

Prepared by the BRASS / El Pilar Program
Mesoamerican Research Center,
University of California Santa Barbara, 93106
Office +1-805-893-8191, FAX +1-805-893-5677
e-mail ford@marc.ucsb.edu

Community & Nature at El Pilar:

A Philosophy of Resilience for the Maya Forest



MESOAMERICAN
HELP FOR
PROGRESS

BIOLOGICAL
CORRIDOR

BRASS
EL PILAR

Copyright Exploring Solutions Past: The Maya Forest Alliance

© 2002

COMMUNITY AND NATURE AT EL PILAR:

A PHILOSOPHY OF RESILIENCE

FOR THE MAYA FOREST

~Table of Contents~

<i>Executive Summary</i>	v
<i>Understanding the Culture of the Maya Forest</i>	1
<i>The Maya Forest as a Garden</i>	2
<i>Community Participation and the Development of the El Pilar Archaeological Reserve for Maya Flora and Fauna</i>	4
<i>The Beginnings</i>	4
<i>The El Pilar Vision Unfolds</i>	5
<i>Managing One Resource in Two Countries</i>	10
<i>Community Opportunities</i>	12
<i>Inclusive Management Planning</i>	15
<i>Community Development Opportunities</i>	17
<i>Education in the Maya Forest</i>	19
<i>Asset Building and Livelihood Opportunities:</i>	
<i>The Be Pukte Cultural Center</i>	21
<i>The Way Forward</i>	22
<i>Reflections</i>	23
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	25
<i>Appendix I: Statutory Instrument for El Pilar</i>	26
<i>Appendix II: CoCEP Advisory Team</i>	27
<i>Appendix III: El Pilar Program Organization</i>	31
<i>Appendix IV: Ten Years Asset Building at Be Pukte</i>	32
<i>Appendix V: List of AdEP Members</i>	33
<i>Appendix VI: A History of the Community Participation</i>	34
<i>Appendix VII: Acronyms</i>	43

Bibliography.....44

COMMUNITY AND NATURE AT EL PILAR:

A PHILOSOPHY OF RESILIENCE FOR THE MAYA FOREST

Prepared by the BRASS/El Pilar Program June 2002

Executive Summary

Resource management and conservation are palpable themes of the day. Nowhere is this more keenly felt than the Maya forest, one of the world most biodiverse areas and among the last terrestrial frontiers. Over the next two decades this area's population will double, threatening the integrity of the tropical ecosystems with contemporary development strategies. Curiously, the Maya forest was home to a major civilization with at least 3 to 9 times current populations of the region. The forest survives and demonstrates resilience to impacts brought on as collateral of human expansion. The ancient Maya lived with this forest for millennia, and the El Pilar Program argues there are lessons to be learned our past.

Over the past ten years, the innovations of the El Pilar Program have forged new ground in testing novel strategies for community participation in the conservation development of the El Pilar Archaeological Reserve for Maya Flora and Fauna. This program touches all the major ministries beginning with Tourism, Natural Resources, Foreign Affairs, and National Security. Yet its growth projects farther. Working with traditional forest-gardeners impacts Agriculture, rural enterprise and capacity building overlaps with Economic Development and Rural Culture, education outreach and training are directly related to Education and Human Resources. There are few areas untouched by the program's inclusive sweep and more areas can contribute to its evolution.

The El Pilar Program recognizes the privilege it has enjoyed in the development of the community participatory process, the management planning design, and the development of a new tourism destination. The success of local outreach at El Pilar can best be seen in the evolution of the community organization *Amigos de El Pilar* (Friends of El Pilar). With groups based in both Belize and Guatemala, the Amigos de El Pilar have worked together with the El Pilar Program to build a participatory relationship between the community and the reserve that is mutually beneficial. The growth and evolution of this dynamic relationship lies at the heart of the El Pilar philosophy, resilient and with the potential to educate communities, reform local-level resource management, and inform conservation designs for the Maya Forest.

MesoAmerican Research Center, University of California, Santa Barbara CA 93106
Office +1-805-893-8191, FAX +1-805-893-5677 email: ford@marc.ucsb.edu

COMMUNITY AND NATURE AT EL PILAR:

A PHILOSOPHY OF RESILIENCE FOR THE MAYA FOREST

Understanding the Culture of the Maya Forest

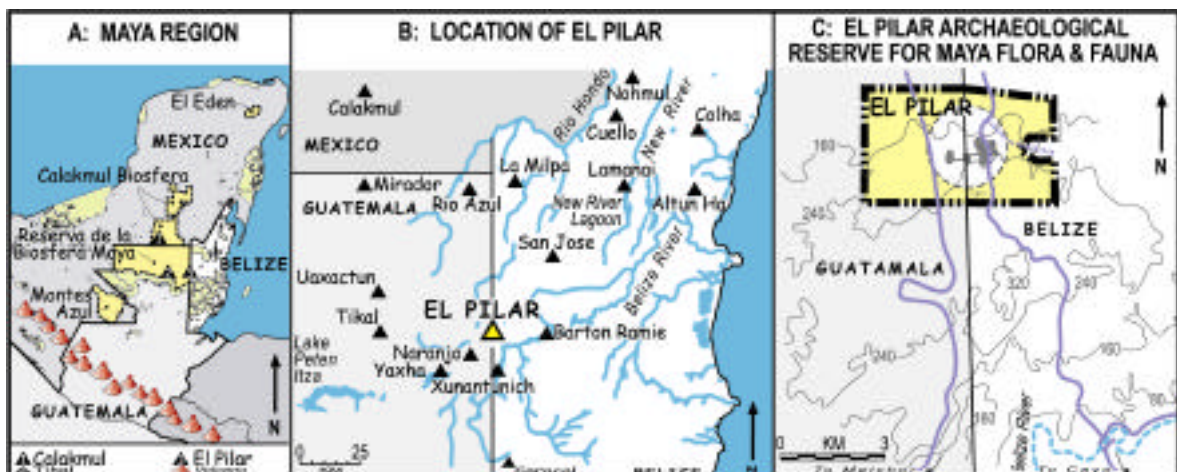
The problem of resource conservation has accompanied humankind throughout time. Resource limits have been encountered repeatedly and predictably. They have been identified in the archaeological record, recorded in historical documents, and are measured exhaustively today. The interaction between humans and their environment has played a key role in every aspect of cultural evolution. Archaeological research of earlier civilizations, including that of the Maya forest, has provided an appreciation of past strategies of managing resources. Can they serve to inform future conservation efforts?

The magnificent Maya civilization of Mesoamerica was once a flourishing farming society. Utilizing forest-dwelling animals and plants and adapting domesticated crops to their tropical habitat, they met their basic needs and managed environmental assets while recognizing environmental limitations. Evolving in the forest, the Maya prospered over many millennia based on a continuity of land use practices before their dramatic demise decline between AD 900 - 1000.

Today, population increase, deforestation, and monoculture farming strategies are bringing the current system to yet another threshold; change is now imminent. The Maya forest is disappearing as a result of contemporary land use strategies that have brought Old World strategies of pasture and plow to the tropics. This environmental transformation has been taking place over centuries. A 1552 town ordinance issued by Tomas Lopez Medel describes the transformation of forest landscape in the Yucatan under the administration of the Spaniards:

“Therefore I order that all the natives ...construct houses close to one another...And they should not sow any milpas within the town, but it shall be very clean. There shall not be groves, but they shall cut them all...so that shall be clean, without sown land or groves; and if there were any, they should be burned.” (Roys, 1952)

Agricultural practices ill-suited for the tropics are now precipitating the dramatic loss of the Maya forest as it has been known over the past decades. Today, the Maya forest of Mesoamerica is a biodiversity hot spot at risk, ranked 2nd of 25 endangered resources by Conservation International. Current projections for the region are ominous. The population is predicted to double over the next 20 years. Yet, this region was home to the ancient Maya civilization for thousands of years. In fact, estimates of the Classic Maya population at its peak suggest that from 3-9 times the present level of 25-50 persons/sq. km lived in the same area of land. Flora and fauna recognized to be at risk today are illustrated in Classic Maya vases and contact period codices. These species, therefore, have demonstrated resilience as they have co-existed with the ancient Maya, who sustained populations much larger than those in the region today. The demise of the Maya civilization, then, has left a record of long-term successes, short-term decision failures, and forest succession that holds great potential to be decoded with current data. The El Pilar Program has drawn together a diverse team of collaborators who are integrating scientific approaches from cultural, economic, and ecological disciplines to rise to this challenge.



