

CHAPTER 4

People, Animals, Protected Places, and Archaeology A Complex Collaboration in Belize

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Introduction¹

In 1981, the country of Belize (formerly British Honduras) in Central America became an independent nation within the British Commonwealth. That same year, the Government of Belize passed the National Park Systems Act and the Wildlife Protection Act. It also began enforcing the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.² The Belize landmass measures 22,920 km², encompassing a population of 398,050 with

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a very low density compared to other countries, and is considered a middle-income nation.³ It is home to unique ancient Maya archaeological places (aka “sites”),⁴ the world’s second-longest barrier reef, and several popular terrestrial parks and reserves. As a preferential development strategy, the country had focused on ecotourism rather than more traditional tourism pursuits typical throughout Mexico and Central America; however, this shifted somewhat in the late 1990s when efforts began emphasizing cruise ship tourism.

A preliminary survey by the Belize Audubon Society and the Wildlife Conservation Society noted many jaguars within the Cockscomb Basin of the eastern Maya Mountains of Belize. As a result, the Government established the world’s first jaguar preserve in 1984, much to the dismay of many then-local residents of both Maya and non-Maya villages. Fast forward to 2014, at which time we (the authors) initiated the Stann Creek Regional Archaeology Project (SCRAP).⁵ Our investigations initially focused on an area adjacent to the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary (CBWS) —now totaling 1,011 km² of “protected” space with its connected forest reserves. Soon after, we expanded into the Cockscomb Basin proper, having been approached by members of an adjacent Maya village who requested local archaeological/heritage investigations.

In this chapter, we discuss the history of the CBWS development, ongoing co-management organization and use relationships with adjacent Maya communities, and how community and park leaders are negotiating the increasing pressure of tourism development within the country. We situate our experience of establishing an archaeological research program within this broader narrative of complex relations: Indigenous communities, not-for-profit organizations, colonial and neocolonial governments, and foreign researchers, alongside current heritage-related legislation in Belize. We question how the ecological, economic, cultural/ ethnic, historical, and political conditions afoot in the region relate to archaeology and, more specifically, to “cultural heritage”—itself an inseparable whole together with “nature” in the Maya world. We also question how people view and value the past or conversely denigrate, destroy, or ignore it. We aim to relate

the elements that should be considered for successful collaborations in this part of the Stann Creek District, based on understandings of local histories and past failures of foreign researchers and investors, although we acknowledge at the outset that there is no singular process for such collaborations. We echo American archaeologist Patricia McAnany's sentiments in stressing that "[b]y avoiding dialogue about and sensitivity to the social and political issues that precondition our research, we flirt with the dangerous possibility of exacerbating existing inequalities."⁶ We emphasize that the material presented herein is anecdotal and is biased toward our personal experiences, privileges, and perspectives as two foreign (Canadian) archaeologists with over 40 years' combined experience researching in Central America. We did not engage in formal interviews for the purposes of exploring this issue. Although these are personal narratives, we situate them amid unique and actual locations, historical events, and recent activity. We are not official members of the villages/communities discussed and do not speak on behalf of them or any other bodies addressed in this chapter, nor is it our intention to directly critique anyone but ourselves.

A Brief History of Conservation in the Cockscomb Basin

In 1975, a group of Mopan Maya families picked up and moved roughly 100 km north from the Toledo District of Belize into the Stann Creek District's southern reaches (Map 4.1).

Dramatic transitions across its landscape characterize this part of the country. Within a mere 20 km east–west span, you can move from crystal Caribbean waters and white sandy beaches alongside coastal mangrove shoreline and lagoons, through pine savannah, to the broadleaf forests of alluvial valleys, and up into the undulating foothills and steeper peaks of the eastern Maya Mountains (Map 4.2). Much of the Stann Creek District lies within the vast anthropogenic Maya Tropical Forest (see Kettunen and Cuxil, Chapter 5, for discussion of the *Selva Maya*). Stretching across Belize, northern Guatemala, and parts of Mexico's Yucatan Penin-



Map 4.1: Map of Belize, Central America, showing location of individual districts. Map: Shawn Morton.

sula, this is the largest remaining tropical rainforest in the Americas (after the Amazon). Stann Creek District boasts many endemic species and is notable within the broader Forest because of the igneous and metamorphic bedrock (Maya Mountains) that characterize this region—versus the karst landscape that dominates

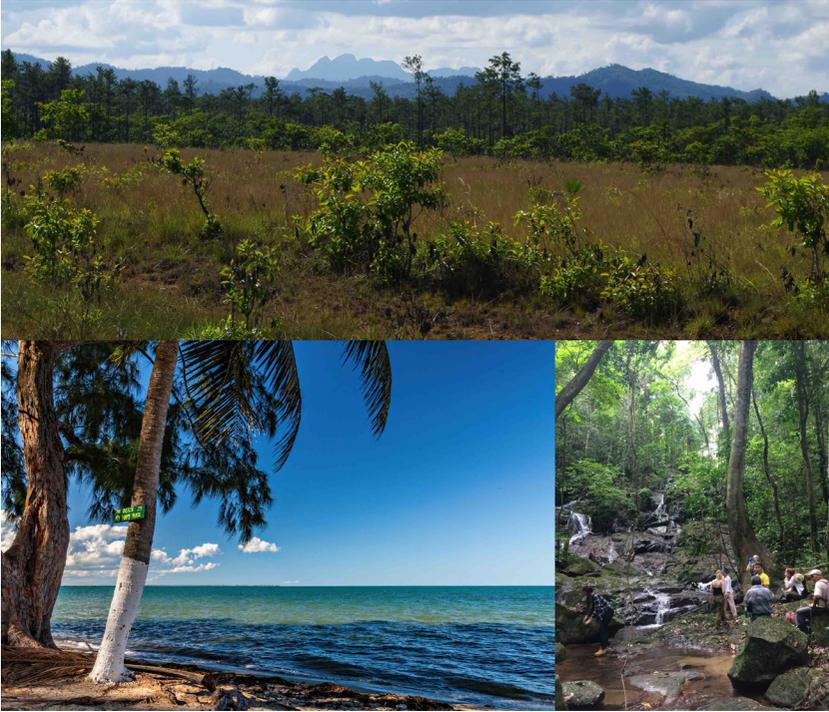
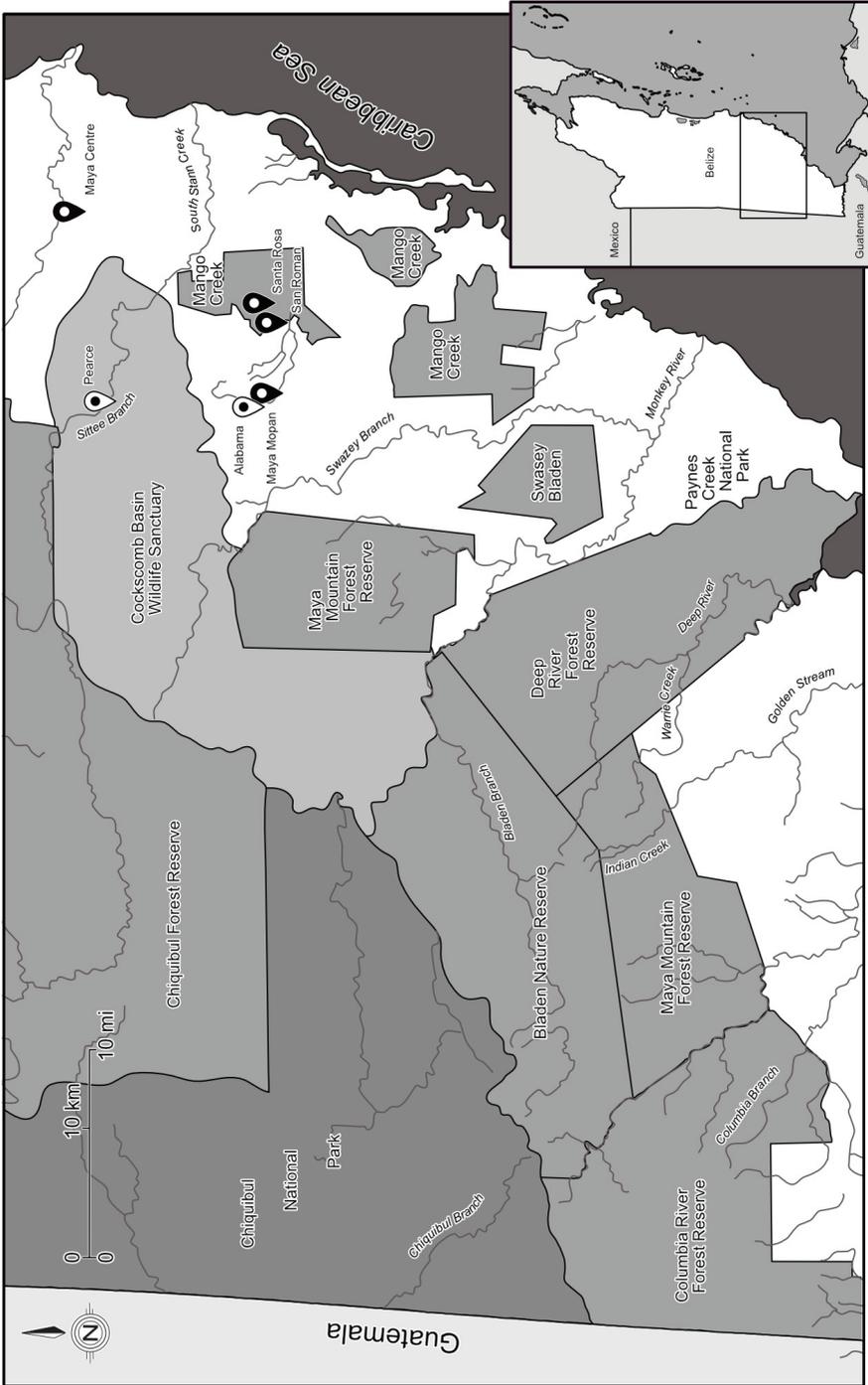


