.
Bæta að gengi	Það dregur úr utanvega akstri
eiga ekki að vera uppbyggðir	Það er bara kominn tími til
Minnka mengun	Það þarf að stjórna umferðinni
Minnkar líkur á að ferðamenn fari sér að voða	Til að auðvelda almenningi aðgengi Til að vegirnir séu betri.
Niðurbýggðir malarvegir anna ekki umferð, valda rykmengun og er dýrt að viðhalda	Verða fyrr greiðfærir og haldast lengur færir
núverandi vegir margir ófærir á sumrin	Vil hálendisveg milli Norður og Suðurlands
Raforku og ljósleiðaratengingar.	

Q17 – Other reason for opposing road development in the Central Highland

Bílar eyðileggja meira en fætur á þessu svæði	Of kostnaðarsamt að viðhalda
fyst þarf að byggja upp vegi í byggð	Stýra umferðinni betur á hálendinu
Hraðbraut gegnum öræfi eyðileggur hugtakið öræfi.	Það er dýrt að viðhalda slíkum vegum og þeir yrðu of oft ófærir.
Nota frekar peningana á láglendisvegi.	virðing fyrir náttúrinni

Q19 – Other main purpose of National Parks and other protected areas in Iceland

Að efla vitund um náttúru, sögu, menningu og og sjálfsmynd þjóðar	auka aðgang veiðimanna
Að standa sem best vörð um eina mestu þjóðargersemi Íslands.	Bjóða aukna þjónustu
Að stuðla að ferðaöryggi	Fræða ferðamenn um viðkvæmni náttúru Íslands
Að stuðla að því að nærliggjandi samfélög njóti góðs í formi fjölbreyttari atvinnutækifæra og bæta lífsgæði íbúa svæðis	Sjá um innheimtu í takt við gefna þjónustu Stjórna því hvert ferðamenn fara miðað við ástand vega og svæðis Varðveita sögulega staði

Q20 – Other ways to improve management and organization of National Parks in Iceland

aukinni fræðslu

Með strangari reglum og auknu samstarfi við ferðapjónustuna

betri vegir

Með upplýsingum og gestastofum

Fjarlægja öfgamenn úr stjórnkerfi þjóðgarðanna

mig skortir þekkingu

hætta að hlusta á reykvíkinga bara heimamenn ættu að fá að hafa áhrif

samræma regluverk

Hef ekk i velt þessu fyrir mér

Stefnumörkun til langs tíma, til dæmis til ársins 2050

Innheimta fyrir greidda þjónustu ríflega

Það getur enginn stýrt umhverfismálum fyrir þjóðina, nema þjóðin sjálf sé umhverfissinnuð. Umhverfið nýtur tillitssemi, ef það verður hluti lífsgæðum okkar, líkt og umferðamenning verður ekki til annars staðar en í hugarheimi ökumannsins.

klosettaðstaða um allt land

Með aukinni vitund um rétt á landi og samvinnu þar um

Þjóðgarðar er ekki góð lausn. Hindrar eðlilegann aðgang almennings að landinu

Með hverri þeirri aðferð sem skilar árangri

Með miklu meira samráði við landeigendur og þá sem búa í dreifbýlinu

Q22 – Other perceived disadvantages of the proposed National Park in the Central Highland

Miðstýring dregur úr samkeppni og sérstöðu milli svæða. Það er áhugaverðara að njóta þess að heimsækja fleiri svæði/þjóðara. Hvert með sinni sér stöðu, t.d. 8 - 12 svæði.

Þá yrði um ofstýringu á gæðum lands að ráða

Það þarf að fara varlega í þetta og hafa gott samráð við sveitafélögin, sem hafa nýtingarréttinn

Reynslan af Vatnajökulsþjóðgarði er slæm

þeir sem nýta hálendið fengju ekki að hafa áhrif bara reykvíkingar

Q23 – Other perceived advantages of the proposed National Park in the Central Highland

Helst þarf að manna og auka eftirlit á álagstíma.

Það er nauðsynlegt að freista þess að koma umræðunni úr því öngstræti, aðalmenn umhverfis- og orkumála hafa lokað í báða enda.

Auðvelda innheimtu gjalda

Hann myndi styrkja sjálfsímynd þjóðar og efla virðingu fyrir landinu og landsins gæðum.

Vekur athygli og virðingu íbúa landsins á víðernum og ósnortnum svæðum landsins

Desired Conditions

Here are listed the answers to the question “what changes would make the area more attractive to you personally?”.

Ábyrgari hegðun manna í umgengni við landið og sérstaklega gróður. Meira eftirlit og sektir við utanvegaakstri, stýra hjólreiðum (bæði reiðhjól og vélhjól) á vegi og vegslóða og að hjólreiðar séu ekki leyfilegar á fjárgötum og göngustígum. Hestamenn verði að sýna meiri gát ogharðar sé tekið á skemmdum á gróðri af þeirra völdum.

Að aðalvegir væru uppbyggðir og öllum færir, en vegir út frá þeim séu ætlaðir til göngu, reiðmennsku, hjólreiða eða annarrar útivistar

Að eiga farartæki við hæfi:)

að hafa aðgang að miðhálendinu og geta upplifað fegurðina án þess að raska náttúrunni

Að hafa það eins og það er núna

Að halda því sem ósnörtustu

Að hreyfa sem minnst við náttúrunni.

Að rekast ekki allsstaðar á ferðamenn og geta hlustað á kyrrðina í friði.

Að stjórn Vatnajökulspjóðgarðs færi að vinna með útivistahópum og skattgreiðindum sem jú borga laun þeirra

Að stýra álagi á fjölsóttustu staðina, að eiga tryggja þeim sem þess óska aðgang að fáförnum óröskuðum svæðum

AÐ ÞAÐ VÆRI GRÓÐURSÆLLA, ÞJÓNUSTHÚS SEM UPPFYLLIR DAGLEGAR ÞARFIR (STURTA, WC, RAFMAGN)

Að það væri meira í takt við þjóðgarða sem maður þekkir erlendis, t.d. í Norður Ameríku.

