

mrp



Participant Guide

Blue Creek, Belize 2024



maya

RESEARCH PROGRAM

www.mayaresearchprogram.org

For more information call 817-831-9011 or email mrpinquiries@gmail.com

Introduction to MRP

Join us as we return for fieldwork in 2024!

Maya Research Program is a U.S.- based non-profit organization (501C3) that sponsors archaeological and ethnographic research in Middle America. Each summer since 1992, aside from a 3-year COVID break, we have sponsored fieldwork in Blue Creek village, Orange Walk District, Belize. Maya Research Program is affiliated with the University of Texas at Tyler. If you are joining us summer, this guide is for you. We hope this will answer questions that you have about your experience with us.

Our goal is, first and foremost, to conduct research that helps us better understand the complex ancient societies of the Americas. MRP is proud to have a diverse staff of talented scientists contributing to this goal and many of our affiliated scholars are recognized as leaders in their fields. Current support comes from National Geographic Society, the National Science Foundation and the Explorers Club and recent support has come from The Denver Foundation, the Foundation for the Advancement of Mesoamerican Studies, the Heinz Foundation, Humanities Texas and the American Council of Learned Societies. In addition, the project was recognized as the winner of the Archaeological Institute of America's Excavation Outreach award. We also operate under permit of the Institute of Archaeology (IoA) of Belize.

Our other key goal is to encourage the participation of students and volunteers – anyone who wants to experience the real world of archaeological or anthropological research and understand how we learn about other cultures may join us. This is a critical educational component of MRP's work and helps us accomplish our research goals as well. The ages of our participants range from 18 to over 80. So many of our participants return year after year that MRP has become an extended family.

Half of our participants are university students under 30 years old and the other half are professionals and retirees. While most participants come from the United States, we have students from Australian, Canadian, European, Latin American, and Japanese institutions as well. For students, academic credit can usually be arranged.



While many students go on to careers in other fields, numerous students go on to become successful graduate students in archaeology or a related field and return to focus on MRP projects for their theses and dissertations.

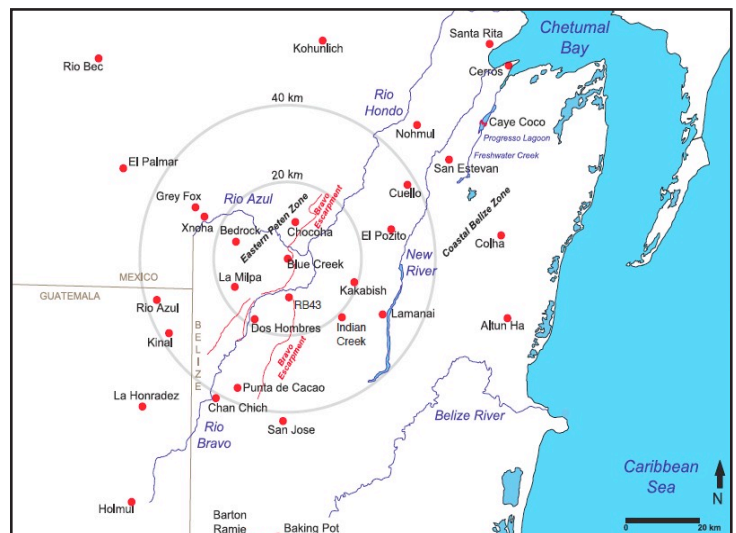
If you have any questions, never hesitate to get in touch by phone (817-831-9011) or email (mrpinquiries@gmail.com). This season, in each session, we will limit our student and volunteer participants to a total of 25 people who will join our professional staff of about 10-15 people. We could be larger, but this scale gives the staff a better chance to work with each student and volunteer individually.



Blue Creek Archaeological Project

This will be our 30th year in northwestern Belize, about 20 miles east of the Guatemalan border and a mile south of the Mexican border.

The 700 people of Blue Creek are Mennonites and much of our work takes place in and around these spread-out agricultural communities. While we're not exactly isolated, we're not in an urban setting either. Much of our permit area is used for agriculture, but we are located on the eastern edge of the Petén region-on a forest-covered, 300' tall, escarpment overlooking northern Belize. This environment supported many of the best-known sites of the ancient Maya world. To the east is the low-lying coastal plain, where the Maya relied on rivers and lagoons to support major centers like Altun Ha and Lamanai. Our permit area is at the junction of these two large-scale environmental regions and is particularly well suited to understanding Maya economic, religious, and political underpinnings.