Figure 4.1: Mosaic image showing landscapes of the Stann Creek District (top, counterclockwise), including pine ridge (savannah) with Cockscomb Range in background, Caribbean coast and beaches, and broadleaf forest in alluvial valleys and Maya Mountains' foothills. Photos: SCRAP.

much of the rest of the Maya lowlands.⁷ The Stann Creek District has been one of the major agricultural and industrial regions of Belize since the 1800s: the coastal waters have long supported a significant fishing and shrimping sector; the rich, volcanic-derived alluvial soils along the various creeks and rivers support long-established banana, sugar cane, and citrus industries; the forest-covered foothills were the focus of early logging pursuits up until the 1980s. Additionally, the towering waterfalls of the eastern face of the mountains and their proximity to the beach and Belize's Barrier Reef make the district a prime tourist destination.⁸ Before the 1800s, at the height of ancient Maya civilization (ca. 600–800 CE), this region was a key producer of salt along the coast, cacao inland, and likely various products derived from the Maya Mountains.⁹



Map 4.2: Map of the southern portion of the Stann Creek District, showing associated sanctuaries, parks, reserves, and villages discussed in the text. Map: Shawn Morton.

The families, as mentioned above, established the village of Maya Mopan along the Waha Leaf Creek of the eastern slopes of the Maya Mountains in the southern end of the district (Map 4.2).¹⁰ They searched for private land following foreign encroachment in 1974 and plans for abolishing Maya community reservations established by the British in Toledo District. The Stann Creek District also drew them for its more significant economic opportunities in various industries. Their arrival roughly coincided with the abandonment of the modern village of Alabama, which included the barracks of the defunct Waha Leaf Banana Company (M. D. Greene and J. Atkins of Mobile, Alabama).¹¹ The only other people remaining were a couple of recently settled Maya families to the east in the area of Santa Rosa and a handful of Garifuna (or Garinagu) families in the nearby area that is today Georgetown (formally established as a village by coastal refugees following Hurricane Iris in 2001). Along with the various Maya groups, the Garifuna are a recognized Indigenous population of Belize, of mixed African and Carib descent.¹²

Less than a year into settling their new village, fractious arguments between some members resulted in several families moving approximately 30 km to the north, where they formed the village of Maya Centre along Cabbage Haul Creek.¹³ Four families also moved further inland from Maya Centre. They set up the settlement of Quam Bank, where they could practice traditional *milpa* farming (swidden agricultural practices, or *kol* in Mopan) among the rolling foothills of the Maya Mountains. Although the migrants considered the Quam Bank location more desirable, access to the area was difficult; therefore, most people stayed in Maya Centre and established a school and church. Maya Mopan and Maya Centre are the two villages/communities which are the primary focus in this chapter.

In 1984, the Government of Belize established the roughly 380 km² Cockscomb Basin Forest Reserve (CBFR) inland from Maya Centre and just north of Maya Mopan, encompassing the Quam Bank community, where the present park headquarters lie.¹⁴ The reserve's primary purpose was to protect jaguar populations in the region, following a study by American zoologist Alan Rabinowitz.¹⁵

He demonstrated the population was at significant risk due to industrial-level logging and agriculture (banana and citrus) taking place in the region, and many years of foreign-sponsored hunting for their pelts. A general “no hunting” ordinance—not just jaguar, but all wildlife (*ba'al che*, which are harvestable types of animals from the forest and part of the Mopan circle of *tzik* or respect)¹⁶—was declared for the reserve. Organizers engaged in limited consultation with the buffer villages—Maya and non-Maya—regarding this development. Residents of Quam Bank (by then almost a dozen families) were told to leave the area with little notice (30 days) or assistance and reintegrated into both the communities of Maya Mopan and Maya Centre. Not surprisingly, this generated considerable resentment among members of the affected Maya families, some of whom are our acquaintances in Maya Mopan, and created a divide between Quam Bank families and those of Maya Centre, whom the former viewed as being in league with reserve management.¹⁷ This issue was even more contentious because the government continued to grant logging permits for the reserve, primarily to non-Maya and foreign/non-local individuals.

