



Tat Rigoberto Itzep Chanchovac (on far left) leads a K'iche' Wajshak'ib B'atz' (Maya New Year) ritual in Momostenango, Guatemala. The photo, by IMS newsletter Jim Reed, appears as the June centerfold in the 2021 Maya Calendar (MRC).

<span style="font-size: 2em; color: red; font-weight: bold; margin: 0 20px;">June 2021</span>						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	7 K'AT	8 KAN	9 KAME	10 KEJ	11 Q'ANIL	12 TOJ
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
13 TZ'I'	1 B'ATZ'	2 E'	3 AJ	4 I'X	5 TZ'IKIN	6 AJMAQ
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
7 NO'J	8 TIJAX	9 KAWOQ	10 AJPU	11 IMOX	12 IQ'	13 AQ'AB'AL
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
1 K'AT	2 KAN	3 KAME	4 KEJ	5 Q'ANIL	6 TOJ	7 TZ'I'
28	29	30				
8 B'ATZ'	9 E'	10 AJ				

The month of June in Tat Rigoberto Itzep Chanchovac's K'iche' Maya Calendar (this year in English and K'iche'). Request a PDF copy of Tat Rigo's 2021 K'iche' calendar from editor Jim Reed at: [mayaman@bellsouth.net](mailto:mayaman@bellsouth.net)



# IMS EXPLORER

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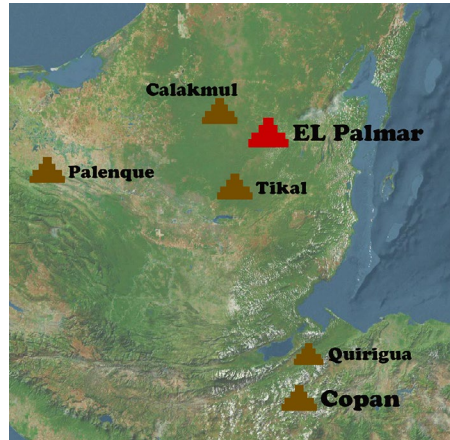
June 16, 2021 • Modern K'iche' Maya Long Count: 0.0.8.10.19 • 9 Kawak 17 Zotz • G3

## El Palmar and Copan by Janice Van Cleve

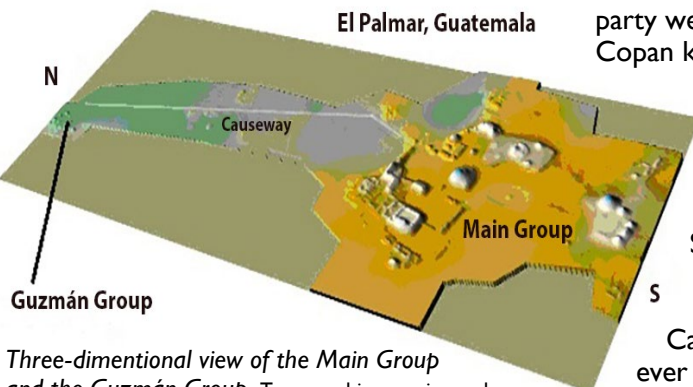
An article in *Latin American Antiquity* (Feb 2021) – The Life Course of a Standard-Bearer: A Nonroyal Elite Burial at the Maya Archaeological Site of El Palmar, Mexico – is a forensic evaluation by Kenichiro Tsukamoto and Jessica Cerezo-Roman. The evaluation is very detailed, but one statement grabbed me: “The inscriptions depict a standard-bearer who played the role of ambassador in negotiating political alliances between El Palmar, Copan, and Calakmul.” As a biographer of Eighteen Rabbit and researcher of Copan royal inscriptions, I had to investigate.

Fortunately, Tsukamoto and Olguin published the inscriptions in *Maya Archaeology* 3 (2014), complete with transcriptions, translations, and even photos of each glyph block with drawings of same. These come from a six-step hieroglyphic stairway in front of the tomb belonging to Ajpach Waal, the person buried below it. Step 1 includes the sentence “on June 24, 726 CE, an El Palmar

The location of El Palmar among other grand Maya sites.



