Baiting Sustainability: Collaborative Coastal Management, Heritage Tourism, and Alternative Fisheries in Placencia, Belize

Eric Koenig

University of South Florida, eskoenig@mail.usf.edu

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Baiting Sustainability: Collaborative Coastal Management, Heritage Tourism, and Alternative Fisheries in Placencia, Belize

by

Eric S. Koenig

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
Department of Anthropology
with a concentration in Applied Cultural Anthropology
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

Major Professor: E. Christian Wells, Ph.D.
Rebecca K. Zarger, Ph.D.
Thomas J. Pluckhahn, Ph.D.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my social studies and initial anthropology teacher in high school, Mr. Trinkner, for taking me down the path of anthropology and to Belizean sociologist and mentor Filiberto Penados for problematizing my understanding of “development.”
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ABSTRACT

Local coastal fishers in Belize are adapting novel strategies to manage, exploit, and market marine and coastal resources in an effort to promote fishing livelihoods and coastal environmental sustainability. These resilience strategies respond to diminished fishing stocks, fisheries and environmental policies and regulations, climate change, shifting seafood markets, and expanding tourism development. With growing foreign investment and nationally-directed infrastructure improvement projects on the Placencia Peninsula in recent years, tourism development is shifting toward mass tourism, and local residents are seeking avenues to sustain their livelihoods. In Placencia, the need for effective monitoring and management of Marine Protected Areas, fisheries, and coastal tourism, and enforcement of environmental regulations is being met through collaborations between the fisheries sector, governmental departments, regional environmental NGOs, and international aid agencies. Drawing on an “anthropology of public policy” approach and ethnographic research (including interviews, participatory mapping, surveys, and participant-observation) between 2013 and 2015 on the peninsula, this thesis investigates the implications of collaborative coastal resource management strategies developed between the Placencia Producers Cooperative Society Limited and regional environmental NGOs such as the Southern Environmental Association (SEA), among others, to promote marine conservation, local fishing livelihoods, and heritage tourism.

In particular, I consider how fishing livelihoods, conceptions of local history and heritage, environmental knowledge, tourism development, and fisheries and environmental policies inform the relationships and trajectory for “sustainable” local fisheries management through these collaborations. Many local fishers recognize a complementary relationship between tourism and fishing occupations through the ways that they can impart an ecological conservation ethos, centering coastal environmental knowledge, education, and local “embodied heritage” experiences and skills to sustain local marine
livelihoods while preserving coastal ecosystems for visitors and future generations of residents. With the declining prominence of commercial fishing for Caribbean spiny lobster, queen conch, and fin-fish in the village, several Placencia fishers are applying their generationally inherited and embodied marine knowledge to livelihood diversification strategies such as seasonal, full- or part-time transitions to tour guiding and NGO coastal conservation, monitoring and enforcement, restoration, and outreach positions. Moreover, many fishers in the Placencia producers fishing cooperative have ventured into alternative fisheries and mariculture activities including fishing and marketing of invasive lionfish as well as seaweed farming and value-added product promotion with variable support from the Belize Fisheries Department, SEA, other environmental NGOs, and international conservation and development organizations. Recognizing these livelihood diversification strategies and relationships for sustainable coastal resource management, I discuss the opportunities and challenges of three recent and emerging alternative livelihoods programs directed by the Placencia fishing cooperative including the seaweed farming project, the lionfish eradication and marketing initiative, and the development of a heritage tourism program centering fisher livelihoods in connection with a proposed local fishing history museum.

To explore the possibility for fishing heritage tourism as a pathway to “sustainable tourism development” on the peninsula in the future, I investigate how local conceptions of fishing as heritage in Placencia village converge with or diverge from tourist “imaginaries” of culture and heritage on the peninsula as well as heritage assets and products conceived in national sustainable tourism development policy and commercial tourism markets. Residents of the peninsula, Belizean workers and visitors residing off of the peninsula, and foreign tourists alike recognize fishing and activities, events, and places associated with fishing as aspects of local heritage, although foreign visitors generally ascribe only cursory significance to fishing in the peninsula’s culture(s), heritage, and identities as compared with Belizean nationals. Rather, these visitors often imagine local heritage in terms of beaches and relaxation, the Belize Barrier reef and cayes, and especially the local friendly vibe, “quaintness,” and cultural diversity of people, drawing partly from national and local tourism marketing media portrayals of major attractions on the peninsula (such as on websites and in magazines and guidebooks) and resident and...
visitor word of mouth. Local and national sustainable tourism policies for the peninsula that recommend cultural tourism as a secondary product for future tourism development on the peninsula align with interview and survey results that suggest widespread resident and visitor interest in seeing the development of cultural heritage attractions on the peninsula such as a local cultural and historical museum. For many residents, conceptions of heritage tourism fit within the scope of local plans and visions for sustainable development that aim to maintain the integrity of the peninsula as a “low impact,” “authentic,” integrated, and primarily overnight tourism destination with a laid-back vibe, beaches, cultural diversity, and access to a variety of inland and marine-based attractions.

Drawing from these results, I conclude by discussing the implications of these alternative fisheries and tourism initiatives and markets to support local livelihoods and coastal environmental conservation, and consider the potential viability of collaborative coastal resource management approaches between fishers, NGOs, and governmental organizations for future sustainable development in Placencia and other coastal Belizean communities. This thesis represents an applied case study of collaborative fisheries management and how heritage is conceived and applied in a coastal Belizean context. It builds on previous coastal environmental resource management, heritage studies, and anthropology of tourism research, and considers the significance of local heritage and livelihoods in crafting locally accountable, relevant, and sustainable development policies and plans in coastal settings.
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Problem

Fisheries are a growing economic sector worldwide with fish supply for human consumption increasing on average by 3.2 percent annually, sustaining commercial capture industries, small-scale fishing operations and livelihoods, aquaculture operations, trade, and regulatory and management bodies (FAO 2014:iii, 3). Yet according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), an estimated 28.8 percent of marine fishing stocks worldwide are being overharvested or “fished at biologically unsustainable levels,” primarily due to unreported, unregulated, and illicit fishing practices and marginal governance, resulting in diminishing wild fish stocks for commercially exploited species (FAO 2014:iv, 7, 37). Along sprawling coastal areas in the Caribbean, the effects of overfishing are acute, exacerbated by increasing competition among coastal resource users, environmental degradation from tourism-related development and activities, marginal enforcement of fisheries and environmental regulations (Salas et al. 2007:5-6), climate change (Gillett and Myvette 2008), and increasing seafood demand (Key 2002a; King 1997). Capture fisheries along the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef system (spanning 1,000 kilometers from the Yucatan Peninsula to the Bay Islands of Honduras along the Caribbean coastline of Central America (Almada-Villela et al. 2002:303-304)), for key commercial species in particular, have seen general declining trends in production since the late 1980s (FAO 2014:11-12; Gillett and Myvette 2008:17; Salas et al. 2007:7-8). Declines in marine capture fisheries along the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef have been especially pronounced following extreme weather events such as hurricanes and sea surface temperature fluctuations.
rises in the mid-late 1990s and early 2000s, which resulted in severe degradation of corals and extensive losses of coral reef cover (Almada-Villela et al. 2002:303-304; Gillett and Myvette 2008:31-32; Perez 2009:195). Responding to reductions in many marine capture fisheries and environmental degradation in coastal zones, recent integrated regional and national policies, plans, and programs have emerged in the Caribbean seeking to sustainably balance the development, use, and conservation of fisheries and other coastal resources (Cho 2005; Clarke et al. 2013; Perez 2009; Pomeroy et al. 2003; Salas et al. 2007; Tompkins 2003). These coastal management policies and plans often include measures to improve inter-stakeholder collaborations and capacity, assess coastal human-environmental interactions, adapt / modify fisheries catch regulations, establish Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), and increase opportunities for local coastal stakeholders to participate in decision-making processes, among others (Cho 2005; Pomeroy et al. 2003; Salas et al. 2007; Tompkins 2003). However, in many cases, constraints including imbalanced knowledge dissemination between stakeholders, issues over property and tenure rights, and unclear management of trans-boundary coastal resources as well as restrictive use regulations and top-down management of MPAs impede the success of participatory and integrated management plans (Pomeroy et al. 2003; Tompkins 2003:ii, 1, 22). Thus, despite efforts to improve coastal resource management, many small-scale coastal fishers in the Caribbean struggle to sustain their livelihoods and are seeking alternative sources of income and employment opportunities (Salas et al. 2007:5, 9, 15), especially in the expanding tourism sector (Huitric 2005:32-33; Key 2002a, 2002b).

To overcome these social, economic, and environmental challenges involved in coastal fisheries management, many local fishers and fishing cooperatives are collaborating with environmental and conservation non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and governmental agencies on a number of projects and initiatives aimed at sustainable resource development (Cho 2005; Pomeroy et al. 2003). Drawing on analyses of coastal environmental management, fisheries, and tourism policies and recent ethnographic research on the Placencia Peninsula, Belize, I consider the implications of these collaborative coastal resource management initiatives and relationships between government, NGOs, and local fishers for sustainable fisheries in the context of rapid tourism expansion around the coastal village
of Placencia. Specifically, I examine how fishing culture, livelihoods, and environmental knowledge are used as assets by stakeholder groups to variably support “sustainable development” goals on and around the peninsula through promotion of alternative livelihoods, heritage tourism, and ecological conservation initiatives.

In the Caribbean context, Belize offers a moderately laissez-faire approach to sustainable coastal resource management that integrates governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and community organizations through a multi-layered system of co-management for Marine Protected Areas and other coastal zones along a central segment of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System, largely supported by external funding agencies and domestic conservation trusts (Cho 2005; Goetze and Pomeroy 2005; Burris 2007). This integrated coastal zone management system represents part of a comprehensive agenda for economic and sustainable development by the government of Belize (see Clarke et al. 2013) alongside other policies and programs conceived since the country secured its independence in 1981 from Great Britain (Government of Belize and UNDP 2013; Harrison et al. 2004). Following neoliberal development policies that encourage economic growth and poverty reduction based on free-market principles of competition, deregulation, and individual economic rationality (Harvey 2005; Yelvington et al. 2012:53), the government of Belize has promoted tourism as a primary economic driver for sustainable development across the country over the past two decades (Dallen and White 1999:231; Government of Belize and UNDP 2013; Medina 2010, 2012, 2015). Aligning with recent UN Millennium Development Goals as part of wider sustainable development efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean, Belize has leveraged environmental conservation (Dallen and White 1999; Lindberg et al. 1996; Medina 2010:248-249; Myles 2008) and culture as commodities for tourism development (Scher 2011:8-9). Central to recent national tourism development and environmental policy plans (e.g., Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a, b), “sustainable tourism” development has emphasized the expansion of ecotourism markets, among others, as an avenue to raise foreign-exchange capital for economic development across the country (Dallen and White 1999:231; Medina 2012:233-234). Critics point out that these “sustainable tourism” plans and programs, especially those targeting impoverished areas, have been largely ineffective.
because they fail to recognize the structural inequalities entrenched in tourism development practices that often favor the interests of foreign investors and businesses over those of diverse local stakeholders (Cater 1993:85-86; Dallen and White 1999:231; Lindberg et al. 1996; Medina 2010, 2012:233-234).

Furthermore, culturally diverse communities often lack adequate representation as stakeholders in decision-making processes concerning the development of local lands and resources (Ausdal 2002; Boles et al. 2011; Harrison et al. 2004; Medina 2005:284; Wainwright 2011; Wilk 1999). Recognizing this historical context, my research seeks to identify and examine various stakeholder visions of sustainable tourism and fishing as heritage to illuminate avenues for locally-directed and equitable coastal development in Placencia.

Building on previous coastal environmental resource management literature and anthropology of tourism and heritage research, this thesis represents an applied case study examining conceptions and approaches for sustainable collaborative environmental resource management and tourism development between coastal stakeholders. In particular, I highlight recent and emerging alternative fisheries and coastal sustainability programs and projects led by a local fishing cooperative - the Placencia Producers Cooperative Society Limited (PPCSL) - in collaboration with regional environmental NGOs like the Southern Environmental Association (SEA), international conservation NGOs and programs, and the Belize Fisheries Department. These projects include seaweed farming and product promotion, fishing and marketing of invasive lionfish as a seafood product, and the proposed design of a community fishing history museum as part of a larger fishing tourism program featuring locally guided seaweed and fishing heritage tours. I collected ethnographic information about these initiatives as well as the challenges and opportunities for local fishers, environmental NGOs, and other stakeholders over three summer field seasons on the Placencia Peninsula, conducting multi-methods research including extensive participant-observation, participatory mapping, semi-structured interviews, and verbally-administered surveys using the KoBo application for smartphones (Anokwa 2011; Cairns 2014).
Furthermore, to explore the potential viability of fishing heritage tourism as a pathway to sustainable tourism development on the peninsula in the future, I investigate how many local resident conceptions of fishing as a form of “embodied ecological heritage” (Baines 2012, 2015) converge with or diverge from “tourism imaginaries” (Salazar 2010) of Placencia’s tourism and heritage and fit into larger forums of sustainable tourism policy and practice and commercial tourism markets.

To assist future fishing heritage tourism efforts in the village as an applied product of my research, I document significant fishing heritage places elicited through discussions and mapping activities with local residents. I conclude by discussing the implications of the fishing cooperative-directed alternative fisheries and tourism programs for local fishing livelihoods and coastal environmental conservation, and consider the potential viability of collaborative coastal resource management approaches between coastal fishers, NGOs, and government organizations for future sustainable development in Placencia and surrounding coastal Belizean communities.

1.2 Theoretical Framework and Key Terms

To examine the connections between coastal resource management strategies, local livelihoods and culture, and tourism development, I apply the term “heritage” as a central concept throughout the sections of this thesis. Meanings of the word heritage are socially and politically constructed and represented in various ways by diverse groups and stakeholders - constantly being negotiated, disputed, authorized, and authenticated toward a variety of ends including preserving local culture and attracting tourists (Chambers 2006; Jackson 2012; Little 2007; Lowenthal 1996; Smith 2006, 2012). Although the meaning of the term heritage is widely debated, it generally represents a sociopolitical construction of the past or present, a process, as well as a discourse used by people through time, which highlights particular tangible and intangible aspects and representations of a group’s memory, identity, traditions, livelihoods, culture, environments, myth, place, nationality, history, and experience at particular historical and

2 I use the term “fishing heritage” to denote cultural and environmental heritage associated with fishing that are recognized as significant aspects of the culture, history, identity, landscapes, and livelihoods of residents and other stakeholders.
political moments (Chambers 2006; Jackson 2012:22-23; Lowenthal 1996:1; Smith 2006, 2012). In these ways, heritage may be negotiated, contested, celebrated, preserved, reflected upon, marketed, and consumed.

To orient my analysis of conceptions of fishing as heritage on the Placencia Peninsula, I draw on anthropologist Noel Salazar’s (2010) term “tourism imaginaries,” Laurajane Smith’s (2006) phrase “authorized heritage discourse,” and Kristina Baines’s (2012, 2015) concept of “embodied ecological heritage.” I use these concepts as analytical lenses to explore the ways in which heritage associated with fishing is conceived, experienced, applied, and shared by local fishers and other peninsula stakeholders as well as how it is constructed, represented, appropriated, (re)produced, and disseminated in commercial tourism marketing media, tourism development plans, and national cultural policy (e.g., NICH 2014) for tourism and coastal resource management and consumption on the Placencia Peninsula. “Tourism imaginaries” consist of the preconceived individual and shared ideas, expectations, and meanings tourists have of destinations before they visit, which are culled from various forms of circulating tourism informational media and “historically laden fantasies” that are collectively expressed as “mass-mediated narratives” about travel to the destination (Salazar 2010:xvii-xviii). In his book, Envisioning Eden: Mobilizing Imaginaries in Tourism and Beyond, Salazar (2010:6) argues that “tourism imaginaries” serve to “… mediate identifications of Self and Other” in the minds of tourists to construct a cognitive framework to interpret the destinations they visit and experience. Furthermore, various “tourism imaginaries” are unevenly circulating to host populations, especially tour guides, who learn, interpret, mediate, and reproduce the dominant narratives of a destination to assume cosmopolitan identities and more effectively communicate and connect with the tourists who visit (Salazar 2010:6-7, 9, 14). Building on this concept, I offer the term “heritage imaginaries” to denote the dominant conceptions that tourists have of a host population’s heritage when traveling to a destination. For example, tourists often imagine heritage and its cultural authenticity in a particular locale by drawing from marketed attractions, places,

3 Tourism marketing media in Belize include the Belize Tourism Industry Association’s magazine Destination Belize, the Belize Tourism Board website (www.travelbelize.org) (BTB 2014), guidebooks like The Rough Guides: Belize (Eltringham 2007), and local media like the Placencia Breeze newspaper, among other sources.
and experiences (such as beaches and relaxation, the Belize Barrier reef and cayes, and a friendly vibe in the case of the Placencia Peninsula) in national and local tourism marketing media like travel websites, magazines, and guidebooks as well as through travelogues and resident and visitor hearsay.

Parallel to heritage imaginaries, “authorized heritage discourse” represents an institutional, ideological, and sanctioned form of communication about heritage meanings that generally privileges Western ideas of material and place-based heritage, and is used to reinforce and circulate “grand narratives” of nation, culture, and the collective past (Smith 2006:42). In this way, “authorized heritage discourse” is used to identify, appropriate, construct, repackage, and market cultural and environmental conceptions of heritage to serve state political and economic needs, often drawing on ethnic and cultural diversity values to promote a collective sense of national identity (Minetti and Pyburn 2005; Scher 2011; Smith 2006). It generally excludes alternative conceptions and forms of heritage, which has consequences for the expression of social and cultural identity by groups of people, especially for those who are marginalized. In her book *Uses of Heritage*, Laurajane Smith (2006:42-43) argues that “authorized heritage discourse” not only confers power of responsibilities for defining and representing the past but also reflects a process that serves to instill social relations or power, values, and meanings about the past and present. In Belize at the national level, this is seen in regional and national sustainable tourism plans (e.g., the “National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan” (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a, b)) as well as national cultural policy that emphasize preservation and marketing of various “cultural forms” as means to promote sustainable development (National Institute of Culture and History 2014).

I argue that with rapid tourism development and ecological changes occurring on the Placencia Peninsula, it is productive to frame many resident conceptions of fishing as a form of “embodied ecological heritage” (Baines 2012, 2015) that is phenomenologically linked to the cultural identities, wellbeing, and livelihood strategies of many local residents, in turn serving as an asset for sustainable development initiatives in Placencia, including tourism. In her ethnography *Embodying Ecological Heritage in a Maya Community: Health, Happiness, and Identity*, Kristina Baines (2015) demonstrates how health and ecological heritage converge through everyday lived experiences, skills, and “traditional”
cultural practices in the Mopan Maya community of Santa Cruz in the Toledo District of Belize. She argues that particular forms of ecological and cultural knowledge are constructed and applied as heritage through the experiential self, linking changes in wellness to alterations in ecological practice structured by “development” incursions in Maya communities through the lenses of individuals and communities in their social, political, and ecological environs (Baines 2012:vi-vii, 4; 2015). Through her research, she found that factors such as foodways, occupation, land use, family, personal skills, and even activism constitute forms of “Maya” heritage practice in Santa Cruz, which community residents identify as inextricably linked to individual bodies and local conceptions of health and wellbeing (Baines 2012:8-9; 2015).

In similar ways, many current or former fishers (mostly men) in Placencia draw on their intimate environmental knowledge and experiences on the reef and surrounding coastal waters to engage in coastal environmental conservation efforts and livelihood transitions into the tourism sector, especially as reef snorkeling and diving tour guides and fishing guides. Applying their experience-based knowledge of the history, locations, and qualities of coastal cayes, seasonal marine species fluctuations, and weather conditions as well as captaining, diving, fishing, and cooking skills to alternative occupations promotes their wellbeing and resilience through continued connection to the sea and marine livelihoods (Spang 2014b:41, 43, 64-68). Thus, some local Placencia fishermen deploy a form of “embodied ecological heritage” to adapt and transition to new forms of work in environmental resource management, tourism, and mariculture sectors in the context of sustained capture fisheries decline and rapid tourism expansion on the peninsula. I explain the ways in which some fishers apply their embodied heritage experiences and environmental knowledge to these alternative and often complementary livelihoods in Chapter six.

Finally, I engage the concept of “co-management” in this thesis to explore the various schemes, responsibilities, and roles of non-governmental and government stakeholders and policy implications involved in managing coastal resources such as fisheries in the near-shore and reef environments surrounding the Placencia Peninsula. Co-management is generally used to describe shared authority and management responsibilities between non-government stakeholders and government, although the form
and extent of this relationship varies (Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:18; Pomeroy et al. 2003:3-5). Following Tara Goetze and Robert Pomeroy (2005:18-19), I use the term “delegated co-management” to describe the government – non-governmental relationships between the Belize Fisheries and Forest Departments and the Southern Environmental Association NGO in managing coastal environmental resources, especially Marine Protected Areas off of the Placencia Peninsula. Recognizing calls for greater accountability, transparency, ownership, access, and involvement of diverse community stakeholders in coastal resource management in the Caribbean (Pomeroy et al. 2003; Tompkins 2003:ii, 1, 22), “delegated co-management” represents a participatory form of governance in which government organizes various non-governmental stakeholders (often community-based organizations) to make management decisions about a pool of resources (Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:19). In this case, these shared environmental resources represent marine fisheries, reefs, and coastal cayes monitored, researched, and managed by the Southern Environmental Association and used by tour guides, tourists, and fishers, among other stakeholders.

1.3 Research Objectives, Questions, and Policy Approach

The primary aim of my thesis research is to explore the collaborative strategies used by coastal fishers and community residents to promote resilient livelihoods and sustainable coastal resource management in response to diminished fishing stocks, fisheries and environmental policies, and shifting seafood markets, especially in the context of rapid tourism development and ecological change on the Placencia Peninsula. As a central focus of discussion, I explore how fishing livelihoods, history, local environmental knowledge, and tourism development have guided the form and direction of sustainable fisheries and alternative livelihoods projects and programs in Placencia. In particular, the collaborative trajectory between the Placencia Producer’s Cooperative Society Limited and regional environmental NGOs such as the Southern Environmental Association in supporting these endeavors is examined. Between these two organizations, specific initiatives have emerged to develop and assist alternative
marine resource cultivation, marketing, conservation, and heritage tourism programs for Placencia fishers in light of fisheries program, regulations, and plans, and NGO co-management arrangements with the Belize Fisheries and Forest Departments.

Investigation of these collaborative initiatives stems from three seasons of ethnographic research conducted during May-June 2013, June-July 2014, and May-July 2015 on the Placencia Peninsula. During these field seasons, I had the opportunity to collect ethnographic information from residents, Belizean workers, and tourists alike on issues surrounding sustainable coastal management, tourism development, and heritage using a multi-method ethnographic approach as part of a larger project investigating perceptions and practices of sustainable water and wastewater management on the peninsula. This research was undertaken in the context of an interdisciplinary, international research project funded by a NSF Partnerships in International Research and Education (PIRE) project titled “Context Sensitive Implementation of Synergistic Water-Energy Systems” (PI – James Mihelcic, University of South Florida). The overarching project investigates the cultural, geographic, and engineering contexts in which technologies used to recover water, energy, and nutrients from wastewater in coastal Caribbean settings can be sustainably implemented (see Wells et al. 2016 for a summary of the scope of the project, research activities on the Placencia Peninsula, and preliminary findings from the 2013 Pilot Season by the USF social science research team).

To examine the cross-section of actors and policies in recent fisheries, tourism development, and coastal environmental plans, laws, and regulations, and the legal and socio-political obstacles and opportunities for coastal fishers in Placencia, I apply a “study through” approach (Wedel et al. 2005) within an “anthropology of public policy” framework (Haenn and Casagrande 2007; Shore and Wright 1997; Shore et al. 2011). Following Janine Wedel and others (2005:39-40), a “study through” approach is often used to trace the source of policy and its outcomes among people and organizations to illuminate power dynamics and distribution of resources between them as well as the roles and strategies actors adopt to navigate policy. In this way, an “anthropology of public policy” attempts to examine and deconstruct the process of policy-making and its social, economic, and political implications by
recognizing that policy itself is a cultural category and a social construction (Haenn and Casagrande 2007:101; Wedel et al. 2005). Using this framework, this thesis examines the roles that various stakeholders have in sustainable tourism development and coastal fisheries management, as well as the laws, regulations, and plans guiding coastal management. In particular, it reviews how national laws, fisheries regulations (like the Belize Fisheries Act), and recent coastal management and tourism sustainability plans like the draft Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (Clarke et al. 2013), the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a, b), and the Peninsula 2020 Vision (Peninsula 2020 Initiative 2011) influence fishing practices, regulation, enforcement, and sustainability projects, as well as conceptions of heritage among local residents. Finally, this thesis aims to illuminate how current perceptions, practices, initiatives, and environmental knowledge of fishers – applying Baines (2012, 2015) concept of “embodied ecological heritage” – have shaped recent conservation, marketing, and heritage tourism programs by the Placencia Producers fishing cooperative.

In an effort to examine how various stakeholders and policies interact in management of coastal waters and fisheries around the Placencia Peninsula and the implications for future sustainable development, I consider the following overarching research questions:

1.) What strategies do Placencia fishers draw upon to sustain and promote local fishing livelihoods and marine conservation in the context of rapid tourism development and ecological change on and around the peninsula?

2.) How do local conceptions of fishing as heritage in Placencia village converge with or diverge from “tourism imaginaries” (Salazar 2010) of Placencia as a destination?

3.) In what ways and to what extent does fishing heritage tourism fit into broader visions of sustainable tourism development in local and national policies and commercial tourism markets in Placencia?
1.4 Thesis Organization

To contextualize my exploration of the interconnections between tourism development, sustainability, coastal resource management, and fishing heritage on the Placencia Peninsula, I review relevant literature on anthropology of tourism, heritage (management), international development and sustainability, coastal resource management, and environmental anthropology in Chapter two. Specifically, I define key terms such as “tourist,” problematize the concepts of heritage, sustainable development and “local environmental knowledge,” and discuss issues and approaches for heritage tourism and marketing. Through my review of these terms and issues, I articulate the theoretical frameworks of heritage imaginaries (building on Salazar’s (2010) concept of “tourism imaginaries”), “authorized heritage discourse” (Smith 2006), and “embodied ecological heritage” (Baines 2012, 2015) that are applied to interpret the ethnographic data presented in this thesis. Finally, I consider the context of modern tourism and sustainable development in the Caribbean.

In Chapter three, I discuss the geographical, environmental, and historical contexts of Placencia, Belize, and integrate previous research into the presentation of this background. In particular, I examine the coastal environments surrounding the peninsula and the historical trajectory of Placencia’s development before and after Hurricane Iris devastated the area in October 2001 (Arellano 2001). The chapter also explores the current landscape of tourism development on the Placencia Peninsula, including demographic characteristics of four communities spread throughout the peninsula, the development corridors between and within these villages, social and environmental impacts of tourism-related development, and prominent concerns, policies, and stakeholders informing local sustainable development initiatives. I conclude the chapter by examining the history of the fishing industry in Placencia centered on the Placencia Producers Cooperative Society Limited (PPCSL), integrating select ethnographic data from interviews and participant-observation activities on the peninsula, to lay the foundation for my presentation of research results and subsequent discussion about alternative fishing livelihoods and the future trajectory of local fisheries.
Chapter four overviews the methodology I used – including an “anthropology of public policy” approach (Wedel et al. 2005) and mixed-method ethnographic research (LeCompte and Schensul 2010) – to guide my fieldwork preparation, data collection, and analysis of the key research questions outlined above. In the chapter, I lay out the context for the research as part of an interdisciplinary project investigating impacts of tourism and water-energy development on the coastal environment, livelihoods, and wellbeing, and describe the mixed-method approach I used for data collection and sampling procedures as well as data analysis. In my discussion, I consider the ethical challenges and opportunities of using GPS-assisted participatory mapping (Chambers, R. 2006) as a method to elicit place-based environmental knowledge and heritage conceptions.

Chapter five contributes to anthropology of public policy by surveying the network of policies and stakeholders involved in integrated coastal resource management including the tourism, fisheries, and protected areas management sectors. I focus a large part of the chapter on the forms and mechanisms of collaboration and co-management between the various coastal development stakeholders – overviewsing the framework for integrated coastal zone management in Belize (Clarke et al. 2013) and tracing the international, national, and regional levels at which “sustainable” coastal development and management policies and initiatives are conceived and operate. I then examine the roles of various stakeholders in this integrated coastal zone management framework, paying particular attention to the relationships between governmental departments such as the Belize Fisheries Department and environmental NGOs like the Southern Environmental Association for the co-management of coastal protected areas.

In Chapter six, I present my research findings relating to the knowledge, strategies, and relationships local fishers in Placencia draw upon to sustain and promote their livelihoods and marine conservation in the context of rapid tourism development and ecological change occurring on and around the Placencia Peninsula. Following Baines (2012, 2015), I argue that local fishing culture, identity, livelihoods, and environmental knowledge collectively comprise a form of coastal “embodied ecological heritage” that fishers apply to variably support sustainable development goals on and around the peninsula through promotion of alternative livelihoods including eco- and heritage tourism in addition to
environmental conservation initiatives. Following my presentation of this interpretation, I then discuss recent and emerging alternative fisheries and coastal sustainability programs and projects led by the Placencia fishing cooperative in collaboration with regional environmental conservation NGOs like the Southern Environmental Association (SEA), international conservation NGOs and programs, and the Belize Fisheries Department. In particular, I examine the opportunities and challenges elicited from research participants for alternative fisheries development initiatives including fishing and marketing of invasive lionfish to consumers, seaweed farming and product promotion, and the proposed design of a community fishing history museum as part of a larger fishing heritage tourism program.

Chapter seven builds on this discussion by exploring the potential viability of heritage tourism as an approach to future local sustainable tourism development. I first examine residents’ understandings of fishing heritage and then consider how they overlap with or diverge from tourist heritage imaginaries of Placencia’s tourism and heritage and fit into larger commercial tourism marketing discourse and forums for sustainable tourism policy and practice. I then discuss how resident initiatives intersect with wider peninsula community and national visions of sustainable coastal development and highlight the possibilities for locally-driven cultural / heritage tourism in the future, drawing upon resident interviews and existing recommendations outlined by local and national policies, researchers, and consultants.

Chapter eight summarizes my main research conclusions for each of the primary research questions investigated through this thesis and reviews how my interpretations contribute to major themes engaged in the literature. Specifically, I discuss how my research findings relate to concepts including “tourism imaginaries” (Salazar 2010) and cultural authenticity (Bruner 2005; MacCannell 1976), local environmental knowledge and “embodied ecological heritage” (Baines 2012, 2015), “authorized heritage discourse” (Smith 2006, 2012), cultural heritage production and marketing, the challenges of “delegated co-management” (Goetze and Pomeroy 2005), and the discourse of sustainable development. I then briefly reflect on my positionality conducting research on the Placencia Peninsula and the limitations of my data collection and analysis. Finally, I consider avenues for future research to address gaps in this study and enhance its utility to better consider the long-term market dynamics and feasibility of cultural
and heritage tourism and alternative fishing livelihoods in Placencia and similar coastal settings undergoing rapid tourism development.
CHAPTER II: HERITAGE TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEXT

2.1 Tourism, Heritage, and Authenticity

To understand the context of tourism development as well as conceptions, discourses, imaginaries, and manifestations of heritage used by local and national actors for tourism and other purposes on the Placencia, Peninsula, Belize, I first review relevant literature on the anthropology of tourism, heritage, and heritage tourism. I discuss how heritage is variably defined and used, and the issues and approaches involved in packaging it for tourism consumption, drawing on insights and recommendations from heritage management and cultural tourism practitioners for heritage / cultural tourism product development and tourism marketing in national and community contexts. I then briefly review the trajectory of tourism for sustainable development as it is has been historically articulated in the Caribbean.

2.1.1 Anthropology of Tourism: Unpacking “Modern” Tourism

The anthropology of tourism is the study of the processes and structures shaping relationships and interactions, culture and travel, between “hosts,” “guests,” and intermediaries in particular settings (Chambers 2010:8-9). It represents an effort to examine the hospitality / tourism industry and the tourist experience from a holistic perspective with attention to both visitors and hosts alike (Stronza 2001). In addition to contributing understandings about the origins of tourism and its impacts, anthropology critically examines topics like immigration, travel, displacement, and diaspora generally to demonstrate the importance that transient human movement has had on the development of culture, and challenge Western assumptions about leisure as the defining characteristic of modern tourism (Chambers 2010:9,
12). In particular, anthropology offers the idea that cultural processes underlie tourism interactions and relationships, which allows us to deconstruct perceived rigid boundaries between hosts and guests and examine practices of consumption, production, exchange, and marketing in cross-cultural contexts that put unfamiliar people in contact with each other (Chambers 2010:8-9). Furthermore, anthropologists studying the phenomenon of modern tourism illustrate how global flows of capital, people, and ideas consumed in local settings both shape and are influenced by broader historical trajectories, power relations, and political, socio-economic, and environmental contexts that generate both mobilities and immobilities among people across locales (Lyon and Wells 2012:2-5). Indeed, by engaging “tourism mobilities” as a central concept with which to study modern tourism, anthropologists challenge binaries between “hosts” and “guests” and complicate simplistic notions of “community,” “local,” and “tourist” (Lyon and Wells 2012:3-4, 12-14). Instead, they acknowledge the fluid identities of individuals engaged in tourism processes and “tourismscapes” – whether they are migrants seeking out commercial opportunities, diasporic family visitors, leisure goods consumers, religious pilgrims, students or humanitarian volunteers, business people, expatriate retirees, or otherwise traveling under their own accord for any number of purposes (Lyon and Wells 2012:3-4, 6). Finally, in addition to “tourism mobilities,” anthropology applies a number of useful theoretical lenses like commercialization, consumption theory and commodification, authenticity (MacCannell 1976), the “tourist gaze” (Urry and Larsen 2011) and “tourism imaginaries” (Salazar 2010), expansionism, political-economy, nationalism, acculturation (Smith 1989), and liminality (Turner and Turner 1978) as well as numerous tourist typologies that help us make sense of the motivations and expectations within, and the transformative effects of, “modern” tourism (Chambers 2010).

Definitions of “tourist” vary across the field and numerous tourist typologies have been articulated to characterize them based on characteristics such as gender, age, social class, motivations, experiences / aspirations, and impacts / engagement in a destination (Chambers 2010; Urry 1992; Urry and Larsen 2011). Despite distinctions between tourist typologies, anthropologists generally describe tourists as people who travel in a state of leisure or for some explicit experience away from their usual
place of residence and stay for some time (at least overnight) in (a) destination(s) (Herbert 1995:5; Nash et al. 1981). Some distinguish the behaviors and experiences encompassed by tourist mobility as a characteristic of “modern” social life (Urry and Larsen 2011:4-5) and cosmopolitanism (Salazar 2010, 2011). According to David Herbert (1995:7), tourism is structured by three primary conditions, namely that “… leisure time provides the general context, activities outside the home identify the relevant behavior, and tourism locates the most specific and clear blocks of usable time.” This definition of tourism, while complicated by ambiguities with its temporal condition and with the term “leisure,” serves as the basis for my use of the term throughout this thesis.

Valene Smith is generally regarded to be one of the pioneers of the budding sub-disciplinary focus on tourism in anthropology (Chambers 2010:8). In her seminal edited volume *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, a compiled collection of 12 case studies first published in 1977, Smith (1989) and others explore the range of tourism types and the experiences of visitors and guests within these permutations of modern tourism. Specifically, they investigate cultural changes resulting from host-guest relationships present in the various forms of tourism, exploring a number of themes ranging from the commoditization of culture and the use of model cultures to tourism as imperialism (Richter 1978:711). Through the case studies, the authors collectively discuss and inspect five primary types of tourism – cultural, ethnic, environmental, recreational, and historical – and assess their impacts on the host-guest relationship, broaching the question “Who benefits (from tourism) and at what cost?” (Richter 1978:711). Importantly, the work examines the inequalities, benefits, and social relations of tourism highlighted in original ethnographic fieldwork in touristic settings, which has paved the way for anthropology’s prominence in the field of tourism studies.

In the volume, Smith (1989) outlines a typology for modern tourists relating to their degree of perceived cultural engagement in the host setting. As Dennison Nash and colleagues (1981:475) comment, this typology is based on the perception of tourism as a phenomenon that happens “… *only* when three elements — temporary leisure + disposable income + travel ethic—simultaneously occur.” Anthropologist Erve Chambers (2010:23) notes in his review of the volume that through examining
variations of the degree of these elements in the tourism experience, Smith identifies seven types of tourists that range from the “charter” tourist seeking Western mediated tourism experiences in large groups without direct interaction with locals on one end of the spectrum and the “explorer” tourist seeking to travel and explore places independently or with a few people. Categories of “charter,” “mass,” and “incipient mass” tourists that seek out Western amenities and generally do not adjust well to the local setting are used to describe tourists on her “low” end of the spectrum, whereas tourists on the “high” end of the spectrum (the “Unusual,” the “Offbeat,” the “Elite,” and the “Explorer” tourists) immerse to some degree in local culture while visiting (Chambers 2010:23-24; Smith 1989). Chambers (2010:24) adds that through her limited study, Smith contends that high-end tourists would tend to have the least impacts on the communities they visited while low-end tourists would have greater negative impacts on the hosts (Chambers 2010:24).

While this assertion may hold some weight, some local hosts perceive tourists that seek to stay for longer periods of time in a local setting and immerse themselves in local culture to be more of a problem than the mass tourists that contribute economically to the local hosts through purchase of crafts, etc. and leave shortly after (Chambers 2010:24). When creating impact typologies of tourists, Chambers (2010:24) notes that anthropologists should consider that “… what makes sense to us…” does not necessarily correspond to preferences and perceptions of local people interacting with tourists.

Some scholars in the anthropology of tourism have examined the role of historical and contemporary pilgrimages in shaping sacred, rather than profane, types of tourism experiences (Graburn 1983; Turner and Turner 1978). For example, anthropologist Victor Turner and Edith Turner (1978) argue that pilgrimages, like tourism, helped shape and spur the development of transportation infrastructure, markets, and cities as destinations in addition to creating a transcendent realm of experience for travelers and hosts alike. Turner and Turner’s (1978) book Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture illuminates the cultural and the symbolic bases for the mass appeal of pilgrimage and tourism throughout history, which has significant implications for how modern mass tourism and tourism marketing efforts are structured in the present.
Tourism marketing efforts generally cater to expected tourist desires and experiences when they visit a destination. John Urry (2011:1-3) conceptualizes these anticipated tourist desires and experiences – the “how and why” of travel outside normal places of works and living – as “the tourist gaze,” which is shaped by people’s interests and curiosities to “depart” the familiar for leisure. This gaze is socio-culturally informed but also constructed and packaged by professionals, who help market and reproduce tourist tastes and expectations, and regulate tourism at a larger scale. Thus, as John Urry and Jonas Larsen (2011:1-4) explain, this gaze is a “learned ability” fashioned from historical and contemporary notions of travel and leisure, personal memories and experiences, and circulating media and signs, and expressed through variable power relations rather than “natural” individual proclivities that merely reflect the environment and ambience of a destination. The gaze represents a performance that categorizes, shapes perceptions, and may visually objectify a tourist’s environment through pre-conceived personal and cultural lenses informed, in part, by age, gender, ethnicity, and class. Notably, these pre-conceived notions configuring the tourist gaze generally “depart” from the cognition, experiences, and organization of non-tourism activities like domestic life and compensated work, and may be reproduced through redistribution of visual media capturing the tourist gaze (Urry and Larsen 2011:2-4). In their book *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*, Urry and Larsen (2011:2) trace the evolution of the “tourist gaze” across different societies and historical contexts, exploring the processes through which tourist gazes are constructed, perpetuated, and authorized as well as the impacts of the gaze and how it relates to other social performances, especially in consideration of technologies accompanying the development of modern tourism such as digital cameras, television, and later the Internet. In these ways, they argue examination of “tourist gazes” can illuminate the inner workings of daily life in various societies during particular historical moments (Urry and Larsen 2011:3-4).

Similar to the “tourist gaze,” anthropologist Noel Salazar (2010:xvii-xviii) engages the concept of “tourist imaginaries” in his book *Envisioning Eden: Mobilizing Imaginaries in Tourism and Beyond* to describe the individual and shared notions, expectations, and values tourists have of destinations before they visit, which are synthesized from various forms of tourism media and historically perpetuated
fantasies that collectively comprise extensively mediated narratives about travel to a destination. These “tourism imaginaries” – conveyed and reproduced through media such as travelogues, websites, film, music, tourism brochures, guidebooks, official tourism policy documents, advertisements, magazines, books, news stories, museum exhibits, and academic publications - circulate unevenly through time and across global, national, local scales to affect tourism consumption and reception practices (Salazar 2010:9). Applying these learned “tourism imaginaries,” largely influenced by Western narratives and popular culture, foreign tourists construct a cognitive framework to “… mediate identifications of Self and Other” in order to perceive and experience the destinations they visit (Salazar 2010:6-7). Channeled through various forms of media as well as tourism and travel infrastructure, industries, markets, and policies, these imaginaries also influence global-local tourism processes and flows of people and capital, and even the performance of culture in local settings, transforming local places into “glocalized” “destinations” (Salazar 2010:13-16). In the context of tourism service provision and marketing, Salazar (2010:14) defines this process of “glocalization” as “tailoring local(ized) products (representations and enactments of natural and cultural heritage) to changing global audiences (international tourists … from various parts of the world … with different preferences).” Thus, tourism imaginaries assist with the reproduction and rebranding of what is valued as “local” in a destination through global tourism markets (Salazar 2010:14-15).

Unlike tourism scholars who maintain a false binary between hosts or “place-bound locals” and ephemeral “mobile tourists,” Salazar (2010:xvii-xviii), among others (e.g., Lyon and Wells 2012), illuminates the various mobilities and immobilities generated by global tourism processes and imaginaries and how they interplay in local settings. Using a “translocal” or multi-sited, multi-method, ethnographic approach to examine relationships between localities and processes of global tourism, Salazar (2010: xvii, 16-18) explores how daily life experiences, culture, and practices in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and Arusha, Tanzania, are being shaped by travel technologies, tourism capital and flows of people, and global, especially Western, “tourism imaginaries” and media. Specifically, he investigates how tour guides in these places learn, adopt, and reproduce global tourist imaginaries to connect with visitors and promote
livelihoods, while navigating the regulated tourism industry, thereby becoming mobile and cosmopolitan actors through the process (Salazar 2010:xvii-xviii, 6-7, 14). Serving in a “tourism intermediary” or cultural broker capacity, tour guides come to learn and share the same master narratives of their culture and home as a destination assembled from TV shows and travel guides, magazines, websites, and newspapers that tourists view and consume (such as the Discovery Channel, National Geographic, and Rough Guides) as well as from institutionalized tour guide training courses that are sometimes informed by anthropological texts on tourism (Bruner 2010:xii; Salazar 2010:xvi, xviii, 7). In this way, tour guides become programmed “with foreign interpretations of their own natural and cultural heritage” that are largely shaped by fixed notions of culture reflected in Western historical narratives and imaginaries, but also more recent concerns with the environment, ecotourism, and cultural preservation (Bruner 2010:xii-xiv). Thus, Salazar (2010:16) finds that through the process of “glocalization:”

… the specific everyday practices and discourses of different and heterogeneous groups—tourists, intermediaries and locals—together shape and translate global tourism imaginaries into a series of complex and different performances, thereby shaping cultural and natural heritage and creating opportunities for figurative cosmopolitan mobility or ‘cosmobility’.

“Glocalization” also serves as a lens to examine individual agency of people (such as tour guides) operating within changing institutional tourism frameworks where symbolic and financial capital is unevenly circulated through manifold pathways (Salazar 2010:16). In these ways, Salazar’s (2010) conception of “tourism imaginaries” can be used as an analytical tool to unpack the “glocalization” of tourism on the increasingly gentrifying Placencia Peninsula, especially considering how tour guides mediate and represent narratives about local cultural and environmental heritage.

2.1.2 Conceiving Heritage

“Heritage” is constructed and represented in various ways by diverse groups of people - constantly being negotiated, disputed, authorized, and authenticated toward a variety of ends – including
preserving local culture, promoting nationalism, and attracting tourists (Chambers 2006, Jackson 2012; Little 2007; Lowenthal 1996; Smith 2006, 2012). Although the meaning of concept is debated, it generally represents a political construction of the past or present, a process, as well as a discourse used by people through time, highlighting particular tangible and intangible aspects and representations of a group’s memory, identity, traditions, livelihoods, culture, environments, myth, place, nationality, history, and experience at particular historical moments (Chambers 2006; Jackson 2012:22-23; Lowenthal 1996:1; Smith 2006, 2012). In this way, heritage is imagined, fabricated, contested, marketed, consumed, preserved, celebrated, and performed in a variety of ways, embodying multiple meanings and representations (Chambers 2006; Jackson 2012; Little 2007; Lowenthal 1996; Silverman 2011; Smith 2006, 2012). As a national, political, social, economic, or personal construction of the past and present, heritage is linked to, although distinguishable from history (Jackson 2012:23; Lowenthal 1996:xii). David Lowenthal (1996:xii) explains that whereas history seeks to survey and explain the past, heritage serves as an epistemology enabling people to conceive and remember the past in the present. Antoinette Jackson (2012:23) adds that history is a means of telling stories about the past in the political present, wherein particular narratives are endorsed while others are marginalized or forgotten (Jackson 2012:23-24; Smith 2012).

Heritage is another way of engaging with the past, similarly shaped by contemporary and historical circumstances (Jackson 2012:23). Erve Chambers (2006), in his book *Heritage Matters: Heritage, Culture, History, and the Chesapeake Bay*, recognizes two primary domains in which heritage is conceived. Used in a political and economic sense, heritage in the public domain differs from personal or private meanings and representations of heritage by communities and individuals (Chambers 2006:2-3). Specifically, heritage in the “public” sense connotes an expression of the past that seeks to conserve social practices and natural processes perceived to be threatened or degraded by institutions, heritage professionals, and others with authority in the public domain (Chambers 2006:2-3). It attempts to conserve the social and cultural practices of diverse publics (including some minority and marginalized
groups) represented within the state or other political unit as a means to celebrate and reflect upon the past, imparting a broad sense of “historical understanding” (Chambers 2006:3).

On the other hand, Chambers (2006:3-4) describes “private heritage” as a form of cultural inheritance with particular meanings and significance defined and understood for particular communities, families, and individuals that relate to contemporary social and environmental contexts (Chambers 2006:3-4). This sense of heritage is tied to identity and experience and linked with social responsibilities, livelihoods, and privileges in daily life that embody the “resilience” of people in a local place (or between places) through a particular historical trajectory (Chambers 2006:3-4). Chambers (2006:3, 5) cautions that this personal sense of heritage may be threatened by public heritage and history constructions that commodify culture and misrepresent the heritage of diverse groups by categorizing their history and lifeways into potentially stagnant, bounded, and externally imposed categories.

Similar to heritage domains, anthropologist Laurajane Smith (2006) identifies two primary “uses” of heritage among heritage professionals, government officials, institutions, communities, tourists, and other groups of people in her book *Uses of Heritage*; namely as a discourse and a cultural process. Analogous to heritage conceived in the “public” sense, Smith (2006:11-12) argues that heritage is used as an authorized discourse by governments, archaeologists, heritage professionals, and others to sanction and reinforce national, institutional, ideological, and dominant colonial narratives and interpretations of history. Smith (2006:42) uses the term “authorized heritage discourse” to convey the sets of criteria, meanings, and practices involved in interpreting, promoting, and managing particular types of heritage, generally invoking Western and professional ideas of materiality, monuments, place, and tangibility. For example, “authorized heritage discourse” is often used to designate monumental or “outstanding” material remains and places of cultural or historical significance in the past or present using prescribed criteria, such as for UNESCO World Heritage sites (UNESCO 1972). In this way, “authorized heritage discourse” and the socio-political and economic agendas it serves (like national identity construction and development) is enacted and inscribed at cultural heritage places, reinforcing and circulating “grand narratives” of nation, culture, and the collective past (Smith 2006:42). This discourse also embodies a set
of practices used to identify, appropriate, construct, repackage, and market cultural and environmental conceptions of heritage to serve state political and economic needs, often drawing on ethnic and cultural diversity values to promote collective national identities (Minetti and Pyburn 2005; Scher 2011; Smith 2006). By codifying dominant narratives, “authorized heritage discourse” also works to marginalize “inconvenient” alternative heritage meanings, interpretations, or histories (Smith 2006), and in many cases, actively silence them (Dearborn and Stallmeyer 2010; Truillot 1995).

Authorized heritage narratives, in turn, may suppress or limit the expression of distinct socio-cultural identities among groups of people, especially those who are marginal in the context of a nation-state. In this way, Smith (2006:42-43) asserts that “authorized heritage discourse” not only confers power of responsibilities for defining and representing the past, but also reflects a process that serves to instill social relations or power, values, and meanings about the past in the present. The concept of “World Heritage,” for example, attributes “outstanding universal value” to particular cultural and environmental resources and places on a global scale, thereby recognizing, celebrating, protecting, and ultimately remembering certain forms and expressions of humankind’s heritage over others (Minetti and Pyburn 2005; Omland 2006). The UNESCO Convention on World Heritage, adopted in 1972, distinguishes two main types of heritage – cultural and natural – to be protected, conserved, and promoted on an international basis, and sets out particular criteria and parameters by which each is recognized and managed (UNESCO 1972). In addition to ten criteria used for identification of heritage properties, designation of World Heritage sites includes criteria for protection, management, authenticity, and integrity. As distinguished in Article 1 of the Convention, “cultural heritage” consists of sites, groups of buildings, and monuments made by people “which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art, or science” including six significance criteria encompassing artistic, aesthetic, scientific, historical, archaeological, or otherwise anthropological points of views underpinning international appeal of a particular heritage resource to visitors (UNESCO 1972:2). In Central America,

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4 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted on November 16, 1972.
for example, World Heritage Sites designated for cultural heritage are often examples of colonial architecture like in Antigua, Guatemala, or pre-hispanic indigenous archaeological sites such as the Maya site of Copán, Honduras (UNESCO 2015). Article 2 of the Convention defines “natural heritage” as “natural” features, formations, sites, or areas, whether physical, biological, ecological, geological, or physiographical, which are “… of outstanding universal value” from the viewpoint of science, conservation, or aesthetics (UNESCO 1972). A notable example of Natural World Heritage is the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System - the largest system of reef structures and habitat in the Western Hemisphere – which encompasses seven reef sites along the Caribbean coast of Belize. UNESCO also inscribed this Natural World Heritage site on the “List of World Heritage in Danger” in 2009 due to threats from climate change, overexploitation of marine resources, tourism and coastal development on mangrove islands, and proposed oil and gas exploration and drilling affecting the “integrity” of the property (UNESCO 2015). In addition to distinct natural and cultural properties, since 1992 World Heritage sites may be designated as both cultural and natural heritage if they represent cultural landscapes in which significant human-environmental interactions that are of “outstanding universal value” to humankind have occurred (UNESCO 2015). For example, the Ancient Maya City and Protected Tropical Forests of Calakmul, Campeche, on the Yucatán Peninsula of Mexico are considered a “cultural landscape” “… of outstanding universal value,” designated as a coupled cultural and natural World Heritage Site due to its combined historical significance as an ancient Maya capital and its environmental significance as a central corridor of the Mesoamerican biodiversity hotspot (UNESCO 2015).

Other articles in the Convention establish guidelines for identifying, protecting, presenting, funding, and managing World Heritage on national and international levels. Notably, the Convention established a World Heritage Committee and a World Heritage List through which countries around the world can recognize and collaborate on managing heritage. UNESCO now recognizes 1031 World Heritage Site Properties, including 802 Cultural sites, 197 Natural sites, 32 “Mixed” sites (with 31 of those properties representing “Transboundary” heritage sites), 48 sites “In Danger,” and 2 “Delisted” sites, which are collectively managed by the 163 state parties to the convention (UNESCO 2015). These
sites generally represent hallmarks of tangible forms of heritage – from ancient and historical monuments and sites to forest reserves and significant habitats – which often skirted many of the intangible meanings, values, and experiences of groups of people in connection with these places. Until UNESCO formally held a Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003, it had no unilateral agreement to safeguard and promote intangible forms of cultural heritage. Thus, conceptions of World Heritage tended to take a tangible, material focus based on their “Outstanding Universal Value” to mankind sanctioned by the World Heritage Committee, which historically has been composed of predominately Western scholars, heritage professionals, and policy-makers (Omland 2006). However, the organization had recognized the significance of “intangible cultural heritage” for cultural diversity and sustainable development since 1989 (under the UNESCO Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore (1989) and Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001), among other conventions, declarations, and charters) (Ruggles and Silverman 2009:12-13; UNESCO 2003). Under the resulting agreement, UNESCO recognized “intangible cultural heritage” as “… traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts” (UNESCO 2003, 2013a).

Significantly, the Convention began recognizing embodied, lived experiences and forms of heritage transmission to better represent the intangible significance, meanings, and values that constitute cultural heritage among groups of people (Ruggles and Silverman 2009:2; UNESCO 2003).

In their edited volume *Intangible Heritage Embodied*, D. Fairchild Ruggles and Helaine Silverman (2009) trace the development and discourse of the “intangible cultural heritage” concept and its application under the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. They point out that within the Intangible Heritage Convention agreement, “intangible culture” is designated “as a living force that is ‘transmitted from generation to generation’ and ‘constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to the social and physical environment’” (Ruggles and Silverman 2009:2; UNESCO 2003). Furthermore, they note that “intangible heritage is an essential aspect of
community identity and ‘promotes respect for cultural diversity and human creativity’” (Ruggles and Silverman 2009:2; UNESCO 2003). By emphasizing heritage as a dynamic “living force” encompassing subjective performance, experience, and place rather than a discrete resource, location, object, or thing (Ruggles and Silverman 2009:1, 11), they follow anthropologist William Logan’s (2007) definition of “intangible cultural heritage” as “heritage that is embodied in people rather than in inanimate objects.” In this way, the Intangible Heritage Convention (UNESCO 2003), among other international charters, declarations, and documents preceding and following it, set the stage for international discourse, documentation, representation, and promotion of “intangible” forms of heritage around the world. For example, in 2001, UNESCO proclaimed the Garifuna language, music, and dance in Belize (and Honduras and Nicaragua) as a “masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity” – along with 19 other cultures - due to its unique diasporic Afro-Carib cultural confluence and the threatened status of the Garifuna language (UNESCO 2008). Moreover, the government of Belize recently has finalized a National Culture Policy as a mode of “authorized heritage discourse,” which “provides the policy framework for the: safeguarding of Belize’s tangible and intangible cultural heritage, promotion of cultural expression and creativity, development of the cultural and creative industries and for the wise management of Belize’s cultural resources” (NICH 2014:6).

Similar to the system laid out in the UNESCO Convention on World Heritage in 1972 for the identification, recognition, and management of World Heritage Sites, however, designation of “intangible cultural heritage” that is of “outstanding” significance to humankind as laid out in the UNESCO Intangible Heritage Convention (2003) has primarily operated at the national level in collaboration with government officials rather than with local communities and populations, thereby largely prioritizing state interests (Ruggles and Silverman 2009:10-11). Furthermore, the concept of “intangible cultural heritage” has been critiqued since it recognizes and valorizes cultural rights for particular ethnic / cultural groups that may be at odds with the human rights of other groups and individuals. This critique is especially pronounced in cases of bodily modifications (e.g., female genital circumcision) and use of intangible heritage status to justify apartheid, subjugation, or otherwise suppression of the human rights of minority
ethnic groups by majority ethnic groups in a nation-state context (Ruggles and Silverman 2009:2, 9-10). Thus, although UNESCO, other international organizations, and states around the world like Belize are incorporating “intangible heritage” discourse into authorized heritage policies, social scientists and heritage professionals are increasingly critical of how and for what ends heritage is construed and valued across national and international scales (e.g., Labadi 2012; Minetti and Pyburn 2005; Omland 2006; Silverman 2011; Smith 2006, 2012).

