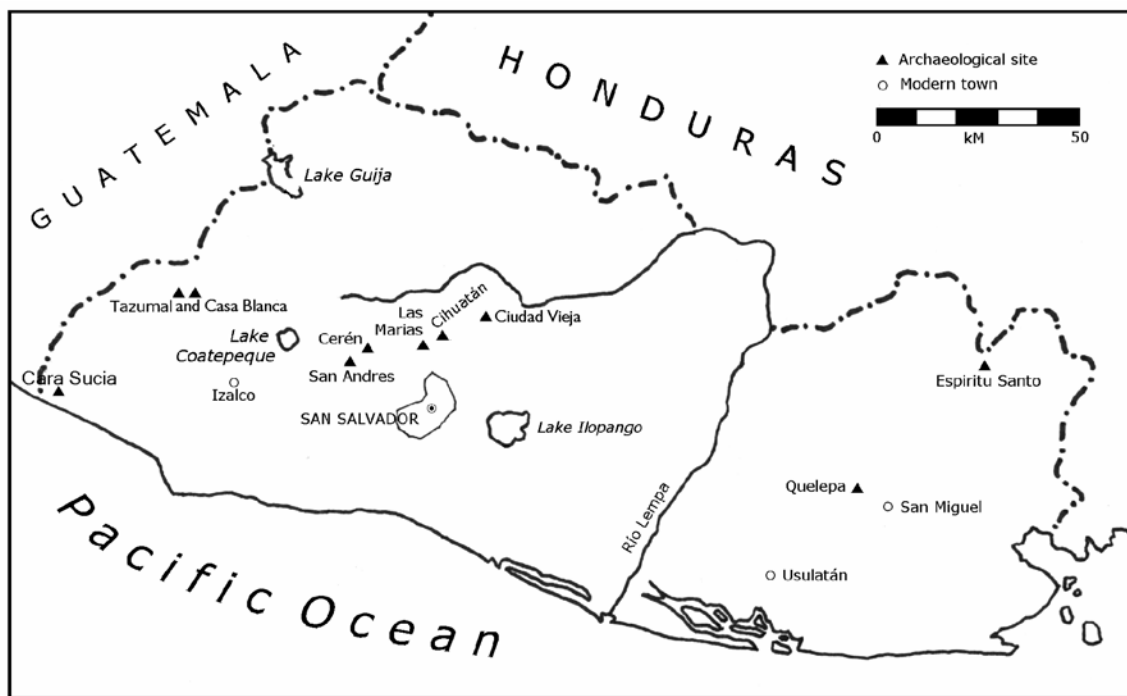


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ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARKS OF EL SALVADOR: HISTORY AND CURRENT STATUS

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THE PARKS



The government of El Salvador has five developed archaeological parks, all in the western half of the country. All are held by the cultural organ of the government, CONCULTURA (Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y el Arte). These parks are:

Tazumal

Located within the modern town of Chalchuapa, this park consists of a large pyramid and associated buildings, including a ball court. It was investigated by Stanley Boggs in the 1940s, and was determined to have an occupation spanning from the Early Classic through the Early Postclassic periods. The pyramid and the land immediately around it were purchased by the government of El Salvador in 1951 and the park was opened on April 18, 1952; this park also had the first site museum in the country. Due to its location within the town of Chalchuapa, Tazumal suffers a number of problems peculiar to its urban setting. As is a common problem with all the archaeological parks, only a small

part of the site was purchased and the remainder has been destroyed or severely damaged by subdivisions and the municipal cemetery. Tazumal especially needs secure parking and improved signage in both park and site museum.

Casa Blanca

A pyramid group about 1 kilometer from Tazumal, on the edge of the modern town of Chalchuapa, Casa Blanca and its adjacent site of El Trapiche were investigated by William Coe in the 1950s, Robert Sharer in the 1960s, by archaeologists working for the Museo Nacional "David J. Guzmán" in the 1970s and then by the Japanese Proyecto Arqueológico from the 1990s to the present time. Casa Blanca has a long occupation including the Late Preclassic and Early Classic periods. The site was acquired by purchase by the Salvadoran government in 1977 and officially opened as a park in 2004. Again the area acquired was very small and the park has been engulfed by a subdivision, with all the problems attendant to this situation. There is a nice site museum building, complete with an artisanal indigo production facility, but signage within the park and museum is poor. The entrance to the site is upon a particularly dangerous curve of the highway.

San Andrés

First excavated by John Dimick in the 1940s, this medium sized Late Classic Maya center (which originally had a large surrounding community) was acquired by the government in 1982 and officially became a park in 1996. It has a site museum which needs improvements in exhibits and security. The site also has a snack bar, sanitary facilities, and secured parking.

Joya de Cerén

This Middle/Late Classic period site, deeply buried by a circa AD 640 volcanic eruption, was discovered by a bulldozer operator leveling for a grain storage facility in 1976. It was first identified as an archaeological site by Manuel López of the Museo Nacional "David J. Guzmán" (within days of the accidental discovery) and two years later was first excavated by Christian Zier and then by Payson Sheets, who later conducted investigations at the site over several years time. The site was acquired in 1991 by a land transfer between two government institutions (from ISTA to CONCULTURA) and officially opened as a park in 1993. In the same year, upon application by CONCULTURA, the site was listed as a World Heritage site by UNESCO. All ten excavated structures are currently open to viewing by the public. There is a small site museum, picnic facilities, bathrooms, a snack bar, and guide service.

Cihuatán

This is El Salvador's largest archaeological park. Cihuatán is the earliest known urban center in El Salvador. In 1974 it was declared a National Monument. The park was acquired by the government in two stages, in 1954 and in 1994, and currently totals 73 hectares. This represents only about ¼ of the Cihuatán site, but includes the monumental area and part of the residential zone. The monumental area has over 20 temples, a walled precinct, two ballcourts, and a royal palace. The danger exists that subdivisions could

encroach upon the outlying areas of the site, although legal restrictions on land use were imposed by the government in 2007. Cihuatán remained relatively undeveloped until 2006, when FUNDAR remodeled an existing building as a site museum, rest rooms, snack bar, and an archaeological laboratory. The archaeological park was officially inaugurated on November 17, 2007.

In addition to these government owned parks, there is one archaeological park in private hands: Santa Leticia near the town of Apaneca . The Salvadoran government owns portions of four other archaeological sites which are not yet developed as parks (Ciudad Vieja, Gruta del Espíritu Santo, Cara Sucia, and Quelepa).

PARK MANAGEMENT

The archaeological parks have been administered by different institutions. El Salvador does not have a park service or equivalent entity and local input into site management has been an important concern.

