



Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

Report Title: Easter Island: The Navel of the Earth **Name:** Angela Sugarek
Other Team Members:
Program: Greater Houston Area Program
Trip Dates: 11/30/-0001 - 11/30/-0001 **Location Visited:** Easter Island
Post Fellowship Reporting Template: PFR Template 01

Project Summary: Once covered by a palm forest, Easter Island is now a desolate land populated instead with mysterious Moai statues. The most widely accepted theory is that the island was settled sometime before 500 AD by a group of Polynesians lost at sea, called Rapa Nui. Living in isolation for the next 1200 years, the Rapa Nui people destroyed the ecosystem of the island by cutting down all of the trees in support of the statue building. With resources scarce, a violent civil war took place nearly killing nearly all of the islanders. Those who were left were discovered by Dutch explorers and eventually carted off by Peruvian slave traders, leaving the statues as a reminder of their once thriving culture. It is the mystery of this beautiful place that drew me to study Easter Island.

My fellowship began with a self-study of the history of Easter Island and its people. During this time, I read about the history of Easter Island and the Rapa Nui people, while making travel arrangements for the 13,000 mile round trip. On July 27, 2008, I left Houston for Easter Island via Lima, Peru and Santiago, Chile on a trip that lasted more than ten days. While on the island, I visited many incredible archeological sites including Rano Raraku, the quarry where several hundreds of Moai statues remain in various degrees of completion, and Ana Kai Tangata, a cave decorated with a beautiful painted ceiling where some believe the islanders once held cannibalistic ceremonies. Because tourism is the largest portion of their economy, the islanders work very hard to ensure that visitors feel welcome. The people were gracious and helpful always willing to point me in the right direction when I got lost or to suggest a good place to eat. A highlight of the trip was SCUBA diving in the unbelievable clear waters off of the coast of the island. While under water, I got to hold a Blow Fish and saw many unusual and colorful fish. Today, looking back on the trip it seems like a surreal dream, too amazing to be real.

Career Impact: * Creating a science-based curriculum unit.
* Overcame a fear of spending extended time underwater.
* Broadened exposure to other cultures.
* Gained a deeper understanding and appreciation of native cultures.

Classroom/Community Impact:* Shared travel experience with peers and students.
* Collaborating with peers in the teaching of an Easter Island curriculum unit.
* Am supporting other teachers in their pursuit of Fund For Teachers Fellowships.
* Using my experience to encourage students to seek opportunities to travel.

Open Response: * Creating a science-based curriculum unit about Easter Island.
* Will present information about my experience to peers.
* Creating a photographic poster documenting the trip.
* Am helping peers to gain similar fellowships

Quote: Exploring Easter Island is an experience that I will share with students for years to come.

Photos:



Moai Sunset



Rano Raraku Quarry



Ahu Tongariki



Ana Tangata



Thanks Fund For Teachers



My Moai and Me



Quarry View



How to Build an Island