

## LOCAL SCOUTS ATTEND THE ICELANDIC NATIONAL JAMBOREE



The Icelandic National Jamboree took place from July 12-19 at the Úlfjótsvatn Scout Centre in Iceland. 435 Canadians took part in the Jamboree as part of the Canadian Contingent, 140 of which were adult volunteers, and the others were 295 youth ranging from 10-18 years old.



The Icelandic National Jamboree is a large-scale camp for scouting youth from around the world age 10 and up. There are many different Jamboree camps for different age groups held by various countries throughout the year, most happen during the summer months when school is out.

And the 137<sup>th</sup> Ottawa Scouts were there with five Scouts and two adult volunteer Scouters, attending as participants and two adult volunteer Scouters as part of the International Service Team.

For many attending, this event was their first jamboree and first international event, so best practices were discussed to ensure everyone would be able to manage the various challenges of attending a weeklong camp in a foreign country.

According to Crystal Burkholder, volunteer with the Cochrane Scout Group and head of the Canadian Contingent, they worked with the Jamboree Organizing team to work on risk assessments and emergency planning for a various number of scenarios to ensure everyone would be safe during the event.

The Ulfljotsvatn Scout Centre was great. On days where the weather was clear, it offered exquisite views of the Icelandic landscapes, as it was situated next to the lake. The group was able to meet Scouts from Iceland, Hong Kong, England, France, and the United States. This experience helped our youth to identify and make connections with Scouts from around the world.



There were many challenges, including fundraising, coordinating flights, some missing luggage, and making sure everyone was prepared as best as possible. The Scouts were able to work together throughout the week and had lots of opportunities to socialise. The 137th Ottawa had great support from the Icelandic Vafill Scout Society members who were camping beside us. The Vafill Scouts were helpful, friendly, and generous during the difficult weather at the beginning of the Jamboree.

A couple unique environmental issues that we had to deal with was, one, it never really got dark at night. The sun would set for a few short hours at night, but it never got dark outside. Most people found it useful to use a sleep mask at night. And two, while there are no mosquitoes in

Iceland, they have plenty of midges that would come out in full force when it wasn't windy or raining. Bug nets were a much-needed clothing accessory around camp.

The biggest, unexpected challenge the contingent faced was the heavy rain and wind at the beginning of camp. The camp started with some extreme weather with remnants of a hurricane. The sun did not peak out until Monday, July 15. The weather in Iceland is cooler than Canadian summers with the average temperature around 15 degrees Celsius during the day and 5 degrees at night. The weather is not something they can control, but it did allow scouts to experience true Icelandic weather.

"The Iceland National Jamboree is a magical event that will bring scouts from Iceland and around the world together to experience the breathtaking beauty of Icelandic nature, the wonder of the midnight sun, and the spirit of scouting and guiding. It promises to be an unforgettable adventure filled with personal growth, cultural exchange, and camaraderie." [Iceland Jamboree Website](#)

Our youth participated in an array of activities including a daily morning polar bear dip, day hikes to the surrounding areas, climbing wall, kayaking, water obstacle courses, bouncy castles, a foam party, shortwave radios, outdoor cooking, knife skills, various arts and crafts, and camp wide games like capture the flag.

It was an amazing adventure with opportunities to meet scouts from all over the world; to see, hear and participate in all kinds of activities.

The 137<sup>th</sup> Ottawa Scouting Group is always looking for adult volunteers to work with youth or behind the scenes.

For interested youth (age 5 to 18), registration opens up for new members mid-September. For more details go to <https://www.137thottawascouts.com/> or email them at [gc@137thOttawaScouts.com](mailto:gc@137thOttawaScouts.com) for further information.