Aðalega að ég myndi afla mér meiri vitneskju un miðhálendið.

Aðeins betri vegir/samgöngur

aðgengilegar upplýsingar um miðhálendið, mögulegar hættur og jákvæða hluti

aðgengilegra

Aðstaða fyrir tjöld og aðra gistingu.

Áfram óspillt fátt fólk

Auðveldari aðkoma - betri vegir.

Auðveldari samgöngur um svæðið. -----
Uppbygging vegakerfis um miðhálendi til að tengja saman landshluta à að geta farið saman við verndun miðhalendis

Auðvelt að ferðast þangað.

Auka eftirlit

Auka gistimöguleika og wc aðstöðu.

Auka gistimöguleika. Bæta vegi. Auka gæslu

Auka þarf aðgengi almennings að Miðhálendinu, gera fólki kleift að ferðast þar um án of mikils tilkostnaðar, bæta almenningssamgöngur, vegi og vegslóða, svo og gönguslóða. Opna þarf betri leiðir í fleiri mánuði á ári, s.s yfir Kjöl. Bæta þarf gistimöguleika og snyrtiaðstöðu. Efla þarf kynningu á Miðhálendinu og töfrum þess fyrir alla aldurshópa og efla leiðsögn.

Koma á tengslum milli búlenda og þjóðlenda og kynna búskaparhætti að fornu og nýju. Kynna þátt Miðhálandissvæða fyrir lífsafkomu og mannlega tilvist, s.s. Eiríksjökuls og nágrenni hans sem matarbúr í öflun viðbótar lífsviðurværis í gegnum aldirnar og sem skjól fyrir útlaga. Vefa saman sögu og menningu Miðhálandisins í fortíð og nútíð.

Auka við gistingu og þjónustu.

Aukið aðgengi, en samt ekki frjálst aðgengi.

Aukið úrval af gistimöguleikum. Betra skipulag gönguleiða, og betri merkingar. Strangara utanumhald og háar sektir fyrir þá sem ekki fara að lögum.

Aukin þjónusta og betri merkingar

Auknar merkingar á gönguleiðum. Aukið fjármagn til verndar mestu álagspunktum.

Bæta vegina til þess að bæta öryggi. Auka upplýsingaflæði fyrir ferðamenn sem eru að ferðast sjálfir, mikið um að þeir stoppi á hættulegum stöðum.

Bæta vegunum.

Bætt aðgengi og betri vegir

Bætt aðgengi, betri þjónusta.

Bætt þjónusta með sem minnstu raski.

Bætt vegakerfi og merkingar við vegi. Það hefur komið fyrir mjög oft að túristar keyra of hratt (t.d. í beygjum) þar sem ekki er hægt að mætast.

Bættar samgöngur

bættir vegir, upplýsingaskilti sem auðvelda dagsgöngur, stikaðar gönguleiðir, upplýsingar um áhugaverða staði frá landvörðum, jafnvel göngur í fylgd landvarða

banna stórar rútur 30+ farþegar og litla bílaleigu bíla

Bara hlyntur því sem er. En láta ferðamenn finna fyrir ábyrgð. Ekki vaða um allt, sem þeir gera nú til dags.

Betra aðgengi

Betra aðgengi en samtímis verður að passa upp á að halda miðhálandinu eins ósnortnu og mögulegt er.

Betra aðgengi og gistimöguleikar

Betra aðgengi, fjölga gistirýmum.

Betra aðgengi, vegamálin, gistimöguleikar.

betra aðgengi/vegir --góðar upplýsingar / merkingar - góð landvarsla /gæsla

Betra skipulag, meiri stjórnun, en þarf að vinnast í samstarfi við landeigendur

betra skipulag, upplýsingar og aðgengi

Betra vegakerfi

Betra vegakerfi

Betra vegakerfi og vel strikaðar gönguleiðir.

Betri aðkoma

Betri aðkomu.

Betri heilsa

betri landvarsla , og almennt eftirlit

betri merkingar

Betri samgöngur

Betri samgöngur og aukin þjónusta. Gisting og veitingar.

Betri samgöngur þó ég telji það frekar óraunhæft

BETRI SAMGÖNGUR.

Betri skálar

Betri stígar, meiri upplýsingar um svæðið og betri gististaðir

Betri Stofn veigi

Betri uppbyggðir vegir

Betri upplýsingagjöf

Betri vegasamgöngur (fyrir litla bíla)

Betri vegi

betri vegi

Betri vegir

Betri vegir

Betri vegir

Betri vegir

Betri vegir

Betri vegir

Betri vegir

Betri vegir

Betri vegir

Betri vegir og aðgöngu fyrir hinn almenna borgara. Hálendið á ekki að vera bara fyrir útvalda sérútbúna ferðalanga.

Betri vegir og þjónusta, salerni.

Betri vegir og tjaldstæði.

Betri vegir, færri erlendir ferðamenn

betri vegir, fleiri salerni við veginn

Betri vegir, gisting og þjónusta.

Betri vegir, þ.e. að ekki þurfi að keyra yfir óbrúaðar ár.

Betri vegir.

Betri vegur svo það sé ekki bara fyrir ríka jeppakalla

Börnin mín mættu eldast svo ég gæti tekið þau með í könnunarleiðangra þangað... Vonandi bíður miðhálendið bara óbreytt þar til að því kemur.

Breyta sem minnstu. Nýta hálendið sem aðrar auðlindir. Hámarka arðsemi hálendis til lengri tíma lítið.

búinn að svara

Byggja upp vegakerfið

byggja upp vegi

ef ég kæmist þangað á bílnum mínum þá væri eihver möguleiki á að ég færi þangað.

"Ef þessi atriði sem nefnd eru, - eru í lagi, er það að mínu mati , aðeins veður sem stjórnar því

hvort ferðamaður njóti landsins okkar - eins og best verður á kosið."

Ég er ánægður með svæðið óbreytt.

Ég er ekki að ferðast lengur

ég er ekki mikið í útivist

Ég er orðin 77 ára og hætur að ferðast.