Regional, local, and site-specific areas of concentration in the Maya forest

The Maya Forest as a Garden

Evolving from an archaeological base, the El Pilar Program recognized that clues to managing the complex habitats of today's forest are embedded in Maya prehistory. The ancient Maya prospered over millennia by selectively managing the environment to favor human

economic ends. This system thrived across the Prehispanic landscape. Indeed, the structure of the Maya forest is a relic of the dynamic relationship in which humans have played an integral part. This relationship extends back more than four millennia to the initial agricultural pioneers of the Maya forest – the heritage of contemporary farmers. It is the ancient Maya landscape that provides material evidence for sustainability in one of the planet's last frontiers: the tropics.

The composition of the Maya Forest today is reminiscent of the Maya's complex relationship with nature. More than 24,000 plants have been identified in the region, 5,000 of which are endemic. This high biodiversity is found in a forest that fostered the growth of a major civilization. This diversity is combined with evaluations of species similarity, indicating that the Maya forest is homogeneous as areas widely spaced are share from 53-71% plant species regardless if whether the area is a poor soil zone or good soil zone. This is dramatically different from the terra firma Amazon where study plots in the Amazon will rarely have more than 10% of species in common from plot to plot even where the areas are next to each other. This great diversity and general homogeneity is combined with a high economic component, with up to 90% of botanicals listed as useful plants. Even with a high productivity, the forest is relatively homogeneous and composed of plants that are useful to humans. When considered together, this suggests that human systems played an important role in the development of the Maya forest.

Describing a long-term human relationship with nature, linguistic terms in the Mayan language speak to traditional knowledge of the forest and describe a continuum of its economic qualities. *Kanan K'ax* describes a "well cared for" forest, evoking a concept of management. In fact, the verb *kanan* can mean both "to care for" and "to learn" in the Yucatecan Mayan language family, reflecting a recognition of the changing dynamics of an adaptive cycle in the ecology of a place. Other terms exist. For example, *K'ax il kab* refers to a forest with honey beehives and *Ka'kab K'ax* indicates a forest with good agricultural soil quality. The traditional Maya farmer's subtle appreciation of the environment implies that conservation is embedded in their language (Atran 1999). If human interventions selectively graded the species composition of the Maya forest to favor their economic needs over four millennia, how might an understanding of this relationship shape conservation efforts today?

The first step is to study the rise of the Maya civilization and to understand the traditional farmers of the forest today. Traditional agricultural systems of the tropics worldwide are as complex as the environment in which they matured. Mimicking the forest structure itself,

polycultivation evolved in the tropics to minimize instability, prevent degradation, and integrate both intensive and extensive labor techniques that maximize production. The result is mosaic land use strategy tailored to the economic needs of the occupants. In terms of this kind of adaptation, the Maya forest is a garden. Heterogeneous and biodiverse, the tropical forest gardens constituted the strength of the Maya community in the past, as they do today, by relying on the traditional knowledge of local farming households. The El Pilar Program is working alongside communities to explore and promote the traditional forest-garden as an alternative to extensive land-use strategies.

Community Participation and the Development of the El Pilar Archaeological Reserve for Maya Flora and Fauna

Deep forest jungle quickly enfolded the vestiges of Maya city monuments and houses after their abrupt demise after AD 900- 1000. The remains lay hidden for centuries beneath undulating terrain and dense forest canopy until the 1830s when curious western explorers entered the region. Since then, the area has drawn scholars who have been conducting ecological and archeological research that fills bookshelves in university libraries. Unfortunately, local communities have rarely been informed of the findings of these studies. Regional leaders, schools, and organizations in the Maya forest have come to recognize the educational vacuum that exists with regard to their own area and history. The El Pilar Program focuses on this void and is encouraging local communities to use, protect, and understand how they contribute to the Maya forest's evolution. The El Pilar Program has set in motion local collaboration for the inquiry of the Maya forest's past and its future.

The Beginnings

In 1972, Dr. Joseph Palacio and Harriot Topsey first recorded the ancient Maya site of El Pilar for the Belize Department of Archaeology. El Pilar's full size and extent would not be fully realized for another decade. Encouraged by Jaime Awe of the Department of Archaeology, Anabel Ford of the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB) made a trip to El Pilar in 1983. The trip prompted the establishment of an initial survey and mapping project named the Belize River Archaeological Settlement Survey (BRASS) carried out under the direction of Ford.

From that time on, visits to El Pilar became more frequent. By 1992, attention to El Pilar began to rise.

Since 1993, with the support of local governments, the BRASS program moved to carry out full-scale research at El Pilar, a major Maya civic center that sits astride the border between Belize and Guatemala. The research and development at El Pilar have brought many changes and opportunities to roughly 60,000 people in adjacent communities in Belize and Guatemala, including exposure to research at El Pilar, use of local labor and expertise at the site, and ongoing relationships with both tourists and international researchers. The original BRASS program's title was expanded to reflect its broadening spheres, and from 1993 onward, the project became "The BRASS/El Pilar Program" to reflect its archeological and anthropological vision.

From the outset of the project, Ford, along with the governments of Belize and Guatemala, have worked to ensure that the research and progress at El Pilar benefit the local community with new opportunities for economic and cultural development that are in step with the preservation efforts at El Pilar and in the Maya forest. Going beyond the scope of traditional archaeological research, the BRASS/ El Pilar Program seeks to cultivate sustainable, income-generating activities related to the burgeoning adventure and eco-archaeological tourist industry in congruence with viable agricultural techniques related to the Maya forest garden. To achieve this goal, the BRASS/El Pilar Program promotes and facilitates local involvement in the management and design of the reserve and embraces the idea that researchers have a responsibility to share the knowledge that they unearth with both the local and academic communities.

The El Pilar Vision Unfolds

In 1992, anticipating benefits of El Pilar related tourism in the region, the Cayo Area Representative Daniel Silva, along with the Belize Department of Archaeology, spearheaded initial clearing of plazas at El Pilar. The clearing opened the site's stunning main plazas to the view of the general public for the first time. Given the support of Representative Silva, the BRASS Project, led by Ford, initiated plans for a full-scale investigation at El Pilar in 1993. Detailed mapping and extensive excavations composed the next 10 seasons at El Pilar. The

results have established the foundation for an innovative approach to participatory conservation efforts in the Maya forest.

During these initial investigations, it became apparent that researchers were not the only people interested in the Maya ruins at El Pilar. Looters' trenches cut through plazas and temples, undermining the structural integrity of the ancient monuments and doing irrevocable damage to cultural remains. Initial efforts at the site would focus on the consolidation of the exposed structures to detain the deterioration of the illicit excavations. It was clear, then, that the site needed formal protection. In 1992 and 1993, initial consultations were made with officials in Belize regarding the creation of a protected reserve at El Pilar. Anticipating needs, the BRASS Project funded the installation of a local caretaker, Teo Williams, at the site.

Local community members in Bullet Tree Falls expressed interest in the research and investigations at El Pilar as work at the site gained momentum. The BRASS/El Pilar director, Dr. Ford, was also eager to include the community in development plans from the outset.