What Will You Do?

At Blue Creek, you will be a full member of one of our excavation teams. These typically consist of at least one professional archaeologist and at least one graduate assistant, working with several students and volunteers and a few local workers. Each team will be working on a research project that has been approved by Belize's Institute of Archaeology and is aimed at understanding a specific aspect of the ancient past. Teams will also spend one day a week processing excavated materials in our well-equipped laboratory.



The Country of Belize and Logistic Information

Location: Belize borders Guatemala and Mexico. The capital, Belmopan, is in the center of the country. Belize City, the country's largest city, is on the coast and is where you will arrive by air. Our research station is located in northwestern Belize (on the border with Mexico) in the village of Blue Creek, Orange Walk District.

Weather: Belize is a tropical country and is very hot and humid year - round. The rainy season is from June to February. You can expect some rain while at Blue Creek. Most will be brief, 5-10 minutes in duration, though tropical waves sometimes pass through the area. The average daily maximum temperature is 90 F, but can rise to over 100 F, and the average daily minimum temperature is 71 F. Nights are generally cool and comfortable.

Language: English is the official language but Spanish, Maya and German are spoken.

Electricity: USA Standards

Passport: It usually takes at least 6 weeks to process a US passport application, so apply ASAP! You will sometimes hear the term visa... as in “You need a visa to enter Belize”. If you are a US citizen, this only refers to the stamp the immigration officer puts on your passport when you enter and nothing needs to be done in advance.

Hazardous Animals and Plants: As in the United States, there are poisonous snakes, centipedes, scorpions, spiders and Africanized bees in Belize. However, we only see these infrequently and you can avoid problems by staying alert and being aware of what is around you. Depending on how wet the season is, there may also be mosquitoes, flies and ticks and chiggers. Although they are usually not “hazardous”, they can be annoying. There are some plants that can cause mild to severe dermatitis, blistering or swelling. Tall socks and/or long pants and long-sleeved shirts work well in preventing contact with these plants and insects. Sturdy shoes or hiking boots also are VERY highly recommended. If you have a specific allergy, you should follow your doctor’s advice and note it on your enrollment form.

Medical: We suggest you bring relevant medical data and insurance information in the event that you need medical treatment. You MUST inform us IN ADVANCE of any medical concerns of which we must be aware. It is EXTREMELY UNLIKELY that you will encounter medical problems and there are no legally mandated medical precautions you must take. However, most people take precautions against hepatitis, malaria and typhoid, and we recommend that your tetanus shot be up-to date (a link to the CDC’s information on Belize can be found here.)

You must have a COVID-19 vaccine (and applicable boosters) to participate in the project.

If you have medical concerns, you should contact your doctor or a tropical medicine specialist. If you have a medical problem at Blue Creek, a clinic is only two miles from our base and other professional care is available in Orange Walk and Belize City.

While the cost of medical care is very low by US standards, all medical costs are your responsibility. We highly



suggest you contact your insurance company to ensure your medical expenses are covered in Belize. **We highly recommend that you purchase inexpensive travel insurance to cover your medical costs and any other associated cost if you must leave early due to illness, family emergency, etc.**

Telephones/Rates: Depending on your cellular provider/plan, using your cell phone (for data and voice) can be very expensive in Belize. **Please note that every cellular provider/plan is different, and you should contact your carrier regarding international plans and roaming fees prior to your trip.** AT&T, Verizon and T-Mobile will give you an international rate if you call in advance of your trip, which generally cuts the cost of making international calls. However, rates can still be VERY expensive due to additional roaming fees and in-country charges. **Again - you should contact your carrier regarding international plans and roaming fees.** The Linda-Vista Shopping center does rent cellular phones (with prepaid credits) and sells Belizean SIM cards.

WiFi: Our research station does have limited Wi-Fi. Please note the internet connection is provided by satellite and the connection can be unreliable (and very slow) when it rains.