'Eg er orðin það gömull að hef ekki hugsað út í ferðir um hálendið held ég sleppi þeim

Ég held að það yrði gengið betur um og þá er það meira aðlaðandi

Ég myndi ekki vilja breyta neinu, bara fylgjast með vegum og slóðum og passa að þeir hverfi ekki né eyðileggist.

Ég myndi vilja sjá klósett, upplýsingamiðstöðvar, hótél og veitingastaði sem falla fullkomlega inn í náttúruna þannig að ásýnd svæðisins breytist ekki. Gera mjög strangar kröfur um slíka uppbyggingu en samt þannig að það byggist upp. Víða erlendis hefur þetta verið gert með miklum sóma og við þurfum ekki að finna upp hjólið í þeim efnum.

ég tel að gjaldtaka (gjöld þurfa þá að renna til þeirra sem byggja upp landið) myndi segja mikið og stórefla þarf klósettaðstöðu á ferðamannastöðum og eftirlit með umgengni, og mengun á viðkvæmum svæðum.

Ég vil engar breytingar þar

Ég vil hafa það helst í óbreyttri mynd

Eingar.

EINGAR.

Einginn sérstök

Eins mikið óbreytt

Ekkert

Ekkert

Ekkert

Ekkert rosalega margar.

Ekkert svo ég viti !!

Ekki gott að segja

ekki troðið af ferðafólki

Ekki viss

Engar

engar

engar

engar

Engar

Engar

Engar breytingar

Engar breytingar

Engar breytingar

Engar breytingar á hálendinu

Engar breytingar. Það væri best að geta haldið í náttúruna eins og hún er, án þess að þurfa að raska neinu. En það eru eflaust bara háfleygir draumar, þegar kemur að ferðapjónustunni og því sem fylgir.

Engar háspennulínur, lítill sjánaleiki að fólk hafi farið um svæðið og raskað því.

engar sérstakar

Er ekki að spá í það.

Er ekki mikil útivistarmanneskja

Er ekki sérstakur áhugamaður um ferðalög um miðhálandið. Tel þó rétt að halda því eins ósnertu og hægt er fyrir þá sem þangað sækja

Fækka farartækjum, stýra og dreyfa ferðafólki og vinna gegn og laga skemmdarverk á náttúrunni (utanvegaakstur og annað rask)

Færri ferðamenn

færri ferðamenn á álagstímum

Færri ferðamenn en eru í dag.

færri ferðamenn og meiri virðing og þekking á landinu.

Færri ferðamenn.

Færri túristar

Ferðast ekki um hálendið

Ferðast lítð sem ekkert um Miðhálendið í dag.

Finnst það alveg aðlaðandi en hef samt ekki farið. Sennilega rándýrt miðað við hvað útlendingar eru rukkaðir um hér á landi.

Finnst það mjög áhugavert eins og það er! Styð frjálsa ferðamennsku. En skil að kannski þarf aukið aðhald með fjölgun ferðamanna. Vona að aðgerðir í sambandi við það verði í samráði við alls konar útivistarfolk og aðra en bara folk sem þolir ekki ferðafólk á velknunum tækjum. Eins þarf að gæta að því að ferðaþjónusta gangi ekki alltaf fyrir og fái einhver seraðgengi. Er mjög mikill náttúruunnandi og óttast aðför að mínum ferðamöguleikum þar sem eg er fjölskyldumanneskja og ekki mikil göngugeit. Hef samt nað að hafa öll mín börn mikið á fjöllum og þau elska það og læra mikið á því tel ég.

fínt eins það er - alltaf eitthvað nýtt að sjá í náttúrunni

Fjölbreyttari gisting fyrir fjölskyldufólk

Fleiri "veitingarhús" eða staði þar sem klósett, matur og ruslatunnur væru aðgengilegri svo náttúran verði fyrir aem minnstum skaða. Mætti einnig gróðursetja fleiri gróður svoseg tré og annað svo bílgerðirnar virðast ekki endalausar á milli byggða (sérstaklega á leiðinni frá reykjavík að jökulsárlóni). Sekta einnig fólk sem losar rusl eða gerir þarfir sínar til að minnka rusl og annan óþvera.

Flottari frontur, tjaldstæði og aðstaða fyrir ferðamenn

Fyrir mig og marga aðra sem eru orðnir of fullorðnir fyrir erfið ferðalög er aðgengi málið, síðan gæti bætt aðgengi líka stuðlað að óþarfa traðki og umferð um viðkvæm svæði.

Fyrir mig þyrfti að verða auðveldari aðgangur að því.

Fyrst og fremst betra aðgengi. Ég á ekki 4x4 jeppa sjálf og kemst því aldrei á mínum eigin vegum þangað sem mig sárlangar að fara.

Gera vegi sem auðvelda okkur að fara þangað og minnkar keyrslu utan vega

Get haft mörg orð um þetta. Það þarf að nota ítölu á svæðinn, sem vinsælust eru. td. var ég á móti því að hleypa bifreiðum yfir hvíslina í Landmannalaugum og ég tal nú ekki um að setja brú á hanna. Nú er ég ekki í því að kynna svæði, sem mér fynst verulega gaman að koma á, því þá er straumurin koma þar.

Geta haft tækifæri á að sækja þangað í dagsferðir, göngur, hlaup eða skoðun.

góð stýring ferðamanna.

Góða vegi yfir Kjöl og Sprengisand ásamt góðum vegi norðan jökla frá Kárahnjúkum vestur í Borgarfjörð

góðar og vel merktar gönguleiðir svo að fólk fari ekki utanveggar og skemmi

Góðir og öruggir vegir.. Til að vernda groður og umhverfi. Þannig að enginn þyrfti að aka utan vega með tilheyrandi skemmdum.

Góðir vegir og einhver aðstaða til að skilja bílinn eftir. Gisting eða tjaldstæði slóðar sem hægt væri að fylgja

Góðir vegir um hálendið - ekki vegir út um allt. Gera þarf vegakort - vegaáætlun.