Early AdEP meeting in Bullet Tree Falls

Convinced that the survival of the cultural and natural resources at El Pilar depended on the caretaking of the local population, Ford worked to forge links between the BRASS/El Pilar Program and the community. In 1993 the local villagers established their first community organization, Amigos de El Pilar (AdEP). AdEP identified its mission as follows: to foster community partnerships in the creation and management of El Pilar, to develop new livelihood opportunities, to promote sustainable income-

generation geared to the growing eco-tourism industry, and to educate on the preservation of natural and cultural resources. The first board included the formidable Angel Tek as president, Fred Prost of Parrots Nest as treasurer, and the young Sandra Manzanero as secretary. The first formal member was Doña Toribia Manzanero who presented the first dues and Fred Prost generously contributed \$100 to the treasury. It was an auspicious start.

Since its inception, the Amigos de El Pilar has made significant strides. During 1994 and 1995, AdEP worked to transform the community's scattered plots of milpa farmland and hidden Maya monuments into the protected area of today. Addressing national and international

leaders, AdEP's activities were consummated with the first boundary established in 1995 and subsequently with the official designation of the *El Pilar Archaeological Reserve for Maya Flora and Fauna* (EPAR) by the government of Belize in 1998.

Early meetings of AdEP were held at the village community center. There was interest in establishing their own base, and with the encouragement of BRASS/El Pilar, the group was able to gain permission from the Bullet Tree Falls (BTF) Village Council for the use of a community lot at the corner of Bullet Tree Road and Palsow Falls Road. There had been some thought on the part of the BTF Village Council of constructing a police station on the lot. Given the importance of a Maya temple mound that lies on the property, however, AdEP's application to use the lot for a cultural center was accepted. As soon as questions about use and beneficiaries of the center were clarified, the land was opened to AdEP to use to promote community interests and education.

The first activity for AdEP, in collaboration with the BRASS/El Pilar program was the launching of Fiesta de El Pilar. Showcasing the cultural tradition of dance and music, the Fiesta drew more than 400 people. Support came from many arenas. Among the sponsors of this first Fiesta were Cayo BTIA, San Ignacio Hotel, Chaa Creek, Windy Hill, Novelos' Bus, Belize Brewing Co, Running W, Homestead Acres, the San Ignacio Town Board, BTF Village Council, Belize Arts Council, the Belize Torres Bakery, BRC Printing as well as Angelus Press, and, of course, Department of Archaeology, whose endorsement was essential.

Registered as an official Belizean community-based organization in 1994, AdEP received funding from The Natural Resources Management and Protection Project (NARMAP) in collaboration with the Cayo Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA), headed by Godsmen Ellis. NARMAP funds were matched by the BRASS /El Pilar Program support in order to complete the objectives. Enabled by the combined support of Cayo BTIA, NARMAP, and BRASS/El Pilar, AdEP joined in several community resource conservation projects:

- 1) Establishment of the boundaries of the reserve in conjunction with the Department of Lands,
- 2) Education for the community in resource management in conjunction with eco-tourism,
- 3) Identification and ecological assessment of the flora and fauna of El Pilar,
- 4) The concept and design of a marked-sign trail system for the conservation of natural and cultural resources,

5) Construction of a caretaker's facility and installation of a permanent caretaker for the full protection of the reserve. These initiatives would come to fruition over the following years with the work of devoted individuals and groups utilizing the combined resources of the growing El Pilar team.

In 1994, steps were taken to define the El Pilar reserve with the Belize Tourism Industry Association (in alliance with AdEP) and to increase public access to the site. With the continuing collaboration between AdEP and BRASS/El Pilar, El Pilar's first trail system was officially implemented and local tour guides were trained for employment at the site.

Maintaining a full-time caretaker's presence at El Pilar was essential. In 1995, the government of Belize took its first step towards the official protection of El Pilar by designating funds for the permanent installation of caretaker Teo Williams, who had been originally supported by BRASS/El Pilar. The BRASS/El Pilar Project continued to support two additional caretakers, one of whom focused specifically on maintaining the model Maya forest-gardens that are being developed at the site as part of the research component of the program.

Teo Williams' unique familiarity with the natural and cultural history of the area was recognized as an asset at El Pilar. Based on one and a half hours of recordings and field notes transcribed by the BRASS/El Pilar Program as a research endeavor, a collection of Teo's local stories were assembled into an unedited stream-of-consciousness manuscript in 1994. The work gained the attention of the Belize Ministry of Tourism and the Environment, which later sponsored the publication of an organized, reworked, and edited edition called *Teo's Way* with funds from USAID in 1995. A devoted scholar of Creole literature, Dr. Colville Young, the Governor General, hailed the book as an important contribution to Belizean Creole culture.



BRASS/El Pilar Program Field Director Clark Wernecke with local tour guides, 1995.

A truly cooperative, joint-effort among Teo Williams, BRASS/El Pilar, and the Belize Ministry of Tourism and the Environment – the published version of *Teo's* was presented to AdEP in March 1995. In a formal presentation that included the Department of Archaeology, Minister of Tourism and Environment, the Permanent Secretary, and the director of USAID, the government's contribution of 600

copies of *Teo's Way* for sale through AdEP at \$10BZ generated an initial base of revenue for the young organization and was an important gesture of the government's support for AdEP's mission. The confluence of academic research, community voice, and government recognition and support is yet another example of the expanding collaboration behind conservation efforts at El Pilar.

Community education got underway during these first years with meetings and workshops. In 1995, two mobile workshops, one sponsored by The Nature Conservancy and the other by the University of the West Indies (under the supervision of Dr. Joseph Palacio) were funded by the Belize Enterprise for Sustained Technology (BEST). The objective of the workshops was to train the local community in resource development and management. As a consequence of presentations by government officials such as Earl Green from the Forestry Department and educational specialists such as Joseph Palacio, AdEP gained an enhanced sense of the importance of local decision-making in issues affecting the group and their opportunities as an organization and instrument for progress.

The second Fiesta de El Pilar was the highlight of 1995, with continued sponsorship of the stalwart Cayo tourism enterprises as well as greater Belize. Angelus Press contributed invitations and flyers. Soft drinks and beer as well as pavilions were supplied by Belize Brewing Co. Novelo's generously provided transport from the riverside to the site. The logistics depended on support from the Belize Department of Archaeology, USAID Belize, and the Cayo Town Board. The Cayo Tour Guides willingly assisted in the oversight and tours at the site, based on our on-site classes offered during the field season. Sumptuous food and supplies were contributed by countless supporters among them: Chaa Creek, San Ignacio Hotel, Cesar's Place, Windy Hill, Celina's, Matha's Kitchen, and more.

With Victor Pott of the BTF Village Council presiding as the Master of Ceremonies, there was a greater participation from the villages. Over 800 attended the festivities, twice the number in the previous year, and Stewart Krohn of Belize Channel 5 News covered the event. Along with the spectacular dancers from Bullet Tree Falls and the Alma Beliceña marimba, the Belize All Star Steel



Dancers at Fiesta El Pilar, 1995

Band and the California Costa Mesa Quartet created a novel aspect to the festivities. Support was contributed from all quarters and the whole event ran from the energy of the volunteers who worked with the team for the enjoyment of all.

Managing One Resource in Two Countries

The influence of local education increased El Pilar's visibility within the community and acted as a catalyst for AdEP to begin building a presence on the national and regional level. With increasing confidence, AdEP President Marcos Garcia discussed the group's interests with key officials in Ministry and Department offices of Belmopan. In 1996, President Marcos Garcia was invited to represent the community in a bi-national workshop called the "Encuentro El Pilar." The "Encuentro" was the first region-wide workshop focused on El Pilar and was sponsored by CCAD, a regional Central American organization addressing environment and development. Representatives from Guatemala included Juan Antonio Valdes, director of IDAEH (Instituto de Anthropologia e Historia); Erik Ponciano, director of Monumentos Prehispanicos; as well as representatives of Belize Brian Woodeye, the acting Commissioner of Archaeology, John Morris of DoA, and Rafael Manzanero of the Ministry of Natural Resources. All of the participants had the opportunity to visit El Pilar and see its potential first-hand. Attendees identified short and long-term goals to move toward the formal protection of El Pilar on both sides of the border _ in Belize and in Guatemala. The Government of Belize agreed to have a Statutory Instrument signed within months and to continue to support the El Pilar Program. Both sides agreed to parallel Reserve management, with an NGO registered in both countries to coordinate policies.

