

**EXTENDING THE BELIZE TEKTITE STREWN FIELD** H. Povenmire <sup>1, 1</sup> Florida Institute of Technology, 7560 Greenboro Drive, #4, Melbourne, FL 32904, katiehall@yahoo.com.

In the last six years a new Central American Tektite strewn field has been discovered and confirmed. The scientific importance of this abstract is that much more field work is needed to extend the size of the strewn field and that there is currently no source, or guide to the researcher heading to Belize. This abstract is intended to be of great aid to new tektite hunters and increase their success in the field for specimen recovery.

The country of Belize is fairly small and the Central American Tektite Strewn Field has been well mapped around the San Ignacio area in the west-central Belize region close to the Guatemala border. The well confirmed area is only about 2,500 sq. miles, but the suspected area with only a few specimens is thought to be many thousands of miles covering Honduras, Mexico, Guatemala and several other countries. The north-south length of Belize is approximately 170 miles, but there are few roads and with the curves, driving it makes the distance much greater. In April 27-May 4, 2015 a surveillance expedition was made to extend the N-S limits of this strewn field in Belize. Tektites are usually found in gravel deposits, but the gravel must be the right age and the optimum months of January or February are best due to the comfortable temperatures in Belize.

This type of expedition must be repeated many times to get a accurate estimation of the true distribution of these newly discovered tektites. This is an important scientific project, as this will help us discover and and confirm the parent crater. At this time, the only viable candidate is the 13 km diameter Pantasma Crater 100 km north of Managua, Nicaragua. This crater was explored on February 16-20, 2015 with promising but inconclusive results by the above author. Researchers are welcome to contact the author to answer their specific questions prior making an expedition trip.

Belize is a third world nation. The rural people are friendly to Americans and they are honest. The two languages are English and Spanish, but mostly Spanish. The water is mostly good, but bottle water is preferred for field trips. Most of the restaurants are safe and the food is reasonable. Belize has hotels and not motels. So far, we have never gotten sick from the food. The rooms available are generally clean and simple. The cost of a Belize hotel is comparable to an American mid class motel room. Gas runs approximately \$5.50 a gallon, so renting a diesel vehicle may be a better option. Air conditioned vehicles are nearly mandatory. You are much nearer the equator, so the Sun is nearly overhead and you need a brimmed hat and blueblocker sunglasses. Insect repellent is recommended. There are poisonous snakes, but they are rarely seen. It is important to have a GPS so that if a tektite is found, it can be accurately documented and the specimen should be kept separately as many of the tektites are small and look alike. Cloudy days are better for tektite hunting and most good hunting is done in road cuts or open areas where there is little vegetation. Under good conditions, one tektite may be found in two hours of hunting. The land is open and most of the time there is no need to request permission to hunt.

It is good to show the locals a tektite and ask if they know of any that have been found. It is OK to bargain with them. If they offer any Mayan artifacts for sale, politely decline as the penalties are severe if you try to take these artifacts out of the country. If you get a hostile reaction, thank them and move on. For the most part, the Police are reasonable and so far we have not had any bad experiences. If you do make an expedition, please report your results to me and I will pass on results to others working on the strewn field.

[1] Povenmire H, (2015) Tektites: A Cosmic Puzzle Blue Note Publishing Melbourne, FL, or Amazon.com.