

# Act on the Conservation of Lake Thingvallavatn and its Catchment Area

No. 85 from 24 May 2005

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*Legislative history. A Bill for an Act.*

**Entered into force on 9 June 2005.** Amended by Act No. 58/2006 (entering into force on 1 July 2006).

■ **Article 1** The purpose of this Act is to promote the conservation of the biosphere of Lake Thingvallavatn and the Lake's catchment area.

■ **Article 2** Areas within the following bounds and Lake Thingvallavatn shall become a special water protection area, namely the Lake Thingvallavatn conservation area: To the south the boundary extends from a point at Stapar on Lake Úlfljótsvatn (the boundaries of the estates Kaldárhöfði and Efribrú) across the Lake to the Sauðatangi peninsula, from there in a straight line to the vertex of the estates Úlfljótsvatn and Hlíð at the furthest most side of the Baulugil Canyon (at Thrivardaflátir). From that point the boundaries between these estates determine the boundary to the parish district boundaries of Grímsnes- and Grafningshreppur parish districts and the municipality of Ölfus. From there the parish district boundaries determine the boundary to the vertex of Skeggi (the boundaries of the estates Nesjavellir and Nes), from there by a direct line to the boundary at Sæluhúsatótt (on the county district limits between Kjósarsýsla county and Árnessýsla county). From that point a line drawn to the eastern part of Lake Mjóavatn shall determine the boundary and continuing further to the bounds of the estate Skálabrekka at Hádegisholt. Then follow the boundaries of the estates Skálabrekka and Kárastaðir which determine the boundaries to the county district limits of Árnessýsla and Kjósarsýsla counties. The county district boundaries determine the boundaries all the way up north to the parish district boundary of the former Biskupstungnahreppur and Laugardalshreppur parish districts on Langjökull glacier. From that point a line determines the boundaries to the summit of mount Hagafell and from there to the summit of mount Hlödufell. From there a straight line determines the boundaries to the eastern Hrutatindur peak (north of Middalsfjall mountain), from there to the Ásar summit and from there in a straight line to the vertex of the Fagradalsfjall mountain on the boundary between the estates Snorrastadir and Laugarvatn. From there a straight line leading to the vertex of the estate Laugarvatn on the south side (at Markahryggur ridge) and from there the boundaries between that estate and the parish district boundary of the former Laugardalshreppur parish and Grímsnes- and Grafningshreppur parishes in the Biskupsbrekkur district. From there the boundaries ascend to the vertex of Thrasaborgir cliffs. From there the boundaries are determined by the boundaries of the estate Kaldárhöfði at Stapi on lake Úlfljótur, see the map in the accompanying document to this Act which shows the outer boundaries of the Lake Thingvallavatn conservation area.

□ The protection of water within the Thingvellir National Park inside the boundaries as determined by law is subject to the provisions of the National Parks Act.

■ **Article 3** Inside the conservation area, no activities are allowed that may contaminate the water or pollute it, this applies to both the surface water and the ground water. The Minister for the Environment issues further rules in consultation with the pertinent municipal authorities and the Ministry of Industry<sup>1)</sup> on the implementation of the water protection measures, including measures regarding the disturbance of the soil, building construction, water drilling, collecting of

minerals, the exploitation of resources from the ground and cultivation of the soil, in addition to rules on the transportation and handling of hazardous materials.

□The municipal administration may subject construction permits and operating permissions that it issues according to the Planning and Building Act, to conditions regarding the implementation of protective measures due to work projects inside the conservation area on the condition that any preconditions comply with the provisions of this Act and regulations issued according to paragraph 1.

□The protection of water in Iceland shall not prevent land owners, leaseholders and others who hold utilization rights from maintaining traditional grazing and husbandry rights to their usable land unless the Minister for the Environment is of the opinion that such use may lead to the water in the area becoming polluted. The Minister may decide to impose restrictions on utilization rights inside the protection area. Such decisions shall be published in the Government Gazette.

<sup>1)</sup>*Reg. 650/2006*

■**Article 4** The biosphere of Lake Thingvallavatn must be protected and efforts made in order not to disrupt the balance of the different habitats and spawning grounds of the variants of char and brown trout stocks now living in the lake.

□The Minister for the Environment shall issue further regulations<sup>1)</sup> concerning the implementation of the conservation measures, including how to deal with variations in the water level and restrictions on the disposal of waste materials and also regarding effluents and sewerages leading into the lake. In the event that the Minister is of the opinion that such discharge into Lake Thingvallavatn does not conform with the conservation of the Lake he/she may prohibit that activity. The Minister shall make these decisions after consultation with the respective municipal administrations, the Thingvellir Committee with respect to the Thingvellir National Park and the Ministry of Industry.

□Fish farming in or on Lake Thingvallavatn is not allowed. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Act on [Fish Farming]<sup>2)</sup>, fish farming may not be conducted in or on Lake Thingvallavatn.

<sup>1)</sup>*Reg. 650/2006* <sup>2)</sup>*Act 58/2006, Article 15*

■**Article 5** Violation of the provisions of this Act or violation of regulations issued according to the Act are punishable by fines or a prison sentence of up to two years. Fines shall be paid to the State Treasury.

□Per diem fines may be imposed and payable to the State Treasury, with a minimum of ISK 50,000 and a maximum of ISK 100,000, in order to induce people to take measures that are mandatory according to this present Act and according to regulations issued according to the Act. Furthermore, the above per diem fines may be imposed in order to force people to cease any conduct contrary to this Act and regulations issued in accordance thereto.

■**Article 6** The expropriation powers active in conservation areas according to this Act, the sale of land registered in the Registry of Sites of Natural Interest, and the right to damages must all comply with Articles 64, 69 and 77 of the Nature Conservation Act No. 44 of 1999.

■**Article 7** This Act shall enter into force immediately.

### **Accompanying document<sup>1)</sup>**

<sup>1)</sup>*See Government Gazette A 2005, page 407.*