Money Matters: Local currency is the Belize dollar with bills and coins in the same denominations as U.S. currency. The exchange rate is \$2BZ=\$1U.S. Everyone gladly accepts US currency and will likely give you Belize currency as change. There is no need to exchange US dollars for Belize dollars at the airport. There is also an ATM at the airport.

You should bring at least two credit/debit cards and a personal check for emergencies. We recommend bringing at least two credit cards from two different banks in case one of your banks has a security breach. Several times, this has happened to our participants and the bank cancels all the cards and sends a new one to your home... which is not so helpful if you are not home! Be sure to notify your bank and credit card companies before going abroad that way you are less likely to get cut off and your transactions are better protected.

The Linda Vista Shopping Center does accept credit cards. However, these are new innovations, and internet connectivity is not always reliable (again – internet is provided via satellite and can be unreliable in inclement weather). Please bring enough cash for your stay. Things that you are responsible for include: (1) a \$30 departure tax; (2) the cost of renewing your visa (\$50US) if your stay is longer than 30 days; (3) costs of having your laundry done and for drink purchased in camp; and (4) entrance fees to archaeological parks and other destinations on our days off. In theory, you need not incur any additional costs. As a practical matter though, most people will want extra cash for personal purchases, such as soft drinks, beer, and mementos. Most people need no more than \$300 for two weeks.

We also recommend that you bring a couple of personal checks...in a pinch we can cash them for you. However, leave the Travelers' Checks at home. They are easily stolen and forged, so no one accepts them in Belize anymore. You are responsible for arranging your transportation to Belize and to inform us so we know when to meet you at the airport. Please schedule your flight to arrive on the first day of your session. Generally, you can expect flights costs to be about \$600 to \$750 round-trip. However, Southwest Airlines has great deals and now flies to Belize. The arrival airport is Goldson International coded **BZE**.

Travel Information

Arriving in Belize: Upon arrival you deplane onto the tarmac and walk inside the terminal to pass through immigration. After immigration you will collect your luggage and clear customs. We will meet you at the exit

and your transportation to Blue Creek will be ready where dinner will be waiting. (We will be at the airport by 1PM and the bus will depart after the last flight arrives on the first date of each session. If you arrive earlier, meet us at the International Airport at that time.) Once at base camp, you will be assigned a cabana and have time to settle in. You can expect to be up early the next morning for breakfast followed by a general orientation in camp, including rules, duties, facilities, team assignments, project objectives and a site tour.

Sometimes a participant cannot join us at the beginning of a session and must arrive at another time. We provide

transportation from Belize City ONLY at the beginning and end of a session. At all other times, individuals are required to provide their own transportation. We can help you make arrangements, but you must pay the cost.



Traveling After Your Session

Many people travel before or after their sessions. However, please note that advance Internet reservations are not advised, because it is typically more economical to make reservations in person or by phone once you are in country. We are glad to help with such things. Remember that the summer months are the rainy season and, as a result, the “low” travel season.

Local People: We work and live in an area owned by Mennonites who migrated to Belize in the 1950s. They are caring and polite people to whom the Maya Research Program owe much. It is important, therefore, that we respect them and their values. For example, behave and dress appropriately when going to the Linda Vista Shopping Center (i.e., no bathing suits or foul language, please). It is also expected that our employees be treated with respect and courtesy.

Local Shopping: The main store is the Linda Vista Shopping Center, and it serves the community of around 850 people. Linda Vista carries a couple of brands of almost anything you will need, including hardware, toiletries, food, clothing, soft drinks and over-the-counter drugs. (Linda Vista does not sell cigarettes. So, if you are a smoker, the best approach is to make a stop at the duty-free store in the airport.) While Linda Vista does accept credit cards –there may be issues with internet connectivity during the rainy season – so please remember to bring cash for incidentals in case the credit card terminals are not working.

Living Accommodations

Our research station has a large central two-story house with water and electricity, a large laboratory building, a large shower/restroom building, a dining hall and kitchen (please note this kitchen is off limits-this belongs to our cooks), and a large metal roof palapa.

There is also a kitchen in the main house that participants may use. The “Peoples’ Kitchen” has two refrigerators, a stove, and many cabinets to store food and drinks. In the main house there is also a charging station for electronics, a library, a beer and coke cooler room, and main room with multiple couches to relax on and tables to study at.

