Anthro Meeting Notes- Dr. Wrobel Bones in Belize
Next meeting on the 27th, Vincent Delgado will be speaking!
Feb 15th – Michigan Archaeological Society – Barb Mead 6:30 pm 454 Baker Hall
Feb 16th 8-11 pm RCAH Theatre RCAH Band AID- Urban Farm
Feb 28th Bowling Night @MSU Union?
U of M Archaeology Museum Tour March 23rd RSVP by February 17th at 8:00 pm!
We’ll leave MSU at 12:30 pm!

The Bioarchaeology of Space and Place: Ideology, Power and Meaning in Maya Mortuary
Contexts by Dr. Gabriel Wrobel
Center of the country there are many rivers and valleys, looking at a particular valley. Been
running a field school there since 1995. Central Belize. Finding new caves in the site all the time.
Boarchaeology in Maya Studies
Previous focus on generating large, “representative” samples to generate aggregate data.
Sampling biases include:
- Small sample sizes

Current Bioarch Trends in the Maya Region
Current bioarch studies tend to focus on the analysis and interpretation of small groups and
individuals

Strong integration with cultural context
Identity
- Reconstructing mortuary practices
- Distinguishing taphonomic processes from cultural treatments
- Strontium isotopes (origin and migration)
- Genetic distance
- Cultural Body modifications

The Caves Branch Archaeological Survey (CBAS) Project
Research permit covers roughly 200 sq kilometers
Includes several distinct ecological zones

Previous to CBAS, area was relatively unknown and assumed to be peripheral to Belize Valley
and Caracol “hubs”

Previous Studies
Prior to 2005, sites investigated in CBVR included:
- Deep Valley (minor Center)
- Petroglyph and Footprint Caves
- Caves Branch Rockshelter

The survey
Since 2005, identified and investigated:
- 15 new rockshelters cites
- 25 new cave sites
  - 3 major mortuary caves
- 10 new settlement

Occupation of the Caves Branch River Valley

Chronology:
Spans Archaic through Historic periods
Permanent villages by Late Preclassic (roughly AD 80)
All early data come from caves and rockshelters
No early settlement contexts identified yet
Dramatic developments in the late Classic
Late Classic AD 600 – 900
Sudden and large scale migration of new groups into the region
First evidence of social and political hierarchy
Appears fortified

December 1st, 711 AD staircase built. Found a stone that was dated. Second carved monument in all of Belize found.

CBAS Research Design
Focus on Late Classic Transition
  - Clear evidence of sudden migration in the region
  - Urban planning related to “instant Polity”
  - Coincides with an increased

Caves Branch rockshelter
Patterns of use seem relatively consistent over time (Late Preclassic through Terminal Classic)