

Indigenous heritage

Passed to Present



P.O. Box 941 • Chapel Hill, NC • 27514

Newsletter

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Sarah Rowe, Program Director, Reports from the Field: Honduras and Guatemala

In September I traveled to Honduras and Guatemala to visit long-term partners and projects in the region.

I spent one week in Copan Ruinas, Honduras, with our longest-running partnership, Proyecto Maya. The Proyecto Maya facilitators lead workshops in primary schools in communities around the UNESCO World Heritage site of Copan, teaching children about archaeology and the ancestral Maya through games and creative expression. The theme during my classroom visit was Maya writing and epigraphy. Students got to try their hand at being Maya scribes by creating their very own codices.

A lasting impression of my time in Copan Ruinas will be the smiles of the children I was able to work with at those workshops. Observing them during their regular class times and during the workshops made it clear what a special opportunity this program provides for these students. Their regular classes focus on memorization and repetition, and don't give them an opportunity to learn about archaeology much less express themselves creatively. It was amazing to watch students gain confidence and display such excitement, even over the course of a single workshop!

After leaving Copan I traveled to Antigua, Guatemala to meet with our partners at the Riecken Community Library Foundation. Together we visited four highland Mayan communities that have worked with us during the last two years on a community heritage mapping project. Each community is pursuing its own focus to address their specific needs, all using GPS mapping software.



Facilitator B'alam demonstrates number glyphs in the schoolyard at Carrizalito.



I worked with J'Aniya to tap into her creativity and draw a butterfly for her name glyph. She rewarded me with this great smile.

Report From the Field, cont'd.

In Xolsacmaljá, project members outlined the boundaries of their community, located sacred shrines, and identified areas for reforestation. At San Juan La Laguna the community is using their map data to create a tourism development strategy and a disaster management plan. In Huitán and Cabrican, the two newest communities, mapping their territorial boundaries and resources is helping to build community solidarity in the face of incursions by mining companies.



Mayan shrine, in use, at Huitán. Located on an ancient mound, this shrine is one representation of the community's deep ties to this land.



Teenagers in San Juan La Laguna consult the mapping key before heading out to record important places in their community.

The variety of applications for the mapping project indicate the many uses of the technology and its ability to support community self-determination. I was struck by the far-reaching impact of a single piece of technology for supporting communities and building capacity for autonomous planning and decision making.

InHerit Affiliate Claire Novotny Returns to Belize

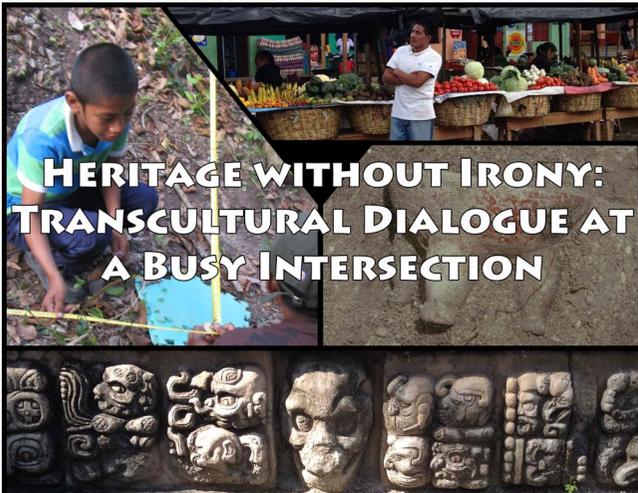
InHerit partner and UNC graduate student Claire Novotny will return to southern Belize during spring 2013. She will continue her archaeology fieldwork with the community of Aguacate and their newly formed Aguacate Conservation Committee. Students from Tumul K'in and members of the Maya Youth Coalition will also work with the community to conduct excavations and work to conserve the site.

Claire is looking for volunteers to support this work. If you are interested please contact her at cnovotny@live.unc.edu.





**Patricia A. McAnany, Executive Director,
Reports on Invited Lectures at Harvard
University and in the 13 Bak'tun Symposium**



On October 17, I gave an informal talk to a packed lunchroom crowd of Harvard faculty and graduate students. Entitled "Heritage without Irony: Transcultural Dialogue at a Busy Intersection," my talk covered the mission and achievements of InHerit and focused thematically on the intersection of archaeological practice with local communities and with remains of the past. I discussed the implications of new collaborative forms of scholarship for archaeology as a discipline. Judging from the lively Q&A that followed my presentation, the democratization of archaeological scholarship is a topic of great interest to Harvard students and faculty alike and also is a topic with applicability to areas as far-flung as northern Iraq.

Also in October, students in my Maya archaeology class and I joined forces to give a presentation to over 150 people on Classic Maya uses of the Long Count calendar. The talk was part of a larger event held at UNC, Chapel Hill, on October 25 and 26 called "13 Bak'tun." Noted Mayan scholar and activist, Victor Montejo, delivered the keynote address in a room overflowing with people who were delighted to welcome him back to North Carolina (a state in which he sought sanctuary when he was forced to leave Guatemala because his life was in danger). He assured us that 2012 was not the end of the world but rather the seating of a new and hopeful time for Mayan people. K'iche' scholar, Emilio del Valle Escalante, led an interactive discussion about time and creation narratives. InHerit partner Cristina Coc also returned to UNC to update the local community on the Mayan land rights struggle in southern Belize. More voices of Mayan peoples were heard throughout the 2-day conference, which culminated with poetry readings by two highly accomplished Mayan poets, Briceida Cuevas Cob and Rose Chavez. Attendees at the conference left with the clear understanding that Mayan poets and intellectuals are engaged with their past, their present, and their future.



In the Next Issue

In the next newsletter we will be announcing the recipients of our Community Heritage Conservation grants. We received over a dozen projects in response for our call for proposals, and we're excited about all the fabulous work being done in Central America to promote community-directed heritage engagement!



**Please Support InHerit
with a Tax-Deductible Donation**



As the year draws to a close and the holiday season is upon us, please consider making a donation to The Alliance for Heritage Conservation. As InHerit's sister organization and a registered nonprofit, tax-deductible donations to The Alliance help to support InHerit's mission and programs such as:

- Heritage Education through arts and games
- Curriculum Reform Projects in primary schools
- Community Mapping in Highland Guatemala
- Community Heritage Conservation Grants
- And much more!



You can make a donation on our website by selecting the program that you would like to support (in-herit.org/bazaar.html), or send a check to:



The Alliance for Heritage Conservation

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