In 1986, the government developed a portion of the forest reserve into the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary (CBWS), with boundaries to the west of Maya Centre and north of Maya Mopan, and would not permit *milpa* (*kol*) farming or logging around the area of the former. Around this time, the Kekchi and Mopan Maya of southern Belize initiated the first formal discussions of territorial claims (ancestral land rights), resulting in a proposed “homeland” map drafted by its leaders.¹⁸ It is important to note that the ability to make *kol* is integral to Mopan Maya identity, which they intimately weave into their communities’ fabric.¹⁹ This action of banning *kol*, requiring Maya Centre residents to go elsewhere to engage in subsistence farming, was taken partially to protect bounding forest lands. Another reason was to maintain an appearance of “pristine” wilderness for newly associated ecotourism pursuits as the official tourist entrance was located along the eastern border of the CBWS and accessed via Maya Centre (see the Introduction to this volume for an example of a similar situation in Finland). Such endeavors promoted a false narrative of modern-day and ancient Maya lifeways.

Scholars estimate that by 800 CE, the Classic Maya had modified at least 75 percent of their environment, if not more, through agricultural/agro-engineering activities, forest management, and other built environment pursuits.²⁰ The Cockscomb forest itself is a subtropical moist forest, primarily of secondary growth due to ancient Maya activity and modern logging.

In the late 1980s, the Belize Audubon Society (BAS)—a branch of the non-governmental Florida Audubon Society that manages the property on behalf of the Government of Belize²¹—attempted to alleviate the tensions resulting from the initial set-up of the reserve/sanctuary. Such attempts included the unsuccessful and contentious appearance of US Peace Corps volunteers to provide a presence and advocate on behalf of the BAS in the area. Conversations with community members led to expressed desires on the part of the Mopan Maya to support a multi-use function, including recreation, weddings, research, and nature-based tourism; in the end, the BAS has only continued to emphasize the latter two. The earliest benefits to the village of Maya Centre were linked to secondary/side ventures not directly connected to the sanctuary, positioned to take advantage of visitor traffic to the CBWS, including the Maya Centre Women's Cooperative development.²² Later on, an agreement led to the Cooperative sharing in revenue from ticket sales to the park by managing tourist registration at the village entrance. Local leader, teacher, and first regional park director, Mr. Ernesto Saqui, was hired to serve as a liaison between the BAS and the village and negotiated the initiative mentioned above.²³ The BAS hired village people as frontline workers for the reserve; originally, Maya Centre members made the request (later denied) that only local Maya people manage/operate the park (including frontline and higher-level decision-making), bringing in other support only as required.

In 1997, the government further expanded the CBWS to roughly 495 km² by adding part of the Maya Mountain Forest Reserve, to connect with the Bladen Branch Nature Reserve. Local co-management now took place through the Cockscomb-Maya Centre Advisory Committee,²⁴ and surrounding (buffer) communities formed similar advisory committees, including Maya Mopan. In

2006, the boundaries of the CBWS were demarcated, with a total area calculated as 502 km², in part to alleviate confusion for surrounding communities such as Maya Mopan that were using (and continue to do so today) surrounding Crown land for *kol*, firewood gathering, logging, and hunting purposes. The connection mentioned above with the Bladen reserve to the south made the overall reserve/protected corridor 1,011 km².

For a while, the World Bank and other international organizations hailed the co-management agreement between the Government of Belize, the BAS, and the local communities as a significant success. Unfortunately, the arrangement turned out to have a fatal flaw: specifically, the plan's foundation rested not so much on solid institutional or legal planning as much as it did on the individual personalities and goodwill of those operating within the systems. Thus, as new park directors have taken over, the arrangement has been easily changed to reflect a similarly new set of management principles that do not necessarily accommodate local co-management. For example, when the BAS moved the CBWS entrance gate to the reserve headquarters, the village lost out on ticket sales. This physical shift led to a series of conflicts, including protests and blockades. According to some non-BAS-employed residents in Maya Centre, it also led to a change from a primarily local co-management approach to one involving an increasing number of stakeholders that eventually included more non-local than local representatives. All major management decisions are now made in Belize City at BAS headquarters by board members not connected to the communities. One community member characterized these board members as "... rich people in their air-conditioned black cars, [and] fancy shoes ..."²⁵ These same residents believe they can no longer honestly describe the park as truly co-managed; however, the CBWS and reserves still hire primarily local peoples as frontline staff and have maintained a stable, "good" relationship. "The BAS will call on the community to help at times; for example, when they want help to clean up after a hurricane."²⁶

The establishment by the BAS of a single tourist entrance for the CBWS—through Maya Centre—has also caused local concern. This decision effectively locked Maya Mopan and other buffer

communities out of the economic/tourism benefits promised by the government when they established the reserve/sanctuary.²⁷ The BAS initially set a warden's entrance near Maya Mopan, just north of the Alabama archaeological site discussed below. Some residents were led to believe (by whom remains unclear to us) that it would eventually become a tourist entrance; unfortunately, it was never opened to the public and the associated building has since fallen into disrepair and is left unused.²⁸ This significant discrepancy in actual and perceived village benefits directly related to the sanctuary continues to foster tensions between Maya Centre and Maya Mopan residents, adding to the decades-old disputes that were a part of their initial founding in the 1970s. To further complicate matters, recently, much to the dismay of local park wardens, an "outside" party negotiated a new access point in the area between Maya Mopan and Maya Centre, but from private property and reserved for their own tourism development.²⁹

In general, the narrative of the beginnings of the CBWS is that of a large, integrated conservation and development project, often viewing local people as a problem. The initial approaches adopted by involved parties were paternalistic, lacking in local expertise, and often one-sided in that they were mainly driven by foreign conservationists' interests.³⁰ Rabinowitz clearly expresses such paternalism on multiple occasions in his account.³¹ Over time, approaches have shifted to being more sensitive to local involvement and knowledge, albeit with degrees of fluctuation, including initiating more significant community-led conservation and development. As such, the dynamics of the CBWS and surrounding buffer communities are complex and influenced by forces well beyond the Stann Creek District proper.

The Stann Creek Regional Archaeology Project

We are archaeologists. As such, we bring along a certain amount of baggage related to how we see humans in their broader environment and the discipline's colonial history. We exist within a "triadic network of archaeologists, communities, and places/ objects of the past. The presence of other interest groups (nation-states,

tourists, collectors) and historical factors—such as colonialism—also impinge upon what can be a very delicate relationship between archaeologists and communities.”³² Such a network uniquely complicates our study of the past. To be clear, for the most part, we explicitly reject the notion of a human-free, “pristine” wilderness, and we include ancient cultural heritage (archaeological places and associated material belongings) among the wonders that parks and protected areas are intended to preserve.

We discuss how we have negotiated our current research at two archaeological places in light of the aforementioned historical contexts and experiences. These places differ in terms of local interest, type of “protection,” and access, located within two very different yet connected buffer villages (communities) of the CBWS: Maya Mopan and Maya Centre. By no means do we pretend to be experts in the official top-down administrative pressures, responsibilities, or processes of the nation-state concerning the environment’s co-governance; neither are we directly involved in any such development from a bottom-up perspective. Nonetheless, we routinely interact with both of these systems through our research under our potentially turbulent position as community-engaged researchers attempting to move toward more community-based archaeology.³³ We are in direct face-to-face contact with multiple rights-holders, stakeholders, and interest groups, while at the same time serving as representatives of the state. The Government of Belize, via the Institute of Archaeology (IA), permits our research activities, and our university/college affiliations and granting bodies represent colonial education/academic systems from abroad. As such, we have the potential to find ourselves at the center of contentious issues of land and resources access rights, conflicting notions of identity and the role of tangible and intangible heritage in such negotiations, and questions about who owns the past and can benefit from it.

