

NAACP Coastal Youth Climate Justice Leaders Delegation

Reykjavík, Iceland

May 2018

Travel funding provided by: [Lowlander Center](#)

Participants: Savannah Ancar (Atakapa Ishak-Chawasha, Grand Bayou) and Tegan Billiot (Pointe-au-Chien)

Report by Savannah Ancar

On May 27th I traveled to Reykjavík, Iceland alongside with me, Tegan Billiot. We got to be a part of the NAACP Coastal Youth Climate Justice Leaders Delegation to Iceland. During the trip, there were five youth leaders representing and speaking on behalf of their communities. Tegan represented her tribe and community in Pointe-au-Chien, LA, and Rodney Woods represented Thibodaux, LA and some parts of Houma. Kristen Brown represented Ewa Beach in Hawaii, Antonio Green represented Gulfport, Mississippi, and I represented the Atakapa Ishak-Chawasha tribe in Grand Bayou Village, LA. During our time spent in Iceland, we all learned about each other and our communities, and became great friends.

My favorite part of the trip was the two full day tours. We were accompanied by Haukar Simonarson, our tour guide. He was very friendly, informational, and helpful throughout both days of our days of our tours. We took the Southern Coast Tour on Tuesday, where we saw mountains, beaches, glaciers, and more. On Wednesday, we took the Golden Circle Tour, where we saw the diverging tectonic plates, waterfalls, and geysers.

On the Southern Coast Tour, our first stop was at one of the largest geothermal power plants. This power plant was a main energy source for the island. I distinctly remember the plant, because of the horrible smell of sulfur in the air. The Icelandic people also use this renewable resource to cook. There was a geothermal kitchen nearby, where they sold baked goods. I brought bread from there and it was actually good, just a little dry. On the tour we also seen many waterfalls, and went walk on the black sand beach. The waves on the beach were extremely rough , but if you look far enough out in the water were the puffins. The last stop on our Southern Coast

Tour was the Solheimajökull Glacier. During the hike, I could see a massive and beautiful glacier, but in front of this glacier was small lakes. The lakes were there due to the glacier melting over time. As Tegan said in her report, seeing where this huge glacier once stood and where it is now, makes me think too on how much land we've lost over time in Louisiana. It made me appreciate my community and the land we still have a lot more. Although it was sad to see the impact of climate change, the glacier was still beautiful to see.

On the second day of our tours, we went to the Golden Circle. During this tour we seen the tectonic plates, geysers, waterfalls, and Icelandic horses. When we went to the tectonic plates, we actually got to walk through them. Our tour guide told us that if we walked through the whole gap, we would actually start on the North American Plate and finish on the European plate. It's like walking from one continent to another. The tectonic plates move apart a few inches every year. The plates are diverging, meaning they move apart. The earthquakes that cause this aren't very big so no one would be able to feel them. Also during the tour, we witness the geysers shooting up. The geyser we seen wasn't the largest but it was still big and exciting to see. The largest geyser on the island is no longer active anymore. To continue our tour, we seen more beautiful waterfalls and also got to pet and feed Icelandic horses.

On the same day, but outside the Golden Circle, we got to swim in a geothermal pool, also known as the Blue Lagoon. This was a short, but great experience. Due to it being too hot in the pool, I could not stay in very long. I was sweating while swimming.

My trip to Iceland was very fun, but also very informational. Climate change and sea-level rise is very much happening. The thermal expansion is causing the air and water to get warmer. As this happens, the glaciers and ice sheets are melting. When the glaciers melt, this reduces the pressure causing Iceland to rise. The island of Iceland rises about one inch each year. Although Iceland gains land each year, coastal communities in Louisiana and other places lose land. The water

from the melting glacier has a great impact on our land loss. By 2045, the water will have risen 1 foot and by 2100, it will have risen 4 to 5 feet.

The NAACP ECJ fellows made it very clear , throughout the trip, that each one of us had power to do anything that we put our minds to. We made action plans on how we can make a difference and help our communities. Since our return, they still remain in contact with us to make sure that our goals are met.

This was a once in a lifetime experience that I am so greatly appreciated to be a part of. What I witnessed and learned will be and stay a part of me forever. It has opened my eyes to so much. I hope that I can teach others and aware them on climate issues happening all around us. Thank you Lowlander Center for funding my trip. I am beyond grateful.