

13.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

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13.1 Introduction

Toledo District was inhabited by the ancient Maya civilization between the Early Classic period and the Early Postclassic period. Relics of that civilization in the Toledo District as well as in other areas around the country are testimony of their greatness and splendour. Some of these archaeological sites include Nimli Punit; a Ketchi word meaning Big Hat, Lubaantun; 'Place of Fallen Stones', Pusilha, Uxbenton, and Uxbenka in Santa Cruz village. The Nimli Punit archaeological site is situated approximately half a mile off the Southern highway near mile 75. This archaeological site was discovered while exploring for oil in 1979. Lubaantun is located near Columbia village along the Columbia River. Pusilha is located in San Benito Poite village.

The Maya Mountain Archaeological Project (MMAP) led by Dr. Peter Dunham of Cleveland State University was launched in 1992 as a multidisciplinary broad-termed project geared at investigating Maya resource exploitation and commercial exchanges in areas along the foothills of the Maya Mountain. During their investigations, the MMAP found and mapped sites that exploited natural resources in the southern Maya Mountains, such as Mayahak Cab Pek founded in 1997. In addition to the archaeological resources in the Toledo District, are relics of sugar cane mills, owned and operated by American confederates who came to Belize after the American Civil War. One of the larger sugar mills was the Seven Hills Estate.

Beside the activities on the mainland, the coast was also bustling with vibrant trade. The entire coast of Belize had been an integral route of the booming sea trade of the ancient Maya. Wild Cane Cay, Frenchman Cay in the southern waters (Toledo) were once trading points in this important route. In addition, investigations in cays in the southern waters of

Belize in the vicinity of Wild Cane cay yielded a waterlogged wooden paddle that was once used by the ancient Maya.

In compliance with the EIA and Terms of Reference for US Capital Energy Belize Ltd., the authors of this document were asked to conduct an archaeological impact assessment in the areas that are to be affected by the development. The areas of concern are parts of the Concession Block 19 that extends from the Sarstoon River which forms the southern boundary with Guatemala to just north of Seine Bight Village and San Pablo. Of immediate concern to the archaeological impact assessment are the Midway and the Crique Sarco villages along the Moho and Temash Rivers in the Toledo District.

The purpose of the Assessment is to identify and document archaeological remains and/or features (as defined by the National Institute of Culture and History Act, Chapter 331 Revised Edition 2000) that are found within the project area and to place these in their given geographic location in the areas of study. The report will also offer recommendation/s for the protection of archaeological features and or mitigation of impacts prior to project implementation. This report will include in its archaeological impact assessment, a description of the study area; Midway and Crique Sarco, a section explaining the methodology of the assessment, a discussion of the type of survey and reconnaissance applied, the results, and recommendations and mitigations for the findings.

The Archaeological assessment and survey will be conducted with full awareness of and adherence to the National Institute of Culture and History Act, Chapter 331 Revised Edition 2000 and all other applicable legislations (see **Appendix C and D**).

13.2 Description of the Area

Concession Block 19 extends from the Sarstoon River which forms the southern boundary with Guatemala to just north of Seine Bight Village and San Pablo. For the purposes of this environmental assessment the study area is limited to the area south of the Moho River and north of the Sarstoon River with the western boundary defined by protected areas to the northwest and the Guatemalan border to the west. US Capital Energy Belize Ltd has had the concession for block 19 since 2001. This concession covers an area of 322,250 ha (795,678 acres).

To the west, the concession parallels the Guatemalan border up to the Colombia River Forest Reserve and runs along its southern boundary in an easterly direction taking in the Deep River Forest Reserve, Paynes Creek National Park, Mango Creek Forest Reserves 3 and 4, the Swasey Bladen Forest Reserve, Monkey Key Forest Reserve and the Sarstoon-Temash National Park. Seventy-one (71) communities fall within the area covered by the concession.

13.2.1 Midway

Midway Village is located approximately 4 miles (6.4 km) NW of Barranco Village along the road that leads to that village. It is characterized by generally flat land conducive for corn and rice fields, but also has a large area of thick forest. A large area has been designated for house lots and agricultural layouts.