Gott aðgengi, fræðsla um gönguleiðir

Gott aðgengi

Hæfileg uppbygging á fallvegum og skinsamlega nýting auðlinda fyrir þjóðina

Hafa hana sem óspilltasta.

Hafa það ein og það er, láta það í friði.

hafa það óbreytt

Hafa þetta eins og er náttúruleg

halda þessu eins fersku og óspilltri náttúru eins og hún er í dag

Halda því óbreyttu í núverandi mynd. Það mætti þó stuðla að aukinni uppgræðslu (gróðurs og jarðvegs) á ákveðnum stöðum á hálendinu

Hef ekki skoðun á því einsog er

Held það þurfi ekkert að breyta

Helst enga breytingu. Þurka út alla óþarfa vegaslóða og gönguleiðir.

herða eftilit svo náttúra skemmast ekki, hef of oft komið að bílum og fólki sem ráða ekki við að ferðast um hálendið. Fólki sem geri sér engan grein fyrir hvað biði hvorki veðurfarslega eða náttúran.

Hjólastólaaðgengi

Höfum það bílgengt að ákvöðnum svæðum og síðan fáum við okkur göngutúra

Horfum til annarra þjóða t.d. Norðmanna um hvernig þeir hafa gert þetta

Innheimta inn á svæðið. Að það séu þjónustustöðvar inn á svæðið og sjá til að enginn fari þangað án þess að borga vel fyrir þá þjónustu sem þar er veitt ásamt inngangi á svæðið

Ja ef það liggur ekki vegur þangað að þá fer ég ekki þangað er svolítið mottó hjá mér. Ef ég myndi ferðast um þetta svæði að þá væri það gert með því að aka um svæðið. Þannig að ég segi bætt vegakerfi um miðhálendið væri eitthvað fyrir mig.

Komið hér að framan

lagfæring á vegakerfi hálendisins

leggja uppbyggða vegi milli landshluta, síðan gera þeim mögulegt sem vilja byggja upp þjónustu og almenna gistingu og því sem því fylgir á hálendinu til að gera landið eftirsóknarverðara fyrir íslendinga og almenna ferðamenn

Leyfa því að vera sem mest ómengað aðkomu mannskepnunnar.

Líklega betri bílvegur

líklega betri vegir og einhver verslun yfir hásumarið.... en að sama skapi væri það bara alls ekki gott því þá yrði átroðningur erlendra ferðamanna líklega mikill þar líka... og það vil ég ekki! Íslendingar þurfa að fá að hafa einhverja staði sem þeir geta heimsótt á Íslandi án þess að vera valtaðir niður af erlendum ferðamönnum

líklegast skárri vegir

Litlar

Markvissari og virkari landgræðsla / endurheimt landgæða/gróðurs.

Með betri vegum, svo ekki þurfi stóra jeppa eða einhverja utanvega bíla til ferðast um á.

Með því að byggja upp vegi

Meira aðgengi að þjónustu gisting, salerni t.d.

meiri aðstaða í boði

Meiri snjór

Meiri þjónusta fyrir alla gesti sem ferðast um landið bæði Íslendinga sem og útlenda ferðamenn fl. WC. og hreinlætisaðstöðu fl. gististaði þar sem hægt væri að fá sér léttu og holla næringu á viðráðanlegu

verði, jafnframt því að geta slakað á og fengið ánægulega hvíld.

Mér dettur ekkert í hug

Mér finnst að það eigi ekki að breyta náttúrunni. Það á bara að vernda hana. Á vinsælum gönguleiðum mætti samt hugsanlega halda göngustígum við og stika gönguleiðir. Ef aðgengi verður of auðvelt þá mun aðsókn margfaldast og mér finnst það ekki jákvæð þróun.

Mér finnst hálendið aðlaðandi eins og það er

Mer finnst miðhálendið fallett eins og það er, það þarf að passa upp á að hrófla ekki of mikið við því en engu að síður þarf að passa upp á að keyrt sé ekki utanvegar, passað sé upp á þann gróður sem er til staðar skemmist ekki.

Mér finnst það dásamlegt eins og það er en upphækkun vega finnst mér að væri til góðs.

Mér finnst það mjög aðlaðandi eins og það er.

merkingar

Miðhálendið er öræfi. Það á ekki að gera það aðlaðandi fyrir ferðamenn til útivistar, ferðamenn eiga að laga sig að miðhálendinu. Okkur vantar ekki 100 stk. 60 manna rútur á dag inn á hálendið. Það er nóg af slíkri ferðamennsku í byggð.

miðhálendið er þegar aðlaðandi til útivistar fyrir mig

Minna af fólki

Minni ferðamenn

Minni fjöldaferðamennska, takmarkanir á bílaleigubílum

Minni magn túrismi

Minni miðstýring

Minnkun ferðamanna á eigin vegum

Mun ekki nýta mér útivist á hálendi

Náttúran

nei

Nokkrir stórir áningastaðir m. þjónustu

Nýta betur auðlindir

Óbreytt

Ökufærir vegir

Öruggara aðgengi þ.e. betri vegir, meiri landvarsla og aukin möguleikar á gistingu myndu gera miðhálendið meira aðlaðandi fyrir mig.

Öruggur Þjóðvegur og gróður friðaður

Öryggi ferðafólks

ósner náttúra

pass

Reglur um aðgengi verði skýrari

sem minnstar breytingar

Sem minnstar breytingar, aðrar en þær að stýra umferð útlendinga um náttúruperlur okkar svo að þær varðveitist óskemmdar

Skilgreina vel markað vegakerfi sem er lagt í landið og án mikils inngríps og röskunar. Hafa bundið slitlag og hafa vegina greiðfæra einungis yfir sumartímann, utan þess tíma þarf ferðaleifi og þeir einir meiga fara um hálendið sem hafa til þess leifi. "Certification"

Skýrar upplýsingar um hvar má vera án þess að valda raski.

Stígar sem skaða ekki umhverfið. Skilti um gönguleiðir. Salernisaðstaða. Annars hef ég ekki mikla þekkingu á þessu sviði og hvað er miðhálendið hefur uppá að bjóða fyrir mig.