Illuminated at night, Structure GZ1, and the Hieroglyphic Stairway in the Guzmán Group at El Palmar. Photo: Kenichiro Tsukamoto (see ref for 2014, pg. 4). Stairway levels labeled by Janice Van Cleve.



Three-dimensional view of the Main Group and the Guzmán Group. Topographic mapping and 3D modeling: Kenichiro Tsukamoto, and Javier López Camacho. Labeled by Janice Van Cleve.

party went up to Copan, to the Copan king Waxaklajuun Ubaah K'awiil at night.” It goes on to list various Copan Gods which are the same ones Eighteen Rabbit personified on his Stela 4, dedicated on September 15, 726, the same date this stairway was carved. Copan was allied with Calakmul’s arch rival, Tikal, ever since Yax Kuk Mo established his dynasty there in 427 CE. In fact, *continued on page 4*



Jim Reed, Editor

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### Inside this issue:

“Old Chichen”—a New Area of Chichen Itza Will Open in 2022 2

Rediscovering Egmont Key with Digital Technologies, with Laura K. Harrison 3

El Palmar and Copan, by Janice Van Cleve (cont. from pg. 1) 4

Unbundling the Past: Events in Ancient and Contemporary Maya History for June, by Zach Lindsey; IMS Membership Application 5

Ritual Deposit Discovered in a Chaltun at Witzna, by Kaitlin R. Ahern 6

IMS Live Streaming Events 7,8

Check Out the Route of the Maya Train 8

### IMS Streaming:

**June 16, 8 pm ET**  
**Digital Approaches to the Past, Present, and Future of Egmont Key, Florida**  
with **Laura Harrison**

**June 23, 8 pm ET**  
**From the Ground Up – Preclassic Construction Methods, Excavations, and Floors in the Holmul Region**  
with **Kaitlin Ahern**

The new section will be open by reservation only. Plan ahead, folks!

## “Old Chichen” – a New Area of Chichen Itza Will Open in 2022

INAH Mexico (National Institute of Anthropology and History) has announced that a new section of the Chichen Itza archaeological site will open to the public in 2022.

Called Chichén Viejo, or “Old Chichen”; the new section is set deep in the outback in an area 900 meters south of El Castillo, the towering calendrically-inspired pyramid that is the largest structure of the ancient Maya metropolis.

“This new area represents a formidable experience because it’s embedded in the jungle,” said Marco Antonio Santos, director of the Chichen Itza site.

“It’s a kind of neighborhood that contains temples and palaces whose decorations evoke scenes that are possibly from the *Popol Vuh*,” he noted, referring to a text that recounts the mythology and history of the K’iche’ Maya of the Guatemalan Highlands. In other words, “scenes from the creation of the cosmos. Here [in Chichén Viejo] priests officiated at, and performed rituals related to fertility and primal divine actions.”

Santos explained that exploration work in the new section was halted in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, but will resume in 2021 to prepare it for its opening to the public next year.

However, vegetation covering some of the structures will not be removed. In the past, vegetation at archaeological sites was completely removed, but “we realized that was a serious mistake, because we were removing the ‘skin’ that protected the sites,” Santos reported.

“What we’re seeking now is a balance between archaeological research and the protection of the existing landscape, flora and fauna. We want people to see ...a Maya palace in the middle of the original flora... with the [coronavirus]

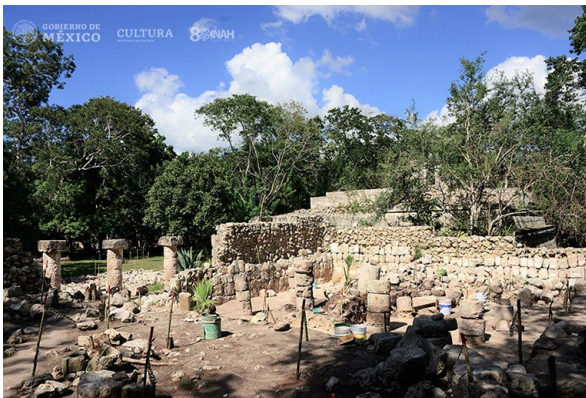
lockdown, the jungle



Old Chichen is set deep in the jungle, and word is, the vegetation will be left in its natural state. Credit: INAH.



