

**FORUM**

**The Ancient Maya and their Forest: A Co-Creative Landscape**



**Saturday, November 4, 2023 from 2:00 – 4:00 pm (PDT)**

**In-person and Live Webcast**

Concord House, 1407 Chapala Street, Santa Barbara, CA

Presenter: Anabel Ford, Department of Anthropology, UC Santa Barbara

Popular views of the Classic Maya present a tableau of an environment destroyed for the avarice of the culture itself. Too many demands on the populace, unchecked population growth, and overuse of the landscape. This is a convenient view; it reflects our own disastrous relationship with our environment in general and our treatment of the tropics in specific. Our Western view of the tropics as challenging and difficult, even inclement, colors our interpretations. How could the Maya civilization arise in this setting?

The collapse seems inevitable. We know that the agrarian Maya emerged in the southern Maya lowlands and thrived as a growing civilization for millennia. By the Classic Period (AD 250-900), they were recording important events in carved stone, on decorated pottery vessels, and inside bark books. The Maya documented regal facets of life, -- challenges to power, state alliances and visits, as well as celebratory proceedings-- recorded from the earliest times through the Spanish conquest. Recent research in the Maya forest of El Pilar provides new insight into the development of the Maya and how they lived within their forest. Surveys of the landscape, working with the traditional farmers, and collaborating with governments to conserve the culture and nature of El Pilar reveal a new integrative approach to the understanding of the sustainability of the Maya. Anabel Ford is the Director of the Mesoamerican Research Center at UC Santa Barbara.

The event will be in person and live webcast: <https://www.youtube.com/user/IWCinSantaBarbara>

**For more information: <http://www.worldculture.org>**