There is electricity at the camp, but most individual cabanas do not have electricity for lights, etc. A good flashlight is essential, and so is a good LED or fluorescent light for reading.

All meals are hearty and provided. All field equipment and supplies are also provided.

Cabanas are 8’x20’ structures with four windows and two beds with simple foam mattresses. They do not have electricity or air conditioning but are comfortable with cool evening breezes. Electricity is available in the main building for charging electronic devices, etc.



The use of illegal drugs is completely forbidden in camp, at the site, or anywhere else while you are associated with the MRP. In addition, the possession, transport and export of antiquities are illegal. Do not, under any circumstances buy or accept artifacts from anyone. Do not even consider making your own “collection” regardless of how small or insignificant it may seem. Such activity would seriously jeopardize MRP to the point that the Government of Belize could revoke our permit. Furthermore, if caught, you may face a jail term and heavy fines. Violation of either of these policies will result in your being removed immediately.

Meals: Breakfast (around 6:30 am) and dinner (around 5:30 pm) are served at the research station and we carry lunches to the field daily.

Water: We have excellent potable water from the community well system and bottled drinking water is available.

Laundry: Laundry service is available for a small fee. It takes about 2 days and is not available on weekends. If you plan to have your laundry done, you should bring a laundry bag with your name on it. The cost is approximately \$2.00BZ per pound after it has been washed, dried, and folded. Please put your name on your laundry bag to avoid mix-ups!!! Some participants use the camp washboard and bucket to do their own laundry. Detergent can be purchased locally.



Schedule / Team Assignments



Our schedule is busy but will not overwhelm you. We leave for the field shortly after 7AM and return early enough to allow you to relax a bit and take care of personal chores (usually by 4 pm). Various assignments are made to achieve the project goals. Periodically, team members will be asked to assist in the laboratory, on survey teams, or with some other responsibility.

Daily Activities

Each morning the sun and birds wake us at about 5:30AM. Breakfast is served at the house at 6:30AM. (You snooze, you lose!). Following breakfast, we drive to the various excavations. Your day may involve PHYSICAL ACTIVITY including lifting, carrying, bending and digging. No one is required to work beyond their physical capacity, but before coming to Belize you should be aware of your limitations and be capable of handling the physical demands of the fieldwork. Any issues MUST be communicated to a staff member as soon as possible. We take breaks during the day, of course, but there is no time for napping. At about 4 PM, we return for showers

and dinner. There are also often lectures after dinner under the palapa. On most nights, things must quiet down by 9:00PM. We take Sunday off each week and offer a trip to the nearby ruins of Lamanai.

Socializing

Archaeological excavation is hard, hot, dirty and occasionally stressful work. Some people enjoy getting together over a cold beverage, sometimes with music and conversation, to unwind after a day's work. PLEASE observe quiet hours (9:00 pm) and to be considerate of those who prefer not to participate. After 9:00, please keep all socializing confined to the palapa—do not sit on top of the house and carry on conversations, and do not continue your conversations in your cabanas, or on your way to your cabanas. It is amazing how voices carry across camp, and we need to respect those who will want to go to sleep at reasonable hours.



Departing

On your last day, you will go by bus to Belize City, around 8:00 am to meet the departing flights. So, you should not book a return flight until after 11AM. Some people like to spend extra time visiting the ruins in the western part of the country or an island off the coast where you can scuba dive or relax at the beach.





What We Expect of You

Participants are full members of the team. We work hard during the day and expect everyone to pitch in when necessary around the camp. Our living conditions are fairly isolated and confined, so it is very easy to get on each other's nerves and disrupt other people's daily operations. Everyone is expected to constantly seek new opportunities to aid the goals of the project. Students receiving academic credit will be expected to do everything that volunteers do. In addition, they will be required to fulfill some requirements agreed upon by themselves and their instructor.



Before we depart for Belize, we will give you an emergency phone number that you can use to contact us in Belize. You can also call our USA phone number: 817-831- 9011 and leave a message. We receive these messages via email and will respond ASAP.

MRP Twilight Lecture Series

Evening lectures are also offered on various specialized topics. Here are some of our recent lectures:

Modelling the Agricultural Potential of Landforms at Tikal National Park, Guatemala. Dr. Chris Balzotti, Brigham Young University.