Plazas, platforms, sculptures, and newly reconstructed structures to explore! Credit: INAH.



More than 50 workers from San Felipe Nuevo, Piste, and Xcalacop communities in Tinum, are contributing to return the splendor to Chichen Itza with an investment of three million pesos. Credit: Mauricio Marat, INAH

has regenerated. We’ve seen deer and jaguars return to Chichen Itza.”

Santos shared that people interested in visiting Chichén Viejo will have to make a reservation, because entry will be limited to numbers well below those who usually visit the main site on a daily basis.

He explained that Chichen Itza was an enormous city covering around 20 square kilometers and that even with the opening of the new section, only 3% will be accessible to the public. Santos noted that about 2.5 million people visited the site in 2019, but numbers fell



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You can never get enough of those Chacmoos!! Credit: INAH.

to approximately 950,000 last year due to the pandemic. He predicted that annual visitor numbers will increase significantly once the Maya Train railroad, which will have a station near Chichen Itza, is operational. (See page 8 for more about the Maya Train.)

**Sources:** INAH Mexico.

An article with photos was released February 1, 2021, at: <https://www.milenio.com/cultura/arte/chichen-itza-abriran-nuevos-templos-en-medio-de-la-selva>

Another article was posted at: <https://mexiconewsdaily.com/news/chichen-itza-to-open-new-site-new-experience-in-2022/>





Fresh from the desk of our June 23rd IMS Live Zoomer!

# Rediscovering Egmont Key with Digital Technologies

by **Laura K. Harrison**  
University of South Florida



Surviving structures on Egmont Key. Image: "Mellon RGB3 Blend 2", by Laura.

Scanner on an Egmont Key beach; plus Laura!

As the *Grey Cloud* steamer departed the shores of Egmont Key, Florida, there was turmoil on land and at sea. On mainland Florida, deadly skirmishes over land between Seminoles and the U.S. Army continued, as the Third Seminole War came to a close. On board the ship, a crew of U.S. Army soldiers maintained a close watch over 164 members of the Seminole Tribe who were captured during the conflict. It's no surprise there was tension on the ship. The Seminoles were bound for unknown lands west of the Mississippi river, where they would be forced to resettle.

The *Grey Cloud* left Egmont Key on May 4, 1858. Among the Seminole prisoners was Emateloys (Polly Parker) and her daughter, Lucy Tiger. Several days later, when the *Grey Cloud* docked at St. Marks, south of Tallahassee, Emateloys and Lucy Tiger disembarked to search for medicinal plants. They escaped and survived a perilous 400-mile overland journey back to their homeland south of Lake Okeechobee. Emateloys lived to be over 100 years old, and her progeny produced many children that repopulated the tribe (Montgomery 2013). Today, Egmont Key is a place of reflection for tribal members – especially those who trace their ancestry to her, her daughter, and granddaughters.

The story of Emateloys is all but invisible to the 200,000 people who visit Egmont Key each year, because interpretive materials on the island are scarce. The Seminole Tribe is eager to share this story using digital technologies. Last year, my colleague Dr. Brooke Hansen (an anthropologist who does participatory action research with Native Americans) and I met with the Seminole Tribe at the Big Cypress reservation. Together, we designed a research project that would make use of the 3D



Enhanced LiDAR image of the main area of Egmont Key, including the lighthouse (detail below).

technologies at the lab I direct (Access 3D Lab at the University of South Florida), to give voice to this painful history. Along the way, we would also document a lighthouse built in 1858 and military batteries from the Spanish-American War (1898-1920), to contextualize the Seminole story on Egmont Key.

In 2019, we set off from the Fort DeSoto Fishing Pier for a 30-minute ferry ride with fifteen team members and three Faro Focus laser scanners in tow. For three weeks, my team and I positioned the scanners inside, around, and on top of historic buildings to create high-resolution three-dimensional point cloud models. While the exact area that the Seminoles were imprisoned remains unknown- we scanned a cemetery in which five Seminoles had been buried.