The government has used two strategies to administer the archaeological parks: 1) directly under its Department of Archaeology, and 2) co-management in partnership with non-governmental organizations.

The first strategy, direct administration by the Department of Archaeology was pursued at Casa Blanca and Tazumal until 2004, and continues to be the case for the four sites mentioned above which have yet to be developed as parks. It is generally accepted by the past heads of the Department of Archaeology (which includes one of the authors) that this approach was ineffectual due to the scarcity of personnel, the virtual lack of transport, paltry or non-existent funds for materials and workers, and the lack of time available as imposed by salvage projects and other pressing situations.

The second strategy, that of partnerships with NGOs, has often had positive results in the US and other countries for the management of archaeological, historical, and natural parks. In El Salvador, the administrations of NGOs charged with the daily functioning of the parks and improvements for visitors have met with varying degrees of success.

The first instance of co-management with an NGO involved the now defunct Patronato Pro-Patrimonio Cultural (henceforth “the Patronato”). The Patronato undertook this work at Joya de Cerén starting in 1989 with extensive financial and logistical support for Payson Sheets’ investigations in that and following years. In 1993 the Patronato inaugurated Joya de Cerén as an archaeological park. In 1994 the Patronato’s mandate was expanded to include San Andrés, where basic infrastructure was built in order to open it as a park in 1996. Following this active period, the Patronato became less focused on archaeology and no longer had the direct participation of archaeologists in its endeavors. The Patronato ceased to co-manage these two parks in 2004.

The neighboring parks of Tazumal and Casa Blanca were administered under a local NGO based in Chalchuapa from 2004 until the end of 2007. The NGO in question had formed to restore the town's colonial church and it may be fair to say that the day-to-day administration of archaeological parks was not its strongest point.

The third instance of co-management of archaeological parks involves the Fundación Nacional de Arqueología de El Salvador (FUNDAR). As is discussed below, FUNDAR began with one undeveloped site in 1998, and currently administers all five archaeological parks in partnership with CONCULTURA.

Cihuatán was pretty much of an orphan, not developed in terms of any visitors' facilities. This situation began to change in 1996 when the FUNDAR was formally established as the only non-governmental organization dedicated to Salvadoran archaeology. FUNDAR's mission is to protect, investigate, and develop El Salvador's archaeological resources, and subsequently the government awarded FUNDAR with the co administration of Cihuatán. Several archaeologists were among the founding members of FUNDAR, including Payson Sheets, Fabio Amador, Roberto Gallardo, Elisenda Coladan, Karen Olsen Bruhns, and Paul Amaroli, as well as other members of Salvadoran society interested in the preservation, investigation, and dissemination of El Salvador's archaeological heritage.

FUNDAR has been on the forefront in the fight against looting and illicit traffic of archaeological artifacts. It has denounced dozens of instances of looting and site destruction, and has participated with INTERPOL and local authorities in field inspections and legal testimony. Archaeologists associated with FUNDAR have had key roles in enacting the current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Import Restrictions on Archaeological Material from El Salvador; Amaroli researched and wrote the base document, and he and Bruhns wrote the testimony on behalf of the Society for American Archaeology arguing for the extension of the MOU in 2005. They have also has also participated in a number of seizures of illegally exported Salvadoran artifacts, providing expert identification of these stolen materials so that they might be returned to their country of origin.

We are compelled to note that FUNDAR has recently been criticized by four foreign archaeologists (none of whom has ever been involved in cultural heritage protection in the country or for the country) for having collectors amongst its members, because of which they allege that the whole organization (FUNDAR) is responsible for archaeological looting in El Salvador. This is a false argument and, we might add, grossly hypocritical since two of these archaeologists were recipients of long-term funding from the Patronato Pro-Patrimonio Cultural, whose board of directors included the same two collectors, plus five other major collectors. The two archaeologists in question never expressed any qualms about receiving support from the Patronato or about maintaining close associations with its collector members over a period of several years. In fact, in their writings, both archaeologists take pains to thank the Patronato and its collectors and other members for the generous monetary support they received for their investigations at Caluco, Joya de Cerén, and Ciudad Vieja.

In regard to FUNDAR, it is important to note that the two collectors in question inherited their artifacts, they are not actively collecting, they have complied with the legal requisite to register their collections with the proper authorities, and they have pledged to donate their collections to the National Museum of Anthropology with which they have collaborated in exhibits and studies during the past decades.

From its establishment to the present FUNDAR's flagship project has been Cihuatán, the orphan park. FUNDAR lobbied to be given a contract to administer Cihuatán and received it in 1998. By 2000 FUNDAR had installed electricity, repaired the access road, and implemented park security.

At this point FUNDAR was still carrying out the tasks it had assigned itself in its incorporation papers: we lobbied for and had received government funds to buy the large urban site of Las Marías, near Tacachico, in the municipality of Quezaltepeque. This site, contemporary with Cihuatán, may prove to be even be larger than Cihuatán. Although the process of acquisition was stalled due to the landowners' lack of deeds, things are now proceeding and we hope to have Las Marías bought and protected in the near future. The two archaeologists associated permanently with FUNDAR, Karen Olsen Bruhns and Paul Amaroli, also did extensive site survey, mainly in the Acelhuate Valley and on the slopes of Guazapa Volcano, and carried out rescue excavations at Carranza, Las Marías, and other sites, while registering new sites officially and undertaking archaeological investigations at Cihuatán. These investigations, carried out with the help (at various times) of Fabio Amador, Vladimir Avila, Federico Paredes, and Zachary Revene, included excavations on the main pyramid, P-7, identification of eight new structures within the Western Ceremonial Center and the excavation of one of them (P-28, a circular temple), beginning the arduous process of completely re-surveying the Western Ceremonial Center and the Acropolis, and excavations in the Burned Palace of the Acropolis. From 1999 to 2001, Paul Amaroli and Fabio Amador also surveyed the limits of the site which, in addition to contributing to knowledge about the ancient city, formed the basis for enacting the legal protection of the entire site.

A REQUEST FOR HELP

In 2005 Federico Hernández, the President of CONICULTURA, asked FUNDAR to take over the administration of two of the other archaeological parks: San Andrés and Joya de Cerén. Both parks were in poor condition, described by CONICULTURA officials as due to "negligence". FUNDAR as the only archaeological NGO in the country, agreed to do its part. Our first step was a careful audit of conditions at the two sites, done with the concerned parties from CONICULTURA. The unfortunate state of the parks when we took them over is well documented in words and photographs.