Stjórn á fjölda ferðamanna og gott skipulag

Stýring á fjölda ferðamanna

Stýring á fjölda ferðamanna

T.d. betri vegir svo ég kæmist á eigin bíl.

Takmarka fjöld erlendra ferðamanna. Skilda erlendar ferðaskrifstofur sem bjóða upp á rútuferðir til að hafa íslenskan fararstjóra. Upplýsa um verðmæti hálendisins. Hafa vegakerfið á hálendinu eins og það er og leyfa náttúrunni að njóta sín :)

Takmarka fjölda ferðamanna

Takmarka hámarkshraða, í 60 km, engin ástæða til að keyra hraðar.

Takmörkun á fjölda. Byggja upp aðstöðu sem þolir fjöldann. Hafa áfram ósnortin svæði.

Það á ekki að breyta neinu, nema aðstöðu ferðamanna. Gisting og hreinlætisaðstaða.

Það mætti lagfæra vegi.

Það þarf að koma í veg fyrir að alls kyns trukkan frá erlendum ferðaskrifstofum þvælist upp á hálendið okkar og stórskemmi það með glæfraakstri og fávítaskap. Látum alla bera virðingu fyrir landinu okkar, ekki bara Íslendinga. Takk fyrir.

Þægilegri vegir, og aukið eftirlit á hálendinu sem sagt eftirlit með því að fólk æði ekki af stað á vanbúnum ökutækjum og í varhugaverðu veðri.

Þarf ekki á breytingum að halda - er hætt ferðalögum um svæðið!

Þarf ekki að breyta neinu!

Þarf engar breytingar til þess

Þarf engar breytingar, bara takmörkun erlendra ferðamanna án skerðingar íslenkra ferðamanna um miðhálendið.

Þjónusta, gisting og góðir vegir

Þjónustustöðvar , aðgengi að vatni , salerni , sturtum , gistiaðstöðu f. ferðabíla og tjöld (skipuleg plön)

Þögn

Til lengri tíma litið, væri æskilegt að ferðast hægt og yfirvegað um miðhálendið, bæði á tveimur jafnfljótum og með aðstoð rafmagns. Munaðurinn yrði fólgin í því að hafa tíma, sem er það sem nútímamaðurinn hefur almennt ekki, og njóta fræðslu, sem almennt fer minnkandi, og eiga þess kost að neyta einfalds og holls matar í ferðalagi um þetta dýrlega svæði.

Tjaldsvæði sem er þannig gert að maður verði lítið var við aðra gesti. Semsagt vel stúkað af fyrir hvert og eitt fellihýsi. Má alveg rukka 4000 KR á nóttina ef aðstaðan er flott og jafnvel heit laug á staðnum. Og svo mætti hafa á afmörkuðu svæði jaðaríþróttabraut. Fyrir fjórhjól, krosshjól og svoleiðis tæki.

Tryggja að ekki þrífist þar massatúrismi!

Tryggja samgöngur og eftirlit á vinsælustu ferðamannastöðum

Uppbygging vega

Upphækkaður vegur yfir Kjöl og hluta Sprengisands, án þess að fara í frekari vegaframkvæmdir út frá þeim vegum. Svo myndi ég vilja sjá samvinnu sveitarfélaga og almennings við gróðurækt, svo sem við plöntun tjára.

Varðveita hin miklu náttúruverðmæti m.a. með góðri stýringu ferðamanna um svæðið og efla landvörslu til mikilla muna

vegaframkvæmdir

vegir góðir og uppbygging þannig að sé hægt að fara um allt árið og svo stjórnar út frá aðalleið Kjalvegi til annarra staða til stjórnunar á ágengi. En að hægt sé að fara yfir gamla þjóðleið og þá hafa áfangastaði uppbyggðar til að staldra við. Sem sagt aðgengi fyrir alla um Kjalveg en stjórnun og frekari ígrundun og takmörkun um önnur svæði

Vegir og tjaldsvæði

Veit ekki

veit ekki

veit ekki

Veit ekki

Veit ekki

veit ekki

veit ekki

veit ekki

Veit ekki, fínt eins og það er

Veit ekki, Langar ekkert þangað eins og er

veit ekki.

Veit ekki.

Vel skipulögð útivistarsvæði.

vent ekki

Ver eins og það er sem mest ósnortið

vernd á náttúru og dýralíf

Víðernisverndun, aukinn fjöldi aðgengilegra gönguleiða, aðgengilegar almennar upplýsingar, töl til að skipuleggja lengri ferðir.

Viðhalda torveltun aðgengi

Vil ekki svara.

Vil hafa það eins og þegar ég fór þar fyrst. Mörg ár síðan. Eiginlega ósnortið.

Vitneskjan um verndun, viss þjónusta við ferðamenn

Comments on the topic

Here are listed the other comments in relation with the issues covered in the survey:

Að frelsi til að aka um hálendið á snjó verði ekki skert

Að miðhálendið sé opið sem flestum.

Að reynt verði sem mest að auka virðingu fólks fyrir ósnertu víðerni

Að við þurfum að vernda náttúruna okkar eins og barn. Þetta er það sem gerir okkur að íslendingum... frelsið og náttúrun

Afar mikilvæg gerð stíga, verndun og eftirlits á vinsælustu ferðamannastöðum. Eins og er eru þessir staðir á láglandi Íslands.

Auðlind sem þarf að bera mikla virðingu fyrir. Alltaf a leiðinni að ferðast meira og kynna mer betur hvaða leiðir eru færar sem myndi henta mer til þess að svo geti orðið.

Bæta merkingar, betri kort með gönguleiðum og meiri fræðsla um sögu.

Bæta þar klósettaðstöðu og setja niður gáma til að henda rusli.

Bara að það þarf að vernda það að öllum mætti!

Byrja sem fyrst að vernda hálendið.