In 1912, these remains were disinterred and reburied in the National Cemetery in St. Augustine. Scanning this site serves as a reminder of Seminole presence on the island. Last year, our fieldwork at Egmont Key was suspended due to COVID-19, so my team and I worked on developing a pop-up touchscreen exhibit and a virtual reality experience about the island's history. This year, we have been fortunate to return and continue scanning on the island.

We're currently focusing on



virtualizing the Coast Guard Museum and the Guardhouse, and plan to utilize the digital models to revamp exhibit spaces in these historic buildings within the framework of sustainable heritage tourism.

Conducting 3D scanning of Egmont Key's historic remains is just the first step in a sustained, multi-year digital storytelling effort. In consultation with the Seminoles, Dr. Hansen and I are developing an immersive virtual tour of the island, which will allow users to autonomously navigate Egmont Key's history in a virtual space populated with audio recordings of Seminole stories, historic photos, and interactive 3D models. Our goal is to make this content available for generations, to sustain the legacy of Emateloys, Lucy Tiger and the Seminole Tribe.

**IMS Program note:**  
Live zoom with Laura Harrison  
on June 16!





Operations at Structure GZ1 of the Guzmán Group in 2010-2011, featuring excavation of the Hieroglyphic Stairway. Photo: Kenichiro Tsukamoto.

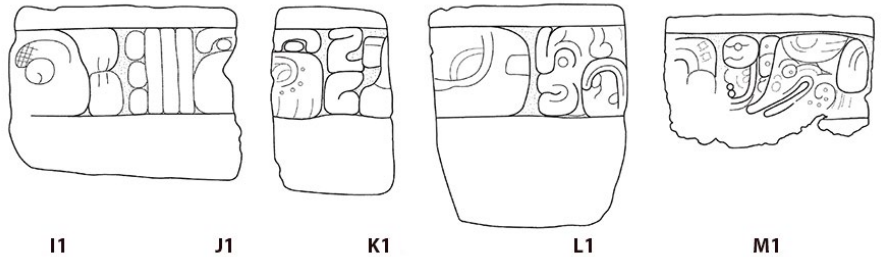
## El Palmar and Copan by Janice Van Cleve

continued from page 1

In his book *Lightning Warrior*, Matthew Looer makes a strong case for Calakmul's hand in Eighteen Rabbit's capture and death in 738 CE. Ambassadors and merchants often visited other cities and the *kujul ahauob* of Tikal, Palenque, and Calakmul, did visit Copan as Eighteen Rabbit's guests to witness the events of 730/731 CE as recorded on Copan Stela A. Did Ajpach Waal have a role in setting up this visit? The inscriptions do not tell us.

Eighteen Rabbit is mentioned again on Step 5 at I1–M1 which reads: *ucha'n waxaklajuun ubaah k'awiil BAT-kuup(?) ajaw*, that is, "He is a guardian(?) of Waxaklajuun Ubaah K'awiil, the lord of Copan." The translation of *uchan-nu* is problematic. *Chan-nu* means "captor, but Tsukamoto notes that on Dos Pilas Panel 9 it has been translated as "guardian" or "master". There is no mention of this standard-bearer or his visit in any Copan inscription.

The glyph just before at H1 is unfortunately gone. The glyphs after at N1 and O1 are heavily eroded, but Tsukamoto writes "the syntax order suggests that they contained either a relational glyph or a secondary verb". Then P1 and Q1 name Yuknoom Took, the *kujul ahau* of Calakmul! El Palmar is only 50 miles east of Calakmul so it is likely that he was under



Glyphs on Step 5 that relate to Eighteen Rabbit. Drawing: Octavio Q. Esparza Olguin.

the influence or directly working for the rulers of Calakmul.

Obviously there is much going on here, but without the missing glyphs and corroborating evidence, only Ajpach Waal knows what it was and he took his recollections literally to the grave.

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- Janice Van Cleve's books and research may be found at:  
<http://mayas.doodlekit.com>



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# Unbundling the Past: Events in Ancient and Contemporary Maya History for June

## by Zach Lindsey

**1 June 702 CE:** On 9.13.10.6.8 5 Lamat 6 Xul G2, K'inich K'an Joy Chitam II took the throne of Palenque, something which probably didn't surprise him very much. He was 52 years old, and his older brother, K'inich Kan B'ahlam II, had groomed him for the role. What probably would have surprised him, though, is that, less than ten years later, he would appear bound and embarrassed on a monument from Tonina.