Geoarchaeology of Ancient Maya Agriculture, Drs. Tim Beach and Sheryl Luzzadder-Beach, University of Texas at Austin.

Ancient Maya Impacts on the Modern Forest, Dr. Nick Brokaw, University of Puerto Rico.

Geochemistry and archaeological studies in Mesoamerican and Thailand, Dr. Duncan Cook, Australia Catholic University.

When the Sky Fell Down: The Chicxulub Impact. Dr. Eric Gaidos, University of Hawaii.

Three decades of understanding the Maya of Belize, Dr. Thomas Guderjan, University of Texas at Tyler.

What Not to Believe about the Maya, Dr. Elizabeth Graham, University College London (England)

Conserving the Stratfordshire Hoard, Pieta Graeves, Drakon Heritage (England).

Studying Maya Ceramics; A Matter of Time: Understanding Maya Calendrics, Colleen Hanratty, University of Texas at Tyler.

GIS applications in Archaeology, Dr. Samantha Krause, Texas State University.

Using Geoarchaeology to Observe the Ancient Human-Environment Complex. Dr. Sheryl-Luzzadder-Beach and Timothy Beach, University of Texas at Austin.

Tribal Approaches to CRM in Australia, Dr. Alex Parmington.

Excavations in Cuba, Dr. David Pendergast, University College London (England).

Bioarchaeology Topics, Dr. Hannah Plumer, Algonkian College (Canada) and Dr. Katie Miller Wolf (University of West Florida).

Geochemical Signatures of Contemporary and Ancient Maya Activities in Plazas. Dr. Richard Terry, Brigham Young University

The Philosophy of Science and 3D imaging, Bob Warden, Texas A&M University.

Mapping the Maya World, Marc Wolf, University of West Florida.

Looting the Maya Past, Dr. Donna Yates, University of Glasgow (Scotland)

Recommended Reading

The Ancient Maya Heather McKillop. ABC-CLIO Publishers, Santa Barbara (about \$25 on Amazon).

Forest of Kings (1990) Linda Schele & David Freidel. Wm. Morrow & Co.

Chronicles of Maya Kings (2001) Simon Martin and Nikolai Grube. Thames & Hudson.

The Nature of an Ancient Maya City: Resources, Interaction and Power at Blue Creek, Belize. (2007) Thomas Guderjan. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.

The Ancient Maya of Blue Creek, Belize: Wealth, Social Organization and Ritual. Edited by Thomas H. Guderjan. BAR Press, Oxford, England (2016)

Many more of our recent academic articles, report, and popular press articles are available from on our website: <http://www.mayaresearchprogram.org>

Suggested Packing List

In addition to the things you would normally pack for a trip or vacation, please take note of the following items. They are many things that you can NOT find in the Blue Creek area and having them will make your experience here much more pleasant.

- *Hat (the Belizean sun is mighty!)*
- *Sunglasses (don't need fancy ones)*
- *Bandana (for sweat management and occasional cover from mosquitos)*
- *Long work pants (at least two pairs)*
- *Shorts (for relaxing back at camp- NOT for the field)*
- *Lightweight long sleeve shirt or two (protection against sun and insects)*
- *Rain Coat (or at least a poncho)*
- *Hiking shoes or sturdy boots (cheap footwear falls apart in this environment)*
- *2nd pair of shoes for in camp (highly recommended, your feet will get wet sometime!)*
- *Socks (pack a few more pairs than you usually would. You'll need them).*
- *Hoodie or light sweatshirt (sometimes gets cool in the evenings.)*
- *Flip Flops (shower shoes)*
- *Swimwear (for trips to the amazing Cenote)*
- *Work gloves (if you typically use them)*
- *Small backpack for the field*
- *Water Bottle or canteen (or you can re-use plastic water bottles)*
- *Small flashlight (mostly for getting around camp at night).*
- *Small lantern (light in your cabana. The solar kind are often very good as are the cheap stick-on LED lights)*
- *Small bottle of DEET (mosquito repellent. 30% is good, 100% is better)*
- *Pillow (you can buy one in Blue Creek but selection is very limited)*
- *Sheet set (we provide a bed with a twin size foam mattress)*
- *Towels*
- *Camera (recommended)*