Challenging historically “authorized” discourses of heritage like UNESCO’s World Heritage designations, Laurajane Smith (2006:44; 2012) argues that heritage should be understood as a socio-cultural process in a more inclusive sense, reflecting the intangible expressions of a group’s memory, past, identity, experience, place, performance, or traditions through time rather than simply reducing heritage to a thing, place, or site. She states, “heritage … is a cultural process that engages with acts of remembering that work to create ways to understand and engage with the present, and the sites themselves are cultural tools that can facilitate, but are not necessarily vital for, this process” (Smith 2006:44). For example, when working with indigenous Waanyi women in Queensland, Australia, to better understand cultural heritage sites in a national park, Smith (2006:45-46) found that the experience-based oral histories passed on by women at the sites were essential to understanding the heritage of these particular places. Furthermore, their stories hold symbolic value in constructing socio-cultural identities for the Waanyi women and reinforce memory and commemoration of a place through active emotional engagement and cultural performance (Smith 2006:60, 66-68). In this sense, Smith (2012:2) later declares that heritage can be defined as multiple processes of “(re)constructing and negotiating cultural and social values and meanings” that “… occur as material heritage places or intangible heritage events (which) are identified, defined, managed, exhibited and visited” by a variety of interest groups engaged in a “… subjective political negotiation of identity, place and memory.” In this usage, heritage thus takes many forms—tangible and intangible, material and immaterial, cultural and environmental (Silverman 2011)—and may be said to be “living” as it communicates diverse narratives associated with history (Faulkner
2000:32) as well as collective memories about the past that are construed and embodied by groups and individuals in the political present (Little 2007:139).

As a cultural process of meaning-making framed through interpretation, heritage researchers and management professionals find that heritage is inherently malleable, partial, negotiated, appropriated, and contested (Little 2007; Lyon and Wells 2012; Silverman 2011:21-22; Smith 2006, 2012). Recognizing the intangibility of heritage and the sociopolitical contexts in which its various manifestations are recognized, negotiated, and produced, many scholars like Smith (2006:53-55, 2012) critique notions of objective and universal heritage inscribed in national and international heritage discourses (Labadi 2012; Minetti and Pyburn 2005; Omland 2006; Porter and Salazar 2005:362; Pyburn 2007; Silverman 2011). A key point of contention concerns UNESCO World Heritage status for particular cultural sites, landscapes, and practices. Framed in the rhetoric of World Heritage, cultural (especially archaeological) monuments, sites, landscapes, and buildings are deemed to be “significant” cultural heritage worthy of preservation, upkeep, and public and global funding if they contain “original,” “unique,” and “authentic” attributes (Minetti and Pyburn 2005:81, 88, 95-97). Specifically, the system of identification and designation of tangible cultural heritage like sites and monuments that are of “outstanding universal value” to mankind (UNESCO 1972:2) has come under scrutiny. Some scholars had critiqued the World Heritage Site system since tangible manifestations of heritage had received international recognition and funding due to their material appeal, while subaltern heritages, which may not be represented tangibly by sites or monuments, have largely gone unrecognized officially for particular regions (Minetti and Pyburn 2005; Omland 2006:248-249; Smith 2006).

Resonating with critiques of “authorized heritage discourse,” such as the UNESCO World Heritage System, some anthropologists emphasize that heritage entails an “embodied,” lived experience to better represent the intangible significance, meanings, and values that constitute cultural heritage among groups of people (e.g., Baines 2012, 2015; Ruggles and Silverman 2009). In her recent ethnography *Embodying Ecological Heritage in a Maya Community: Health, Happiness, and Identity* (based on her doctoral dissertation *Good Men Grow Corn: Embodied Ecological Heritage and Health in*
a Belizean Mopan Community), anthropologist Kristina Baines (2012, 2015) demonstrates how ecological heritage and health come together through everyday lived experiences, skills, and “traditional” cultural practices in the Mopan Maya community of Santa Cruz in the Toledo District of Belize. She asserts that specific forms of ecological and cultural knowledge are constructed, applied, and phenomenologically “embodied” as heritage through the experiential self, linking changes in wellness to modifications in ecological practice, which are structured, in part, by “development” incursions in Maya communities through the perspectives of individuals and communities in their social, political, and ecological environs (Baines 2012:vi-vii, 4, 10, 14; 2015).

Through extensive ethnographic research, she found that socio-cultural factors such as foodways, occupation, land use, family, personal skills, and even activism constitute forms of “Maya” heritage practice in Santa Cruz, which community residents identify as inseparably linked to local conceptions of health and wellbeing and individual bodies (Baines 2012:8-9; 2015). Framing this heritage practice, she argues that “traditional ecological knowledge” – a dynamic system of local or indigenous knowledge and skills drawing on interconnected processes and relationships between human culture and the “natural” environment (Berkes 1993; Zarger 2011:371) - can be conceived as a form of “embodied heritage” among Maya community residents since it entails the “bodily experience of ecological practice” (Baines 2012:15-18; 2015). As an expression of constructed “embodied heritage,” “Being Maya,” Baines (2012:19; 2015) asserts, is the accumulation of several influences including “personal interactions, daily sensory experience, as well as ... activist discussions” – that collectively constitute a “person’s lived experience.” In turn, rather than reflect a static list of knowledge sources and traditions, this “lived experience” is shaped by individuals’ and groups of people’s dynamic interactions with various “heritages” through time and place (Baines 2012:19; 2015). Moreover, the dynamic nature of “lived experience” and the engagements people have with ecological settings and processes through time, Baines (2012:19; 2015) maintains, enables every person to have a “unique environmental heritage.” While many heritage professionals maintain that environmental knowledge is a form of “intangible heritage” that holistically integrates “cultural space” with biophysical landscapes (e.g., McKercher and du Cros
Baines (2012:20; 2015) adds that it is often personal and understood not only in the collective sense but also in a private one. This conception of “environmental heritage” thus departs from much of UNESCO (1972) and other (inter)national organizations authorized use of the term “natural heritage” in that Baines (2012:21-22; 2015) and others (e.g., Baines and Zarger 2012; Zarger 2011) center the lived experience of both individuals and communities in their ecological surroundings and dynamic environmental circumstances rather than simply ascribing “natural” phenomena and places “of outstanding universal value” that are largely devoid of local socio-cultural and political significance and meanings.

To frame this more holistic and personalized conception of “environmental heritage” and apply it in her ethnographic assessment of Mopan health, wellness, and heritage in Santa Cruz, Baines (2012:22-25; 2015) introduces the concept of “embodied ecological heritage” – unifying ecological learning, knowledge, skills, and practice through phenomenological, bodily experience. In a similar vein, Baines’ (2012, 2015) term “embodied ecological heritage” can be used to accentuate how many current or former fishers in Placencia apply their familiar experiences and environmental knowledge in coastal waters surrounding the peninsula to engage in livelihood transitions into tourism and environmental NGO sectors, among others, and assist with coastal environmental conservation initiatives. As they deploy their experience-based and transgenerational knowledge of the locations, qualities, and histories of coastal cayes, seasonality of marine ecosystems and species in addition to fishing, diving, captaining, and cooking skills toward alternative forms of work, they promote their resilience and wellbeing through sustained intimatey with their coastal environs and marine livelihoods (Spang 2014b:41, 43, 64-68). Thus, “embodied ecological heritage” can provide a useful theoretical framework to assess how some local Placencia fishers adjust to alternative occupations in tourism, mariculture, and environmental resource management sectors, navigating changing social, economic, and environmental circumstances generated through accelerated tourism development, recent environmental regulations, and shifting coastal ecosystem dynamics on and around the Placencia Peninsula. I discuss the ways in which local fishers apply their “embodied ecological heritage” to navigate these circumstances in Chapter six.
2.1.3 Heritage Tourism: Locating Heritage in Tourism Development

As governments of many post-colonial countries like Belize are seeking to further develop economic capacity in a global political economy, especially through tourism revenue (Sutherland 1998), they typically adopt similar criteria and policies as international heritage organizations for the identification and management of cultural heritage (Minetti and Pyburn 2005:84). However, these definitions and the management policies they carry for “authentic” cultural heritage associated with national identity have often invoked the privileged viewpoints of scientific “elites” and heritage professionals, with little input from local communities and the general public who live around these heritage sites (Ardren 2004; Faulkner 2000; Minetti and Pyburn 2005:97; Pyburn 2007). This pattern calls into question whether the heritage is valued by wider publics and local communities, whose heritage is represented (whether people identify with it), what message it communicates about culture, and who benefits from its management (Lyon and Wells 2012:6-8; Silverman 2011:24). These questions speak to the larger issues of audience and relevancy for heritage management and cultural tourism development (McKercher and Du Cros 2002).

Recognizing the need to diversify tourism products into alternative forms of “sustainable tourism development,” many Caribbean countries have integrated heritage and cultural tourism into national tourism planning strategies (Scher 2011:7-8). Heritage tourism represents an effort to package, commodify, and market culture, history, people, and the environment in particular regions as products, destinations, and experiences for tourist consumption (Jackson 2012:24, 34; McKercher and Du Cros 2002). Some authors argue that national efforts to promote heritage tourism, generally aligned with tourism development organizations, ministries, and governmental departments serve not only to generate tourism revenue but also provide a mechanism to construct and reinforce national identity (Scher 2011; Montero 2011:2-3; Smith 2006). Thus, nationally authorized representations and conceptions of heritage not only interpret, essentialize, and sensationalize cultural understandings for tourist consumption but, in turn, carry political-economic force to guide development efforts (Scher 2011). Much of what is termed national or “authorized heritage discourse” used to promote national tourism and political-economic ends
(Minetti and Pyburn 2005; Smith 2006) impacts the market for cultural tourism, by influencing what is represented, valued, and promoted for a given destination, which tourists, in turn, consume.

Tourist imaginations and visions of host destination culture and heritage are thus partly shaped by what images of culture, people, and places are authorized, marketed, and circulated, by regional and national tourism industries and media internationally (Feldman 2011; Salazar 2010, 2011, 2012). Salazar (2010:6), in his book Envisioning Eden: Mobilizing Imaginaries in Tourism and Beyond, argues that “tourism imaginaries” serve to “… mediate identifications of Self and Other” in the minds of tourists to construct a cognitive framework to interpret the destinations they visit and experience. Applied to etic understandings of heritage, the term “heritage imaginaries” can be used denote the dominant conceptions that tourists have of a host population’s heritage when traveling to a destination. For example, some elite local tourism business owners, tour operators, and developers - supported by government officials, NGOs, and foreign investors – work to shape the cultural tourism industry on Roatán Island, Honduras, by appropriating an ancient Maya past as part of the tourism imaginary of the place, drawing from symbolism at Classic Maya sites like Copán on the mainland of Honduras (Figueroa et al. 2012:43-45, 48-49). Due to these tourism mediators’ influence over authorized interpretations, presentations, and marketing of ancient Maya heritage at venues such as a local “indigenous” (interpreted as pre-Hispanic in their context) museum and an exclusive island resort and interpretive center (containing a reconstruction of the UNESCO designated Maya World Heritage Site of Copán), tourists come to expect ancient Maya material remains and narratives as part of the “authentic” heritage of the Bay Islands (Figueroa et al. 2012:44-45, 49-50). However, Alejandro Figueroa, Whitney Goodwin, and E. Christian Wells (2012:43-46) argue that this heritage discourse and its basis within nationalist agendas for historical reconstruction and neoliberal development for tourism – what historian Darío Euraque (1998; 2010) has conceived of as a process of “Mayanization” for Honduran tourism – has largely effaced the histories, narratives, and even material remains of marginalized groups of people that live on the Bay Islands.

Through ethnographic, historical, and archaeological research, Figueroa and colleagues (2012:44-46) find that despite a dearth of archaeological remains supporting a “Mayanized” interpretation of
Roatán’s past, developers in the tourism industry promote this imaginary of Maya heritage, rather than a multi-ethnic historical interpretation that better represents the complex reality of the settlement and history of the Bay Islands. In this way, the identification and representation of tangible and intangible heritage of local marginalized groups like the indigenous Afro-Amerindian Garífuna population (who have occupied the island the longest since colonial times) is relegated both symbolically (through exclusion from authorized tourism industry narratives and representations) and physically (by means of demolishing archaeological remains and historical sites and displacing communities for development purposes) from the mainstream tourism industry (Figueroa et al. 2012:43-47, 49-50, 54). As a diverse multi-lingual and multi-cultural setting, Figueroa and colleagues (2012) use ethnography and archaeology to unveil and make sense of the contested heritage on the island and the socio-economic, political, and ethnic power relations that structure representations of local identities, “indigeneity,” and histories as well as access to and recognition of lands, resources, and social rights in this context. Thus, anthropological and historical research can be used to inform heritage counter-narratives or alternative heritage imaginaries to increase visibility, challenge misrepresentative portrayals, and potentially provide marginalized groups of people with valuable information in their struggles to secure and maintain rights, resources, and socio-economic opportunities such as alternative tourism ventures (Figueroa et al. 2012:54-56). Furthermore, Figueroa and colleagues (2012:55-56) uphold that anthropological (especially archaeological) research has the potential to augment multivocal participation in and promote local community ownership over schemes of research, interpretation, representation, and preservation of various groups’ histories and heritages on the Bay Islands.

As the case study above demonstrates, heritage is variably conceived, contested, and appropriated by groups of people (Chambers 2006, Dearborn and Stallmeyer 2010; Jackson 2012; Little 2007; Lowenthal 1996; Smith 2006), even within dominant discourses (Smith 2006) and imaginaries as it is “historically contingent and emerging” and an “active part of meaning making for living communities” (Figueroa et al. 2012:56). Therefore understanding how various forms of heritage are conceived, marketed, represented, and managed, for what ends, and for whose benefit, in tourist locales is vital in
assessing the suitability and sustainability of heritage tourism initiatives in these destinations (McKercher and du Cros 2002). As a mediated experience offered and coordinated by particular hosts, heritage professionals, and stakeholder groups (Chambers 2006, 2010), different meanings of heritage are authorized, presented, and emphasized in tourism marketing campaigns for particular destinations that may not accurately reflect the personal meanings of heritage conceived by local people. A recent example of heritage marketing by Belize Tourism Board, a statutory body of Belize’s Ministry of Tourism, Civil Aviation, and Culture (and the leading national tourism industry organization in the country) illustrates this point.

2.1.4 Heritage Marketing Discourse in Belize: An Example from the Belize Tourism Board

The Belize Tourism Board (BTB), responsible for marketing, developing, and executing tourism programs between the Government of Belize and the private (economic) sector recently developed a new marketing campaign to promote Belize as an international tourist destination (Belize Tourism Board 2013a). Departing from earlier national tourism marketing campaigns which emphasized Belize as a “pristine” ecotourism destination through slogans like “Naturally Yours” (McMinn and Cater 1998:676-677) and “Mother Nature’s Best Kept Secret” (Medina 2010:259, 2012:234), the BTB’s most recent attempt to market tourism presents Belize as a place where tourists can have “authentic” heritage experiences and explorations. In a three and a half minute video produced for tourists on the homepage of the Belize Tourism Board website (www.travelbelize.org), the name of the country itself -- “(Be)lize” — (with clever placement of parentheses) appears as the slogan and theme of tourism marketing efforts.

The video takes the viewer through a series of high resolution, visually-appealing scenes that collectively convey the idea of Belize as a sensational, active destination where the visitor can experience and explore diverse peoples, cuisine, activities, events, and nationally significant cultural and natural heritage places (like the ancient Maya sites conserved throughout Belize). A Punta song composed by a Belizean Garifuna band plays in the background as a series of coastal and inland activities like fishing, cave tubing, ziplining, visiting markets, Maya ruins exploration, and hanging out barefoot on the beach
flash by, accompanied by phrases like “be laid back,” “be natural,” “be free,” and “be primitive.” Such an experiential portrayal of tourism activities and the peoples and places of Belize would seem to convey a more “private” conception of heritage (Chambers 2006:3) reflecting local cultural meanings. However, it is evident that the video targets a particular type of tourist experience emphasizing leisure and discovery (Chambers 2010) that overshadows the daily lived experiences of the Belizean and other actors appearing in the video. This type of marketing seems to play on tourist desires and motivations to seek out authentic experiences that serve as an escape from the stress and burdens of modern industrial, capitalist societies in Western nations (Chambers 2006:14, 2010:22; MacCannell 1999). Phrases such as “be primitive” certainly evoke a sense of re-discovery with “authentic” ways of being that are performed and perceived in the tourist experience, through which tourists hope to reconnect with some degree of primordial or fast-disappearing reality (MacCannell 1999). This portrayal of Belize as an “authentic” tourist destination is further expressed in recent tourism development policies, such as the “National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan” (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a, b) that orient the direction of the Belize tourism industry in the future.

A case can be made that the BTB video also represents a form of “public (cultural) heritage” (Chambers 2006:2-3) marketing in that it promotes and ascribes significance to particular conserved national cultural heritage “assets” (Jackson 2012). The video reflects a Belizean “national heritage discourse” (Minetti and Pyburn 2005) that attempts to preserve, represent, celebrate, and market the diversity of ethnic groups in the country, by showcasing and packaging the uniqueness and authenticity of each group’s social and cultural practices associated particular foods and activities, among other performed elements of culture. By commodifying the cultures of these groups and ascribing particular forms of heritage to them, Erve Chambers (2006:3, 14, 42) warns that such “public” uses of heritage can serve to alienate local communities from the more personal meanings inherent in everyday experiences as they are pushed into static cultural identity categories that tourists come to expect as “authentic.”

With different meanings and conceptions of heritage identified, represented, and used by different stakeholder groups - including the multitude of ethnic and indigenous groups in Belize - national efforts
to develop and promote regional and site-specific cultural heritage tourism are recently seeking to involve descendant and local communities and national cultural organizations such as the National Garifuna Council in the process to ensure equitable allocation of benefits and representation of their stories in public interpretation (National Institute of Culture and History 2014). Antoinette Jackson (2012:15) points out that such accountability to descendant groups and local communities in heritage tourism, preservation, and management processes enables holistic thinking about the heritage of marginalized groups represented within the politically contended present.

2.1.5 Heritage Tourism and Authenticity

Through heritage tourism, meanings formed around the uses of heritage as tourism “assets” and products have contributed to how tourists and the public perceive and expect heritage to be in local settings (Jackson 2012:33-34; McKercher and Du Cros 2002:8). In this way, according to Antoinette Jackson (2012), Bob McKercher and Hilary Du Cros (2002), and other heritage professionals, cultural heritage tourism seeks to define cultural heritage resources and assets as commodities, products, destinations, or even experiences to market and sell for tourist consumption (Jackson 2012:24, 34). Jackson (2012:34, after Chambers 2010:32) explains, cultural heritage tourism represents a managed, mediated type of tourism with the goal of “… attracting visitors or hosts to a host location.” As a mediated experience offered and coordinated by particular hosts, heritage professionals, and stakeholder groups (Chambers 2006, 2010), different meanings of heritage are authorized, presented, and emphasized in tourism marketing campaigns for particular destinations that may not accurately reflect the personal meanings of heritage conceived by local people.

Tourists, especially those with an interest in heritage, often seek out cultural and historical “authenticity” in heritage tourism experiences and displays (Bruner 2005; MacCannell 1976). As discussed earlier in this chapter, John Urry and Jonas Larsen (2011:1-4) explain how authentic experiences may be framed through the “tourist gaze” - a “learned ability” fashioned from historical and contemporary notions of travel and leisure, personal memories and experiences, and circulating media
and signs that collectively work to categorize and shape perceptions of a tourist’s environment through pre-conceived personal and cultural lenses (that are informed, in part, by the visitor’s background).

Similar to the “tourist gaze,” cultural anthropologist Edward Bruner (2005:95, 98, 149-150) notes that local groups assess the authenticity of particular cultural performances, heritage, and experiences through a “questioning gaze” in which the credibility and accuracy of that display / experience is examined using various criteria, and its meaning is variably interpreted. He conceives of four different meanings and definitions that people use to assess where a particular thing, performance, reproduction, or display is “authentic:” 1) the thing / display is “credible and convincing” for visitors; 2) that the thing / display has “historical verisimilitude” (a historically accurate and true representation to the particular time period); 3) that it is an original rather than a reproduction; or 4) that the thing / display represents an authoritative reproduction that is certified by a governing institution or body (Bruner 2005:149-150). Applying these various criteria and meanings in variable ways, tourists and local groups alike assess the authenticity of particular cultural performances, heritage, and experiences through a “questioning gaze” in which the credibility and accuracy of that display / experience is examined and its meaning is variably interpreted (Bruner 2005:95, 98). In an effort to match different types of tourist and guest expectations of authenticity with local cultural performances to effectively cater to and accommodate that particular group’s experience, MacCannell (1979) suggests that hosts put on a form of “staged authenticity” in cultural displays and performances.

In the case of the Maasai cultural performances in Kenya, different cultural displays target different groups of people with varying interests and backgrounds that see the displays (Bruner 2005). For example, at the Mayers Ranch site, Maasai men performed for foreign tourists, reproducing the 19th century colonial narrative of Maasai men as exemplary of “… an African primitive, as natural man” and tribal warriors that the tourists perceived as “authentic” (Bruner 2005:73). Meanwhile at the Bomas sites, Maasai men performed dances and songs for mostly domestic Kenyan tourists from nearby urban areas who sought out “traditional” Kenyan heritage performances associated with nationalism, despite ethnic diversity, as authentic cultural experiences (Bruner 2005:77, 92). Finally, at a tented camp site called the
Out of Africa Sundowner site, the predominant tourist type were wealthy, white Euro-Americans who sought a transnational luxurious and Safari experience and came in with a post-modern image of the Maasai associated with U.S. American pop-culture media images of Africa (like the Lion King) and blackness (Bruner 2005:75, 94). Between these three sites Bruner (2005) points out fundamental differences in expectations of Maasai cultural authenticity by the different tourist types (groups) – expectations, which are reproduced by the Maasai cultural displays and performances.

Similarly, many tourists come to expect some degree of authenticity for satisfaction in their heritage tourism experience, even if it the event, cultural performance, or attraction is removed from its original cultural context and thus may represent a form of “staged authenticity” (Chhabra et al. 2003:703). For example, Deepak Chhabra and colleagues (2003:717) suggest that the quality of the heritage tourism experience for visitors at the Flora MacDonald Scottish Highland Games in North Carolina is directly related to their perception of authenticity of the staged games, which affects their rate of return to the festival, their likelihood of spending more money at the festival, and their interest in engaging in cultural heritage preservation of ancestral Scotland through participation. Since visitors generally perceived the event as fairly authentic, even though the Scottish Highland Games had been displaced and staged away from its original cultural context, this study indicates that tourists and visitors can connect with immigrant traditions transposed to new locations because they view them as traditional expressions of heritage events (Chhabra et al. 2003:716).

2.1.6 Developing Heritage Assets for Cultural Heritage Tourism: Business Insights

In light of differing expectations and criteria for “authenticity,” the market for heritage products and attractions varies by tourist type. Therefore, what aspects or forms of culture and history to preserve, package, and present to tourists is a primary consideration when developing various heritage “assets” and product types. As a managed “commodity,” heritage professionals Peter Johnson and Barry Thomas (1995:170-171) suggest that estimations of the scale of heritage production and the “market” between supply and demand forces in private and public sectors is needed for developing heritage products and
attractions. Based on these considerations, heritage should be transformed to some extent to make it more accessible to visitors (Johnson and Thomas 1995:170-171). This can be achieved through two main interrelated types of heritage production – conservation of materials (managing the heritage “stock”) and by providing interpretation and guiding activities and services associated with the heritage attraction (Johnson and Thomas 1995:170-171). The scale of intended heritage production activities can be measured in three key ways: 1) evaluating the available heritage assets and tourist market valuation at a particular time, 2) estimating the cost and required resources needed for heritage production, and 3) assessing the extent to which heritage assets are or will be consumed by visitors (Johnson and Thomas 1995:173-176).

However, stakeholders packaging heritage assets must balance conservation of heritage materials and culture with consideration for tourism flows, access, and product embellishment, in case the very heritage asset being conserved is degraded or has a perceived loss of authenticity by tourists or hosts with increasing demand (Herbert 1995:8; Johnson and Thomas 1995:172). Johnson and Thomas (1995:187) assert that heritage production endeavors should also consider the issue of ownership of heritage products and estimate the social valuation and benefits of heritage products in addition to resource costs to assess the net benefits of particular heritage productions.

Furthermore, Peter Howard (2003) suggests heritage producers examine the interrelationships and dynamics between six heritage stakeholders – owners, insiders, outsiders (including tourists, etc.), academics, media, and governments to better assess the markets for heritage tourism. Pulling these threads together, McKercher and du Cros (2002:171-184) suggest: 1) considerations of existing and potential users and stakeholders, 2) the political-legal context, 3) heritage meanings and values, 4) the type of proposed tourism activity, 5) the integrity of the heritage asset, and 6) the context / place of the asset in its setting as essential factors in assessing the tourism potential and viability of cultural heritage attractions and products.
2.1.7 Issues in Cultural Heritage Production and Representation

Between these considerations, there are several issues underpinning cultural heritage production for tourist consumption. As several scholars note, productions of heritage and history are inherently imbalanced and often contested at cultural tourism attractions and destinations (Crooke 2010; Dearborn and Stallmeyer 2010; Jackson 2012; Silverman 2011; Truillot 1995). Heritage professionals and governments often privilege Western dominant narratives and interpretations of heritage – following Laurajane Smith’s (2006) concept of “authorized heritage discourse” – that set out criteria and meanings for particular types of monumental or “outstanding” material heritage at heritage places, like World Heritage sites. “Authorized heritage discourse” and the socio-political and economic agendas it serves (like national identity construction and development, respectively) are enacted and inscribed at cultural heritage places, works to marginalize “inconvenient” alternative heritage meanings, interpretations, or histories, and in many cases, actively silence them (Dearborn and Stallmeyer 2010; Truillot 1995).

Lynne Dearborn and John C. Stallmeyer (2010:131-132), in their case study on World Heritage tourism in Luang Prabang, Laos, discuss how global heritage tourism consumption reflects the reproduction of power, politics, and social hierarchies in the present, where certain cultural practices and heritage interpretations, like for local Laotians, are intentionally erased from the landscape. National tourism entities, especially in Latin America, often appropriate cultural images of marginalized and indigenous groups (like the Maya of the Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico) toward promoting a multi-cultural identity construction in foreign tourism marketing, yet little economic capital flows into the marginalized communities whose constructed pasts and heritages tourists consume, since the heritage production process is tightly controlled by state and foreign stakeholders (Ardren 2004; Silverman 2011:10-11).

In Belize, public and authorized notions of heritage reflect a Belizean “national heritage discourse” (Minetti and Pyburn 2005) used by national tourism organizations that is informed by statutory bodies of the National Institute of History and Culture that seeks to preserve, research, represent, celebrate, and market the diversity of ethnic groups in the country. National cultural tourism and preservation efforts seek to showcase and commodify the uniqueness and authenticity of each group’s
social and cultural practices as “cultural forms” associated with particular foods, events, and activities, among other performed elements of culture (National Institute of History and Culture 2014). By commodifying groups’ cultures and attributing particular forms of heritage to them, Chambers (2006:3, 14, 42) warns that such “public” uses of heritage can alienate local communities from the more personalized meanings encountered and shaped through everyday experiences. With different meanings and conceptions of heritage identified, represented, and used by different stakeholder groups, recent national efforts to develop and promote regional and site-specific cultural heritage tourism seek to increase involvement of local communities in the process to promote equitable allocation of benefits and representation of their stories in public interpretation (National Institute of Culture and History 2014).

2.1.8 Community-based Cultural Heritage Tourism Production: Issues and Approaches

At the community level, differential values and identities are ascribed to and associated with international, national, and local cultural heritage (Silverman 2011). Helaine Silverman (2011:21-22) notes that this scene of cultural heritage is contested by various groups within and between communities and at differing institutional levels in the political realm. Specifically, in multi-ethnic and descendant communities, the significance of local heritage resources, history, and narratives of the past may be disputed in the present, especially in the context of historical archaeology and heritage projects (Little 2007). For example, Barbara Little (2007:141-142) points out that heritage ownership and rights are disputed in Ghana over colonial sites that were associated with the slave trade. In the context of the historical diaspora from Ghana, various groups in Ghana, local Ghanaian people, and African American tourists interpret these sites differently and construct various meanings and historical narratives around them (Little 2007:141-142). These interpretations reflect different visions of how Ghanaian history should be recognized and conveyed, especially with consideration for initiatives tied to the rapidly developing tourism industry in Ghana (Little 2007:141-142).

In community-based heritage projects, anthropologists may serve as mediators and negotiators to recognize, incorporate, compile, and present various perspectives, ideas, and memories about the past and
diverse conceptions of heritage for public presentation and outreach venues with the creation of heritage, museum, and educational centers through participatory means (Atalay 2012). Barbara Little (2007:143) aptly explains:

The face of “heritage” is potentially isolating as a set of memories into which it is possible for people to withdraw and exclude others or make invisible some parts of the past. Certain stories can be deemed acceptable while others are not. This is one place where the outsider—the heritage professional—may play an invaluable role as facilitator to assist in identifying and suspending power differentials within a dialogue so that dialogue includes all of the stories and allows for … (types) of education, civic renewal, and transformation.

Thus, power dynamics and community representation issues also play out in local contexts within community-based heritage (tourism) projects (Salazar 2012). This is especially the case for museums, where, as Elizabeth Crooke (2010:16-17) explains with a comparative case study in Northern Ireland, different communities and interest groups bring their social, political, and cultural projects into museum spaces to assert authority and control over local identities and histories. Thus, both community and heritage are evolving and politically-loaded constructions that play into the selection, representation, production, and interpretation of heritage assets for cultural tourism marketing and consumption (Crooke 2010). Despite profound inequalities in cultural heritage production, for indigenous and marginalized local communities, cultural heritage tourism may provide a significant socio-economic strategy to improve livelihoods and revitalize culture, if properly mediated and managed (Chamber 2010). The question of how to best balance “tradition,” interpretations, “commodification” of heritage in cultural productions (Chambers 2010:99-102), adapting national or regional tourism industry representations of heritage, mitigating negative impacts of tourism flows, while providing equitable economic and social benefits to local people, is thus a key consideration for community-based cultural heritage tourism projects.
From community-based heritage management case studies in the United Kingdom, Andrew Hodges and Steve Watson (2000) provide insight into key factors and conditions for establishing successful community-based heritage projects. They suggest that communities of place recognize and inventory local heritage assets by reflecting on oral histories and local knowledge to connect to and establish “a local distinctiveness,” and that the communities take responsibility to develop a plan for long-term care of cultural heritage through existing organizations (Hodges and Watson 2000:232-233, 235, 238). They note that particular factors influencing the success of community-based heritage projects include a well-organized community network, existing local institutions and organizations to assume management and coordination roles, effective leadership and managerial competence, community interest in local history and heritage, communal ownership of recognized heritage assets, inclusiveness of community-based heritage project objectives, and effective communication of project updates (Hodges and Watson 2000:238-242). McKercher and du Cros (2002) emphasize that local communities also need tourism infrastructure in the physical setting (lodging, restrooms, etc.) before any heritage tourism program can be successfully implemented. When developing recognized heritage assets into cultural tourism products, particularly for museum exhibits, a clear thematic, experiential, interpretive framework should be used that seeks to reduce “strangeness” of the product and promote “familiarity” for the tourist consumer (McKercher and du Cros 2002:120-122).

McKercher and du Cros (2002:122) note that successful interpretive frameworks for cultural tourism attractions share a number of features, namely that they tell a story, make the asset “animated,” make the visitor experience participatory and relevant to the tourist, and focus on authenticity and quality. Interpretation of heritage assets involves crafting a message and theme and constructing an appropriate image for the heritage product that appeals to various tourist types. McKercher and du Cros (2002:126) suggest that since many cultural tourists are well-educated and well-traveled, quality heritage products should contain some degree of perceived authenticity for various cultural tourist types. Toward this end, heritage producers can use tactics like mythologizing the asset, making it a cultural “spectacle,” affirming
its “otherness,” making connections between the past and present, and constructing a story around the asset to increase its appeal to tourists (McKercher and du Cros 2002:128-134).

Visual and digital participatory methods are particularly useful to synthesize, reflect, and represent local community heritage assets, knowledge, and oral histories in engaging ways to tourists (Gubrium and Harper 2013). For example, participatory digital archives and virtual exhibitions can be used to display community conceptions of cultural heritage through local participation in assembling and curating digital media that record community member stories, histories, material culture, and intangible heritage. These records can be artistically assembled into interpretive virtual displays that can be made available through online media to a wider range of audiences, including virtual tourists that may not otherwise visit the physical location of the community who manages their heritage displays (Gubrium and Harper 2013:38, 169, 173). Similarly, participatory Geographical Information Systems mapping methods with Global Positioning Systems technology can be used as a means to spatially represent local heritage knowledge and significant locations to identify community heritage assets, and can be used as a tool to further community-based heritage management efforts and political ends like land rights claims (Gubrium and Harper 2013:38, 151, 153, 160-161). However, technologies and instruments needed for these participatory community-based methods can be expensive, require varying degrees of training, and may contribute to imbalances over control of knowledge production (Chambers, R. 2006).

Before specific approaches are implemented, community-based heritage tourism projects must first determine the market for cultural heritage consumption among tourists, which requires identification of the potential types of cultural tourists that might visit the cultural heritage attraction. While several scholars have conceived of useful typologies for cultural tourists like Richards’ (1996) “specific” and “general” cultural tourists, McKercher and du Cros (2002:140, 144) offer a practical framework for identifying five types of cultural tourists based on experiences sought and the importance of cultural tourism in the tourist’s choice to visit a destination. These types of cultural tourists range from “the Serendipitous cultural tourist” on the deep end of the spectrum, to the “purposeful cultural tourist, the sightseeing cultural tourist, the casual cultural tourist, and the incidental cultural tourist” toward the
shallow end of the spectrum (McKercher and Du Cros 2002:140). These categorizations and other tourist typologies as well as the tourist market for cultural heritage consumption should be considered before specific approaches to community-based heritage tourism are applied.

2.2 Tourism and “Sustainable Development” Discourse

Over the past 25 years, tourism has become a primary economic foundation and a catalyst for development across the neoliberal political landscape of the Caribbean (Feldman 2011:48; Scher 2011:7-8), with a total contribution of more than 75 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in some Caribbean countries (Hamzah and Hampton 2014:43; Montero 2011:1). Within an increasingly competitive, globalized tourism market, the importance of advancing sustainability in emerging tourist destinations has become paramount to national tourism development policy and marketing efforts (Cater 1993; Clayton 2002; Graci 2013; Medina 2005, 2012, 2015; Milne and Ateljevic 2001:373-374; Mowforth and Munt 2008). However, the concept of sustainability is often difficult to operationalize toward these ends as it has been defined in a variety of ways.

As part of an international movement for sustainable development in recent years, many countries have constructed national “sustainable tourism development” plans and programs often in partnership with international organizations and consultants (e.g., Graci 2013; Moli 2012; Tourism & Leisure 2011a, b) to generate foreign exchange capital to pay off international loans and meet UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Two focal MDGs that sustainable tourism development policies and plans target in particular are MDGs 7 and 8, which seek to “ensure environmental sustainability” and “develop a global partnership for development” (including international development assistance), respectively (Government of Belize and UNDP 2013; UN 2000). Although various measures of “sustainability” for development projects have been suggested (Lu and Nepal 2009; Zhang et al. 2007), international discourse on “sustainable development” generally emphasizes three primary pillars: long-term economic growth, societal needs, and environment conservation as outlined in the 1987 Brundtland Report titled
Definitions of “sustainability” in anthropological and other literature applied to tourism and other forms of development generally emphasize maintaining the integrity of two or more of the following criteria over the long-term: equitable allocation of economic benefits, social justice, and environmental conservation (Cater 1993:85-86; Clayton 2002; Mather 2007:221-222; Medina 2012:227-228; Weaver 2001). Following these criteria, Erlet Cater (1993:85-86) outlines three principles whereby state efforts at “sustainability” in tourism development may be attained. He notes that to be “truly sustainable,” tourism development should foremost “… meet the needs of the host population in terms of improved living standards both in the short and long term,” meaning a focus on local development with more participation from local people that supports their livelihoods and well-being (Cater 1993:85-86). Maintaining the social equity condition of sustainability for development, in particular, reflects an attempt to reverse the effects of marginalization that occur in countries around the world, especially post-colonial nations, due to the globalization of economic markets and interactions (Zhang et al. 2007:996-997). This condition also emphasizes the importance of meeting the needs and desires of local residents in a particular tourism setting (Cater 1993:85-86), while ensuring that development policies and practices are viable over the long-term for future populations (Zhang et al. 2007:996).

Secondly, Cater (1993:86) asserts that “sustainable” tourism development should tailor to the demands of a growing and diversified tourism market to help satisfy the first objective. This principle entails finding ways to effectively market local attractions and areas to tourists in a competitive global tourism market (Cater 1993:87-88). Stuart McMinn and Erlet Cater (1998) point out that since tourists are not a homogenous group from different places and backgrounds in search of different experiences and activities, local and state marketing efforts should accommodate and consider a diversity of tourist types to effectively promote local attractions to tourists. In addition to tourists seeking to stay over longer periods of time with greater financial commitment in tourist destinations – including the “developer-tourist” and the “condo-tourist” – they note that the “itinerant tourist” (foreign visitors vacationing/
visiting a location over a short period of time) also contributes to a large portion of the tourism market (McMinn and Cater 1998:677), toward which marketing efforts can be directed. Marketing of local attractions like cultural sites, festivals, and practices as well as environmental settings and features to tourists, especially “itinerant tourists,” has been accomplished through two primary strategies: mass tourism and alternative tourism (Weaver 2001).

Mass tourism seeks to raise tourism revenue through promoting large-scale tourism flow in high-density destinations like tourist strips for foreign tourists seeking inclusive accommodations and guided services to various attractions solicited through foreign, rather than locally-owned companies (Weaver 2001:106). Due to a lack of local participation and benefits, mass tourism is commonly assumed to be economically, socially, and environmentally “unsustainable” (Weaver 2001:106) on account of its often negative environmental and socio-economic impacts. A notable example of this type of tourism is cruise tourism, operating through Belize City’s port with several cruise lines including Norwegian Cruise Line, which currently is developing a port on a caye south of the coast of the Placencia Peninsula (The Guardian-Belize 2014) and is set to launch its first ship by the end of 2016. With an assumed “unsustainable” orientation, mass tourism is generally conceived to be an approach for tourism development that is in direct opposition to alternative forms of tourism that seek to promote smaller-scale, more locally directed experiences and activities for tourists often in less densely populated areas (Weaver 2001). Such types of “alternative” forms of tourism include volunteer tourism and ecotourism (Weaver 2001) in addition to heritage tourism (McKercher and du Cros 2002; Scher 2011) among others, each of which attracts different types of tourist consumers and clientele.

In addition to the social justice and economic marketing tenets of “sustainable” tourism development, ecotourism in particular attempts to uphold Cater’s (1993:86) third principle of “sustainability” by seeking to protect and preserve the integrity of the “natural environment.” Although it is a type of “nature-based tourism,” ecotourism attempts to foster learning in tourists’ experiences interacting with a particular physical environmental setting, and thereby reflects more than simply leisure and adventure-based tourism activities (Weaver 2001:104) in an effort to promote conservation ethics in
both tourists and tour operators (Medina 2012:227). While the exact definition, form, and implementation of ecotourism programs are debated, Weaver and Lawton (2007:1170) note three central tenets of ecotourism (some of which have already been discussed), namely that ecotourism should have 1.) tourist attractions focused around the natural environment, 2.) environmental or conservation education built into tourist experiences, and 3.) tourist products, programs, and outcomes that are “… sustainable in ecological, sociocultural, and economic terms.”

Accordingly, ecotourism fits into Cater’s (1993:85-86) three criteria of “sustainable tourism development.” However, several authors note that ecotourism often fails at achieving the socio-cultural and economic equity and the environmental preservation tenets of “sustainability” in its forms and uses (Medina 2012; Clayton 2002:65; Lindberg et al. 1996; Moreno 2005; Weaver 2001), and therefore cannot be characterized as “truly sustainable” for tourism development (Cater 1993:86). Foreign investment often shapes the form of ecotourism in local tourist destination development (Cater 1993:86) and may exclude local residents from participation in the planning, decision-making, and management of ecotourism enterprises (Moreno 2005:219). Infrastructural capacity development and the increasing scale of tourist activities resulting from the accommodation needs of an increasing influx of ecotourists to tourist destinations may also contribute to physical environmental degradation like the clearing of coastal mangroves (Cater 1993:88-89; Moreno 2005:228).

Furthermore, ecotourism in local settings may actually reflect a form of “mass tourism” depending on its scale and the types of tourists that it caters to (Weaver 2001:104-105). Weaver (2001:105) identifies a spectrum along which ecotourism activities occur from “soft” to “hard.” On the “soft” end of the spectrum, tourists generally take on short duration ecotourism activities with minimal commitment to environmental conservation goals as part of a multi-purpose visit, while “hard” ecotourists seek active, non-interpreted experiences with minimal accommodations and services in their interactions with the “natural environment” and attempt to improve the condition of the setting they visit in some way through monetary or labor contributions (Weaver 2001:105). In this way, “soft” ecotourists like U.S. and European vacationers that go on day or overnight guided Safaris through the African Savannah (that are
often commissioned by foreigners in Kenya and other countries) while staying in up-scale resorts in densely populated areas away from the Safari destination demonstrate such a “mass tourism” configuration. As a form of “mass tourism,” however, ecotourism is not necessarily “unsustainable” in all of its economic, socio-cultural, and environment facets, as it depends on the socio-economic and environmental context and conditions as well as fluctuating markets in historically and politically situated circumstances surrounding development by various actors in a tourist destination setting (Cater 1993:89-90; Weaver 2001).

Other than ecotourism typologies, some authors discuss the variety of uses of ecotourism by tourism development stakeholders in emerging tourist destinations in Central America (Lindberg et al. 1996; Medina 2010, 2012). Laurie Medina (2012:228-229) approaches the concept of ecotourism from outside of the “problematic” for the term by examining how ecotourism is used by environmental NGOs and the state to articulate and implement development and conservation agendas. For the state, the policy and form of ecotourism in a particular emerging tourist setting is generally dictated and articulated by the market potential of ecotourists abroad, in addition to large foreign investments, inflation on land prices, and the limited financial capacity of local people to participate in this market (Cater 1993:86-87).

2.3 Problematizing Local Environmental Knowledge and Place: Insights from Environmental Anthropology

Like ecotourism, to understand and discuss how environmental knowledge, heritage, and skills of local fishers and other residents in Placencia are being applied in pursuit of alternative livelihoods and collaborative strategies for “sustainable” coastal resource management, it is productive to review how contemporary environmental anthropologists conceive of “local environmental knowledge.” The following discussion charts the development and deconstructs the concept, explores its inherent complications as a focus of anthropological inquiry, and examines anthropological engagement with local knowledge systems for conservation, development, and human and civil rights initiatives, among other applications.
Over the past several decades, local environmental epistemologies and practices have become a core consideration in anthropological studies aiming to inform or challenge environmental, conservation, development, and human rights policies to encourage sustainable and socially equitable outcomes for local, often marginalized, groups of people (Berkes 2012; Brosius 2008; Conklin 2008; Conklin and Graham 1995; Crate 2008; Dove and Carpenter 2008:4, 26-27, 30-31; 42-52; Ellen 2008; Greene 2004; Nazarea 1999; Li 2008; Neves-Graça 2006; Posey 2008; Tsing 2008; West 2005; West et al. 2006). The trajectory of anthropological research on local environmental knowledge stemmed from a foundation of ethnoscientific studies in the 1950s with pioneering ethnoecological studies of “indigenous” and “traditional” knowledge surrounding subsistence practices, plant and animal use, cosmology, and ecosystem dynamics (Conklin 2008; Dove and Carpenter 2008:26-29; Nazarea 1993:3-5). These studies sought to challenge misguided, popular Western presumptions that designated indigenous and traditional land and environmental resource use practices as destructive, untenable, and disorganized (Conklin 2008; Dove and Carpenter 2008:26-29; Nazarea 1993:3-5; Posey 2008; Zarger 2011:373). Parallel to the methodological development, especially with anthropology’s “critical turn” in the 1980s, environmental scientists have attempted to deconstruct and “decolonize” value-laden dichotomies between Western scientific and local, traditional, and indigenous knowledge and classification systems (Berkes 2012:173-174; Ingold 2000:13-15; Nazarea 1999:4; Zarger 2011:371). Some have sought to demonstrate the similarities and overlap between the two systems, and highlight how local environmental knowledge can complement the generalized knowledge of science (Berkes 2012:174; Neves-Graça 2006:19). Others have attempted to translate indigenous and local place-based meanings, identities, values, and ethnobiological classification schemes embodied in local environmental knowledge to scientists, conservationists, and policy makers for conservation and development purposes (Berkes 2012; Crate 2008; Dove and Carpenter 2008:4, 30-31; Neves-Graça 2006; West 2005:632), and to secure land tenure and human rights (Posey 2008) or intellectual property (Green 2004; West 2005).

Several global trends and processes have influenced the development and direction of approaches to understand and apply local environmental knowledge. With the proliferation of the transnational
environmental movement and its concerns about global climate change and conservation of species diversity and ecosystems around the world, challenges posed by global market-based capitalism and development projects in local settings (Conklin and Graham 1995), in addition to the emergence of large-scale human and indigenous rights movements (Greene 2004:211; Messer 2002; Stavenhagen 2002), community-based and collaborative partnerships and approaches have formed to address a range of environmental issues (Berkes 2012; Crate 2006; Greene 2004; Neves-Graça 2006; West et al. 2006). These partnerships and approaches draw upon local and scientific environmental knowledge and relationships between a variety of indigenous and non-indigenous stakeholders including environmental NGOs, neo-liberal state representatives, and local policy-makers to address environmental concerns and inform conservation and development policies. However, challenges abound in applying local environmental knowledge research to solve these issues. Authors have expressed concern over the implications that environmental knowledge-based research produces political statements (Dove and Carpenter 2008:4-5, 30-31, 48-49; Nazarea 1999:8-9; West 2005:632) and noted problems and ambiguity in accurately translating meaning, identities, experience, and “place” for environmental spaces between knowledge systems (West 2005:632, 639-640). They also have critiqued unequal power dynamics in environmental knowledge co-production, representation, and conservation projects (Brosius 2008; Conklin and Graham 1995; Dove and Carpenter 2008:47-52; Tsing 2008), assessed problematic terminology such as “indigenous,” “traditional,” “natural resources,” and “community,” in determining whose knowledge, rights, initiatives, management practices, and interests should be considered, represented, and defended (Dove and Carpenter 2008:42-47; Ellen 2008; Li 2008; SfAA / EPA 2001:1-5; Tsing 2008), and debated about whether or not local culture, knowledge, and identity should be privatized (Greene 2004).

To meet these challenges, some environmental knowledge researchers have suggested that anthropologists take action-oriented, advocacy approaches (Crate 2008:569) and use community-based participatory research methodologies for localizing global environmental problems (Berkes 2012:173-177). Others advise using “engaged” ethnoecology and environmental anthropology approaches to inform
policies for the preservation of ecosystems, land and resource rights, and local knowledge (Nazarea 1999:10; West 2005:639-640) or suggest anthropologists act as “cultural brokers” between local groups, resource extractors, environmental scientists, and other environmental policy and management stakeholders (Crate 2008; Greene 2004:212; Haenn and Casagrande 2007). Researchers also recognize the need to develop methods and learning settings whereby environmental knowledge can effectively be translated, shared, and experienced cross-culturally (Neves-Graça 2006) to facilitate cultural and environmental knowledge education, heritage, and revitalization initiatives (Zarger 2011:384).

Studies of local environmental knowledge initially responded to fallacious popular assumptions and portrayals of indigenous land and environmental resource management practices as untenable that were adopted by Western policy-makers to justify development projects on and displace indigenous peoples from lands they traditionally occupied (Conklin 2008:241-242; Dove and Carpenter 2008:26-27). These assumptions and misconceptions vilified and debased indigenous and traditional land and resource management practices (Dove and Carpenter 2008:26-27) - especially swidden agriculture - though terms like “slash and burn” and descriptions of the management practices as “haphazard” and “destructive” (Conklin 2008:241-242; Dove and Carpenter 2008:26). With the discourse of development entrenched in U.S. foreign policy by mid-century (Truman Library Public Papers 1949), anthropologists increasingly looked into the human-environmental epistemological frameworks of indigenous and traditional peoples through ethnoscience, seeking, in turn, to challenge assumptions about indigenous land use and resource management practices, particularly by highlighting how indigenous knowledge has been used to effectively manage and conserve local environments over time (Conklin 2008; Dove and Carpenter 2008:4, 26-27; Posey 2008). Ethnoscience combined approaches from linguistics, ethnography, ecology, and cognitive anthropology to examine the diversity of indigenous and traditional systems of knowledge and biological classification used to conceive and categorize the world (Nazarea 1999:3-4; Zarger 2011:373). Drawing on an interdisciplinary-oriented ethnoscience approach, Harold Conklin developed ethnoecology in the mid-1950’s as an epistemological framework to quantitatively and qualitatively document indigenous knowledge, subsistence practices, and local conceptions, categorizations, uses,
experiences, and relationships with environmental resources that are adapted to local ecosystems (Dove and Carpenter 2008:30-31; Nazarea 1999:3-4). Employing ethnolinguistic taxonomic and cognition studies with an ethnographic focus (Zarger 2011:373), Conklin sought to approach indigenous knowledge, cognition, and categorization from an *emic*, insider, perspective by documenting indigenous words, phrases, and language relating to local ecology and the conceptual land and resource use systems used by indigenous groups themselves (Nazarea 1999:3).

In his pioneering work, Conklin (2008:242-243) aimed to gather an emic perspective of Yāgaw Hanunóo swidden agriculture through documenting the annual cycle and methods of swidden cultivation practices and ecological concepts used among the group on the southeastern part of Mindoro Island in the Philippines, and by recording their associated local economic, religious, subsistence, social, and worldview significance, terminologies, biological taxonomy, and meanings. He also considered the effects of environmental variables like local climate, soilscape, sunlight and forest dynamics on the subsistence system in addition to agricultural expenditures to assess the viability and productiveness of the Hanunóo swidden agriculture and the knowledge system it was constructed around in the local ecological context (Conklin 2008). Based on his ethnographic field observations among the Hanunóo from November 1952 to January 1955, Conklin (2008:242, 246) found that “…the swidden farmer sometimes knows more about the interrelationships of local cultural and natural phenomena than … (Western) … writers realize.” His foundational study served as a political statement - grounded in scientific research - to challenge Western assumptions and development policy concerning the viability of swidden agriculture and the indigenous peoples who practice this system, and provided a successful model that later ethnoecological studies of forestry management could built upon (Dove and Carpenter 2008:29-31).

As a political tool with the potential for defending indigenous peoples and their land-use practices, ethnoecological and ethnobiological approaches were adopted in later indigenous ecological knowledge research methodologies (Posey 2008:89; Dove and Carpenter 2008:4). Assuming an activist position in defense of land rights for the indigenous Brazilian Kayapó, Darrell Posey (2008:90) sought to
study the cognitive *emic* categories of ecological zones constructed and identified by the Kayapó for integrated forestry management and agriculture practiced over the centuries. Through this study, he argued that some island patches of forest are not traces of “natural” forest, but rather are actively created and maintained through a sustainable system of long-term forestry management that even increases biodiversity in particular rainforest ecosystems (Posey 2009:90). Posey’s work targeted development policy-makers by challenging the dominant degradation narrative associated with indigenous land-use practices, illustrating how the Kayapó forestry management system contributed to conservation of tropical forest ecosystems and biodiversity (Dove and Carpenter 2008:4-5). Through his case study, he sought to inform “socially and ecologically” responsible and sustainable models of land development in the Amazon (Posey 2008:89-90). Although the study was later critiqued for exaggeration of indigenous ecological knowledge as a systematic management system, bad science, and an attempt to translate indigenous knowledge into Western terminology for legitimization, Posey’s work represents a touchstone that guided the orientation of future indigenous knowledge approaches (Dove and Carpenter 2008:4).

For Posey, Conklin, and other early ethnobiologists, the central focus of indigenous knowledge studies – encompassing the fields of ethnobotany, ethnozoology, and ethnomedicine - was on the “what” meanings, categories, relationships, and interactions that indigenous people have in relation to their environments (with ethnobiological research on floral and faunal taxonomies) rather than on how this knowledge is learned, shared, and transmitted among local groups of people themselves (Zarger 2011:371-372). Early definitions of environmental knowledge reflected the explicative forms and functional aspects of these systems of environmental meanings, classifications, and relationships over the process of learning environmental knowledge. For example, Fikret Berkes’ (1993:3) classic definition of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), as a “… cumulative body of knowledge and beliefs” communicated between generations about human-environmental relationships in a particular setting over time, emphasized the traditional cultural aspects of knowledge transmission rather than the active experience of learning it within a landscape. Since environmental knowledge reflects a group’s experience and adaptation to changing environmental conditions (Berkes 2012:190-191) and landscape
circumstances (Zarger 2011:371), it is constantly “evolving,” and thus, environmental learning represents a conception of this dynamic process. Rebecca Zarger, in her study of childhood ethnobiology learning among the Q’eqchi’ Maya in southern Belize, points out that in addition to practical environmental knowledge, shared “skills” and experiences interacting with and working on a landscape - as a form of embodied environmental knowledge - are needed for success within a particular landscape (Zarger 2011:372, 377). These skills are learned not just through “transmission,” but through first-hand experiences, observation, participation, and imitation in a culturally and historically-situated place (Zarger 2011:371, 377). Indeed, as people interact with and relate to local ecologies throughout their lives and their experiences become cognized through cosmology, logic, perceptions, intuitive feelings, and associations with place, they learn environmental knowledge and skills to sustain themselves in particular landscapes (Ingold 2000:15, 19, 24-26). Thus, the concept of unidirectional “transmission” and teaching of environmental knowledge is problematic since knowledge is generated, shared, and learned between generations and among them (Zarger 2011:372). In this way, constructing local ethnobiology and knowledge reflects, in part, a process of experiential environmental learning between childhood and adulthood (Zarger 2011:372-373, 377).

As a partly experiential, place-based, epistemological framework, local environmental knowledge has been difficult to communicate and translate to scientists, policy-makers, environmental NGOs, workers, and other stakeholders seeking to conserve, use, manage, or develop particular landscapes (Berkes 2012; Crate 2008; Dove and Carpenter 2008:4, 30-31; Neves-Graça 2006; West 2005:632). For several decades, anthropologists have actively sought to deconstruct dichotomies between scientific understandings of the environment and local environmental knowledge (Neves-Graça 2006:19) that have upheld the expertise of scientific studies and models and diminish local environmental knowledge to the realm of “stories” and “superstition” (Ingold 2000:13-14). Tim Ingold (2000:15) points out that Western dualities between “humanity and nature” and “modernity and tradition” play into this false dichotomy and the disparity in valuation between the ways of knowing that such assumptions generate. Since human being occupy both physical and “discursive” environments of “culturally constructed significance,” the
perspectives of ecologists and local people regarding human-environmental relationships may complement each other (Ingold 2000:14).