The life of a captive was undoubtedly humiliating and, for a man in his sixties, excruciating. That said, this embarrassment seems to have had surprisingly little effect on Palenque. David Stuart argues that K'an Joy Chitam himself was released and returned to serve as king for another ten years before being succeeded by K'inich Ahkal Mo' Nahb' in 721 CE. If Palenque was serving as a vassal of Tonina, they did well for themselves – K'an Joy Chitam's most famous monument, the Palace Tablet, was commissioned after his captivity.

**13 June 776 CE:** On 9.17.5.8.9 6 Muluk 17 Yaxk'in G7, Yajaw Chan Muwaan II acceded to the throne of Bonampak. Though a vassal state of Yaxchilan, Bonampak was rich and powerful in its own right, and, under Yajaw Chan Muwaan, the city's artists would design one

*Tonina Monument 122, showing the unfortunate king of Palenque K'inich K'an Joy Chitam II in a very bad spot. Typically captives are shown bound and stripped of regalia, and while K'an Joy Chitam is bound here, he still wears a royal symbol on his head – that of the god Ox Yop Hu'n. Maybe this was to make it clear to anyone who couldn't read glyphs that this was an important captive.*

*Like many Maya monuments, the face on this one has been chipped away, a way of ritually killing rulers who had fallen out of favor. Here the reasoning is confusing; he was already a captive so why bother to disrespect him? Original artwork by Zach Lindsey.*



Reconstruction of Bonampak Room 1, Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of Bonampak Documentation Project, illustrated by Heather Hurst and Leonard Ashby. At: <https://www.doaks.org/resources/online-exhibits/standing-on-ceremony-processions-paths-and-plazas/Processions/murals-at-bonampak>

of the most important murals in the Maya artistic corpus – the three-part murals of Bonampak. Steven Houston suggests these murals may have been the Maya equivalent of Macchiavelli's *The Prince* – a sort of docudrama of what a good prince should be like, with Yajaw Chan Muwaan's own heir, Chooj, as the protagonist.

Unfortunately, life and politics got in the way. The murals include space for glyphic captions that were never filled in, probably a sign they weren't finished.

The Bonampak murals were some of the first major pieces of Maya art I ever saw, so, like many of you, I have a soft spot for them. But anyone who has seen them knows they're not much to look at these days. A botched restoration attempt involving kerosene left them in a sorry state until Mary Miller and her team – including artist Heather Hurst--made vivid recreations that show the true glory of the murals.

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**Editor's note:** This discovery was the final excavation featured in Episode 2, of *Lost Treasures of the Maya: Secrets of the Underworld* on the National Geographic Channel. An interesting skull was found in the chultun, but this short article mentions the Early Classic ceramics found alongside it.

## Ritual Deposit Discovered in a Chultun at Witzna

by **Kaitlin R. Ahern** State University of NY at Buffalo

In 2018, excavation began on an architectural complex located at the top of one of the highest hills in the Holmul region. This complex consisted of a plaza, pyramid, masonry building, and platform. Excavation of the masonry structure, known as Building A revealed a chultun located under the earliest floor.

A ritual cache was discovered in the chultun, which contained the top of a human skull and an assortment of deciduous and permanent teeth. In addition, the cache contained four complete miniature vessels and two plates (Figs. 1 and 2). Ceramic analysis of the vessels determined that the offerings deposited in the chultun dated to the Early Classic period (Arroyave et al. 2019).

The cranium fragment was found with its interior facing upwards. The placement of the teeth above the cranium suggests that a human head was placed into the chultun face-up during this ritual event, but over time, most of the skull deteriorated. The lack of other bones discovered suggests that this individual was decapitated either as the cause of death or postmortem. Based on the range of teeth, the skull likely came from an adolescent. Following the ritual, the chultun was filled in with marl and covered by a meter of fill. At a later point, a new floor was placed inside Building A.