In the remainder of this chapter, we speak from a particular experiential position that resonates with many themes throughout this volume. We address some of the elements that we consider when engaging in archaeological study, promotion, and potential

future development in the region and do our best to situate this within the villages' specific contexts amid which we conduct our research. These communities, and others of the area, are effectively caught between discourses and practices of biodiversity conservation, culture history research (including tangible and intangible heritage conservation), and tourism development. Each of these elements have their ultimate management housed within government institutions and NGOs that do not typically represent local voices, and can transform daily life for both the good and the bad. The resulting consequences are economic and environmental and extend into negotiating cultural identity issues, "being Maya,"³⁴ and the inclusion or exclusion of local Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities within the Belizean national space.³⁵

Maya Mopan and Alabama

Since 2014, SCRAP has conducted investigations at the archaeological site of Alabama—named after the village and banana barracks mentioned above—located on private land that includes a surrounding citrus orchard, just north of Maya Mopan Village.³⁶ The site was initially investigated in the mid- to late 1980s as part of the Point Placencia Archaeological Project.³⁷ Some consolidation of the ball court and other structures of the site's monumental core occurred at this time, with the expressed intention of "preparing the site for visitors."³⁸ Unfortunately, when the principal investigator suddenly passed away in the 1990s, these efforts and research ceased, much to the dismay of local Maya Mopan residents and to the detriment of those structures left exposed and untended.

We initially visited the village in 2013, given leave to do so by the then Director of the IA, who was looking to help establish new projects in the district, as none had been present since the late 1990s/early 2000s. As researchers, we were also very interested in this "frontier" region of the Maya lowlands, which had been subject to minimal previous archaeological investigation. Our initial visit served to determine if there were both a viable research program and local interest in renewed research at the site. During

this visit, villagers we spoke with provided much casual encouragement, including the then *alcalde* (“mayor,” for lack of a better word [see below]; this individual now serves as our community liaison and project foreman). However, they also did not want their hopes raised regarding tourism development—a discussion that we, as archaeologists permitted by the state, are expressly prohibited from spearheading at any rate. Most communities in this part of Belize can point to a list of broken promises related to failed foreign-led investment and development, including the original citrus grove planting in Maya Mopan (recounted in the *Maya Atlas*³⁹). Additionally, previous experiences and unkept promises of archaeologists and their impact on communities in the Toledo District of Belize led to dramatic events, including the vandalism of archaeological places, burning down portions of project camps, and the threatening of project members.⁴⁰ These concerns were worth considering from the earliest planning stages and remain at the fore of our decision-making processes to this day.

Maya Mopan is currently home to just over 600 people, consisting of roughly 100+ households.⁴¹ For the most part, community members seem only vaguely familiar with the bulk of the archaeological site itself; its location on private land limiting regular access to orchard employees and the occasional passing feet of hunters and *milperos*, and the dense bush covering the monumental center (with its squadrons of thirsty mosquitoes) deterring all but the most curious (Figure 4.2).

Nonetheless, most community members regularly interact with ancient material culture. Such interaction occurs through finds such as figurines and other objects encountered at the riverside while washing or swimming and ancient residential mounds (house platforms) in their house lots or *milpas* (Figure 4.3). It seems likely that most households in Maya Mopan keep at least one memento of the region’s ancient past; however, when asked if they consider these old belongings as those of their ancestors, we have yet to encounter a community member that views these items as such. Instead, community affiliations seem concretely historical: although they acknowledge the ancient people of Alabama were “Maya,” and therefore connected to them in some manner of speaking, they



Figure 4.2: Aerial shot of Alabama, showing monumental core of site covered in broadleaf forest and surrounded by modern citrus orchard, looking west into the foothills. Photo: D. Zborover.



Figure 4.3: Children from Maya Mopan Village, posing with a ceramic figurine fragment they recovered while washing in Waha Leaf Creek. Photo: SCRAP, with permission from parents to use.

see their direct ancestors as being represented at the archaeological places in Toledo (e.g., Lubaantun and Nim Li Punit) and further afield in Guatemala where most Belizean Mopan and Kekchi communities originate, having immigrated into the country starting in the late 19th century.⁴² Of course, this brings up engaging and important narratives of place-based and network-based identities among Maya peoples, both past and present;⁴³ however, we must also remember that heritage alienation can be situational and does not necessarily represent a fixed relationship with the past.⁴⁴ Indeed, some community members have expressed the opinion that, regardless of affiliation, the site should have a Mayan name (the ancient name is currently unknown) and serve as a culturally relevant resource for the Maya Mopan community.

Additional sources of disjunction between Maya Mopan residents and Alabama's ancient remains are, more broadly, metaphysical. According to the *Maya Atlas*, the community is primarily Protestant and "other Christian" (over 66 percent of the population⁴⁵), compared to the over 89 percent Catholic identity in Maya Centre (discussed below; numbers by individual village not available in current national census reports).⁴⁶ Many residents associate the Maya of the past with "heathen" practices and beliefs, from which they distance themselves in formal speech and action today. At the start of our excavations each season, we are given a ceremonial blessing or smudging by our hosts in Maya Centre: a practice we usually do at the site. Maya Mopan representatives, including the *alcalde*, have asked that we not conduct such ceremonies in Maya Mopan, related to the aforementioned Protestant sensibilities, among other reasons. Our informal conversations with Maya Mopan crewmembers and other villagers reveal that deeper elements of Mesoamerican belief are still present in many peoples' ideas/values—or reflected on as memories of parents and grandparents—concerning places and things of the surrounding environment. These include the ideas that obsidian/volcanic glass is the result of lightning, forests breathe, and mountains are alive. They also include the telling of morality tales related to various animals such as monkeys and dogs, or supernatural

beings living on the fringes of the village, and taboo beliefs, such as eating/drinking very cold substances on sweltering days (related hot/cold concepts⁴⁷). Many villagers also embrace the view that ancient space aliens influenced the ancient Maya past in a distinctly modern twist. This belief may relate to easy access to popular pseudoarchaeology programs (e.g., *Ancient Aliens*) or tales linked to the crystal skull falsely reported by F. A. Mitchell-Hedges as discovered in the 1920s at the site of Lubaantun near their communities of origin in Toledo.⁴⁸ Questions about the crystal skull were so prevalent in the question/answer period at our 2019 *Fajina* presentation (discussed below), conducted along with a representative of the IA, that we opted to host a free movie night later in the season featuring a documentary that lays out the argument debunking this “find.”⁴⁹

On the surface, most Maya Mopan villagers seem to view the value of archaeological study at Alabama in terms of its potential catalyst for future economic development related to tourism—comparable to that associated with Maya Centre and the CBWS—as well as current employment opportunities with our research team. With those caveats of association/identity previously noted, in one-to-one conversations with local team members, a subtler effect of our collective efforts seems to be a growing appreciation for the affinity (if not direct link) between modern and ancient populations. We hear constant comparisons between our team’s findings and current or recent-past domestic practices in Maya Mopan as well as back in Toledo (e.g., stories of how grandparents used to make pottery). Community members express their interests in these places through discussions of local soils, rocks, plants, animals, and their relationships to daily home life. Their stories emphasize views of people-spaces/places-things as one entity or a “biocultural diversity complex,” as discussed by Kettunen and Cuxil (Chapter 5, this volume). On more than one occasion, their stories have also expressed the importance of archaeological places as locations to teach younger generations about concepts that older community members feel are actively at risk of being lost (traditional ecological knowledge⁵⁰). More recently, requests

for books on the ancient Maya and archaeological practices have also been made to us by our crewmembers, both young and old.