While ecologists study the dynamics and processes – the form – of local environments, anthropologists attempt to examine the *emic* perspectives, meanings, cognition, and cosmologies of local people constructed around the natural world (Ingold 2000:14). Employing such a complementary epistemological framework, some researchers have attempted to bridge understandings between scientific and local and traditional systems of knowledge by recognizing the potential overlaps and similarities between the epistemologies and how they can complement each other to assist with examination of local environmental dynamics, problems, and challenges (Berkes 2012:173-174; Neves-Graça 2006:19). To understand the impacts of global climate change in the Arctic and the local experiences of climate change among the Inuit of Sachs Harbour on Banks Island in Canadian West Arctic, Fikret Berkes (2012:174-177) outlines a five component, community-based participatory methodology to assist with integrating “traditional” Inuit and Western scientific sources of knowledge. Specifically, to collaboratively produce knowledge about the local effects of global climate change in the Arctic, the methodology calls for the use of Inuit traditional knowledge as a source of “local-scale expertise,” as a base-line for climate history data, to provide insights into climate change effects and adaptive responses in Inuit communities, for construction of research questions and hypotheses, and to establish a basis for “long-term, community-based” climate change monitoring (Berkes 2012:174, 176). Similarly, Katja Neves-Graça (2006:19, 21) advocates for a collaborative approach to co-construct local and scientific knowledge to address global conservation and environmental dilemmas through the formation of a “Glo-cal meta-knowledge” framework at the intersection of localized and global scientific ecological knowledge. Through fieldwork in the village of Lajes do Pico on the Azores Island off the coast of Portugal, she mediated between ecologists from environmental NGOs and former whalers in the village who contended about the best ways to observe, approach, and protect whales for whale-watching based tourism (Neves-Graça (2006:19-21). Although the relationship between the former whale hunters and the “deep ecologists” studying whale and dolphin behavior was initially contentious, through five years of work together and mutual
knowledge formation, they eventually became partners in whale conservation efforts and whale-watching ecotourism off of Azores Island (Neves-Graça 2006:19-21).

Attempts to understand and address the local impacts of global environmental processes through engaging indigenous partners in research also have taken the form of action-oriented advocacy approaches to contextualize and humanize global environmental problems – like climate change – through elicitation of local environmental knowledge and experiences (Crate 2008:569). Susan Crate undertook ethnographic fieldwork among the Viliui Sakha of northern Siberia to document elder perceptions and experiences with local climate change and the symbolic meanings and cosmology framing them in an attempt to infuse climate change science with local socio-cultural significance (2008:569-571). Departing from earlier anthropological approaches that investigated the “adaptive capacity, vulnerability, and resilience” of local groups of people responding to cultural and environmental change, she argues that anthropologists should direct their ethnographic research efforts to fill in the voids of Western scientific knowledge, design coping strategies, and inform environmental policy (2008:569, 571). In this way, anthropologists can act as advocates, educators, translators, and mediators between local and indigenous communities, scientific researchers, and a global audience to address global environmental problems (Crate 2008:570-571).

In their capacity to translate environmental knowledge, anthropologists have pondered how to effectively and accurately explain local experience and knowledge to a variety of audiences and stakeholders in an effort to inform environmental policies that achieve sustainable and socially equitable outcomes (Crate 2008:570; West 2005). One problem with translating local and indigenous ecological knowledge into scientific categories and typologies is that the symbolic material and cultural meanings associated with local conceptions of the environment are often lost (West 2005:632). Since acts of translation are inherently political and may be guided by conservation and economic motives, Paige West (2005:632-633, 639) suggests that anthropologists move away from translating indigenous and local knowledge into Western resource-based and conservation-based categories, and instead focus on the conveying the productions of meaning, identity, space, and value actively created in local environmental
knowledge. Through her case study on the politics surrounding a conservation and development project that sought to draw upon environmental knowledge of local Gimi-speaking people in Maimafu village in Papua New Guinea to create eco-products like eco-tourism and handicraft production that link biological diversity to economic markets, West (2005:632, 639) encounters the inherent contradictions in the translation process. By translating Gimi indigenous environmental knowledge into generalized categories that serve to commodify the knowledge by relating it to rational economic choices and actions, West (2005:639) argues that the “aesthetic, poetic, and deeply social” relationships and interactions that people have with their surrounding environment is missed. These considerations are brought into the focus of an “engaged” environmental anthropology that seeks to understand how indigenous epistemologies are produced, expressed, transmitted, and taught between actors, by learning local idioms to effectively explain the “socio-ecological lives” of local people while considering the “politics of translation, value, and spatial production” (West 2005:640).

Concern over the commodification and privatization of indigenous identity and culture has also been expressed when attempting to translate local environmental knowledge systems to global and regional environmental movements, NGOs, and corporations that seek to partner with indigenous groups on conservation initiatives and projects, and eco-economic prospects (Conklin and Graham 1995; Greene 2004; West et al. 2006). To promote the cause of the environmental movement, especially for the conservation and protection of tropical rainforest ecosystems, Western environmental NGOs and groups increasingly have found common ground in resisting environmentally degrading development and resource extraction projects and practices with indigenous and local groups of people living in these settings, and have built partnerships with them to achieve their political initiatives (Conklin and Graham 1995:695). In the Brazilian Amazon, by partnering with indigenous peoples, environmentalists sought to mobilize supporters by using symbolic marketing of indigenous identity and culture and displaying local faces – images of Brazilian natives - for their cause, and revitalize the movement by means of integrating “local knowledge” and new environmental meanings (Conklin and Graham 1995:701-702). The Kayapó, in particular, were portrayed as “ecologically Noble Savages,” and gained the attention of international
media organizations, celebrities, and “green” companies as part of a “symbolic politics” to further the
ends of environmentalists and to secure land tenure, resources, and human rights for the Kayapó and other
indigenous groups in the Brazilian nation-state (Conklin and Graham 1995:696, 698, 691-692). Although
the “middle-ground” between the international environmental NGOs and indigenous people in the
Amazon created a transnational ecological solidarity for conservation and indigenous rights, it also served
to politicize and essentialize the cultures, identities, and self-determination initiatives of diverse groups of
indigenous peoples in the Brazilian Amazon (Conklin and Graham 1995:697-698, 703, 706).

Essentializing indigenous culture, identity, and environmental knowledge also has served the
economic interests of international corporations and businesses and bureaucrats (Greene 2004). Through
marketing indigenous intellectual and cultural property including traditional plant knowledge, specifically
for bioprospecting activities, indigenous people have been recruited to participate in ethnopharmaceutical
projects with corporations using market-based logic, and in the process indigenous knowledge and
although indigenous culture and identity is misrepresented in the process, the politicization and
privatization of culture represents a political strategy used by indigenous peoples to economically
mobilize to achieve self-determination initiatives by tapping into a globalizing market. However,
patenting indigenous environmental knowledge and privatizing identity runs the risk of monopolizing
cultural identity and property at the expense of other local groups and may breed conflict between and
within local groups, development stakeholders, corporations, and environmentalists over marketing
efforts and attempts to maximize profit (Greene 2004:224). Greene’s (2004) case study, among others,
(Brosius 2008; Ellen 2008; Li 2008; Tsing 2008) illustrates how socio-economic and political power
dynamics affect the positioning, strategies, and success of indigenous and tribal activism movements for
economic, political, and human rights self-determination initiatives at particular historical moments.

The politicization of indigenous and local identity and culture can therefore be thought of as a
product and an “articulation” of international and national environmental and human rights partnerships
and struggles as strategies to secure rights and further conservation initiatives at particular historical
moments (Li 2008). Although international definitions of indigeneity and traditional emphasize historical
continuity in socio-cultural and political practices, settlement patterns, and use of a landscape or
geographic area before the imposition of boundaries by a state (Crate 2008:569), they lack a consideration
of the political and strategic positioning and dynamic and often contended dimensions that an
“indigenous” status conveys (Greene 2004:211-212). Greene (2004:212) explains that many indigenous
groups actively use cultural boundaries and state and internationally defined characteristics of indigeneity
“… in ways that portray them as relatively fixed and identifiable wholes associated with delimited ethnic
collectivities / territories and specific histories” as strategies to achieve particular political agendas
(Greene 2004:212). However, rather than representing static constituencies, indigenous peoples may be
constituted by multiple local groups (Brosius 2008), and have more fluid membership and identities that
are influenced by inter-ethnic relations, social productions of space (West et al. 2006:264), and current
historical, political, and other circumstances (Li 2008) to assert an “indigenous” status for political
positioning. As Tania Li (2008:340-342) explains, attempts by local ethnic groups and populations to
self-identify as tribal or indigenous and fit into what she calls the “indigenous slot” reflect agent-based
ideological strategies to position and leverage their political demands and initiatives at particular
moments in their struggles for rights and opportunities within a nation-state. In this way, local groups
claim a form of environmental authenticity (West 2006:265) and identity that assists with establishing
political alliances and partnerships, especially with environmental NGOs, that allow them to pursue their
political goals and protect their lands and rights in a relatively greater position of power (Li 2008:342-
344).

Because indigeneity is often articulated in this way, the demands, agendas, and environmental
knowledge of some local groups may be privileged over others when considering development projects
and the allocation of land, resource, and political rights, even though several groups may have legitimate
claims to indigeneity based on their historical continuity of culture, landscape use, and settlement in areas
within or between currently delimited nation-states (Li 2008:340). Valuation of indigenous and traditional
knowledge over other expressions of local environmental knowledge can thus be problematic as
indigeneity is politically, socially, and historically contingent, and may have negative political implications for various groups of people dealing with environmental problems and development pressures. Therefore, anthropologists should consider how indigeneity and traditional knowledge is claimed, constructed, asserted, and positioned as well as alternative systems of knowledge. These considerations may allow anthropologists to effectively ponder, translate, communicate, and represent the diversity of indigenous and local environmental knowledges to various stakeholders in order to inform environmentally sustainable and socially equitable policies and development plans.

In this capacity as translators of local environmental knowledge (Crate 2008; Ingold 2000; Nazarea 1999; West 2005) and through “cultural brokerage” between various stakeholders, I believe that environmental anthropologists may be best positioned to take action in addressing environmental and social justice issues (Haenn and Casagrande 2007:99). Following an “engaged” environmental anthropology that considers the politics surrounding the use of environmental knowledge and employs ethnographic study of the production, expression, and transmission of local environmental knowledge and the *emic* meanings and symbolism contained therein (West 2005:640), anthropologists can assist with bringing local perspectives, meaning, and desires to environmental policy discussions, advocating on behalf of local communities (Haenn and Casagrande 2007:101-102). As “cultural brokers” in multi-disciplinary environmental research projects and political coalitions involving stakeholders ranging from environmental science researchers, local communities, government policy-makers, NGOs, natural resource managers and exploiters, and citizens, anthropologists are positioned to negotiate and balance differences in identity, initiatives, and outcomes between these diverse groups (Haenn and Casagrande 2007:99). In these projects, anthropologists should consider the roles of citizens as local “experts” in defining environmental issues, assessing risk, and developing approaches to address them, as well as seek to promote their perspectives concerning the veracity and application of scientific data that is produced to encourage a greater degree of community participation, transparency, and local relevance in environmental policy decision-making (Checker 2007; Haenn and Casagrande 2007:100, 102; Johnson and Niemeyer 2008).
To ensure that participation in these projects and policy-making decisions is equitable and that various community perspectives are represented, environmental anthropologists may also consider how the communities associated with a research project are constituted, what views are represented among them, and how community members can meaningfully participate (SfAA / EPA 2001:2-5). Such an undertaking should investigate both local “communities of place” - people sharing a physical space - and “communities of interest” – groups of people who hold similar values - to parse out the diversity of views, social composition(s), cultural beliefs and values, and political intentions of the stakeholders (SfAA / EPA 2001:1-3). By “studying through” the various stakeholders, interests, initiatives, and methods involved in environmental policy-making and the communities impacted by the policies, environmental anthropologists can undertake methods such as social network analysis to assess the social and political dimensions of, and power dynamics in, the relationships between communities of place and interest (Wedel et al. 2005:39-40). By recognizing that policy itself is a cultural category and a social construction (Haenn and Casagrande 2007:101; Wedel et al. 2005), “studying through” in this way allows environmental anthropologists to deconstruct the roles, aims, intentions, and relationships between the various stakeholders to promote equitable participation and outcomes in research projects and environmental policy-making processes. By integrating environmental justice, community-based participatory research, and “engaged” environmental anthropology approaches, anthropologists are better equipped to translate local knowledge to inform environmental policy and global audiences, and mediate between diverse stakeholders, aims, and desires to make the ways in which environmental issues are approached more transparent, democratic, and accountable.

Drawing from these insights in environmental anthropology, especially the capacities of anthropologists to translate local knowledge and mediate between the interests of diverse stakeholders for environmental management, I consider how local conceptions of environmental knowledge and heritage intersect with current schemes, plans, and initiatives for sustainable coastal development and environmental conservation on the Placencia Peninsula as well as diversification strategies used by local fishers to support and sustain their livelihoods and wellbeing. In order to examine the similarities and
disjunctures between local conceptions of heritage, tourist “imaginaries” of the peninsula’s heritage and culture, and heritage discourse in sustainable tourism development policies and plans, cultural policy, and tourism marketing media, I apply the concepts of heritage imaginaries (building on Salazar’s (2010) term “tourism imaginaries”), “authorized heritage discourse” (Smith 2006), and “embodied ecological heritage” (Baines 2012, 2015) in particular to interpret interview, survey, and participatory mapping data presented and discussed in Chapters seven and eight. Finally, to assess the potential viability of a heritage tourism market in Placencia, featuring heritage tours, a prospective fishing heritage and history museum, and local festivals, among other attractions in the context of local and national plans and visions for sustainable (tourism) development, I consider Belizean tourism marketing and sustainable development discourse, business insights for developing heritage assets into cultural tourism products, and approaches to and issues with cultural heritage production and representation (including stakeholder perceptions of “cultural authenticity” (Bruner 2005; MacCannell 1976)).
CHAPTER III: PLACENCIA, BELIZE: BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH

3.1 Site Description: Geographical and Environmental Background

Placencia is a multi-ethnic, multi-national village containing over 1,500 permanent residents located at the southern end of the narrow Placencia Peninsula in the Stann Creek District (Statistical Institute of Belize 2011). The peninsula extends as a narrow 15 mile-long spit of sand south of the small community of Riversdale on the mainland, rising less than three meters above sea level (Ariola 2003; see Figure 1). The area has a subtropical climate with a mean annual temperature of 28 °C and average annual precipitation of 2,500 millimeters, and is acutely vulnerable to the effects of storm surge from tropical storms and hurricanes due to its low elevation (Boles et al. 2011:8; King et al. 1989, 1992; Walker 1973).

The peninsula itself is situated east of the country’s central coast, separated from the mainland by a 24 km-long lagoon fed by the drainage of three creeks from coastal watersheds. This lagoon is a shallow estuary system with minimal tidal flow and a maximum width of 3.4 km, containing mangrove forests, seagrass beds, and aquatic vegetation that provide important habitat for migratory birds, juvenile fish species, crustaceans, manatees, crocodiles, and bottlenose dolphins (Boles et al. 2011:6-7). The eastern lagoon shoreline serves as the foundation for much of the expanding tourism development on the peninsula including foreign-owned resorts and condominiums under construction. These developments have led to extensive clearing of coastal mangroves, dredging, and filling along the coastline resulting in coastal erosion, sedimentation, and nutrient discharge into the estuary ecosystem (Boles et al. 2011:8, 14, 18-25). West across the lagoon is the Caribbean deep-water port of Big Creek, where seafloor dredging to deepen the channel for a port expansion (Vernon 2012:1) and nutrient rich run-off from agricultural operations pose threats to the ecological health of the lagoon (Roots and Reef 2011:7). Oil drilling and exploration by the US-based Treaty Energy Corporation in Independence, a few kilometers north of Big
Figure 1. Map of the Placencia Peninsula, showing the location of the villages, the Placencia Lagoon, and other key landscape features. (Map drafted by the author using ESRI® DigitalGlobe, © OpenStreetMap imagery, and the Global Administrative Areas Database (GADM; http://gadm.org/) for the Belize extent map shapefile).

Creek, and shrimp farms further north also have been reported to threaten lagoon ecosystems (Boles et al. 2011:35; Roots and Reef 2012:1-2).

To the east of Placencia is the southern segment of the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System, part of the second longest coastal barrier reef system in the world and a World Heritage site, which was inscribed by UNESCO in 1996 (UNESCO 2013). This barrier reef system consists of abundant sand and mangrove cayes, patch reefs, offshore atolls, and fringing reefs (Almada-Villela et al. 2002:305-306) that sustain marine fisheries and serve as primary draws for tourists seeking sun and beach, scuba diving.
snorkeling, sport fishing, and ecotourism experiences (Cho 2005:936, 944-945; Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a:34, 36-37). The southern segment of the Barrier Reef contains six of Belize’s fourteen Marine Protected Areas (MPAs - including Marine Reserves, National Parks and Monuments, and Wildlife Sanctuaries), many of which are co-managed by community-based or regional environmental NGOs with either the Belize Fisheries Department or the Forest Department (Cho 2005:938; Cohun 2005:4; Figure 2). Reef areas now bounded within MPAs off of the coast of the Placencia Peninsula - which include Port Honduras Marine Reserve, South Water Caye Marine Reserve, Glover’s Reef Marine Reserve, Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve, Laughing Bird National Park, and Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve - traditionally have served as major fishing grounds for local fishermen in the region (Perez 2009:195), especially since some provide refuge for spawning aggregations of grouper and snapper species (Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:26-27). In addition to their historical fishing significance, many of these MPAs serve as prominent marine ecotourism destinations (Boles et al. 2011:7; Cho 2005:938). Scuba diving and snorkeling in and around Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve, in particular, brings in thousands of tourists to the Placencia Peninsula every year, especially around the annual whale shark season from April to June, coinciding with spawning aggregations of mutton and cuberra snappers (Cohun 2005:13-14; Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:27; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:29).

Over the past 20 years, a number of extreme weather events and storms have severely impacted the health of lagoon and reef ecosystems surrounding the Placencia Peninsula. In 1995, 1998, and 2005, the Belize Barrier Reef experienced massive coral bleaching events attributed to elevated sea surface temperatures, resulting in severe degradation of corals through disease, succession of harmful algae over beneficial algae, and the loss of live corals as high as 75 percent in some areas (Almada-Villela et al. 2002:303-304; Gillett and Myvette 2008:31-32; Perez 2009:195). Severe storms like category five Hurricane Mitch, which passed south of Glover’s Reef in 1998, also have contributed to coral decline, with a reported 48 percent reduction in live coral cover over the area (Gillett and Myvette 2008:32). More recently, residents, shrimp farm and NGO representatives, and tour guides also report a large green chlorella algae bloom extending along the coastline in the summer of 2011.
Figure 2. Map of Belize’s National Protected Areas System including several MPAs off the coast of the Placencia Peninsula. (From “NPAS-Official-Map-2013-web.pdf,” National Protected Areas Secretariat, 2014; PDF file; 26 Feb 2015 <http://protectedareas.gov.bz/technical-documents/>. Copyright 2014 by Guadalupe V. Rosado. Reprinted with permission. (See Appendix 2 for use permission statements)).
While the exact source of the bloom has not been confirmed, many believe the bloom was caused by nutrient-rich discharge into coastal waterways following widespread inland fires and flooding events (Interview with local NGO representative, June 23, 2013), climate change (Interview, July 11, 2014), or minimally treated wastewater from Belize City along with effluent from peninsula septic systems and commercial shrimp farms, among other reasons (Roots and Reef 2011:7). This massive algae bloom increased overall water turbidity, decreased visibility, and caused oxygen depletion resulting in fish kills, thereby negatively impacting snorkeling and diving tourism and the local fishing industry (Interview July 11, 2014; Roots and Reef 2011:7).

3.2 Placencia’s Settlement and Early History: 1600s - 1981

Before European contact and colonization, the Placencia Placencia and surrounding cayes were intermittently occupied by Maya people who engaged in salt production, fishing, and coastal trade as indicated by archaeological evidence of shell and salt production activities from at least fourteen sites around the Placencia Lagoon (MacKinnon 1989; McKillop 2005). The area was later settled by English Puritans from Nova Scotia and the Colombian island of Providencia in the 1600s and 1700s who were primarily fishermen, loggers, or pirates who raided shipping routes and hid among many coastal cayes (Spang 2014b:23; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:8). By the 1820s, the initial settlement at Rum Point - located about 2.5 miles north of present day Placencia village – was abandoned while the Central American wars of independence against Spain were being fought (Carne (ed.) 2013:5; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:9). Archaeological evidence of smoking pipes and bottles, among other artifacts, from Rum Point near the initial settlement in what is currently Placencia village indicates that these immigrants occupied the settlement during this time period (Carne (ed.) 2013:5).

Lawrence Vernon and Henry Young-Westby, Sr. (2014:9) offer various narratives for the formal naming of the settlement of Placencia. By many accounts, after the initial Rum Point settlement was vacated, Spaniard Manuel Rodriguez came to the Placencia in the 1850s - 1860s and named the settlement “Punta Placentia” (Placencia / Pleasant Point) after his hometown in Spain (Spang 2014b:23;
Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:9), and moved with his family there until he reportedly died in a 1893 hurricane (Carne (ed.) 2013:5). Another account suggests that other European fishermen had named the settlement sometime during the 1600s – 1700s after visiting the peninsula and cayes, recognizing the place as a strategic location for trans-Caribbean trade routes with abundant fisheries (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:8). Other accounts, supported by archaeological evidence of historic bottles from Drunken Caye in the Placencia Lagoon, assert that Portuguese pirates (led by a man with the surname Cabral) or British privateers resettled Placencia seeking refuge after attacking Spanish fleets along the Caribbean coastline (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:9). Regardless of this speculation, Placencia remained mostly uninhabited until five founding families later resettled in the area between the 1880s and the 1920s for fishing or employment in the logwood and agricultural, and later mahogany industries (Carne (ed.) 2013:5-6). In the late 1800’s, the Garbutt family moved from the nearby Creole town of Monkey River to Mango Creek and eventually Placencia after the banana industry declined in the region. Abner Westby, originally from Scotland, moved to Placencia from Crooked Tree in 1894 and bought land from Miriam Martinez to herd cattle and cultivate pineapples (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:9-10). Westby was followed shortly after by his half-brother John Eiley who also married into the community (Spang 2014b:25). The Cabral family from Lisbon, Portugal sailed to southern Belize after closing their business in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and eventually married into the community after conducting business with residents (Carne (ed.) 2013:5). Sometime during the late 1800s or the early 1900s, the Vernon family emigrated from France to Placencia and the Romero and Martinez families arrived from Spain (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:10-11). By the early 1900s, the Leslie and Villanueva families from Roatán, Honduras moved into the village, and were followed by the James, Borden, and Stevens families also from British-occupied Roatán (Carne (ed.) 2013:5-6).

During the early years through the 1950s, Placencia was a small Creole fishing village that was only accessible by boat or foot, with a population of several hundred residents who traced their ancestry to these founding families (Carne (ed.) 2013:6). Livelihoods centered on the fishing industry and coastal trading, with many families obtaining 99 year leases from the British Honduras government for land on
the cayes or grants for strips of property spanning the seafront to the lagoon side of the peninsula (Spang 2014b:25). Many of these original families like the Cabrals, Leslies, and Fauxxs constructed homes on cayes off of the coast near fishing grounds, and would only travel to the Placencia Peninsula for basic provisions and trade or to conduct business with other residents. They often produced coconut oil, raised pigs, chickens, and other livestock, and fished out on the cayes. The families traded salted turtle meat, conch, and finfish for other food provisions such as rice, flour, salt, and produce as well as clothing, kerosene for fuel, and tools using dug-out dories (small wooden canoes sometimes outrigged with sails) or sloops for transportation between the cayes and the peninsula or other towns in Honduras and Guatemala (Spang 2014b:25-28; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:12-13). Other families who resided fulltime on the peninsula pursued logging or agricultural ventures on the mainland or engaged in coastal trading (Carne (ed.) 2013:5; Spang 2014b:25). Furthermore, to meet the demands of coastal trade and fishing on the peninsula, many men became carpenters and woodworkers to construct boats and homes (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:13), while some other residents established and operated small shops like dried good stores (Spang 2014b:31, 55).

By the mid-1900s, missionaries began settling in Placencia to proselytize and assist with infrastructure development (Carne (ed.) 2013:6). Among them was Edward Arthur Dunn, who served as Anglian Archbishop of the West Indies from 1936-1943 and moved to Placencia after retiring. Bishop Dunn assisted with the construction of an Anglican school (St. John’s Memorial School) and a church, a community center, a cultural center with a local library as well as a concrete sidewalk through the village in 1947, which later became renowned as the “narrowest (main) street in the world” (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:14). He also helped coordinate the construction of a pier and a rural healthcare facility in the village, opened a provisions buying club, spread the Anglican faith (Carne (ed.) 2013:6; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:14), and was said to support the original idea of a fishing cooperative in the village (Spang 2014b:31-32).

In the 1960s, infrastructure development for transportation, nascent tourism, shipping, and telecommunications was initiated. Just before Hurricane Hattie hit Belize in 1961, an entrepreneur named
Dr. MacCleary built a private airstrip north of Placencia, which was later expanded and publically opened by the mid 1980’s, and renovated again in 1994 (Carne (ed.) 2013:6). Doris and Liston Leslie established the first hotel named the Seaspray on the Placencia Peninsula in 1964 catering to British soldiers, seafaring merchants, and tourists (Seaspray Hotel 2007), thereby introducing a small-scale local overnight tourism industry, which matured into the 1970s and 1980s. Doris Leslie also managed the village’s first post office and hand-crank telephone between 1960-1987, which served as the primary community phone for nearly three decades since household landlines were not introduced on the peninsula until the late 1980s and early 1990s (Carne (ed.) 2013:7; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:21).

Between 1940 and the 1970s, before the construction of a road accessing the peninsula, the primary means of transportation for residents and visitors and shipping for mail and cargo to Belize City and surrounding towns and villages such as Dangriga, Monkey River, Punta Gorda, and Puerto Barrios, Guatemala were passenger ships like the MV Heron H (Carne (ed.) 2013:6-7; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:38) and the Maya Prince (Spang 2014b:26, 30-31). These coastal passenger ship services phased out after 1985 when a bus service was established between Placencia and the Stann Creek District capital of Dangriga with the completion of a dirt road spanning the length of the peninsula in 1984 that connected to the Southern Highway between Dangriga and Punta Gorda (Carne (ed.) 2013:6-7; Spang 2014b:41).

In 1962, local fishermen created the Placencia Producers Cooperative Society Limited, which became a primary economic pillar of the village over the next 30 years and formalized a burgeoning local commercial seafood industry (Carne (ed.) 2013:7; Key 2002a:9; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:13; see section 4.6 for an overview of the history of the fishing industry in Placencia). The fishing cooperative began proving electricity to village residents from generators for its freezing plant in the early 1970s until Belize Electricity Limited established a municipal grid in the early-mid 1990s (Carne (ed.) 2013:7; Spang 2014b:34-35).

The first Euro-American expatriates began settling in Placencia alongside the growth of a nascent tourism industry during the 1960s and 1970s. In the early 1970s, a Norwegian / Japanese American couple moved to Placencia and established Wallen’s Market, the first grocery store to sell vegetables, and
later a hardware store (Spang 2014b:55). During this time, the first foreign-owned resort named the “Cove” (where the resort Chabil Mar currently is situated) was established and hosted lunch for a tour boat named the MV Argonaut from Greece (Carne (ed.) 2013:6-7). In 1973, the all-inclusive resort named Rum Point Inn was established by the Bevier family at the site of the historic Rum Point north of Placencia (Carne (ed.) 2013:6). These resorts, among other small resorts and inns provided some of the first tourism service industry jobs on the peninsula by hiring local Placencia and Seine Bight residents to work as staff. For example, in addition to hiring restaurant, front desk receptionists, and general hotel workers, the Beviers managing Rum Point Inn began training and employing local male tour guides (Carne (ed.) 2013:7-8; Spang 2014b:38). The family later held a large role in the development of a local marine ecotourism industry through lobbying to establish Laughing Bird Caye as a National Park (1994), creating a full service licensed dive shop, and providing tour guide and dive master training and certifications for interested (predominately male) residents (Carne (ed.) 2013:7-8). In addition to the few full-time guides employed by the resorts, fishermen began to capitalize on the influx of tourists to the peninsula beginning in the late 1970s and early 1980s by offering snorkeling and fishing tours including fly fishing, trolling, and drop fishing to overnight guests (Spang 2014b:38, 41-42).

3.3 Placencia’s Postcolonial Emergence as a Tourism Destination: 1981 – 2001

Before Belizean independence in 1981, overnight visitors to the peninsula consisted primarily of government officials, mariners, British soldiers, and “hippie backpackers” traveling around Central America (Spang 2014b:38-39). Over the past 30 years, however, with government promotion of Belize as an international tourist destination and the establishment of formal national tourism policies and institutions like the BTB, the local tourism sector has expanded (Spang 2014b:40-41). National tourism development policies and investment in tourism development have facilitated the rise of local and foreign real estate companies, improvements in transportation and water supply infrastructure, the establishment of licensed local tour and dive operators and a tour guide association as well as the construction and
operation of several resorts, condominiums, and diveshops, and restaurants north of Placencia (Spang 2014b:39-40).

Following other infrastructure improvements such as the construction of a dirt road in 1984, the renovation and re-opening of the airstrip, and connection to a municipal electrical grid through Belize Electricity Limited in 1993, the government of Belize financed the construction and installation of a municipal water system on the peninsula in 1996 (Carne (ed.) 2013:7-8). Prior to 1996, residents used rainwater vats, wells, and a community water reservoir to collect water for drinking and washing and bathing, respectively. The municipal water system began to provide potable tap water to residents and businesses on the peninsula from a water tower in the village by pumping water sourced from an aquifer near the town of Independence through pipes across the Placencia Lagoon (Carne (ed.) 2013:8). After completion of the construction, operation and management of the system was transferred to locally-appointed Water Boards in Placencia and Seine Bight, providing a significant stream of revenue for community projects and services in both villages (Interview with a previous Water Board manager, June 19, 2013).

Some local residents also economically benefitted from finding large amounts of cocaine locally known as “sea lotto” and lumber drifting ashore in the mid-1990s (Carne (ed.) 2013:8). As a corridor for drug trafficking since the late 1970s / early 1980s, residents infrequently found and sold “sea lotto” or bales of cocaine that drifted ashore from planes or boats that need to dumped the product in the sea (Spang 2014b:57-58). Often cocaine is sold back to local dealers who sell the product locally to residents and tourists or distribute it north through the drug trafficking corridor, and some residents use the revenue to assist with buying land or making household or business investments or improvements such as new boats or renovations in plumbing and indoor kitchens (Carne (ed.) 2013:8; Spang 2014b:57-58). Since the drug trade has taken hold in Placencia, some traffickers reportedly launder money into various tourism-related businesses for construction and real estate development (Spang 2014b:58). Additionally, addictions to cocaine and crack have increased in the village with the growth of the drug trade alongside tourism development, including among some local fishermen who reportedly paddle out to sea to legally
catch or poach seafood for sale below market value (Spang 2014b:59). Due to limited rehabilitation programs, cocaine / crack addiction continues to pose a public health and safety issue in Placencia, resulting in increasing incidence of petty theft, prostitution, and incarceration (Spang 2014:59-60).

Despite increasing incidence of drug dealing and substance abuse in Placencia, the formalization of the tourism industry in the 1990s has spurred the creation of local tourism businesses and organizations. In an effort to professionalize the growing national tourism industry, the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) introduced initial Tour Guide and Tour Operator legislation in 1990 requiring training and licensing for tourism business and tour guides (Spang 2014b:40-42). After the legislation was passed, many local residents (primarily men) entered into the tourism industry to become licensed tour operators, tour guides, and divemasters, and many opened their own tour operator shops in Placencia. To organize local tour guides and meet the demands of a growing tourism industry, the Placencia Tour Guide Association was formed in 1996 to provide services for tourism capacity building among local members (Placencia Tour Guide Association 2015). Currently, the organization has over 100 local members including over 26 female guides. Over the next 15 years, other local tourism organizations such as the Placencia chapter of the national Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA) and the Placencia Tourism Business Organization also became prominent political and economic institutions in the village. The Placencia chapter of the BTIA, which is composed of over 110 local and foreign-owned business and entrepreneur members, publishes a local newspaper named *The Placencia Breeze* monthly and operates a tourism center in Placencia village (Placencia Tourism Center 2015), while the Placencia Tourism Business Organization supports local tourism-related businesses (Carne (ed.) 2013:9; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:38). Coinciding with the rise of local tourism organizations in the 1990s and early 2000s, concerns about coastal environmental conservation and sustainability grew among residents recognizing fisheries depletion and increasing tourism development, among other threats to coastal resources (Boles et al. 2011). During this period many tourism, fisher, and business stakeholders on the peninsula coalesced into various nongovernmental environmental organizations such as Friends of Nature (which later became
the Southern Environmental Association (SEA) in 2008) to protect coastal resources such as the reefs surrounding Laughing Bird Caye (Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:25).

Alongside the rise of tourism organizations and NGOs on the peninsula and infrastructure improvements, noticeable demographic changes began to occur with expanding tourism development (Spang 2014b:49). At the turn of the millennium following the inception of a retirement program by the Government of Belize through the BTB in 1999, many foreign, predominately middle to upper-middle class white expatriates from the United States, Canada, and Europe started buying land on the Placencia Peninsula to build houses for part- or full-time residence and often to open businesses (Spang 2014b:49-50). The retirement program allowed these expatriates to access very low property taxes to purchase lands and build houses in Belize and duty-exempt status to move their belongings into the country (Interview with a local consultant, June 15, 2015). Immigration of these “Qualified Retirement Persons,” as some “local” residents refer to them, has generated animosity between many local entrepreneurs and these foreigners since Belizean business owners do not receive the same tax benefits and because many expatriates seek to persuade local political affairs and village life (Interview June 15, 2015). Furthermore, the large arrival of Euro-American expatriates beginning around the turn of the Millennium is stimulating gentrification of the peninsula with rising real estate values, increases in commodity and food prices, and changes in goods offered at local grocery stores (Spang 2014b:50).

Some Placencia natives are emigrating from the peninsula because of this gentrification while others are seeking out employment and education opportunities elsewhere in Belize or abroad (Spang 2014b:51-52). At the same time, hundreds of workers from surrounding Creole, Mestizo / “Spanish,” Garifuna, and Maya communities in the Stann Creek, Cayo, and Toledo Districts have sought out employment opportunities on the peninsula generated through expanding tourism development. While a large portion of these workers reside on the peninsula, many travel daily for work, especially for construction, tourism and restaurant service industry and domestic employment (Spang 2014b:47-49), produce and food sales, and sale of cultural crafts and souvenirs to tourists. In addition to workers from nearby Independence / Mango Creek who ferry across the lagoon on the Hokey Pokey water taxi, many
migrant workers bus onto the peninsula from nearby immigrant communities that are predominately composed of Spanish-speaking Maya and Mestizo immigrants from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador (Spang 2014b:47). Based on 2010 census figures for the peninsula, over 1,000 individuals living on the peninsula identify as “Mestizo / Hispanic” or “Spanish,” and make up nearly 25 percent of Placencia’s total population (Statistical Institute of Belize 2011). Adding to Placencia’s multi-ethnic demographic transition are residents who identify as Maya and East Indian as well as recent Chinese and other Asian immigrants (Spang 2014b:48-49). In the early 2000s, after Hurricane Iris hit the peninsula in 2001, many Chinese and Asian entrepreneurs immigrated to the peninsula to establish grocery stores and restaurants and soon began dominating the local grocery market on the peninsula (Spang 2014b:54-55). These demographic changes reflect Placencia’s transition from a small Creole (Kriol) fishing village to a burgeoning multi-ethnic tourism destination and the formation of increasingly cosmopolitan identities around the time Hurricane Iris made landfall on the peninsula in October 2001.

3.4 **Hurricane Iris and the Redevelopment of Placencia as an International Tourism Destination**

October 8, 2001 marked a turning point in the development and history of Placencia after Hurricane Iris (a category four storm) directly hit the Placencia Peninsula, causing almost $100 million in damage and destroying an estimated 85-90 percent of existing buildings and infrastructure along the southern extent of the peninsula; thereby halting a rapidly growing local tourism industry (Alexander 2008; Arellano 2001; Government of Belize 2001; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:35). In the wake of Hurricane Iris, with increasing foreign investment in tourism development on the peninsula, anthropologist Sarah Alexander (2008) documents how residents of Placencia adapted resilience strategies to cope with stresses and vulnerabilities generated or exacerbated by the storm, and how the village was rebuilt to participate in an expanding ecotourism market. Though development of a resilience index for households in the community, she found that resident income, occupation, and neighborhood social cohesion are key factors that influence socioeconomic resilience to storm events (Alexander 2008). After the storm, many resident-owned tourism-dependent businesses were slow to recover since they lost
income from a full tourism high season, resulting in a quarter of households reporting not being able to
cover basic expenses and over half of Placencia residents borrowing additional credit to reconstruct their
homes and businesses (Alexander 2008; Smith, D. 2012:28; Spang 2014b:45-46).

Seeing an opportunity to redevelop the peninsula for international tourism after the devastation
caused by Hurricane Iris in 2001 (Arellano 2001) with the depression of local tourism businesses and a
depreciation of the real estate market with abandonment or sale of many resident properties, the
Government of Belize opened parcels of land on the peninsula to foreign companies, investors, and
entrepreneurs to encourage economic growth and transportation development (Boles et al. 2011:11;
Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:35). Foreign investment and development began to change the local
landscape north of Placencia with the construction of small and large-scale multinational resorts, hotels,
condominiums, marinas, and an airport (Boles et al. 2011:4). In addition to encouraging foreign
investment, the national government has also initiated a number of infrastructure improvement projects in
tourism destinations across the country including in Placencia, Belize City, San Ignacio, and San Pedro as
part of the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan with support from international development
agencies (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:46). The first major infrastructural improvement after
Hurricane Iris came in 2010 with the completion of a government-funded project to pave the dirt road
spanning the length of the peninsula, which has since spurred increasing flows of tourists, workers, and
commodities to the Placencia Placencia (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:16). Also in 2010, a US $3
million project funded by a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) began
reconstruction of the community pier / dock damaged by the hurricane, renovation of the Placencia
sidewalk, and installation of drainage channels in Placencia Village (Boles et al. 2011:32; Vernon and
Young-Westby 2014:39). The multi-use pier, which was inaugurated on September 5, 2013 by the
Minister of Tourism and the chairlady of the Placencia Village Council, commemorates a village
historical landmark and promotes local tourism. It extends 275 feet long, and includes a shoreline
promenade, plaza, a docking facility, and a couple of tables to clean and fillet fish (Vernon and Young-
Westby 2014:39-40; see Figure 3).
Figure 3. The Placencia Municipal Pier. (Photo courtesy of Suzanna Pratt).

Placencia is now one of the top tourist destinations in Belize, despite less than 14 years of redevelopment after Hurricane Iris, especially with a strip of tourist resorts and lodging to the north of the village gaining notoriety and prominence (Boles et al. 2011:11-12). According to the popular Rough Guides travel guidebook, tourists from around the world come to Placencia for its renown beaches, diving, and fishing, and access to inland tourist destinations such as Maya sites, as well as for local festivals and events like the annual Lobsterfest celebrations in June and the Sidewalk Arts festival in February (Eltringham 2007:267). Similarly, a recently published informational booklet about Placencia titled Footprints on the Beach to Paradise: Placencia and Its Environs describes Placencia as a laidback, friendly, luxury beach destination (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:28, 37). Additional circulating imaginaries about Placencia as a tourist destination can be gleaned from popular magazines such as
Destination Belize (BTIA 2013, 2014) and numerous online travel websites (e.g., BTB 2013b), which acknowledge Placencia’s fishing history and its transition to tourism development and its position as a hub for tourism activities along the reef and tours throughout the region. Moreover, local and national tourism media continue to market a laid-back island vibe for Placencia using phrases such as “Barefoot Perfect” (BTB 2013b) and “the caye you drive to” (BTIA 2014:82) to brand the destination.

3.5 Placencia Peninsula Demographics and Development Corridors

Multiple ethnic groups make up Placencia’s estimated population of over 1,500 residents (Statistical Institute of Belize 2011). Based on figures in the 2010 population census, Creoles (with a mix of African and European ancestry) are the major ethnic group in the village (making up almost 42 percent of the village’s population), while White / Caucasian U.S., European, and Canadian ex-patriates (nearly 10 percent), Garifuna (of West African and indigenous Carib descent) (roughly 3 percent), Chinese and Asian (~ 1 percent), Mestizo / Hispanic (24 percent), Maya (over 6 percent), East Indian (~ 2.5 percent), and mixed ethnic identities add to the multi-cultural composition (Boles et al. 2011:9; Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:22; Spang 2014b:48; Statistical Institute of Belize 2011; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:25-27). Although Placencia is a multi-ethnic community, residents still generally identify the village as “Creole” or “Kriol” drawing from its historical legacy and settlement, with Kriol as the dominant language spoken (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:26). Aside from tourists and temporary residents, a large portion of the population is foreign-born, especially ex-pats from the United States and Canada and migrant workers from surrounding Central American countries. Opportunities for work, leisure, and retirement centered on the tourism industry have attracted many foreign-born residents in addition to Belizeans from outside of the peninsula, especially “Spanish” / Mestizo immigrants, resulting in substantial growth of the peninsula’s population since 1990 to over 3,400 permanent residents in 2010 (Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:22; Spang 2014b:48; Statistical Institute of Belize 2011).

Extending seven kilometers directly north of Placencia village is an area of intensive tourism, transportation, and residential development, where small and large-scale multinational resorts, hotels,
condominiums, sandy beaches, gift and dive shops, marinas, and an airport, funded principally by foreign investment, dominate the local landscape (Boles et al. 2011:4). Just north of this development, about four miles from Placencia is Seine Bight village, which also has been impacted by the rapid economic, ecological, and social changes associated with rapid tourism development. Seine Bight is a multi-ethnic, predominately Garifuna community whose ancestors settled in the area in 1869 and now has a population of over 1,100 residents, although its political jurisdiction technically extends north up the peninsula to Riversdale (Flores 2013:28-29; Statistical Institute of Belize 2011). Historically, residents in the village have had tense relations with the neighboring Creole community of Placencia, structured to a large degree by political differences, racism, village border disputes, and uneven economic development between the two villages, although the communities have engaged in trade for several decades (Boles et al. 2011:9; Spang 2014b:22). Recent rapid tourism development has provided a means of reconciliation between political leaders and residents in the two villages (Key and Pillai 2006:14-15), but also has increased socio-economic disparities between them as Seine Bight residents continually are marginalized from emerging tourism economic opportunities on the peninsula (Interview June 25, 2013).

Four kilometers north of Seine Bight village on the peninsula is Maya Beach, a community of roughly 400 residents consisting of a primarily transient population of North American and European ex-pats that grew from an initial Canadian real estate development in 1964 (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:17; see Figure 1). Riversdale, a historically Creole fishing village of over 550 residents that contains a large population of Mestizo residents, anchors the northern end of the peninsula to the mainland and extends into some banana plantations surrounding the village (Spang 2014b:22). Between Maya Beach and the small settlement of Riversdale at the northern end of the peninsula is another area of intensive tourism, transportation, and residential development, funded principally by foreign entrepreneurs and companies (Wells et al. 2016:434). To provide space for tourism and transportation development, thousands of acres of mangroves have been cleared (Boles et al. 2011:4). These mangroves act as natural coastline barriers counteracting erosion and sedimentation, a biological sieve for wastewater and storm-water discharge, and as reproductive refuges for species of fish and crustaceans (like spiny lobster) vital
to the local Placencia economy, fishing livelihoods, and the ecology of the lagoon. As a result of mangrove clear-cutting, filling, and dredging from tourism development on the peninsula, much of the coastal habitat (especially grass beds and coral reef) has degraded, parts of the coastline have eroded, and diminished populations of commercially significant marine species have undermined the local fishing industry (Boles et al. 2011:4, 33, 35; Key 2002a). In addition to diminishing near-shore fisheries, these tourism development practices coupled with increased tourism traffic and pollution have stressed off-shore fisheries, especially with large flows of drifting waste from Guatemala and Honduras (Interviews June 24, 2013; July 12, 2014).

Concerns about wastewater disposal also have been raised in response to this rapid tourism development (Boles et al. 2011:26-28; Halcrow 2012). Residents and business on the peninsula primarily use septic systems, and during storm surges in the past some residents have reported rashes and other health risks from wading through standing water mixed with minimally treated wastewater (Boles et al. 2011:28). Also, effluent released from shrimp farming aquaculture into the lagoon and discharge of partially or un-treated wastewater from tourist resorts and residences on the peninsula have contributed to nutrient loading in coastal waterways (Boles et al. 2011; Roots and Reef 2011:7). This nutrient loading has facilitated widespread decline in seagrass cover and harmful algae growth, which obscures water visibility and encourages particular aquatic species to relocate, thereby reducing local fishing catches and snorkeling and diving tourism (Roots and Reef 2011:7). In response to concerns about coastal water quality and public health, especially with punctuated flows of tourists between high and low seasons, the Government of Belize has proposed a BZD $25 million integrated water and wastewater treatment system for the peninsula with support from the Inter-American Development Bank Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management to be managed by the private water and sewerage utility Belize Water Services Limited (GEF CReW; BWSL 2013). Although many residents and businesses recognize the need for a centralized wastewater system with expanding tourism development, many residents have expressed concerns about the infrastructural specifications and socio-economic and environmental impacts of the
proposed system, especially with issues relating to costs of the installation and servicing, transparency to stakeholders, and loss of community revenue sources (see Wells et al. 2016:436-439).

Other residents have raised concerns about the socioeconomic impacts of current tourism development practices more broadly. Some have noted that large-scale tourism development by foreign companies and ex-patriots competes with the small-scale tourism enterprises of local residents, drawing revenue away from the town’s local economy and raising property values (Boles et al. 2011:4, 11). With rising real estate and commodity prices and demographic shifts toward white Euro-American expatriates and migrant laborers on the peninsula accompanying extensive tourism development, a process of gentrification is occurring, which is facilitating a decline in small-scale overnight tourism (a hallmark of Placencia’s tourism market for decades) in favor of mass tourism. This transition is causing many family and locally-operated tourism operations and accommodations to go out of business (Interviews June 20 and 28, 2013; June 19, 2014). Many residents remain concerned about large-scale cruise ship tourism from Norwegian Cruise Lines developing on Harvest Caye, believing the development will have detrimental impacts to the coastal environment, especially coral reef and mangrove ecosystems, overnight tourism, and local businesses like dive shops that promote an ecotourism image (Interviews June 17 and 20, 2013; Ramos 2013:A1; The Guardian-Belize 2014).

In response to increased population growth, and economic, environmental, and social pressures associated with the seasonal influx of tourists (which can increase the peninsula’s population by over three times during a given season), many existing local cooperatives, associations, and councils in addition to local non-governmental organizations have opened dialogue with policy-makers to address local concerns associated with this rapid tourism development (Boles et al. 2011:11, 38-43; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:46-47). Responding to a proposal from Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines in 2010 to convert a part of Placencia village into a cruise port and echoing local opposition to the development at the time, numerous peninsula stakeholders – led by the Placencia chapter of the BTIA and a steering committee with funding from the WWF - contributed to a study in 2011 outlining a shared vision for sustainable development on the peninsula (Peninsula 2020 Initiative 2011:2-4; Vernon and Young-
Westby 2014:42-43). Informed by consultant research, this vision - named the “Peninsula 2020 Initiative” – makes a number of social, economic, and environmental recommendations for sustainable development over the next decade, concluding that “… the Placencia Peninsula should not become a mass tourism destination” but rather maintain a “low impact” predominately overnight tourism industry (Peninsula 2020 Initiative 2011:4, 12; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:42). Emphasizing the need for more local control throughout the vision statement, the document further outlines recommendations for employment, access to capital, foreign vs. local ownership, transportation, fishing, land ownership, healthcare, crime, cultural preservation, environmental impacts of rapid tourism expansion, physical planning and zoning, sustainable tourism development, and governance on the peninsula (Peninsula 2020 Initiative 2011).

While the recommendations from this local policy document for sustainable development only provide guidelines, it continues to serve as a model for peninsula-wide collaborations and discussions for sustainable development among peninsula stakeholders. Prominent local stakeholders involved in dialogues about monitoring and managing coastal resources on and around the peninsula currently include: the Village Councils of Placencia and Seine Bight, the Southern Environmental Association NGO, the Peninsula Citizens for Sustainable Development NGO, the Placencia Producers Fishing Cooperative Society Limited, local fishers, the shrimp farming industry, the Fragments of Hope NGO, the Placencia Tour Guide Association, and the Placencia chapter of the Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA).

3.6 A Brief History of the Fishing Industry in Placencia

The Placencia Peninsula has undergone significant tourism and economic development over the past 20 years (Boles et al. 2011; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014). Like other coastal towns in the region, the economy of Placencia village used to focus around the fishing industry (Carne 2013:6-7; Huitric 2005; Key 2002a, 2002b; Spang 2014b:34-37). Initially, residents fished, trapped, speared, and netted fish and turtles among other coastal and marine species, but after U.S. and European foreigners encountered an abundance of Caribbean spiny lobster and conch in the early-mid 1900s (which local fishermen
already recognized), they became products for export to the US and elsewhere and a primary means to sustain fishing livelihoods (Boles et al. 2011:9; Huitric 2005:29; Informal interview July 13, 2014). With the arrival of new technologies to the peninsula like gill nets and diving masks as well as outboard motors in 1959, which became abundant by the mid-1970s, fishermen increased the range over which they fished, and expanded fishing practices to effectively increase production (Boles et al. 2011:9; Carne 2013:7).

With the eventual support of the British Honduras colonial government following Hurricane Hattie in 1961, local fishermen in Placencia created the Placencia Producers’ Cooperative Society Limited (PPCSL) in June of 1962, seeking to profit from the export of spiny lobster, conch, and whole finfish by setting competitive prices for seafood export (Huitric 2005:32; Key 2002a:9; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:13). Formalization of the fishing cooperative also provided a means for local fisher members to lobby for extended harvest seasons for conch, lobster, and shrimp, and contest fisheries quotas (Boles et al. 2011:10; Key 2002a:9). The Placencia fishing Cooperative has been owned and operated by local fishermen, and includes an elected management committee of seven fishermen, led a chairman, who collectively hire an operations manager to oversee production, marketing, and sales (PPCSL 2014). The cooperative formed with only ten fishermen, and in its formative years fishermen sold lobster to a boat from Belize City and eventually to an U.S. middleman for export to the United States of America. According to an elder Placencia fisherman and founding member of the cooperative, the cooperative worked with an entrepreneur named Ed Deborak to secure a U.S. market for local fishermen’s seafood product, with exports predominately directed to Florida (Interview July 7, 2014). In the early 1960s, the cooperative established a partnership for export with the Northern (fishing) Cooperative in Belize City in which Placencia fishers would sail and fish along the reef to sell their catch to the Northern Cooperative, buy ice, and return to Placencia (Spang 2014b:34). By 1965, cooperative members had erected a small building for cooperative operations from product sales and were able to access a small freezing unit in the village for storing seafood products (Boles et al. 2011:10; Spang 2014b:34). In the early 1970s, they ended their agreement with the Northern Cooperative and began a partnership with Booth Fisheries based out of Miami, Florida. Booth Fisheries supported the construction
of a freezing plant (including a blast freezer and four-ton ice machine) and a processing facility for the PPCSL to assist with export of frozen seafood (primarily lobster) to Brownsville, Texas, or Miami, for wider distribution in the U.S. (Boles et al. 2011:10; Spang 2014b:34).

Throughout its history, the Cooperative has served as a hub of community activities around the southern pier, and a centerpiece of the village’s fishing-dominated economy and identity (Figure 4). A former representative of the cooperative explained, “I think that through the Placencia Co-op - because we have always been an integral part of this community - many people have sort (of) a keen sense of appreciation of what happens here. Our business side of it – they show that they support us – and that is very good” (Interview June 19, 2013). The Cooperative historically has supported local fishermen by giving them access to credit for loans to buy engines, boats, and other maritime equipment as well as ice for storage, processing, and shipping, and has coordinated efforts to market, package, sell, and ship marine products to both domestic and international markets (Key 2002a:9; Spang 2014b:35).

Additionally, family of cooperative members could buy groceries on credit at a cooperative general store in the early 1980s, and gasoline was purchased on credit by coop fishermen when the PPCSL managed a gas station between 1985-1986 (Spang 2014b:35). The fishing cooperative also used to provide services like electricity for a marginal cost from diesel generators for its freezing plant to the village of Placencia until Belize Electricity Limited established a municipal grid in the early-mid 1990s (Carne 2013:7; Spang 2014b:34-35). Furthermore, the Society funneled revenue from its sales and services into donations for local education and community events (PPCSL 2014). By the late 1970s, cooperative seafood production was high, and income from the prominent fishing industry in the village circulated to most households (Spang 2014b:35). During this period, men with accounting backgrounds from Belize City generally served as cooperative operations managers, although local Placencia men filled the positions of processing plant manager and assistant manager. In addition to hiring fishermen to work in the processing facility, several women were employed in the co-op to clean, process, and package seafood (Spang 2014b:35). At the same time, seaweed began to be planted and cultivated from seed stock originally from Gladden Spit (Interview July 7, 2014).
Technical partnerships through the fishing cooperative enabled some fishermen to travel to Canada and the United States to study alternative and more productive, yet environmentally degrading, methods of fishing like drift netting, long lining, and trawling, and by 1982 the cooperative was operating three shrimp trawlers (Spang 2014b:36). Recognizing declining yields of conch with some of these practices, the Government of Belize updated fisheries regulations in 1977 to establish a minimum size for conch extraction as well as a closed season for queen conch coinciding with seasonal reproduction (Huitric 2005; Spang 2014b:63).

The co-op reached peak seafood production in 1986 with upwards of 40,000 pounds of lobster tail, 250,000 pounds of whole fish, and 75,000 pounds of conch produced and sold each season (Carne ed.
2013:17; PPCSL 2014), becoming the second biggest fishing cooperative producer in Belize (Spang 2014b:36). At that time, there were two dozen employees and over 100 members of the co-op, which reported average earnings between BZ $40,000 - $50,000 per fisherman (Interview June 19, 2014; PPCSL 2014). However, overfishing with the introduction of new fishing methods, cooperative member debts, fund embezzlement blamed on non-local operations managers and accountants, and poaching began the demise of the fishing cooperative’s prominence (Boles et al. 2011:10; Key 2002a:10; Spang 2014b:36).

By the early 1990’s, fishery stocks had declined further and the spiny lobster and conch export markets had become saturated (Key 2002a). This decline in fisheries has been attributed to over-exploitation, especially by Honduran and Guatemalan poachers (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:13), and environmentally degrading fishing practices like shrimp trawling and mass gill netting that became prominent with the increasing demand for seafood – especially conch and lobster - on an international market and with growth in tourism (Key 2002a:1-2; King 1997). In 1990, the cooperative closed its processing facility and downsized its membership, thereby discontinuing direct export of seafood products, and subsequently re-entered in an agreement with the Northern Fishermen’s Cooperative for international seafood export (Spang 2014b:36-37). Following another attempt to increase marine shrimp production through ocean trawling in the early 1990s and ensuing fisheries decline and loss of operational funds, the cooperative closed temporarily in December 1993, and members began to diversify into other business undertakings outside of seafood production (Boles et al. 2011:10; Spang 2014b:37). At the time, the co-op’s temporary closure sent ripple effects into the local economy as bars and restaurants had difficulty finding new sources of ice to store food and beverages (Boles et al. 2011:10).

In response to a decline in fisheries and with calls for marine conservation, including by environmental organizations and some local fishers, a number of fisheries regulations were updated in 1989 and subsequently 2009 from the 1948 Belize Fisheries Act to limit the quantity, size, types, and timing that fishermen can harvest marine species (Belize Fisheries Department 2009; Interview July 12, 2014; King 1997). Fishermen now navigate a series of regulations that have become standardized by the Fisheries Department including seasons and size and weight limitations for lobster, conch, Nassau
grouper, wild shrimp, and Hicatee turtles; bans on grazer fish, marine mammals, marine turtles, and whale sharks; fishing gear restrictions for particular areas; and special fishing permit requirements to harvest species like sea cucumber, among other regulations (Belize Fisheries Department 2009, 2015).

