

Kelli Breeden

2015 Jane C Waldbaum Scholarship Recipient

Chan Chich Field School in Maya Archaeology



A pair of cabanas at the Chan Chich Resort, located in the main plaza of the ancient Maya city
photo- K. Breeden 06/20/2015

With the funds granted by the Jane C Waldbaum scholarship, I was able to participate in the Chan Chich Field School in Maya Archaeology run by Texas Tech University in Chan Chich, Belize. I applied the scholarship fund directly to the tuition of the program. For four weeks with 10 other students of archaeology, anthropology, and other related fields, I helped with two graduate research projects in relation to the Classical Maya city of Chan Chich.

With alternating days of field excavation, lab work, and trips to other nearby archaeological sites, this field school provided experience in the planning, setting up, physically excavating, interpreting, and closing of an archaeological project. We were able to study various types of artifacts, from architectural features, such stone benches and walls, to complete lithic tools and flakes, to multiple forms and styles of pottery. I was even fortunate enough to observe visiting ceramicists analyze sherds that we had excavated during our time in Belize. The projects we participated in were very different in location, focus and context. The first: a study of the use

and material deposits of buildings in relation to causeways known to have spiritual meaning to the Classic Maya. The second looked for evidence of cultural continuity of the Maya within a Historic context, more specifically during the British logging era in the 19th century CE. With different soils, excavation techniques, and goals for each project, we were given a more rounded experience at an archaeological site.

The group's trips to Lamanai, the second largest Classical Maya city in Belize, and Tikal in Guatemala, one of the largest urban centers of the Pre-Columbian Maya world, provided perspective on our work through looking at and exploring the recreated plazas, temples and causeways. We could find direct correlations between the standing structures and the collapse and remaining architecture within our own site.

Dr. Houk and the rest of the staff at the Chan Chich Field School in Maya Archaeology provided an extremely positive and educational experience in the fundamentals of field archaeology. I plan on taking this experience with me into my graduate education and hope to be able to run similar projects of my own to continue the study of the Maya, their culture and their heritage in today's populations.



My fellow students uncover a stone wall the served as the outer wall of building A53.
photo - K.Breeden 07/01/2015