The request that a private NGO administer these two parks was not without precedent, as these had been administered since their founding by another NGO. This was not a move

towards privatization. FUNDAR is not the Archaeological Conservancy and we do not buy nor do we own any archaeological sites. We would like to note that even in developed countries with huge bureaucracies of all kinds, such as the United States, some archaeological sites are private (and even privately exploited, either as parks or as mines), others, such as Mount Vernon or Crow Canyon, are owned and run by non-governmental organizations of various kinds, while others are in city, county, state, or national hands. No country seems to have a totally unified policy towards archaeological remains and their protection or exploitation (for leisure, education or money). It was known that FUNDAR numbered professional archaeologists among its member and that it was actively engaged in outreach, advising several municipalities on the identification, protection and investigation of archaeological remains within their boundaries. And as mentioned above, FUNDAR has also been openly vocal about cultural heritage and had been publicly involved with the renewal of the MOU with the United States, with denouncing destruction and imminent danger to sites, denouncing looting and collecting, and were active in other ways in cultural property protection. We also had experience with site development at Cihuatán.

NOT AN UNUSUAL SITUATION

Although these four North American archaeologists have questioned the wisdom of assigning the administration of the archaeological parks to an NGO, this is not at all unusual. CONULTURA and some other government institutions have “Resource Transfer Programs” in order to apportion funds to NGOs in the civil sector. CONULTURA currently has this arrangement with some 30 NGOs. Of the 30, 22 NGOs manage cultural properties. Aside from FUNDAR these include NGOs which manage the following historic properties (among others):

- The Theater of Santa Ana
- The ex-Club Atlético of Santa Ana
- The Gallardo Library (including both the historic building in Santa Tecla and its holdings)
- The Tower of San Vicente
- Some 6 colonial churches

The Academia Salvadoreña de la Historia is also a recipient of these funds (in Spanish “Programa de Transferencia de Recursos” or PTR). These funds were the source of the money it used to purchase part of the Ciudad Vieja as well as part of the money they used to finance excavations there.

Recipients of PTR funds must be non-profit NGOs. They are further required to formulate yearly projects, subject to approval by CONULTURA and to finance 20% of the project budget. They are also subject to periodic compliance inspections by CONULTURA’s PTR team; they must maintain detailed accounting and are subject to financial audit.

It might be asked why CONULTURA simply does not assign the money for the five archaeological parks to its own Department of Archaeology. The answer to this is that

PTR funds are a special budget category determined by the Ministerio de Hacienda (the treasury). They are agile and flexible in their use. In contrast, any changes in internal funding for, say, CONCULTURA, are glacial and encumbered by legal restrictions on hiring and the use of resources.

We would like to point out once more that FUNDAR's role in managing the parks is not without precedent. Another NGO did it for 15 years (the Patronato Pro Patrimonio Cultural). Many other NGOs are helping to preserve other parts of El Salvador's cultural heritage. This is how things are done in El Salvador. This situation is not unusual at all in Central America. For example, the Asociación Tikal was instrumental in lobbying for the creation of that park and now hosts the annual Tikal Symposium, publishes the papers, etc. The Asociación Copan in Honduras has conducted investigations, financed other endeavors, offers consulting services, and manages the tourist facilities at the Copán site.

Although the idea of a separate entity to manage cultural parks in El Salvador has been discussed off and on for the past 30 years or so, this is unlikely to occur. The Department of Archaeology has consistently suffered from low pay for its personnel (who are scarce and often transient in consequence), lack of transport, and almost no budget for even simple protective measures or repairs. When Lic. Manuel López was de facto archaeological parks administrator in the 1980s and Director of the Museum (he was removed from this position in 1992 by the then Director of the Patrimonio Cultural) he was offered a job as the head of a proposed new Parks Unit. The funding for this unit consisted of his salary and the facilities a desk. Lic. López resigned and has changed careers. Discussions in the 1980s with the head of the Servicio de Parques Nacionales (later dissolved) concerning moving the archaeological parks into their oversight, were likewise fruitless as the Servicio was already tremendously overburdened for its personnel and funding. Moreover, any such movement of oversight would have involved negotiation with CONCULTURA and there was a general perception that CONCULTURA might be reluctant to relinquish control over the parks. In any event the non defunct Servicio de Parques Nacionales had no archaeologists on staff (nor funds to hire any) to help with decision making and planning.

At this point, since the traditional system of management is working quite well, there is no movement towards the creation of any new entity to manage any historic or archaeological resources, such as the parks and the protected sites.

THE SITUATION AT JOYA DE CERÉN AND SAN ANDRÉS IN 2005

JOYA DE CERÉN

We found, and documented, a large number of serious problems at both parks. For example, at Joya de Cerén, a tiny park, there were 19 workers, while at the large San Andrés park there were only 2. These were redistributed in a more rational way. The ancient structures at Joya de Cerén are protected by large modular structures with sheet metal roofs, but we found many sheets twisted and perforated with numerous holes which

allowed free entry of rain water. Drainage canals were blocked. Half of the exposed structures could not be viewed by visitors because of having been deemed “restricted” at some point in the past. Gardening was rare to nil. Access to the archaeological area of the park was unrestricted.

Lacking direct supervision, the site personnel had improvised procedures which they said were for the conservation of the site, but which were terribly destructive, including daily hosing down of the delicate structures “in order to maintain their humidity”, and the wholesale and undocumented application of new plaster which effectively led to the needless restoration of large surfaces of the structures. Upon taking control of the sites in May, 2005 FUNDAR and CON CULTURA immediately suspended these practices.

After assuming the co-management of Joya de Cerén FUNDAR put together an international meeting of conservation specialists, including two people from the Getty Conservation Institute and specialists from El Salvador, Mexico, and Guatemala to discuss measures which ought to be taking with regard to the site. This meeting was held in August of 2005. These specialists were unanimous in their horror at the hosing down of the buildings and at the poor conditions of roofing, drainage and general upkeep of the site. The report of this meeting is on file at both CON CULTURA and FUNDAR and is available for consultation. A brief account of the meeting may be found on the Cihuatán website at www.cihuatan.org.

In June, 2005, CON CULTURA and FUNDAR held a meeting with Payson Sheets inviting him to continue excavations at the site, which had been prohibited since 1996 for reasons unknown.

A major (and continuing) problem with Joya de Cerén is simply that no one really knows how to preserve clay and ash structures in a tropical climate. Problems include not only the man with the hose, but sunlight damage, rain blowing in, large burrowing birds (the Torogoz, *Momotus momota* var.), animals, and insects. They also included poor drainage, with groundwater seepages into the excavated ruins where walls were being undermined and mud plaster “repairs” were falling off the structures. FUNDAR immediately called in a soils engineer, Ing. Enrique Melara, to deal with drainage problems, which have largely been resolved.