These fisheries regulations, coupled with the reduction of fish stocks, competition from other seafood producers and poachers, climate change, and the rise in formal and informal tourism markets in the village opened by national development have affected the viability of full-time fishing livelihoods in Placencia (Boles et al. 2011:35; Key 2002a; Spang 2014:37, 41-42). Thus, many fishermen have made the transition – full or part-time - to the tourism industry, especially as tour guides, fly fishing guides, and dive masters (Boles et al. 2011:35; Interviews June 19, 2013; Interview June 21, 2013; PPCSL 2014; Spang 2014b:41-43; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:34). Many of the co-op member fishers employed as tour guides still shift focus from tour guiding to fishing during the high and low tourism seasons (Boles et al. 2011:35). While the Placencia Producers’ Cooperative Society is still a prominent economic and social institution in the village, the co-op produces only around 6,000 pounds of lobster per season and has decreased in size to around thirty full-time members and 32 part-time members from Placencia and the nearby mainland communities of Independence, Monkey River, and Punta Gorda as of 2014 (Interview June 19, 2014; PPCSL 2014). Although some Placencia fishermen continue to sell part of their catch to the cooperative for half price up front, most choose to sell their seafood products to local restaurants, residents, and hotels for higher prices (Boles et al. 2011:35; Spang 2014:37, 42). However, according to many local residents, there are now only a limited number of fishermen in Placencia village that supply fresh seafood to local restaurants and residents from catches around major fishing grounds in the reef, since many choose to sell their catches to resorts north of the village (Interviews June 21, 2013, July 13, 2014). Most of the whole fish still sold to the cooperative is now sent to Rainforest Seafoods, a Jamaican export company, located in Mango Creek across the Placencia Lagoon (Spang 2014b:37). Due to these trends affecting local seafood availability, many Placencia and Seine Bight residents still practice small-scale fishing in the Placencia Lagoon, often off of docks or canoes and kayaks to supplement their meals with fresh catches (Informal interview July 10, 2014), while some local restaurants commission
daily fishing excursions to bring in seafood (Spang 2014a:23). Moreover, according to a local tour guide, roughly 40 percent of Placencia tour guides still fish in the tourism slow season from May – November to make ends meet (Interview June 21, 2013). Although many fishermen within and outside of the Placencia Producers Cooperative have sought out direct employment in the tourism industry as dive masters, tour guides, and sport fishing guides, several other local fishers are pursuing alternative means and strategies to sustain their livelihoods (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:34).
CHAPTER IV: METHODS

4.1 Research Context

The research discussed in the following chapters was carried out over three sequential summer field seasons between 2013 and 2015 as part of an interdisciplinary project by University of South Florida anthropologists and environmental engineers investigating perceptions and practices of sustainable water and wastewater management on the Placencia Peninsula, Belize. More broadly, this interdisciplinary research seeks to examine how rapid tourism expansion, water-energy development, and wastewater development impact coastal health, local livelihoods, and wellbeing, and cultivate international partnerships for research and education about these issues (see appendix 3 for the IRB study approval letter and appendix 4 for the research permit letters (for the 2013-2015 field seasons) from the Belize National Institute of Culture and History, Institute for Social and Cultural Research).5 This social science research was undertaken in a coastal Belizean context alongside other Caribbean research sites through an overarching interdisciplinary, international research project funded by a NSF Partnerships in International Research and Education (PIRE) grant (No. 1243510) titled “Context Sensitive Implementation of Synergistic Water-Energy Systems” (PI – James Mihelcic; Co-PIs: Maya Trotz, E. Christian Wells, and Camille McKayle). The overarching NSF PIRE project investigates the cultural, geographic, and engineering contexts in which technologies used to recover water, energy, and nutrients from wastewater in coastal Caribbean settings undergoing tourism development can be sustainably implemented (see Wells et al. 2016 for a summary of the scope of the project and Pilot Season research activities on the Placencia Peninsula).

5 The social science research project study title is “Impacts of Tourism, Wastewater, and Water-energy Development on Livelihoods and the Environment on the Placencia Peninsula of Belize,” and is currently approved for human subjects research by the USF Institutional Review Board (IRB) under study #Pro00012766.
I had been working as a graduate research assistant throughout the research project on the Placencia Peninsula, Belize, since the initial USF anthropology faculty visit in December 2012 through the spring of 2017, collaborating on many aspects of the project including background research, research protocol preparation, ethnographic data collection, and data compilation and analysis spanning four summer field seasons. In particular, I conducted background research on the Placencia Peninsula and other PIRE Caribbean research sites, assisted with coordinating travel logistics, preparing research design and Institutional Review Board study protocols, recruiting research participants, undertaking multi-method ethnographic data collection, and compiling and analyzing information gathered during the 2013 Pilot season and subsequent fieldwork in 2014 and 2015. Engaged with the larger research project in these capacities, I developed research interests in the construction and practice of sustainable tourism development and coastal resource management, especially the strategies and heritage conceived and deployed by fishers in the historically-identified fishing village of Placencia to navigate reported rapid tourism development and ecological change occurring around them. The confluence of these research interests – through various iterations – forms the basis of my master’s thesis research presented here.

4.2 Anthropology of Public Policy Approach

My research builds on the approach and findings of students and faculty from the Natural Resource Management Program at the University of Belize who carried out a “Rapid Assessment of the Effects and Issues Related to Development in the Placencia Area” in 2011 to investigate the socio-economic transition of the Placencia Peninsula to tourism in relation to natural resource management and ecological, social, and economic challenges faced by peninsula residents (Boles et al. 2011). Through a mixed-method research approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative analyses, they identify and explicate numerous challenges for development on the peninsula, map out key policies, stakeholders, and practices shaping the context of rapid tourism development, and suggest recommendations for future sustainable development recommendations to share with key stakeholders on and off of the peninsula (Boles et al. 2011). Considering the approach presented in this study and others to examine coastal
resource management and sustainable development around the peninsula, I recognized the utility of an “anthropology of public policy” (Wedel et al. 2005) framework as a lens to apply to my own examination of collaborative relationships, projects, and initiatives for sustainable coastal resource management and tourism development on the peninsula. In particular, a “study through” approach (Wedel et al. 2005:39-40) within an “anthropology of public policy” framework (Haenn and Casagrande 2007; Shore and Wright 1997; Shore et al. 2011) often is used to trace the source of policies and their outcomes among people and organizations to illuminate power dynamics and distribution of resources between people as well as the roles and strategies actors undertake to navigate policy. In this way, an “anthropology of public policy” attempts to examine and deconstruct the process of policy-making and its political, social, and economic consequences by recognizing that policy itself is a cultural category and a social construction (Haenn and Casagrande 2007:101; Wedel et al. 2005). Applying this framework, my thesis research examines the roles that various stakeholders have in sustainable tourism development and coastal fisheries management, as well as the policies and initiatives guiding coastal management and conceptions and practices of sustainable coastal development.

To illuminate the context of coastal resource management and tourism development on the Placencia Peninsula, I first reviewed relevant natural resource management, fisheries, and tourism development literature through Internet searches using online library databases. I then surveyed international, national, and local policy documents, reports, Belizean online forums, and newspapers to identify key laws, regulations, initiatives, actors, and discourses at the forefront of coastal resource management and tourism development processes in Belize, specifically for reef and estuary environments surrounding the Placencia Peninsula. In particular, I examined the policies and discourses outlined in national fisheries regulations (like the Belize Fisheries Act (Belize Fisheries Department 2009)), and recent coastal management and tourism sustainability plans like the draft Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (Clarke et al. 2013), the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a, b), and the Peninsula 2020 Vision (Peninsula 2020 Initiative 2011). To understand the imaginaries of Placencia as a tourism destination and how local conceptions of fishing and heritage
overlap or differ from these narratives, I explored the discourses used to characterize Placencia in various tourism marketing media and national tourism and cultural policies. Specifically, I examined tourism industry depictions of Placencia in the Belize Tourism Industry Association’s magazine *Destination Belize*, the Belize Tourism Board website (www.travelbelize.org) (BTB 2014), guidebooks like *The Rough Guides: Belize* (Eltringham 2007), and local media like the *Placencia Breeze* newspaper, among others. I also examined conceptions of Placencia’s heritage and prospects for cultural tourism articulated as an approach to sustainable tourism development in recent national policy documents such as Belize’s National Culture Policy (NICH 2014) and the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a, b) as well as in local plans such as the Peninsula 2020 Vision (Peninsula 2020 Initiative 2011). Information gathered from this survey of tourism media and sustainable coastal resource development policies and initiatives was compared with the conceptions of residents, non-resident workers, and tourists about Placencia’s heritage and cultural tourism development in the future to understand how these ideas fit into broader visions of sustainable tourism development for the peninsula. Qualitative information about resident conceptions of fishing as heritage and collaborations for local sustainable coastal resource management and tourism development, especially among fishers, NGO representatives, and tour guides was collected through a multi-method ethnographic approach over three summer field seasons spanning 5-9 weeks each between 2013 – 2015. In addition, qualitative and quantitative data about the imaginaries of culture, heritage, and tourism on the Placencia Peninsula among tourists, workers residing off of the peninsula, and residents were elicited through informal discussions, participant-observation, and digital surveys using the KoBo application for smartphones (see Anokwa 2011; Cairns 2014) over the course of the fieldwork. In the following discussion, I describe the multi-method ethnographic component of my thesis research methodology in greater detail within the framework of the overarching USF social science research project on the Placencia Peninsula – divided into sections on data collection and sampling procedures and data analysis.
4.3 Data Collection and Sampling Procedures

My ethnographic research on the peninsula primarily drew upon examinations and analyses of the data elicited through semi-structured and oral history interviews, targeted digital surveys, participant-observation, and community-informed mapping activities conducted over three summer field seasons in 2013, 2014, and 2015 in addition to a review of relevant literature and a survey of key policies and stakeholders involved in coastal resource management in Belize. The social science research team under the NSF PIRE grant initially drafted data collection protocols in line with project research objectives and questions exploring household perceptions and practices and institutional approaches and responses for water-energy, wastewater, and tourism development on the peninsula with particular attention to perceived and physical impacts on local livelihoods and coastal and community health. Before the initial 5-week Pilot season of research between late May to early June, we designed a semi-structured interview guide, a digital survey using the KoBo application and toolbox for smartphones (see Anokwa 2011; Cairns 2014), and a participatory mapping interview guide in addition to informed consent scripts, recruitment strategies, and data maintenance, analysis, confidentiality, and privacy procedures to navigate the IRB process.

After drafting research protocols, many of which were iterative in design and content, and obtaining permission to conduct research by the USF IRB (Permit No. 00012766) and a permit from the National Institute of Culture and History (NICH), Institute for Social and Cultural Research (ISCR), we sought out permission to conduct research from the chairpersons and Village Councils of Placencia and Seine Bight communities on the peninsula. These initial interactions with community leaders helped us develop rapport and expanding our network of connections among local stakeholders, especially local NGO contacts on the peninsula. Through these contacts, using a referral sampling design, we conducted in-depth (half hour to two hour) semi-structured interviews with key informants (n = 21) in the local and national government, environmental NGO, utility, tourism, and fishing sectors to better understand coastal development decision-making processes and multi-scale policy formation for tourism, water, energy, and coastal resource management as well as perceptions of impacts to coastal health and local
livelihoods. Drawing on information and key issues elicited from participant-observation, semi-structured and informal interviews (LeCompte and Schensul 2010), and digital surveys during the 2013 Pilot season, we revised and “scaled up” the design and content of subsequent data collections protocols, especially surveys using the KoBo application for smartphones. In the 2014 and 2015 field seasons, the research team expanded the data collection protocols to include oral history interviews (LeCompte and Schensul 2010) with village leaders and elders in the communities (n = 15) as a means of situating knowledge about water use, tourism, heritage, coastal health, and wastewater in a local ethnohistoric context.

Furthermore, we convened two focus groups (with a convenience sample of 4-10 people for each focus group) during the summer 2014 field season representing different stakeholder sectors including tour guides and general peninsula residents to better understand key concerns, experiences, and perceptions about tourism development, coastal health and wellbeing, and water, wastewater, and sanitation (management) among these groups. Nine residents from the village of Seine Bight participated in our first focus group held in late June 2014, while four tour guides in Placencia participated in our second focus group, convened later that summer in July. We also extended the geographical coverage of our fieldwork from Placencia and Seine Bight villages up to the Maya Beach and Riversdale communities on the Placencia Peninsula (see Figure 1). Within the context of this mixed-methods ethnographic approach, I identify and briefly discuss the specific data collection and sampling procedures I used to inform my examination of the main research questions addressed in this thesis.

To examine the strategies, collaborations, and knowledge fishermen use to promote their livelihoods in Placencia, and how local conceptions of fishing as heritage fit into wider visions of sustainable development on the peninsula, my research primarily draws on qualitative analyses of several audio-recorded semi-structured interviews (n = 14) and oral history interviews (n = 5) (Bernard 2006) with key informants and community elders (over 55 years old) conducted during the 2013-2015 field seasons. These semi-structured and oral history interviews were conducted with environmental NGO and fishing cooperative representatives (n = 4), NGO education and outreach personnel and program officers (n = 3), local government representatives (n = 2), local tour guides and tourism consultants (n = 2),
tourism lodging owners (n = 2), local fishermen (n = 4), and other Placencia-born residents (n = 2), with several participants working in multiple economic sectors / occupations (see appendix 5 for the semi-structured oral history interview guide). Key stakeholders over 18 years old and elder community members (over 55 years old) were generally recruited to participate in the semi-structured interviews and oral history interviews, respectively, through referral by other research participants. Semi-structured interviews generally lasted between a half hour and two hours, while oral history interviews ranged from 45 minutes to two and a half hours. Each of these interview types were mostly audio recorded with consent of the interviewee and included multiple questions organized around the themes of coastal health and water uses, tourism development and sustainability, and local history and heritage.

My investigation of fisher livelihood strategies, fisheries policies, coastal resource management stakeholders, and local conceptions of sustainable development also draws, in part, from field notes that summarize participant-observation activities (LeCompte and Schensul 2010). Through extensive participant-observation, I carried out numerous informal interviews spanning the topics of coastal resource use and management, coastal health, tourism development, and local history / heritage on the peninsula among fishermen, dive and tour guides, and Southern Environmental Association (SEA) NGO rangers. I recorded jottings and compiled field notes (Bernard 2006) from personal observations and took photographs while participating in snorkel outings on the reef, visiting various cayes, drinking and eating at local restaurants, and attending major events on the peninsula. Much of the information presented in this thesis was collected during the annual Lobsterfest celebrations during the third or fourth weekend in June (which celebrates the opening of Lobster season), during which I volunteered as a lionfish sorter for the annual Lionfish Slayers competition in the summers of 2013, 2014, and 2015. Personal field notes also contain additional information from the extended digital surveys and informal interviews with elder residents, fishermen, tour guides, and former and current NGO personnel.

To address the research question of how local conceptions of fishing as heritage overlap with or diverge from tourism imaginaries of Placencia’s culture and heritage, my thesis research also draws on a stratified sample of 134 digital surveys using the KoBo application and open-source tool for smartphones
Between the 2013 and 2014 field seasons, residents, workers residing off or temporarily on (< 6 months) the Placencia Peninsula, and Belizean and foreign tourists over 18 years of age, representing diverse ethnic identities, were recruited to participate in a 10-20 minute digital survey using this application in various communities and development areas around the peninsula, especially around public venues and households in Placencia and Seine Bight villages, on boats, and a few cayes off the coastline. Specifically, between the 2013-2014 field seasons, this digital KoBo survey targeted self-identified Placencia Peninsula residents (n = 80; 47 male, 33 female, ages 18 – 67 (average age: 37)), workers residing off or temporarily on (< 6 months) the Placencia Peninsula (n = 15; 7 male, 8 female, ages 18 – 65 (average age: 36)), and Belizean and foreign tourists (n = 39; 14 male, 25 female, ages 18 – 72 (average age: 37)) (see Table 1 for KoBo survey respondent demographics).

After receiving informed verbal consent to participate, survey administrators (composed of a team of USF social science researchers – faculty and graduate students working under the PIRE Belize research project) verbally guided respondents through an array of cascading questions in the digital surveys (based on whether the respondent identified as a community resident, tourist, or a Belizean living off the peninsula). These questions were organized around particular themes, including coastal health, tourism development, water and wastewater management, and local culture and heritage on the peninsula, among others, to collect data to address broader research questions conceived for the PIRE social science team ethnographic study on the Placencia Peninsula. The KoBo surveys also included a brief demographic and socioeconomic information collection section to gather information about how demographic backgrounds and identities (gender, age, ethnicity, place of residence, nationality, education, income, etc.) relate to resident, worker, and visitor responses and perceptions. The surveys employed Likert-type scale, short phrase free response, and single-select and multi-select questions to gauge resident perceptions about the aforementioned themes, among other topics (Anokwa 2011; see appendix 6 for a full list of KoBo survey questions considered for my analysis within the scope of the PIRE Belize project).
Table 1. KoBo survey respondent demographics for the 2013 and 2014 field seasons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Information Type</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sub-category</th>
<th>2013 Pilot Season</th>
<th>2014 “Scaling Up” Season</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% per Type</th>
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<th>2014 “Scaling Up” Season</th>
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To inform my analysis of how residents, commuting workers, and tourists conceive of culture and heritage in Placencia, I explore the results of three questions from the survey in particular:

1. A short phrase free response question that asks what respondents consider the most important thing or place associated with local culture.

2. A multi-select question asking respondents to identify heritage on the peninsula from a list of fifteen items spanning national tourism industry conceptions of heritage as well as prominent local events, holidays, and activities that were read aloud to them.

3. A Likert-type scale question asking, in general, how residents think heritage is maintained on the peninsula on a scale of 1-5, with one being “not well at all,” and five equal to “very well.”

My focus in analyzing the responses from these questions is to compare conceptions of fishing as heritage among diverse residents of Placencia village and between local residents, other peninsula residents, commuting workers, and tourists to the peninsula. To gauge residents’, workers’, and visitors’ interest in a possible local culture and history museum on the peninsula (which might suggest a potential market for cultural tourism), a Likert-type scale question was added to the 2014 KoBo survey asking “how would you rate your interest in seeing a local culture / history museum be developed here?” (using a scale of one to five, with one being “not at all interested,” and five corresponding to “very interested”).

Finally, in an effort to illuminate how local environmental knowledge, experience, and heritage inform fisher livelihood strategies and conceptions of sustainable development through place-based elicitation, I was led by a convenience sample of four groups of residents – a local tour guide couple, SEA NGO rangers, a Seine Bight fisherman, and a Placencia father-son fishing duo - to document coastal resource management areas, seaweed farms, and coastal environmental knowledge and heritage using a method called GPS-assisted participatory mapping (Chambers, R. 2006; Chapin et al. 2005). Participation was voluntary and compensation for gas expenses to travel by boat to various locations was provided to mapping participants. Participatory mapping developed out of the participatory rural appraisal (PRA) approach and geography land-use studies as a useful tool in documenting the collective social memory of
land use among a group for political ends (Chapin et al. 2005:610, 613). Here, it is used to map out coastal places of cultural, historical, and environmental significance to local mapping collaborators to create a cultural and coastal environmental resource map, and elicit cultural and historical information about these places (Chambers, R. 2006; Duvail et al. 2006).

Through the participatory mapping activities, resident mapping participants led me to various areas surrounding the peninsula including fishing grounds in the Placencia Lagoon and various cayes and Marine Protected Areas on the Belize Barrier Reef such as Laughing Bird Caye National Park. As part of these GPS-assisted participatory mapping activities, after receiving informed consent, informal interviews with the mapping collaborators were carried out, posing a handful of questions about each location/resource being mapped and taking down jottings, while taking Global Positioning Systems (GPS) waypoints of the location on a handheld Garmin Forerunner navigational GPS and digitally documenting features and activities with photographs. Collectively, informal interview questions sought to elicit information about what the feature is (e.g., a caye), its local name, characteristics of the feature, its historical, environmental, and use significance, cultural aspects of the feature, its environmental or social setting, its condition, and whether or not it is conceived as a part of local community heritage (see appendix 7 for the “Participatory Heritage Mapping GPS Data Collection Template, Informal Interview Guide, and Demographic Information Collection Form”). Two questions were also posed to the mapping participant at the end of the informal interview for the participatory mapping activity to provide insight into local interpretations and meanings of concepts central to this study, namely: 1) What does the word “heritage” mean to you? and 2) What does the word “sustainability” mean to you?

Basic demographic and socioeconomic information including gender, age, ethnicity/ethnic group, nationality, level of formal education completed, residency and employment status, employment sector, and personal income also were collected for each participatory mapping participant to gather information about how participant backgrounds and statuses relate to wider community resident identities in shaping conceptions of sustainability and heritage associated with fishing.
In the following review, I overview the method of participatory mapping in greater depth to explore its genealogy, ethical challenges, and applied advantages such as place-based elicitation of environmental and cultural knowledge and heritage to complement conventional ethnographic research methods such as semi-structured and oral history interviews, participant-observation, and surveys.

4.3.1 Participatory Mapping

Participatory research approaches emerged during anthropology’s critical turn in the late 1970s and 1980s in reflection of the colonial and positivist history of the discipline, power imbalances between researchers and research subjects, and the national liberation, social and civil rights movements during 1950s and 60s, especially in the United States and Latin America (Nabudere 2008:63). Building upon a framework of “action anthropology” that seeks to balance academic research goals and practical approaches to solving problems within a community through an “experimental methodology” (Tax 1952:103-104), these methodologies aim to empower historically marginalized communities through democratizing research designs and knowledge production to address locally-relevant problems defined by community members themselves (Freire 1982; Nabudere 2008). Practitioners of participatory approaches to field research questioned the “objective” neutrality of the anthropologists who interpreted and generated theory about cultural phenomena among marginalized groups, arguing that treating human subjects as “objects” of study serves as an extension of colonial exploitation (Atalay 2012; Nabudere 2008). Rather, they emphasize an integration of theory and practice in which the applications of research directly benefit indigenous, local, and descendant communities (Atalay 2012) through production of communal “emancipatory” knowledge (Nabudere 2008:70).

Key among the participatory methodologies developed during the 1970s was participatory action research (PAR), pioneered by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1982) with his work on East African oral history, which deconstructed the “participant / observer” divide and enabled an educational dialogue between researchers and participants throughout the research process for collaborative production and dissemination of knowledge (Nabudere 2008:67, 70). A similar participatory methodology to achieve
social ends arose in the 1970s in the context of economic development and extractive industries stripping the lands of local and indigenous communities in Latin America (Pain and Francis 2003) that was initially used as a qualitative method for studying rural lands and resources (Nabudere 2008:64). Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) thus became a visual methodology that employed mapping, ethnographic observation, and interviews with community members (Pain and Francis 2003:47) to identify local lands and resources of local groups to achieve political ends. Although participatory action research and participatory rural appraisal seek to help communities achieve political ends, critics have questioned the level of participation and empowerment that these methodologies afford local people in the research design (Pain and Francis 2003:47) and their degree of compatibility with traditional systems of knowledge (Atalay 2012).

Participatory mapping developed out of the participatory rural appraisal (PRA) approach and geography land-use studies as a useful tool in documenting the collective social memory of land use among a group for political ends (Chapin et al. 2005:610, 613). Initially, maps of indigenous and local lands were made by the foreign researchers, which called into question the integrity of the participatory process and knowledge representation (Chambers, R. 2006:3). Later participatory mapping projects enlisted community members and local surveyors to sketch out their own local resources and lands using their own culturally appropriate symbols to create cultural and natural resource maps and land-use maps of local landscapes (Chambers, R. 2006:3; Denniston 2005:2). With the adoption of computer-based spatial data organization, analysis, and visualization technologies like geographic information systems (GIS) as tools for participatory mapping research, a number of concerns were raised about ownership and transparency of spatial data, and representations of local knowledge (Chapin et al. 2005; Chambers, R. 2006). Concerns range from training research collaborators to use the technologies, the long amounts of time required for mapping, the use of unfamiliar technology among local people, and the marginalization of some people in the research process, to the need for ground-truthing of the spatial data (Chambers, R. 2006:6). Critics also question the level of participation and empowerment that GIS affords local people and its degree of compatibility with traditional knowledge (Dunn et al. 1997; Abbot et al. 1998; Chapin et
al. 2005:628). These concerns are echoed by critiques of participatory methodologies in general that contend whether they truly take a bottom-up approach to research design (Pain and Francis 2003:47) and if local stakeholders actually have control over the data coding and analysis, or even comprehend the data produced from a particular project (Chambers, R. 2006).

In Belize, participatory maps and indigenous atlases of current and historical land use have been produced and used to engage the legal process for land and resource rights (Wainwright and Bryan 2009; Wilk 1999:371). In similar ways, cultural heritage maps may be created to lend legal and tourism marketing legitimacy to local cultural tourism initiatives and projects. If the production and ownership of the information and products from such maps remains with community stakeholders, spatial formats of community heritage documentation may facilitate productive discussions about the meanings, construction, and marketing of local heritage between multiple stakeholders from government culture and history institutions and national tourism industry organization representatives to local community residents. In this way, community-generated heritage map documentation may facilitate more accountable and equitable power relations in cultural heritage identification and management.

4.4 Data Analysis Methods

To examine the roles, relationships, aims, and initiatives between stakeholders in fisheries management and development, the current and proposed strategies used by fishermen in and out of the Placencia Producers Fishing Cooperative to navigate fisheries policies and regulations, and various visions for sustainable tourism development, a mixed-methods approach integrating quantitative and qualitative analyses was pursued. This mixed-methods approach is informed by grounded theory through exploratory, content, and thematic data analyses (LeCompte and Schensul 2010) of the semi-structured key stakeholder and oral history interviews, field notes, and KoBo survey data compiled during and after the five-nine week 2013, 2014, and 2015 summer field seasons. Specifically, interviews were transcribed and field notes and transcriptions were subsequently coded using the search tool in Microsoft Office Word to search for key words, and comments were added to code and organize relevant observations,
information, and quotations into memos around the themes of tourism and fisheries development, sustainability, fishing practices and perceptions, environmental conservation, and coastal culture and heritage to support the interpretations presented in this thesis. Proportions of resident responses to KoBo survey questions concerning their perceptions about the health of the coastal environment, places and elements of culture and heritage on / surrounding the peninsula, and the management / maintenance of coastal heritage were tabulated using cross-tabs and exploratory statistical analyses in IBM SPSS 22 statistical software (Greasley 2008). Charts comparing resident, tourist, and commuting worker responses to various questions concerning conceptions of heritage and environmental management categorized by demographic and socioeconomic characteristics also were generated using the “Chart Builder” tool with SPSS software.

To situate knowledge about tourism, environmental and cultural heritage, coastal health in a local ethnohistoric and spatial context on the peninsula, information from the oral history interviews and informal interviews with GPS-assisted participatory mapping collaborators were compiled and analyzed for common themes about environmental and historical knowledge associated with fishing as well as to identify community recognized heritage places and events associated with fishing culture. In particular, semi-structured oral history interviews and informal interviews with participatory mapping participants were coded and memoed using Microsoft Word to ascertain common themes relating to heritage construction and management, sustainability, and cultural tourism among Placencia community residents. Furthermore, I considered joining cultural and environmental information from the informal participatory mapping interviews and oral history interviews with GPS point feature data marking the general location of heritage places and photographs of those places to create a future interactive fishing heritage map using Google Earth® GIS software. This interactive map would not be entirely representative of community
heritage associated with fishing, and thus would be circulated to research participants and local fishers for their review and assessment of accuracy and representation before wider circulation / use, if at all.6

Before examining various strategies, alliances, and alternative livelihoods aimed at sustainable coastal resource management between the Placencia Producers Co-op and SEA, among other organizations in Placencia, I first consider the network of various non-governmental and governmental stakeholders and policies currently responsible for overseeing, coordinating, and monitoring coastal tourism development, as well as marine / estuary resources such as fisheries and Marine Protected Areas.

6 For the purposes of this thesis, I decided not to make a map of Placencia fishing heritage places informed by GPS-assisted participatory mapping accessible due to concerns by some “local” residents that some expatriates were appropriating traditional fishing grounds for their own use after local fishermen pointed them out by using GPS units to re-navigate to the locations (Interview June 15, 2015). Since some white expatriates who take part in this “dishonest” fishing practice may be more likely to access Google Earth than “local” residents, a map could be created in the future to share with select individuals that participated in the study for their review and assessment of representation of communal fishing heritage before wider circulation / use, if at all.
CHAPTER V: BELIZE COASTAL POLICY AND STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

This chapter surveys the cross-section of tourism development, fisheries, and coastal resource management policies and stakeholders in Belize to chart the complex management schemes, plans, and initiatives for sustainable coastal development and conservation.

5.1 Tourism and Sustainable Development in Belize

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, in Fiscal Year 2011, Belize’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from tourism totaled between 18-25 percent, and accounted for nearly 28 percent of all formal employment. By 2014, travel and tourism made up over 27 percent of Belize’s total investment as the nation’s primary economic sector, with investment in the sector expected to grow to nearly 35 percent of the country’s total investment by 2025 (World Travel and Tourism Council).

Moreover, in fiscal year 2014, the total contribution of travel and tourism accounted for over 39 percent of Gross Domestic Product (BZ $1,311.8 million; and 15 percent of GDP directly), and supported over 35 percent (48,000) of the total jobs across Belize’s workforce (World Travel & Tourism Council 2015).

Discourse surrounding “sustainability” has been central to nascent national tourism development and environmental policy plans in Belize, emphasizing the expansion of ecotourism and other markets as avenues to raise foreign-exchange capital for economic development across the country, to pay off national debt (Medina 2005, 2012:233-234, 2015), and meet MDGs (Government of Belize and UNDP 2013). Sustainable management and conservation of the “natural environment” has become a cornerstone of the ecotourism agenda, following a growing ecotourism market in the U.S. and elsewhere during the late 1980s and 1990s (by as much as 25-30 percent annually) associated with the proliferation of the Environmentalist movement. This ecotourism agenda has contributed to state branding of Belize as “Naturally Yours” (McMinn and Cater 1998:676-677) and later “Mother Nature’s Best Kept Secret” in its
international marketing efforts (Medina 2010:259, 2012:234). It has also developed in tandem with environmental policy – like coastal management and fisheries regulations from the Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development – and encouraged the delineation of Marine Protected Areas to promote conservation of coastal and marine resources while meeting the market demands of tourists and foreign investors (Cater 1993:85-87; Cho 2005:933-934; Lindberg et al. 1996; Medina 2012, 2015).

Ecotourism initially was adopted as a platform for sustainable development by the government of Belize after mounting pressure from national conservation NGOs like the Belize Audubon Society and its transnational partners - the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) – to protect and conserve species biodiversity in Belize’s diverse ecosystems (Medina 2012:230-231). By emphasizing the value of ecotourism to both state economic development goals and for environmental preservation, these conservation NGOs lobbied for the delineation and designation of ecological parks and protected areas in the tropical rainforests, the barrier reef system, and coastal estuaries and wetlands in Belize (Medina 2012:230-231). In this way, relationships between various government departments of Belize and local and (trans)national environmental NGOs and donor institutions were established to manage and monitor these newly designated terrestrial and marine protected areas in sustainable ways to conserve biodiversity and raise economic revenue through tourism (Medina 2010, 2012, 2015). Medina (2015:280-281) argues that this form of environmental governance, integrating “the devolution of state responsibilities for managing the environment and the commodification of nature,” thus serves to perpetuate Neoliberal rationalities as a kind of market-based governance through the avenue of ecotourism.

Drawing on a case study in which the government of Belize conferred management of Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary to the Belize Audubon Society NGO and sought to evict Mopan Maya from the sanctuary to promote the area as a “protected tropical nature” tourist attraction, Medina (2015) demonstrates how ecotourism market strategies became their own mechanism for managing the protected area. Notably, local Maya community members in Maya Centre conceded hunting and other access rights to the Wildlife Sanctuary in order to collaborate with the Belize Audubon Society in the
commodification of the sanctuary for global ecotourist consumption through selling crafts and engaging in tourism services, thereby participating in protected area governance through Neoliberal market exchange (Medina 2015:280-281).

As this case demonstrates, states and NGOs seek to conserve biodiversity and generate tourism capital through the creation of protected areas, management systems commonly have precluded traditional livelihood activities like hunting and fishing (Salafsky and Wollenberg 2000:1422; West et al. 2006). Nick Salafsky and Eva Wollenberg (2000:1422) comment that “the key feature of the protected area strategy is that (the) local livelihood is assumed to conflict with conservation,” and thereby falls into the “no human consumption” category. In this way, the delineation of protected areas to stimulate national tourism development goals may negatively impact the viability of traditional livelihoods.

Furthermore, Erlet Cater notes that state ecotourism development efforts often fail to meet criteria of “true sustainability” (1993:85-86) by marginalizing the participation of local people in development decisions in emerging tourism loci while prioritizing the interests of foreign stakeholders.

Alongside ecotourism, the Government of Belize is exploring the economic prospects of mass tourism (Boles et al. 2011:18, 37; Ramos 2013), which has encouraged collaborations with foreign development organizations like the Inter-American Development Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on major infrastructural improvement initiatives in emerging tourism destinations across the country (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a, b). These development projects – taking the form of paved roads, municipal piers (Boles et al. 2011:32), sewage collection and treatment systems, and tourist welcome centers, among others - cater to the demands of an increasing global tourism market (Cater 1993; Clayton 2002:64). However, in practice, tapping into a global tourism market often has taken precedence over the specifics of national policies like the Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a, b) and the draft Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (Clarke et al. 2013) that seek to engage “sustainable” relationships between local, national, and foreign development goals and the use and conservation of the environment in developing cultural and nature-based tourist destinations through regional zoning plans.
5.2 Coastal Tourism Development Policies and Stakeholders in Belize

Recent national tourism development efforts in Belize have drawn on strategic policies to guide sustainable tourism expansion, packaging environmental resources, activities, and culture throughout the country into discrete commodities and heritage assets for regional tourism product and program management and destination marketing. Regional zoning plans for tourism development are laid out in National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan for Belize 2030 (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a, b), which was drafted by the Spanish consulting company EuroPraxis in collaboration with the Belize Tourism Board (BTB). The BTB - a statutory body of the Ministry of Tourism, Civil Aviation, and Culture established in 1989 - is the country’s national tourism industry organization that seeks to market, develop, and execute tourism programs between the Government of Belize and the private (economic) sector. The BTB is composed of the Belize Trade and Investment Development Service (Beltraide), which has various branches, as well as the Belize Hotel Association (BHA) and the Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA), each with their respective chapters that represent different industries within the private tourism sector (Belize Tourism Board 2013a). In the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan, the BTB conceives of a vision statement, drawing heavily from the concept of sustainability and eco- and heritage tourism principles for the direction of the Belize tourism industry by 2030: “Belize is an exclusive multicultural sustainable destination in the Central American Caribbean. It is a destination where the authenticity and friendliness of its people, coupled with the uniqueness of an exotic natural environment can be actively experienced within a conserved world” (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a:7).

Four strategic goals are outlined to achieve this 2030 vision, namely to support leadership roles for Belizean stakeholders in tourism development, increase and broaden the research of socio-economic benefits produced by tourism, ensure that tourism development is “sustainable” and planned, and to promote Belize’s status as a world-class tourist destination by being competitive on a global market (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a:10). By focusing on economic competitiveness, the needs of diverse Belizean stakeholders over the long and short term, and considering environmental conservation, these goals can be conceived as manifestations of criteria for sustainability in tourism development (Cater
As part the socio-economic benefit optimization goal, the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (NSTMP) conceives of six primary tourism experiences to market to potential visitors to and within Belize (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a:10-11). These tourism products include cultural tourism (including living culture and heritage), sun, sand, and beach tourism, cruise tourism (pocket and conventional mass tourism), leisure and entertainment (luxury, shopping, etc.), nautical tourism (private and leased vessels), and nature-based tourism (adventure tourism and ecotourism) to cater to different types of tourists in distinct regions in Belize (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a:10-11).

As part of national tourism product marketing, the BTB highlights the value of four primary cultural and natural “tourism assets” that are unique to Belize; including the ancient Maya site of Caracol, the Blue Hole Marine Reserve, the Chiquibul Cave System, and notably the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System World Heritage site (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a:4-5). By marketing these tourism assets and a variety of tourism products, the government of Belize is pursuing a diverse tourism marketing strategy that goes beyond the ecotourism platform including alternative forms of tourism like heritage tourism at Maya sites and embracing conventional mass tourism and commercialization in development plans for particular areas. However, the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan calls for containing and consolidating tourism development on the Placencia Peninsula - as a low density destination featuring beach resorts, a diversity of coastal and marine species (including manatees and whale sharks), and diving and snorkeling along the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System World Heritage site - to limit potentially adverse ecological and social impacts of development (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a:8). The policy furthermore suggests that cruise tourism should not be developed on the peninsula itself, but rather the peninsula should promote sun and beach and nautical tourism as its primary tourism products, with ecotourism and adventure tourism and possibly pocket tourism as secondary tourism products to continue its marketing image as a world-class “pristine” beach and coastal nature-based destination (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011b:42, 45-46). However, with the recent acquisition of a conventional cruise ship port on Harvest Caye south of peninsula by Norwegian Cruise Lines, governmental stakeholders are considering the prospects of mass tourism around the peninsula (Ramos 2013), demonstrating how - in practice -
national coastal tourism development policy is not necessarily a binding framework for coastal tourism management decisions.

On the Placencia Peninsula, tensions between eco- and overnight tourism plans and mass tourism development goals (Boles et al. 2011:14, 18) have stirred apprehension among local coastal resource management institutions, residents, and environmental NGOs about the environmental and socio-economic impacts of mass tourism, especially with the arrival of cruise ships to nearby Harvest Caye (Ramos 2013) (now likely by early 2017). Despite proposing ecotourism and sun and beach tourism as two cornerstones of “sustainable tourism development” in regional zoning plans for the Placencia Peninsula and along the Belize Barrier Reef (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011b: 45-46; 53-56), marginal enforcement of environmental regulations and waning governmental commitment to small-scale overnight and “nature-based” tourism development along the southeastern coastline is encouraging the proliferation of large-scale development projects (Boles et al. 2011:18, 36). Researchers and residents attribute inadequate monitoring and enforcement accompanying the expansion of largely foreign tourism development, among other factors, in the extensive destruction of coastal mangroves, dredging and filling of seafloor, and local beach erosion and sedimentation in addition to the rising property values, land shortages, increased crime, and local business losses occurring on the Placencia Peninsula (Boles et al. 2011; Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a:17-18, 28). Various tourism development practices also have stressed near-shore and off-shore fisheries with increased tourism traffic and pollution (Boles et al. 2011:33, 35). Additionally, government oversight of tourism development along coastal areas of Belize has, in select cases, resulted in limited accountability to and communication with local resource management institutions and organizations (Boles et al. 2011:38; Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:28-30), including fisheries (King 1997:462, 464-465).
5.3 The Fishing Industry in Belize

The central segment of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef Reserve System serves as a major source of economic revenue in Belize, contributing about 30 percent of Belize’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through commercial fisheries products, aquaculture, cruise and ecotourism, and investments in coastal developments (Cho 2005:933). Capture fisheries, in particular, account for roughly 2-3 percent of GDP, employing thousands of fishers and industry workers country-wide (50in10 2015; Gillett and Myvette 2008:14-15; Gongora 2012:3, 5; Ysaguirre 2015). This industry has promoted significant foreign income generation through sale of key marine products like Caribbean spiny lobster, Queen conch, various fin-fish species (groupers, snappers, king mackerel, great barracuda, and jacks), and wild sea-shrimp to Caribbean, US markets, and Central American markets. Other species like grunts, mullets, snooks, stone crab, and blue crab contribute to small-scale domestic fisheries (Gillett and Myvette 2008:14-15).

Fishermen currently use a variety of traditional and mechanical methods to catch these species including hand-line fishing, lobster and fish traps, free diving, gillnetting, hook sticks (gaffs), lobster shades (casitas), spearguns, and trolling (Gillett and Myvette 2008:15). To reach fishing grounds, canoes are still used by many traditional fishers, but fishermen generally use small fiberglass or wooden pangas and skiffs with outboard engines, sailboats, or larger commercial vessels (Gillett and Myvette 2008:15). Coastal fishermen generally fish in shallow waters inside the 220 km-long Belize Barrier Reef System and in coastal mangrove forests and various estuary ecosystems, which comprise segments of six fishing zones with distinct habitats delineated by the Belize Fisheries Department that collectively cover an area of approximately 4,700 km² (Gillett and Myvette 2008:17). To fish in one of the six fishing zones, Belizean residents can apply for annual artisanal or fishing vessel licenses from the Belize Fisheries Department (Belize Fisheries Department 2014; Gillett and Myvette 2008:20-21).

Although many fishermen produce seafood on a subsistence or local distribution level, fishing cooperatives are the major institutions of marine seafood production for foreign export in Belize, collectively exporting more than 90 percent of lobster and conch products and coordinating a majority of the country’s licensed fishers (FAO 2005; Gillett and Myvette 2008:15). While there has been a general
increase in the number of licensed fishermen over the past twenty-five years (to more than 4,500 currently (Ysaguirre 2015)), several of the major commercial fisheries have waned (Gillett and Myvette 2008:14-15, 17). Although conch harvesting has remained relatively stable, production and stock sizes of lobster and various fin-fishes have decreased steadily, notably for individual yields, even with increased fishing effort (# of days fished) (Gongora 2012:4; Gillett and Myvette 2008:14-15; Huitric 2005). Marine shrimp production peaked from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s (Gillett and Myvette 2008:15, 17, 79), followed by a sharp decline into the 2000s, and now has been halted due to a complete national ban on bottom trawling (Ramos 2011). All forms of bottom trawling for shrimp and other species were banned in 2011 following governmental recognition of the devastating impacts the fishing practice had on coral reef ecosystems, marine tourism, and fisheries after years of lobbying by OCEANA and other environmental organizations (Ramos 2011). Belizean residents recall devastating effects of the marine shrimp trawling industry on fisheries, diminishing juvenile fish and crab populations, among others, and destroying corals (Interviews June 21, 2013; July 11, 2014; and July 12, 2014). Today, shrimp trawling has been supplanted by a prominent shrimp farming industry that took root in Belize around the early 1980s (Gillett and Myvette 2008:22).

5.4 Regional Framework for Sustainable Management of Coastal Resources

Changes in fisheries and coastal ecosystems, driven by a number of factors including overfishing and climate change, have led to a number of coastal resource management sustainability initiatives and regulations by the government of Belize as part of a wider network of Caribbean and Central American countries. Belize is a member state of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) – a regional body of fifteen nations and dependencies in the Caribbean working to promote economic development, integration, and the sustainability of the region through common laws, initiatives, partnerships, and a court of justice (Belize Fisheries Department 2015). Through its membership in CARICOM and the Caribbean Forum of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States (CARIFORUM), Belize participates in the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism (CRFM), which aims to promote sustainable regional
management of fisheries and other aquatic resources for the social and economic benefit of Caribbean populations (Belize Fisheries Department 2015; FAO 2005). Under the CRFM and its various sub-projects, with support from the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) / Global Environment Facility (GEF), Belize has built institutional capacity for fisheries management, improved stakeholder coordination, awareness, and technical support, and formed new plans and policies targeting sustainable conservation, use, and oversight of fisheries resources on regional and national scales (Belize Fisheries Department 2015). These sub-projects also support research on the development and the socio-economic dynamics of the industry and various management schemes in Belize (FAO 2005). Other than the CRFM, Belize participates in the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System (MBRS) project implemented by the World Bank, and funded by the UNDP / GEF and a regional body of Central American governments including Belize, Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras through the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD). Similar to the goals of the CRFM, this project - headquartered in Belize City - seeks to “enhance protection of the unique and vulnerable marine ecosystems comprising the MBRS, and to assist the countries of Mexico, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras to strengthen and coordinate regional policies, regulations, and institutional arrangements for the conservation and sustainable use of this global public good” (Belize Fisheries Department 2015). The program specifically promotes biodiversity conservation in the MBRS, training for staff in research on and monitoring of coral reef ecosystems, mangroves, sea grass, and fish as well as promotes training for fishers to transfer over to alternative livelihoods and fisheries. Other projects for fisheries management in Belize funded by foreign aid focus on data collection and monitoring of various human-environmental parameters in inland and coastal water bodies to assist with future regional sustainable fisheries and aquaculture management plans (Belize Fisheries Department 2015).
5.5 Conceptualizing Coastal Resource Management in Belize

Some policy analysts argue that coastal development oversight is partially attributed to complex, overlapping management structures for coastal and marine resources, and a lack of financial, technical, and legal resources needed to adequately monitor and protect coastal ecosystems and enforce environmental policy (Burris 2007:439; Cho 2005:939, 941). To assist with capacity to monitor and manage coastal and marine resources and enforce environmental regulations, especially in protected areas, many local and regional environmental NGOs have entered into co-management agreements with the Government of Belize (Burris 2007:439; Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:19; Pomeroy et al. 2003) – beginning with the Belize Audubon Society for Half Moon Caye Natural Monument in 1982 (Cho 2005:934-936, 938).

“Co-management” is generally used to describe shared authority and management responsibilities between non-government stakeholders and government, although the form and extent of this relationship varies (Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:18; Pomeroy et al. 2003:3-5). From various Caribbean case studies, Tara Goetze and Robert Pomeroy (2005:18-19) conceive of a scale with three categories representing relative allocation of authority and responsibilities in co-management between non-government stakeholders and government. These categories range from “consultative co-management” in which government makes most if not all the decisions for resource management to “collaborative co-management” involving shared decision-making and mutual action between various non-governmental stakeholders and the government, and finally “delegated co-management” in which government organizes various non-governmental stakeholders (often community-based organizations) to make management decisions concerning a pool of resources (Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:18-19). Governance over “common property” coastal resources in the Caribbean is increasingly moving toward community-based natural resource management schemes (Berkes 2006; Tompkins 2003) on the “delegated co-management” end of the coastal resource management spectrum. This shift from bureaucratic toward participatory governance responds to calls for greater accountability, transparency, ownership, access, and involvement of diverse community stakeholders in coastal resource management (Pomeroy et al. 2003; Tompkins 2003:ii, 1, 22).
particularly with recognition of the role of local environmental knowledge and community resource management approaches in promoting conservation and sustainable common resource provisioning and use through customary forms of access (Brosius et al. 1998:158-160). Community-based approaches also seek to address complex governance issues inherent in managing “common property” resources like fisheries (Berkes 2006), since, by definition, these resources are characterized as those “in which (i) exclusion of beneficiaries through physical and institutional means is especially costly, and (ii) exploitation by one user reduces resource availability for others” (Ostrom et al. 1999:278). Although global and regional flows of people, capital, and resources facilitate open access to “common property” resources, some scholars suggest that approaches to sustainably manage these resources should, in theory, limit access of outsiders and promote local social and economic incentives for community stakeholders to encourage the self-regulation of resources over the long-term (Berkes 2006:47).

In Belize, the formation of co-management schemes for protected environmental resources and parks between environmental NGOs, community-based organizations, and various governmental agencies (Cho 2005; Medina 2010, 2015) has effectively created “multi-layered management structures,” in which NGOs are conferred a bulk of responsibility for management, monitoring, and enforcement of environmental and tourism policies and regulations (Burris 2007:439, 442-444). To effectively monitor and manage environmental resources and ecosystems in these parks and protected areas and enforce emerging environmental policy regulations developed around the ecotourism platform, environmental NGOs in Belize sought to establish partnerships with international NGOs like the World Wildlife Fund and the Nature Conservancy to secure funding (Medina 2010:254; 2012:234-235). These international and transnational environmental conservation organizations provided grants to assist with developing initial infrastructure for ecotourism in these protected areas and parks, and to employ and train park and protected area personnel needed to manage and monitor these tracts of land and riparian, coastal, and marine areas in order to fill a void in finances to enforce environment laws and regulations on behalf of various departments of the government of Belize (Medina 2012:234-235).
However, this “delegated co-management” relationship, and the intricate network of policies, regulations, and interests of the various governmental departments involved in conserving and developing protected areas have sometimes generated “conflicts over jurisdiction” and placed burden on NGOs to provide the necessary resources to monitor, conserve, and enforce regulations within them (Burris 2007:439, 442-443; Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:29). For example, the Green Reef Environmental Institute, an environmental NGO situated on Ambergris Caye, co-manages Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve and National Park (established in 1996) with the Fisheries Department with involvement of the Forest Department, the Department of the Environment, the Land and Surveys Department, the Geology and Petroleum Department, and even the Ministry of Housing due to the various types of environmental resources, activities, and forms of property contained within the National Park (Burris 2007:440). These various departments often have conflicting interests and obligations, and thus jurisdiction over conserving and managing the lands, use, and resources in this park are muddled (Burris 2007:439-440). Notably, administrative and financial burdens associated with this complex co-management structure, reactive monitoring to illicit resource and development activities, deficiencies in available technical and financial resources for regulation, and sometimes competing interests between the governmental departments and the NGO tasked with managing the protected area has resulted in “chaotic monitoring and management” (Burris 2007:441-442). Furthermore, limited participatory decision-making, confusion over specifications of co-management, imbalanced benefits to and representation among stakeholders, unclear resource and property rights, deficiency of strong supporting legislation, small budgets, administrative transparency and accountability, and insufficient evaluation measures have been noted as issues with existing co-management arrangements in coastal areas (Berkes 2006; Burris 2007; Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:28-29; Pomeroy et al. 2003:21-25; Tompkins 2003:1, 22).

To overcome these challenges for monitoring and managing marine protected areas and coastal tourism and fisheries activities, environmental NGOs in Belize are developing innovative strategies and alliances. Many environmental NGOs – like the Southern Environmental Association (SEA) based in Placencia – have sought out support from international funding agencies such as the United Nations
Development Programme - European Union (UNDP-EU), and established partnerships with international and regional conservation NGOs as well as fisheries organizations to assist with these responsibilities.

5.6 Marine Protected Areas and Integrated Coastal Zone Management

To assist with implementing policies directed at regional sustainable coastal resource management, various governmental and non-governmental institutions and stakeholders have established a framework for integrated coastal zone management to address intersecting management challenges of tourism development, fisheries, and land-based activities along the Belizean coastline (Cho 2005). Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), in particular, have been used as tools for integrated coastal zone management, seeking to conserve marine resources while accommodating the interests of multiple stakeholders including ecotourists, tour guides, fishermen, environmental NGOs, and foreign investors (Cho 2005). Initially, the Marine Protected Areas program was established in the early 1980s to preserve and manage marine habitats in the Belize Barrier Reef like Half Moon Caye Natural Monument, generally with considerations for biodiversity conservation of particular species (Cho 2005:933). Since the late 1980s, the program evolved into an instrument for managing marine and coastal resources for multiple users after local communities lobbied to preserve various marine and coastal resources. As linkages between coastal development activities, land-use, and marine conservation became recognized, the MPA program began to employ a multi-sector approach to protect critical marine and coastal areas against environmental threats as well as to research and restore coral habitat and fisheries, and manage tourism and development activities (Cho 2005:933-934). In addition to eight Marine Reserves, the program manages a network of three Wildlife Sanctuaries, two Natural Monuments, and a National Park along the Belize Barrier Reef under an integrated coastal zone management framework (Cho 2005:936, 938; Figure 2). In 1996, UNESCO inscribed seven of these MPAs as the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System World Heritage site based on their collective “universal natural heritage” value representing exceptional examples of biological reef formations (Cho 2005:936). Oversight of this network of MPAs was informed by a National Protected Areas Policy and System Plan, created in 2004, which specified the policy
framework and requirements for protected areas resource planning, management, and evaluations to balance conservation with national economic development (Meerman 2005:4). Execution of the National Protected Areas System (NPAS) Plan is now directed by the National Protected Areas Secretariat under the Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Sustainable Development with involvement of the National Protected Areas Technical Committee (NPAS). This committee consists of eleven members (including the National Protected Areas Secretariat among a number of other government agencies and statutory bodies, the University of Belize, and national non-governmental organizations), and is responsible for organizing, consulting, and providing technical assistance on management issues within Belize’s network of over one hundred terrestrial and marine protected areas.

To manage MPAs through an integrated coastal zone management framework, multiple stakeholders are involved in various capacities - from government entities (including the Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute, the Fisheries Department, the Forest Department, the National Protected Areas Secretariat, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Civil Aviation, and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Agriculture) and international funding agencies (like the WWF, the WCS, and the Nature Conservancy), to regional conservation NGOs, community-based organizations, and fishing cooperatives (Cho 2005:934). Under co-management agreements, the Belize Fisheries Department, Forest Department, and various environmental NGOs based in Belize currently are tasked with overseeing, researching, monitoring, and conserving these MPAs. Management of particular MPAs is based on their use type, which ranges from no-take (prohibiting any resource extraction) to multiple-use (allowing activities including recreation, tourism, fishing, and research) (Cho 2005:935-936). These use-zones are set out under amendments in the Fisheries Act (administered by the Fisheries Department) and the National Park Systems Act (administered by the Forest Department). Among the MPAs, the Fisheries Department is responsible for co-managing Marine Reserves, while the Forest Department is tasked with administering the network of Natural Monuments, National Parks, Nature Reserves, and Wildlife Sanctuaries in partnership with environmental NGOs (Cho 2005:935). These MPAs are mostly supported through various project and grant funding from international donors, especially through the UNDP / GEF
and the Community Management of Protected Areas for Conservation Trust (COMPACT), although some operate from entrance fees and small grants (Cho 2005:939).

Following the development and establishment of two initial MPAs, the Integrated Coastal Management process began in 1989 in Belize with a workshop coordinated by the Fisheries Department and various NGOs to discuss the sustainable use and management of marine and coastal resources along Belize Barrier Reef System and connected ecosystems. These workshops resulted in the founding of a Coastal Zone Management Unit within the Fisheries Department in 1990, which received technical assistance from the UNDP / GEF financed Coastal Zone Management Project (CZMP) in the mid-1990s (Cho 2005:933-934). By 1998, the Coastal Zone Management Unit was institutionally restructured as a statutory body under what is now the Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries, and Sustainable Development through the Coastal Zone Management Act. This statutory body, renamed the Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute (CZMAI), seeks to achieve three goals, namely “increasing knowledge and sustainable coastal resource use; supporting planned development; and building alliances to benefit Belizeans” (Cho 2005:935). To achieve these objectives, the CZMAI follows a number of guiding principles, which include: balancing conservation and development, promoting quality research and information management, applying environmental management best practices, facilitating interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral decision-making, and recognizing national, regional, and international policies and activities for natural resource management while incorporating the ambitions and needs of local communities.

5.7 Major Stakeholders Involved in Integrated Coastal Resource Management

5.7.1 Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute (CZMAI)

As the preceding section mentions, the Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute (CZMAI) is the main statutory body overseeing development, research, and conservation of Belize’s coastal areas. The CZMAI acts as a scientific marine research institute in Belize that does water quality
and ecosystem monitoring along the coastline including in coastal plains and lagoon and estuary ecosystems, on coral islands and cayes, and along the Belize Barrier Reef system and three atolls, namely Turneffe, Lighthouse, and Glover’s atolls (Belize Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute 2011, 2016a; see Figure 2). Seeking to update management policy in Belize’s Coastal Zone Management Act of 1998, the CZMAI recently collaborated with a number of governmental departments and local, regional, national, and transnational NGOs and agencies and conservation projects, notably the Natural Capital Project of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the Southern Environmental Association (SEA), and the Toledo Institute for Development and the Environment (TIDE), to draft a National Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (Clarke et al. 2013). This proposed National Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (ICZMP) seeks to establish regulations within all the coastal zones of Belize—anything three kilometers from the high water mark—which includes Placencia and everything toward the Caribbean Sea to promote “… a sustainable future where healthy ecosystems support and is supported by thriving local communities and a vibrant economy” (Clarke et al. 2013:i, v).

The ICZMP document responds to further calls for sustainable use of coastal resources arising from concerns about population growth, extensive development, and over-exploitation of marine resources (Clarke et al. 2013:v). In particular, it provides an integrated approach to balancing the development and management of the aquaculture, fisheries, and tourism industries as well as environmental conservation principles with the “economic and social needs” of Belize along the coastal zone through suggested models drawing on current plans and policies and decision-making processes (Clarke et al. 2013:v, 3). This integrated approach applies the “inVEST” – “Integrated Valuation of Ecosystem Services and Tradeoffs” modeling framework to assist with coastal and marine zoning and use planning by allowing decision-making stakeholders from advisory committees in nine coastal planning regions, among others, to quantify and spatially represent impacts from different coastal industries by tying them to coastal processes and ecosystems in order to navigate development and conservation goals (Clarke et al. 2013:v). Several zoning areas are identified in the document that range from coastal agriculture, aquaculture, and development; marine dredging, recreation, and transportation, and oil
exploration to conservation (protected areas management, spawning aggregations, etc.), cultural and historical sites, and fishing zones (Clarke et al. 2013:173).