This take on the potential value of cultural/heritage sites stands in opposition to much of the current elite-focused, overly historical (versus locations of contemporary identities), and sterile style of presentation at “developed” archaeological reserves in Belize. These local views highlight the importance of promoting “everyday houses,” “natural” spaces, and entire landscapes in archaeological tourism development. We cannot deny the broad appeal of past elites’ grand monumental architecture, particularly as it relates to foreign tourism interests;⁵¹ however, we often overlook the political implications of such focus. With relatively few exceptions (development at El Pilar, Belize, offering a notable exception to the norm), it seems that we have been negligent in emphasizing those elements of ancient cultural heritage that are most relatable to modern-day, local communities. We consider this of critical import in our research, and it is one of the reasons our activities focus not only on elite, monumental architecture (with pressure to do so by the IA), but also the houses, spaces, and activities of the non-elites of the past, and their surrounding environments, both “cultural” and “natural.”⁵²

Maya Centre and Pearce

Since 2014, we have also attempted to initiate a research program at the ancient site of Pearce, located in a portion of the CBWS/CBFR and not accessible to the general public. Except for our 2016 reconnaissance trip⁵³ and the 2019 LiDAR survey (results yet to be published), this remains in a preliminary stage of development. Additional planning requirements related to access issues through both rugged physical terrain and multiple levels of bureaucracy (Government of Belize/IA, BAS, Maya Centre representatives, etc.) make this a delicate process. Despite intense local interest (Maya Centre villagers initially approached us about the site), the BAS carefully controls access. It also dictates accommodation, hiring practices (BAS staff versus independent local crewmembers),

additional fees (e.g., overnighting), specific access routes, and the degree of impact of archaeological endeavors while in the sanctuary/reserve. Since it is an organization focused primarily on wildlife protection (mainly birds and cats), this level of control is not unexpected.

Ironically, Pearce's location within the protected boundaries of the CBFRC/CBWS may introduce additional risks to the site. As the size of the warden/conservation officer crew is not large enough to frequently patrol all areas of this massive reserve, looting has been a problem in the past, along with other illegal activities (e.g., logging, hunting). When a research team entered the area to conduct archaeological mapping in the 1990s,⁵⁴ looters followed.⁵⁵ Community members commonly attribute this activity to non-local individuals, as the crew the researchers brought in were not all from the nearby communities (possibly reflecting a degree of soreness for not having included more local crewmembers). By way of comparison, we've noticed no serious looting at the infinitely more accessible and ostensibly "unprotected" Alabama since the 1950s, when the banana plantation was first in operation. We credit recent property owners' protection initiatives for Alabama's relatively excellent condition. Additionally, observers' constant presence on/near the property (engaged in citrus crop or *milpa* activities) is critical. A crewmember proudly told us they once refused to reveal the site's location to a stranger posing as an archaeologist.⁵⁶

Many residents of Maya Centre (almost 400 people arrayed in just under 90 households⁵⁷) seem to have many varying views of the archaeological materials (places and belongings) present within the CBWS/CBFRC, including Pearce. Admittedly, we know comparatively few individuals, given that we have only operated out of this village since 2018. At present, our primary form of interaction with the community is through the guest cottages owned and operated by Mr. Ernesto Saqui, a Mopan Maya and former village chairperson and CBWS park director, and his wife, Ms. Aurora Saqui, a Yucatec Maya traditional healer and cook originally from the Cayo District.⁵⁸ In as much as the village takes

advantage of their position at the entrance to the park for economic gain, there seems to have developed a more openly sympathetic tendency toward more “traditional” aspects of Maya culture and belief. This acceptance may be related to the high number of individuals who identify as Catholic (mentioned above); contrary to popular perception, the Catholic Church has been far more receptive of syncretic elements of traditional religion than have other Christian churches.⁵⁹ Therefore, it may come as no surprise to find—both in sharp contrast and similarity with Maya Mopan Village—that some community members draw a direct connection through archaeological remains to their ancestors. They also see the potential of using ancient places and belongings as tools for cultural teachings and maintenance. There is also an explicit recognition of the marketing advantage of promoting direct culture-historical connections in terms of tourism development. If the archaeological site were made available for use, some families have also expressed interest in conducting ritual/religious-oriented ceremonies on site, not only for personal use, but also for tourism purposes.⁶⁰

The Alcalde System and Archaeological Stewardship

The station of *alcalde*, *Notch Winik* or *Pohlil Kah* in Mopan, has its origins in the Medieval Spanish municipal magistrates who had judicial and administrative functions. In its modern usage, the term is more akin to a mayor, supported by a series of officers.⁶¹ Within the Maya communities of Belize, villagers elect the *alcalde* for two years. The *alcalde*'s role is as a *de facto* cultural and moral leader, ensuring that community values and responsibilities are upheld, presiding over local courts, managing communal lands, and acting as a school officer. The position is alongside the village's federal government representative and chief public servant: the officially elected chairperson, supported by a village council.

Not all Belizean Maya communities have an *alcalde*, and we have found this difference to be important in the way each community interacts with and perceives us. While Maya Mopan has

both an *alcalde* and a chairperson, Maya Centre has only the latter. In Maya Mopan, the *alcalde* has generally served as our primary point of contact for village leadership—namely because, until 2019, the elected chairperson was inactive in the community. Our community liaison regularly contacted this individual, but they never expressed interest in meeting with us; however, we always provided updates on our research to the village council via crewmembers seated on the council. We seek informal permission from Maya Mopan’s *alcalde*—being the village located nearest the site, from which all our local crewmembers originate—to conduct our research. We also consult with them to receive advice and feedback on priorities, research focus, other interests, and general or specific concerns of the community regarding our activities (e.g., the hiring of local individuals and how that practice occurs). Other recent issues have included planning for future archaeological materials storage, and co-organizing outreach/knowledge mobilization activities and interest groups within the community. Currently, the IA does not formally require such permission/consultation/notice; instead, we are only required to provide “[l]etters of permission from landowners in the research areas per field season.”⁶² The only mandatory reporting required of all activity is to the government itself, through which individual Belizeans may request access.