The excavated portions of the Joya de Cerén site were roofed, although in a number of cases the roofs were at high risk of collapsing when we took over, in part from the decay of pine wood supports. Under FUNDAR’s aegis roofs have been repaired and replaced, and panels and skylights of a polymer which filters UV light were installed so that the ruins are now visible (and photographable) by natural light. The rags hung along the cyclone wire fences surrounding the excavations to try to protect the ruins from sun and rain have been removed and replaced where necessary by sloping roof additions. We have also repaired and replaced walls, paths, and fences, and installed bilingual signage. The archaeological portion of the site is enclosed in green cyclone wire and has guarded and restricted access. Basically, no one may enter without one of the official guides (appointments can be made for a guide and there are now more English-speaking guides).

The grounds of Joya de Cerén were ill kept. One of the most important excavated portions of the site, the excavation which contains houses, fields and the domed sweat bath (*temescal*) was not open to the public; this area was reserved for VIP visitors only. The paths have been repaired, construction materials and other debris gathered up, and the enclosure has been repaired and rebuilt and made safe to enter, with natural lighting, well built paths, and stairs into the area. This is especially important since, for years, all the publicity concerning Joya de Cerén, posters, post cards, advertisements, etc. featured the image of the *temescal*, which virtually no visitors were allowed to actually see.

Apart from repairing and extending paths and installing adequate drainage in the vicinity of the excavations, FUNDAR has redesigned the plantings. Joya de Cerén now boasts examples of most of the plants grown by its ancient Maya inhabitants, including cacao, Xanthosoma, manioc, traditional varieties of corn, squash, chiles, etc. , as well as purely ornamental plantings in the area of tourist facilities. Some of these decorative plantings serve a purpose, they shield visitors from the sight of nearby roads and modern dwellings. The Salvadoran government owns more of the site than is within the fenced park boundaries and plans are underway to incorporate all of the land, which would treble the size of the park. FUNDAR has now paved over the area where the grain silos were to be installed for new parking.

Other problems when we took over administration of the sites were past thefts from the site museum and the general failure and closure of the snack bar and sanitary facilities. In addition, the picnic areas were not kept clean. The museum problems were solvable with the installation of movement sensors on all the cases and the deployment of the guards in a different manner, so that all of the exhibit area was under supervision. The snack bar and sanitary facilities were repaired and reopened with reliable employees. The pump house, which was an aqua-painted blight in the middle of the lawn next to the museum, was enclosed in bamboo siding and roofed and a souvenir shop (carrying replicas of archaeological objects, postcards, bead necklaces, and similar mementos) was built next to the pump house. New access gates and doors assure protection for the ruins while the leisure activities area is now open and pleasant. We have also installed significant new, bilingual, signage, both at Joya de Cerén and at San Andrés. FUNDAR's policy is that all signage, including museum labels, should be in Spanish and English, both for the convenience of English speaking tourists and for the edification of schoolchildren, all of whom study English. Bilingual signs are very useful for them, as well as to the increasing number of foreign tourists.



TWO VIEWS OF THE MAIN RUINS ENCLOSURE AT CERÉN, SHOWING RAGS HANGING ON THE CYCLONE FENCE TO “PROTECT” THE BUILDINGS FROM UV AND RAIN.



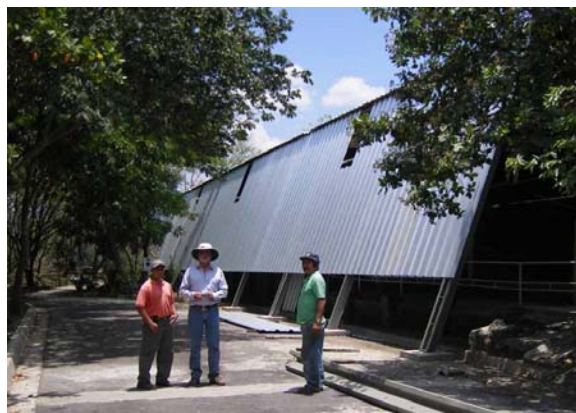
SEEPING WATER IN WALL BY STRUCTURE 3 AND WATER DAMAGE TO BRICKS IN STRUCTURE 10 AT TIME FUNDAR TOOK OVER PARK ADMINISTRATION.



THIS VIEW OF OUR NEAREST NEIGHBORS HAS NOW BEEN OBSCURED BY PLANTINGS.



NEW ENTRANCE AND SIGNAGE AT JOYA DE CERÉN





NEW UV FILTERING PROTECTION RESULTS IN BEING ABLE TO SEE THE RUINS BY NATURAL LIGHT. THE TEMESCAL AREA IS NOW OPEN TO VISITORS.



ANTONIO RIVERA AND FELICIANO TORRES ADMIRE A HEALTHY MALANGA (*XANTHASOMA* spp.) PLANT IN THE “MAYA PLANTS” GARDEN. PART OF THE CACAO GROVE IS BEHIND THEM.

SAN ANDRÉS

The San Andrés archaeological park presents a number of circumstances which are not present or not as acute at other parks. It is in a rural area which is rapidly industrializing and which has a dense population of under-employed or unemployed rural dwellers who were not brought up with country knowledge or values. It is on a main highway and by a river which floods. There had been ongoing problems with looters, armed assaults, and robberies of the ticket stand and visitors.

When we took over the administration of San Andrés there were many problems, some situational, others due to years of poor management. San Andrés had been a cane field when acquired and the past NGO had reforested a large part of the site with non-native trees planted close together in straight rows. As these grew up they provided heavy cover for ill intentioned people lurking in the park, as well as covering important areas of the site. The Great Plaza and its structures and the Campana were covered with thick brush. Although the Acropolis at San Andrés had been partly restored in the 1940s, it needed extensive repair work and restricted access to the tops of some of the more fragile structures. An ongoing problem was the infiltration of ambulatory vendors at the site, who had set up camp along the path to the Acropolis where they shouted their wares, played their radios, and generally made a dreadful mess.

Problems with visitors' facilities included a over-large museum structure with many points of access which weaken its security. Exhibits had not been repaired or replaced for a long time and the various graphics were inadequate, dirty and faded. The guides assigned to the museum were, however, energetic and eager to update their knowledge and the cleaning staff mainly suffered from no oversight.

The 17th century indigo workshop next to the museum area was also in a poor state of repair. The roof over the excavated vats, canals, and installation for the water wheel, was damaged, drainage was poor, the gutters on the roof broken, and there was only a muddy path and no signage for this important historic site.