The "Encuentro El Pilar" set the stage for the first Mesa Redonda El Pilar, or "El Pilar Roundtable" in Mexico City in January 1997. With funds from the Ford and the MacArthur Foundations, the BRASS/El Pilar project convened the Mesa Redonda, bringing together 28 professionals from Belize, Guatemala, Mexico, and the United States representing archaeology, ecology, law, and the government. These professionals, together with the local community represented by Heriberto Cocom and AdEP President Marcos Garcia, gathered to develop a vision for the future management of the contiguous reserves at El Pilar.

In a statement to fellow participants, President Garcia summed up the challenge for his community on the particular topic of eco-tourism and AdEP's mandate: "People of the village do

not have a clear idea of what ecotourism is all about...we need to be trained so that the impact of ecotourism will be positive and not negative. This is one of the alternatives we think should work in conjunction with Amigos de El Pilar, reaffirming that we have a future with ecotourism” (Ford 1998). Spanning one week, including plenary and breakout workshops as well as site visits in Mexico City, the participants of the Mesa Redonda El Pilar agreed and declared “Community-based ecotourism is the most appropriate development model for El Pilar, and the communities must be the primary beneficiaries of the resource.”

El Pilar continued to attract growing numbers of tourists. The annual Fiesta El Pilar was now drawing large crowds. In 1997, 1,500 people made the trip to celebrate the Fiesta, now destined to become a tradition. The numbers of attendees have increased ever since. Today the event is well known. Featuring local history and dance, and focusing on the cultural heritage of El Pilar, activities of the early Fiestas increased local awareness and regional visibility of El Pilar. It also brought the community together. Village council member Victor Pott, for example, got involved with AdEP after volunteering as MC for the Fiesta several years in a row, and is now an important member, spearheading educational efforts in the BTF schools.

Despite these successes in advancing the El Pilar Archaeological Reserve, there have naturally been issues that have had to be surmounted along the way. For example, not all the members of the village community supported the conservation efforts. Certain individuals and groups, particularly Bullet Tree Falls families accustomed to usufruct land use around the El Pilar area, either felt little connection to the El Pilar project, or felt that the project had not benefited the community, though it might in the future (Veach 1998).

The formation of the El Pilar Archaeological Reserve for Maya Flora and Fauna (EPAR) had created land use restrictions within its boundaries. As a result of the protective measures, some twenty individuals in Belize who had previously cleared land for milpa farming within the reserve’s boundaries were prohibited from doing so. Extractive use of resources, such as logging, hunting, fishing, and chicle harvesting, were also restricted. Some specific residents opposed the protection of the reserve altogether and, at times, protested its formation. Because these villagers did not view eco-tourist ventures as a livelihood alternative to the aforementioned extractive practices, they were not interested in involving themselves in resource conservation and management. Creating and sustaining income-generating eco-tourist ventures that benefit

the village community in short term and in long term dynamics remains a central theme in developing appropriate eco-tourism enterprises at El Pilar.



The AdEP Galleria after construction in 1995

Asking individuals in the local community to view El Pilar in a new light - as a more enduring resource worthy of protection - presented a challenge (Veatch 1998). It was becoming very apparent that this new legal status would have significant influence over the future of El Pilar and that more effort was needed to expand local involvement and support in the community.

Community Opportunities

To address the need to expand community outreach, in 1997 the BRASS/El Pilar team enrolled the support of the University of Florida (UF). Funded with a grant from the Ford Foundation, the UF team facilitated a participatory planning process that improved AdEP's overall effectiveness, enlisted more-extensive NGO support, and began to focus more attention across the border to communities in Guatemala. Outreach and alliance creation increased AdEP's ability to leverage support and helped to create a network that would provide an institutional basis for future participation in the management of El Pilar in both Belize and Guatemala.

In 1998, AdEP's center, an underused concrete block construction was re-vamped, painted, and opened as the "Be Pukte Cultural Center." The Center received help from Global



Be Pukte after initial construction in 1997

Roots and BRASS/El Pilar to construct the AdEP cultural center in 1995 and 1996. Stimulated by inputs from Help for Progress, the idea was to have a focus for the AdEP meetings and to feature handicraft items and local publications like *Teo's Way* for purchase. Be Pukte was designed to serve as the gateway to El Pilar, providing community

members access to the growing market for local goods created for tourism. The production of crafts, staffing, and publicity for the Be Pukte Cultural Center was organized with the enterprising AdEP members, chiefly through the initiative of an AdEP women's group that formed around the production and sale of crafts. Confidence and the ability to plan and carry out ideas are essential to AdEP's survival and success. Successful achievements like the opening of Be Pukte show that AdEP is continuing to build its capacity to work effectively.

One obstacle to effective community participation that was identified by the UF team was the need to increase AdEP's linkages to other individuals and institutions. As the UF team concluded, the group had built important bridges within the community, with local NGO's, government agencies, neighboring communities, and in Guatemala. With Ford Foundation funds, regional program advocates were formally incorporated into the El Pilar Program. In Belize, Anselmo Castañeda, a natural resource conservationist with an agronomy background, focuses on local and regional environmental issues. In Guatemala, José Antonio Montes concentrates on legal and political processes. Castañeda's interest in ecological sustainability and Montes' appreciation of international law transformed the team from a grass-roots effort to the regional program that it has become today. This new dynamic infused AdEP with new internal organizational ability and external visibility.



Be Pukte Cultural Center and Café in 2001

In collaboration with Help for Progress (HfP), a Belizean Non-Government Organization, in 1998, as part of the group's initial outreach mission, AdEP developed a community survey with the assistance of Maria Gamero of the Human Rights Commission of Belize. The group met with 150 families, roughly 60% of the households in the area, in order to better understand the attitudes and interests of locals with respect to the Reserve. The results of the survey showed that there was much greater support for both AdEP and BRASS/El Pilar than the group had anticipated. The survey also made the group realize that, in order to strengthen links to individuals within the community, they would need to give those individuals a *reason* to care

about and participate in their work with the reserve (Veitch 1998). Indeed, this is an ongoing challenge.

One way that AdEP is investing individuals with a reason to “invest” in El Pilar is through education. This is a fundamental foundation of the El Pilar Program. In order to expose locals to community assets, AdEP has sponsored trips to the Belize Zoo and to local Maya monuments such as Cahal Pech and Tikal, organized an El Pilar essay competition, held a BTF bike race, and hosted periodic BBQ’s at the site to focus local energy at El Pilar. An attractive scale-model of El Pilar was added to the Be Pukte Cultural Center in 1998. Spearheaded by Ken McMurry of UF Landscape Design, with the help of AdEP, the El Pilar scale-model provided a basis to begin the education of village students about the cultural and natural resources of El Pilar. This model has become a chief attraction for visitors to Be Pukte.

Also in 1998, AdEP began expanding its network further with new contacts in government agencies. When a group of displaced farmers threatened to burn land in the reserve, members of AdEP gathered the signatures of over 100 community members who supported the protection of the reserve; and then traveled to the capital to meet with government leaders to vent their concerns and circulate their petition. Through this effort and the subsequent support from the Department of Archaeology (DoA), the government stopped the destruction of the reserve. In this case, AdEP acted as a watchdog and a government advocate within the community to ensure that the national regulations protecting El Pilar were enforced. The DoA’s strong backing of AdEP positively reinforced this relationship and suggested that AdEP could embrace an

enforcement role in the future.