As mentioned above, it is only since 2019 that the village chairperson has become an active contributor to/participant in our project activities. However, their interest seems to lie primarily with the economic element represented by our presence as a labor source for the community, and even more so in the context of potential future economic benefits associated with archaeological tourism. Crucially, it is also through the *alcalde* and chairperson (as well as our project’s community liaison) that we are best able to articulate our intentions and the limitations of our presence. Our efforts at articulation/outreach helps to manage the expectations of both our team and the community-at-large. For example, we can only guarantee our funding for a limited period. While we can support community efforts in tourism development by providing

information about the archaeological past, we can neither ethically nor legally drive such growth. The *alcalde*'s and chairperson's views and intentions (along with those of their supporters) can frequently be in opposition. We must navigate and satisfy both of these essential village elements to the best of our abilities, which is not easily achieved, as members of different social and political networks within the village often fall to one side or the other. Through the *alcalde*, Maya Mopan villagers are also now pushing to take up a measure of stewardship over the site of Alabama. Under their direction, the community is seeking permission to "maintain" the place (keeping vegetation growth low, policing, etc.) as an element of the *Fajina* (village communal labor cleaning). The *alcalde* calls the *Fajina* twice a year, and all heads of households participate. This one activity alone significantly elevates the site's visibility and its prominence in the community's consciousness.

By contrast, the lack of an *alcalde* in Maya Centre makes our interactions less culturally guided on an elevated community level. This difference hinders our involvement in village-level consultation for current research and future directions. Thus, we are focused, by necessity, on individuals and smaller group representation (e.g., the Cockscomb-Maya Centre Advisory Committee, Women's Cooperative, or village council via the chairperson). Maya Centre villagers seem very interested in the Pearce research, based on the question period at our public presentations hosted by the Saquis in 2019. However, when moving to research Pearce, our ability to do so will be heavily dictated by the BAS. This dictation strongly contrasts the situation at Alabama, where the property owner is unconcerned about how exactly we conduct our research, as long as it does not significantly impact the citrus operation, the safety of our crew, and the protection of the archaeological site itself.

In neither case do the villages in question, at present, have the legal authority, finances, administrative capabilities, or training required to manage (to government-required levels) the archaeological resources at their fingertips. However, thus far, our experience suggests that general, voluntary stewardship is entirely possible.

Even so, there lies a substantial gulf between the legal or community powers of available organizations in Maya Centre and the ethical or cultural capacities that the *alcalde* can bring to bear in Maya Mopan. Ultimately, the chairperson and village council must actively push for accessibility at the federal level and formal property owner collaborations should they wish to pursue development of this nature.

Identifying and Engaging Rights-Holders, Stakeholders, and Interest Groups

As part of our research alongside formal leadership in the two villages, we must also take time to identify and engage all potential rights-holders, stakeholders, and interest groups concerned with ancient cultural heritage research and broader environmental/ecological issues. We define a rights-holder as one whose realization of human rights is inextricably linked to customary and socially defined rights to particular tangible and intangible cultural heritage (past or present). We understand stakeholders to include any person interested in or concerned for the material past, mainly related to business or economic pursuits and impacts. We label interest groups as all others with interest in or concern for such heritage (e.g., tourists). In other words, we continue to identify the individuals, groups, and communities that are engaged in a myriad of ways with the southern Stann Creek District “archaeoscape”: “the physical and ideological intersection of the past in the present.”⁶³

The Government of Belize does not recognize unique “rights-holders” for ancient Maya archaeological remains. Whether formal archaeological reserves, ancient (+100 years) artifacts, or sites on private, communal, or Crown land. The government identifies them under Article 4 of the Ancient Monuments and Antiquities Act of 1972 (amended in 2000) as “absolutely vest in the Government,”⁶⁴ which holds them in trust for all people of Belize. It is also important to note that property owners have land rights as they pertain to the control of physical access to archaeological

sites, but not to the places or heritage objects themselves. The National Cultural Heritage Preservation Act⁶⁵ goes on to identify archaeological sites and belongings as “heritage assets” for “the benefit and enjoyment of the present and future generations of the people of Belize” versus providing special rights to particular groups. This identification operates alongside the Belize National Cultural Policy 2016–2026, which aims to build a national heritage for all Belizeans, even those who do not identify as Indigenous. The policy asks all “to fulfil their functions within the mores, laws and customs of a multi-cultural and democratic society ... so that persons may properly assert their Belizean cultural identity and exercise creativity for personal growth and national development.”⁶⁶ It identifies all Belizeans as rightful “owners” of tangible and intangible heritage elements (versus individual groups of rights-holders). The government justifies this through the declaration that “patterns of settlement and resettlement and intermingling have led different ethnic groups to adopt cultural forms characteristic of other groups.”⁶⁷ It employs archaeology to verify the essentialized ethnic political history typical of young nation-building and associated economies.⁶⁸

The overall lack of federally acknowledged rights-holders counters the view of many Maya individuals, groups/organizations, and communities, particularly in the Toledo District (although we have heard similar sentiments in the Stann Creek District). These Maya argue for their natural and unique rights to ancient archaeological places and belongings,⁶⁹ more recently under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Article 11.1 states that “Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artifacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.”⁷⁰ Article 11.2 adds that “States shall provide redress through effective mechanisms, which may include restitution, developed in conjunction with indigenous peoples, with respect to their cultural,

intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free, prior and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions and customs.”⁷¹ Article 12, section 2, addresses the repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains to Indigenous communities. Article 15 states Indigenous peoples’ right to have their cultures and traditions accurately represented in education and public information. It also effectively calls on museums and other institutions to carefully evaluate and review how they collect, curate, display, and communicate information about Indigenous peoples.

Regardless of actual or perceived status, at this time, we believe that all rights-holders, stakeholders, and interest groups should be made aware (informed) of the nature and precarious state of archaeological places and belongings in the district. They should be encouraged to take part (engage) in the recovery science of archaeology and assist where possible with the stewardship of places and belongings—particularly those whose lived existence is proximate to the heritage location under discussion. Finally, they should also have the opportunity to meaningfully engage in dialogue about their views and concerns regarding cultural resource identification, access, and management.⁷² As archaeologists in Belize, the IA limits us to direct involvement in the first two elements, and only tangentially to the latter two. Thus, we have spent significant time focusing on making sure people have the information and experiences they need to make informed decisions about their involvement with ancient cultural heritage. We also believe that our research results and any accompanying benefits should be (as much as possible) equally accessible for multiple groups and individuals to minimize exacerbation of existing tensions, which we have outlined above. Table 4.1 presents the rights-holders/stakeholders/interest groups that we have identified for the area we are currently investigating (the southern reaches of the Stann Creek District) and the current status of our efforts in informing and engaging with each (Figure 4.4). This table clearly shows directed efforts and in which areas we must improve. We are attempting to broaden participation in archaeological research, mainly through greater engagement and dialogue



Figure 4.4: Images of various SCRAP consultation, information, and engagement activities: (left to right, top to bottom) consulting with chairperson; presenting to Fajina; local crewmember, tourist, and government rep. learning to excavate together; lab tour; experimental archaeology; pottery making; artifact viewing; year-end presentation and viewing; instruction in mapping; website; movie night. Photos: SCRAP.

with communities with a vested interest in the sites due to proximity. We look to foster a practice of archaeology “that is not only acceptable to communities but also useful and perhaps even necessary in our contemporary world.”⁷³

Conclusion and Future Directions

At the start of this chapter, we ponder how the ecological, economic, cultural/ethnic, historical, and political conditions afoot in the southern half of the Stann Creek District relate to archaeology and, more specifically, to cultural heritage. As a result, we also wonder how people view and value the past or conversely denigrate, destroy, or ignore it? Throughout this chapter, we attempt to outline the back- and foreground elements that shape the nature of our collaborations in Belize concerning these questions and as they relate to our archaeological research. To summarize the challenges of weaving together views of the state, the international tourism industry, tourists, and local/Indigenous villagers, etc.—which we must navigate alongside our “actual” studies—we developed the following list of considerations (terms of engagement) for our team. This is not intended as a guidebook for others, but rather is a product and reflection of our own histories, experiences, and relationships operating at the intersection of those diverse interests/contexts as we have come to understand them. The writings of Indigenous archaeologist Sonya Atalay, and American archaeologists Patricia McAnany and Anne Pyburn, and the ethics of our own professional archaeological associations (e.g., Canadian Archaeological Association, Society for American Archaeology, Register of Professional Archaeologists) have heavily influenced these terms.⁷⁴ In listing these elements, we clarify the potential impacts of practicing archaeology. It allows us to understand the factors that shape our research, develop an awareness of local histories and inequalities, and recognize local knowledge and values regarding relevant biocultural diversity complexes.