Video from this excavation can be found in *Lost Treasures of the Maya, Episode 2, Secrets of the Underworld* on National Geographic.



Fig. 1: Miniature vessels found in the ritual cache.



Fig. 2: The two ceramic plates (or bowls) found in the ritual cache.

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### IMS Program note:

Live zoom with Kaitlin Ahern and the IMS on June 23!

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## **Digital Approaches to the Past, Present, and Future of Egmont Key, Florida**

**with Laura K. Harrison, Ph.D.** Director, University of South Florida Access 3D Lab

Egmont Key is a small island located where the Gulf of Mexico meets Tampa Bay. Because of its strategic location, the island played a significant role in Florida's history. It was a haven for runaway slaves and Union soldiers during the Civil War, a Seminole prison during the Indian Removal Period, an outpost for rum runners during Prohibition, and a military fort in multiple 19th and 20th century conflicts. Today, these histories are largely invisible to the public, due to limited tourism and outreach infrastructure on the island. In addition, coastal erosion threatens to destroy and submerge several historic buildings. This presentation details an ongoing interdisciplinary project at the University of South Florida that aims to digitally document, preserve and share the cultural and natural heritage of Egmont Key with terrestrial LiDAR, drone photogrammetry, 360 imaging, archival research, and community outreach. Together, these tools allow us to tell the many stories of Egmont Key's past, present and future.



*An outdated power plant dissolves into the Gulf of Mexico. All the while, Laura keeps smiling, and smiling, and smiling!*

**Dr. Laura K. Harrison** is the Postdoctoral Research Associate, Center for Virtualization and Applied Spatial Technologies, at the University of South Florida. She is the Director of Access 3D Lab, where she oversees instrumentation and workflows, spearheads outreach with faculty and researchers, and carries out collaborative digital science and digital humanities research. As Director of USF's Access 3D Lab, Dr. Harrison looks forward to mobilizing the facility's resources to support and advance student and faculty research at USF and beyond.

**IMS Live Streaming Event • Wednesday, June 23, 2021 • 8 pm ET**

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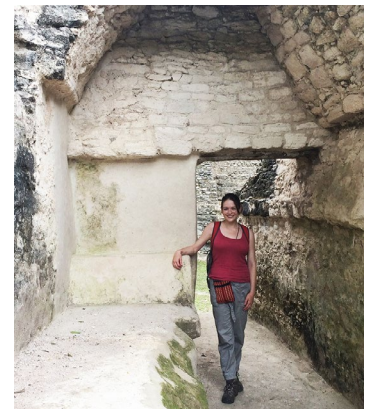
## **From the Ground Up – Preclassic Construction Methods, Excavations, and Floors in the Holmul region**

**with Kaitlin R. Ahern, Ph.D., RPA**

Research Associate, Department of Anthropology, University at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY

This lecture discusses construction material, lime plaster, and floors researched from various excavations from the Holmul region in northern Guatemala. These basic building blocks of ancient Maya structures can provide surprising insight into the development of various construction technologies. Particular emphasis is placed on the author's excavations at the ancient Maya sites of Cival and East Witzna. The presentation begins with a brief description of each site location and regional geography, then an examination of the construction of several Preclassic period pyramids.

**Kaitlin R. Ahern** is a recent Ph.D. graduate from the University at Buffalo (May 2020), where she currently works as Research Associate. She has spent multiple field seasons working with the Holmul Archaeological Project and recently published an article about lime plaster floors located within the Holmul region. She also appeared in an episode of *Lost Treasures of the Maya* on the National Geographic Channel in 2019.