During the walk, the researchers met with a group of six residents of Midway Village clearing a large area for milpa plantation. In discussions with them they stated their familiarity with archaeological mounds, but had not seen any in the area. The alcalde of the village also stated that he not seen any archaeological mounds in the village.

13.2.2 Conejo Village

Conejo village is a very small linear community along the road leading to Crique Sarco characterized by undulating land.

13.2.3 Crique Sarco Village

Crique Sarco is a small community of people of Maya Indian descent on the bank of the Temash River. It is characterized by undulating pasture-like lands before the river and forest land across the river, beyond the Temash River.

13.4 Methodology

Prior to visiting the proposed sites, research was conducted at the Institute of Archaeology and the Sarstoon Temash Institute for Indigenous Management's (SATIIM) office to review any relevant documents and maps of the study area and to put these into an archaeological perspective.

Following this, a survey was conducted in the area of Midway and Crique Sarco to specifically determine, record and map, any archaeological remains or features that might be in the area. These would include evidence of Pre-Maya, ancient Maya, Historic-Colonial Period occupation and any other artifacts or features that may qualify under the NICH Act.

13.4.1 Midway

The transect in Midway is incomplete. At the time of the investigation, the section northeast of the community has not been cut, however, the section from the road going toward the NW was cut and identified as Transect No. SA – 06 – 15. The researchers traversed the transect to look for archaeological and/or colonial remains starting at coordinate E 0200658 N 1776966 and ended at coordinates E 0291 234 N 1778 361. There the researcher returned to the starting point and continued to Barranco village to arrange for other activities relating to the investigation. The researcher departed from the main transect at intervals of approximately 100 yards to a distance of between 50 to 100 yards, alternating sides.

The investigation did not yield any evidence of archaeological or colonial occupation.

13.4.2 Conejo Village

The researcher stopped at Conejo village to search for remains of archaeological and/or colonial occupation along Transect TE – 06 – 07 situated on the left side of the road. Similar to the method employed at Midway, the researcher traversed the transect departing from it at intervals of approximately 100 yards on alternating sides for a distance of between 50 to 100 yards. Again, remains of archaeological and/or colonial occupation were not found.

13.4.3 Crique Sarco

In Crique Sarco, the researcher traversed Transect TE 06 – 05 having coordinates E 0278327 N 1771724, also known as Line # 3, situating on the left hand side of the road. This transect meets with line TE – 06 – 02. Mr. Thomas Cal's through whose plantation Transect TE 06 – 05 passes said that he has not seen any archaeological or colonial remains in the area.

The researcher traversed the other section of the transect to the west of the road. To continue the pattern of survey, the main line was abandoned at intervals to look for archaeological and

colonial remains. A line of huge outcrop of limestone rocks in a northeast to southwest direction was found. Its coordinates are E 0277876 N 1772115, however it was not of an archaeological value. The researcher followed the line to where it would meet with another proposed transect. Again, no evidence of archaeological and/or colonial occupation was found.

The researcher traversed another transect in Crique Sarco village, starting at coordinate E 0273638 N 1768223, continuing on the west side for about 400 yards, where the bank of the Temash River was met. The researcher went back to the starting point and continued to meet with the team that surveyed the eastern section. Both teams met at Mr. Erasmo Choc's property. Again, no evidence of archaeological or colonial occupation was found.

13.4.4 Barranco / Temash River

The team visited Barranco village where they hired a boat to navigate the Temash River to familiarize themselves with the area of proposed lines within the Sarstoon - Temash National Park. Those lines have not been cut therefore the use of the GPS was relied upon to indicate their intended location. Line 1, Transect SA – 06 – 17 will be at coordinates E 0289090 N 1766657. Line 2, Transect SA – 06 – 15 will be cut at E 02287 570 N 1768 633.

13.5 Result of Survey

Throughout the intense investigation in the Midway, Lucky Strike and Crique Sarco villages in the Toledo District, the survey did not produce any remains of archaeological and/or colonial remains.

13.6 Recommendation

Although the survey of this limited area did not produce any remains of archaeological and/or colonial remains, the developers are to be mindful of remains that might be underground. Should any remains of archaeological and/or colonial occupation are unearthed, the operation should be suspended, and the information brought to the attention of the Institute of Archaeology for action and further instructions.