- *Small waterproof case (or a ziplock bag) to keep your valuables dry.*
- *Smart phone, tablet or small laptop (recommended)*
- *Small excavation tools if you have them -- trowel, small metric measuring tape, sharpie, etc. If you don't have them, no worries, we provide them.*
- *Copy of your passport's information page (Photograph it with your cell phone and email it to yourself)*
- *Books, games, puzzles and evening pastimes.*
- *Some Cash money (US \$\$ are happily accepted in Belize. \$2BZE=\$1USD)*
- *Credit Cards (accepted throughout most of the country -- call ahead and alert your bank that you're traveling to Belize!)*
- *Cigarettes? The Mennonite Community of Blue Creek does not sell cigarettes. Bring some from your home turf or visit the duty-free shop on your way into the country.*

Things you can buy in Blue Creek

- *Wellington boots (rubber rain boots)*
- *Batteries (common sizes)*
- *Salty snacks, Gatorade mix, candy and fresh made ice cream*
- *Basic toiletries (shampoo, soap, deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste, feminine hygiene products, etc)*
- *Postcards and stamps*
- *Pens, pencils, notebooks*
- *Rental cellphones.*
- *Basic pain relief and first aid items*
- *Some towels and some pillows*
- *Beer*

Academic Credit for Participants

Many students wish to receive academic credit for their participation in the Blue Creek project. However, since we are not a university but a non-profit research group, we do not directly offer credit. However, we can award credit through the University of Texas at Tyler. UT-T students simply enroll for a course. However, non-Texas residents must pay out-of-state tuition. If you are interested in academic credit, please contact us in advance. Also, we are an approved field school for students at the Institute of Archaeology, University College-London and the University of Leicester in England and many other schools.

Most students obtain credit by arranging an independent study class at their home institution and are happy to help you. The best approach is to contact an archaeology or anthropology faculty member at your school and ask them to sponsor the course. If you do not know who would be appropriate, let us know since we very probably already know someone who would be willing to do so. We will treat you as though you are a UT-T student then send a letter of appraisal to your faculty member.

Typically, each 2-week session is regarded as a 3-semester hour class. So, 4-weeks at Blue Creek are considered the equivalent of a 6-semester hour field school.

Information for students taking the Field School for academic credit:

If you are receiving academic credit for your participation, either through UT-Tyler or as an independent study at your home university, then we will be asking a few things in addition to your participation.

- *We expect you to master the essentials of the field and lab techniques used to gather and process archaeological data.*
- *We expect you to be able to understand the project research design and how the data being collected pertain to it.*
- *We expect you to keep a notebook (written record) of the orientation and ongoing twilight lectures and to be able to understand and discuss their relevance to the research design.*
- *While grades will be assigned by Dr. Guderjan, all supervisory staff will have input regarding your performance.*

Scholarships

MRP offers Welker Scholarships and Maya Conlin Scholarships to promising students who intend to pursue archaeology at an advanced level. Scholarship recipients are recognized as being highly motivated and exceptionally talented individuals who are expected to have a higher level of responsibility and greater workload than other participants. They assist staff members and can expect mentoring from one or more staff persons through the course of their stay. The competition for these scholarships is intense. We prefer to support students who are near the end of their undergraduate studies or at the early stages of their graduate studies.

The Welker Scholarship is named after Bill Welker, our departed friend and colleague and is funded by Bill's friends and family. The Maya Conlin Scholarship is funded by our friend Tyler Conklin and named for his daughter. While they are very similar, Tyler Conlin has charged us to focus on those who would benefit from the experience regardless of background and future plans. Applicants apply for both at the same time.

The intent is to encourage talented young scholars to participate as fully as possible in the Blue Creek project. While anyone may apply, the target group for the scholarships includes upper-division undergraduates and lower-division graduate students who intend to pursue archaeology or a related field. The scholarship pays \$1000 towards a second session for a student who will participate in 2 or more sessions. Scholars are expected to assume greater responsibility during the fieldwork than other participants. Applicants should see the MRP website for all scholarship application requirements.

Welker and Maya Conklin Scholarship applications are due on March 15th.