Like the Sustainable Tourism Master Plan, the ICZMP draft policy is the product of a national trend in which Belize governmental ministry departments are increasingly contracting foreign firms and organizations and partnering with international development organizations (like the UNDP) and conservation organizations (e.g., the WWF and the Nature Conservancy) to draft sustainable development plans and policies for land, hydrology, and marine resource use and tourism.

5.7.2 Belize Nature Conservation Foundation

Along with the CZMAI, another statutory body of the Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries, and Sustainable Development is the Belize Nature Conservation Foundation, also known as the Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT). The Foundation acts to fund the management and development of protected areas and parks (like MPAs) in Belize along with training and research in these areas in an effort to promote the “sustainable development of Belize’s natural and cultural resources” through allocation of grants (Protected Areas Conservation Trust 2010). To raise funds and encourage tourist visitation to the various protect areas and parks, the Foundation partners with community-based and regional environmental and indigenous NGOs and transnational NGOs and targets donations from international conservation and development agencies.

5.7.3 National Protected Areas Secretariat

While the Belize Nature Conservation Foundation assists with funding Belize’s Protected Areas, the National Protected Areas Secretariat – also under the Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries, and Sustainable Development – works to coordinate various regulatory agencies and organizations involved in managing protected areas within the National Protected Areas System (NPAS). The Secretariat was established in 2010 to lead the execution of the National Protected Areas System Plan by coordinating projects, drafting proposals, and supporting various protected areas stakeholders and Ministries to meet objectives set out in
the Operational Framework for the Protected Areas System (National Protected Areas Secretariat (NPAS) 2014). Toward this end, Project Management Units within the Secretariat work to implement specific activities outlined in the National Protected Areas Policy and System Plan (Meerman 2005; NPAS 2014). The Secretariat also heads the National Protected Areas Technical Committee, which is tasked with organizing, consulting, and providing technical assistance on management issues pertaining to Belize’s network of diverse protected areas. This technical committee consists of ten other members – namely, the Ministry of Tourism & Culture, Institute of Archaeology, the University of Belize-ERI, the Belize Association of Private Protected Areas, PACT, the CZMAI, the Land and Survey Department, the Association of Protected Areas Management Organization, the National Federation of Community Based Co-managers, and the Belize Forest and Fisheries Departments - which are involved in overseeing protected areas in various capacities (NPAS 2014).

**5.7.4 Belize Forest Department**

Complementing the efforts of the National Protected Areas Secretariat, the National Protected Areas Technical Committee, the CZMAI, and numerous environmental NGOs tasked with monitoring and managing coastal resources and MPAs and enforcing various regulations are a few other Belizean governmental departments under the Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries, and Sustainable Development. The Forest Department regulates development activities affecting coastal forestry like the extensive mangroves extending along the banks of estuaries, cayes, and the coastlines of mainland Belize. Notably, regulations include permitting of licenses to clear mangroves in addition to wildlife conservation, forestry resource management, and law enforcement programs (Belize Forest Department 2015). Under the National Park Systems Act of 1981 (revised in 2000), the Forest Department also is tasked with administering (including monitoring, enforcement, research, and conservation activities) the network of Natural Monuments, National Parks, Nature Reserves, and Wildlife Sanctuaries in Belize in partnership with environmental NGOs (Cho 2005:935).
5.7.5 Department of the Environment

Also under the umbrella of the Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries, and Sustainable Development, the Department of the Environment (DOE) was established through the Environmental Protection Act (Chapter 328 of the Substantive Laws of Belize) in 1992, which was amended in 1998 and 2009 to protect, preserve, and improve the “environment” and manage Belize’s “natural resources” (Belize Department of the Environment 2013). One key function of the DOE is to review the impacts of coastal and interior development and resource extraction projects on the surrounding physical environment through means of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA). The department also works with various environmental NGOs to draft environmental policy and law, seeks to enforce environmental regulations, monitors compliance by developers, informs the Belizean public of environmental policy, and coordinates a number of conservation projects (Belize Department of the Environment 2013).

5.7.6 Belize Fisheries Department

The Belize Fisheries Department, also within the Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries, and Sustainable Development, is the main entity tasked with implementing regional fisheries policies, plans, and projects in the country, and overseeing the management and use of coastal aquatic and fisheries resources including enforcement of fisheries regulations (Belize Fisheries Department 2014). The Department was established in 1965, and is now divided into four units, namely the Capture Fisheries Unit, the Ecosystem Management Unit, the Aquaculture and Inland Fisheries Unit, and the Administrator and Support Unit. The Capture Fisheries Unit, in particular, is responsible for drafting fisheries regulations and policy and enforcing those regulations, which impact fishing methods and the size, type, timing, and quantity of certain species that can be harvested by fishermen in Belize (Belize Fisheries Department 2014).

Fisheries regulations are set out in the High Seas Fishing Act (2003) and the Belize Fisheries Act that was originally drafted in 1948 and subsequently updated several times – notably in 1989 and 2009 – with input by the Department of the Environment, Belizean environmental NGOs such as the Belize
Audubon Society, international environmental conservation organizations like the WWF, The Nature Conservancy, and OCEANA in addition to UNESCO (Belize Fisheries Department 2009; FAO 2005). These Acts collectively govern licensing for capture fisheries and seafood product export as well as put limitations on commercially significant fisheries like Caribbean spiny lobster, queen conch, wild shrimp, and Nassau grouper, restrict fishing and collection of particular species, and imposes seasons and (no-take) areas to assist with conserving fisheries stocks and populations along the coast to promote juvenile growth and protect species during periods of spawning (Belize Fisheries Department 2009; FAO 2005; King 1997).

In particular, the updated Belize Fisheries Act imposes annual closed seasons for lobster (February 15th – June 14th), wild shrimp (July 1st – September 30th), conch (July 1st – September 30th), Hicatee turtle (May 1st – May 31st), and Nassau grouper (December 1st – March 31st, except for at two cayes where a special license can be obtained for traditional fishers). The Act includes size and weight limitations for lobster (minimum cape length of 3 inches and minimum tail weight of four ounces), conch (shell length over seven inches, cleaned market weight exceeding 3 ounces), and Nassau grouper (captured fish is required to be between 20-30 inches long). Additionally, it levies bans on grazer fish (including Parrot Fish, Surgeon Fish, Blue Tang, and Doctor Fish), marine mammals (such as manatees), whale sharks, marine turtles (except with a traditional use fishing license), and corals (except for black coral with a special license). Finfish species like Tarpon, Permit, and Bone Fish are now catch-and-release only, and special permits for species like sea cucumber are required. Rules also require fish fillets to have skin patches of at least two square inches and restrict fishing gear for particular areas (e.g., no spear fishing, nets, traps, or longlines in marine reserves and no artificial breathing devices for fishing in general). When a party violates these regulations, the Act gives the Fisheries Department authority to levy fines up to BZ $500, imprisonment up to six months, or both, in addition to a thirty dollar fine for each prohibited fish caught or sold. Finally, the Fisheries Act requires all fishermen to hold valid fisher folk or fishing vessel licenses - issued by the Fisheries Department in Belize City (Belize Fisheries Department 2009). To enforce these regulations and monitor coastal waters, the Belize Fisheries Department employs
a number of rangers on cayes in or around various Marine Protected Areas to patrol the reserves and research the dynamics of fisheries stocks (Cho 2005:939, 941; Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:27-28).

Other than the Capture Fisheries Unit, the Administrator and Support Unit acts as the human resources division of the Fisheries Department by issuing fishing licenses to Belize citizens and permanent residents and also collects revenue. The Ecosystems Management Unit co-manages marine reserves with local and regional environmental NGOs and community-based organizations as well as generates marine environmental assessments (Belize Fisheries Department 2012a). To organize these efforts, the Ecosystems Management Unit established a network of strategic marine reserves in 2000, following regional fisheries policy recommendations and indications of over-exploitation (Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:20-21). Within the scope co-management agreements, a Board of Directors, an Advisory Committee, an Executive Director, and staff, and environmental NGOs work with the Ecosystems Management Unit to provide input on the management, zoning, and regulations for particular MPAs (Cho 2005:936, 939). The MPA Advisory Committees, in particular - composed of major stakeholder groups like public sector government agencies, tourism and fishing industry organizations, local government, and local communities - facilitate an avenue of community participation for advising the MPAs. To enforce regulations for activities and use in MPAs, the Fisheries Department employs some rangers to conduct surveillance and daily patrols of the areas, who are conferred the power to search and arrest individuals who are suspected of violating the MPA regulations or other laws (Cho 2005:939), although for many co-managed MPAs, environmental NGOs provide similar enforcement capabilities. However, due to financial constraints, many MPAs do not have sufficient capacity to effectively enforce the regulations (Cho 2005:939, 941). Despite this challenge, the Fisheries Department notes a number of benefits of the Marine Reserves they co-manage including: easier enforcement of marine and coastal area regulations, greater equality among fishers, improved multi-species management, increased catch likelihood, restoration of spawning stock biomass, fisheries spillover into nearby areas to augment local catches, and better public understanding of fisheries management (Belize Fisheries Department 2012a).
Following an approach to “sustainably” manage marine and fisheries resources in its mission statement, the Fisheries Department has advanced and supported a number of conservation and alternative fisheries programs in addition to co-managed MPAs (Belize Fisheries Department 2014). The Department is currently working to passing the Aquatic Living Resources Act, 2011, which seeks to set out updated and detailed regulations for fishing in Belize and promote additional sustainability initiatives (Belize Fisheries Department 2012a).

For example, a recent coastal sustainability program grants access to select licensed fishermen to fish in particular MPAs in an effort to assist with compliance of fisheries regulations, increase accountability to fishermen, and boost participation in fisheries management while facilitating the recovery of fish stocks. The Fisheries Department established this “Managed Access” program in 2011 in collaboration with environmental NGOs like the Environmental Defense Fund, WCS, and the Nature Conservancy, and TIDE, among others, as part of a global “Fish Forever” initiative (Belize Fisheries Department 2014). In particular, this program responds to concerns held by many fishers that integrated coastal zone management, especially the MPA program, is stringent and not considerate of fishing interests and livelihoods since most MPAs are often perceived as non-extractive (Cho 2005:934; King 1997). The Managed Access fishing program, which seeks to promote sustainable fishing practices and stewardship among fishers in areas that have historically served as major fishing grounds by combining no-take replenishment zones with territorial user-rights for fishing, is being piloted in Glover’s Reef and Port Honduras Marine Reserves (50in10 2015). Through the program, the Fisheries Department issues a limited number of traditional use fishing licenses for exclusive managed access in Marine Protected Areas. With access to these MPAs, fishermen participating in the Managed Access program then assist with identifying violations of fishing regulations and contribute to monitoring efforts like reporting catch information to inform annual catch limits (50in10 2015). In addition to continuing a public education campaign about the program, the Fisheries Department plans to expand the program across Belize’s whole Marine Protected Area network in 2015, and increase participatory governance by giving locally-managed fishing stakeholder committees the capability to determine fisher eligibility for the program. In
addition to permitting managed access licenses, the Fisheries Department has encouraged “sustainable alternative livelihoods” for fishermen through assisting with developing alternative fisheries, including sea cucumber mariculture (Belize Fisheries Department 2014).

5.7.7 Fishing Cooperatives

Working with the Fisheries Department on fisheries regulatory compliance and on some “sustainable alternative livelihoods” programs are a number of fishing cooperatives that coordinate a majority of the country’s licensed commercial fishers as the major institutions of marine seafood production for foreign export in Belize (FAO 2005; Gillett and Myvette 2008:15). The country’s five official fishing cooperatives range in size in terms of production and membership and contain both producing and non-producing members, but all belong to the national Belize Fishermen Cooperative Association Ltd., which provides legal, technical, and education services to member cooperatives. The two largest cooperatives in the country (based in Belize City) have over five hundred members and USD $5 million in total assets, while the smallest cooperatives in southern Belize – namely the Placencia Producers Cooperative Society Limited and the Rio Grande Fishermen Co-operative – each hold less than half a million US dollars in total assets and contain under 65 members (Gillett and Myvette 2008:21; PPCSL 2014). Each cooperative has an elected seven member steering committee consisting of a chairman, a vice-chairman, a treasurer, and a secretary, among other committee members as well as an appointed operations manager who coordinates the cooperative’s resources, development plans, public outreach, and marketing efforts. Fishing cooperative operations are overseen by a Co-operative Department under the Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries, which provides various services for Belize’s Cooperatives including advice and assistance, registration and regulation, training and education, and data collection and records maintenance of cooperative financial and other statistics (Belize Cooperatives Department 2015).
5.7.8 Environmental NGOs

Finally, in addition several international conservation and development organizations funding coastal resource management sustainability initiatives in Belize, a number of community-based environmental non-governmental organizations directly manage, monitor, research, and enforce regulations in several Marine Protected Areas under co-management agreements with the Belize Forest and Fisheries Departments (Cho 2005:939). Although there are many prominent NGOs working on coastal resource management along the southeastern coastline in Belize (e.g., Peninsula Citizens for Sustainable Development and the Toledo Institute for Development and the Environment (TIDE)), the following discussion highlights the development and activities of the Southern Environmental Association (SEA), which is based in Placencia Village.

5.7.9 Southern Environmental Association (SEA)

The Southern Environmental Association (SEA) is a non-profit environmental NGO that formed when a local Placencia community-based conservation organization named Friends of Nature (FoN) joined with the Toledo Association for Sustainable Tourism and Empowerment (TASTE) in 2008 to improve community involvement and co-management of marine and coastal resources along the Southern Barrier Reef Complex (Southern Environmental Association 2015). SEA’s mission is to “… continuously work toward improving stewardship and the environmental integrity of key marine areas in southern Belize through effective, collaborative protected areas management, community involvement, and strategic partnerships for the benefit of all stakeholders.” As part of this mission, SEA co-manages the Marine Protected Areas of Laughing Bird Caye National Park, Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve, and Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve with the Belize Forest Department and the Fisheries Department, respectively, and a local advisory committee (Southern Environmental Association 2015). Before the merger between FoN and TASTE, Friends of Nature (formerly known as Friends of Laughing Bird Caye) was a community-based organization composed of fishermen, dive and tour guides, and business leaders on the Placencia Peninsula. In the early 1990s, the organization lobbied to get Laughing
Bird Caye – a 1.4 acre caye historically used as a fishing camp approximately 11 miles east of Placencia – and its surrounding reefs designated as a protected area to conserve biodiversity and promote sustainable resource management with increasing tourism expansion (Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:25-26). As a result of a petition created by the Friends of Laughing Bird Caye (FOLBC), the caye was initially declared a national park in 1991 under the National Park Systems Act, and subsequently expanded to include 4,077 ha of surrounding marine area containing a faro (an elongated ringed ridge of reef with a central lagoon, separated from surrounding reef structures by deep channels) and coral patch reefs in 1996. By 2000, the coalition signed a memorandum of understanding for co-managing the National Park with the Conservation division of the Forest Department (Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:25-26). Today the caye and its surrounding reef formations cover an area of 10,119 acres as part of the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System World Heritage site (Cho 2005:938), serving as a key diving and tourism destination and biological monitoring station. SEA regulates the park as a “no-take” conservation zone permitting only particular recreational and scientific research activities (Southern Environmental Association 2015).

In the late 1990s, FOLBC focused efforts on lobbying the government in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy to protect Gladden Spit and the Silk Cayes – a significant fish spawning and whale shark aggregation site located about 22 miles east of Placencia at the southernmost “elbow” of the barrier reef (see Figure 2) - due to concerns over minimally regulated whale shark tourism and overfishing in the area (Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:26-27). In 2000, the Government of Belize declared the roughly 26,000 acre expanse a marine reserve, and in 2002 a co-management agreement for the reserve was signed between FoN and the Fisheries Department. Today, the Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve is a multi-zone MPA classified by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as a category IV habitat / species management area comprised of four zones (Wildtracks, Belize et al. 2010:1-2, 4, 19). These zones include a “General Use (fishing) Zone” allowing diving and hand line fishing, a “Restoration Zone” restricting fishing to promote the regeneration of seagrass and conch populations, a non-extractive “Conservation Zone” covering the Silk Cayes and various adjacent reefs, and a “Special Management Area” for the primary fish spawning aggregation and whale shark region outside the reef, which restricts
the activities of divers, fishers, and researchers. For the Special Management Area of the marine reserve, in particular, special licenses for tour guides and a limited number of fishermen are required, and a “whale shark viewing” fee is levied for tourists (Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:27-28).

Under the co-management agreements for both MPAs, SEA is delegated management authority for site visitation, and coordinates monitoring and research, enforces regulations for fishing, tourism, and other activities, and informs the respective government departments of recommended actions and regulations, which the departments then review (Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:17-18; Southern Environmental Association 2015). Toward these ends, SEA works with eight stakeholder communities from Punta Gorda to Hopkins (including Punta Negra, Monkey River, Independence, Placencia, Seine Bight, and Sittee River (from south to north) in between these communities) along the southeastern coastline and the town of Sarteneja on coastal environmental zoning policy and management as well as coordinates tourism, education, research, and outreach activities, programs, and events (Southern Environmental Association 2015). For example, since 2003, SEA has undertaken biological monitoring for both of the co-managed MPAs, collecting data on population dynamics and ecological health parameters for corals, lobster, conch, and various commercial finfish species. At the same time, rangers have carried out routine patrols to enforce environmental, fisheries, and tourism regulations in the protected areas. SEA is guided by a strategic plan and employs a staff of administrative, science, education and outreach, and enforcement officer personnel (i.e., MPA rangers) to coordinate these various activities and roles (e.g., Wildtracks, Belize et al. 2010). An executive director heads the environmental organization, while a board of directors representing business, tourism, fishing, and other stakeholder sectors from the communities oversees its activities (Southern Environmental Association 2015). SEA historically has worked with hotel representatives and tour guides on various MPA issues, but is now seeking to establish a more transparent and involved relationship with fishermen in the stakeholder communities, especially on issues concerning fishing access and alternative livelihood initiatives in and around the Marine Protected Areas in southern Belize (Interview, June 26, 2014). Currently, the environmental organization receives institutional support from international NGOs like the World
Wildlife Fund and the Nature Conservancy to assist with regulating these MPAs and secures funding mainly from international organizations like the UNDP-EU and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for coastal environmental assessment, monitoring, and rehabilitation projects and efforts (Interview, June 26, 2014).

In this chapter, I examine the goals, relationships, and intersections between tourism development, fisheries, and coastal resource management stakeholders and policies in Belize to chart the complex management schemes, plans, and initiatives for sustainable coastal development and conservation. This elucidation of coastal development policies and stakeholders sets the stage for my discussion of the strategies, practices, and challenges of coastal resource co-management and alternative approaches to sustainable development on the Placencia Peninsula between governmental, international and local NGOs, local fishers, and tour guide stakeholders in Chapter six. In particular, I explore how this complex coastal management scheme structures relationships, roles, alliances, and initiatives for local fisheries management and development in Placencia and its implications for alternative livelihoods, coastal environmental conservation, and sustainable tourism development on the peninsula.
CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION OF PLACENCIA FISHER LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES AND FISHING COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

6.1 Placencia Fisher Livelihood Strategies

To examine how various stakeholders and policies interact in managing coastal waters and fisheries around the Placencia Peninsula and the implications of fishing heritage for future sustainable development on the peninsula, my research results and discussion are organized into two chapters covering three main themes corresponding to the primary research questions investigated through this thesis. In this chapter, I examine the strategies Placencia fishers draw upon to sustain and promote local fishing livelihoods and marine conservation in the context of rapid tourism development and ecological change on and around the peninsula.

6.1.1 The Impacts of Poaching, Environmental Degradation, Fisheries Regulations, and Education on Fisheries Conservation

Drawing from an integrated multi-methods ethnographic approach, results from this research indicate that local fishers in Placencia have adapted their livelihood strategies to navigate national fisheries regulations, fishing competition, ecological changes, seafood and culinary market shifts, and tourism development, echoing trends discussed in previous research (Boles et al. 2011:10, 33-35; Key 2002a, 2002b; Spang 2014b:36-37, 41-42). On the technical side, with increasing coastal environmental regulations and ecosystem protection awareness resulting in a decline in mass gill netting practices and a national ban on bottom trawling, which collectively had reduced the abundance of certain fish species and crustaceans, many legal fishers in Placencia currently are using more artisanal fishing methods like hand-line fishing, lobster and fish traps, lobster shades (casitas), free diving, hook sticks (gaffs), spear fishing with spear-guns, and trolling, and mostly fishing along or outside the reef (Interviews June 21, 2013; June
During an interview, Jerry (pseudonym),7 a former NGO representative, described some of the changes and continuities in fishing technologies and practices he associates with tourism development and revised fisheries regulations:

Yeah, it definitely change because at one point in time it was just hand line – whether off the beach or out on the ocean in a skiff. You throw your line overboard, you hold it in your hand, and you reel it in when you get a fish. And ... eventually you have rods. Rods, you know, and ... that didn’t spark trolling because people used to troll with a hand line too ... But then I think they just made a different way and I think that … rods came in with tourism. Because, let’s face it, Americans and Canadians - let’s use them for example – they don’t know much about hand line. Most of their fishing is like ... trolling and rods, you know? And I think that’s … one of the ways it got introduced to make it easier for them. But, yeah in terms of changing fishing techniques ... it didn’t change that much. ... In terms of diving, I think there was a ban on a certain type of spear gun. But generally, people make their own spear guns from … homemade (materials). ... Certain things got banned – species rather - ... afterwards like sea turtles. But ... no matter what gets banned, ... laws, they were meant to be broken. A lot of people keep that – or stick by that. But at one point in time, turtles, they were legal. And people still catch them, even though they’re completely banned. [Interview July 15, 2014].

A current member of the fishing cooperative, Rodney, attributes much of the current depletion of regional fishing grounds to the illicit activities of non-local fishermen who become naturalized Belizeans and easily obtain fishing licenses to extract marine resources in the southern province fishing zone off of the coast of the peninsula extending from the Sapodilla Cayes north of Gladden Spit (see Gillett and Myvette 2008:78 for a map of fishing areas; Interview June 20, 2015). In an interview, Rodney described how many non-local, naturalized fishermen - who generally reside in the Corozal and Belize Districts up north - often use gill netting along small creeks feeding the Placencia Lagoon, poach undersized conch

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To protect the anonymity and privacy of interviewees and research participants who partook in this study, I have assigned pseudonyms to my informants in the following chapters, denoted by italicized names.
and lobster often out of season, and damage corals, showing a general lack of respect for marine and estuary ecological conservation. He further explained the competition among fishers in the area and differences in fishing philosophy between many local fishermen on the Placencia and the naturalized Belize fishermen from the north:

It’s just they grow up in a place where fishermen – there’s no like limit. Once you’re a Belizean or 18, you could get a fishing license. … And that’s the problem that we’ve been trying to tell the Fisheries Department, you need to cap the amount of fishermen that you have. These guys from Guatemala ain’t immigrants, they’re naturalized Belizeans so they get license(s), and they come and fish in our area. … So they come … all the way from north … because our area is actually the most productive in the country. … the guys from the north, especially; they don’t have the education to say alright “let me fish for tomorrow,” you know? [Interview June 20, 2015].

He went on to describe generational continuity and the role of education in instilling a conservation ethic among many Placencia fishermen:

At that time [the time of his grandparents], there was so little fishermen, and so many product, there was no need for that. But that’s the way we were taught … so there was no need to take the little conch. You know, the conch has a … we call it a leaf. As it gets older, the leaf get bigger and thicker and thicker. There was no need to take those conch at the time because there was so much conch in the sea … – But these guys are like laid off in the cane fields and they became fishermen so they were not taught – they know nothing else … – what the legal size would be or they don’t care. … So they take everything. They just take everything. [Interview June 20, 2015].

According to Rodney and some other local fishermen like Brian, variation in education backgrounds, economic opportunities, and livelihood experiences impact some of the differences in
marine conservation ethics between local fishermen in Placencia and outsiders who fish the coastal waters off of the peninsula (Interviews June 16, 2014; June 20, 2015). Brian explained:

We used to go to the islands as kids, man, ... by the thousands, the Laughing Birds raise up over your heads; now not even one. ... A lot of things we used to see as kids that we don’t see now. Right, but I think things were more plentiful because there were less people. Now there’s more people so things got to be less. You know, the more people take, the less there is there. [Interview June 16, 2014]

Many non-local fishermen even have been reported to take algae grazing species such as parrotfish, reef tang, and angelfish in the reef (Spang 2014b:63), facilitating the spread of harmful algae and changes in coral reef dynamics. Fisheries regulations levied by the Fisheries Department that restrict the capture of these and other species and impose seasons for prominent commercial fisheries along with patrols by SEA NGO rangers and the Belize Fisheries Department have assisted with fisheries and reef preservation efforts, yet many local residents and fishers remain concerned about the resilience of coastal fisheries in the future. A local business owner named Larry discussed how poaching and gillnetting has led to a decline not only in commercial fisheries such as lobster, conch, and finfish, but also sharks in coastal waters, and how limited fisheries enforcement has contributed to this problem:

So the net destroys some species that mankind don’t consume. And shark, we used to have a lot of shark around here, you know. And then a guy came from PG, he stayed in Guatemala, Honduras. ... And shark was the most common thing around here. And when they came in, they net this area, and you couldn’t see a shark for years after that. They kill out them shark. They saw them, take them to Guatemala, Honduras, and sell during the Easter … time - much as they could carry they said. ... They poach all kind of things. They poach lobster, the conchs, fin-fish. ... [It’s] still a problem. As I say, the enforcement is very poor in this country. The resources – I don’t think that the resources have to be as bad as they are. I think they just don’t care about, you know, taking care of the fishing industry. ... They can hire fishermen to captain those vessel(s) because
the way it is right now there’s a coast guard boat that goes out there, but they are confined. At five o’clock, they have to be in … some harbor. So the fishermen from over there, they come after five o’clock and they can’t do shit. You know, ‘cause they don’t know the reef. [Interview June 19, 2014].

As Larry recounts, demand for shark meat beginning in the 1950s, especially in the town of Puerto Barrios in Guatemala, led to a decline in this fishery through gillnetting (Pomeroy and Goetze 2003:30) and subsequent poaching practices. To address the issue of limited fisheries enforcement against poaching, Larry suggested hiring older local fishermen to do nighttime patrols in the reef and captain boats since they have intimate knowledge of the coastal waters (Interview June 19, 2014). In addition to Larry, several other residents have noticed degradation of the health of coastal ecosystems over the past fifteen to twenty years (Interviews June 20, 2013; July 12, 2014; July 15, 2014). When asked about any changes she had seen in coastal health since Hurricane Iris hit the reef and the peninsula in 2001, Ann – an expatriate living on the Placencia Peninsula for numerous years – told me:

I mean there’s fewer fish. There’s less coral, there’s fewer seagrass beds, there’s fewer mangroves, fewer manatees. Of course, it’s all declining. ... well it’s (due to) development primarily. ... Dredging, filling, cutting down mangroves, the fishing is partly habitat destruction, and partly over-fishing. … Coral reefs, you know, would be tourism destruction by whatever man-made boats that kind of thing, and then also this water’s getting hot and killing – climate change ... The whole catch is declining. Part of the problem with that … here is … fishing the spawn – that’s still allowed, illegal fishing from fishermen from Guatemala and Honduras, and it’s also because there’s been a processing plant opened up in Mango Creek that’s shipping primarily to Jamaica ... And Jamaicans don’t care what size their fish is. And we don’t have any limits – any kind of size limitations on fish.⁸ So ... you can take one this big (Ann holds up hands

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⁸ There are size limitations levied for Nassau Grouper by the Belize Fisheries Department (2009).
to show a size) and take one this big (extends arms), and everything in between [Interview June 20, 2013].

In addition to concerns about poaching and poorly monitored seafood export, other residents recall the severe destruction of coral reefs by Hurricanes Mitch in 1998 and Iris in 2001 and coral bleaching in 1998 (Interviews July 12, 2014; July 15, 2014). When asked about the effects of Hurricane Iris on coastal health, a local NGO representative named Kel told me:

[It was] devastating. Direct hit. So we just had Mitch before in 98’ and we also had severe bleaching in 98’ – globally, everywhere in 98’. Iris split Laughing Bird Caye in half. There was nothing left alive. The whole caye was covered in dead organisms – things you’ve never seen before. ... Every caye you go to here is full of the dead corals washed (ashore) … even out at Glover’s, the whole eastern side of the all the cayes is all dead corals up this high (gestures) that got washed up.” [Interview July 12, 2014].

Jerry, a Placencia native, also remembers loss of coral reefs following Hurricane Iris:

I would say a lot of the corals, they definitely got destroyed by the Hurricane (Iris) because you know, I always used to go with my dad around the islands nearby and would dive for lobster or fish. And some of the corals that were there, they are gone or they are just all broken up. ... if you go farther in than say the beach, the part where it hits the beach, it definitely changed the way it looks from erosion and this sort of thing. [Interview July 15, 2014].

A local dive master and tour guide named Christopher further recalled increased vulnerability and lower abundance of nearshore reefs when asked if he noticed any major changes in the health of the coastal waters in the recent past:

Yes, like I said just off the coast – just a few feet off - in some places there are little fringe reefs or little patch reefs, and 10, 20 years ago there were really healthy corals. And over the past
couple years they’re not the same. ... I’ve noticed a lot that they’re a lot more vulnerable to
diseases. They’re also just huge mounds that I think is more sedimentation - just silt settling on
the corals. … I personally have noticed, especially along the coast and the inner cayes that there’s
not as much current(ly) as we used to have a few years ago. I don’t know if it’s just a little phase
or something but the health has been definitely not the same as it was a few years ago. [Interview
June 24, 2013].

More recently, some residents have been concerned about large algae blooms along the coastline
(Interviews June 20, 2013; June 24, 2013; July 12, 2014) and seasonal Sargassum (a thick brown
macroalgae) accumulation on the beaches (Interviews June 15, 2015) and their impacts on coastal tourism
and fishing industries. During an interview in 2014, Kel recounted a large algae bloom that extended
throughout the reef and the lagoon between June and December 2011:

That started … shortly before lobster season opened in 2011, in June then. And it didn’t really
finish until November / December – there were still remnants. So it got so bad that … when you
jumped over, you couldn’t even see your fin tips it was so green and murky. And the fishermen
were affected, they couldn’t find their lobstershades for the opening of lobster season. Tourism
was affected because they couldn’t do the regular diving and snorkeling near here – they had to
go further and further up to South Water Caye, out to Glover’s. Eventually, the effects did reach
out to Glover’s. [Interview July 12, 2014].

Christopher also described the substantial impact the algae bloom had on tourism in the MPAs
and along the reef, noting that “the (marine) parks, they would lose a lot of revenue because nobody
would visit those areas” (Interview June 24, 2013).

In addition to severe coastal weather events and environmental phenomena, some residents
attribute some of the changes in coral reef dynamics to coastal development practices, including partially
or untreated sewage discharge into coastal and estuary ecosystems (Interviews June 24, 2013; June 15,
2015), while others note pollution from agricultural and aquaculture operations on the mainland as contributing to the degradation of coastal reefs (Interviews June 24, 2013; June 19, 2014; July 7, 2014). A retired member of the Placencia Producers fishing cooperative named Carlton implicated mainland agricultural farms in particular, disclosing:

> What I see most of the thing that is affecting the coastal area is chemical from these farms. You know, the banana farms, the orange, and all of them. The chemicals that they use go out in the river and then come out and they damage all the coral that used to be along here. You can’t find any coral along here again. They were alive way back. ... All along the coast. Then eventually goes out too, (It) goes to the sea and damage the marine too. Because these banana farms, and orange, and cane, and all them, I know they use a lot of chemicals that eventually find their way out to the river here and damage the coral. [Interview July 7, 2014].

In light of coral destruction, a decline in many marine capture fisheries, and other impacts to coastal waters, some residents discussed how these changes in ecosystem health have impacted fisher livelihoods on the peninsula (Interviews June 20, 2013; June 24, 2013; July 7, 2014; July 12, 2014). Carlton remembers how the death of nearshore corals impacted lobster fishing along the coastline, telling me: “the rock is dead, the coral is dead along here. We used to go and fish for lobster right along here. Right along the coast up to Riversdale. But now, the crayfish, they have to go out to sea because the rock ain’t good again – they’re dead” (Interview July 7, 2014). Ann further noted a couple of ways local fisher livelihoods had changed due to these impacts during an interview in 2013:

> They have (changed) because you have to go further and stay out longer to get a quantity of anything anymore. And … there aren’t many people left – there’s probably only four, maybe even not that many – who still make a living off of commercial fishing. Usually what happens is the guys guide during tourist season, and then fish and dive for lobster in the off-season as a supplement to their tourism income. [Interview June 20, 2013].
Relating to these changes in coastal health and fishing livelihoods, some fishers discussed how concerns about the survivability of coastal fisheries for subsequent generations are being addressed by national fisheries regulations. During an interview in 2014, Carlton explained:

I’m afraid that probably the next generation won’t see any of them, so they just slow down on them, you know? (The Fisheries Department) give you a season to work it, and when the season is over, they close it for four or five months. Like lobster is on now, but conch is closed. You see, grouper you can’t catch at all; turtle you can’t catch. So you know, that gives them a chance to survive. [Interview July 7, 2014].

Furthermore, with increasing environmental conservation awareness and training and financial support from international environmental and development programs like the UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme, some local fishers have adopted changes in artisanal fishing technologies like lobster shades to better conserve reef biodiversity and ensure the survivability of commercial fisheries like Caribbean spiny lobster in the future (The GEF Small Grants Programme 2012a). From 2003-2004, the GEF Small Grants Programme awarded a $49,170 U.S. grant to the Placencia Producers Cooperative Society Limited to train and build capacity among fishermen from Monkey River, Independence, and Placencia for reef and lobster biology education and conservation, collect data on lobster populations, and finance the construction of lobster traps and concrete lobster shades with minimal negative environmental impacts (which would replace many of the traps and shades lost by Cooperative fishermen during Hurricane Iris (Interview June 19, 2013)). The grant supported an educational trip for local Placencia fishermen to Punta Allen, a small island in Quintana Roo, Mexico, to exchange lobster fishing insights with local fishers and learn how to construct concrete lobster shades. The grant allocated funds for the construction of 870 shades for 29 members of the Cooperative and an additional 900 traps for fifteen members of the Cooperative to help bolster the fishing cooperative’s resources and assist with fishers’ transition to using the new types of lobster traps and shades (The GEF Small Grants Programme 2012a). Lobster shades - submerged boxes attached to a rope and a buoy that lobsters gather in – were traditionally hand-made
from wood, often mangroves or Palmetto branches with zinc fittings, which would scatter over the seabed and degrade coral habitats when destroyed after a relatively short use life. Since the program was implemented, the construction of these traditional lobster shades has phased out in Placencia in favor of shades made from more durable concrete, which do not degrade quickly in the marine environment and require fishers to net rather than hook the lobsters sheltered in the shades (allowing for juveniles and pregnant females to be more easily discerned and released) (7NewsBelize 2006).

Many local fishers recognize the significance of fisheries conservation programs supported by external funding agencies to sustain marine fisheries and livelihood opportunities, especially through the Placencia fishing cooperative (the Cooperative’s alternative livelihoods initiatives is discussed in more detail below). Carlton explained his conception for sustainability for fisheries conservation in this context: “I think that the next generation will have something there – it won’t be depleted because if you keep on like how we used to do it before, there would be very little left. So we have to sustain it that we could have for years to come” (Interview July 7, 2014). Similarly, other residents recognize the need to balance conservation with development to ensure the sustainability of fisheries, fishing, and other livelihoods in the future. For example, Mila, a local tourism business owner, told me during an interview:

Because I think that for every bit of dredging that you have to do in the lagoon, you have to do some preserving. You have to go back and make sure that something is put back. It’s like fishing. ... It’s something that my husband and I do. We both love to fish. There is only so much fish that I can eat, you know. So I’ll only keep what I need. I believe it’s the same principle. You just have to make sure that you put back. ... I think that they (conservation and development) can go hand in hand as long as you don’t have one group telling you that you can’t do this at all. I think that that is a no win situation because people have to live and they will do what they have to do in order to survive. You just have to find ways to conserve as you develop. [Interview June 12, 2014].
6.1.2 “Embodied Ecological Heritage” and Livelihood Diversification

Salafsky and Wollenberg (2000) comment on how experiences and intimate ecological knowledge derived from fishing livelihoods help to impart a conservation ethic for marine resources since sustained resource extraction from coastal waters over time requires preserving the dynamics of marine and estuary ecosystems. As opportunities for fishing and exporting commercial species like conch, finfish, and Caribbean spiny lobster through the Placencia Producers Cooperative dwindle or become less profitable, many fishers (primarily men) who diversify(ied) into tourism, draw on their local environmental knowledge acquired through fishing livelihoods and traditions as a form of economic capital and an asset for marine conservation. Since local fishermen, marine tour guides, and many residents depend on maintaining the health of coastal ecosystems to sustain their livelihoods, most residents on the peninsula place a premium on the value of coastal resources, and are acutely aware of changes in coastal health. For example, when asked to describe the worth of coastal waters to local people, Christopher explained:

It’s extremely important. Like I said, most people in the village depend either on tourism or on fishing. And if that area is messed up, both of them are compromised. So it’s extremely important to everybody on this peninsula. And there are other little communities on the peninsula that are a little smaller than Placencia, and they depend on the small finfish for example and if ... we lose that then ... they will definitely feel the direct effects, negatively. [Interview June 24, 2013].

Among Placencia Peninsula residents who participated in KoBo surveys during the 2013 and 2014 field seasons, nearly 94 percent described the health of the coastal waters (the reef, etc.) as “somewhat important” (approximately eight percent) or “very important” (~ 86 percent) to their experience living on the peninsula using a Likert-type scale question ranging from “very unimportant” to “very important.” Furthermore, the reef, in particular, held an overwhelming personal significance among surveyed residents with about 98 percent responding that the reef was either “somewhat important” (about five percent) or “very important” (roughly 92 percent) to them when asked a similar Likert-type scale
question. Although the prevalence of fishing as a primary occupation is becoming increasingly marginal on the peninsula, these survey results suggest that local residents continue to recognize the importance of coastal waters as an asset to sustain marine-centered livelihoods – whether they be in tourism, fishing, or marine ecosystem conservation.

Following Baines’ (2012, 2015) concept used to illuminate Mopan Maya health, wellness, and heritage in the village of Santa Cruz, Belize, many (former) fishers may be said to apply their “embodied ecological heritage” as a resilience strategy both for sustainable resource extraction and coastal environmental conservation as well as to pursue alternative livelihoods that engage similar types of knowledge. This is especially the case for former and current fishers who pursue marine tour guiding and other tourism industry occupations such as those who become dive masters and reef scuba or snorkeling guides, work as whale shark dive operators, or lead fly fishing or other guided fishing trips for tourists in addition to those who become fisheries managers and environmental NGO rangers and conservation / restoration personnel. Local fishers’ “embodied ecological heritage” encompasses an experience-based marine environmental knowledge and skill set, usually passed down by their fathers, uncles, and other relatives, which considers patterns of tides, weather (such as wind direction), the layout of the cayes, and the locations and seasonality of fish stocks and other marine resources within the coastal reef environs. A number of fishermen discussed their conception of heritage in this sense as skills and environmental and historical knowledge inherited from their relatives that are reinforced through experiences in their marine-centered livelihoods (Interviews June 21, 2013; June 16, 2014; July 15, 2014). Brian, for example, highlights the inter-generational role of experience-based education through fishing trips and other experiences in the development of many local fisher’s conservation ethic, coastal environmental knowledge, and a mariner skillset, which collectively contribute to a fisher’s “embodied ecological heritage”:

Right now we’re trying to preserve and conserve, making reserved areas and stuff. So just to have to look at, and the fisherman to grab a little to feed a small community, small household, and stuff around here. ... I have knowledge of it – I know where they’re (lobster, conch, and fish) born and
growing. So I know where to go get them if I need for me and my family, my livelihood, my sustainability. ... That’s what the guys told me, you know, I have to start to implement. The knowledge that I have teaching and showing other people where fishes are born, where (sea) cucumbers are born, where and how the lobsters and in a sense though to protect and to preserve. ... The knowledge that you have is going to work or is going to help in a lot of ways. ... Once you have that type of local knowledge of it. My first memories, man, was being on a sailboat. My grandfather pushed my head through the hatch of the boat – small boat, smaller boat than anyone of these out there. And he tied the turtle onto his hand like this with ... his seine – and pulling him on board. ... We put them right there (gestures) ... for a week at a time, right here along this beach. People would come from inland (and) trade, and we trade meat for ground food – potato and beans, and stuff that couldn’t grow here. So that’s how the trading start. That’s how I was taught to be a trader by my father trading meat and fish for villagers inland, Indians mainly, Mayans. [Interview June 16, 2014].

While conducting participatory mapping of significant fishing heritage places in the reef and on the cayes off of the coastline of the peninsula in 2013, another middle-aged tour guide and fisherman named Terrence told me that this knowledge derived from island lifestyles where families who lived on the cayes exploited turtles, birds (such as laughing gulls), varieties of snapper, grouper, barracuda, lobster, crab, and conch throughout the year for subsistence, and that fishermen brought their catches back to Placencia to sell to village residents (Interview June 21, 2013). He further explained that when taking multi-day fishing trips out on the cayes, many fishermen still hold on to “customary fishing law” that entails fishing for whatever they can catch in limited supplies for subsistence if they are unable to catch species in season or within regulations. As anthropologist and Placencia resident Lyra Spang (2014b:43, 67-68) notes, this experience-based marine environmental knowledge as well as captaining and fishing abilities, seafood preparation and storage, and cooking techniques, among other skills, serve as status symbols and forms of cultural capital in the village, especially among men as part of a “seaman identity,”
Despite many fishermen turning their attention to tourism enterprises. This “seaman identity” has carried over to (marine and coastal) tourism guiding in a prominent way as roughly 87 percent (172 of 198) registered tour guides in Placencia reported in 2013 were male (Spang 2014b:66-67). Spang (2014b:66) states that although seafaring is primarily a male-centered “machismo” occupation, women also have substantial knowledge about life on the sea as many have assisted or continue to help men on family fishing camping trips, fish from the coastline to supplement family meals, and historically several even have engaged in commercial fishing (Spang 2014b:66). For example, an elderly business owner in Placencia named Diana disclosed in an interview that she used to fish off of the beach and that there were even patches of lobster near the shore back in the day (Interview June 13, 2014).

Before foreigners purchased many of the cayes, fishermen commonly camped out on cayes around major fishing grounds (sometimes with their families), and cooked and shared meals while on weekend or multi-day trips (Spang 2014b:66-67), although some privately owned and NGO managed cayes still allow fishermen to camp out (Interview June 21, 2013). Many families used to live on the cayes where they fished, collected coconuts to produce coconut milk and oil, and often raised pigs and cultivated beach almonds and fruits like limes, breadfruit, papaya, among other fruits (Interview June 21, 2013). According to some residents of Placencia, families who lived on the cayes, would return to the peninsula every few weeks to trade and sell their coconut oil, fish, and other products with peninsula residents for fresh water, flour, produce, and other basic provisions and supplies (Interviews June 21, 2013; July 7, 2014; Informal interview June 26, 2013). While explaining coastal water use historically during an interview, Jerry discussed how families used to engage in fishing and barter with their catch for other products from peninsula residents:

You could gather along the beach, down here near the dock – just take a hand line and just throw it out with bait and a sinker, and just catch fish right off the beach. You can still do it. And, you know, they used to go camp out on the islands for a few days … and eat fish, fish, and come back in, sell it. Also at one point in time, they used to use that as currency. Not solely as currency, but
more of like a barter, you know, thing. They would ... exchange fish for game meat, you know, swap (for) vegetables. [Interview July 15, 2014].

Likewise, Carlton remembered how island residents made their living back in the day: “There was some (people) on the cayes, on the islands out there that come in, you know, ... spend two weeks out there, they would come in and then they go about, they said that. ... (People would) come back, get their food, then go back and fish again, bring their product in here, sell it, and then go back again. Sometimes they go to Dangriga (and) sell their catch, dive (for) food, and go ... out again” (Interview July 7, 2014). However, many of the cayes are now privately owned and deny access to Placencia Peninsula fishermen and several of the Marine Protected Areas restrict fishing within their boundaries. Due to the increasingly limited public access for fishing camp sites on the cayes, the Southern Environmental Association NGO purchased Buttonwood Caye - a popular fishing camp location in the barrier reef located east of Placencia - for local fishermen to use as a base of operations for fishing excursions. A former representative of the NGO explains: “And … along the cayes systems, it’s actually a little difficult for fishermen … (since) fishermen don’t really have a landing site to work while they’re fishing. So SEA is in the process of purchasing a caye to help ensure that the fishermen have a location … that they could stay, deposit their fish, their catch” (Interview June 17, 2013). This institutional support of local fishers is reflected in SEA’s broader commitment to marine resources conservation, as one representative of the NGO elaborated:

[SEA seeks] to protect the environment, the marine resources in the parks in particular, which at some point, we probably want to expand. But to protect and preserve the marine life. ... And to make whatever marine resources we have sustainable for the foreseeable future. That there would never be an elimination of conch or lobster or fishes. That there’ll always be an amount of ... there for those people who love fishing, or livelihood and fishing as a sporting activity. [Interview July 14, 2014].
As a primary strategy to sustain marine-centered livelihoods, many local fishers have sought out alternative employment based in the tourism industry and marine conservation, often through local tourism organizations and environmental NGOs like SEA. Many fishers and former fishers see tourism-centered jobs, among other occupations (including carpentry, construction, etc.) as a key diversification strategy to support local livelihoods, especially with a gradual decline in the production of many fisheries (Interviews June 16, 2014; June 19, 2014; July 7, 2014). On this point, Larry told me his rendition of the decline of the fishing cooperative and how diversifying into the tourism industry and real estate, among other ventures, kept him economically secure:

Now this place, my father and they work hard to form the fishing co-op, which was the backbone of this community. The fishing co-op survive, I mean … It provided electric for this village. It died because of the scarce lobster and seafood production – it’s getting scarce, and since it was a fishing co-op, everybody own a part of it. So they would go there and get ice, gas. They would get an engine and don’t pay for it. So they actually destroyed it themselves. If they had a little sense – I used to be on the board of directors and back then what we were doing was buying up land ‘cause I knew that land would become – you know … – (so) we started buying up some land. We paid $25,000 for like maybe five acres of land down here. We were going to buy another piece and the fishermen tell, “oh, you better stop spending our money and buying land” because we miss another nice piece. But, when the thing went broke, that land, we were able to sell them for $30,000 for a lot - which the co-op made money. All they had to do was diversify into something else, you know, rather than just depend on fishing. And a few people, they couldn’t see that, you know. … People who come from somewhere else, and don’t know the hard work that our parents put into those things, and to keep them alive. But, they couldn’t because they didn’t diversify. They depended solely on fishing, you know. We could have had half this peninsula bought up, built our own hotel, you know. But it just didn’t happen because people … didn’t have a vision in it – in doing things like that. But, can you imagine if we had continued on that line … and we were the owners of all these hotels out here, this community could have survived very
well. But we started fighting each other and, you know, that fell apart. Now the co-op is just hanging on by a little thread. You know, they have a nice spot there that they could probably sell for half a million dollars, but that’s all they have going for them right now. I discharge myself from them a long time ago ... Well much of the people here, they say they were all fishermen. That’s how I grew up, being a fisherman. I quit about, you know, 1985 because you could tell it was, the lobster stock was going down, you know. Anyway, I used to go there and catch a hundred pounds of lobster every day. ... Yeah. All I got was $1.75 per pound, you see? But then that was a lot of money, and I was used to that. And when it got that I couldn’t do that, I decide to go do something else. So I learned to do carpentry, I get myself into that, and that’s what I do now. I have this business, then ... I buy property, I build houses on them for rent. I diversify into, you know, other things that will make more money also. So it’s all about, you know, not staying in one spot too, because sometimes … like right now, the tourists we make a little money off of them, but it’s so hard now to do business – very expensive to do business (so) that we are not hardly making any money. So we have to look elsewhere, you know, ... you work elsewhere for extra money. I’m not rich, but … if I should sell all my assets, I would not have to work for the rest of my life. ... I have my kids – I would like to pass it on to them so they could make a living from it ... But I hope they can, by that time. [Interview June 19, 2014].

Other than the restaurant business and the real estate industry, tour guiding, in particular, arose as a primary diversification strategy for local fishers beginning around the 1970s (Interviews June 20 and 24, 2013; July 15, 2014; Spang 2014b:38, 41-42). In an interview, Christopher noted how tour guiding, particularly fishing tours, originated in Placencia, explaining: “You know, when tourism first started here, people came and we had some of the older folks taking them out fishing and … I think that’s how it kind of got started” (Interview June 24, 2013). When discussing the transition from fishing to tourism livelihoods, Jerry added: “And then eventually tourists came in and it then became sort of an alternative
livelihood, if you want to put it that way. Because whenever ... they aren’t fishing, then they would … take out … tourists on tours, and snorkel, but fishing also, trolling” (Interview July 15, 2015).

6.1.3 Fishing and Tourism Development: A Complementary Relationship?

Local fishers often see a positive connection between tourism development and fisheries conservation, especially since environmental conservation ethics taught in tour guide training courses and other tourism education mediums reinforce preservation values developed with fishers’ marine embodied ecological knowledge. When asked what impact tourism development has had on him personally, Brian explained that it has had a positive influence: “I have learned much more how to take care, protect, and conserve. And that sense you use as to … relate back to the younger ones in schools because they going to be taught to be the future guides and the future fishermen around here, and you know, you want to it be theirs for a time to come – their kids – because it’s a recycling thing – an ongoing thing that goes around” (Interview June 16, 2014). In a later interview, Carlton added that the transition to tourism from fishing is helping to replenish fish stocks: “Yeah that thing (tourism) is good. Most of the fishermen diverge, you know, from fishing – both of them now – and they’re going into tourism, which give the … fish … a rest, yeah” (Interview July 7, 2014). Other fishers and residents highlight the complementary relationship between the local tourism industry and fishing livelihoods (Interviews July 14, 2014; July 15, 2014; June 20, 2015). Joshua, a local educator, for example, discussed how seasonality plays into this complementary socio-economic relationship between fishing livelihoods and the tourism industry – especially tour guiding:

Well it [tourism] has affected it, but probably positively because the fishermen have largely become the tour guides, the fly fishing guides, and they provide – the fish that they catch has a greater demand and price. And so I think if you actually were interviewing some of the fishermen ... they have removed … their energies from fishing and have transferred it to tourism and probably bigger income. But ... they are two industries that really complements each other well in this area. Kind of low season like between July and September, the fishing becomes a good
alternate income earner, and when November to February / March, the tourism takes over, and then they can put their fishing gears aside to a certain extent. [Interview July 14, 2014].

Other residents recognize that although a complementary relationship between the local tourism industry and fishing livelihoods exists, there are negative impacts of tourism development practices along the coastline, as fishing co-op member Rodney explains:

Tourism is good for land people. It’s bad for development along the coast because everybody wants to make a high rise and they want to cut down the mangroves and all of that to make way for tourism hotels. Fishing complements tourism in a sense because like I said, I take you out to sea like if the lobster ... I’ll take you out and see it instead of killing the lobster... So it’s good in a sense because they put that the turtle is ... on this list of endangered species out here in Belize. [Interview June 20, 2015].

Moreover, many residents see expanding mass tourism development like the proposed Norwegian Cruise Lines cruise ship port on Harvest Caye (two miles south of the peninsula) as a potentially negative force impacting Placencia’s coastal resources and economy (Interviews June 20, 2013; June 21, 2014; July 7, 2014; July 12, 2014). When asked about the proposed cruise ship project, for example, Carlton raised concerns about impacts to critical manatee habitat surrounding Harvest Caye from dredging, filling, and other coastal development practices used to make a port for cruise ships:

Some people want it (the cruise ship port), but other people didn’t want it because they say, you carry tourists down there to that caye, and they’ll degrade the manatee there. They’ve been there and when they say that when they begin to dredge that caye, pull it out, those manatees will move. ... ‘cause the dredging is used to fill the island. And then the manatees that leave, they’ll move. They have to go somewhere else because their feeding is gone. [Interview July 7, 2014].
In addition to concerns about the impacts of impending mass cruise tourism, other local fishermen suspect part of the decline in coastal fisheries may be attributed to tourism development (Interviews June 19, 2014; July 12, 2014). Larry, for example, explained how increased seafood demand by tourists may be contributing to this decline:

Fishing, generally has become less, you know. Every marine species has become less, especially one that man consume. You know, you could tell that … probably the tourists, among the tourists might have had something to do with that because there’s always that thing that you have to have enough fish, you have to have enough lobster … to feed them because that’s more likely what they will order, you know, something seafood. [Interview June 19, 2014].

Moreover, with increasing numbers of tourists demanding local seafood year-round, less local fishers available to obtain it, seasonal restrictions on a few commercial species, and a decline in many fisheries, many restaurants (especially foreign-owned ones) on the peninsula often struggle to find reliable supplies of fresh local seafood. One expatriate business owner named Neil explained that:

… as far as the fishing goes - ‘cause we buy all of our fish from the local fishermen – and that goes in cycles and it’s pretty much the same every year. You know, you get certain fish at certain times, and then there’s times when you just can’t get any at all. They’re just not catching any fish. And, but I don’t think that has changed at all. What has changed is there’s a higher demand for fish here because there’s more tourists. And so, you know, it gets harder for us to actually … find fish sometimes here because there’s a lot of the fishermen in the tourist season, they become tour guides. You know, they’re fishermen and tour guides, and they can – and it’s guaranteed money to take a tour out. It’s not guaranteed money to go out and try to catch fish. And so a lot of the … fishermen switch over to tour guiding rather than fishing, and so there’s less fish coming in. [Interview June 17, 2014].
The few local fishermen who currently fish year-round and those who fish part-time or seasonally often sell their catch to particular restaurants and resorts on the peninsula in bulk rather than to the fishing cooperative (Interviews June 16, 2014; July 10, 2014), leaving many local residents with limited opportunities to directly purchase fresh seafood (other than packaged shrimp from nearby shrimp farms). While some residents fish for their own catch in the lagoon to supplement meals, many residents purchase seafood from a handful of Placencia fishers who periodically sell their catch near the southern tip of Placencia village near a make-shift wooden fish fillet / cleaning table. Although these fishermen occasionally sell to tourists, they predominately sell their catch to local residents since many locals are generally aware of when the fishermen go on their fishing trips and when they are expected to return with their catch – which they often sell on a first-come, first-serve basis (Informal discussion May 27, 2015).

In addition to selling fish to “local” residents and occasionally tourists, on a couple of occasions, I witnessed a couple of fishermen bartering with owners of Chinese grocery stores and restaurants to sell their catch of crab and other types of seafood, which may have lower market value than prominent commercial fisheries (lobster, conch, finfish) since demand for these types of seafood by restaurants and Euro-American tourists is lower. One fisherman I spoke with even mentioned on one occasion in the past that he had given some fishermen he knew the meat from a hunted American crocodile – a protected species in Belize – which they sold to a Chinese grocer on the peninsula (Interview July 10, 2014). To ensure a steady supply of seafood for tourists, especially during the tourism high season, some restaurants in Placencia hire their own local fishers to bring in fresh catches throughout the week (Interviews June 19, 2014; July 13, 2014), although the availability of fresh seafood largely depends upon weather patterns and the condition of the sea since most fishers in Placencia travel out to the reef or just outside the reef to fish.

In addition to increased demand for seafood by tourists and the negative physical impacts of some tourism development practices on coastal waterways, some residents are concerned about tourists and recent ex-patriate immigrants to the peninsula appropriating traditional local fishing grounds for their own use – namely sport fishing. During an interview, Ewan, a consultant from Placencia, told me about this issue:
Again where you have the QRPs (Qualified Retired Persons) would come in and they get these exemptions to bring their boats. And so after they bring their boats, and then they hire a local fisherman or a local fishing guide to carry them out. And then when that local fishing guide carry them out, they GPS their … fishing spots. ... Then, the next week when I go out and I notice that I took you out last week and this week. You’re going out with your friends on my fishing grounds that I took you out on last week. That creates animosity. [Interview June 15, 2015].