Ef miðhálendsipjódgarður verður stofnaður er mikilvægt að stjórna umferð fólks um hálendið. Stofnun þjóðgarðs segir fólki að þetta sé staður sem virði er að heimsækja en mörg svæði innan hálendisins eru mjög viðkvæm og þarfnast mikillar verndunar. Þurfum aukið fjármagn og landverðir verða að vera sýnilegri!

Efla þarf sveitarstjórnarstigið, til dæmis að krefja sveitarfélög um að lágmarki 20.000 íbúafjölda til þess að taka af allan hrepparíg í kringum miðhálendið. Með því náum við að taka hreppa og hagsmuni fárra út fyrir sviga og við förum að hugsa um almannahagsmuni og langtímastefnumörkun.

Eftirlit á miðhálendinu er of lítið og stór svæði sem eru meira og minna án eftirlits. Að mörgu þarf að hyggja ef á að byggja upp ferðapjónustu á miðhálendinu nauðsynlegt að undirbúa það vel svo hvorki spillist land né friður. Við verðum að vera meðvituð um hvenær nóg er nóg!

Eftirlit með hálendisþjóðgördum verði í höndum þess sveitarfélags sem þjóðgarður fellur undir, ekki stýra öllu frá höfuðborginni

Ég hef ferðast um þetta svæði frá því að ég var lítil og hef séð á því ótrúlegar breytingar - allt of fáar til góðs því miður. Það er lykilatriði að við hugum að þessu landsvæði, verndum það og reynum að halda því áfram eins og það var. Náttúran á að njóta vafans í öllum tilvikum, þó það bitni á ferðafólki eins og mér eða á gróða fyrirtækja og stofnana.

Ég held að það sé vilji hjá sveitastjórnnum að fara í samráð með nýtinguna. En varlaeg skal farið því peningasjónarmið eru hjá mörgum það eina, sem ræður.

ég tel að sekta þurfi meira, þá sem ganga illa um hálendið og þegar skemmdir verða á viðkvæmum svæðum.

Ég tel að sveitarfélögin, sem og bændur sem eigendur jarða eigi að hafa hvað mest að segja um skipulag hálendisins. ----- Ég vil sjá vandvirkni við úthlutun starfsleyfa á hálendinu og takmörkun á frekari orkuvirkjun í stærri kantinum.

Ég þakka fyrir að fá tækifæri til að tjá mig um málið.

Ég vil halda miðhálendinu ósnortnu.

Einlæg von um að þjóðgarður Miðhálendisins verði að veruleika á næstu misserum!

Ekki að sinni.

Ekki hleypa útlendingum í vélsléðaferðum inn á svæðin.

Ekki opna hálendið fyrir öllum ferðamönnum ef það á að vera friðlýst og verndað svæði þá ber okkur (öllum) að vernda það ekki láta spilla eða skemma það..

En enga öfgar sem eftirlitsiðnaðurinn vinnur að

Engar virkjanir á hálendinu og það á að vera ferðafrelsi

engin uppbygging er góð uppbygging, en viðhald og landvarsla er nauðsynleg.

Ferðapjónustan er að eyðileggja miðhálendið, græðgisvæðing er alltumlykjandi. Fræðsla til ferðamanna skilar sér ekki.

Ferðapjónustuaðilar axli meiri ábyrgð og greiði auðlyndagjald

Förum vel með landið en nýtum það.

Forum vel með landið okkar.

Gera fleyri svæði þar sem hægt er að keyra út fyrir veg og njóta. Lækka hraða bifreiða. Hraðinn drepur.....og minna á að á vorin er miðhálandið mjög viðkvæmt.

göngum um landið okkar með virðingu..

Hættum að virkja.

Hafa meira samráð við Íslensku útivistar- og ferðafélögin, td. f4x4 ofl.

Hafa mikla gæslu, vegna átroðnigs ferðamanna.

Hagsmuna aðilar (sérstaklega) í orkuiðnaði hafa of mikil ítök þar nú þegar og það þarf að stöðva!

Halda sem mest í ósnorta náttúru

Hálendi Íslands á að vera aðgengilegt fyrir alla en það þarf að leiðbeina fólki að umgangast landið með fræðslu og upplýsingum um það.

Hálendið á að nýta eins og allt landið. Til hasmuna fyrir landsmenn alla. Á hálendi eiga að vera vegir og raflínur til hagsbóta fyrir almenning. Blind"" verndun er skelfileg og engum til gagns."

Hálendið er ekki eins aðlaðandi og það var um 1960 - 80.

Hálendið verður að vera fyrir fleiri en göngugarpa og þá sem eiga jeppa.

hálendinu má ekki raska með raflínum og einkavæðingu einstakra svæða og vega

Helst ekki meiri virkjanir

Hljóðlát upplifun

hlusta á 4x4 og björgunarsveitar.

Hluti af því að ferðast um miðhálandi Íslands er að vera "einn í heiminum". Upp á síðkastið hefur mér þótt það erfiðara og erfiðara að fá þá tilfinningu því maður er að rekast á fólk alls staðar þar sem maður á alls ekki von á fólki.

höldum þessu óbreyttu svo íslendingar eigi einhvern griðarstað rá útlendingum :)

Huga þarf að aðgengi fatlaðra

Já ég vona svo sannarlega að með árunum komi betri vegir og þá sérstaklega að öll þjónusta verði bætt, bæði hreinlætisaðstaða og öll aðkoma. Og bæði Íslendingar og útlendir ferðagestir læri að meta okkar fallegaland og læri að ganga vel um alla þá staði sem heimsóttir eru og skilji ekki eftir sig neinar skemdir né sóðaskap.

já miðhálandið á að vera fyrir alla að njóta og börnin okkar í framtíðinni sertaklega

Já opnum Vonaskarð aftur

Laga vegina mun betur svo venjulegir bílar komist óskemmdir um hálendið

Láta alla greiða umhverfisfiskatt

Leggja þarf mesta áherslu á betri samgöngur og aukið aðgengi að lykilstöðum hálendisins. Stórauka þarf þjónustu og upplýsingar í samstarfi við fólkið í héraði á hverju svæði. Upplifun með fólki uppöldu og búsettu á viðkomandi svæði gefur heimsóknum meiri dýpt og verður persónulegri og eftirminnilegri.