Rights-Holders/Stakeholders/Interest Groups

	Maya Mopan	Maya Centre	Garifuna Communities	Other Maya Communities	Spanish-speaking temporary workers	Menonite communities	Belizean public	Foreign public	Property Owner(s)	Belize Audubon Society	Institute of Archaeology	Stann Creek House of Culture	Tourists	Tour Guides	Businesses	Belizean students	Foreign students	Archaeological community
SCRAP-sponsored activities since 2014																		
Engaging																		
Site tour	X	X							X	X	X	X				X	X	X
Virtual tour (YouTube)	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Alabama digital application (development)	X										X	X				X	X	X
Hands-on artifact displays	X	X	X													X	X	X
Experimental archaeology activities	X	X	X	X			X						X	X		X	X	X
Excavation opportunity (paid)	X																	
Excavation opportunity (volunteer/field school)	X		X	X							X		X			X	X	X
Discussions/consultations	X								X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Virtual reading group	X			X													X	X
Glyph workshop participation	X															X	X	
Day trips to other archaeological sites	X															X	X	
Community artifact inventory and site survey	X															X	X	

*Items accessible through our project website, in print at the Institute of Archaeology, or via print copies distributed by project

1. *Identify and engage rights-holders, stakeholders, and interest groups* (discussed above). Frequently revisit and update this list.
2. *Learn about and acknowledge aforementioned historical associations between rights-holders, stakeholders, and interest groups.* Such associations include territorial claims and existing government policies/acts and their potential impact on tangible heritage and associated research. By educating ourselves through listening to and talking with diverse community members and groups, we attempt to be better versed in local (and national) issues that may foreshadow situations that can and likely will develop in our region and to minimize the impact of our own action on such elements (i.e., do no harm).
3. *Help, when possible, to un-silence the voices/values of associated Indigenous and/or marginalized communities.* We can achieve this by relating the views and opinions of our friends, acquaintances, and colleagues from communities we research alongside, through forums such as this volume and in conversation with other groups.
4. *Continue archaeological consultation and engagement processes,* regardless of whether or not this is legally required, mainly through democratically elected and traditionally acknowledged community leaders.⁷⁵
5. *Enable learning from place whenever possible and for any interested parties, provided they do not infringe on the aforementioned situations/associations/legalities.* As much as is possible, we encourage visitors from multiple groups/communities to join us at the site to learn through doing (e.g., excavate) or being/experiencing (e.g., touring) or to visit through virtual tours.
6. *Promote activities that advocate for protected and multi-use heritage environments—including co-stewardship, anti-looting campaigns, ceremonial and educational components, etc.*
7. *Counter false narratives that are harmful to Indigenous and marginalized communities and the archaeological record.* Counter notions of pristine wilderness that are promoted by various entities—particularly as they pertain to tourist education—and pseudoscientific narratives. Honestly address beliefs that foreign researchers are “stealing” materials away from the country. Presentations at gatherings such as the *Fajina* are critical events where we can be clear about who we are, why we are present in the region, what we can offer, and what is beyond our scope, and offer ourselves up for interrogation/scrutiny.
8. *Constantly revisit and question Western notions of archaeological conservation and preservation, along with similar initiatives focused*

on “nature.” Question who such notions and actions are serving and how more meaningful consultation can occur in their development.

Research processes and preservation/conservation initiatives do not exist in vacuums. They cannot be separated from their use in the contemporary world, involve no clear formula of engagement (i.e., each situation is unique, requiring an understanding of both past and present processes), and take time to achieve correctly. All ideas and concerns—no matter how problematic—are worth contemplating and engaging with, whether you view tangible heritage (including “nature”) as part of your direct ancestry or current identity, or as a commodity for the purpose of the economic bettering of yourself, your family, or your community. If done correctly, requiring ongoing negotiation, these can be effectively woven together for ideal outcomes.

It is important to emphasize that, while we increasingly and consciously position the issues under discussion in this chapter toward the fore of SCRAP planning, we are cautious of falling afoul of the idiom that *people living in glass houses should not throw stones*. Reflecting on Table 4.1, while we feel we have successfully engaged with some sectors (in particular and not surprisingly, people in Maya Mopan and Maya Centre), there are definite areas for improvement. We can expand our efforts to include more transient populations (such as temporary workers) or local Mennonite communities, at least to the degree considered acceptable/desirable by these communities. At the other end of the spectrum, we can ensure that we are engaging with institutional stakeholders and interest groups to a greater extent. Perhaps most significantly, we have to remind ourselves that ethically and consciously engaging and collaborating with multiple rights-holders, stakeholders, and interest groups, while at the same time serving as representatives of the state, is not an event, but a “long-durational relationship” process.⁷⁶ This process must be continuously revisited and worked on to maintain and improve.

Calls for the democratization of archaeological research are relevant for ethical practice and speak to fundamental rights held by people in all communities, both Indigenous and other. We challenge

the assumption that archaeologists and governments are the only—or even the best-qualified—stewards of the archaeological record. Instead, we assert that both descendant and non-descendant communities have the right to be actively involved in producing knowledge about the past, and gain benefits from the research. Ideally, all processes must be transparent and not vested in the goodwill of a single planner. Participants should meet as often as possible to share different information, beliefs, and approaches that can be woven together (or “braided” *à la* Atalay⁷⁷). As such, individuals, governments, organizations, and institutions must be prepared to support a “slow archaeology” and an “archaeology of the heart.”⁷⁸ There are no singular voices regarding archaeological research and preservation, as communities are diverse both within and between, related to the diversity of lived experiences. Our understanding and acknowledgement of this must be via a local consultative and participatory-based approach, not relying on broad generalizations put forward in previous “studies,” and must be regularly revisited by us as opinions, views, and data change over time. The archaeologists’ crucial role is not to make promises they cannot keep or are not in a position to be making. Be honest. Listen. Do not focus on the commodification of ancient cultural heritage, at least not to begin with. Start with the goal of mutual and reciprocal learning about past, present, and future, and approach archaeology as a way of creating collective benefits for all.