The snack bar in the museum structure and the bathrooms were in poor shape, basically needing maintenance. The picnic area behind the museum was overgrown, filthy, and infested by packs of feral dogs. Visitors rightly felt that the rear part of this area, out of sight of the museum, was dangerous.

CHANGES AT SAN ANDRÉS

Security was obviously the priority. FUNDAR had a site perimeter fence installed. This has lights which turn automatically on at dusk. Spotlights were also installed, focused on all possible entrances to the museum. These also turn on at dusk. Private security has been installed. This is working well. Looting has been a persistent problem in this

region (the Zapotitán Valley) and the outlying areas of the San Andrés site have been heavily affected. FUNDAR has repeatedly denounced this situation.

The ruins themselves have now been fenced with access controlled via a guarded access gate leading from the museum to the path to the Acropolis. A revolving gate of steel bars permits exit but all access has to be past the guard through this one locked gate.

The problem of the itinerant, unlicensed, uncontrolled vendors was a thorny one. They were a noisy nuisance, leaving garbage and general mess where they sold their food and souvenirs, in the very heart of the monumental area of the site. After consultation, the vendors were removed to the museum patios, where they have access to running water and sanitary facilities and where their activities can be monitored. This is a better situation for the vendors. We are currently finishing stalls for each vendor, creating in effect what we hope will be an attractive tiny market area. We have also renovated the small snack bar (selling water, coffee, and other beverages and snacks such as potato chips), and tidied the available picnic area, repositioning the tables within the space for better visibility and more security.

GROUND AND RUINS

With the purchase of a brush cutting machine and several chain saws, the problems of brush and trees on the ruins themselves were quite quickly dealt with. A wood chipper was also purchased, turning the brush and trees into wood chips used to cover the paths. This works very well, since paths are heavily used and often muddy. The Great Plaza with its surrounding long structures and the Campana (a large pyramid upon a platform) were also cleared. Unfilled excavations of past years plus eroded paths made by visitors climbing the pyramid had seriously damaged the Campana. Workers built a series of wattle fences with which they created catchment barriers every few meters in the erosion channels. The channels were then refilled and the Campana planted in a grass with strong roots which will help control further erosion. The platform of the Campana has been planted in a flowering ground cover. On the Acropolis wood chip paths have been constructed to guide traffic to the tops of selected structures. The main pyramid is fenced and an impermeable membrane was installed on its summit to help with controlling further rain damage.

Given the problems of mowing grass on very steep slopes such as the sides of the Acropolis platform and its pyramids (the Campana platform is planted in ground cover to avoid just this problem), some sheep have been acquired to keep the grass down. The “Familia Cortagrama” has been very successful in keeping the grass down, providing unending fascination for small children, and in reproduction. From three sheep, within a year the herd grew to 20 sheep. Some of these sheep will be deployed at other sites; some will find another fate. The grounds not in grass or ground cover, have been planted with historically important crops (all bushes): indigo, cacao, coffee. A small garden of native trees, suitably labeled, is planned for the open space next to the museum structures. Bilingual signage has also been installed about the park, where needed.

The entrance to the park remains a problem. It is on a very busy highway and we have asked the appropriate government agencies to consider entry and exit lanes (there is room for them). We managed to have illicit signs removed from the area between the site fence and the highway and cleared and planted this areas (once weeds, debris, and signs in various states of dilapidation) in ground cover and palms and put in new signs indicating the entrance to the park.

Repairs and investigations are an ongoing problem. San Andrés was restored, mostly in the 1940s at a time when cement was all that was available. Both San Andrés and Tazumal were so restored and both have suffered some problems as the cement, never meant to be a permanent installation which needed no care, is beginning to fail in the heavy winter rains. We have done some repair work on the main pyramid, including the top membrane and, financed by CONCULTURA, we are tunneling the Acropolis to gain information on construction of the fill and early structures.

FUNDAR plans to redesign the museum exhibits. Given the original design of the museum building, where a guard at either door cannot see into more than one of the three exhibit halls, plans are to change exhibits in the first two halls to ones on ecology, history, and prehistory of El Salvador and, specifically, San Andrés, gathering all artifact containing exhibits into the third hall where they can be invigilated by the guard at the door which gives onto the entrance to the ruins and where, moreover, there are no open little interior patios or easily climbable openwork walls to invite thieves.



ENTRANCE TO THE RUINS IS NOW CONTROLLED THROUGH THIS GATE. THE REVOLVING GATE IS THE EXIT.



BILINGUAL SIGNAGE AND MAP OF THE RUINS AT ENTRANCE TO THE ACROPOLIS



THE MAIN PYRAMID AT SAN ANDRÉS BEFORE AND DURING CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES. THE MEMBRANE HAS NOW BEEN COVERED WITH EARTH AND GRASS SO THAT THE PYRAMID REMAINS UNCHANGED IN ASPECT. THE STEEL FRAMEWORK IS A SHELTER FOR THE OPENING TO THE EXPLORATORY TUNNEL.



THE CAMPANA BEFORE AND DURING REPAIRS AND EROSION CONTROL. IT IS NOW PLANTED IN GRASS WITH A LOW FLOWERING GROUND COVER ON THE BASAL PLATFORM.



PROBLEMS: ZACHARY REVENE DEMONSTRATES HOW EASY IT IS TO GET INTO THE MUSEUM AND A HORDE OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (BUT IN SMALLER GROUPS THAN PREVIOUSLY) VIEW THE MODEL OF THE INDIGO PROCESSING PLANT. A NEW RESERVATION SYSTEM HAS ORGANIZED SCHOOL VISITS SO THAT THEY ARE MANAGEABLE AND DO NOT RESULT IN WIDESPREAD VANDALISM. STEEL GRATINGS AND REARRANGEMENT OF THE EXHIBITS WILL TAKE CARE OF THE MANY WAYS TO ACHIEVE ILLICIT ENTRY TO THE MUSEUM BUILDING.



THE GREAT PLAZA AND CAMPANA BEFORE AND AFTER CLEARING OPERATIONS. BOTH VIEWS FROM THE SAME SPOT ON THE ACROPOLIS.

CIHUATÁN

Cihuatán remained the undeveloped site of the park system. Despite having been named a National Monument in 1977 and enlarged in 1994, it had not been inaugurated as a park and was relatively undeveloped because of benign neglect and lack of funding. When FUNDAR took over Cihuatán's administration in 1998, we mainly confined ourselves to investigation of the archaeological remains, despite growing visitorship to the site. We did get electricity reinstalled (one of the site guardians had removed the transformer during the civil war and hidden it under his bed!). With this and the help of the local electric company, wire was strung to the still standing posts and electricity installed. However, there were problems with water; the site is on a rocky ridge and the cost of a new well, or re-drilling the old (now mostly dry) one was astronomical. 24 hour a day armed security was provided for Cihuatán in 2000, much to the relief of park workers, families living nearby, and FUNDAR.