Líst vel á verndun hálendis og stofnun þjóðgarðs. Það þarf miklu meira eftirlit svo fólk sé ekki að gera þar það sem því sýnist

Lít á miðhálandið sem eign allra landsmanna

Meiri vernd. færri virkjanir	nei
Miðhálandið er eign allra Íslendinga.	Nei
Miðhálandið á ekki að vera lokað en það	Nei
má gera kröfur um að aðeins þeir sem bera	nei
virðingu fyrir því og umgangast það sem	
djásn ferðist um það.	
Miðhálandið er einstakt, að mínum dómi	nei
ómetanlegt. Í listanum yfir	Nei
uppáhaldssvæði fannst mér vanta	nei
Fjallabaksleiðir nyðri og syðri.	
Miðhálandið er með því dýrmætasta sem	nei
við Íslendingar eigum.	
miðhálandið kemur ekki reykvíkingum	Nei
við	Nei
Miðhálandisþjóðgarður er byggður á	Nei
stórkostlegri og hneykslanlegri	Nei
eignaupptöku.	
Mikilvægt að vernda miðhálandið. Það er	nei
dásamlegt að ferðast um svæðið og	nei
mikilvægt að mínu mati að hálandið	Nei
haldist hreint og tært. Þangað sé hægt að	nei
sækja orku og svigrúm til að vera "einn í	
heiminum"	
Nei	nei
Nei	Nei
Nei	nei
nei	Nei
nei	Nei
Nei	nei
nei	Nei
nei	nei
Nei	nei
nei	nei
Nei	Nei

nei	Nei, held að flest hafi komið fram í spuringum. En allur óþarfa átroðningur,
Nei	utanvega akstur,og takmörkun ,
Nei	sérstaklega erlendra ferðamanna, þarf að
Nei	viðhalda, til verndar náttúrunni. Halda
nei	henni sem gersemi, með sínum kostum og
Nei	gæðum, svo og því lífi sem þar þrífst. Og
	hana nú.
Nei	Nei.
nei	nei.
nei	Nei.
nei	Nei.
nei	NEI.
nei	Nei.
nei	öll uppbygging innviða á miðhálandi þarf
Nei	að vera vel ígrunduð t.d. finnst mér að
Nei	gistimöguleikar eigi sem mest að vera í
nei	útjöðrum en ekki inn á miðhálandinu
nei	sjálfu m.a. vegna fráveitumála. Hvað
nei	varðar uppbyggingu vega á miðhálandinu
Nei	þá finnst mér mikilvægt að það sé gert á
nei	tilteknum stöðum til að sporna við
Nei	utanvegaakstri og skemmdum af þeim
nei	völdum. Meðfram vegstæðum er þá hægt
nei	að koma við öðrum lögnum t.d.
nei	línulögnum í jörð og slíku og þar sem
nei bara að hætta að senda mér svona kannanir	takmarka rask af þess völdum. Í mínum
Nei ekkert	huga felst ekki verndun miðhálandsins í
Nei takk	því að leyfa ekki neitt heldur skipulagðri
Nei takk	og velígrundaðri uppbyggingu sem er
Nei takk.	hógvær og tekur tillit til aðstæðna á
Nei takk.	hverjum stað. Í verndun er fólgin stýring á
Nei, er á móti boðum og bönnum	aðstæðum.
	Orkunýtingu á ekki að útiloka innan
	þjóðgarðs á hálandinu
	Pass
	Sagði já við uppbyggðum vegi og er þar
	að tala um Kjalveg, annað EKKI.
	Samkvæmt kortinu er þjóðvegur 1 frá
	Mývatni að Egilstöðum inn á

miðhálandinu, jafnvel Holtavörðuheidi. Það eru þessir hlutar miðhálandisins sem ég hef heimsótt.

Sekta fólk er brýtur lög.

setja reglur um ferðamenn svo að folk fari sér ekki að voða. Láta ferðamenn borga fyrri leit og björgun

Skilja þarf á milli afþreyingar sem á heima á láglendinu og þeirrar sem ekki er hægt að stunda nema á hálandinu. Að njóta fámennis, kyrrðar og fegurðar í óspilltu umhverfi er líka afþreying.

Skipulag þarf að bæta.

Stýra umferð um það.

Það eiga ekki allar leiðir á hálandinu að vera auðfærar. Aðeins aðalvegir á milli landshluta sem myndi stytta leið og greiða fyrir ferðamennsku og almennri notkun. Viljir þú fara út af aðalleiðum þarf að hafa fyrir því.

Það er erfitt að segja. skrifa. þetta er tvíeggjað sverð, því að um leið og allir komast þarna uppeftir í óbyggðirnar. þá eru þetta ekki lengur neinar óbyggðir.

Það er frábært

Það er mikilvægt að stoppa virkjanavæðingu landsins. Náttúran er mun verðmætari til lengri tíma eins og hún er.

Það er nauðsynlegt að gera allt sem við getum til að vernda miðhálandið. Hvort sem það er með því að takmarka fjölda ferðamanna þangað og hafa meiri gæslu eða byggja upp þjóðgarð. Eitthvað verður að gera.

Það held ég ekki.

Það þarf miklu meiri gæslu og fleiri landverði.

Það vantar fjármagn til reksturs þjóðgarða sem eru í dag. Fæst fjármafn til framtíðar til þess málaflokks?

Það verður að stofna þjóðgarð

Þarf að fara sem fyrst í aðgerðir til verndunar og stefnu um aðgengi en byggja upp Kjalveg sem styttri leið á milli landshluta og um leið aðgengi að smá svæði innan miðhálandisins

Þetta er gullnáman okkar og hana ber að vernda með öllum ráðum og ekki eyðileggja með lagningu rafstrengja.

Þetta skiptir okkur MIKLU máli í landinu og fyrir framtíðina.

Vona þess vegna að ákvarðanir verði teknar í samráði við sem flesta en ekki af fólki sem fyrir lítur aðrar tegundir af ferðamennsku en þá sem það stundar sjálft!