The BRASS/El Pilar Program developed a web site in 1997, and El Pilar was soon gaining international visibility. The site highlights the community’s collaborative efforts, along with research and managements updates. The site caught the attention of Charles Brennick and Jed Truett, chairs of InterConnection a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide professional, affordable Internet technology assistance to non-governmental organizations



Ford Foundation visits the Be Pukte Cultural Center 2001

involved in local economic development and environmental preservation in developing countries. InterConnection set up a website for AdEP in 1999 and integrates current information as it becomes available (www.interconnection.org).

Inclusive Management Planning

By 1998, protective reserves had been established around El Pilar in Belize and Guatemala. In 1998, a Statutory Instrument was signed into law by Minister Henry Young of Tourism and the Environment (SI #54 of 1998, see Appendix I), effectively establishing the *El Pilar Reserve for Maya Flora and Fauna* (EPAR) in Belize. In 1997, in Guatemala, the Reserva de la Biosfera Maya by Consejo Nacional de Areas Protegidas (CONAP), the government agency that oversees the Maya Biosphere Reserve El Pilar, issued a declaration for the *Monumento Cultural El Pilar para Flora y Fauna Mayas* (MCEP). Subsequently, in 1998, MCEP was officially certified as a protected area. Now both the Belizean and Guatemalan governments recognized El Pilar as two contiguous protected reserves. The next step would be to decide on the nature of the administration and management of the contiguous reserves.

A second Mesa Redonda El Pilar was convened to decide the issue. Held in Placencia, Belize, in 1998, the Mesa Redonda II (MR II) was the second of three international, multi-disciplinary workshops held as forums in which management strategies for the reserve are envisioned and devised. The clear accord between AdEP and



Participants of the Mesa Redonda II

the government representatives at the MR II was underscored by the latter's approval of the community's role in reserve management planning, a role that they suggested would be enhanced by university level training aimed at building local management capacity. Not only was AdEP an effective participant in the MR II and endorsed the drafted management plan, but they followed up by relaying the results of the proceedings to the residents of surrounding communities. The inclusion of the community – the group that has the greatest stake in the future of the El Pilar Archaeological Reserve – in the MR II augmented the viability and the credibility of the management planning process.



Traveling to the Mesa Redonda III El Pilar in Remate 2000

Given the success of the MRII, the Belizean NGO Help for Progress (HfP) and Anselmo Castañeda organized the first consultations with the community of Melchor de Mencos, Guatemala, regarding joint-participation in the management of EPAR. This became the basis of subsequent cross-border activities sponsored by HfP. The institutional framework for truly cross-border management emerged in 1999, when HfP formed an alliance with the Guatemalan

NGO Canan K'aax (*Guardians of the Forest*) to provide leadership to the nascent AdEP group on the Guatemalan side of the border. From these beginnings, Amigos de El Pilar, Melchor, would be officially registered in 2000.

In 1999, the Protected Areas Technical Evaluation Committee – El Pilar (PATEC -EP) convened to finalize the draft Management Plan for El Pilar originally developed at the MRII. The committee was headed by the DoA and made up of prominent conservationists in the public and private sector. The committee visited El Pilar and met with the AdEP group at the Be Pukte, where it reiterated the importance of ensuring that local communities receive direct and long-term benefits from EPAR. A similar finalization process was undertaken in Guatemala that led to CONAP's endorsement of the management plan. These proceedings culminated in November 1999 at the "Día del Sombrero Verde" (Day of the Green Hat) workshop in Yaxhá. There, governmental and non-governmental agencies from both Belize and Guatemala drafted a letter of intent for cooperative management of El Pilar. This significant document recognizes the importance of surrounding communities as local stewards and those most affected by development at El Pilar.

A third Mesa Redonda El Pilar (MRIII) was held in June 2000 in Remate, Petén, Guatemala. The objective of the MRIII was to formalize the institutional arrangements for the administration of El Pilar in Belize and Guatemala in legal terms. Initiated by the legal research of Montes and Thomas Ankerson of UF, the MRIII resulted in the creation of a temporary

technical advisory group called the Consultative Council for El Pilar (CoCEP) to support management entities in both countries. Part of CoCEP's mandate was to strengthen the participation of communities adjacent to EPAR in their efforts to promote conservation and responsible management of resources. In June of the following year, the first formal meetings of CoCEP convened, and a strategic plan for El Pilar that unifies the interests enshrined in drafts of both Belize's and Guatemala's management plans was approved (Appendix II).

In the spirit of the cross-border alliance that marked the proceedings at the *Dia del Sombrero Verde* and the Mesa Redonda III, a cooperative association has been established between AdEP Belize and AdEP Guatemala. Their shared goals are to develop community enterprises in tourism and sustainable agriculture that will increase their communities' stake in preserving El Pilar. In 2000, AdEP-Belize and AdEP-Guatemala undertook full organizational responsibility for the Fiesta El Pilar. The successful joint-organization of the event demonstrated that the two groups are able to work as a team, and is an encouraging precursor of what could be done in the future. Under their administration, new ideas are being incorporated into the Fiesta. In 2001, for example, two *Reinas El Pilar* were selected to represent El Pilar. The girls posed as El Pilar Chikin and Lakin, or West and East, at once drawing the attention of youths to El Pilar and symbolically dissolving political boundaries (E. Awe 2000). And, beginning in 2002, members of AdEP began referring to themselves as "AdEP Lakin" and "AdEP Chikin," further transcending boundaries and affirming new alliances.



Las Reinas de El Pilar, 2001

Development Prospects

The El Pilar Program, now fully composed of community, research, and management entities (Appendix III), coordinated a variety of field operations and community endeavors. To familiarize AdEP with other archaeological sites that involve adjacent communities in management activities, a series of mobile workshops, or *Talleres*, were organized. The Talleres were sponsored by HfP and lead by BRASS/El Pilar archaeologist Anabel Ford and Guatemalan conservation archaeologist Rudy Larios with support of the BRASS/El Pilar field team.



Raleigh International Volunteers

Participants of the Talleres visited six major archaeological sites in the Mundo Maya during the years of 1999-2000 to evaluate community and reserve strategies. The workshops demonstrated the different development options that community members have with regard to the formation of EPAR.

As an income-generating strategy related to the environment and tourism, AdEP began to develop the Masewal Forest Garden Trail in 1999. Don Heriberto Cocom, who signed an agreement with the AdEP to have this land opened to the public, privately owns the forest-garden. Working with Raleigh International volunteers from the U.K, a 1.5 km trail was created in the garden to highlight the variety of ornamental and medicinal plants. The Masewal Forest Garden Trail fuses tourism and traditional knowledge as a development strategy for the community. Intrepid tourists off the beaten path and eager students frequent the garden trail. Visitors to the Masewal Forest garden can enjoy the trail and plantings, purchase ornamentals, and learn about the nature and culture of the area.

As the community's relationship with the El Pilar Program matures, AdEP members are focusing their attention and activities on their development agenda. During the 1999 field season, for example, AdEP members began to develop the idea of expanding the Be Pukte Cultural Center to include a small café. Despite some uncertainty as to whether the necessary organizational and financial capacity to run this type of operation had been developed (Ageton 2000), the group received support for the project through funds from the Canada Fund designated by HfP. Volunteers from AdEP helped with the construction of the café, which doubled the size of the community center and provided water and sewer for the operations. Constructed to foster micro-enterprise, the Café Be Pukte held its grand opening in May 2000.

While it may present a challenge, the divergence of priorities also signals progress. It shows that AdEP is becoming more independent. Not only do they have their own vision of how their relationship with El Pilar should develop, they are gaining the capacity to turn their vision into tangible results. The ability to carry out plans independently is important not only to

develop viable tourism projects, but also to evolve into an organization that is prepared to handle more management responsibility.