We installed an interpretative trail, with leaflets in Spanish and English, but there were problems of lack of infrastructure, as in who was responsible for the leaflets and their distribution. We did do considerable mapping, survey and excavation and began to lay plans for future developments.

In 2005, owing to a generous donation from the Sol Meza family, whose ancestor, Antonio Sol, was the first excavator of Cihuatán in 1929 and a founder of Salvadoran archaeology, we began construction of modern visitors' facilities at the site.

The water problem was finally overcome by the construction of a large cistern, fed by rain water in the winter and by water truck, as needed, in the summer. The site house was completely renovated and a site museum, named for Antonio Sol, installed. Given the situation of Cihuatán at approximately an hour by car from San Salvador, some 4 km. from the market town of Aguilares, and up a km. long access road from the highway, it was decided that the museum would contain no artifacts. At a symposium at the annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology held some years ago and since published, theft was identified as the main problem faced by every single site museum discussed.¹ The exhibits at the Cihuatán site museum are on large panels and present the ecology, history, history of investigations at Cihuatán, maps, photographs, and so on. Texts are in Spanish and English. Along with the museum a laboratory, with its own bathroom and air conditioning (the site is in a hot area of a hot country) was installed, as were storage facilities, and other amenities. Among these are public bathrooms. There are two sets of bathrooms: one for regular tourists and one for school children. We have found that visits by groups of school children tend to result in widespread destruction and this is one way to contain the problem.

Along with the renovations of the site house, including cosmetic work such as ceilings along the front veranda, "decorative" ironwork closing the veranda off from outside and the work areas from the museum area, painting, paving of the area around the house and installation of potted plants and decorative plantings (including cacao trees, which are doing very well) around the site house, a small snack bar has been installed in the renovated remains of a former storage shed. This facility distributes the leaflets for the newly redesigned interpretative trail and sells water and other cold beverages and simple snacks to visitors.

A picnic area was also installed between the site house and the west wall of the Western Ceremonial Center. Tables and benches are now in place (and much used) in this shady grove and grilling facilities are to be installed shortly. The picnic area is close to the bathrooms as well.

We installed a new parking lot. People had been parking on the West Terrace of the site and we had had problems with clumsy school bus and truck drivers crashing into ancient structures. All parking has been removed to west of the site house. This area was surveyed for evidence of ancient use and mitigation (moving of proposed limits of the parking area) undertaken. New signage and a large iron barred gate were installed at the entrance to the site. This is closed when the site is not open (sites in El Salvador are open Tuesday through Sunday, 9 AM to 4 PM) and is heartily endorsed by the people who live in a small subdivision along the lower road, as it provides them with added security. In 2006-2007 Zachary Revene, a Peace Corps volunteer working with us, grew and planted

¹ *Archaeological Site Museums of Latin America*. Helaine Silverman, editor. University of Florida Press, Gainesville, 2006.

500 hundred native flowering trees along the access road. He previously talked to all the people living in the vicinity of the road, explaining what we were doing and why and asking their cooperation in protecting the trees. These trees are growing rapidly.

The site house has also been fenced and access to the ruins is through a locked gate which is attended. An exit gate is at the same location. The new interpretative trail has been marked with painted rocks and has signs installed along it. Throughout the site there are bilingual signs as needed. A floating steel stair has been installed up the back of the main pyramid (hidden by trees), so that visitors may climb the pyramid without damaging it. Similar stairs protect the fragile stonework of the “Temple of the Idols” attached to the North Ball Court.

Some work on consolidation and restoration (as minimal as possible) has been undertaken. In October 2007 Karen Olsen Bruhns oversaw the clearing, repair, and consolidation of Structure P-12, a small platform badly damaged by time and poor excavation, located next to the new interpretative trail. Similar repairs are planned for a collapsing section of the north wall of the Western Ceremonial Center and P-9, an *adoratorio* (platform with four stairs) damaged by poor excavation in the 1970s and by the Salvadoran army during the civil war (a machine gun nest was put on top). The plaza between the Western Ceremonial Center and the Acropolis has been cleared and planted in ground cover and we hope to begin clearing and consolidating the west wall and monumental stair of the Acropolis platform early in 2009.

Cihuatán was officially inaugurated as an archaeological park on November 17, 2007 with a large party to which CONCULTURA and FUNDAR members, government officials, officials, the Sol Meza family, workers and their families and neighbors were invited.



ELECTRICITY RETURNS TO CIHUATÁN AS CAESS INSTALLS NEW WIRES AND POLES.
ZACHARY REVENE GREW HUNDREDS OF NATIVE FLOWERING TREES TO PLANT ALONG THE
ACCESS ROAD TO THE SITE.



ENCROACHING ILLEGAL SUBDIVISIONS ARE A PROBLEM. HERE KAREN BRUHNS CONSULTS WITH OFFICIALS FROM THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENT CONCERNING HOW TO STOP THE INVASION.



THANKS TO THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE HELICOPTER PHOTOGRAPHS OF MANY OF THE PARKS. P-7, THE MAIN PYRAMID AT CIHUATÁN, WAS CHOSEN FOR EXCAVATION TO ASCERTAIN ITS STATE OF PRESERVATION. HERE THE LOWER WESTERN STAIR IS UNCOVERED AND WORK IS PROCEEDING UPWARDS TO REVEAL THE ENTIRE STAIR.



STUDENTS CLIMBING P-7. THE ORIGINAL FACING OF THE PYRAMID IS SOFT VOLCANIC TUFF AND CLIMBERS WERE DESTROYING THE PYRAMID. THE INSTALLATION OF A FLOATING STEEL STAIR TO THE REAR OF THE PYRAMID HAS TAKEN CARE OF THIS PROBLEM.



EXCAVATIONS WITHIN THE WESTERN CEREMONIAL CENTER (HERE THE END OF THE EXCAVATION OF NEWLY DISCOVERED P-28, A CIRCULAR WIND GOD TEMPLE) MUST BE PROTECTED FROM THE VISITORS, BUT ALSO EXPLAIN TO VISITORS WHAT IS GOING ON. SIGNS IN SPANISH AND ENGLISH EXPLAIN THE TEMPLE AND ASK FOR VISITORS' COOPERATION IN NOT DISTURBING THE EXCAVATION.