Þjóðgarðsumræðan er ekki endilega til þess fallin að gera miðhálandinu gott, Best komið í höndum heimamanna og að stjórnvöld leggi ekki skorður á uppbyggingu og þjónustu sem einstaklingar og fyrirtæki vildu koma upp til þjónustu, fyrir íslendinga og hinn almenna ferðamann.Það irði miðhálandinu til góðs ef of mikil afskiptasemi stjórnvalda léti undan

Þurfum að vernda auðlindina - landið okkar.

Treysti því að það verði vilji til að vernda það!

Verda þennan gimstein sem við eigum

Vernda miðhálandið á vitrænan hátt - en umfram allt að almenningur eigi þess kost að njóta þess - leggja malbikaða kjarnavegi þar sem er þjónusta.

Vernda það í þeirri mynd sem það nú er.

Verndum það fyrir ágangi,og of fjölgun ferðamanna

Verndun

Við eigum að gæta öræfanna eins og þau eru og ens og þau breytast af náttúrulegum völdum. Ég vil að stjórnun á svæðinu sem mest í höndum aðliggjandi sveitarfélaga í hvejum landshluta, þar sem staðarþekkin er fyrir hendi, en ekki stýrt af embættismönnum, hvort sem þeir eru staðsettir í Reykjavík eða annars staðar. Yfirstjórn svæðisins þar að vera sett saman af annars vegar sérfræðingum á umhverfis og náttúrufræðasviði með fulltrúum frá útivistarsamtökum og ferðaþjónustu og hins vegar frá stjórnsýslunni. Öræfin eiga að vera opin fyrir þeim sem þangað vilja fara, en það má ekki setja þau undir "glerhjálms" og halda að ekkert breytist ef allt er bannað á svæðinu.

Við eigum að nýta auðlindir okkar þó þær séu á miðhálendinu. Þarf bara að fara saman við aðra starsemi þar

Við erum kynslóðin sem annað hvort verndar það eða "leyfir" eyðileggingu þess með t.d. of miklum ágangi eða of harkalegri nýtingu. Megum ekki skorast undan þeirri ábyrgð.

Við verðum að fara vel með miðhálendið og líka njóta þess setja skýrar umgengis reglur

Við VERÐUM að verda miðhálendið

Viðhalda þeim vegum sem eru nú þegar betur

Vil að Miðhálendisþjóðgarður útiloki ekki orkuvinnslu (þar sem hún er hagstæð/í samræmi við Rammaáætlun og raski er haldið í lágmarki).

Vinsamlegast að láta ekki lítinn minnihluta öfga náttúruverndarsinna ráða af miklu um nýtinu hálendisins.

Virðum landið okkar

Comments on the survey

Here are listed the general comments on the survey itself:

Að það fari nú loksins að koma fram ábyrg stjórnun á þessu svæði þar sem er innheimt ríflega fyrir aðgang og það sé þjónusta veitt þar sem aðgangur er heimill inn á svæðið. Ef fólk fer inn á svæðið ótryggt, og án þess að greiða að það verði sektað ríflega. Það má gera app eins og bílastæðaapp sem auðveldar allar greiðslur ef fólk er að fara inn á svæðið á óhefðbundnum svæðum eða á óhefðbundnum tíma. Það verður að sjá til þess að leitar og björgunarsveitir og þýrlur séu fjármagnaðar með tryggingum og greiðslu fyrir leitir. Áframhaldandi hunsun á því að taka á þessu er í raun þjófnaður af hinum venjulega manni sem

er í dag skattlagður fyrir þessum kostnaði og er að taka á sig framtíðarkostnað af því að það er ekki verið að taka á þessu.

ég held að sannir útivistarmenn geri almennt ekki upp á milli staða hvað varðar fegurð og upplifun, þess vegna finnst mér spurning um að velja einn ekki eiga heima í könnuninni

Ég vil gjafakort

góð

hun er auðvel og flótsvöruð

Hún er fróðleg og upplýsandi.

í starfslýsingu vantar bæði kennara og skólastjórnendur, fólk getur verið starfandi og líka á eftirlaunum, en það gefst ekki möguleiki nema að svara öðru hvoru.

Íslandskortið með númerunum var aðeins of lítið og loðið fyrir sjónina mína.

Mætti hafa valmöguleika í námi og hlutastarfi þar sem margir nemar eru í vinnu samhliða námi :)

Mikilvægt mál! Vona að niðurstöður skili sér vel. Erfitt/vonlaust að velja 3 upphaldsstaðina á fjöllum :)

Nei

nei

Nei

Nei

nei

nei

Nei

nei

Nei.

Nýtum landið allt

Til hagsbóta fyrir alla landsmenn.

Þjóðgarðar er óttalegt bull sem skemmir nýtni verðmæta.

Skemmtilegt viðfangsefni könnunar!

Stjórnmalaskoðanir eða menntun og starf eiga ekki hema í svona könnun

Takk fyrir

Takk fyrir að beina athyglinni að okkar viðkvæma landi. Nauðsynlegt er að vernda landið okkar fagra gegn grimmri umferð. Alvarlegt lúxus-vandamál.

Takk fyrir mig og áfram Ísland!

Tel að ekki ætti að fjölga erlendum ferðamönnum sem koma til Íslands á meðan innviðir eru ekki betri en nú. Tel að nú sé komið nóg og mál að staldra við. Eitt sem mætti gera er að stækka ekki flugstöðina í Keflavík.

Það er almenningur í landinu sem á miðhálendið - það er fólkið í landinu sem á að fá að njóta þess með kerfisbundinni þjónustu á ákveðnum svæðum.

Þjóðvegur 1 liggur inn á kort af miðhálendinu án athugasemda. Könnunin er þó augljóslega um önnur atriði en venjulega ferð í fólksbíl milli Akureyrar og Egilstaða.

Tilfinningin er svolítið þannig að það gæti of mikilla miðstýringarsjónarmiða í spurningunum.

Vantar meiri valmöguleika um háskólanám.

Vinstri hægri er úreld skilgreining