Despite these concerns about the tourism industry and some animosity toward foreign expatriates, many local fishers remain either neutral or positive about the tourism industry’s impacts on them personally. For example, when asked how tourism development has affected them personally (using a Likert-type scale question with responses ranging from “very negatively” to “very positively”) among residents surveyed during the 2013 and 2014 field seasons who noted fishing as an occupation (n = 8), 50 percent responded that tourism development had not affected them personally, while the other 50 percent responded that it had affected them “somewhat positively” (12.5 percent) or “very positively” (37.5 percent).

6.1.4 Environmental NGO Collaborations, Conservation Initiatives, and Alternative Fisher Livelihoods

Although many fishers in Placencia continue to balance fishing livelihoods with work in the tourism sector, as an alternative or addition to pursuing tourism-centered livelihoods, many local fishers have cooperated or otherwise sought out employment directly with local environmental NGOs like SEA. SEA seeks to involve local fishers as a key demographic among its eight stakeholder communities in planning decisions about management and use of the Marine Protected Areas of Laughing Bird National Park and Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve, which the NGO co-manages under agreements with the Belize Forest and Fisheries Departments, respectively (Interviews June 26, 2014; July 14, 2014). Moreover, the organization collaborates with international NGOs (such as the WWF and the Nature Conservancy), regional industries (such as the Belize Shrimp Growers Association), and local cooperative
fishers to develop and promote various coastal sustainability initiatives. Although Laughing Bird Caye National Park and parts of Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve are no-take fishing zones, under management of SEA, many local fishermen have access to particular managed areas to fish, promote cooperative initiatives, and sustain local livelihoods through participation in alternative fisheries livelihoods programs (Interviews June 26, 2014; July 14, 2014). In addition to granting select fishermen using traditional methods access to fish in some marine conservation areas, the education and outreach director at SEA explained that the NGO also makes special fishing licenses available for mutton snappers at Gladden Spit during the spawning aggregation from March to June every year (Interview June 26, 2014), a phenomenon which also attracts whale sharks and ecotourists (Interview July 14, 2014). SEA aims to work closely with its eight stakeholder communities to ensure that residents fishing along the central and southern stretches of the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System are not only informed of fisheries, coastal use, and zoning regulations, but also actively participate in coastal use planning discussions. When I asked about how SEA collaborates with local fishers, a former representative of SEA who worked in this capacity stated:

That's why we have the eight stakeholder communities. We visit, we do consultation(s), we do discussion, we get their views, we get feedbacks, and ... I’m clearly focused that that is an essential part, whether we have either managed access or whether we are just to not have managed access and ... continue running our parks. That is absolutely essential that you have their favors; you must not only be helpful or doing the things we say we do, but you must be perceived to be doing that. And so ... (it is) needed in a protected area sector – that we will consult with those people and respond to their contributions. [Interview July 14, 2014].

Yet, despite outreach by SEA (Interview June 26, 2014) and the Belize Fisheries Department, some residents and fishers feel that their ownership over, participation in, and information about coastal fisheries management, regulations, zoning, and use decisions is limited or not evenly allocated (Pomeroy and Goetze 2003:32-33). For example, an elder Creole (Kriol) resident and business owner explained that
– historically – protecting Laughing Bird Caye was in the best interest of many community members, but since it used to be a popular fishing ground, limiting collection of marine resources for fishermen was a challenge. Although she said SEA lets some fishermen take limited amounts of fish from the waters surrounding Laughing Bird Caye, her concern with the environmental organization now is that it has preferential treatment for some fishermen to extract marine resources while other fishermen do not benefit, so she sees the need to put in a system to rotate fisheries resource collection off of the caye between fishermen (Interview June 13, 2014). Moreover, Sean, a Placencia fisherman and tour guide, mentioned during an informal discussion that while the Fisheries Department has sought to increase fisher access to Marine Protected Areas like Glover’s Reef Marine Reserve, recent fisheries regulations allocated just 75 managed access fishing permits in the MPA, restricting access for many fishers in the region (Informal interview June 22, 2015).

To address these concerns, in line with the Peninsula 2020 Initiative to promote “sustainability” in local tourism development and coastal resource management (Peninsula 2020 Initiative 2011), SEA recognizes the need to reach out to a greater diversity of fishermen and facilitate their participation in future coastal resource management decisions (Interview June 26, 2014). Although SEA has begun coordinating focus groups with local fishermen toward this end, the NGO is seeking out other methods and platforms to more effectively engage and encourage fishermen to become a part of this process to ensure mutually beneficial outcomes.

SEA has been working with Wildlife Trust Consultancies, Wildtracks, Belize, the fishing cooperative, peninsula fishers, and a community coalition consisting of village council representatives, NGO representatives, shrimp farm industry representatives, and various stakeholders called the Friends of Placencia Lagoon to designate the Placencia Lagoon as a National Protected Area (Interviews June 26, 2014; July 12, 2014; July 14, 2014; July 15, 2014; June 26, 2015). In order to put together a management plan, they seek to consult local and regional stakeholders about uses and conservation of the lagoon (Interviews June 26, 2014; July 14, 2014). Under a proposed Wildlife Sanctuary Type II – traditional use - Protected Status overseen by the Forest Department, local fishermen using traditional fishing methods
such as hand-lines would be granted managed access while seagrass beds and habitat for juvenile fish, manatees, and other species, and the mangroves that surround the lagoon would be safeguarded (Interview July 12, 2014). Although SEA is actively working to consult and involve local fishers in this initiative, a local environmental NGO representative discussed the need for consideration when approaching community consultations with regard to managed access use for residents:

But those are very delicate consultations because sometimes the public sees it as just taking away more of our traditional fishing grounds or traditional areas where we have fun. And so it’s very careful and delicate negotiations to let them see – let them know – that what you’re doing is in the better interest of conservation so that it is sustained in the future; that your children will be able to catch the same kind of fish products that you are catching now. [Interview July 14, 2014].

Fishermen have reported limited visibility and decreasing fish abundance, size, and catches in the Placencia Lagoon due to increased turbidity and algae growth in addition to a proliferation of catfish, a local extinction of sawfish, and increased abundance of jellyfish (Interviews June 20, 2014; July 12, 2014; Informal interview June 7, 2015). Peninsula residents often implicate lagoon-side tourism development practices like dredging, filling, and mangrove removal as reasons for a decline in many fisheries in the lagoon (Interviews June 20, 2013; June 24, 2013; July 12, 2014; June 15, 2015). When asked if he had seen any changes in particular fishing grounds since he began fishing in the lagoon, an older Placencia fisherman named Carlo who took part in participatory mapping of the Placencia Lagoon explained: “Oh yeah. A lot of changes because of the dredging – wreaks havoc. The mangrove population, that’s what makes a lot of fishes migrate and go to other areas, you know” (Informal interview July 13, 2014). When asked about conservation efforts for the Placencia Lagoon, an environmental NGO representative added: “they’re trying to not eliminate the mangroves because if they eliminate the mangroves, they eliminate the fish stock – the juvenile fish stocks whether they be lobster, conch, fish” (Interview July 14, 2014).

Other residents have noticed increasing sedimentation and limited visibility in the Placencia Lagoon over the past 15 years, especially with expanding lagoon-side development (Interviews June 24,
During an interview, Christopher described how visibility in the lagoon has changed in recent memory: “over ten years ago and more, the visibility in the lagoon was excellent. You could actually see the bottom going all the way across the lagoon from here to Independence. Today it’s very rare when you get good visibility in there. Like I said, the bottom composition it gets stirred up quite easily, but even when it’s calm for days and for weeks, we still don’t (get) really good visibility in there” (Interview June 24, 2013).

Moreover, scientific research studies attribute significant reductions in seagrass cover and manatee populations in the lagoon to nutrient discharge and sedimentation from coastal developments, tourism traffic, and commercial aquaculture, among other factors (Auil Gomez 2011; Interviews June 17, 2013; June 19, 2013). To address these issues, a former environmental NGO representative named Susan explained that a management plan is being finalized that considers the lagoon setting and the variety of use needs within it (Interview June 26, 2015). If the lagoon is designated as a Marine Protected Area, enforcement of environmental and fisheries policies, especially for coastal development affecting mangroves, would be more stringent because a co-management body between SEA and the Belize Forest Department would be established to oversee monitoring, regulation enforcement, and protection of the lagoon (Interviews June 19, 2013; June 26, 2015). After consultations with many stakeholders in the primary two villages on the peninsula – Placencia and Seine Bight – who largely expressed support for the proposed plan for the lagoon (Interviews July 15, 2014; June 26, 2015), some NGO representatives are enthusiastic about the initiative. Jerry, for example told me:

I am totally for it. Placencia Lagoon has one of the highest populations of manatees, birds, crocodiles too. A lot of people are using nets and they’re killing fish, killing rays. You know, harming manatees with the engines, propellers. So I think it’s a good idea to get protected or recognize it as a … National Protected Area. Maybe have certain speed limits that you would have to abide by to help prevent damage to manatees. But I’m definitely looking forward to protecting Placencia Lagoon. [Interview July 15, 2014].
Among others working in the coastal environmental conservation sector, enthusiasm for the initiative is curbed by recognition that the process of finalizing a management plan may take a long time, potentially well after the first cruise ships harbor at Harvest Caye at the southern end of the lagoon (Interviews June 12, 2014; June 26, 2015). During an interview, Susan described her concerns about some of Norwegian Cruise Lines’ planned activities for tourists in the lagoon:

So I know the consultants are still gathering comments and edits on the management plan and then once that’s finalized it will go to government and who knows how long that might take. I’m personally a little bit concerned with the timing of it because we could put - if the lagoon was a managed area - it could restrict the cruise ship activities because the cruise ships are already selling a tour where you can basically drive your own powerboat around. You can go as a tourist and drive your own powerboat around, which apparently they want to do in the Belize City but they were stopped because that’s crazy. If you don’t have a captain’s license you shouldn’t be driving a boat here especially when you don’t know the water. You can imagine those cruise ship tourist(s) would love it. We’re just really worried about the manatees. I just hope the government - because the government is the one pushing the NCL (project) here - ... they just don’t think this is just a total conflict of interest and not want to declare it as a protected area. I mentioned that to the consultants and they totally agreed but this is all we can do. All we can do is put it to the government and ... I think the whole community is totally for it. There’s no reason why they shouldn’t be. [Interview June 26, 2015].

While the management plan for protecting Placencia Lagoon as a Type II Wildlife Sanctuary in Belize is being finalized, SEA continues to recruit and collaborate with local fishers to assist with overseeing the MPAs it co-manages. SEA employs several former fishermen as rangers among its staff to monitor and enforce revised tourism and fisheries regulations in its co-managed MPAs (Boles et al. 2011:42; Interview June 26, 2013). These rangers are assigned to camp out on one of two primary cayes that SEA maintains ranger stations on (Little Water Caye and Laughing Bird Caye) for two weeks at a
time (with one week back on the peninsula / mainland between each rotation). While stationed on the cayes, their duties include conducting daily or multi-day patrols of the MPAs and nearby coastal waters along the Southern Barrier Reef Complex to monitor for illicit fishing or other activities, informing visitors about the marine reserves, explaining environmental and tourist use regulations, and collecting tourist fees from boats in addition to cleaning up the cayes that the tourists visit (rake seagrass, etc.) (Informal interview June 26, 2013; Interview July 15, 2015). During a visit to Little Water Caye, I noticed that between work shifts, rangers generally share meals and relax, sometimes allowing guests such as researchers and local fishers to join their company and camp out (with permission from SEA). Although SEA rangers have made several minor busts and a few major ones for fisheries violations including a seizure of an illicit catch of 911 undersized conch in 2013, which carried fines totaling $20,000 BZD (Interview June 17, 2013), enforcement of fisheries and coastal environmental regulations under a complex environmental co-management scheme remains an issue according to some community residents (Interview June 20, 2013). During an interview in 2013, Ann described how constrained NGO and governmental resources facilitate a pattern of limited enforcement although several environmental policies are in place:

Every single public consultation, someone at the beginning in the audience will say, “well what’s gonna’ happen to this report? What’s gonna’ happen to this policy? What’s gonna’ happen to these guidelines?” Because every other one that we’ve ever … been involved in just gets stuck on somebody’s shelf or in a drawer, and nobody ever hears from them again. ... and they say, “we have laws, and we don’t enforce the existing laws we have,” which we don’t. We have no enforcement capability. We don’t have the resources. ... There’s the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan, the Coastal Zone Development is getting ready to come out with their Coastal Zone Management Plan. We have zoning guidelines. We have land use guidelines. We have all – … it’s great on paper. But a lot of them are just guidelines or policies or plans that they really have no force of law, right. ... And even if it were laws, nobody would enforce it anyway. They just don’t have the money. [Interview June 20, 2013].
To assist with fisheries regulations compliance, increase accountability to fishermen, and boost participation in fisheries management, the Belize Fisheries Department began piloting a Managed Access program in 2011 within Marine Reserve areas of Glover’s Reef and Port Honduras in partnership with environmental NGOs such as the Environmental Defense Fund, WCS, Belize Audubon Society, and TIDE (Belize Fisheries Department 2014). Through the program, the Fisheries Department seeks to promote sustainable fishing practices and environmental stewardship among fishers in Marine Reserve areas by involving them in fisheries reporting, monitoring, and education efforts. Although the Managed Access program is in its nascent stage, and is expected to be rolled out throughout the country (including to fishers on the Placencia Peninsula in the near future), SEA has been practicing its own form of managed access for fishers in Gladden Spit where special permits are required to go to the whale shark zone, the spawning aggregation zone, and other areas (Interview June 26, 2014; July 14, 2014). In addition to permitting select managed access licenses through the program, the Fisheries Department and environmental NGOs are encouraging “sustainable alternative livelihoods” for fishers through assisting with developing alternative fisheries like sea cucumber farming and invasive lionfish (Interview June 26, 2014; Informal interview with Belize Fisheries Representative June 28, 2014). For example, the Fisheries Department is supporting a recently proposed sea cucumber farming project in Monkey River, through which an initial stock of sea cucumbers from Laughing Bird Caye National Park is being provided to fishermen to use for marine aquaculture purposes (Informal interview June 28, 2014; Interview June 26, 2014). Other NGOs, like the Fragments of Hope Foundation, are promoting “sustainable alternative livelihoods” for local fishermen by providing employment opportunities for coral planting / reef restoration in Laughing Bird Caye National Park and other areas. The Foundation is focused on coral restoration, but wrote its articles of association in more open way to include capacity building and training or any hands-on, active management strategies to alleviate threats to the marine or coastal ecosystems beyond just constant monitoring (Interview July 12, 2014). During an interview, a local scientist discussed the purpose of Fragments of Hope and how the organization works with local fishers and marine tour guides to support alternative livelihoods:
So it focuses on the corals, but ... (there is) a proposal ... that includes mangrove restoration, but not the way that SEA was doing it – using a different methodology that’s called the Riley Encasement method that is more for high energy sites. So when there’s a lot of wave action and more specifically geared toward erosion issues, whereas what SEA has been doing all these years is more of a low-energy in the lagoon, and just sticking the seedings in the group, and really more adjusting developmental loss of mangroves. ... And, for example, ... (the organization) also included a lagoon ecology training for a bunch of tour guides and a bunch of kayaks so that ... (it) could start utilizing the lagoon in more of an eco-tourism way than is currently being done, and also, you know, provide an additional revenue for guides … So (the organization is) focused on the coral work, but … wrote the structure in such a way that ... (it’s) not limited to just the coral restoration work. [Interview July 12, 2014].

The scientist later explained personal experiences with grant writing and educational outreach to support training capacity for local fishers and tour guides in reef ecology and alternative livelihoods, discussing how she has written many grants for a tour guide association and a classroom building, and has coordinated tour guide and open water education through dive master training and advanced marine tour guide training as well as whale shark photo identification lessons. She mentioned even taking some training participants to a regional whale shark conference as well as coral bleaching and climate change workshops, among other opportunities for training and research outreach (Interview July 12, 2014).

Relationships formed between local fishers, including those in the Placencia Producers Cooperative, and regional environmental NGOs such as Fragments of Hope Foundation and the Southern Environmental Association, among other organizations, largely aim to overcome challenges associated with rapid tourism expansion and ecological change around the peninsula through increasing educational outreach, employment opportunities, and collaboration on coastal sustainability initiatives. While some fishermen on the peninsula do not support SEA - among other environmental NGOs co-managing coastal resources - because they perceive MPAs as restricting access to traditional fishing stocks, many fishermen
realize the long-term ecological and commercial value of no-take zones to replenish fish stocks around the reef (Interviews June 26, 2014; July 7, 2014). For example, Carlton explained how the marine reserves and the ecotourism it promotes can reduce pressure on commercial fisheries:

We have to protect the industry, you know. Because ... one time it was only fishing. Now it’s not, but a lot of the younger (people) said (they) now want to do tourism. They go out and take care out there, you know they get money … to help a lot. ... But it’s good. ... it help the fishing industry a lot. And everybody, even the younger (people) said they gone up there to dive too much, you know. ... They’d rather take out the tourist to the cayes and show them around and bring them back in. And there’s a lot of things to see out of the cayes out there. We have a caye out here, Silk Caye, the turtle, they come right in, and the tourist dive and they see the turtle, and don’t touch them or nothing, you know. The turtle don’t run from them, they’re tame – come right around there. The shark – they come there right around the turtle … You see a lot of these eels, and all different kind of fish. ... So everybody want to go down and see them, ... when they come, they say they’re happy, they had a nice stay. It’s good. Give the fish and thing(s), and the conch, and so on a little rest. ... This way we won’t kill out the reef. [Interview July 7, 2014].

6.2 Fishing Cooperative Initiatives for Alternative Livelihoods and Sustainable Development

Alongside marine tour guiding and NGO collaboration opportunities to sustain local fisher livelihoods and promote coastal environmental conservation, fishers within the Placencia Producers Cooperative Society Limited, with support and funding from international and regional organizations, have been developing novel, alternative approaches to promote local fishermen livelihoods and preserve community heritage while sustaining coastal fisheries. Three initiatives for sustainable local fisheries development in Placencia are highlighted in the following discussion.
6.2.1 Sustainable Seaweed Farming and Marketing

Through a project funded initially by a BZ $90,000 grant awarded by the UN (global) COMPACT foundation GEF Small Grants Programme in September 2010, cooperative fishermen are cultivating seaweed off of the shoreline of three cayes to replenish fish habitat and traditional fishing stocks and market a variety of seaweed products (Interview June 19, 2013; PPCSL 2014). The project is called “The Placencia Producers Cooperative Society Ltd. (PPCSL) Sustainable and Environmentally Responsible Production of Seaweed (Euchuma isoforme and Gracelaria spp) in the marine areas adjacent to Placencia Peninsula,” and seeks to reduce fishing pressure in and around Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve and Laughing Bird Caye National Park as well as assist alternative livelihoods through the Placencia Cooperative (The GEF Small Grants Programme 2012b). The seaweed mariculture project started in September 2010 with the goal of establishing renewable seaweed farms and re-training ten members of the Placencia Cooperative to sustainably harvest seaweed. It also promotes economic opportunities for a few single mothers in the village by facilitating training for processing seaweed products at the cooperative including bulk dried and powdered seaweed and seaweed gel and soap (see Figure 5; PPCSL 2014; The GEF Small Grants Programme 2012b). After the project’s inception, the fishing cooperative acquired a former shrimp trawling vessel from OCEANA for one dollar to use as a base of operations for the project and as an educational facility to train additional fisher folk (PPCSL 2014).

The project initiated after a local fisherman and regional representatives of UN COMPACT approached a local marine biologist, to assist them with writing a grant for seaweed cultivation. Following the success of Caribbean seaweed farming methodology workshops held in 2005 in Placencia and Belize City that were led by a man named Al Smith from St. Lucia with support from UNEP International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN), WWF, the Belize Cooperative Department, and the Belize Fisheries Department, the cooperative recruited the marine biologist to help write the proposal after a concept grant paper was initially rejected (Interview July 12, 2014). The cooperative was awarded a $10,000 BZD planning grant to assess the viability of the seaweed product for a Belizean market, and
after eliciting data and deliberating with consultants, a full proposal was developed. However, the project experienced a number of setbacks, including a full year and a half delay through negotiations with the government of Belize since the project financers initially requested that the cooperative seek to lease rather than secure seabeds for seaweed cultivation at $70,000 BZD per year from the Belize Ministry of Lands in the event that developers were interested in purchasing the submerged lands in the future (Interviews July 12, 2014; July 15, 2014). The Fisheries Department eventually intervened and suggested reframing the proposal as a research project under jurisdiction of the Fisheries Department in the Marine Protected Areas it co-manages (Interview July 12, 2014). Upon further consultations, the Fisheries Department then agreed to support the project if the seaweed farming sites were established and operated in MPAs, despite being further from Placencia, since the MPAs fall under their legal jurisdiction. After some initial success stemming from the planning grant, the United States Agency for International Development’s (USAID) Regional Management of Aquatic Resources and Economic Alternatives (MAREA) Program and the World Bank learned of the project and began to support it in connection with a larger multi-million dollar alternative fishing livelihoods program targeting five coastal areas in Belize (Interview July 12, 2014).

The cooperative was awarded a $90,000 BZD grant by the UN COMPACT foundation in September 2010, leading to the creation of twenty 50 ft. x 50 ft. farms off of the coasts of Little Water Caye – where SEA has maintained a ranger station since 2002 - and Hatchet Caye nearby through the pilot project (Interviews July 12, 2014; July 15, 2014). The Cooperative then applied for and received a second $100,000 BZD grant from COMPACT to expand the project to create an additional 20 farms in Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve (Interview July 12, 2014; PPCSL 2014). Toward this end, the cooperative signed a contract with SEA on June 4, 2014 to establish a one square mile (or kilometer depending on the source) seaweed farming area in a no-take fishing zone and fish spawning aggregation area adjacent to Gladden caye north of Gladden Spit (Informal interview June 12, 2014; Interview July 15, 2014). In addition to the COMPACT funds supporting the seaweed farming project, the USAID MAREA program allocated funds to create and provide a salary for an operations manager position at the
cooperative to better organize the cooperative’s production and marketing of their products and
distributed funds to purchase additional equipment to support the project (Interview July 12, 2014;
PPCSL 2014). Together these organizations provided financial assistance to rebuild the cooperative office
building in 2012, which had been damaged by an earthquake in 2009, in order to provide a space to better
facilitate sale and marketing of cooperative products. Collectively, these funds from international
organizations sought not only to assist the cooperative’s seaweed farming project, but more generally to
“regenerate and rejuvenate the coop itself ... (by) taking pressure off of ... traditional commercial species”
and supporting alternative fishing livelihoods (Interview July 12, 2014).

Figure 5. Bulk dried seaweed packaged for sale inside the main Placencia Producers Cooperative Society
Limited office building. (Photo taken by the author in 2013).
Since the beginning of the project in 2010, despite the success of the initial 20 farms off of the coasts of Little Water and Hatchet Caye and securing additional funds from the USAID MAREA program, the number of local fishers involved in the project has dwindled. In an interview, the biologist explained why she thought participation in the cooperative-led seaweed mariculture project has decreased, despite its commercial success: “There’s really only a handful of guys really doing it now. It dropped from like sixteen people to six people … because some of the guys, you know, were hoping to see immediate benefits, and it’s not like that. You really have to put in – … just like the coral work, it’s not tomorrow, it’s like … long-term investment” (Interview July 12, 2014).

Still, despite decreasing cooperative membership in recent years, this group of PPCSL members has sought to shift the cooperative’s focus toward seaweed production as part of its organization’s development plan, and rebrand themselves as “Placencia Seaweed Farmers” (PPCSL 2014). During an interview, Percy, a local fisher and member of seaweed farming project, told me that he saw the project as a model for other fishers throughout Belize and the region to increase coastal community participation in alternative fishing livelihoods (Interview July 15, 2014). The cooperative’s seaweed farming efforts have received international attention with environmentalists from the Mesoamerican Reef Leadership program and the Nature Conservancy interested in collaborating on reef conservation programs and facilitating “sustainable alternative livelihoods.” Furthermore, media coverage and promotion of the project has ranged from National Geographic and the World Wildlife Fund documentaries to interviews with local and foreign (TV) news agencies (Interview July 15, 2014). Percy disclosed that the Placencia seaweed farmers also have received offers to introduce their seaweed products to Taiwanese, Californian, and Japanese markets, to expand their primarily local market for dry seaweed and boiled gel products internationally. To promote their seaweed products on a national level, the cooperative seaweed farmers have held expos and shows, and are working with the government to get processed seaweed onto supermarket shelves (Interview July 15, 2014).

Seaweed from the project is currently processed in Placencia, where two women have been hired at the cooperative processing facility to work in this capacity (Interview July 15, 2014; PPCSL 2014). As
of mid-July 2014, the seaweed farming plots had yielded over 700 pounds of dry seaweed, which on average takes six to seven pounds of harvested (wet) seaweed to produce one pound of dry seaweed (Interview July 15, 2014). On the farming side of operations, planting, cultivation, and harvesting of seaweed requires a number of steps. Percy and Carlton explained that seaweed farms have been propagated from original, seaweed “seed” stocks from Glover’s Reef atoll (of which only one percent survived for cultivation for the project) by growing starter fragments of macroalgae on ropes in aquatic areas off of the coastline (Interviews July 7, 2014; July 15, 2014). For each of the seaweed farms, seaweed is planted along eleven 50 foot ropes secured by anchors and buoys that are situated roughly eighteen inches to two feet apart with a preferred depth for seaweed growth at six feet below the surface of the water (Interview July 15, 2014). Ten of these ropes are used for commercial seaweed production while one rope or net is used for expansion by cutting and replanting the farm’s “seed stock” to propagate another farm plot. A team of five seaweed farmers spend an initial seven to eight day period planting the seaweed along the ropes, and then return roughly once a week for monitoring and maintenance of the seaweed plots including clearing off growth of other types of algae along the ropes. After a growth period of three to six months, the seaweed is harvested and subsequently processed in Placencia (Interview July 15, 2014).

Although techniques for seaweed farming are informed by collaborations with international marine conservation and alternative livelihoods agencies and programs, environmental knowledge of seaweed farming has been passed down generationally within the PPCSL. Carlton remembers cultivating seaweed for international export to the United States and receiving a competitive price during some of his years working at the fishing cooperative (Interview July 7, 2014). He told me that he taught a couple of his relatives who now work on the seaweed farming project about the process of seaweed cultivation, explaining that he used to obtain seed stock from Glover’s Reef to create seaweed farms:

They tie it (seaweed) to the rope, a lot of rope, and then they grow right there. They take a bunch, and then they put it on the rope, and they grow it there. I used to go over by Glover’s Reef, an island about 30 … miles from here out in the ocean there. Ooh, they have abundance there,
growing right in the water. And then I bring a lot, and then fix it here so that I could ... plant them here. [Interview July 7, 2014].

_Percy_ describes this environmental knowledge passed down from his forefathers in the cooperative as vital to his conceptions of heritage and “sustainability” in this context, as seaweed farming is an inherited form of knowledge from his ancestors in which seaweed “uses itself to regenerate” for long-term cultivation (Interview July 15, 2014). Rather than cultivate all of the seaweed from the farm plots, Placencia seaweed farmers like _Percy_ only harvest about 75 percent of the seaweed on each plot and leave the rest for regrowth to create a renewable mariculture enterprise (Interview July 15, 2014).

Thus, some residents recognize the cultivation and marketing of seaweed as an avenue toward sustainable development since it can serve both to regenerate reef habitat and produce an economically viable product that is rich in nutrients. To promote reef conservation, seaweed farms can act as a nursery for crustaceans, squids, and juvenile fish, attracting diverse reef species and encouraging the recolonization of wild reef plants (Interview July 15, 2014). Seaweed is commonly used to make both food products such as gels and cosmetics like soaps. The macroalgae has high concentrations of vitamins C, A, B2, calcium, iron, potassium, as well as in iodine; and has carrageenan or agar, which are used as a thickeners in gels, as an inhibitor against some sexually transmitted infections and cervical cancer, and as a laxative, respectively (Carne 2010; interviews with cooperative representatives June 3, 2013, and June 19, 2013). Dried seaweed powder is commonly mixed in with smoothies and shakes at food stands and restaurants on the peninsula (Interview July 15, 2014; PPCSL 2014). In addition to sale of bulk dried seaweed, seaweed powder and gels, a couple of local entrepreneurs are using seaweed from the cooperative to make seaweed soaps for regional marketing and sales (PPCSL 2014).

To meet increasing demand for seaweed products, the cooperative seeks to assess how much seaweed can be produced from one individual farm during six month and one year cycles for sustainable production (The GEF Small Grants Programme 2012b). While seaweed products are already being sold locally on the peninsula and to regional and international markets, a caye caretaker near a plot of seaweed
farms remarked that productivity of the seaweed farms could be higher as a large proportion of the seaweed is not cultivated and washes ashore. He suggested that seaweed farms could be expanded to 2-3 tons for export to the US, Guatemala, and Mexico (Informal interview June 26, 2013). In addition to the twenty individual renewable seaweed farms off of Gladden Caye created through the $100,000 BZD COMPACT project renewal grant (Interview July 12, 2014; PPCSL 2014), as of late 2014, the Placencia seaweed farmers were working to apply for a grant from The Nature Conservancy to expand the project to increase production (Interview July 15, 2014). As part of delegated co-management schemes for the MPAs, according to a former cooperative operations manager, these seaweed farmers also are assisting with enforcement of fisheries regulations and monitoring in the Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve area with support from the Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries, and Sustainable Development (Informal interview June 12, 2014). In connection with a recent multi-million dollar grant from the World Bank to support Belizean mariculture (Ysaguirre 2015), the cooperative also is looking into other mariculture alternatives for commercial production besides seaweed including farming sea cucumbers, squids, conch, and Cobia fish as part of its 2013-2017 development plan (PPCSL 2014).

6.2.2 Lionfish Eradication and Marketing

Through a second initiative, local fishers have started exploiting lionfish through on-sight spear-fishing to reduce populations of this invasive species and market them to high-end restaurants and seafood suppliers domestically and abroad in the United States (Interview June 19, 2013). Fishermen first reported seeing Indo-Pacific lionfish (Pterois volitans) - a popular aquarium fish featuring orange, red, and black or white stripes and venomous dorsal spines - enter the coastal waters of Belize around 2008 (Foley 2008; Interview July 7, 2014). Since then, these fish have become a dire threat to Caribbean reef ecosystems as they voraciously prey on juvenile fish and invertebrates, have few natural predators, and are able to reproduce very rapidly (Longsworth 2013; Informal interview with Blue Ventures researcher June 28, 2013).
Recognizing the impact of lionfish on coastal fisheries, some local fishers draw connections between lionfish eradication and sustainable fisheries, as Carlton explains:

Then, I don’t know if you hear, but this lionfish ... it’s a terrible thing. He ... eat every other one, the young one from every other fish. So we are trying to kill them out now, you know? That’s why we have different time when we go out there and kill them. The other day, they ... brought ... them here (points to dock), and they catch about 600 at one spot. ... One spot, 600 – all size, little one and big one, and that was good, you know, because ... they would make a mess of the reef if we don’t get rid of them. ... But ... one time people see them out there, they kill them, you know. [Interview July 7, 2014].

Many local fishers and tour guides I spoke with have taken notice of the proliferation of invasive lionfish along the reef. Carlton remembers when lionfish first entered coastal waters off of the peninsula:

They had to catch a wave from some place in Florida, and then they come into the Caribbean, then from there, they move into here. We never had them before, and never heard about them before until later down when they come and they’re all over the country. Everywhere you could think about – Punta Gorda, here, Belize City, Lighthouse Reef, anywhere. They come in anywhere you go. [Interview July 7, 2014].

Seeking to curb lionfish proliferation, juvenile predation, and competition with reef fish, and thereby reduces fishing stress on commercially significant fisheries like conch and lobster in coastal waters, some environmental NGOs and residents are working to develop a lionfishery on the peninsula, especially since since no fishing restrictions are imposed on lionfish (Blue Ventures 2014; Chapman 2014). For the past four years during the June Lobsterfest weekend – an multi-day event celebrating the opening of Lobster season – in Placencia, the fishing cooperative has co-sponsored an annual Lionfish Slayers competition and cook-off that has promoted lionfish marketing and consumer education as well as provided marine biological researchers with an opportunity to study the population dynamics, size, types
of species consumed, and reproduction habits of lionfish in coastal Caribbean reefs (Interview June 19, 2013; Informal interview June 28, 2013). OCEANA in Belize initially co-sponsored the competition in March 2011 as an educational event for its Juvenile Fish Protection Campaign, but the competition has since been coordinated by the Placencia Producers Co-op (with the exception of 2015) in collaboration with marine conservation NGOs Blue Ventures, ECOMAR Belize, and OCEANA, regional environmental NGOs TIDE and SEA, the Placencia Tour Guide Association, the local chapter of the BTIA and the Placencia Village Council (Longsworth 2013; Informal interviews June 28, 2013; June 27, 2014; June 18, 2015).

These lionfishing competitions have targeted spaces within the Marine Protected Areas SEA co-manages to reduce existing lionfish populations within them and in surrounding reef environments. The competitions also have promoted consumption of the fish through educational outreach and marketing campaigns to change resident attitudes about eating lionfish, since the meat is often misperceived as poisonous on account of the lionfish’s venomous spines (Informal interviews June 28, 2013; June 27, 2014). A few teams participated in the June 2013, 2014, and 2015 Lionfish Slayers competition, including representatives of local dive shops / tour operators, the fishing cooperative, and resorts on the peninsula, respectively. Teams competed for cash prizes awarded for the largest catch of lionfish as well as the smallest and largest individual lionfish by weight. During the event, some researchers and volunteers from Blue Ventures, TIDE, and SEA, among other organizations, assisted with monitoring the teams, and catching lionfish, while others moved, sorted, measured, weighed, and chilled the lionfish catch (Figure 6), which totaled over 1,100 pounds between the teams in 2015 (Informal interview June 19, 2015).

Volunteers processing lionfish during the 2014 and 2015 tournaments also cut off tailfins for a local Placencia jewelry shop owner and jewelers from Punta Gorda, respectively, to use for crafting earrings and other types of jewelry as value-added products (Informal interviews June 27, 2014; June 19, 2015). In addition to facilitating research and seafood production, the tournaments also have served to raise public awareness for this lionfish eradication initiative by the fishing cooperative and its environmental NGO partners Blue Ventures, OCEANA, SEA, and TIDE. Furthermore, publicity
surrounding the annual tournament had attracted potential regional and foreign customers to purchase lionfish in bulk from the PPCSL and the Northern Fisherman’s Cooperative located in Belize City (Chapman 2014:165-166). To assist with the processing and shipping of lionfish, the Placencia cooperative now has a licensed handling and export facility at the ice storage / seafood processing building in the village near the southern pier supported by USAID’s Regional Program for the Management of Aquatic Resources and Economic Alternatives (MAREA) (Figure 7). This facility recently has been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA), which will help the cooperative attain legitimacy in its international marketing efforts (Longsworth 2013).

Figure 6. Researchers from Blue Ventures and several volunteers assist with sorting and measuring a lionfish catch at the 2013 Lionfish Slayers Competition in Placencia. (Photo taken by the author).
However, with the resignation of the operations manager of the cooperative after allegations of misconduct by members of the cooperative in early 2015, the future of the PPCSL’s efforts to tap into an emerging lionfishery remains uncertain. Many fishers operating outside of the cooperative focus their attention on traditional commercial fisheries such as lobster, conch, and whole finfish since they say the venomous spines are too much work to process for the price of lionfish fillet per pound (which some fishermen say should be at least $10 BZ) (Informal interviews May 31, 2015; June 19, 2015). For example, when I asked a local fisherman about catching lionfish, he told me “I don’t fuck with those things,” explaining that he doesn’t hunt lionfish because the venomous spines hurt more than stingray stings; and he just beats them to death when he catches them and occasionally uses the heads for bait.
Despite the risk, many local tour guides opportunistically spearfish the species during guided scuba diving or snorkeling tours since there are no catch limitations, and often sell their catch to particular restaurants on the peninsula (Informal interview June 7, 2013).

Results from a TIDE NGO lionfish survey administered at their booth at a festival in Punta Gorda held in October 2012 about taste and costs of lionfish suggests that there is a lot of public misinformation among Belizean residents about the fish, namely whether or not the fish was poisonous to eat or that people can incur serious injury or death from getting stung (Foley 2012). Coupled with lionfish tastings, the administered questionnaires by TIDE revealed that the majority of residents perceived the taste of the fish to be like grouper or snapper, and would potentially pay $3-5 BZ per pound in the Punta Gorda market for filleted lionfish. Thus, education and outreach expos about the species indicate that there is a domestic market for lionfish in Belize, especially in the growing tourism industry in the region, although further educational outreach is needed to change public perceptions about consuming the invasive species (Chapman 2014:166; Foley 2012).

Furthermore, despite public education and outreach initiatives and outreach by Blue Ventures, SEA, and other environmental NGOs to facilitate the development of a robust lionfishery, a market for public consumption, and the creation of value-added products like lionfish jewelry, convincing many local fishers to prioritize targeting the species for seafood production over traditional fisheries remains a challenge in light of the opportunity-costs of focusing attention on the species. Many local fishers and tour guides opportunistically catch lionfish if they see them, but don’t actively seek them out, unlike many fishermen in the small fishing village of Santeneja, located in the Corozal district of Belize, where Blue Ventures Belize bases its country operations (Blue Ventures 2014). By 2014, Blue Ventures was working with the Northern Fishermen Cooperative Society Limited out of Belize City to secure an agreement for mass foreign export of bulk lionfish to the United States to assist with the development of a national lionfishery (Chapman 2014:166; Blue Ventures 2014). Stronger collaborations for lionfish market development between Blue Ventures and other environmental NGOs with the PPCSL after a new
operations manager is appointed and additional incentives for local fishers to target the species are likely needed in order to promote a more robust lionfishery in Placencia.

6.2.3 Placencia Fishing Heritage Tourism

Finally, through a third project, representatives of the Placencia Producers cooperative have been planning the development of a fishing history museum and a heritage tourism program since 2012 that seeks to employ local fishermen as guides to take tourists to traditional fishing grounds and seaweed farms in an effort to conserve and promote coastal heritage associated with fishing livelihoods as well as provide fishers with an alternative source of income (Interviews June 19, 2013; July 12, 2014; July 15, 2014). During a conversation in 2013, a former representative of the co-op explained what a tour of the seaweed farms might look like as part of this proposed heritage tourism program:

That we can do a specific tour with fishermen going out fishing, learning about the seaweed, coming back and actually getting an entire day filled with learning about what people of Placencia traditionally did or continue to do for a very long time. You know, I think that we had of course experienced it with a group from all over – Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador – and we gave them a tour of our seaweed farm. You know, it was all hands on, you get in the water, you clean the hook, you harvest, you replant, then you come back and you taste what the seaweed smoothie is all about. … This would facilitate a job for … maybe 5-6 of your tour guides, members that are participating in the seaweed (project). [Interview June 19, 2013].

To fund this program and the proposed museum, the cooperative has applied for a grant from the Inter-American Foundation as an extension of the seaweed farming project in line with Cooperative’s 2013-2017 development plan (Interview July 12, 2014; PPCSL 2014). A two to three story building was planned and, until recently, was under construction adjacent to the main fishing co-operative office, which would serve as a headquarters and office complex for the proposed tourism project and museum (PPCSL 2014). In addition to the museum / cultural center, a local scientist who assisted with grant
writing for the project mentioned that the proposed structure will include a conference room and perhaps a restaurant on top (Interview July 12, 2014).

The former representative of the fishing cooperative described displays and exhibits in the museum that will feature oral histories and videos to illustrate local fishing livelihoods and history. He explained the goal of these displays as “… being able to capture all the older fishermen and the women of this community, and … capturing videos of what they know, what they use to know - things that they can add as examples” (Interview June 19, 2013). Another member of the cooperative, Percy, later told me that the proposed museum will highlight the history and development of the community by the fishing cooperative and the significance of the institution to the village (how it provided local electricity; scholarships for high school students, etc.). Percy also added that the museum would give tribute to the cooperative’s founding fathers, convey the struggle of fishermen to sustain livelihoods through the years, and display traditional fishing vessels and technologies (such as sail boats and use of paddles) (Interview July 15, 2014), to collectively show the significance of fishing livelihoods to community history and identity.

When I asked Joshua what he thought of about the fishing cooperative’s proposed museum in Placencia, he discussed how visitors could learn about changes in fishing practices and technologies historically, telling me:

That would be great. I can imagine a museum with old model dories - the boats that they used to have, the paddles and the sails – compared to what they have now. ... Having the old pots and irons that they use and fishing – the baking pot, the fire hearth. That would have to be a success. ... And again those smaller person(s) – (see) what fishing was like, the nets, the turtles, the entire process. And you can see the evolution, and some good things better and some bad things worse. [Interview July 14, 2014].

Other Placencia residents conceive of a local heritage museum as an opportunity to educate residents and tourists alike about historical materials, tools, and practices used by people living on the
peninsula generations ago (Interviews June 24, 2013; July 12, 2014; July 15, 2014), as Jerry explained in an interview:

Even locals, even kids, even students, they are so unfortunate. … they’re so unfortunate that they didn’t get to see Placencia, for example, the way I got to see it - before all this development, before all the immigration from different areas. … And some of tools and instruments that … were used in that era, they don’t even know “what’s that? … What did they use this for? What’s a fire hearth?” You know it’s something educational both for locals and tourists [Interview July 15, 2014].

Similarly, Brian was enthusiastic about the educational possibilities of the fishing cooperative’s proposed museum, remarking:

That’s gonna’ be a good thing, man. ... You have to have someone there who has knowledge of it and is willing to always be there to provide that service and whatever basic questions there are, and ... There’s going to be a need for ... education, speeches, and more traditional things like knowing how to fish, spear a fish, use a fish trap, you know. Simple things, you know, because that’s basically (where) we come from.

In a conversation about the proposed museum in 2013, a former representative of the co-op further articulated community interest in a local fishing history and culture museum, observing:

… a lot of people still appreciate that mode of living and lifestyle. But now that’s changed, people have strayed away those traditional mode(s) of living. I think it still can be captured, you know putting it into heritage tourism. You know a package that people from other parts of the world can come around and enjoy, but still be able to enjoy (what) we use to do 10, 20, 50 years ago. … You know, and appreciate I think your community a little more, … where I can jump a canoe with somebody with all the experience in the world and paddle in the lagoon or go out … probably five miles out, catch my fish, come back in, clean it, and enjoy. Have somebody show
me how to clean fish. A lot of people have no clue, you know, the process of being able to fillet a fish, of cleaning and gutting it, and cooking it in a traditional way. … It’s something that the Placencia Cooperative is working on right now … because we believe that the heritage of the Placencia community, as a fishing village, needs to hold that. And I think if we hold that, the future … is very bright. Because we can show people to appreciate our culture and our heritage and then in turn, the word would be out. [Interview June 19, 2013].

Recognizing increasing international demand for locally-inspired cuisine and national multicultural tourism marketing in Belize (e.g., in Destination Belize magazine (BTIA 2013, 2014)), this brand of fishing heritage tourism represents an opportunity for fishers to demonstrate traditional local seafood ways or “fisherman cooking” to tourists through what Belizian anthropologist Lyra Spang (2014a:1, 24-25; 2014b:70-72) following Richard Wilk (2006) terms “Belizean Home-Cooking.” As a relationship-oriented, culturally-rooted culinary practice in contrast to professional cooking (Spang 2014b:70-72), Kriol “home-cooking” of seafood after a tour may expose interested tourists to an “authentic” sea-to-table experience of catching, preparing, and eating seafood with a local fisher guide. Thus, fishing heritage tourism, coupled with seaweed tours, may tap into an expanding culinary tourism market as an alternative to conventional tourist dining experiences in ex-patriate owned as well as local restaurants that often feature some variation of the informal Belizian Creole (Kriol) national dish of stew chicken, rice and beans with potato salad and plantains, among others (Spang 2014a:7, 21-25). It also connects to what many residents conceive a sustainable coastal tourism industry might look like in the future – highlighting a complementary relationship between local fishing and tourism livelihoods (Interviews June 16, 2014; July 14, 2014; July 15, 2014). Joshua, an educator and former fisherman, articulated: “I like the model that we have right now … because they can do fishing, they can sell their products at the hotels, or at the co-op and then sell to the hotels. So that the tourists eat the fish and … employ these fishermen to take them out so they earn foreign currency and they still sell their fish at a better price” (Interview July 14, 2014).
Interview data and survey results suggest that local people consider fishing and the cooperative as fundamental features of Placencia’s culture and identity. For example, when a local NGO representative was asked what she thought was the cultural legacy of the peninsula, she replied: “The culture of fishing, that’s how I know it. There’s always a cooperative, many fishermen, and then they diversified into tourism” (Interview June 17, 2013). Jerry, who was born and raised in Placencia, further elaborated:

Placencia was founded and based on fishing. In matter of fact, the first company to provide electricity - … to this village before it explode(d) into this size, which is still not too big - was the fishermen’s cooperative. … The fishermen’s coop - you know - that was a very big deal here. A lot of people had jobs, the women they had jobs in the processing facility / processing plants, processing conch, lobster, fish, … packaging, then shipping them off to the mother branch there in Belize City. And still today, fishing is a big deal. ... It hasn’t really changed in terms of income source that much. … But still, it’s fishing … and tours. And … other people in the community, they benefit also from resort jobs – whichever department. But generally it all revolves around tourism. But before tourism was introduced, it was just fishing. [Interview July 15, 2014].

When asked to rate their interest in a museum focused on local culture and history more broadly (not just on fishing), roughly 95 percent of residents, 90 percent of Belizean non-peninsula residents, and 79 percent of foreign tourists surveyed during the 2014 field season responded that they were either “interested” or “very interested” in seeing such a museum be developed on the peninsula (using a likert-type scale ranging from “not at all interested” (1) to “very interested” (5); N = 79; n₁ = 55 for peninsula residents, n₂ = 10 for Belizeans not residing on the Placencia Peninsula, and n₃ = 14 for foreign tourists; see Figure 8). Among these survey respondents, there appeared to be general consensus between men and women with respect to their interest in seeing a local culture / history museum be developed on the peninsula with nearly 93 percent of men (n = 41) and roughly 89 percent of women (n = 38) responding that they were either “interested” or “very interested.” Similarly, younger and older respondents appeared to have similar level of consensus with 100 percent of respondents between 18-25 years of age (n = 15),
roughly 91 percent of respondents in the 26-35 age grouping (n = 34), around 77 percent of respondents in the 36-49 age grouping (n = 13), 92 percent of respondents in the 50-64 age grouping (n = 13), and 100 percent of respondents 65 years and older (n = 3) replying that they were either “interested” or “very interested” in seeing a such a museum be developed. Among Belizean residents (N = 65), roughly 90 percent of survey respondents from Placencia (n = 21), 96 percent from Seine Bight (n = 24), 100 percent from Maya Beach (n = 8), 100 percent from Riversdale (n = 2), 100 percent from Independence / Mango Creek (n = 6), and 75 percent of respondents residing elsewhere in Belize (n = 4) noted that they were either “interested” or “very interested” in seeing a such a general cultural or historical museum be developed.

Even Belizean residents from different ethnic backgrounds had similar levels of interest in seeing the creation of a local culture / history museum on the peninsula. Approximately 94 percent of Belizean resident respondents identifying as Creole (Kriol) (n = 18), 100 percent of Maya (Mopan and Q’eqchi’) respondents (n = 4), 90 percent of Mestizo / Hispanic / Spanish respondents (n = 10), 80 percent of White / Caucasian respondents (n = 5), 100 percent of Garifuna respondents (n = 18), 100 percent of respondents identifying with mixed ethnicity (n = 5), and 80 percent of respondents identifying with other ethnic groups (n = 5) noted that they were either “interested” or “very interested” in the development of such a museum.9 These survey results suggest that Belizeans from diverse ethnic backgrounds, especially those residing in communities on or surrounding the peninsula, have a high level of interest in seeing the creation of a local culture / history museum on the peninsula, especially considering that nearly 62 percent of Belizean survey respondents indicated that they were “very interested” in the development of such a museum.

Among foreign tourists surveyed during the 2014 field season (n = 14), however, interest in developing a local culture / history museum on the peninsula was more varied as 80 percent of European respondents (n1 = 5) and 100 percent of Canadian tourists (n2 = 3) surveyed were either “interested” or

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9 For the purposes of simplifying ethnic groups for comparison, I combined a few ethnic categories noted in the Belize census, relative to major ethnic groupings of residents represented on the peninsula (e.g., combining ‘Spanish’ and ‘Mestizo’ into the “Mestizo / Hispanic / Spanish” category).
“very interested,” while only two-thirds of U.S. tourists (n = 6) expressed interest in seeing such a museum be developed. Although the number of foreign tourists surveyed represents a small sample size, differences in relative interest in developing a local culture / history museum between Belizean residents and foreign tourists may suggest differing markets between domestic and foreign visitors for local heritage consumption. Notably, among Belizean residents, all but one respondent surveyed in 2014 who identified as having Belizean nationality (n = 53) was either “interested” or “very interested” in seeing such a museum be developed. Some expatriate and “local” residents our team interviewed were unsure about the viability of developing a culture and history museum on the peninsula (Interviews June 17, 2014; June 26, 2015). For example, one middle-aged expatriate living in Maya Beach told us with regard to developing a culture and history museum nearby in Seine Bight: “I don’t know. … There’s a Garifuna museum, which I haven’t been to, but I hear is very interesting in Dangriga, which is a much larger Garifuna town than, you know, Seine Bight. … Honestly, I don’t know” (Interview June 17, 2014).

Furthermore, when I asked Christopher about the potential for developing a local culture / heritage museum in Placencia more broadly, although he thought it could work, he was uncertain about how museum exhibits might be constructed to convey Creole (Kriol) culture without tangible heritage, telling me:

I would think so, but our culture is ... I don’t know how you’d classify it, but it’s more like storytelling and a little singing. It’s not much tangible stuff that you would be able to put into a museum. So you would definitely have to have like the stories of the older folks and that kind of stuff. So it’s not like we’re ... you know, the other culture up in Seine Bight, they’re very rich in their cultural heritage, and they have other tangible stuff like the drums and other tools that they use every day, which … they could definitely put in a museum but it would be very different. ... It would be a good thing. I think a lot of the younger people would be able to – because, like I said, that’s one thing with our group. I’m Creole (Kriol), we’re Creoles, and we have held on especially well to our traditions so it would be difficult putting our stuff in a museum. [Interview June 24, 2013].
Figure 8. Bar chart showing relative interest in seeing a local culture / history museum be developed on the Placencia Peninsula among 2014 KoBo survey respondents. (Chart drafted by the author).

Other residents noted that although there is local interest in developing a history and culture museum in Placencia, insufficient funding and resources limits the possibility that a museum will be created, as Susan explained during an interview in 2015:

I think so. I hope so. That’s part of the new co-op development. They had a business plan done. Did you see that? Yea they had a business plan done and ... (name of person) was working with them and … worked with SEA and the fishing co-op to develop a business plan and they were going to set up a cultural museum showing the fishing history in Placencia. People have talked about walking tours through the village, but nothing like that has ever happened. Nothing’s ever
come to creation. ... I think even though that was in the business plan, I don’t think there was actual funding for it. So it’s a nice idea, but it never happened because there wasn’t ever funding for it. [Interview June 26, 2015].

Thus, despite extensive interest in the development of a fishing history museum centered on the fishing cooperative in Placencia or a local cultural / historical museum more generally on the peninsula, especially among Belizean citizens, differing levels of enthusiasm for a local history and culture museum between foreign tourists and Belizean residents as well as difficulties securing financial capital for the project complicate the success of such a coordinated heritage business venture. Additional research into the local, regional, and (inter)national markets for fishing heritage tourism elicited through further interviews and surveys and comparisons with similar cases of marine-centered community-based tourism initiatives are needed to more fully assess whether the cooperative’s proposed fishing heritage tourism plan can be viable over the long term.
CHAPTER VII: HERITAGE IMAGINARIES, MARKETING, AND VISIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN PLACENCIA

To better consider the market for cultural tourism on the peninsula, particularly for fishing heritage tourism, I examine the ways resident and tourist conceptions of what local heritage is overlap or diverge in the following discussion by exploring results from the targeted surveys, semi-structured and oral history interviews, and participatory mapping activities carried out through this research. First, I examine how and to what extent peninsula residents conceive of fishing as a form of heritage before exploring “tourism imaginaries” (Salazar 2010) of the Placencia Peninsula as a destination and its heritage. I then discuss how local heritage conceptions and non-local heritage imaginaries of Placencia intersect within the scope of sustainable tourism and cultural policies, visions, and marketing media.

The KoBo data for resident, worker, and visitor perceptions of heritage (namely in response to an open-ended short answer and a multi-select question about significant / important aspects of culture / heritage on the peninsula and conceptions of heritage from a list of items spanning local events, holidays, and activities and national (authorized) tourism conceptions of heritage (such as Maya archaeological sites and the Blue Hole), respectively), were coded, categorized, and analyzed to quantitively compare differences in local heritage perceptions between participants representing diverse demographic backgrounds and identities. Simply analyzing heritage perceptions through quantitative comparisons of discrete coded categories of heritage “things” or “places” may valorize the tangible representations of heritage and conceal the intangible memories, uses, and underlying meanings, values, relationships, and experiences implicit or embodied within conceptions of heritage that many heritage scholars discuss in their critiques of sanctioned and authorized discourses of heritage used for tourism marketing, patrimonial preservation, and national identity construction, among other purposes (e.g., Chambers, E. 2006; Labadi
To address this shortcoming, I consider these basic identifications and categorizations for quantitative comparisons of heritage perceptions between various groups of people on the peninsula within a broader context of resident conceptions of heritage elicited through semi-structured and oral history interviews and participatory mapping excursions, imaginaries of culture and heritage circulated in tourism marketing media, and “authorized heritage discourse” (Smith, L. 2006) in national sustainable tourism and cultural policy documents. Furthermore, to better characterize the nuances implicit within these cursory categorizations of heritage perceptions among survey respondents as part of broader heritage conceptions, I discuss these notions of heritage as “aspects” or “features.” I focus my analysis around fishing conceptions – specifically whether or not and to what extent peninsula residents, Belizeans living off of the peninsula, and foreign tourists representing varying demographic backgrounds consider fishing as an aspects of local heritage. Specifically, my discussion is based around comparative analyses of the results of the two KoBo questions focusing on identification of (significant / important) attributes of local culture / heritage in particular (noted at the beginning of this chapter) to ascertain any potential patterns of heritage perceptions between various demographic groupings of survey respondents. Through this comparative analysis, I consider not only whether respondents identify fishing / the fishing industry as (significant / important) heritage on the peninsula directly, but whether they attribute events, places, and activities that they may be familiar with or associate with fishing culture like the annual Lobsterfest celebrations (traditionally a fishermen’s holiday and now primarily a tourism-oriented event; included as a category in the 15 option multi-select heritage question) or the Placencia pier. While analyzing these survey data in this way does not illuminate the nuances of heritage meanings, values, relationships, experiences, and production discussed and articulated in the literature review (Chapter two) and other sections of this thesis, they may indicate general patterns of heritage conceptions and imaginaries between various groups of people interacting on the peninsula and the place of fishing within them.
7.1 Fishing as Heritage in Placencia: Local Conceptions and Tourism Imaginaries

7.1.1 Local Conceptions of Fishing as Heritage

Considering the peninsula’s fishing history and the significance that the Placencia fishing cooperative held in the economic development of Placencia before the transition to tourism as the village’s primary income-earning activity, survey and interview results suggest that most Placencia adult residents (and residents of other villages on / around the Placencia Peninsula) recognize fishing and local events or places associated with fishing as significant features of heritage on the peninsula. When peninsula residents were asked about what they identify as heritage from a list of fifteen items spanning national (authorized) tourism conceptions of heritage and local events, holidays, and activities through the KoBo surveys (see appendix 6, question 11), nearly 90 percent of those surveyed from the 2013 and 2014 field seasons (N = 79) considered fishing activities to be part of heritage on the peninsula.10 Notably, among peninsula residents, almost 98 percent of survey participants from Placencia (n = 43) considered fishing to be a part of local heritage, while roughly 88 percent of respondents from Seine Bight (n = 24), 100 percent of respondents from Riversdale (n = 2), and only 60 percent of Maya Beach respondents (n = 10) attributed the activity to local heritage (Figure 9). Even roughly 81 percent of Belizean residents living off of the peninsula (n = 16; including about 86 percent of respondents from Independence / Mango Creek (n1 = 7)) noted fishing to be a part of the peninsula’s heritage during the surveys, likely due to the similar historical and economic valuation of fishing to other towns and villages along the Belizean coastline (Huitric 2005). When examining resident responses by gender, the survey results suggest a similar degree of consensus between men and women from the peninsula regarding whether fishing activities are a part of local heritage as roughly 88 percent of men (n = 48) and about 94 percent of women (n = 31) noted fishing. Furthermore, among Belizean resident survey participants living off of the peninsula, seven out of eight men and six out of eight women recognized fishing as an aspect of the peninsula’s heritage.