*Katie poses within a structure at Naranjo.*

**Join us for both of these IMS Live streaming events!**

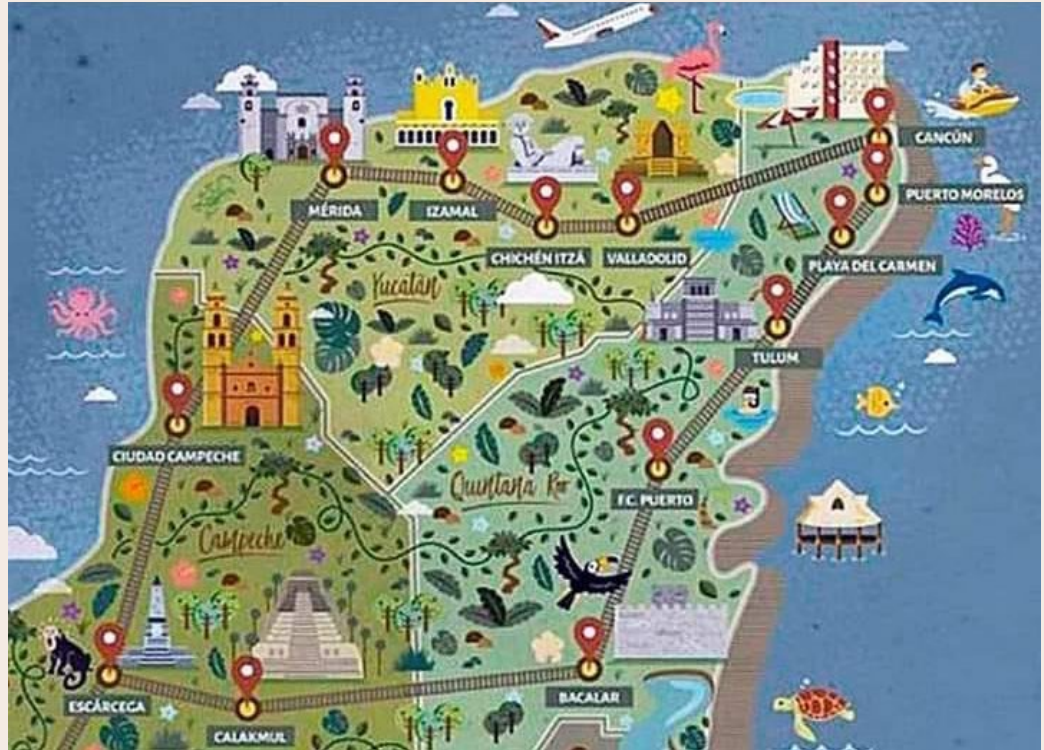




## Check out the route of the Maya Train

The railroad, that will run through Tabasco, Chiapas, Campeche, Quintana Roo, and Yucatán, is currently under construction and scheduled to begin operations in 2023. Construction of the train, which President López Obrador says will spur social and economic development in the country's long-neglected southeast, began last June.

But a dramatic change took affect on February 22, 2021, when a federal judge ordered the suspension of the Maya Train railroad project in three Yucatán municipalities. Yucatán-based Judge Karla Domínguez Aguilar ordered a halt to construction work in Mérida, Izamal, and Chocholá, due to environmental concerns. Also, some landowners around Felipe Carrillo Puerto are not happy about the project; they blocked the highway into the city for a few hours when López came to speak in early May. 🇲🇽



## IMS Streaming 2021

Join in the Exploration!

We have two events this month, at 8 pm EST



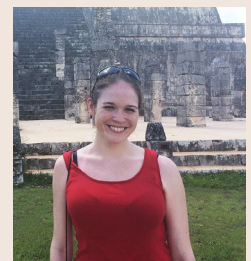
**June 16 • Laura K. Harrison**

◀ *Digital Approaches to the Past, Present, and Future of Egmont Key, Florida*

Stay tuned for IMS Zoom event link notices!

**June 23 • Kaitlin R. Ahern**

*From the Ground Up – Preclassic Construction Methods, Excavations, and Floors in the Holmul Region* ▶



**Upcoming IMS Zoom Presentations:**

**July 21 • Dr. Clark Wernecke**

**August 11 • George Fery    August 18 • V. Garth Norman**

**September 15 • Jason Yaeger & Kathryn Brown**

Stay informed... stay engaged... with the IMS! See Zoom links on pg. 7

## IMS EXPLORER

Join the **Explorer-ation!** Scholar or not, we welcome submissions from IMS members and other Maya enthusiasts. Share what interests you with others. All articles and news items for the **IMS Explorer** should be forwarded to the newsletter editor at: [mayaman@bellsouth.net](mailto:mayaman@bellsouth.net)