



THE BELIZE VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECONNAISSANCE PROJECT

Waiver

The Belize Valley Archaeological Reconnaissance Project (BVAR) is a professional archaeological research project directed by Dr. Jaime Awe and his staff. Optional academic credit is provided for the BVAR field school through Northern Arizona University.

BVAR is a serious scientific endeavor that conducts and teaches archaeological research using methods and techniques that are widely acknowledged among professional archaeologists as standard practices. There are a number of legal and professional jurisdictions under which BVAR conducts its research and teaching. The staff of BVAR, as members of the Society for American Archaeology, subscribe to the Principles of Archaeological Ethics of the Society. BVAR conducts its research under the auspices of the Belize Institute of Archaeology and in accordance with all applicable laws of Belize. Credit for the field school component of BVAR is offered through Northern Arizona University and as such is subject to applicable academic policies of the University.

The learning and living environment

It is the common responsibility of all participants in the project to protect the learning environment. In the context of a field school the learning environment cannot be separated from the living environment. All participants will treat people, both participants and others, with respect and courtesy. In particular, BVAR is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination based upon age, disability, race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including sexual harassment and sexual assault) and sexual orientation.

It is expected that participants shall use alcoholic beverages in a reasonable and responsible manner that conforms to applicable laws.

Possession, use or sale of illegal substances will not be tolerated.

Conservation and protection of the archaeological record

The archaeological record consists of all of those things that constitute evidence of human activity in the past and the records and reports that document that evidence. It is the responsibility of archaeologists to conserve and protect the archaeological record. Selection of appropriate research strategies, documentation of all processes and finds, and operation within a clearly articulated scope of discretionary judgment are all key components in the exercise of responsibility for the archaeological record. These are particularly important when an archaeological process, such as excavation or removal of artifacts, is destructive of the primary record. It is the responsibility of supervisors at each level to be sure that the person given responsibility for a component of the project has a clear understanding of the objective and the scope of discretion and possesses the skills to successfully complete the task. It is likewise the responsibility of those assigned tasks to seek from the supervisor clarification or training as necessary. It is important to the learning process that the range of options be discussed candidly. It is important to the protection of the archaeological record that the decisions and instructions of the supervisors be followed at each level. Ultimate responsibility lies with Jaime Awe who is the Principal Investigator of the project.

It is against the laws of Mexico, Belize, Honduras, and Guatemala to take any pre-Columbian antiquities out of these countries. It is against the laws of Canada, England, the United States and most other members of the United Nations to import pre-Columbian artifacts. All artifacts discovered in the course of the field school are held in trust by the project for the Government of Belize.

Intellectual property

Participants are free to discuss and describe the work of the project but may not publish information regarding any aspect of project research or findings without prior approval by the Principal Investigator. It is the right of a Principal Investigator to have primary access to the archaeological record and to make public the finds and the interpretation of the finds of the project. It is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to accomplish this in a timely fashion. To meet this objective the project files a report on its activities with the Institute of Archaeology each year. The project also encourages the publication of interpretive material by staff reading papers at professional meetings.

Physical and environmental conditions

Project staff will make every effort to establish a safe working environment. Nevertheless, it is the case that there are hazards associated with archaeological research as well as those of the environment itself, and participants are responsible to take precautions to minimize those hazards. With respect to archaeological research, it is important to move cautiously around equipment or excavations to avoid damage to equipment or harm to persons. Appropriate care must be taken in the handling of tools, particularly those that are edged or pointed. With regard to the environment there are a number of areas that require caution. The weather will be hot and humid. Working outside may be strenuous and demanding. Participants must take appropriate precautions particularly with regard to protection from the sun through appropriate clothing, especially head covering and sun block, and through maintaining hydration.

Participants must also exercise caution with reference to natural hazards of the tropical bush and jungle. There are numerous plants that are well equipped with thorns, spikes and irritant oils. There are also animals that present a spectrum of hazards, some fatal. These include snakes, spiders, scorpions and ticks. When possible animals, both domesticated and wild, should be avoided; bites, stings, and contact with some insects cause unpleasant reactions. Medical attention should be sought if an insect bite or sting causes redness, swelling, bruising, or persistent pain. Many insects also transmit communicable diseases. Some insects can bite and transmit disease without the person being aware of the bite. Participants are responsible to take appropriate precautions including clothing, use of insect repellent and inspection for ticks. Being observant is the best way to avoid snakes. Watch where you are walking and do not place your hand where you cannot see that it is safe. Observe snakes from a distance. Point them out to other participants and notify your supervisor. Attempts to kill snakes are dangerous, often leading to bites on the fingers.

In consideration for being permitted to participate in the Belize Valley Archaeological Reconnaissance Project, I agree to participate in this project on these terms and understand that violating these terms may result in my dismissal from the project. I further agree to hold harmless, defend, and indemnify Jaime Awe and the staff of BVAR operating under his jurisdiction, employees of Northern Arizona University who are a part of the BVAR Project, and agents of each of them, from any and all loss, damage, and liability which I may incur or which may occur in connection with the field school in which I am being permitted to participate. I agree to these terms freely and understand that I may have this language reviewed by a counsel or advisor.

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____