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10 There were only 13 items on the 2013 Pilot season KoBo survey, with fishing and diving combined into one response. N = 55 residents surveyed during the 2014 summer field season.
Similarly, peninsula residents who participated in the KoBo surveys generally considered fishing activities to be a part of local heritage across ethnic identities. Among peninsula residents surveyed, 100 percent of respondents identifying as Creole (n = 23), 75 percent of Maya (Mopan and Q’eqchi’) respondents (n = 4), 100 percent of Mestizo / Hispanic / Spanish respondents (n = 8), 80 percent of White / Caucasian respondents (n = 10), approximately 78 percent of Garifuna respondents (n = 18), 100 percent of respondents identifying with other ethnic groups (n = 7), and nearly 89 percent of respondents identifying with mixed ethnicity (n = 9) noted fishing as an aspect of local heritage. Consensus about fishing being a part of local heritage was similar across age groupings with some slight variation between younger and older demographics. Only approximately 82 percent of 18-25 year old residents surveyed (n = 17) considered fishing to be a part of their heritage, while roughly 94 percent of residents between 26-35 (n = 31), 92 percent of residents between 36-49 (n = 13), 100 percent of residents between 50 and 64 years old (n = 14), and two out of three senior residents (65+ years in age) noted fishing as an aspect of local heritage (Table 2). This slight difference between younger and older residents, while not statistically significant, may be associated with the declining prominence of fishing livelihoods and the diminishing contribution of fisheries to the local economy over the past 20-25 years (although a larger sample size for particular age groupings (e.g., 65+) is needed to better assess differences between them).

Furthermore, when peninsula residents were asked to identify just one significant feature of local culture or heritage on the peninsula through a KoBo survey administered over two field seasons (N = 79), nearly 18 percent of respondents noted fishing, or events or locations associated with fishing (with 64 percent of this group noting fishing or the fishing industry in particular; see Figure 10). For example, two residents identified the annual Lobsterfest celebrations in June (which initially served as a fishermen’s holiday after the opening of lobster season) and one resident attributed the community pier located at the southern end of the village (where fishermen sold their catch and residents fished) as significant features of local heritage.
Table 2. Placencia Peninsula resident survey respondents’ identification of fishing as an aspect of local heritage by age group when asked what they consider to be heritage from a list spanning several national and local traditions, holidays, events, places, and activities during the 2013 and 2014 field seasons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Row N %</td>
<td>Column N %</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Row N %</td>
<td>Column N %</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Row N %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-49</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>92.3%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>91.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three-day weekend festival now called Lobsterfest began as an annual Fishermen's Day under the fishing patron Saint Paul in Placencia to celebrate the opening of lobster fishing season and recognize the contribution of local fishermen, but changed substantially after the Placencia Village Council and the local chapter of the BTIA took over the event over 10 years ago (Informal interview June 22, 2015; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:32-34). Since 1999, Lobsterfest has become one of Placencia’s major tourism events throughout the year alongside Easter weekend, the Sidewalk Arts festival in February, and the September Belizean Independence Celebrations (Interview June 19, 2014), and even earned the Belize Tourism Board’s Festival of the Year award in 2013 (Placencia Village Council and Placencia Tourism Center 2016).

Similar to other Lobsterfest celebrations held at or shortly after the opening of lobster season in San Pedro and Caye Caulker, Belize, Placencia’s Lobsterfest serves as a community fundraising event during tourism low season (sponsored by the Placencia Chapter of the BTIA and the Village Council), where local businesses and artisans sell their food, goods, and services, and local non-profits, environmental NGOs, and other organizations promote their causes - including conservation and community work - at various booths and tents along the beach adjacent to the Tipsy Tuna restaurant / bar.
Local cooks take pride in serving a variety of lobster and non-lobster themed fare to several hundred or potentially thousands of residents and visitors alike, while numerous vendors, a variety of beverages, a line-up of popular bands, DJs, and local music groups, a central raffle, and games contribute to the beach festival atmosphere.

The Lobsterfest weekend opens early Friday morning with a roughly five mile long “Battle Cancer” run / walk on the peninsula’s main road between Seine Bight village to the north and finishing in Placencia village. The run / walk event has supported prostate and cervical cancer awareness and
screenings and the Edlin Leslie Sr. Hospice and Home Care program since 2007 (Informal interview June 27, 2014). The weekend festival also includes a parade through the streets of Placencia led by a marching band on Saturday, a commercial fishing tournament sporting large boats as well as the Lionfish Slayers competition (discussed in detail in a previous section), which has been sponsored by environmental NGOs and the Placencia fishing cooperative (until recently). Moreover, Lobsterfest used to include a two-day fishing tournament, attracting local commercial fishers and resort sport fishers, but the tournament since has been moved to September (Informal interview June 22, 2015).

In addition to local environmental NGOs and community organizations, the Belize Fisheries Department and other national organizations have a presence at the festival, distributing information about fisheries regulations, commercial species, and conservation initiatives (including their sustainable alternative livelihoods program) to interested residents and visitors. Although the event supports environmental conservation initiatives and local community organizations, Lobsterfest has become a primary tourism income earner for businesses in the village during the tourism slow season as Larry discussed during an interview:

I mean if we get people, we still can stay in business, but the problem now (is) that we’re in our off season. Like now it’s almost gettin’ to where … you just about break even. Some weeks you definitely lose money. That’s why the Lobsterfest was created. ‘Cause June was always a really bad month and to get some activity in the village, they created the Lobster festival. ... See and that brings in people from all over the country to come and spend … a little money. And that does well for that weekend, but after that it’s down in the drain again. [Interview June 19, 2014].

Despite the relatively recent creation of Lobsterfest, nearly two-thirds of peninsula residents surveyed (N = 79) noted the Lobsterfest celebrations as an aspect of the peninsula’s heritage when asked what they identify as heritage from a list of fifteen items spanning national (authorized) tourism conceptions of heritage and local events, holidays, and activities through the KoBo surveys in 2013 and 2014 (see appendix 6, question 11). Among peninsula residents, notably, approximately 72 percent of
survey participants from Placencia (n = 43) attributed Lobsterfest to local heritage, while roughly 58 percent of respondents from Seine Bight (n = 24), 60 percent of Maya Beach respondents (n = 10), and 50 percent of respondents from Riversdale (n = 2), considered the event to be a part of local heritage. Even 75 percent of Belizean residents living off of the peninsula (workers or visitors) (n = 16) including six residents from nearby Independence / Mango Creek noted Lobsterfest to be a part of the peninsula’s heritage during the surveys, likely due to the event’s regional tourism and fishing significance. When examining resident responses by gender, the survey results suggest a large degree of consensus between men and women from the peninsula regarding whether Lobsterfest is part of local heritage as roughly 65 percent of men (n = 48) and about 68 percent of women (n = 31) noted the event. Furthermore, among Belizean residents living off of the peninsula who were surveyed, seven out of eight men and six out of eight women (n = 8) attributed Lobsterfest as an element of the peninsula’s heritage.

However, whether Lobsterfest is considered to be a part of the peninsula’s heritage differed to some degree between resident respondents identifying with various ethnic groups. Among peninsula residents surveyed, nearly 74 percent of respondents identifying as Creole (n = 23), 75 percent of Maya (Mopan and Q’eqchi’) respondents (n = 4), 50 percent of Mestizo / Hispanic / Spanish respondents (n = 8), 80 percent of White / Caucasian respondents (n = 10), roughly 56 percent of Garifuna respondents (n = 18), over 71 percent of respondents identifying with other ethnic groups (n = 7), and about 56 percent of respondents identifying with mixed ethnicity (n = 9) noted Lobsterfest as an aspect of local heritage.

These differences in perception of Lobsterfest’s heritage significance may be due to varying representation and involvement in the festival among residents from differing ethnic groups on the peninsula (such as Garifuna residents), since it is a Placencia-based tourism event (although organizations and vendors across the peninsula are generally welcome to participate). Moreover, while the majority of peninsula residents surveyed across all age groupings identified Lobsterfest as an element of local heritage, consensus seemed to vary to some degree between resident groups depending on the number of years they have lived on or around the peninsula (see Table 3).
Figure 10. Bar chart showing what peninsula residents who participated in KoBo surveys during the 2013 and 2014 field seasons responded when asked to identify just one significant aspect of local culture / heritage on the peninsula. The response categories are color-coded into major groupings. (Chart drafted by the author).

Among resident survey respondents who reported living on the peninsula for a year or less (n = 9), two-thirds considered Lobsterfest to be a part of their heritage, while 100 percent of residents who reported living on the peninsula between 2-4 years (n = 8), roughly 71 percent of those who living on the peninsula between 5-10 years (n = 17), only about 36 percent of residents living on the peninsula between 11-19 years (n = 11), and almost 64 percent of resident respondents living on the peninsula twenty years or more (n = 33) noted Lobsterfest as an aspect of local heritage. These differences in perception of Lobsterfest as local heritage between residents who have lived on the peninsula for varying amounts of time, while not statistically significant, may be associated with whether or not residents had lived on the
peninsula before the inception of the festival in 1999, their degree of familiarity with Fisherman’s Day before the holiday became a tourism-centered event, and their relative level of involvement in the tourism industry on the peninsula (although a larger sample size for particular residency time groupings (e.g., 0-1, 2-4, and 11-19 years) is needed to better assess differences between them).

More broadly, when peninsula resident survey respondents \((N = 78)\) were asked to identify just one significant thing or place associated with local culture / heritage on the peninsula, 17 percent of men \((n = 47)\) and roughly 19 percent of women \((n = 31)\) noted fishing or places and events associated with fishing (including fishing and tourism, Lobsterfest, and the Placencia pier (see Figure 10)). While the proportion of men and women resident respondents who attributed fishing or places and events associated with fishing as the most important feature of local heritage on the peninsula were similar, the level of consensus varied to some extent between surveyed residents from different age demographics. Nearly 12 percent of 18-25 year old residents surveyed \((n = 17)\) considered events associated with fishing (i.e., Lobsterfest) to be the most important feature of their heritage, while roughly 23 percent of residents between 26-35 \((n = 31)\), 23 percent of residents between 36-49 \((n = 13)\), roughly 14 percent of residents between 50 and 64 years old \((n = 14)\), and zero percent of senior residents \((65+ \text{ years in age}; n = 3)\) noted fishing / places or events associated with fishing as the most significant feature of local heritage. These differences in perception of the importance of fishing to local heritage between residents 26 to 49 years old and those younger and older than this age demographic, is difficult to explain, although this variation in perceptions may be due to a small sample size for particular age groupings (e.g., 65+ years old).

Similarly, identification of fishing or events and places associated with fishing as the most significant feature of local heritage varied to some extent between Belizean residents surveyed \((N = 95)\) by their primary occupation(s) and place of residence. For example, five out of ten residents surveyed who noted fishing as a primary occupation (nine men and one woman) attributed the fishing industry / places and events associated with fishing when asked to identify the most important aspect of local heritage to them.
Table 3. Placencia Peninsula resident survey respondents’ identification of Lobsterfest as an aspect of local heritage by the number of years they have lived on the peninsula when asked what they consider to be heritage from a list spanning several national and local traditions, holidays, events, places, and activities during the 2013 and 2014 field seasons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years lived on or around the peninsula (range)</th>
<th>Resident identification of Lobsterfest as an aspect of local heritage</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Row N</th>
<th>Column N</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Row N</th>
<th>Column N</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<th>Column N</th>
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<tr>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-19</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20+</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compared with Belizean residents surveyed who noted employment in other occupations, fishers had a much higher relative percentage of identifying fishing as significant local heritage as only 30 percent of teachers / educators (n = 10, one of whom was also a fisherman), approximately 36 percent of tour guides / dive masters / tour operators (n = 14, six of whom were also fishermen), 25 percent of homemakers (n = 4), zero percent of construction workers (n = 7, two of whom also identified as fishermen), zero percent of workers employed in the hotel / lodging industry (n = 9), about 10 percent of Belizean residents working in food / bar service industry positions (n = 21), and roughly 19 percent of residents identifying with other occupations (n = 31) noted the activity / places and events associated with fishing when asked to identify the most important aspect of the peninsula’s heritage. These survey results suggest, while not statistically significant, that Belizean fishers and those who work with fisheries, marine tourism, or processing / preparing seafood in some capacity tended to recognize the fishing industry / places or events associated with fishing as significant local heritage to a greater degree than Belizean residents employed in other occupations / industries.

By place of residence, approximately 26 percent of survey respondents from Placencia (n = 43) identified fishing / places or events associated with fishing as the most significant feature of local heritage.
as did 50 percent of respondents from Riversdale (n = 2), while only about four percent of respondents from Seine Bight (n = 24) and 11 percent of Maya Beach respondents (n = 9) noted fishing culture / places / events. Furthermore, about 18 percent of Belizean residents living off of the peninsula (workers or visitors) who were surveyed (n = 17), including one resident from the nearby town of Independence / Mango Creek, noted the fishing industry or events or places associated with fishing as the most significant feature of the peninsula’s heritage, likely due to the region’s fishing significance historically. The higher proportion of survey respondents from Placencia who identified the fishing industry / events or places associated with fishing as the most important aspect of local heritage compared to other villages on the peninsula such as Seine Bight and Maya Beach, is likely due to the historical presence of the fishing cooperative based in Placencia for over 50 years, a prominent pier, and the village hosting Lobsterfest annually for more than a decade and a half. These differences in identification of fishing / events or places associated with fishing as the most important aspects of local heritage between survey respondents residing in different areas on the peninsula roughly parallel the proportions for identification of fishing culture / places / events by the major ethnic group(s) represented in each of these locales. Notably, 26 percent of Creole (Kriol) resident respondents (n = 23; the major ethnic group in Placencia), no Maya Mopan or Q’eqchi’ respondents (n = 3), 50 percent of Mestizo / Hispanic / Spanish respondents (n = 8; one of the major ethnic groups in Riversdale), 20 percent of White / Caucasian respondents (n = 10; the major ethnic group in Maya Beach), approximately six percent of Garifuna respondents (n = 18; the major ethnic group in Seine Bight), zero percent of respondents identifying with other ethnic groups (n = 6), and ten percent of respondents identifying with mixed ethnicity (n = 10) surveyed on the peninsula attributed fishing / events or places associated with fishing as the most significant aspects of local heritage (Figure 11).

Fishing or events and places associated with fishing, however, was not the most popular category identified by peninsula residents as the most significant feature of local culture / heritage during the surveys. More than the proportion of residents who identified fishing or fishing-related events / places, about 22 percent of resident respondents (N = 79) noted one or more ethnic groups (or the diversity of
ethnic groups on the peninsula) as the most significant aspect of local culture / heritage (see Figure 10).

Among peninsula residents surveyed, nearly 39 percent of Garifuna respondents (n = 18) identified Garifuna culture or cultural diversity as the most significant aspect of local heritage while nearly nine percent of Creole (Kriol) respondents (n = 23) identified Creole (Kriol) culture or cultural diversity. These results may indicate that for particular ethnic groups on the peninsula, there are strong connections between ethnic identity and cultural heritage. For example, when I asked about how groups could promote local cultural tourism on the peninsula during an interview in 2014, Jerry told me:

![Figure 11](chart.png)

**Figure 11.** Bar chart showing the percentage of peninsula residents who participated in KoBo surveys during the 2013 and 2014 field seasons and identified fishing or places / events associated with fishing when asked to identify just one significant aspect of local culture or heritage on the peninsula by their ethnicity / ethnic group. (Chart drafted by the author).
Well, to be honest, Kriol, though we have and we are a culture ... – and this is my opinion – that we don’t have such a very, very strong culture or we’re not that strong a cultural base as say Garifuna or Mestizo or Mayans. I would say the Garifuna, the Garinagu people, they can more cut the lines or get into a cultural recognition tourism-wise by – you know, they have a specific clothing they use, they have the drums, they have the shakers, they also have food, they have ceremonies. Whereas Kriol, we don’t necessarily have clothing we use, we don’t have something to identify as clothing for Kriol though we do, but it’s not something significant. We have food, we have music, we have way of life – fishing – amongst other things. And in certain cases, for example at (name of restaurant) ... we try to promote the way we cook authentic ... Kriol cooking. We could go a little extra by cooking on a fire hearth the way everybody cooked bak den’. ... (It) makes the food taste a lot nicer, but it’s a lot of work. [Interview July 15, 2014].

Like Jerry, some other residents made explicit connections between Kriol culture and fishing livelihoods. When I asked Larry how he would describe his culture, he explained: “So we are called Kriol, and that’s our culture. I mean, we eat fish. We have fishermen. We … were pirates. Some of my relatives were pirates too.” (Interview June 19, 2014).

Ethnic identity / cultural diversity were recognized as significant elements of local heritage to some extent by residents across the peninsula. Among residents surveyed, approximately 16 percent of respondents living in Placencia (n = 43), 38 percent of respondents in Seine Bight (n = 24), 10 percent of respondents living in Maya Beach (n = 10), and one out of two respondents living in Riversdale identified ethnic / cultural diversity or particular ethnic groups such as Creole (Kriol), Garifuna, or Maya represented on the peninsula as the most significant feature of local heritage. Interestingly, by contrast, not a single Belizean survey respondent from Independence / Mango Creek (n = 7) or elsewhere in Belize (n = 10) distinguished ethnic / cultural diversity or particular ethnic groups as the most significant aspect of the peninsula’s heritage. This contrast between respondents living on the peninsula and those living elsewhere in Belize, while not statistically significant, indicates that peninsula residents may be more
likely to recognize their cultural / ethnic diversity as the most significant aspect of local heritage than non-residents. Younger peninsula residents, in particular, were more likely to recognize ethnic / cultural diversity as the most significant part of local heritage with roughly 18 percent of survey respondents between 18-25 (n = 17), 29 percent of respondents between 26-35 (n = 31), and approximately 31 percent of respondents ages 36-49 (n = 13) noting it, while only one out of 17 residents surveyed who were 50 years old or older distinguished particular ethnic groups or ethnic / cultural diversity when asked the survey question (see Table 4).

Roughly eight percent of other resident survey respondents recognized cultural performances (drumming, dancing, music, food, etc.) by particular ethnic / cultural groups on the peninsula as the most significant part of local heritage. In particular, roughly five percent of residents living in Placencia (n = 43) and approximately 17 percent of Seine Bight residents (n = 24) surveyed noted type(s) of cultural performances when asked to identify the one most significant aspect of culture / heritage to them on the peninsula. Among those residents who distinguished cultural performance(s) during the KoBo surveys (n = 6), one-third identified with Creole (Kriol), one-third with Garifuna, and a third with mixed ethnicities, respectively.

Resonating with Jerry’s comment about Kriol cooking as a significant feature of Kriol (Creole) culture, an additional five percent of peninsula residents surveyed distinguished local cuisine and ethnic foods when asked what they consider to be the most important aspect of local culture / heritage. These residents lived in Seine Bight (n₁ = 3) and Placencia (n₂ = 1), and represented Kriol, Garifuna, and Chinese ethnic identities, groups that are known for having strong culinary traditions in Belize (Spang 2014a, 2014b). For Belizean survey respondents who resided off of the peninsula (n = 17), almost 12 percent (one respondent from Belmopan and the other from Independence / Mango Creek) noted local cuisine as the most significant aspect of culture / heritage on the Placencia Peninsula. Furthermore, one hundred percent of Belizean respondents residing off of the peninsula who were surveyed in 2014 (n = 10) noted Belizean cuisine when they were asked about what they identify as heritage from a list of fifteen items spanning national (authorized) tourism conceptions of heritage and local events, holidays,
and activities, suggesting that many Belizeans perceive foodways as a significant aspect of Belizean heritage, and, by extension, their heritage imaginaries of the peninsula.

Other resident survey respondents saw the local friendly vibe of the people of Placencia / on the peninsula as the most significant aspect of peninsula’s heritage. Notably, 14 percent of Placencia residents (n = 43) and over eight percent of Seine Bight residents (n = 24) who participated in the KoBo surveys in 2013 and 2014 described the local friendly people / vibe of the place when asked to identify the one most important thing or place associated with local culture / heritage to them.

Table 4. Placencia Peninsula resident survey respondents’ identification of significant aspects of culture / heritage on the peninsula by age group when asked what they consider to be the one most important thing or place associate with local culture / heritage during the 2013 and 2014 field seasons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One Most Important Aspect, Thing, or Place Associated with Culture / Heritage on the Peninsula</th>
<th>Resident Age Range (Years)</th>
<th>18-25</th>
<th>26-35</th>
<th>36-49</th>
<th>50-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barrier Reef or Cayes</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Column N %</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Column N %</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Column N %</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaches / Relaxation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Performances (Dance, drumming, music, food, and others)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic / Cultural Diversity (Kriol, Garifuna, Maya, and others)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing (Industry)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Most Important Aspect, Thing, or Place Associated with Culture / Heritage on the Peninsula</td>
<td>Resident Age Range (Years)</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Column N %</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Column N %</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Column N %</td>
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<td>---</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing and Tourism</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobsterfest</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Cuisine</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Friendly Vibe / People</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Tourism</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maya Archaeology / Ruins</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placencia Lagoon and Atoll</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placencia Pier</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placencia Village</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seine Bight Village</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snorkeling / Diving</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sea / Ocean</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resident respondents noted the friendly people / community(ies) on the peninsula across ethnic groups (except Maya Mopan or Q’eqchi’ residents) and age demographics, especially among respondents ages 26-35 (nearly 13 percent) and those between 50 and 64 years old (over 14 percent) (see Table 4). However, male residents surveyed (about 13 percent of 48 respondents) noted the local friendly people / vibe of the people in Placencia / on the peninsula as the most significant feature of local culture and heritage at roughly double the proportion of female residents (approximately seven percent of 31 respondents). For example, when asked about describing the peninsula’s culture and heritage to a visitor, William, a hotel owner, explained during an interview in 2013:

… I wouldn’t go out of my way to explain it. It’s something that more gets picked up by the pace of the place. I mean … you could go to the Turtle Inn on a Thursday night and see the Garifuna dancing show – and it’s pretty cool and it’s interesting. But my experience is that maybe 10 percent of the tourists appreciate that kind of thing, whereas 90 percent kind of appreciate the vibe. It’s something they pick up, it’s … a much different kind of experience than they would have in Cancun or even Playa del Carmen. It’s really the local … the interaction with the people. Language certainly has a lot to do with it if you’re talking about North Americans, but just that, you know, the ease of it regardless of language barriers. … I travel a lot of places in the Caribbean, and the Caribbean in general is a pretty friendly place in terms of local people and tourists, but I think Belize probably exceeds that. [Interview June 20, 2013].

Thus, many residents perceive the friendly ambience of the place and a welcoming attitude by residents toward visitors as a significant aspect of their culture and heritage, especially with the growth of tourism on the peninsula. When asked what they believe to be the most important thing or place associated with culture / heritage on the peninsula, roughly five percent of resident KoBo survey respondents (four respondents from Placencia working across a diversity of industries) and one out of seven respondents from Independence / Mango Creek noted local tourism (including those responding “fishing and tourism”). Moreover, about three percent of resident survey respondents (n = 79; one from
Placencia and one from Maya Beach working in the hotel / lodging and construction industries, respectively) and one of 17 Belizean respondents residing off of the peninsula (who works in a tourism service industry position) noted marketed tourism activities including snorkeling / diving (n₁ = 2) or beaches / relaxation (n₂ = 1) as the most significant piece(s) of local culture / heritage. While only a total of roughly eight percent of peninsula (and Belizean) resident survey respondents identified local tourism or marketed tourism activities on the peninsula as the most important aspect of local heritage, the increasing prominence of tourism-centered livelihoods in Placencia and elsewhere on the peninsula is likely influencing the recognition of tourism activities as locally significant culture / heritage. Notably, approximately 46 percent of 78 resident survey respondents listed direct or indirect involvement in in tourism-centered livelihoods such as tour guiding and work in restaurants and the lodging / hotel industry. Moreover, even recent tourism-centered events like the Placencia Sidewalk Arts & Music Festival (occurring annually in February along the historic village sidewalk in Placencia since 2004) are being recognized as aspects of local heritage. Notably, roughly 61 percent of peninsula resident survey respondents (N = 79; approximately 63 percent of Placencia residents (n = 43), 54 percent of Seine Bight residents (n = 24), 70 percent of Maya Beach residents (n = 10), and 50 percent of Riversdale residents (n = 2)) as well as almost 71 percent of Belizean respondents who resided off of the peninsula (n = 17) identified the Sidewalk Arts Festival as heritage from the list of fifteen items spanning national tourism conceptions of heritage and local events, holidays, and activities during the KoBo surveys (see appendix 6, question 11).

In addition to tourism activities and the friendly vibe of the people / place, roughly six percent of resident respondents (N = 79 from Placencia, Seine Bight, and Maya Beach) designated the villages of Placencia (n₁ = 2) and Seine Bight (n₂ = 3) when asked what they perceive to be the most important aspect of local culture / heritage during the KoBo surveys. In particular, two out of three senior peninsula residents (over 65 years old) surveyed, attributed Placencia village or Seine Bight village, respectively, as the most significant feature of the peninsula’s culture / heritage. These results suggest that the physical places in which cultural and tourism activities and tourist / resident interactions occur also hold
significance in how residents construct local heritage in that the villages and their communal environs root cultural identities, livelihood activities, community knowledge, and interpersonal exchanges beyond superficial conceptions of these places as “tourism destinations” in tourism marketing media.

Moreover, nearly nine percent of residents surveyed (N = 79; mostly men involved in a various occupations) responded that coastal environments including the Placencia Lagoon (n₁ = 1), the Belize Barrier Reef or cayes (n₂ = 3), and “the sea” / ocean (n₃ = 3) were the most fundamental places associated with local culture / heritage on the peninsula (see Table 4), likely drawing connections between coastal environments and marine-centered livelihoods. The majority of surveyed residents who attributed one or more coastal environments as the most significant place(s) associated with local culture or heritage lived in Placencia (almost 14 percent of 43 Placencia resident survey respondents), where marine-based ecotourism and fishing are crucial aspects of the village’s economy and history, compared with one out of ten Maya Beach residents and one out of seven respondents from Independence / Mango Creek. The preservation of coastal environs, in particular, seems to be significant to peninsula residents as 81 percent of Placencia residents (n = 42), nearly 91 percent of Seine Bight resident (n = 22), 90 percent of Maya Beach residents (n = 10), and one hundred percent of Riversdale residents (n = 2) who were surveyed in 2013 or 2014 responded that the health of the coastal environment was “very important” to them when asked a Likert-type scale perception question (with responses ranging from 1-5, with 1 = “not important at all” to 5 = “very important,” see appendix 6, question 6(1)). Furthermore, when residents were asked a similar question about the relative importance of the reef to them, 93 percent of respondents living in Placencia (n = 43), roughly 88 percent of respondents living in Seine Bight (n = 24), 90 percent of respondents living in Maya Beach (n = 10), a hundred percent of respondents living in Riversdale (n = 2), a hundred of respondents living in Independence / Mango Creek (n = 7), and 80 percent of respondents from elsewhere in Belize (n = 10) responded that the reef was “very important” to them (see appendix 6, question 7). Consensus about the barrier reef being “very important” among resident survey respondents cross-cuts ethnic identities, as individuals identifying as Creole (Kriol) (n = 23; 100 percent of respondents), Garifuna (n = 18; 89 percent of respondents), White / Caucasian (n = 10; 90 percent of
respondents), mixed (n = 10; 100 percent of respondents), or with “other” ethnic groups (n = 6; 100 percent of respondents) had very high levels of consensus.

Considering the high degree of consensus about the importance of coastal environments and their role in sustaining many local livelihoods, proper stewardship of coastal ecosystems is perceived to be of great importance to numerous residents. For example, an environmental NGO ranger who was surveyed in 2013 described how the barrier reef is essential for Placencia residents and their livelihoods, as it protects the peninsula and its people from hurricanes and strong storms (Informal interview June 26, 2013). Similar to Maya valuation of freshwater and estuary wetlands as heritage along the coastline of northern Belize and the Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico, for aquaculture, fishing, and ecotourism, ecological information, archaeological uses, and species habitat, among other uses and functions (Smardon 2006:296-297), many residents in Placencia and on the peninsula more broadly value the conservation of the barrier reef system and lagoon estuary system not only to sustain traditional marine resources such as fisheries, but also for environmental education and ecotourism purposes to support local livelihoods. For example, during a participatory mapping excursion documenting fishing grounds in the Placencia Lagoon, a Placencia fisher and tour guide named Corey described the educational and tourism value of the mangroves and estuary creeks for his family:

We get student groups who study birds ... And then they have a marine aspect of their trip to Belize, and I deal with that part. I take them snorkeling and show them ... how the different corals are formed and stuff like that. And a part of the marine trip is a mangrove tour. I call, we snorkel in the mangroves. ... Yeah, you come snorkeling in the mangroves around here, and you see all types of (species) – they have three different species of rays, you see tarpon, ... and (the) mangrove ... is home to all different kinds of animals. [Informal interview July 13, 2014].

Through the participatory mapping activities and semi-structured interviews, fishers, tour guides, environmental NGO representatives, and other residents identified the cayes, the reef, various areas of the Placencia Lagoon, the fishing cooperative, the pier, free diving, hand-line and net fishing, and the annual
Lobsterfest celebrations, among other places, activities, and events, as prominent features of fishing heritage in Placencia, often drawing connections between local livelihoods, coastal health, island lifestyles, and fishing history. Carlo, a long-time fisherman in Placencia who took part in participatory mapping of fishing grounds in the Placencia Lagoon, described the value of conserving coastal “heritage spots” around the peninsula and environmental knowledge to pass on to future fishers when asked what the word “heritage” means to him during an interview:

Heritage is a good word. ... It’s something we’ve inherited from the elders. And we protect it so that it don’t go to hell. That tomorrow’s children can accept it as a heritage spot also. ... Yeah, well fishing is the way that people live by and protect the areas as heritage spots as parks and stuff like that because if we didn’t ... set aside those locations for the future of tomorrow’s fisherfolks, what the hell would there be to go fish for? Or where will they have to go to fish too? ... If we didn’t broaden our knowledge in preparing these locations for our future generations to come. That’s how it becomes heritage because one leave it for another and we protect the rights of ... sizes and the kinds, and storms [...] whatever, you know? ... And even those parts that I used to go look for lobsters, those parts aren’t there anymore because the hurricane destroyed those locations. ... So people would have never ... lived to realize that there is actually a place prepared for them for the future. You know, because, for example, those rocks I used to go to, they’re not there anymore – hurricane came, earthquake came, roll them off the damn banks, they roll down the channel, so the kids of tomorrow have to look for new areas all the time. Right, and they have to secure those areas on GPS or landmarks for their future fisherfolks to use. [Interview July 15, 2014].

Thus, Carlo discussed the need to conserve and document “heritage (fishing) spots” to sustain future fisher livelihoods. When I asked Carlo for any specific examples of “heritage spots” around the peninsula and why he considered them to be heritage, he told me:
Right behind the island here, behind the peninsula. Like at the mouth of the creek coming in, that’s a heritage spot right there. ... it’s a spot that you have to respect. You want to fish there, you got to be careful. You don’t want – like see how we went through that creek and you saw that little ray and stuff like that – people won’t be bothering those things, right? So it’s like you’re protecting them also.

Jerry provided a broader overview of heritage places / areas associated with fishing and noted how many fishing grounds / cayes later became protected environmental areas when I asked what places around the Placencia Peninsula he considered to be a part of Placencia’s communal heritage:

Areas of the peninsula – ... we have ... Laughing Bird Caye, the Gladden Spit area, Pointer Reef, which is also in the Gladden Spit area, Buttonwood Caye, Hunting Caye, all these areas. … They have a very strong tie to the Placencia fishing heritage. These are the areas where – even before these areas were even National Parks and Marine Reserves, they were home for camping fishermen who go out for a week, two weeks at a time, more, just fishing, fishing, fishing, and then they would come home to Placencia. ... Yeah, but many of the islands are what is tied to the heritage and culture of Placencia village as a whole. [Interview July 15, 2014].

Other current and former fishers and tour guides who took part in interviews or participatory mapping activities identified the following fishing heritage places along the reef: Ranguana Caye (now a private caye, which historically was used by a prominent Placencia family and Placencia fishers for baitfish and collection of marine seafood, coconuts, salt, and other resources to trade for mainland provisions) and a submerged reef nearby (a popular fishing ground locally known as Salamandina near the reef wall with a diversity of marine species), Tarpon Caye (a fishing spot where a shallow reef drops off into a deep channel, which is named after the sportfish that frequents its shores), Lighthouse Reef (east of Belize City and Turneffe Atoll), Crawl Caye (located on the northwestern end of Turneffe Atoll near Blue Hole Natural Monument as part of the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System World Heritage
site), Little Water Caye (which has a history of Placencia family use before SEA acquired the caye in 2002; now it has seaweed farm plots off of the coastline), Pumpkin Caye (a private island that has been used a popular camping spot for fishers), and the Silk Caye(s) (part of Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve since 2000, which are now co-managed by SEA and the Fisheries Department as a no-take conservation zone (Wildtracks, Belize et al. 2010:1-2, 4, 19)) (Interviews and informal interviews June 19, 2013; June 21, 2013; June 10, 2014; June 16, 2014; June 19, 2014; July 7, 2014; July 10, 2014; July 12, 2014; July 13, 2014; July 15, 2014; June 20, 2015; see Table 5).

Table 5. List of fishing heritage spots and places associated with fishing heritage identified by research participants including (current and former) fishers, tour guides, and environmental NGO representatives on the Placencia Peninsula.\textsuperscript{11}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fishing Heritage Location Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Scale of Heritage (Private, Communal, National, World)</th>
<th>Size (km\textsuperscript{2})</th>
<th>Location / Setting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laughing Bird Caye</td>
<td>A faro and patch reef marine area and mangrove caye used as a traditional fishing ground and camp, respectively, which is named after the Laughing Gull. The area became protected as a National Park after lobbying by Friends of Laughing Bird Caye in 1991. It is now co-managed by SEA with the Belize Forest Department as a no-take fishing zone, serving as a key ecotourism destination, coral restoration area, and biological monitoring station in the region.</td>
<td>Communal, National, World (one of seven sites in the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System)</td>
<td>0.1 (Laughing Bird caye); 41 (for the entire protected area)</td>
<td>Southern Inner Cayes (about 18 km off of coast of Placencia; Southern Barrier Reef Complex)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gladden Spit, Pointer Reef (in Gladden Spit), and Gladden Caye</td>
<td>A significant snapper and grouper fish spawning and whale shark aggregation site (described by one Placencia fisher as “action station” (Interview July 15, 2014)) used by peninsula fishers since the 1920s (Wildtracks, Belize et al. 2010:21). In 2000, the Government of Belize declared Gladden Spit and the Silk Cayes a marine reserve, and in 2002 a co-management agreement for the reserve was established between Friends of Nature and the Fisheries Department. Today, the Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve is a multi-zone MPA.</td>
<td>Communal, National</td>
<td>0.004 (Gladden Caye); 105 (for the entire Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve)</td>
<td>Barrier Reef Cayes (about 36-40 km east of Placencia at the southern-most “elbow” of the barrier reef; Southern Barrier Reef Complex)</td>
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\textsuperscript{11} Light Grey background = Marine / Reef sites; Dark grey = Placencia Lagoon sites; White = Placencia Peninsula sites.
Table 5 (Continued)

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<tr>
<th>Fishing Heritage Location Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gladden Spit, Pointer Reef (in Gladden Spit), and Gladden Caye (continued)</td>
<td>These zones include a “General Use (fishing) Zone” allowing diving and hand line fishing, a “Restoration Zone” restricting fishing, a non-extractive “Conservation Zone” covering the Silk Cayes and various adjacent reefs, and a “Special Management Area” for the primary fish spawning aggregation and whale shark region outside the reef, allocating special licenses for tour guides and a limited number of fishers. It is a popular seasonal scuba diving / snorkeling tourism destination to see whale sharks, and a location where Placencia seaweed farmers maintain a seaweed farming area adjacent to Gladden Caye, northwest of Gladden Spit.</td>
<td>Communal, National</td>
<td>0.004 (Gladden Caye); 105 (for the entire Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve)</td>
<td>Barrier Reef Cayes (about 36-40 km east of Placencia at the southern-most “elbow” of the barrier reef; Southern Barrier Reef Complex)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk (Queen) Cayes</td>
<td>Traditional plentiful fishing grounds used by peninsula fishers surrounding small coral sand cayes, which are now protected as part of a no-take conservation zone in the Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve. Fishers commonly camped on the largest Silk Caye before the protection of the area in 2000 after conservation lobbying by Friends of Laughing Bird Caye. Silk Caye is now a popular day trip stop for lunch by tour guides bringing snorkeling and dive boats to the Marine Reserve.</td>
<td>Communal, National</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>Barrier Reef Cayes (about 36-40 km east of Placencia in Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glover’s Reef (Marine Reserve)</td>
<td>A large, partly submerged atoll with an inner lagoon, patch reefs, and cayes, containing a major spawning aggregation site for Nassau grouper (at the NE end) and a wide diversity of fish species (Belize Fisheries Department 2012b). The expansive atoll area has been managed by the Belize Fisheries Department as a Marine Reserve since 1993, and now has five different management zones including a Conservation Zone, Seasonal Closure Zone, Spawning Aggregation site, Wilderness Zone, and General Use Zone.</td>
<td>Communal, National, World (one of seven sites in the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System)</td>
<td>351 (for the entire atoll); 262 (for the general use zone); 15.5 (for the Nassau grouper seasonal spawning aggregation zone)</td>
<td>Outer Barrier Reef (about 45 km east of Dangriga; Southern Barrier Reef Complex)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glover’s Reef (Marine Reserve) (continued)</td>
<td>Some zones are no-take areas, while other zones (like the General Use Zone) have managed access conferring licenses to a select number of fishers who have traditionally fished in the area, while restricting certain fishing methods (Belize Fisheries Department 2012b). Additionally, tourism activities (diving, snorkeling) are allowed in the General Use and Conservation zones with visitor education and interpretation as part of a Public Use Programme. In addition to being a prominent fishing ground, Glover’s Reef is also where the initial seaweed stock was obtained by the fishing cooperative seaweed farmers.</td>
<td>Communal, National, World (one of seven sites in the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System)</td>
<td>351 (for the entire atoll); 262 (for the general use zone); 15.5 (for the Nassau grouper seasonal spawning aggregation zone)</td>
<td>Outer Barrier Reef (about 45 km east of Dangriga; Southern Barrier Reef Complex)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarpon (Tarpum) Caye</td>
<td>A popular destination for sport fishing where a shallow reef and lagoon drop off into the deeper Victoria Channel between the Inner Reef Cayes and Barrier Reef Cayes. Much of the island is currently privately owned by a Placencia family, catering to tourists seeking catch-and-release fishing for permit and tarpon, among other species.</td>
<td>Private, Communal</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>Northern Inner Reef Cayes (about 24 km east of Placencia; Southern Barrier Reef Complex)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buttonwood Caye</td>
<td>A small island recently acquired by SEA, which has been used as popular fishing camp ground for snapper, grouper, and other species for generations by fishers from the Placencia Peninsula and other coastal areas.</td>
<td>Communal</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Barrier Reef Cayes (east of Placencia near Gladden Caye; Southern Barrier Reef Complex)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting Caye</td>
<td>A high coral sand caye with a crescent shape that is located at the southern extent of Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve (established in 1996). It is a popular tourist destination and visitor camping area for Hondurans, Guatemalans, and Belizeans and contains a ranger station, a lighthouse, and an immigration / Belize Defense Force post in addition to an expansive beach along the eastern shoreline (SEA 2015). Fishers from Guatemala, Honduras, and Belize often used the caye as a camping location for fishing excursions.</td>
<td>Communal, National, World (one of seven sites in the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Barrier Reef Cayes (in Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve; around 64 km east of Punta Gorda)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Pumpkin Caye</td>
<td>Pumpkin Caye has served as a prominent camping location for fishers from the Placencia Peninsula and from around southern Belize and even Honduras. Although the caye is now privately owned by a Frenchman, fishermen are still allowed by the owner and caretaker to camp periodically for fishing ventures.</td>
<td>Communal</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Barrier Reef Cayes (south of Little Water Caye; Southern Barrier Reef Complex)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Water Caye</td>
<td>A mangrove-rimmed island, on which SEA has with majority ownership and maintains a ranger station and research monitoring area. Before SEA acquired the caye in 2002, a couple of Placencia families used to raise pigs, make coconut oil, fish, and prepare salted fish on it. Under the most recent previous owners, a resort was briefly maintained. Sportfishing for bonefish and permit occurs on the caye and Placencia seaweed farmers tend numerous seaweed plots off of the coastline. Fishers occasionally camp out on the island with permission from SEA.</td>
<td>Private, Communal</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>Barrier Reef Cayes (southwest of Hatchet Caye; Southern Barrier Reef Complex)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatchet Caye</td>
<td>Once used as a popular fishing camp caye, Hatchet Caye is now a private island with an expansive ecotourism resort catering to tourists. Placencia cooperative fishermen maintain several seaweed farms off of the coastline.</td>
<td>Private, Communal</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Barrier Reef Cayes (about 17 km east of Placencia in Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranguana Caye</td>
<td>An oblong coral sand caye, located between the Victoria Channel (lagoon) to the west and the edge of the Barrier Reef wall to the east, which is now privately owned by Robert’s Grove resort (located on the peninsula). The caye was initially occupied over 150-200 years ago (perhaps earlier) to meet trading demand for Puerto Cortez in Honduras, but then was settled by the Leslie family who owned the caye for generations. Descendants of the Leslie family used the island as a base of operations to trade saltfish and often allowed other fishers to camp overnight.</td>
<td>Private, Communal</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>Barrier Reef Cayes (about 29 km southeast of Placencia; Southern Barrier Reef Complex)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ranguana Caye</strong> (continued)</td>
<td>The waters surrounding the caye were known by Placencia fishers as a good source of baitfish and fishing grounds (for species including jacks, mackerel, red heim (groupers), conch, lobster, and crab). Coconuts, coconut oil, salt, and other resources from the caye were traded for mainland provisions, and later a small tourist resort was established on the island by the family.</td>
<td>Private, Communal</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>Barrier Reef Cayes (about 29 km southeast of Placencia; Southern Barrier Reef Complex)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salamandina</strong></td>
<td>A submerged reef near Ranguana Caye and the Barrier Reef wall with depths up to 40 feet that is a popular fishing ground since it contains a diversity of marine species and plentiful stocks of fish.</td>
<td>Communal</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Barrier Reef Platform (about 30 km southeast of Placencia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crawl Caye and Mauger (Maugre) Caye</strong></td>
<td>Two mangrove islands located near the northwest tip of Turneffe Atoll (a Marine Reserve containing the biggest coral atoll in Belize with high biodiversity) east of Belize City, which border the atoll wall and an inner lagoon. Crawl Caye has been historically used as a fishing excursion base with semi-permanent camps for fishers (CZMAI 2016b:41), especially commercial fishers targeting lobster, conch, and a variety of finfish species (Wildtracks, Belize et al. 2011:25, 32). The caye recently was considered as a site for a cruise ship port due to its proximity to the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System World Heritage Sites Blue Hole Natural Monument and Half Moon Caye Natural Monument in Lighthouse Reef atoll. Mauger Caye, deriving from a Kriol word meaning small or narrow (Informal interview June 16, 2014), was also used by camping fishers in the past since it is nearby a major Nassau grouper spawning aggregation site (Wildtracks, Belize et al. 2011:9, 24-25, 32, 102-103).</td>
<td>Communal, National</td>
<td>0.19 (Crawl Caye), 0.01 (Mauger Caye)</td>
<td>Outer Barrier Reef Islands (Roughly 42 km northeast of Belize City; west of the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System World Heritage Sites Blue Hole Natural Monument and Half Moon Caye Natural Monument in Lighthouse Reef atoll)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawl Caye and Mauger (Maugre) Caye (continued)</td>
<td>The small caye also has a historic lighthouse maintained by the Belize Port Authority, and now primarily is used for education, research, and conservation purposes within the Mauger Caye Conservation Zone as part of the Turneffe Atoll Marine Reserve (CZMAI 2016b:41, 94). However, a select number of traditional fishers with special licenses from the Fisheries Department are still permitted to fish in the Nassau grouper spawning aggregation site during the fishery’s closed season (Wildtracks, Belize et al. 2011:23-24, 32, 195, 258). Although Crawl Caye is a private island, these cayes are part of the Turneffe Atoll Marine Reserve, which has been co-managed by the Belize Fisheries Department and the Turneffe Atoll Trust since 2012 (CZMAI 2016b:15-16; Wildtracks, Belize et al. 2011). The Marine Reserve permits extractive and non-extractive uses (e.g., fishing, tourism, research and education) in various zones (CZMAI 2016b:31, 36, 41, 96; Wildtracks, Belize et al. 2011:6) where fly fishing, diving, and snorkeling are popular activities.</td>
<td>Communal, National</td>
<td>0.19 (Crawl Caye), 0.01 (Mauger Caye)</td>
<td>Outer Barrier Reef Islands (Roughly 42 km northeast of Belize City; west of the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System World Heritage Sites Blue Hole Natural Monument and Half Moon Caye Natural Monument in Lighthouse Reef atoll)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangrove Point</td>
<td>A deep traditional fishing ground used by some Placencia fishers with a strong current near Rosanna Caye where the Placencia Lagoon meets the sea. Fishers often catch various snappers (dog, mutton, black) and occasionally predators like barracuda and sometimes see crocodiles. The area (called Mangro Pint in Kriol) has been impacted by dredging from surrounding developments.</td>
<td>Private, Communal</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Southern end / mouth of the Placencia Lagoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-conch Shoal</td>
<td>A submerged sandbar on the edge of the seagrass and muddy banks near the mouth of the lagoon where some Placencia fishers often catch silk snapper, mutton snapper, and occasionally mackerel.</td>
<td>Private, Communal</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Southern end / mouth of the Placencia Lagoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangrove Cutoff Mouth</td>
<td>A mangrove creek outlet used by Placencia fishers to catch snook, black snapper, mutton snapper, silk snapper, shad, and occasionally bonefish.</td>
<td>Private, Communal</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Southern end of the Placencia Lagoon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water Tower Pipeline</td>
<td>Fishing spot near the Placencia water tower where the fish such as silk snapper and yellowfin jack hide under the municipal water pipeline coming across the lagoon from Independence.</td>
<td>Communal</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Southern end of Placencia Lagoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarrat</td>
<td>A river outlet to a shallow seagrass area where Placencia and Seine Bight fishers often catch black snappers surrounding an island with underwater passageways.</td>
<td>Communal</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Southern end of Placencia Lagoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Creek Mouth</td>
<td>A large creek outlet by a mangrove island toward the mainland side of the lagoon where fishers from surrounding coastal communities catch snook, yellowfin jack, and black snapper (especially with flood waters). Turtles and American crocodiles used to be abundant in the area.</td>
<td>Communal</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Middle Lagoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drunken (Man) Caye / “Junks” / The Junction</td>
<td>A popular fishing spot for Placencia and Seine Bight fishermen (especially at night, depending on the tides). The area is in a channel with an island in the middle near where a man drowned many years ago. Fishers often target black snapper, cubera snapper, grouper, permit, and shads, and catch bait fish such as mullet and sardines (glass and solid) in the area. Sometimes fishers dive in submerged passageways around the island in the channel to catch big fish.</td>
<td>Communal</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Middle Lagoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadman Caye</td>
<td>A wide channel near one of the largest islands in the Placencia Lagoon where there is a submerged pipeline. Peninsula fishers catch silk snapper and sometimes yellowfin jacks and goliath grouper, among other species, around the caye.</td>
<td>Communal</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Middle Lagoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand Point</td>
<td>Popular fishing ground among Seine Bight fishers. Some fishermen have reported to catch goliath grouper here.</td>
<td>Communal</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Middle Lagoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black River</td>
<td>Popular fishing ground among Seine Bight fishers near a river outlet from the mainland roughly eight miles from Placencia.</td>
<td>Communal</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Upper / Northern end of Placencia Lagoon</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Head / End of the Lagoon</td>
<td>A creek outlet near the shrimp farm mouth behind The Placencia resort lagoon at the northern end of the peninsula / lagoon where fishers from Placencia and Seine Bight often catch snook, cubera snapper, yellowfin jack, and sometimes goliath grouper.</td>
<td>Communal</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Upper / Northern end of Placencia Lagoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placencia Pier / Dock</td>
<td>Site of the historic community pier / dock – located at the southernmost tip of the Placencia Peninsula near the fishing cooperative icehouse - which was used as a community gathering place for residents to purchase fish, lobster, and conch from fishermen landing in Placencia as well as to fish off of the dock themselves. The dock / pier was reconstructed in 2013 as a multi-use pier after damage by Hurricane Iris with funds allocated by the Inter-American Development Bank (IaDB) as a site component of the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (Boles et al. 2011:32; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:39). The multi-use pier commemorates this village historical landmark and aims to promote local tourism. It extends 275 feet long, includes a shoreline promenade, plaza, a docking facility, and a couple of tables to clean and fillet fish (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:39-40; Figure 3).</td>
<td>Communal</td>
<td>&lt; 0.1</td>
<td>Placencia Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing Cooperative Building and Icehouse</td>
<td>Just north of the renovated pier at the southern tip of Placencia village, the two-story wooden icehouse / seafood processing facility has been used for fish processing, storage, and ice production by the Placencia Producers Cooperative Society Limited since the 1960s (Figure 7). This storage / processing facility also has served as a meeting place for fishers and community residents to sell / buy fish. Across the Placencia sidewalk is an office building (renovated in 2012), which is used by the fishing cooperative for business purposes, and an adjacent lot directly to the south is the Cooperative’s proposed site for a local fishing culture / history museum.</td>
<td>Communal</td>
<td>&lt; 0.1</td>
<td>Placencia Village</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Rainwater Reservoir Heritage Murals</td>
<td>Heritage murals painted by local artists on a historic community water reservoir depicting various aspects of village life in Placencia past and present, especially fishing livelihoods (e.g., Figure 4) and prominent marine life. Before the municipal water system was installed in 1996, the concrete community water reservoir – located adjacent to the Placencia sidewalk – served as a primary communal area to collect rainwater for drinking and other purposes since it was constructed in 1962.</td>
<td>Communal</td>
<td>&lt; 0.1</td>
<td>Placencia Village</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example, during a participatory mapping excursion in 2013, Terrence visited Pumpkin Caye after catching lobster for lunch in the Salamandina submerged reef. Pumpkin Caye has served as a prominent camping spot for fishermen from the Placencia Peninsula and from around southern Belize and even Honduras. After we moored on the beach and waded ashore, Terrence told me that a relative was the previous caretaker of the island and that his grandparents used to frequent the caye. Although the caye is now privately owned by a Frenchman, he told me that like many cayes historically, fishers generally are allowed by the owner and caretaker to camp for days – even up to a week – and cook and share their food and catch with other fishers, building camaraderie during their fishing ventures. Fishers bring essential supplies that generally include rice and flour to cook with and use coconut husks, scattered throughout the caye, as a fuel source to burn over a fire. A Kriol woman who accompanied us on the participatory heritage mapping excursion of particular cayes told me that visitors often husked mature coconuts on the caye to extract milk or oil from the coconut meat or later trade coconut seeds on the peninsula for food and other provisions (Informal interview June 21, 2013).

In the Placencia Lagoon, peninsula fishers identified a number of areas associated with fishing heritage ranging from popular lagoon boat docks and outlet channels fishers use in Placencia and Seine
Bight villages as well as fishing grounds across a range of depths spanning from the mouth of the lagoon south of Placencia to the head of the lagoon near a shrimp farm outlet around Riversdale. These fishing grounds include Mangrove Point ("Mangro Pint" in Kriol, a deep traditional fishing ground with a strong current near Rosanna Caye where the lagoon meets the sea), Mid-conch Shoal (a submerged sandbar on the edge of the seagrass and mud near the mouth of the lagoon where fishers often catch silk snapper, mutton snapper, and occasionally mackerel), Mangrove Cutoff Mouth (a mangrove creek outlet where snook, black snapper, mutton snapper, silk snapper, shad, and occasionally bonefish are caught), Watertower Pipeline (near the coast of Placencia where the fish such as silk snapper and yellowfin jack hide under the municipal water pipeline coming across the lagoon from Independence), Silver Creek Mouth (a large creek outlet by a mangrove island near the mainland where fishers catch snook, yellowfin jack, and black snapper (especially with flood waters) and often see American crocodiles), Sarrat (a river outlet to a shallow seagrass area; fishers often catch black snappers surrounding an island), Drunken (Man) Caye / The Junction (a channel with an island in the middle near where a man drowned many years ago; fishers often target black snapper, cubera snapper, grouper, permit, and shads, and catch bait fish such as mullet and sardines (glass and solid) in the area; sometimes fishers dive in submerged passageways to catch big fish), around Deadman Caye (a wide channel near one of the larger islands in the lagoon with a submerged pipeline; fishers catch silk snapper and sometimes yellowfin jacks and goliath grouper), Sand Point (about 6.5 miles north of Placencia; Seine Bight fishers have caught goliath grouper here), Black River (roughly 8 miles from Placencia), and Head / End of the Lagoon (a creek outlet near the shrimp farm mouth behind Placencia resort lagoon at the northern end of the peninsula where fishers often catch snook, cubera snapper, yellowfin jack, and sometimes goliath grouper) (Interviews and informal interviews June 21, 2013; June 20, 2014; July 10, 2014; July 13, 2015, July 15, 2015; see Table 5).

Fishers use these areas to target particular fish species at different times of day and during various seasons, depending on the tides, weather, feeding habits of fish, fish spawning and migration patterns, etc., applying environmental knowledge that has been passed down through generations of fishers in the
region (Interviews and informal interviews June 20, 2014; July 10, 2014; July 13, 2015, July 15, 2015). Percy, a leader of the seaweed farming project, identified environmental knowledge inherited from his ancestors as central to his understanding of heritage during an interview (Informal interview July 15, 2014). In the context of fishing, he described this embodied heritage knowledge as knowing where to fish, the timing of particular fish species, how they migrate, etc. Similarly discussing environmental knowledge, Carlo pointed out when Placencia fishers often visit various fishing grounds in the lagoon during an interview: “The lagoon – providing when it’s rainy season like I told you before when it’s flooded water – then you catch a lot of fish because the fish migrate along a lot in the lagoon. And anything that crawls, they snap at because they’re hungry - ‘Cause the water is murky, you know” (Interview July 15, 2014).

To sustain populations of fish and prevent overfishing at particular fishing spots out on the reef and in the lagoon, many local fishers frequently rotate which fishing grounds they use, as Carlo explained while handline fishing at Mangrove Point: “I used to fish at this spot, sometimes two times for the month. You don’t stay at one spot too long ‘cause you deplete it. See what I mean?” (Informal interview July 13, 2014). Likewise, Enitan, a local tour guide from Seine Bight who also took part in participatory mapping of fishing grounds in the Placencia Lagoon, discussed his conception of sustainability for fishing during an interview: “Sustainable means keeping it up so that you can keep on using it ... or reaping from it like taking care of it so that you can use it after. ... Don’t kill the small ones. When you go to fish there, leave the small ones so every time you come, you’ll find (a) good sized one. And the small one also attracts big one(s). It keeps life in the area.” (Interview July 11, 2014).