FUNDAR INITIATED EXCAVATION ON THE ACROPOLIS WITH THE START OF A LARGE SCALE EXCAVATION OF THE BURNED PALACE, A ROYAL RESIDENCE.



INAUGURATION OF THE CIHUATÁN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK: THE RENOVATED SITE HOUSE AND MUSEUM, DR. BRITO AND COMPANY AT THE OPENING OF THE MUSEUM, LADIES IN *VOLCANERA* COSTUME MAKE PURPLE CORN PUPUSAS (“PUPUSAS MAYAS™”) AND THE LOCAL TRADITIONAL MARIMBA.

ACTIONS TAKEN THAT PERTAIN TO THE PARKS ADMINISTERED BY FUNDAR

One salient problem of all the parks was lack of an on-site administrator who could oversee the daily running of the parks and make decisions concerning repairs, needed materials, and so on. We are fortunate to have an experienced administrator and willing field person, Rafael Amaya, who has been administering San Andrés and Joya de Cerén admirably for two years. He has an office at San Andrés and visits Joya de Cerén daily. Mr. Amaya also tries to come to Cihuatán about once a week to see if there are any problems. The President of FUNDAR, Dr. Rodrigo Brito Lara, and Archaeologist Paul Amaroli, make weekly (or more frequent, when needed) visits of inspection of all the parks to make decisions that Mr. Amaya cannot make or wishes to consult about and to make sure that construction, repairs, etc. are going as planned. Cihuatán is under a local *encargado*, Mr. Pastor Gálvez, seconded by Mr. Antonio Castillo, both long term, trusted employees. All are equipped with cell phones, as are the security officers, and instant advice or help can be summoned as needed. San Andrés and Joya de Cerén also have *encargados*, Mr. Rolando Quintanilla and Mr. Antonio Rivera, respectively, as does Las Marías (actually a troubleshooter, who informs us of looting and other bad behavior), Mr. Feliciano Torres. These are the people who oversee work being done on site. This system has been in place since before FUNDAR and works well; the necessity was for some formal interface between upper administration (now FUNDAR and CONULTURA, to whom we report on a regular basis) and the *encargado* and workers. This administrator also has to be able to take care of the paperwork involved with ordering and purchasing equipment, labor, running the snack bar, and the myriad other tasks involved. Fortunately Joya de Cerén and San Andrés are very close, so administering them both is little problem. Cihuatán lies about an hour away, but presents fewer problems, at least so far.

Although the archaeological parks of El Salvador vary greatly in their size, degrees of public use and general situation, there are some problems faced by all of them. One of these is inappropriate use. For all parks we have set up controlled access to the areas of ruins. Ruins are fenced, there is a single point of public access. This has reduced a number of problems and results in the guards knowing how many people are about and, to some extent, who they are. Guards and gate minders can identify potential trouble and do so. Armed 24 hour a day security has also been installed at the three parks.

Open public land is at a premium in El Salvador, and people were using the parks (and even the ancient ball courts at Cihuatán) to play soccer, fly kites, play with their dogs, fly remote controlled toy aircraft, picnic (usually leaving the debris behind), and indulge in social activities which embarrass the workmen. This latter problem we have not solved; young lovers are ingenious, but we have put up signs prohibiting the other activities, which the gate minder enforces. Renovated and extended picnic facilities take care of families who want to have a “*día del campo*” and are very successful. Snack bars mean that clean drinking water is available at a token price and functioning clean and open sanitary facilities have cut down on the public health problems arising from visitors (and workers) using any secluded spot for a bathroom.

An innovation has been the insistence that school groups make reservations. School visits are invariably on Wednesdays, when entry to parks and museums is free for students. We had experienced problems with huge numbers of students arriving all at once and then creating havoc of the sort that only several hundred unsupervised 8-12 year olds and young teenagers can create. Since we usually have several hundred to up to maybe 1,500 students a Wednesday at the popular sites, this was perceived as a problem which needed solving. The matter came to a head at San Andrés on April 5, 2006 when 3,500 school children arrived all at once. The chaos was indescribable, the guides in the museum and the security at the ruins were swamped. After the school visitors had left, it was discovered that not only was there the usual debris from eating and drinking and the usual crushed plantings and so on, some of the boys had gotten extremely excited playing ball and had gone into the bathrooms and nearly destroyed them. Since the problem had obviously gotten out of hand, we were able to convince CONCULTURA that a reservation system would give the children a better experience and would alleviate very expensive repairs. Reservations are handled by the FUNDAR secretary and visits are staggered so that the site museums are not too crowded and the children can see the exhibits and hear the guides. Teachers are required to stay with their charges instead of running away to sit in the shade. Children must leave their backpacks on the busses (no balls in the parks, nor slingshots, nor radios, nor food outside of the picnic areas), under the guard of the bus driver. They can retrieve them for lunch, of course, but lunch is not an unsupervised free for all, far from the eyes of spoilsport adults. Just as important, schools are required to take monetary responsibility for damages caused by their students or by inattention on the part of supervising adults. These are, of course, all very common strictures in the US and Europe, but are new to El Salvador. There have been some complaints, especially by those—such as a kindergarten that wished to have a piñata and a Santa within the ruins of San Andrés for their 4-5 year old students—who do not understand that these sites represent the national heritage, they are not fun centers.

TWO MORE PARKS: TAZUMAL AND CASA BLANCA

As of this writing, FUNDAR is assuming the administration of two more parks, bringing to five the total in co-management with CONCULTURA.

In late 2007 Federico Hernández requested that FUNDAR extend its administration to the parks of Tazumal and Casa Blanca. This was in recognition of our successful partnership in the co-management of the other three parks. This transfer of administration took place in January, 2008, and we have begun, as at the other parks, with visits of inspection in order to identify problems and determine goals. The following discussion of measures is in the preliminary discussion stage, of course. Our preliminary assessment is that both sites and their site museums suffer from outdated, inadequate exhibits. Moreover, both sites have minimal, monolingual, signage. We will be working with CONCULTURA provide more informative exhibits, labeling, and texts in the site museums.



TAZUMAL, THE MAIN PYRAMID GROUP AND CASA BLANCA, STRUCTURE 1

TAZUMAL

The small Tazumal park is right in the middle of Chalchuapa. It lacks secure parking for visitors, who must leave their cars on the city streets, paying street children to look out for them. On the streets by the current entrance to the park there are also a series of stores selling curios, including antiquities, to visitors and some food shops.