Education in the Maya forest

Educational outreach is an important way of building a foundation of community support and a leadership base for the Amigos de El Pilar. El Pilar presents local students with the opportunity to study questions that are central to the management of natural and cultural resources and presents local farmers with the opportunity to learn better strategies of using their land. Indeed, the evolution of AdEP's potential and the scope of its vision may depend, in large part, on the ability to draw in and incorporate youthful voices.

The BRASS/El Pilar Program and local collaborators have made the development of local curricula relevant to environmental and conservation education a priority. Since 2000, Friends for Conservation and Development (FCD) has been implementing a series of workshops targeting teachers, community leaders, students, and members of AdEP. The FCD also published a topical guide, the *El Pilar Community Creek Trail* based on local history as well as a *Checklist of the Birds of El Pilar Archaeological Reserve for Maya Flora and Fauna*. As a result of these efforts, there has been an influx of schools visiting the El Pilar Archaeological Reserve, learning about its environmental philosophy. Over half of El Pilar's monthly visitors are primary and secondary school students.

To broaden educational exposure for El Pilar, HfP received support from the Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT) to develop publications on El Pilar. An education booklet *The Tzunu'un Forest Garden Trail Guide* was produced by BRASS/El Pilar and designed by a Guatemalan architecture student, Alejandro Paz, in July 2001. The recent publication, *The Trails of El Pilar*, a comprehensive 90 page book, debuted at the Fiesta El Pilar 2002 and provides an accessible overview of El Pilar in the context of the Maya forest.



Anabel Ford at Sacred Heart Junior College



BTF students learn at Be Pukte

In 2001, PACT along with the Ford Foundation provided seed funds to strengthen El Pilar's collaboration with the two local schools. These funds helped the El Pilar teamwork with Sacred Heart Junior College (SHJC) to promote a program in eco-archaeological tourism and with the University Of Belize Faculty of Natural Resources (FNR) to introduce the forest-garden concept into their curricula.

The collaboration of communities, NGO's and students has borne results. Hands-on field projects integrate the site into course curricula. Also, Sacred Heart JC teamed with Help for Progress and Canan K'aax to study and prepare a document on the carrying capacity of EPAR (E. Awe 2001). Likewise, in

September 2001, the UB Faculty of Natural Resources carried out a household survey to collect data on the use of forest in the area that buffers EPAR in Belize. They found that farmers in the zones adjacent to El Pilar need training to maximize the productivity of their agricultural practices. They also found the need for training to promote better resource conservation strategies and income-generating use of resources. The Amigos de El Pilar could be used as a conduit for this type of training.

To this end, progress is already being made. In December 2001 an agro-forestry workshop, facilitated by Alfonso Tzul from U. Kuxtal Masewal, was held at Be Pukte with AdEP Lakin (Belize) and Chikin (Guatemala) and their NGO partners HfP, Canan K'aax, the Belize Department of Agriculture, and the Association de Comunidades Forestales (ACOFOP). At the workshop, local farmers presented the findings of three farm exchange visits conducted between farmers in Belize and Guatemala that had been organized earlier in the year to share information and network. The group also worked to create a model of an integrated agro-forestry demonstration plot for the Maya Forest (E. Awe 2001). This model is the basis for promoting the forest garden concept of conservation. Through education, the research and community elements of El Pilar are converging to provide an alternative to the resource crisis faced in the Maya Forest.

Asset Building and Livelihood Opportunities: The Be Pukte Cultural Center

Over the course of the ten-year relationship between Bullet Tree Falls and the El Pilar Program, the Amigos de El Pilar have worked hard to develop their resource base. Their accomplishments are reflected in the Be Pukte Cultural Center and Café. The success of the venture is measured by the accumulation of the resources at the fledgling center and in the dedication of the key committee that is participating in the management of the Be Pukte. Community activities related to education, ceremonies and presentations, meetings, as well as cultural events and natural resource training all focus at the Be Pukte. It presents an ideal focal point for the community interests in the environment and has potential to grow in its visibility and influence.

The Amigos de El Pilar have relied on two principal sources of support: their own spirit and dedication, and partnership support from the El Pilar Program. AdEP worked with the partners to develop plans, participate in activities and training, draw in community interest, and to develop livelihood opportunities. Grants generated through the network of Help for Progress, Anselmo Castañeda, and the BRASS/El Pilar team has paired with local human resources, student volunteers, and professional volunteer inputs to develop the Be Pukte.

At the Be Pukte Cultural Center and Café, the assets have grown from a vacant lot where speedy pole-and-thatch “champas” were set up for a presentation, to the 20 by 30 foot, two room and porch construction with storage and lavatory facilities of today. The villagers appreciate the well-maintained grounds and plantings of the local garden display. Today, the construction and installations at the Be Pukte are considerable and are entirely managed by the AdEP. The building, the interior investments, the grounds facilities, plantings, fences, mirador, and the equipment have an accumulated value of more than \$80,000 US. These values have been invested with volunteerism with matching funds derived from grants and support of the network of El Pilar Program (Appendix IV). This is an innovative strategy for collaboration and represents a model with great potential in community participation and conservation in the Maya forest and beyond.

The Way Forward

As the visibility of El Pilar increases, new interests and opportunities are emerging. Regional and international agencies, not just the local community, are looking to up their stake in El Pilar. With a large resource base, these new interests have the wherewithal to eclipse local-level ability to promote El Pilar.

Recently, the InterAmerican Development Bank (IDB) has initiated a combination of projects that have put a spotlight on the Maya forest. Beginning with a sustainable development program in the Petén of Guatemala, continuing with a tourism development project in Belize, and pieced together with a Mundo Maya project focused on regional, ancient Maya cities, environmental management, and community development, the projects have been pulled together thematically. On the ground, however, the process is motivated by a variety of interests that can leave aside the community.

The wording of these IDB programs is explicit when it comes to community participation. This is underscored in the IDB project in Belize, which states that “... negative impacts ... could occur if economic benefits do not reach the communities [will] be mitigated by a community participation component directed at the villages.” (IDB Tourism Project Belize). Strong community based organizations with links to the broader local and regional communities have the potential to leverage these interests to their advantage.

A community’s incapacity to see beyond its own world-view can present a major obstacle to this growth. Clearly, demonstrating and advocating the conservation/tourism model is only the beginning of a greater process. Rethinking traditional and even progressive strategies aimed at incorporating local communities with entrepreneurship skills will need to be addressed by a diversity of inputs in the ongoing project of sustainable and profitable eco-tourism development. This is a key area that needs strengthening and support.

The government position in Belize could be more forthcoming in its support of the community. On the one hand, it implements international programs committed to these communities, yet its offices are understaffed. Without significant lobbying, it will not be in a position to advocate for the community. Non-governmental organizations, such as HfP, stand in a particularly advantaged position with long-standing ties to government and good reputations with the rural sector in the region. A coordinated effort between NGOs and the communities

they represent could make projects such as those proposed by IDB a great success. The caveats acknowledged by the international donors to build effective strategies must be followed up to insure the inclusion of communities on the ground.

There is reason to be look forward to greater opportunities. Major international agencies have vested resources in the El Pilar planning process. Private conservation and development foundations have committed support to the community participatory process at El Pilar. Regional agendas have acknowledged the potential for creating a local voice in the development process. And research funding has underwritten the growth of knowledge and infrastructure at El Pilar. These infusions total more than 1 million US dollars, apart from the wide contribution of human resources and energy that have helped to blaze the new course for the El Pilar model. This represents a collective endorsement of the innovative collaborative process happening at El Pilar.

