



## Maya Atlas: The Struggle to Preserve Maya Land in Southern Belize (Literature)

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The Maya Atlas was made by the forty-two Ke'kchi and Mopan Maya communities of southern Belize. The maps, text, drawings, photographs and interviews were done by Maya village researchers and cartographers elected by the communities. In their own words and with their own maps, the Maya describe their land and life, the threats to their culture and rain forest, and their desire to protect and manage their own Homeland. The Atlas is an important step in developing a Maya Homeland. The Maya researchers and cartographers made the Atlas so that their communities, young people and leaders would have a comprehensive, village-by-village, regional understanding of the state of Maya natural and human resources and their traditions of living in harmony with nature - what is being lost, and what needs to be preserved and developed. The Atlas is a window to both the ancient and modern Maya world. The Atlas will appeal to people interested in indigenous rights, environmental issues, Latin America, arts, ethnography, traditional knowledge, community-based conservation, and the New Cartography, which involves cartographers assisting local communities to map their own lands and land use.

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### **Editorial Review**

#### Review

"At a very basic level we are all geographers interested in how and where people live. The *Maya Atlas* taps a wellspring of that geographic interest and provides an authentic insider's view of the Mayan's traditional and modern worlds. The *Maya Atlas* instantly transports the reader to villages in the rain forest where the smell of wood smoke hangs in the air, the calls of birds mix with the laughter of children, and the people till their fields by hand and burn incense to the spirits of the Hills and Valleys so the crops will grow abundantly."

- Bernard Nietschmann, Professor of Geography, University of California, Berkeley

"This village loves this village because its river banks are full of iguanas sunning themselves and its fishes love to bite."

- Santiago Chub, Village Researcher, Maya Mapping Project: Santa Anna, Toledo District, and Belize

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##### **Alicia Wescott:**

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