We are proposing to move the entrance to the park to the opposite side of the park, where there is undeveloped land which can be converted into a guarded parking lot. This area will have to be surveyed and mitigation undertaken first. To compensate the nearby residents for loss of income from their stores and food shops, we plan to install an area with stands for vendors. This way we will be able to control prohibited antiquities sales as well as insist upon sanitary conditions for food sellers.

It is evident that picnic facilities need to be installed and that the bathrooms of the old site museum need renovating. Student bathrooms, which are being successful at other sites, need to be installed.

An interpretive trail was once begun at Tazumal, but never finished. We hope to install the lacking signage and, perhaps, install a floating steel stair like the one at Cihuatán for visitor access to the top of the pyramid.

CASA BLANCA

Located on the main highway at the entrance to Chalchuapa, Casa Blanca is another small park surrounded by subdivisions. Excavations and development to date have been financed by the Japanese government and the archaeologists of the Japanese Proyecto Arqueológico have housing and laboratory facilities in the park.

The museum structure, a U-shaped traditional tile roofed house with a central patio, houses offices, the indigo workshop, and a small site museum. The exhibits here are adequate, save in their labeling. We have proposed to enlarge text and labels and are

toying with the idea of trilingual labels at this site (Spanish, English, Japanese), in honor of the generosity of the Japanese in investigation and restoration of the site.

There are some restoration problems, as there are in all sites, although some of these are simply the aftermath of the now long terminated civil war, when, for over a decade, there was no money at all for repair, but the rain and the energetic vegetation (and the looters) were as active as ever. Main improvements planned for Casa Blanca are restriction of access to the ancient buildings area, repair of paths, installation of decent signage, and possible relocation of the parking area. A related problem is that the entrance to Casa Blanca is on a dangerous blind curve of a very busy highway. Again, we would like to see entrance and exit lanes built, but this is very much in the future. Moving the entrance is a possibility, but one not much liked.

A SIXTH PARK?

CONCULTURA has decided that the early colonial site of Ciudad Vieja should be started on the road to development as an archaeological park.

Ciudad Vieja, which is located some 10 km. south of the historic town of Suchitoto, was the second San Salvador (*Villa de San Salvador*) and was inhabited by Spaniards and Mexican Indian mercenaries between 1525 and 1545. The site was located and identified by Paul Amaroli in the early 1990s. William Fowler excavated at Ciudad Vieja from 1996 to 2005. Part of the site was recently purchased but remains undeveloped, although a site guardian was installed and the site area is partially fenced.

Preliminary plans for the Ciudad Vieja site/park include more investigation and archaeological mitigation along the access road into the site, better fencing of the site, an informational kiosk with poster panels discussing the site, its history and so on at the entrance (like those seen in US National Parks), and signage at various structures within the site. The distance from any town means that further development would be difficult at this point. The Ciudad Vieja project is in its early stages of planning and no further details are available.





CIUDAD VIEJA: VIEWS OF A STREET, A BUILDING IDENTIFIED AS THE CABILDO AND ANOTHER WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A LOOKOUT.

THE FUTURE

We would like to stress again that FUNDAR's role in administering El Salvador's archaeological parks does not represent a step towards privatization. On the contrary, it was a move towards consolidating the administration of the parks in competent hands, utilizing people trained in archaeology and experienced in cultural heritage issues to repair and restore the parks and to develop needed facilities at them. FUNDAR has risen to this challenge and hopes to continue its role in the continued development of El Salvador's rich archaeological heritage and public access to that heritage. FUNDAR's participation in the protection of the parks arose out of an immediate need.

We (FUNDAR and CONULTURA) have been saddened by the intemperate, vicious, attacks by a small group of North American archaeologists, none of whom has shown any previous interest in cultural heritage management or cultural heritage protection, and two of whom who have neither visited El Salvador nor shown any interest in El Salvador for the past several decades. These attacks became public in a paper given at the Society for American Archaeology meetings in Austin, Texas, in 2007, and were followed by a barrage of untrue, insulting, and extremely offensive e-mails to Karen Olsen Bruhns, to FUNDAR and to CONULTURA on the part of the principal authors, William Fowler and Payson Sheets. The actions of these two archaeologists have seriously weakened good relations between CONULTURA and North American investigators. Sheets demanded a meeting with CONULTURA when his research permit was denied (and he had refused to meet with officials and explain the assertions contained in the paper). Officials at the US Embassy intervened to request that CONULTURA grant this meeting. The meeting was held, with FUNDAR officials also present. It was also videoed with Sheets' approval. Sheets denied he had had anything to do with the paper given, attributing it completely to Fowler (although FUNDAR and CONULTURA are in possession of a draft with his comments in the margin). Sheets then wrote a letter of retraction regarding his coauthorship of the paper and was subsequently granted his

research permit. We wish to note that FUNDAR's and CONCULTURA's relationships with US Embassy personnel have always been most friendly and harmonious, and that FUNDAR has recently received a \$8,000 grant from the Embassy for archaeological and conservation work at Cihuatán.

Once again, and quite in contradiction to Fowler's and Sheet's pernicious claims, FUNDAR has no intention, or possibility, of acquiring the archaeological parks of El Salvador for the foundation. FUNDAR is not involved in anything to do with the antiquities trade and we have been proactive in testifying, in working with US officials in seizures and returns of materials, and in education within the country. We have also been targeted by looters and dealers, not a comfortable position in a small country where everyone knows you and where you are. None of this is true for our detractors, who happily accepted money from collectors in the Patronato and have never shown any interest in protecting El Salvador's cultural heritage. In any event, the actions of these irresponsible and ignorant North Americans have been unfortunate and unpleasant. On the other hand, foreign scientists, including archaeologists, are more than welcome in El Salvador, something that a few badly behaved people will not change.

Situations involving the establishment and continuing protection of archaeological resources vary immensely from country to country. In the general way of things, most Salvadorans acknowledge that they have at least some indigenous heritage and one of FUNDAR's mission is to heighten this sense of identity with the past and to foster the understanding that protection of archaeological resources is protection of everyone's heritage. El Salvador also is very crowded and lacking in low cost, public, recreational facilities. This is a strong consideration when administering or planning archaeological parks: one must protect the archaeological resources while providing for rest and recreation.

We in FUNDAR have invested ourselves wholeheartedly and full time in the job we are asked to do and we have made enormous strides in the protection of El Salvador's archaeological heritage. Until such time as other arrangements are set in place, we will continue to work closely with CONCULTURA and other archaeologists in El Salvador to maintain, improve, and increase in number the country's archaeological parks and to protect, however possible, the precolumbian and colonial heritage of the nation.



CIHUATÁN'S NEW PARKING AREA THE DAY OF THE INAUGURATION.