While well founded, the institutional framework behind the El Pilar vision is still fragile. As the visibility of El Pilar mounts, threats to community-led development multiply. Each challenge presented has repercussions. Negotiating strategies are emerging from the community, but the process takes time. Establishing links to outside tourist venues is a central aspiration of the community process, but remains tangential to internal organizational dynamics. AdEP membership is broad (Appendix V), but it still needs a strengthened institutional unity to achieve its potential. As investments are made and risks appreciated, this unity has great potential to emerge. Each new external link that is forged reinforces AdEP's internal organizational structure (Appendix VI). The process is deliberate, however, and needs attention if AdEP is to keep pace with faster marketing schedules.

Reflections

The achievements and progress that have been made at El Pilar since its beginnings ten years ago are the result of an ever-expanding network of collaborators. Supported to date by annual funding efforts, the Program has established an eclectic base of support. Individual volunteers and researchers from all over the world join the work of long-term actors like the Belize Department of Archaeology, Help for Progress, Amigos de El Pilar, and BRASS/El Pilar. Committed local and international groups like Raleigh International, Global Roots, The Nature Conservancy, BEST, Conservation International, and the Friends for Conservation and Development demonstrate the inclusive nature of the vision.

The El Pilar vision is not static. As the reserve and its surrounding communities evolve, the vision adjusts accordingly; as more people visit the site each year, the vision grows. While plans evolve and new goals are developed, a certain commitment lays at the core of El Pilar – the commitment to uphold the integrity of the cultural and natural resources it was formed to protect. To be genuine, that commitment needs to be wholly embraced by the local community, towns, and cities. Participation is what makes the El Pilar Reserve for Maya Flora and Fauna dynamic, infusing it with the ability to educate, reform, and transform.

Acknowledgements

The work at El Pilar owes much to the people of the Maya forest and the governments of Belize and Guatemala who have provided the foresight to explore an innovative development scheme. They have explicitly given the El Pilar Program the privilege to demonstrate the many different ways to view the ancient Maya monuments. New views to achieve convergent objectives are worth an experiment, and in the case of El Pilar, we have something that has, at once, challenged the tradition, yet at the same time opened many doors. To imagine the Maya forest as one region, to appreciate El Pilar as one site, and to collaborate together with cheerful skepticism, has given us a new dimension to include El Pilar among the novel destinations of the Mundo Maya. It is to all who know that they are part of this story and to all those who will be soon.

BRASS/El Pilar Program
May 2002

BELIZE:

STATUTORY INSTRUMENT

No. 54 of 1998

ORDER made by the Minister responsible for ancient monuments and antiquities in exercise of the powers conferred upon him by section 28 of the Ancient Monuments and Antiquities Act, Chapter 259 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 1980-1990, and all other powers thereunto him enabling.

(Gazetted 23rd May, 1998.)

1. This Order may be cited as the

ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND ANTIQUITIES (EL PILAR ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESERVE FOR MAYA FLORA AND FAUNA) ORDER, 1998.

2. The area of unalienated National Land situate in the Cayo District which is described in the Schedule hereto and known as El Pilar is hereby declared to be an Archaeological Reserve.

MADE by the Minister responsible for ancient monuments and antiquities this 12th day of May, 1998.

(HENRY V. YOUNG)

Minister of Tourism and the Environment, Minister responsible for Ancient Monuments and Antiquities

Printed in Belize by the Government Printer

SCHEDULE (Paragraph 2)

All that piece or parcel of land known as El Pilar Archaeological Reserve for Maya Flora and Fauna containing ±808 ha (1,997 acres) that is situated in the area of Foster's Wood in the vicinity of Pilar Camp, which is between 6 and 8.5 miles North from Bullet Tree Falls along the Pilar Road. The parcel being now National Lands, vide plan of location, lodged in the office of the Commissioner of Lands and Surveys, Belmopan, and being more particularly described as follows:

Commencing at the western border of Belize near UTM Coordinate 19-07-180N/2-71-190E, being the southwest corner of the herein described parcel, thence along grid bearing 27° 08' 00" ±120 m to concrete pillar AF4 thence for 630.29 m to El Pilar Reserve South Boundary Marker SBM1, having UTM Coordinate 19-07-180N/2-71-933E, adjacent to the south ceiba tree, thence following the same UTM grid line 19-07-180N across the Pilar Rd. 2,090.25 m to the southeast corner concrete pillar Z22 at UTM Coordinate 2-74-023E/19-07-180N, thence on a grid bearing of 00° 08' 00" for a distance of 2,854.04 m to another concrete pillar GP7 being the northeast corner at UTM Coordinate 2-74-023E/19-10-034N, thence on a grid bearing 279° 08' 15" for a distance of 2711.73 m towards the north ceiba tree, across the Pilar Rd to another concrete pillar GC5 and continuing along the same bearing ±140 m to the northwest corner at the western border of Belize, thence along the western border of Belize south ±3,300 m back to the point of commencement.

EXCLUDING the following portion of land containing ±62 ha ±154 acres: Commencing at concrete pillar C13 having the UTM Coordinate 2-74-023E/19-08-316N along the eastern boundary of the El Pilar Archaeological Reserve for Maya Flora and Fauna, thence along that portion of the Stratton Lease (No. 1879/86) to concrete pillars 9, 12, 12D, as shown on entry n°. 1952 Reg. 1, to concrete pillar C15, having the UTM Coordinate 2-74-023E/19-08-881N, being another concrete pillar along the east boundary of the El Pilar Archaeological Reserve for Maya Flora and Fauna, thence south 180° 08' 00" back to the point of commencement.

- 1. UTM grid coordinates determined by Cayo Survey Department traverse and solar observation on 24 February 1995.
2. Stratton Lease N° 1879/86 was approved 3 March 1994 and registered under entry N0 1952.

Appendix II: CoCEP Advisory Team

CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL EL PILAR



Lakin ~ Chikin

One Initiative for El Pilar in the Maya forest

*International Coordination – Consultative Council
El Pilar*

Carta de Intención Para el Establecimiento del Consejo Consultivo El Pilar

Letter of Intent Establishing the Consultative Council El Pilar

Considerando:

Que El Pilar es un sitio del Maya Ancestral que representa un recurso cultural y natural compartido entre dos naciones contemporáneas,

Considering:

That the ancient Maya Center of El Pilar represents a single cultural and natural resource shared by two modern nations,

Considerando:

Que las comunidades que rodean a El Pilar, son los custodios de este recurso cultural y natural y desean preservarlo y a la vez disfrutar de un desarrollo económico sostenible,

Considering:

That the communities around El Pilar are custodians of this natural and cultural resource and wish to preserve El Pilar and its rich cultural heritage while enjoying sustainable economic development,

Acuerdan/It is therefore agreed:

Artículo 1. Objeto. Establecer el Consejo Consultivo El Pilar con el objeto de apoyar la administración desde Belice y Guatemala con el desarrollo de un plan estratégico, establecer mecanismos para la resolución de diferencias, dar ejemplos estandarizados armonizados, realizar estudios compartidos.

Article 1. Objective. To establish the Consultative Council El Pilar in order to assist the administrators from Belize and Guatemala with the development and implementation of the strategic plan for El Pilar, develop mechanisms for the resolution of differences, provide examples of harmonized standards and carry out joint studies.

Artículo 2. Atribuciones. El Consejo Consultivo El Pilar tendrá las siguientes atribuciones:

Article 2. Duties. The Consultative Council El Pilar will have the following duties:

1. Contribuir y asesorar sobre los planes estratégicos de El Pilar.
1. Contribute to and provide advice concerning the strategic plans for El Pilar.
2. Coordinar y velar por la implementación de un sistema conjunto de monitoreo y evaluación.
2. Coordinate and support the implementation of a joint system of monitoring and evaluation.
3. Apoyar la estandarización, dentro del marco legal e institucional de cada país, de las investigaciones, el monitoreo y la administración en El Pilar.
3. In accordance with the legal and institutional framework of each country, support the standardization of research, monitoring and administration in El Pilar.
4. Promover proyectos de desarrollo sostenible conjuntos.
4. Promote projects of joint sustainable development projects.
5. Búsqueda de recursos financieros y logísticos para proyectos conjuntos.
5. Look for financial and logistical resources for joint projects.
6. Apoyar la resolución de diferencias técnico-administrativas en El Pilar.
6. Support the resolution of technical/administrative differences in El Pilar.
7. Promover la capacitación de técnicos y comunitarios.
7. Promote training for technicians and representatives from the community.
8. Convocar a una Mesa Redonda cada dos años.
8. Convene a mesa redonda every two years.
9. Participar en eventos afines a las atribuciones de este Consejo.
9. Participate in events in support of the duties of this Council.