Graduate Degrees based on MRP work

We are always in the business of supporting graduate research and are proud of the successes of those who have done so well with grad research from MRP:

Helen R. Haines, *Intra-Site Obsidian Distribution and Consumption Patterns In Northern Belize and The North-Eastern Peten*, PhD-Archaeology, University College-London, 2000.

Robert Lichtenstein, *Communities of the Greater Blue Creek Area, Belize, Central America*, MA-Archaeology, Boston University, 2000

Antoine Giacometti, *The Role of Plaza Complexes in Hinterland Settlements at the Maya Site of Blue Creek, Belize*. MA-Archaeology, University College London, 2001.

Elizabeth Gilgan, *Archaeological heritage management in Belize: a case study*, MA-Archaeology, Boston University, 2001.

Jerry Ek, MA-Archaeology, University College-London, 2002.

Jeffery Baker, *Maya Wetlands: Ecology and Pre-Hispanic Utilization of Wetlands in Northwestern Belize*. Ph.D.-Anthropology, University of Arizona, 2002.

Colleen Popson, *An Evaluation of Evidence for Formative Economic Behavior: Artifact Assemblage Diversity at Chan Cahal*. MA-Anthropology, State University of New York at Albany, 2002

Jason Barrett, *Constructing hierarchy through entitlement: Inequality in lithic resource access among the ancient Maya of Blue Creek, Belize*, PhD -Anthropology, Texas A&M University, 2004.

Nicole Little, *Pots and politics: Chemical characterization of Early and Late Classic pottery from northwest Belize*, MA-Anthropology, University of Missouri, 2005

Greg Savoie, *Maya E-group Assemblages, An Evaluation of their Morphology, Spatial and Temporal Distributions and Function*. MA-Anthropology, University of Leicester, England, 2005.

Tim Preston, *The Rosita Community: Examining Power Heterarchies Within An Ancient Maya Polity*. MA -Anthropology, San Francisco State University, 2007.

Antonio Padilla, *Akab Muclil: A Classic to Postclassic Hinterland Settlement in Northwestern Belize*. MA-Anthropology, Texas Tech University, 2007.

Jacque Martinez, MA-Archaeological Conservation, University College London (2008).

David Driver, *The Construction Of Intrapolity Sociopolitical Identity Through Architecture At The Ancient Maya Site Of Blue Creek, Belize.*, Ph.D.-Anthropology, Southern Illinois, 2008.

Christina Marroquin, *Maya Political Economy: A Spatial, Temporal, and Contextual Analysis of Jade Deposits throughout the Southern Lowlands*, M.A.-Archaeology, University of Leicester, 2009.

Gail Hammond, *Water, Stone and Soil: A preliminary investigation into the location of selected sites in far north-west Belize in relation to critical natural resources.*, M.A.-Archaeology, University College- London, 2009

McKenzie Morse, *Pollen From Laguna Verde, Blue Creek, Belize: Implications For Paleoecology, Paleoethnobotany, Agriculture, and Human Settlement*, Ph.D.-Anthropology, Texas A& M University, 2009.

Samantha Krause, *Geoarchaeology and GIS at Blue Creek, Belize*. MA-Geography, Florida State University, 2009

Virginia das Neves, MA-Anthropology, Australia National University, 2011.

Dana Ritchie-Parker, *Late and Terminal Classic Subsistence: Stable Isotope Analysis of Chac Balam and San Juan on Northern Ambergris Caye, Belize*, MA-Anthropology, University of Texas at Arlington, 2011

Jason Gonzalez, *Domestic Landscapes, Power, And Political Change: Comparing Classic Maya Communities In The Three Rivers Region Of Northwestern Belize (A.D. 600 - 1000)*. Ph.D. (Anthropology), Southern Illinois Univ, 2013.

Dominick Van den Notelaer, *Chan Cahal: Socio-economic dynamics in an agrarian Maya community in the Blue Creek polity, Northwestern Belize*. MA (Archaeology), Vrije Univeriteit Brussel, Belgium, 2014.

Gail Hammond, Ph.D. (Archaeology), University College-London, 2016.

Hannah Plumer, PhD (Physical Anthropology), University of Sheffield, 2017.

Hollie Lincoln, MA (Anthropology), St. Cloud State University, 2018.

