

THE Current

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UCSB Archaeologist to Discuss New El Pilar Maya Site Partnership

Since discovering the El Pilar Maya site in Belize and Guatemala in 1983, UCSB archaeologist Anabel Ford has been dedicated to making the culturally rich area a unique blend of research, preservation, community cooperation, and economic development.

She convinced the governments of both countries to protect the area from encroachment and named the resulting binational reserve the El Pilar Archaeological Reserve for Maya Flora and Fauna. She got citizens on both sides of the border working in community groups aimed at both exploiting and protecting the site. She organized the ongoing research effort. And she reached out for funds to anyone who might be interested in helping preserve and study the artifacts of one of the ancient world's most amazing cultures.

Now, with so many aspects of the project up and running, Ford is hard pressed to give any of them the attention they need.

"I am overwhelmed," Ford said. "I am only one person and I can't handle all parts any more."

With that in mind, Ford has formed a partnership with Counterpart International, a Washington D.C.-based nonprofit community building group.

Ford will talk about the new partnership with local supporters at her annual El Pilar fiesta, Saturday, September 27 at the MultiCultural Center on the UCSB campus. The event will feature a Latin jazz band, potluck dining, books, compact discs, and other El Pilar items for sale, and a talk by Ford. Doors open at 5 p.m. and Ford will speak at 7 p.m. Her talk will be accompanied by slide photographs. Guests are asked to bring food for the potluck and to make a donation.

“The theme of the party this year is “El Pilar at the Crossroads,” Ford said. “I think partnering is the only way forward for me. Counterpart will help in the community area and with enterprise development, environment and conservation. I will be involved in my research and developing networks.”

To learn more about El Pilar, visit the project Web site at www.marc.ucsb.edu/elpilar.

Related Links

[El Pilar Web Site](#)

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