Artículo 3. Integración del Consejo Consultivo. Se invita a las siguientes instituciones a integrar el Consejo Consultivo El Pilar, debiendo designar un representante.

Article 3. Composition of the Consultative Council. The following institutions are invited to become members of the Consultative Council El Pilar through the designation of a representative:

Por Guatemala/ By Guatemala:

1. Consejo Nacional de Areas Protegidas, CONAP
2. Instituto de Antropología e Historia de Guatemala, IDAEH
3. Organización No Gubernamental (coadministrador del area protegida).
4. Municipalidad de Melchor de Mencos
5. Asociación de Amigos de El Pilar ~ Lakin, Guatemala

Por Belice/ By Belize:

1. Department of Archaeology

2. Department of Forestry
3. Non Governmental Organization (Co-administrator of the Protected Area).
4. Representative of Bullet Tree Falls Village/Town Board Cayo
5. Amigos de El Pilar ~ Chikin, Belize

Así también se podrá invitar a la Comisión Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarrollo, CCAD. The Central American Commission of Environment and Development (CCAD) is invited to participate in the meetings and activities of the Council.

Artículo 4. Presidente y Secretario. Al tener su primera reunión el Consejo Consultivo El Pilar elegirá entre sus miembros un presidente y un secretario, quienes desempeñarán sus cargos ad-honorem y por un período de dos años, pudiendo ser reelectos.

Article 4. President and Secretary. Upon convening its first reunion the Consultative Council for El Pilar will elect among its members a president and a secretary who will serve without remuneration for a period of two years, and who can be reelected.

Artículo 5. Reuniones. El Consejo Consultivo se reunirá por lo menos una vez cada semestre, alternando en cada país. Sus decisiones serán tomadas por consenso y se considera que habrá quorum con la presencia de la mitad más uno de sus miembros.

Article 5. Meetings. The Consultative Council will meet at least once each six months, alternating the location each year. The Council's decisions will be taken by consensus and a quorum will be considered present upon the attendance of half of the members of the Council plus one.

Artículo 6. Asesores. El Consejo Consultivo El Pilar, cuando lo considere conveniente, podrá hacerse asesorar de consultores y especialistas según la materia requerida.

Article 6. Advisors. The Consultative Council for El Pilar, when it considers it to be necessary, can retain advisors, consultants and specialists in accordance with the expertise it may require.

Artículo 7. Transitorio. Cuando ambos países nombren a sus administradores para cada sector, éstos pasarán a integrar el Consejo Consultivo El Pilar.

Article 7. Procedure for Establishing the Consultative Council. When both countries have named administrators for each sector, these entities will establish the Consultative Council.

Firmamos el presente documento, en dos originales de igual tenor y validez, redactados en inglés y español, en la Ciudad de _____ el día _____ del mes _____ del año 2000.

Signed in two equally identical originals, redacted this _____ day of _____, 2000.

Administrator de El Pilar – Guatemala

Administrator of El Pilar – Belize

List of Attendants at the 1st meeting of the Consultative Council of El Pilar CoCEP held at the San Ignacio Resort Hotel on June 14, 2001

Name	Organization/Group
Dr. Anabel Ford	MARC/UCSB Santa Barbara Ca. 93106 USA
Julia Flores de Ortiz	Ciudad Flores Petén Guatemala
Mario Mancilla	Canan Kaax Petén Guatemala
Paul J. Francisco	Department of Archaeology Belmopan Belize
M. Joyce Tun	Department of Archaeology Belmopan Belize
C. Rudy Larios V.	4. Calle 13-62 Zona Villa de Mixco, Guatemala. C.A .
Eduardo Gonzales Vassaux	3 Ave "A" 3-51 Zona 1 Guatemala. C.A.
Henry Atherley	Belize Tourism Board Central Bank Building Level 2, Belize City, Belize CA Tel:02-31913
Ambassador James S. Murphy	Ministry of Foreign Affairs P.O Box 174 Belmopan, Belize Tel: 501-8-22167 and 501-8-22322
Enrique Morfin G	ADEP Melchor 9265413
Orlando Pulido	HFP-BRASS
Heriberto Cocom	ADEP Lakin,
Miguel Pereira	Canan Kaax
Elias A. Awe	Help for Progress
Rick August	Help for Progress
Oswaldo Sabido	Min. Natural Resources, Environment and Industry
Anselmo Castaneda	Meso American Biological Corridors Project
Cecilia Neal	Cayo Adventure Tours Cayo Belize
Dr. John Morris	National Institute of Culture and History Belize
George Thompson	Department of Archaeology
Dr. Joseph Palacio	University of the West Indies
Fr. Richard Walz	Santa Familia Monastery
Ninni Berger	CI, Guatemala City

Appendix III: Collaborative Organization

El Pilar Team

El Pilar Program

~ UCSB Main Office: Anabel Ford Director

1. Coordinate interdisciplinary research projects as well as activities, agendas and meetings for El Pilar
2. Assist in and manage team research, development, and coordination for El Pilar and the Maya forest internationally.

~ Belize Advocate: Anselmo Castañeda Regional Environment

1. Presentation of the El Pilar conservation model in the context of the analyses of Mesoamerican biological corridors.
2. Promotion of the El Pilar model among key government and NGO officials involved in culture and nature.

~ Guatemala Advocate: José Antonio Montes International Law

1. Regional and international analyses of legal and political structure for management of shared cultural and natural resources.
2. Research and drafting of legal position papers for regional distribution and formal documents for agreements.

Community Participation

~ Amigos de El Pilar: Lakin/Chikin (Belize/Guatemala)

1. Community based organization promoting local participation in the management and benefits related to the conservation of resources at El Pilar.
2. Actively involved in expanding participation in conservation, especially the youth
3. Maintain cross-border community projects at El Pilar.

Community Accompaniment

NGO Program Partners: Community and Conservation Management

~ Help for Progress/Belize: Elias Awe, Rick August, Melanie Santiago

1. Asset building for rural community development in the Maya forest.
2. Social and environmental advocacy for community programs.
3. Linkage empowerment between rural communities and local government as well as local and international NGOs

~ Canan K'aax/ Guatemala: Mario Mancilla, Ramon Zetina

1. Resource conservation management and environmental research in coordination with community participation.
2. Environmental research inventory, monitoring.
3. Management linkage for communities and resource conservation.

*Appendix IV: Ten Years Asset Building
Supported by the El Pilar Program
at the Be Pukte Cultural Center ~ Bullet Tree Falls*

Fixed Assets in US \$

Cultural Center Structure 20 ft by 30 ft	
2 rooms w/ communicating door	
Adjoining full length porch	38,000
Toilet	8,000
Storage	3,000
Kitchen equipment	9,400
Fence	1,600
Garden planting	9,000
Mirador	800
Walkway	1,100
Fences	1,800
Sings	500
Masewal Forest Garden Trail	8,000
<i>Subtotal</i>	<u>\$ 81,200 US</u>

Support Supplies and Equipment

Scale Model	2,700
Furnishings	1050
Trimmer Mower	300
Cooking Utensils	2,330
Table ware	2,500
Tables and Chairs	800
Supplies and Equipment	1,600
<i>Subtotal</i>	<u>\$ 8,580 US</u>

GRAND TOTAL **\$ 89,780 US**