Alyssa Davis, MA (Anthropology), New Mexico State University, 2018.

Samantha Krause, PhD (Geography), University of Texas at Austin, 2019.

Louisa Aebersold, PhD (Anthropology), University of Texas at Austin, 2020.

Aubrey O'Toole, M.A. (History) University of Texas at Tyler, 2020

Thomas Ruhl, Ph.D. (Geography) University of Cincinnati, 2021.

Sara Eshleman, PhD (Geography), University of Texas at Austin, in progress.

Colin Doyle, Ph.D. (Geography), University of Texas at Austin, in progress.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is this a tour or educational program? Yes and No. This is a working project where research is our first priority. You will join a talented staff of professional archaeologists and senior graduate students conducting original research on important topics in the field of Maya archaeology. Of course, the more you know, the better team member you are, but prior knowledge is not required. However, we do feel that our project offers the best opportunity for archaeology students in college to get good experience and valuable training of any similar project fielded in the Maya area. We offer several lectures and workshops throughout the week to help you improve your knowledge of the Maya and archaeology. While this may sound like all work, it's not. Most team members find this to be a truly fun experience.

Why is it so expensive? While we work at keeping our costs as low as possible, many people view this as an expensive program. And it is—our costs in Belize are very high and rapidly increasing. For example, a 20-year-old pick-up truck rents for \$125 USA per day and gasoline is over \$12 USD per gallon.

Why is it so inexpensive? Compared to Earthwatch and other programs, our costs are very low because we have minimal overhead costs. Your entire contribution will be used for this project and nothing else. We also raise outside funds to support our work and improve our physical plant.

Is airfare included? No. Our participants come from so many places that it is not possible to arrange.

Are there other programs? Sure. And some of them have some really great accommodations. Some of them have some really great staff members. But we think that the breadth and diversity of our talented staff is unexcelled. Past staff members have come from schools such as the University of Arizona, Arizona State University, Boston University, University of California at Berkeley, University of Chicago, George Mason University, Georgetown University, University College of London, University of New Mexico, SUNY-Albany, Southern Illinois University, Southern Methodist University, University of Texas, University of Kansas, Texas A&M, and Vanderbilt University. We are deeply interested in making this experience work for you – as you will make it work for us.

Is this tax-deductible? For many people, the answer is “yes”. You are making two distinct acts of contribution. First, you are giving the required donation. Second, you are donating your time to our effort and your travel costs may be deductible. However, receiving academic credit or traveling elsewhere during the same trip may affect the deductibility of your contributions.

Costs

The donation for a single two-week session for non-students is \$1850 USD. A special first-session rate of \$1750 is available to students currently enrolled in an accredited University or College. If more than one session is desired, the donation is \$1500 for each additional session. Students are encouraged to apply for a MRP scholarship to reduce their cost. A non-refundable deposit of \$250 per session is required to hold your spot. (Participants are responsible for their travel costs to Belize). If a student wishes to receive academic credit, tuition costs (via the University of Texas at Tyler or their home institution) will apply in addition to the required donation to the Maya Research Program.

2024 Blue Creek Archaeological Project – Research Consortium

- Dr. Grace Bascopé, Botanical Research Institute of Texas and MRP.
- Dr. Tim Beach, University of Texas at Austin
- Kim Cox, Maya Research Program
- Dr. Ross Ensley, Structural Geologist
- Pieta Greaves, Drakon Heritage and Conservation; West Midlands, England.
- Dr. Thomas Guderjan, University of Texas at Tyler
- Colleen Hanratty, University of Texas at Tyler.
- Dr. Hollie Lincoln, Louisiana State University
- Jocelyne Karr, University of Leicester
- Dr. Eleanor King, Howard University.
- Dr. Sheryl Luzzadder-Beach, University of Texas at Austin
- Dr. Katie Miller-Wolf, University of West Florida.
- Dr. Alex Parmington, Maya Research Program.
- Alex Pastrana, MRP
- Dr. Hannah Plumer, Niagra County Community College.
- Rachel Smith, University of Mississippi.
- Jocelyne Swayze, University of Leicester
- Dominick van der Noteles, MRP
- Bob Warden, Texas A&M University
- Dr. Marc Wolf, University of West Florida

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