Notes

- ¹ We want to say *botik* to the community members of Maya Mopan and Maya Centre, Belize, whom we have been fortunate enough to research alongside and learn from since 2014. Thank you to the various *alcaldes* and chairpersons we have had the good fortune of engaging with as part of SCRAP. We also recognize the essential contributions and permissions of the IA/National Institute of Culture and History Belize, Athabasca University, the University of Calgary, Northern Arizona University, the Stann Creek House of Culture, the Belize Audubon Society, Mr. G. Greene, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Thank you to the two

anonymous reviewers who provided helpful feedback on an earlier version of this chapter. Any mistakes are our own.

- ² “What Is CITES?” <http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/what.php>.
- ³ The Statistical Institute of Belize, *Annual Report*.
- ⁴ Awe, *Maya Cities*.
- ⁵ “The Stann Creek Regional Archaeology Project,” <http://www.scraparchaeology.com>.
- ⁶ McAnany, “Transforming the Terms.”
- ⁷ Bridgewater, *Natural History of Belize*; Graham, “Stann Creek District”; Nations, *Maya Tropical Forest*, 229.
- ⁸ Bulmer-Thomas and Bulmer-Thomas, *Economic History of Belize*; Moberg, *Myths of Ethnicity and Nation*; Simmons, *Confederate Settlements*; Smith, *History of Enterprise*; Thomson, *Belize*.
- ⁹ Graham, *Highlands of the Lowlands*; Peuramaki-Brown, Morton, and Jordan, “Maya Archaeology”; Sills, “Re-Evaluating.”
- ¹⁰ TMCC/TAA, *Maya Atlas*, 7–8, 112–13.
- ¹¹ Moberg, *Myths of Ethnicity and Nation*, 34.
- ¹² Palacio, *Garifuna*.
- ¹³ Saqui, “History of Maya Centre,” 18–21; TMCC/TAA, *Maya Atlas*, 110–11.
- ¹⁴ Lindberg, Enriquez, and Sproule, “Ecotourism Questioned”; Nations, *Maya Tropical Forest*, 244–46.
- ¹⁵ Rabinowitz, *Jaguar*.
- ¹⁶ Danziger, *Relatively Speaking*.
- ¹⁷ Saqui, “Community Conservation,” 43.
- ¹⁸ Parks, “Winning Title”; TMCC/TAA, *Maya Atlas*, 4, 7–8; Wainwright and Bryan, “Cartography, Territory, Property.”
- ¹⁹ Saqui, “Mopan Maya Science.”
- ²⁰ Canuto et al., “Ancient Lowland Maya Complexity”; Fedick, *Managed Mosaic*; Whitmore and Turner, “Landscapes of Cultivation.”
- ²¹ Young and Horwich, “Protected Area Designation.”
- ²² Gould, “Tale of Two Villages.”
- ²³ Saqui, “Community Conservation.”
- ²⁴ Moreno, “Co-Management Project.”
- ²⁵ Maya Centre resident, personal communication with authors, 2018.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*
- ²⁷ Lindberg, Enriquez, and Sproule, “Ecotourism Questioned,” 558, tab. 6.
- ²⁸ Maya Mopan residents, personal communication with authors, 2019.
- ²⁹ CBWS park warden, personal communication with authors, 2018.

- ³⁰ Lyon and Horwich, “Community Conservation.”
- ³¹ Rabinowitz, *Jaguar*.
- ³² McAnany, “Transforming the Terms,” 162.
- ³³ Atalay, *Community-Based Archaeology*.
- ³⁴ Taylor, *Being Maya*; Wainwright, *Decolonizing Development*.
- ³⁵ Wilk, “Whose Forest?”
- ³⁶ Peuramaki-Brown, “Ancient Maya of Alabama, Belize”; Peuramaki-Brown and Morton, “Maya Monumental ‘Boom.’”
- ³⁷ MacKinnon and May, “Ballcourts of C’habben K’ax”; MacKinnon, Olson, and May, “‘Megalithic’ Maya Architectural Features.”
- ³⁸ MacKinnon, “C’habben K’ax,” 3.
- ³⁹ TMCC/TAA, *Maya Atlas*, 113.
- ⁴⁰ Parks, “Collision of Heritage and Economy,” 440.
- ⁴¹ The Statistical Institute of Belize, *Population and Housing Census*, 68, tab. P1.9.
- ⁴² Thompson, *Ethnology of the Maya*; Woods, Perry, and Steagall, “Composition and Distribution.”
- ⁴³ Beyyette and LeCount, eds., *Only True People*; Tokovinine, *Place and Identity*.
- ⁴⁴ McAnany, “Transforming the Terms”; Wilk, “Whose Forest?”
- ⁴⁵ TMCC/TAA, *Maya Atlas*, 113.
- ⁴⁶ TMCC/TAA, *Maya Atlas*, 111.
- ⁴⁷ Messer, “Hot and Cold.”
- ⁴⁸ Walsh, “Skull of Doom.”
- ⁴⁹ Remme, *Crystal Skull Legend*.
- ⁵⁰ Inglis, *Traditional Ecological Knowledge*; Saqui, “Mopan Maya Science.”
- ⁵¹ Ramsey and Everitt, “If You Dig it.”
- ⁵² Peuramaki-Brown, “Revisiting Ancient Maya.”
- ⁵³ Peuramaki-Brown and Morton, “Archaeological Reconnaissance.”
- ⁵⁴ Dunham et al., “Field Report.”
- ⁵⁵ CBWS park warden, personal conversation with authors, 2018.
- ⁵⁶ Maya Mopan resident, personal communication with authors, 2018.
- ⁵⁷ The Statistical Institute of Belize, *Population and Housing Census*, 68, tab. P1.9.
- ⁵⁸ Saqui, *Ix Hmen U Tzaco Ah Maya*; Saqui, *U Janal Aj Maya*.
- ⁵⁹ Watanabe, “From Saints to Shibboleths.”
- ⁶⁰ Maya Centre resident, personal communication with authors, 2018.
- ⁶¹ TMCC/TAA, *Maya Atlas*, 6–7.
- ⁶² Institute of Archaeology, *Conditions for Archaeological Permits*.
- ⁶³ Parks, “Collision of Heritage and Economy,” 437.

- ⁶⁴ Government of Belize, *Ancient Monuments and Antiquities Act Chapter 330*.
- ⁶⁵ Government of Belize, National Cultural Heritage Preservation Act, 373.
- ⁶⁶ NICH, *Belize National Cultural Policy 2016–2026*, iv.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.
- ⁶⁸ Rowan and Baram, *Marketing Heritage*.
- ⁶⁹ Parks, “Winning Title.”
- ⁷⁰ UN General Assembly, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 6.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 6.
- ⁷² Ducady, “Gathering Public Opinions.”
- ⁷³ Atalay et al., “Transforming Archaeology,” 8.
- ⁷⁴ Atalay, *Community-Based Archaeology*; McAnany, “Transforming the Terms”; Pyburn, “Activating Archaeology”; Pyburn, “Archaeology for a New Millennium”; Pyburn, “What Are We Really Teaching.”
- ⁷⁵ Klein et al., “Future of American Archaeology.”
- ⁷⁶ McAnany, “Imagining.”
- ⁷⁷ Atalay, *Community-Based Archaeology*, 27.
- ⁷⁸ Caraher, “Slow Archaeology”; Supernant et al., *Archaeologies of the Heart*.

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