In addition to integrating the concept of sustainability into their conceptions of environmental knowledge, some fishers described particular methods of fishing and livelihood practices in surrounding seascapes as significant to their embodied heritage and history. For example, Brian told me about how local fishers have adapted fishing methods based on the relative abundance of particular fisheries like lobster when I asked him whether he considered diving to be a part of Placencia’s heritage:
Yeah, free diving is culture. People used to free dive from my grandfather’s days, you know. No, they used to catch the fishes out of the boat, they used to catch the lobster out, they throw it in with a glass. Yes, they didn’t used to free dive like us and go so deep. They used to catch them off the boat with a square box with a glass on the bottom, and they kept the glass and they touch the hook, and they come out. Yes, there was so much. I used to go out with my grandfather. My grandfather used to catch turtles, but we used to catch lobster too out the boat, not in the water. Yes, so diving come after. We never had to dive, there was so much. You could dive the conch, cause’ they’re on banks. You go walk up to your chest and pick them up by the boat load. [Interview June 16, 2014].

_Carlton_ added that free diving is a significant feature of Placencia’s fishing history, explaining during an interview: “Well I feel like the fishing. I’d say that (is significant) – I left when I was a kid, you know. I love fishing – fishing industry and the whole livelihood of the sea. And I go dive. I dive my whole life right out there. ... I used to dive a lot. Go down deep” (Interview July 7, 2014).

In addition to fishing methods, community institutions like the Placencia Producers Cooperative also fed into many resident conceptions of significant heritage in Placencia among non-fishers and fishers alike (e.g., Interviews June 20, 2013; June 13, 2014; June 19, 2014; July 15, 2014). For example, when I asked _Larry_ about significant things or places associated with the history or heritage of Placencia, he emphasized the foundational role the Placencia fishing cooperative held in the community, explaining:

Oh boy - that co-op is the backbone I tell you. ... everybody had to, you know, we all pitch into that thing because - did I say that it provided us with electricity? It was very poor by the time we reach up there and get ninety boats ... but, you know, and expensive. We paid for it because … there was no other way out. But there’s not near anything other than that co-op made this place. But … people stayed here because of that. You know, as I use Punta Negra as another village of equal beauty, but nobody wanted to stay there because there’s nothing there that was holding them … - that give them some kind of a life, you know. Here, that co-op; we could look out at the
end of the year to get some rebates or something and you made enough money that you don’t want to go nowhere. You know, you live in a place, sleep with your windows and doors open until the tourists came. [Interview June 19, 2014].

This local resident valuation of the fishing cooperative and fishing history as key elements of Placencia’s heritage is portrayed in murals on the site of a community water reservoir near the main sidewalk in Placencia Village, which served as a primary communal gathering place to collect rainwater for drinking and other purposes until the municipal water system was installed in 1996 (Interviews June 18, 2014; June 19, 2014; July 15, 2014). Placencia artists donated murals on the side of the reservoir with the blessing of the Village Council a few years ago to depict various aspects of Placencia village life in the past and the present, especially fishing livelihoods, prominent people, and marine life (e.g., Figure 4; this heritage place is also described in Table 5). One of the artists explained the conception of the murals during an interview:

We tried to depict classic people from Placencia past and present – those who contribute or you know... just people who are just characters or influential or ... did their fight for the village and are now retired, or some of them are even deceased on there. And also some of it is like way of life, things we do, the things we see in our day-to-day lives in our various capacities as fishermen or teachers or whatever. For example, there’s one there with an elderly guy in a white cap. That’s my grandfather – great grandfather actually. And he’s still alive, but all his life, he did nothing else but build houses and fish. ... So ... he took his work religiously if you want to put it like that. He was a dedicated fisherman, carpenter as well. More of a fisherman than a carpenter. And he just fished in a big wooden skiff, a big wooden dug out with a little small engine on the back. And that was his way of life. The other one with the woman with the big glasses, she ... donated the property that the reservoir sits on right now - well, what’s left of the reservoir. And I don’t know if you’ve met ...the guy involved in the seaweed farm ... he’s on there too, the guy throwing the net. ... Like I said, yes, he contributes to the community. Especially, he’s really … the
brainperson behind the seaweed farm. You know, and then you have some scenes of fishing and whalesharks at the back. Those are things that we do on the sea, pretty much on a daily basis except whale shark of course. But it just tells a story, you know. And then there’s a picture that I started of some … by the fishermen’s co-op. It’s not quite finished yet – with the dock, there’s supposed to be a dock behind the co-op. ...And that was the co-op maybe … 35 years ago, more or less. It’s a scene way bak, way bak. [Interview July 15, 2014].

Thus, the significance of fishing livelihoods and renowned people and places associated with those livelihoods to local cultural heritage, history, and identity is not only commemorated through resident recollection and daily practice, but is physically depicted on a site of communal historical significance within the village of Placencia. Portraying a scene close to the fishing cooperative processing facility and icehouse, the artist mentioned that the unfinished mural will illustrate what the community multi-use pier looked like decades ago when it was a wooden dock / pier used as a community gathering place for residents to purchase seafood from fishermen landing in Placencia as well as to fish off of the dock themselves (see Figure 4). This historical landmark, with its past uses for fishing and community exchange and current function as a multi-use pier to stimulate local tourism and (to a lesser extent) support fishers, local vendors, and events (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:39-40), is symbolic of the village’s transformation from a small community centered on fishing livelihoods to a growing international tourism destination.

Many residents recognize this internal transformation as vital to the culture and heritage of the village, and note the role the coastal environment has played in tying together fishing and tourism-centered identities and livelihoods (see Table 5 for a list of coastal environmental heritage places). When asked about the most significant thing associated with local heritage on the peninsula during the KoBo surveys and semi-structured and oral history interviews, several residents noted fishing and tourism or described the transition from fishing to tourism-dependent livelihoods (e.g., Interviews June 20, 2013; June 16, 2014; June 17, 2014; June 19, 2014; July 15, 2014; June 20, 2015). For example, when I asked
Brian (a local fisherman and tour guide) to identify the one most significant thing or place associated with heritage in Placencia during an interview, he told me succinctly: “It used to be fishing, now it’s tourism man” (Interview June 16, 2014). Jerry similarly described his take on a popular heritage imaginary of the Placencia Peninsula developing from quiet fishing villages to a prominent tourism destination, stating: “but before tours was a big deal here, it was Placencia and Seine Bight, we were just sleepy fishing village(s). That’s the (main) thing (?) – nothing more, just fishing. And the fishing includes diving – diving and fishing from boats or right off the beach. That was a very popular thing. It’s still popular, but that was it” (Interview July 15, 2014).

Other residents like Rodney described the transition from fishing to tourism in relation to significant events impacting the development of the Placencia Peninsula such as Hurricane Iris: “We were always a quiet community – a fishing village with a little drinking problem, but it was all good at the time. It actually changed … – to me after the Hurricane was 2001. That’s like 15 years ago. A lot of people sold their property to foreigners, and oh man” (Interview June 20, 2015). Similarly, William, a resort owner on the peninsula, explained his version of the narrative within the broader context of changes on the peninsula he has seen since the 1970s:

… They’ve (the villages) changed radically in some ways in terms of infrastructure. When I first lived there, there was no road, there was no electricity, there was one phone, … yeah this was functionally an island. You could only get here by boat. Even the airstrip wasn’t really … there. But generally, the vibe wasn’t that much different. … You just … didn’t have resorts, you didn’t have restaurants, you didn’t have fruits and vegetables. … yeah it was pretty. You had a lot of fish though. … More fish - It was a lot easier to get fish then, than now. … The Co-op was strong. The Co-op, everything revolved around the fishing co-op, now it kind of revolves around tourism. … There’s a great expression, I was talking to a friend - an old timer, who’s a son of an old timer. We were discussing this transition, and when the tourism thing first started, … To desert your career as a fisherman to become a tour guide – or I think the line might have went from fishermen to being fishing guides, you know the first reaction … to ... someone leaving the field of fishing
to become a fishing guide, “You know, I sit and smell white man fart all day” (in Kriol).

[Interview June 20, 2013].

Humor aside, many local residents on the peninsula, especially Placencia residents perceive the duality of fishing and tourism as fundamental to their identity and cultural legacy. This narrative of the village’s transformation from fishing to tourism livelihoods, while often shared by Placencia Peninsula residents and Belizean workers and visitors who live off of the peninsula alike and represented in (inter)national tourism industry marketing media (e.g., BTB 2013b; BTIA 2013, 2014) and sustainable tourism policy (e.g., Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011b) to some degree, is not widely recognized by foreign tourists as the following discussion elucidates.

7.1.2 Placencia “Heritage Imaginaries”: Policy and Marketing Discourse, Tourist Conceptions, and the Branding of a Tourism Destination

As the tourism industry expands in Belize, Placencia is being marketed as a major regional destination along the southern coastline. National sustainable development policy (e.g., Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a, b; Clarke et al. 2013), tourism travel magazines (e.g., Destination Belize (BTIA 2013, 2014)) and websites (such as BTB 2013b), and popular guidebooks like The Rough Guides (Eltringham 2007) alike often highlight Placencia as a coastal hub for beaches, culinary experiences, land tours, and marine-based tourism recreation activities (scuba diving, snorkeling, sport fishing, boat charters, etc.) while describing the laid-back vibe of the place and the residents. Collectively, these circulating tourism media in addition to tourist and resident narratives contribute to shaping what Salazar (2010) calls “tourism imaginaries” of Placencia as a destination. In the following section, I consider how these media and resident narratives are reflected in tourist imaginaries of Placencia as a destination, specifically pertaining to the village’s culture and heritage (what I call “heritage imaginaries”), and examine to what extent these imaginaries align with resident understandings of Placencia’s heritage and legacy, drawing on tourism marketing media, sustainable tourism and coastal resource management
policy documents, resident interviews, and the results of select KoBo survey questions to frame my assessment.

Mass-mediated narratives about Placencia as a destination are circulated in many forms. Travel guidebooks and local tourism booklets recognize the international appeal of Placencia for tourists, distinguishing its beaches, reef diving and snorkeling, (sport) fishing, popular local festivals like the annual Sidewalk Arts festival in February and the Lobsterfest celebrations as top attractions in addition to its central location to facilitate inland tours to Maya sites and other areas around the country (e.g., Eltringham 2007:267; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014). A recently published informational booklet about Placencia titled *Footprints on the Beach to Paradise: Placencia and Its Environs* conveys a few primary, somewhat overlapping imaginaries of Placencia between tourists, frequent visitors, and residents (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014). Belizean writers Lawrence Vernon and Henry Young-Westby (2014) blend historical narratives and various aspects of village life in the booklet with promotion of tourist attractions to provide a snapshot of Placencia in its current tourism development context. The book opens by calling upon various imaginaries of the village held by residents and tourists, stating:

Whether you know Placencia as a quaint and pristine community which was only accessible by sea; or whether you are a native villager who experienced its various changes in infrastructure and culture and traditions; or whether you have only read of Placencia in the guide books as a laid back village with beautiful beaches, there is no doubt that it has a powerful and definite impact on everyone who has had the pleasure of knowing or hearing about it. [Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:1].

Thus, for some tourists and residents the narrative that Placencia was an isolated “quaint and pristine” community resonates with how they imagine the place, while others see the community as more dynamic with changes in culture and infrastructure, and still others, especially tourists, may perceive Placencia in a touristic sense as a laidback luxury beach destination with amicable people, which serves as “the doorway to Belize’s most south after sea and land activities” (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:1,
Accounts by historian and frequent visitor to Placencia, Leo Bradley, describe the natural beauty and landscapes of the peninsula and the intimate connection between the sea, the beach, and fishing livelihoods as well as the local friendly vibe and people as significant to Placencia’s sense of place (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:1-2). Bradley (1962) sets the scene for visitors to Placencia in his book *Glimpses of Our History: Placencia* around the time when the fishing cooperative formally emerged:

> Anyone who has been to Placencia will attest to the natural beauty of the village. It is certainly an ideal honeymoon spot! ... Whether one approaches it from the South or North or West, it is introduced by a big bluff of coconut trees. It runs out to sea as a real point, and the sea around it is calm since just across it is an island of bush and trees. Placencia means quiet and calm and certainly this entrance to the village is indicative of these qualities. ... Just about 200 people live in this little village, and the clean, small, wooden houses are interspersed with towering coconut trees as well as cashew trees. The sand is grainy and very white, and the sea is clear and very inviting for a bath. As if to accentuate nature’s beauty, the people, who are mostly fisher-folk, flash their smiles to all visitors. [Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:2].

This quaint and “pristine” portrait of Placencia with its connection to the sea and surrounding coastline has been adopted to describe and designate major tourism attractions in the village including “the best beach in Belize,” “a lagoon sanctuary, coconut trees, and fishing and diving” by popular guidebooks and websites as Vernon and Young-Westby (2014:2-3, 15) discuss in their informational booklet about Placencia. Notably, guidebook and hotel narratives often draw upon the imaginary of Placencia’s transition from a small (Creole / Kriol) fishing community to a culturally diverse “tourist Mecca:” “Placencia ... is often described as a destination that emerged out of a colorful historical past into the vibrant world of tourism that offers beaches, reefs, and jungle destinations all in one strategic location” (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:1, 3). Vernon and Young-Westby (2014:28) go onto directly explain the character of this transformation: “The quiet fishing village of Placencia has blossomed into a
tourist destination, and although still retaining some of its traditional charm has a lot of amenities and activities to offer.” Similarly recognizing Placencia’s fishing history and its transition to tourism development, the Belize Tourism Industry Association’s (BTIA) 2014 Destination Belize magazine (2014:80-81) designates Placencia as a versatile destination hub: “Offering pleasures terrestrial, nautical and culinary, this once-quiet fishing village remains a top destination for visitors looking to experience the best of Belize from a single base.” Other narratives, echoing the previous national tourism industry slogan “Mother Nature’s Best Kept Secret” (Medina 2010:259, 2012:234) allude to the village’s increasing visibility and involvement in ecotourism and other forms of tourism development as populations grow, cultural diversity increases, and transportation infrastructure improves on the peninsula (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:3). Vernon and Young-Westby (2014:1, 3) describe this modernizing imaginary, noting that “while indigenous villagers are still united in their love for the sea, and have become committed to tourism and development, Placencia is no longer the well-kept secret it once was.” Anthropologist Kenneth Little (2010:3, 5) illuminates this low-key allure of Placencia in his article “Paradise from the Other Side of Nowhere” culling from advertisements in Belize tourism marketing media such as a brochure by the Belize Tourism Board from 2003, which describes Placencia as “… what you have always wanted in get-a-way pleasure, in a hide-a-way place advertised across the globe as ‘mother nature’s best kept secret.’”

Imaginaries of Placencia as a laid-back “paradise” also are circulated in national travel and tourism media such as Destination Belize magazine (BTIA 2013, 2014) and the BTB website (https://www.travelbelize.org/destinations/southeast-coast/placencia). Similar to many resident conceptions of heritage on the peninsula, both the serenity of the coastal environment and the laid-back friendly vibe and culture of the people are recognized as part of the ethos of Placencia in tourism industry marketing efforts. For example, on the BTB website and in other national tourism industry media, the Placencia Peninsula (Placencia in particular) is branded as a “Barefoot Perfect” destination (BTIA 2013:118) or “the caye you drive to” (BTIA 2014:82), where “shirts, shoes and worries are optional” and scuba diving, snorkeling, extensive “golden-sand” beaches, bars and restaurants, local art, and traditional
Kriol culture are renowned (BTB 2013b). In addition to golden sand beaches and reef diving and snorkeling (especially for whale sharks), the 2013 and 2014 volumes of Destination Belize note game / sport fishing and a diverse culinary scene centered on seafood as primary tourist attractions (BTIA 2013, 2014). For example, this marine-centered, multi-cultural tourism imaginary is conveyed in part of the 2013 description for Placencia in Destination Belize: “Although divers thrill in the countless world-class dive sites that are within a short boat ride, serious fishers spend their days in search of the next big catch. ... Home to Belizeans of nearly every ethnicity, Placencia is where you will find a variety of local and international foods. Seafood reigns supreme on the peninsula” (BTIA 2013:118). In a list of major tourist attractions around Placencia, nautical and marine-based tour adventures including a visit to Laughing Bird Caye National Park and sport fishing are emphasized in Destination Belize (BTIA 2013, 2014). The 2013 volume illuminates the significance of sport fishing to Placencia tourism in particular, stating:

Fishing has become one of the biggest tourism draws for Placencia. The peninsula has seen an increase in the number of saltwater fly fishermen looking to come hook wahoo, tarpon, snook, bonefish, or the elusive permit. Private island resorts are ideal for spending your entire holiday fishing and talking about your catch over dinner. [BTIA 2013:120].

Although this narrative draws on the marketed tourism imaginary of Placencia as a (former) fishing village, it highlights sport fishing (primarily catch-and-release and private resort excursions) and seafood cuisine as major tourism attractions over possible cultural tourism attractions on the peninsula (like the fishing cooperative). In Destination Belize magazine, Lobsterfest is advertised as a local tourism event and seaweed is promoted in the context of culinary attractions (BTIA 2013:122, 2014:83), yet the cultural significance of these items is not explained. Rather, in relation to fishing heritage, the magazine highlights the more recent legacy of sport fishing since 1960 left behind by Victor Barothy (who started the first fishing lodge for tourists in Belize and trained fly fishing guides around the country including relatives of the Westby and Eiley families who reside on the peninsula) (BTIA 2013:37-38). Similarly, year-round spin-casting, trolling, deep sea fishing, and fly fishing (primarily catch-and-release) are
considered a prominent tourist attraction suite for Placencia, which according to Vernon and Young-Westby (2014:31), has been branded by anglers as the “Permit (fishing) Capitol of the World.”

Informational booklets available to visitors and residents alike in the Placencia Tourism Center and other venues, which promote Placencia as a destination such as Footprints on the Beach to Paradise (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014) and Way Bak Den (Carne (ed.) 2013), discuss Kriol culture and its ties to Placencia’s fishing heritage at some length. Vernon and Young-Westby (2014:3) open Footprints on the Beach to Paradise with a general imaginary of Placencia’s cultural transition, explaining “… the story of a proud people whose historical heritage has developed to form itself into a vibrant village with the potential to be an exemplary one in terms of both infrastructure and character.” Historian Leo Bradley (1962) provides an early and exoticized account of Placencia’s culture, which describes the people of Placencia as “husky, physically fit residents, many of them of clear appearance indicating either ethnic affinity to previous European settlers, or settlers from the Bay Islands or the Cayman Islands. The males are the most proficient fishermen in the country” (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:25). Vernon and Young-Westby (2014:25-27) go on to portray Placencia as a “culturally diverse” place with the continuing influx of immigrants from around Belize and the region that has retained its identity as a friendly “Creole village” with peacefully co-existence between Kriol, Mestizo, Maya, Spanish, Garifuna, (and Caucasian and Asian) ethnic groups. They note that this ethnic and national diversity also is significant in the local food scene where Mexican, Caribbean, European (especially British), and North American cuisines contribute to the village’s culinary repertoire (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:27).

This narrative of ethnic co-existence and cultural fusion in Placencia fits into the marketed Belizean national tourism industry imaginary of the country as the “Land of Cultural Diversity” (BTIA 2014:13) as well as the Belizean National Culture Policy framework (NICH 2014). Notably, anthropologist Theresa Holmes (2010:154-156) argues that this national cultural diversity narrative enveloped in tourism marketing serves to produce “ethnic citizenship” throughout Belize.

Alongside “cultural diversity,” Vernon and Young-Westby (2014:28-31) highlight Placencia’s connection with coastal environments and nature-based tourism as a quintessential aspect of the village’s
As some of the other examples have illustrated. As the “doorway to Belize’s most sought after sea and land activities,” Placencia is marketed as a hub for inland tours including visits to rainforest preserves such as the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary / Jaguar Preserve, waterfalls, and nearby Monkey River in addition to marine-centered activities such as sailing, (fly and sport) fishing, scuba diving, and snorkeling (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:28). In connection with the diversity of marine-centered activities, a number of sites in the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System World Heritage site including Southwater Caye Marine Reserve, Laughing Bird Caye National Park, Glover’s Reef Atoll, and Sapodilla Caye Marine Reserve contribute to the narrative of Placencia as a nature-based / eco-tourism destination (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:28). Popular dive / snorkeling spots in the outer and inner reef such as Gladden Spit Marine Reserve, Tarpon caye, the Queen cayes, and Ranguana caye also are distinguished in addition to tours in the Placencia Lagoon for manatee and other wildlife viewing (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:29-31).

Collectively, these attractions cater to multiple types of tourists seeking diverse experiences from a single hub - whether they are drawn to the peninsula primarily for sun and beach, coastal or inland adventure, luxury, culinary, nature-based / ecotourism experiences, the local vibe, or some combination thereof. As the 2013 Destination Belize magazine sums up in its description of Placencia, “no matter how you choose to fill your days, you will undoubtedly find Placencia relaxing, strangely intoxicating, and ultimately a place that calls to you long after you depart” (BTIA 2013:118). Thus, as these examples indicate, local and national tourism media imaginaries of Placencia converge in many ways with resident conceptions of heritage on / around the peninsula, especially in recognition of the local friendly vibe and people, local tourism events like Lobsterfest, and the coastal environment (including areas in the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System World Heritage site like Laughing Bird Caye National Park). However, beaches, marine recreation activities (such as sport fishing and sailing), and land tours likely hold greater significance in tourism industry marketing of the peninsula than among most peninsula residents’ conceptions of local heritage as the KoBo survey results suggest.
Like tour guides in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and Arusha, Tanzania (Salazar 2010), Placencia tour guides and tourism industry representatives on the peninsula are keenly aware of and generally share national and globalized narratives about travel to the peninsula they operate on, some of which are learned through BTB sponsored tour guide courses or picked up through interactions with tourists (Informal interview July 12, 2014). For example, when I asked Christopher about what he thinks are the primary draws for tourists to visit Placencia, he emphasized the local people / vibe and listed surrounding marine and land-based recreational activities:

I think the beach, there’s quite a bit. It’s just a quiet place. I think lots of people like the fact that it’s laid back, they’re friendly people, and no real big development – I think people are attracted to that. And of course we do have, I didn’t get into a lot of the little attractions, but we do have really good diving, snorkeling, fishing – world-class fishing right off – and from here as well, it’s so easy to get to some of the inland tours. We have Mayan ruins, there’s so many great nature trails, the howler monkeys, the manatees – there’s so much you can do right around here. But I think that the feel of the village is really what brings people back here. [Interview June 24, 2013].

Similarly, when asked the same question, a private tourism industry representative on the peninsula explained during an interview:

... One, authenticity – cultural authenticity. Two, certainly the world-class attractions at sea and on land. Basically, within Belize, what makes Placencia special is … you know, you can catch your gland slam out here in the morning and then in the afternoon hike to the coolest double waterfall all alone with your girlfriend. You know.... Belize in general in terms of size and scale is just through sheer obvious luck, has got it just about right. It’s (a) big enough place that you know, you don’t have an island mentality. You can get in your car and drive from Punta Gorda to Corozal and it’s kind of an adventure. I mean you can move around so there’s a sense of undiscovered places. [Interview June 20, 2013].
Moreover, when I asked Jerry how he thinks how local culture is portrayed in tourism marketing advertisements for the peninsula, he highlighted cultural diversity as a central theme in Belizean marketing efforts, telling me:

> Whatever they’re marketing, the few that I’ve seen it’s always mixed ... There’s a little bit of everybody in whatever commercials they use whether it’s a private commercial for a business, but still using cultural diversity as a tool in advertisement and that’s usually the case in diversity. Well it’s ... nothing’s specific or special towards my culture that they use though I think the Kriol culture is like the second largest group in the country. At one point it was the largest, but the Mestizo quickly became the largest group, though every culture speaks Kriol. [Interview July 15, 2014].

In addition to the local feel / vibe, “cultural authenticity,” and ethnic / cultural diversity, many residents involved in the tourism industry - like imaginaries circulated by national tourism marketing media - distinguished the importance of coastal waters in attracting tourists to the peninsula. Neil, an expatriate business owner, discussed the significance of a healthy coastal environment for recreational tourism attractions such as fly fishing, in particular, when asked about the value of coastal waters in the area:

> Well tourism, of course. You know, that’s what people come here for. They come for the – ... fishermen it’s mostly fly fishing is what fishermen will come here for, … and diving and snorkeling, and, you know, people spend a lot of money on that so that’s the value to the community is that it attracts tourists because you know it’s a very healthy reef at this point, and that’s what people want to see. [Interview June 17, 2014].

Perceptions of tourist attractions to the peninsula among tour guides and tourism industry representatives overlapped to some degree with what tourists noted as the primary reasons they came to the Placencia Peninsula in the KoBo surveys. When foreign tourists were asked about the main reason
they came to the peninsula during the 2013 and 2014 field seasons (N = 37) using a multi-select question with options spanning various types of tourist attractions on the peninsula (see appendix 6, question 3b), interestingly no respondent identified (sport) fishing and no respondent noted coming to the peninsula explicitly for cultural tourism attractions. About 35 percent of foreign tourists surveyed identified diving / snorkeling, 27 percent noted beaches, roughly five percent identified all of the main options (i.e., “beaches,” “cultural tourism,” “jungle / rainforest,” “Maya ruins / archaeology,” and “diving / snorkeling”), about five percent noted coming to the peninsula for research purposes, approximately eight percent were searching for property / real estate, and another roughly 22 percent of respondents noted other reasons for coming to the peninsula. While the proportions for tourist attractions were similar across foreign tourist age groups, the primary draws to the peninsula varied to some degree between men and women. For example, roughly 62 percent of foreign tourist men (n = 13) noted diving / snorkeling as a primary draw to the peninsula, while only approximately 21 percent of women (n = 24) identified the activity. In addition to beaches (25 percent), female foreign tourists who participated in the surveys (nearly 71 percent of whom were 35 years old or younger) described a range of other reasons for coming to the peninsula, including property searches (about eight percent) and research (approximately eight percent of respondents).

Comparing tourist draws by nationality, approximately two-thirds of Canadian tourists surveyed (n = 3) and 40 percent of European tourists (n = 10) noted beaches as the main reason they came to the peninsula, whereas only about 17 percent of U.S. / American tourists (n = 24) identified beaches in particular. By contrast, nearly 46 percent of U.S. tourists surveyed listed diving / snorkeling as a primary attraction, while only 20 percent of European tourists surveyed identified the activity. Although they represent limited sample sizes, Canadian and European tourists seemed to have been more interested in purchasing real estate on the peninsula than U.S. tourists as 20 percent of European tourists and a third of Canadian tourists surveyed in 2013 and 2014 noted being on the peninsula searching for property, while no U.S. nationals indicated being on the peninsula to search for property. Although the sample of foreign tourists who participated in the KoBo surveys was limited and consisted predominately of white /
Caucasian North American or European individuals, variation in the primary draws tourists noted coming to the peninsula for may suggest differing tourism markets or attraction preferences between men and women and across nationalities. At least among this sample, foreign tourists noted access to diving / snorkeling activities and beaches as the primary attractions on the peninsula, suggesting that their tourism imaginaries of the peninsula draw at least partly from tourism industry marketing media.

Like national tourism industry media, national sustainable tourism and coastal development policies (e.g., Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a, b; Clarke et al. 2013) promote a number of key attractions / tourism products relating to the coastal environment along and around the peninsula. For example, the Belize Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (Clarke et al. 2013: 56-59) and the Belize National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan conceive of the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System as a key environmental heritage tourism asset, promoting diving, fishing, and sun and beach activities around key protected areas (including Glover’s Reef Marine Reserve, Laughing Bird Caye National Park, and recommendations for including Gladden Spit and Silk Cayes Marine Reserve (Destination Belize 2014:15)) off of the peninsula (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011b:4, 53-54). As a destination along the southeastern coast of Belize, the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan 2030 vision recommends that the Placencia Peninsula “contain development and consolidate” to promote low to mid-density development and coastal environmental conservation centered around “sun & beach” tourism (focused on creating coastal resort areas and waterfront activity capacity as well as maintaining the peninsula’s “pristine beaches” for tourist relaxation) and nautical tourism (concentrated on developing infrastructure and capacity for tourism boat charters (yachts, etc.) while maintaining the integrity of the coral reef) as its primary attractions (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a:8, 11; 2011b:42, 45-46). Secondary tourism products envisioned for the peninsula by the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan physical destination plan include nature-based tourism and adventure tourism (essentially recreational ecotourism in the reef, the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, etc.), cultural tourism (developing and showcasing cultural heritage and “living culture” in towns and festivals, markets, etc.), and possible pocket cruise tourism (small-scale, under 300 passengers per ship) north of the peninsula (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a:10-
Although the primary tourism products for the Placencia Peninsula outlined in the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan are sun and beach and nautical tourism, “authentic” “charming villages” or “enchanting villages” (NICH 2014:38) such as Placencia are promoted as proposed “cultural tourism products” to showcase ethnic and cultural diversity, which the plan aims to highlight contemporary Garifuna and Maya cultures and traditions, in particular (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011b:21, 42, 45-46). In sum, the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan provides the following proposed development statement and tourism imaginary for coastal residents and travelers to the southeastern coastline:

This distinctive destination will be hosting a chain of mid to low density sun & beach resorts, a chain of charming villages such as Placencia, Hopkins and Dangriga along with pristine and attractive beaches. This area will host mid-high end markets drawn by sun & beach, marine life and rainforest motivations; as well as it will become the main hub for nautical tourism development and the first to attract the pocket cruise market.” [Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011b:42].

Following recommendations in the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan, coastal development policy calls for maintaining and monitoring marine protected areas in the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System World Heritage site (Clarke et al. 2013:56-59) and consolidating development through “informed management” (integrating conservation goals with coastal use and development considerations (Clarke et al. 2013:13)) to assist with maintaining and promoting existing tourism attractions on and around the peninsula (CZMAI 2016a:34, 36-38). In particular, the South Central Region Coastal Zone Management Guidelines for the peninsula recommend maintaining the integrity of the peninsula as a small-scale (“low impact”), integrated, and “authentic” overnight tourism destination rather than developing it for (all-inclusive) mass tourism, although pocket cruise tourism with village oversight is noted as a development option (CZMAI 2016a:34, 37-38).
This vision of continuing “low impact” and integrated tourism development for the peninsula, particularly for Placencia, is shared by many representatives of the tourism industry on the peninsula, including some resort owners, as William disclosed during an interview:

And, Placencia is just such a very cool, authentic place. You walk around, you don’t feel like you’re in some tourist trap. You go into the grocery store, and it’s mostly local people that are buying stuff next to you. A lot of local people still live on the beachfront in the village. There’s a good mix. It’s a – It’s kind of the encounter is … a much more equitable encounter. In other words, if tourism is an encounter between two cultures, the encounter in this case is much more equitable than it is in a cruise ship encounter. [Interview June 20, 2013].

As part of a “low impact” tourism destination, the integrated coastal management policy for the south central region highlights water sports and other marine-based recreational activities such as diving / snorkeling, swimming, sport fishing, and kayaking, among others, as key coastal attractions especially in relation to significant protected areas for tourism and conservation such as Laughing Bird Caye National Park and the Gladden Spit area (CZMAI 2016a:34, 36-38). Moreover, aligning with some fisher resident conceptions of sustainable coastal management, the guidelines suggest that the tourism and fishing sectors be strongly interwoven “in terms of culture, tourist activities, and supply chain” to promote “informed” coastal resource management, especially in the Placencia Lagoon and along the barrier reef system (CZMAI 2016a:32-33). These coastal zone management recommendations for the peninsula draw from vision statements in the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (Tourism and Leisure 2011b) and the Peninsula 2020 Initiative (2011) as well as the results of the InVEST Recreation and Tourism ecosystem service model for projected tourism growth, and provide an integrated approach to coastal resource management across sectors and governmental departments (CZMAI 2016a:34, 37-38).

Collectively, national sustainable tourism and coastal development policies promote the consolidation of development and moderate expansion of tourism markets on the peninsula – especially sun and beach, marine nature-based / eco-tourism, and nautical tourism – which already are promoted as
main attractions for the peninsula by the BTB, BTIA, and Belize Hotel Association (Clarke et al. 2013; CZMAI 2016a; Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a, b). Although these policies acknowledge the significance of local people and cultural activities in maintaining the authenticity of the destination, local cultural heritage is considered a secondary tourism product / market for the peninsula.

Similar to the primary tourism products and attractions outlined in national tourism industry marketing media and policy, results from the KoBo surveys suggest that a large proportion of foreign tourists and visitors to the peninsula consider coastal environmental attractions such as the barrier reef and cayes and beaches / relaxation to be fundamental to local culture / heritage, often more than traditional livelihoods and cultural activities such as fishing. When foreign tourists were asked to identify just one significant feature of local heritage or culture on the peninsula during the KoBo surveys in 2013 and 2014 (N = 37), over 16 percent of respondents noted the barrier reef or cayes while another roughly 14 percent identified beaches / relaxation, more than five percent noted local tourism, and about three percent identified snorkeling / diving (see Figure 12). Moreover, as an inland tour option, Maya archaeology / ruins were noted as the most important aspect of local culture / heritage by over eight percent of foreign tourists surveyed. Although one tourist imagined Lobsterfest to be the most significant thing associated with local culture / heritage on the peninsula (likely since the event occurred around the time of the survey), no tourists noted fishing, or other events or locations associated with fishing when asked the question. Furthermore, only one tourist (representing roughly three percent of respondents) identified local cultural performances (such as dancing and drumming) as the most significant feature of local culture / heritage, suggesting that cultural activities and traditional livelihoods may not be a prominent part of foreign tourists’ heritage imaginaries of Placencia or the peninsula in general. However, like the tourism imaginaries advertised in prominent national and local tourism marketing media (especially Destination Belize and Footprints on the Beach to Paradise), the local people and ambience of the peninsula were recognized as the most fundamental aspect of the peninsula’s heritage / culture by the largest proportion of foreign tourists surveyed as nearly 19 percent noted the local friendly vibe / people in particular, eight percent identified ethnic / cultural diversity, and over five percent
described the location as a “quaint town” (see Figure 12). Another eight percent of foreign tourists (all women) identified the local culinary scene as the most fundamental aspect of local culture / heritage, sharing the tourism industry imaginary of Placencia as an ethnically diverse culinary hub (BTIA 2013:118).

While conceptions of significant heritage on the peninsula were similar across foreign tourist age groups, what foreign visitor respondents identified as the most significant feature of culture / heritage on the peninsula (in the community(ies) they visited) varied to some degree between men and women.

Figure 12. Bar chart showing what foreign tourists who participated in KoBo surveys during the 2013 and 2014 field seasons responded when asked to identify just one significant aspect of local culture / heritage on the peninsula. The response categories are color-coded into major groupings. (Chart drafted by the author).
For example, roughly 17 percent of foreign tourist women (n = 24) noted beaches / relaxation as the most significant aspect of local culture / heritage on the peninsula, while only approximately eight percent of men (n = 13) identified this local attraction. In addition to beaches / relaxation, female foreign tourist respondent identified local cuisine and Maya archaeology / ruins (roughly 13 percent of respondents for each category) as the most important aspects of local culture / heritage on the peninsula, while no men did.

Comparing foreign tourist perceptions by nationality, almost 17 percent of U.S. / American tourists surveyed (n = 24) and ten percent of European tourists (n = 10) noted beaches / relaxation as the most significant feature of local culture / heritage, while nearly 13 percent of U.S. tourists and 30 percent of European tourists surveyed identified the barrier reef or cayes. Among the very small sample of Canadian tourists (n = 3), one hundred percent of respondents identified the local friendly vibe / people or “quaintness” of the community(ies) they visited on the peninsula as the most significant aspect of local culture / heritage, while nearly 21 percent of U.S. and ten percent of European survey respondents recognized the local community ambience and people. Moreover, European tourists (20 percent) and to a lesser extent U.S. tourist respondents (just over four percent) recognized ethnic / cultural diversity on the peninsula as the most significant aspect of local culture / heritage. Finally, similar proportions of U.S. and European tourist respondents (roughly eight percent and ten percent, respectively) noted the local culinary scene or Maya archaeology / ruins as the most significant features of culture / heritage on the peninsula, which suggests these marketed tourist attractions are a primary component of some Euro-American heritage imaginaries of the peninsula.

These results indicate that many foreign tourists, like peninsula residents, recognized the local people and ambience of Placencia and other villages on the peninsula as the most significant aspect of local culture / heritage, and therefore the tourism imaginary of Placencia as a laid-back community with friendly people is likely shared between a large proportion of community members and tourists. Although foreign tourists did not recognize fishing or places and events associated with fishing as the most significant features of local culture / heritage (other than one respondent who noted Lobsterfest), they did
overwhelmingly acknowledge fishing as a part of the peninsula’s heritage after being provided a list of potential heritage items including fishing during the surveys. When foreign tourists were asked about what they identify as heritage from a list of fifteen items spanning national (authorized) tourism conceptions of heritage and local events, holidays, and activities through the KoBo surveys (see appendix 6, question 11), over 91 percent of those surveyed from the 2013 and 2014 field seasons (N = 35) considered fishing activities to be an aspect of heritage on the peninsula. Examining foreign tourist responses by gender, the survey results suggest a very similar degree of consensus between men and women from the peninsula regarding whether fishing activities are part of local heritage as nearly 91 percent of women (n = 22) and over 92 percent of men (n = 13) identified fishing.

Consensus about fishing being a feature of local heritage also was similar across age groupings with a hundred percent of 18-25 year old foreign tourists surveyed (n = 7), roughly 86 percent of foreign tourists between 26 and 35 (n = 14), over 83 percent of foreign tourists between 36 and 49 (n = 6), and one hundred percent of residents 50 years and older (n = 8) noting fishing as an aspect of local heritage. Consensus about fishing being a feature of heritage on the peninsula was similar between foreign tourists visiting from different regions with some slight variation between North American and European respondents as nearly 96 percent of U.S. (n = 23) and one hundred percent of Canadian respondents (n = 3) identified fishing as heritage from the list, while only about 78 percent of European respondents (n = 9) noted the activity (see Figure 13). Collectively, these results suggest fishing is widely included in Euro-North American foreign tourist heritage imaginaries of the peninsula to a very similar degree as peninsula resident conceptions of local heritage, but that the activity is not perceived to be one of the most significant aspects of local heritage. Rather, like the tourism imaginary of Placencia as a “once quiet fishing village” that has transformed into a versatile tourism hub (BTIA 2014:80-81), foreign tourists conceive of fishing (livelihoods) as a secondary feature of the peninsula’s (particularly Placencia’s) heritage – perhaps by virtue of its coastal location and the availability of local seafood – behind the primary marketed tourism attractions and the local people / vibe of the place.
Similar to fishing, but to a lesser extent, foreign tourists who participated in the KoBo surveys generally identified Lobsterfest as a secondary feature of local heritage on the peninsula, likely due to its prominence as a nationally and locally marketed tourism event in Placencia. Almost 69 percent of foreign tourists who participated in the KoBo-based surveys during the 2013 and 2014 field seasons (N = 35)

Figure 13. Bar chart showing foreign tourist survey respondents’ identification of fishing as an aspect of heritage on the peninsula by nationality when asked what they consider to be local heritage from a list spanning several national and local traditions, holidays, events, places, and activities during the 2013 and 2014 field seasons.
considered Lobsterfest to be a part of heritage on the peninsula when asked what they identify as heritage from a list of fifteen items spanning national (authorized) tourism conceptions of heritage and local events, holidays, and activities (see appendix 6, question 11). Among these foreign tourists, survey results indicate that men and women had slightly differing levels of consensus regarding whether they consider Lobsterfest to be part of local heritage as over 77 percent of women (n = 22) identified the event while only about 54 percent of men (n = 13) noted it when asked the question, although a larger sample size is needed to determine any statistically significant difference in perceptions between the genders. Consensus that Lobsterfest represents an aspect of local heritage on the peninsula varied to some degree across foreign tourist age groups, especially between younger and older survey respondents. Notably, a hundred percent of 18-25 year old foreign tourists surveyed (n = 7), over 71 percent of foreign tourists between 26 and 35 years old (n = 14), and two-thirds of foreign tourists 36-49 years old (n = 6) identified the event, while only roughly 38 percent of residents 50 years and older (n = 8) attributed Lobsterfest as an aspect of local heritage (see Figure 14). While no statistically significant difference between these age groups of foreign tourists can be ascertained due to limited sample sizes for particular categories, these results suggest that younger foreign tourist heritage imaginaries include Lobsterfest to a greater extent than older foreign tourists (especially those age 50 and older), perhaps due to their greater participation in the event.

Finally, consensus about Lobsterfest being a feature of heritage on the peninsula was mixed between foreign tourists visiting from different regions as approximately 78 percent of Europeans (n = 9) and nearly 74 percent of U.S. / American respondents (n = 23) identified Lobsterfest as heritage from the list, while no Canadian respondents (n = 3) noted the annual event. While these sample sizes are insufficient to distinguish any statistically significant differences in perceptions of Lobsterfest as an aspect of local heritage between foreign visitors representing different nationalities, these survey results may indicate that U.S. and European tourists were more aware of the event occurring in Placencia (through access to different forms of tourism media) or that they associated its significance with local culture to a greater extent than Canadian tourists.
Taken together, these survey results illuminating heritage imaginaries held by foreign tourists are by no means representative of the views of the diversity of types of tourists coming to the peninsula. In addition to a limited sample size, the majority of surveys with tourists were conducted in Placencia, and to a lesser extent, Maya Beach. Thus, the sample is likely biased toward tourists staying in the village of Placencia at smaller-scale accommodations rather than at large scale resorts (although a small fraction of respondents noted staying at larger resorts around Placencia, Seine Bight, and Maya Beach). Additionally,
only 35 percent of foreign tourist survey respondents were male and the majority of female foreign tourist respondents were 35 years old or younger as discussed earlier in this section, biasing the gender and age demographics of the sample. Furthermore, the majority of foreign tourists who took part in a KoBo survey (nearly 65 percent of respondents) during the 2013 or 2014 field seasons identified as having U.S. / American nationality, and all respondents were from either North America or Europe, biasing, in turn, the representation of nationalities among foreign visitors to the peninsula in the sample.

Despite these sample biases, overall, peninsula residents, Belizean visitors and workers, and foreign tourists alike who participated in the surveys recognized Lobsterfest and fishing as a part of heritage in Placencia / on the peninsula to similar degrees, but differed in their perceptions of whether the event or activity / industry holds primary or secondary significance for local cultural heritage. Thus, the survey results indicate that foreign tourist heritage imaginaries of the peninsula, in general, share recognition of fishing and local tourism events as heritage with peninsula residents, but likely only at a cursory level.

### 7.2 Visions for Sustainable Development and Cultural (Heritage) Tourism in Placencia

Narratives of Placencia as a tourism destination along with resident and tourist conceptions of local culture and heritage relate in significant ways to prominent visions for the Placencia Peninsula’s sustainable development as a whole. Local residents and leaders, NGOs, and policies such as the Peninsula 2020 Initiative (2011:2, 4) articulate a vision in which residents have greater control over decision-making processes involving investment in and development of land and resources on / around the peninsula, especially recognizing the peninsula’s marketed image as a primarily small-scale overnight tourism destination with “attractive beaches, proximity to marine and land attractions, excellent infrastructure and genuinely friendly residents.” Numerous residents, especially members of the local chapter of the BTIA, believe that recent foreign-initiated mass tourism development projects like the proposed cruise ship port currently under construction south of the peninsula on Harvest Caye threaten the integrity of Placencia’s marketed tourism ethos (The Guardian-Belize 2014; Vernon and Young-
Thus, many residents and local leaders (Boles et al. 2011:18, 37-38; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:43-44) as well as national tourism and coastal development policies (e.g., Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a, b:42, 45-46; CZMAI 2016a:34, 37-38) and marketing media (e.g., BTIA 2013, 2014) seek to actively encourage and pursue a “low impact” trajectory for local development that maintains the appealing character and “authenticity” of the place while expanding socioeconomic opportunities for diverse local stakeholders (Peninsula 2020 Initiative 2011:12). In this vein, local development policies like the Peninsula 2020 Initiative (2011:4-6, 12) and informational guides propose that Placencia and other communities on the peninsula balance foreign investment and local development to promote “mutually beneficial relationships between residents and investors” (Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:46). Specifically tailoring to a future based around sustainable tourism development, development vision statements for the peninsula recommend facilitating local small business training and expansion, broadening participation in community tourism development decisions, and improving public infrastructure, urban planning, and enforcement of environmental regulations to reduce pollution and lessen other potentially negative impacts of expanding coastal development accompanying growth in tourism (Peninsula 2020 Initiative 2011:4-7, 10-11; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:47).

In line with these recommendations, many residents believe continuing the current forms of overnight tourism and nature-based / ecotourism on the peninsula, while increasing local ownership in the industry, are the most sustainable pathways forward for tourism development (Interviews June 20, 2013; June 24, 2013; June 19, 2014; July 7, 2014). For example, when I asked about what a “sustainable” tourism industry looks on the peninsula during an interview, Christopher emphasized the need for local involvement and ownership in the industry, stating:

I think the only way it would be considered sustainable is if the locals are involved. You know, of course the environment is important, and then we need to have that – take good care of that for it to be sustainable. But I think the locals play a big role as well. The locals definitely have to be involved in all different aspects of the tourism industry ... – in the planning, even in the ownership of the different tourism businesses. [Interview June 24, 2013].
Drawing on this theme of local involvement in the tourism industry, Larry discussed overnight tourism in opposition to cruise tourism and a tourism imaginary of Placencia as an “eco-conscious” destination when asked the same question, explaining:

The overnight tourism, I see that that could be something good for this village, everybody for sure. ... I would have every tourist dollar spent here, I believe a local would benefit, you know. At least 25 cents out of the dollar, some local people will get some benefit ... – and overnight tourism is sustainable ‘cause ... they don’t come in big quantities at one time. ... I think any time you venture into something like this, it has to be sustainable. Otherwise you don’t do it. ... Like cruise tourism, it’s not a sustainable tourism venture. ... it’s bound to whoever. If you have three thousand people on an island, and they all go to the Maya ruin; let’s say five hundred of them go to that Maya ruin. ... Nobody else want to go there while they’re there, you know. What you going to see? ... you’ll be blind and then you have to watch they don’t knock you over, you know. So those things to me, I don’t think they can go for any ... long period of time before they fuck up the whole place, you know. So, I say that’s where my thing is – sustainable tourism, which is ecotourism. That’s ... what people come here, a lot of people come here to go see the forest, to see herds of wildlife, they go to the sea, to see whatever there is to see and preserve it, you know. You don’t have five hundred people jumping in the water at once. You know, that’s the way it should be. You have five hundred people going around a little caye like the Silk cayes. I tell you, in five years, there won’t be sand left there. ... We are not for numbers. We might be a little expensive, but you know, the numbers is what would kill this place.” [Interview June 19, 2014].

William also described his preference for maintaining overnight tourism and ecotourism as the peninsula’s primary tourism markets in relation to the proposed tourism products outlined in the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan for the region, telling me:
… I don’t agree with every minute single point in the whole National Sustainable Plan, but I’ve read it pretty closely and it’s – I think it’s a pretty good document. … I wish it would go a little more in the ecotourism direction. You know, they are talking about more of a high-density zone kind of north of Riversdale. ... And they …. did that because of the existence of the half-built international airport … up there. So I think they kind of went that direction by default ... But in general, it was a good effort. I wish government would follow it in terms of cruise tourism ‘cause the plan clearly states that mass cruise tourism … ought not to be allowed in the South. But that’s what we’re fighting with government (over) [Interview June 20, 2013].

Similarly advocating for small-scale tourism development, some Placencia residents discussed the need to pursue overnight tourism, while acknowledging how the Government of Belize could encourage sustained tourism growth through expanded international marketing efforts, as Jerry elaborated:

I think … government should give the villages more say in how they go about granting permission to potential business investors or development – or resort developers. (And) ... I think if you could tie that question back to the NCL situation, a sustainable tourism industry here in Placencia would just be: for one, leave it as overnight tourism, and two, I think the government should beef up the tourism industry with, you know, international ads and things that welcome or invite tourists / tourism to your country. Like a simple example would be if you’re watching TV and flipped through the channels, you would see a beautiful commercial of Mexico or a beautiful commercial of Jamaica, and there’s none with Belize, you know. A lot of people don’t even know where Belize is, but it’s the truth that a lot of people don’t know about it. But that can be a good thing and a bad thing. Bad relating to if you’re a tourism-dependent person, especially in the village(s) of Placencia, San Pedro, and these other tourism hot spots in the country. It’s a bad thing if people don’t know where your country is or what … it’s all about. ... But I think promotion of the country, getting it up there on the world market – world stage and all … And
therefore, we’d have more tools to win. I think too maybe what happens is – happens with a lot of effects on local tourism is with pricing, the rates, prices of accommodation, of food, of all these things is much higher, whereas they can go to a country ... nearby and get the same services for way less – (for) diving, for accommodation. [Interview July 15, 2014].

Jerry also noted how cruiseship tourism could spur loss of local cultural authencity and discussed why continuing integration of tourists and local people should be considered for future sustainable development on the peninsula, explaining:

But I think people traveling from … various places, they would want to see village life, they would want to see the local life rather than be, you know, stuck on an island. They are already stuck on a ship, right? I think another aspect that people aren’t looking at is that the loss of cultural integrity in that it would be real culture ... would turn into a commodity, especially culture in Seine Bight. You know, they got rich Garifuna culture. ... I’m assuming they might ... look at selling their culture rather than having it be … very real. [Interview July 15, 2014].

In addition to perpetuating overnight tourism and the dominant ecotourism and sun and beach tourism markets on the peninsula, local residents and NGO representatives increasingly recognize the potential for cultural (heritage) tourism as one pathway to conserve culture, pursue sustainability, and increase local ownership over development efforts on the peninsula (Peninsula 2020 Initiative 2011:9). Specifically, the Peninsula 2020 Initiative (2011:9) calls for investing in and promoting cultural tourism on the peninsula, chiefly in the villages of Placencia and Seine Bight, to revitalize and conserve traditional cultural practices and meet the budding tourism demand for local cultural activities and experiences. This peninsula-wide aim to integrate local cultural preservation with tourism aligns with recommendations in national sustainable tourism development policy (e.g., Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011b:46) and national cultural policy (NICH 2014:37-38) that seek to develop cultural tourism as a (secondary) tourism product for the peninsula, especially as part of a network of “Enchanted Belizean
Villages” to showcase Belize’s cultural diversity. Notably, the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan in its “Strategic Framework for sustainable tourism development in Belize” supports expansion of this tourism market since cultural tourism is recognized as the first priority tourism product for Belize by 2030 alongside nature-based tourism (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a:10). Moreover, the National Culture Policy recognizes the need to promote heritage conservation and sustainable livelihoods initiatives including programs supporting local entrepreneurs specializing in “cultural forms” and entertainment that draw from traditional cultural practices and may assist with environmental protection and educational initiatives (NICH 2014:22-23, 25, 33-34, 36-37).

In this context, many peninsula residents envision the development of a cultural tourism market on the peninsula that necessitates conserving local heritage (Peninsula 2020Initative 2011:9) as well as maintaining coastal livelihoods and ecological resources to support future tourism ventures (Boles et al. 2011:38-39). Recognizing fishing as a potential component of the local cultural tourism market in particular, the Peninsula 2020 Initiative (2011:8) recommends that “the fishing and tourism industries must be more tightly integrated in terms of culture, tourist activities, and supply chain” to sustain local livelihoods between these sectors. Hector, a former representative of the Placencia fishing cooperative, explained that heritage conservation and environmental preservation are vital to promote future beneficial development for local residents between these sectors in Placencia:

If the people of Placencia hold strong to what they believe in, I think the future is good. You know that we can maintain our heritage, our islands and cayes, our waters around those islands and cayes as pristine as possible. Our fishermen being able to do what they love. You know they can be a tour guide, they can be a tour operator, they can be a fisherman. You know, having that all around privilege. ... I can still see that in the future. But that has to come with people willing to stand up for what they believe in. If we allow the multi-million dollar people to come in and believe that they can do what they want and not standing up and saying anything, we may not have it. [Interview June 19, 2013].
Despite concerns about loss of fishing livelihoods and other prominent aspects of Placencia’s heritage, especially with the rapid expansion of primarily foreign-funded tourism development and accompanying gentrification on the peninsula in recent years, the majority of residents on / around the peninsula who participated in KoBo surveys in 2013 and 2014 (nearly 80 percent; N = 79) noted that their heritage is either “well” or “very well” maintained when asked how well they think (their idea of) heritage, in general, is maintained locally (see appendix 6, question 12). Consensus that local heritage is maintained on the peninsula spanned across resident ethnic groups with at least two-thirds of respondents in each resident ethnic category noting that heritage was at least well maintained. Residents identifying as Kriol (Creole) (n = 24), Mestizo / Hispanic / Spanish (n = 8), and with other ethnic groups (n = 6) had the highest levels of consensus that heritage is maintained on the peninsula with roughly 88 percent of Kriol (Creole) and Mestizo / Hispanic / Spanish residents and one hundred percent of respondents identifying with other ethnicities, respectively, noting that heritage is at least well maintained (Figure 15). No residents noted that their heritage was “not very well at all” maintained, but 15 percent of respondents (including nearly 28 percent of Garifuna residents surveyed) described their heritage as not very well maintained locally. Similarly, consensus that local heritage is generally maintained on the peninsula spanned across residents from different communities on / around the peninsula with at least 70 percent of respondents from each community noting that heritage was at least well maintained. Residents living in Placencia (n = 42), Riversdale (n = 2), and Independence / Mango Creek (n = 2) had the highest degrees of consensus that heritage is maintained on the peninsula with over 83 percent of Placencia respondents and a hundred percent of Riversdale and Independence / Mango Creek respondents noting that heritage is at least well maintained (although this is likely due to a limited number of survey participants for Riversdale and Independence / Mango Creek). Likewise, men and women residents (n1 = 47, n2 = 32) who participated in the surveys had similar levels of consensus as nearly 83 percent and 75 percent of respondents, respectively, identified their heritage as at least well maintained.
However, consensus about how well heritage is maintained varied to a greater degree between younger and older residents. Residents 35 years old and younger at the time the surveys were administered more often described their heritage on the peninsula as not very well maintained in general (about 23 percent and 18 percent of residents between 18-25 (n = 17) and 26-35 years old (n = 31), respectively) than older residents. By contrast, all of the resident respondents on / around the peninsula who were 50 years or older at the time they participated in a survey (n = 17) perceived their heritage to be at least well maintained on the peninsula. These results suggest generational differences in the recognition
and conservation of heritage, although a larger sample size of survey respondents across the five age group categories is needed to distinguish any statistically significant variations between them.

Considering a general consensus that heritage is at least well maintained on the peninsula among residents, some tour guides, fishers, and NGO representatives in Placencia recognize heritage tourism constructed around history and traditional livelihoods as a potential avenue for sustainable development in the future (Interviews June 20, 2013; July 12, 2014; July 15, 2014). For example, when asked about what sustainable development might look like during an interview, *Kel* highlighted cultural / historical tourism as an avenue for small-scale, local tourism development, explaining:

Cultural (tourism) - I don’t think we have enough of – there really isn’t like any Placencia historical tours. I’ve heard people talking about it. There was a couple of walking tours with a smaller cruise ship that came here. … – that was years ago, I think they did offer a walking tour of Placencia. And then I’ve heard people talk about bringing that back, but nobody’s currently offering that. So, there’s room … for cultural and historical tours. There’s some room, many people have brought up for a type of a – I don’t know if museum is the right word - museum or like a visitor center or something, you know that has more historical information on the area. … There’s a few people offering some foodie-type tours now, which is I think great. You know, a nice way to make it a personal Belizean tour, ecotourism tour like that. But we could certainly have more of that. [Interview July 12, 2014].

*Jerry* also provided a pitch for heritage tourism in Placencia and discussed the potential types of tourists the market would attract, telling me during an interview:

There is a possibility for a new window of tourism, and you know you could call it like heritage tours - … just a quick pitch thing. Like somebody would create a tour company that’s specifically geared towards heritage. You go to this area, somebody shows them what exactly is being – how it was prepared – and how it has been prepared, or “many years ago this is what we used.” You know, something like that but … specifically there isn’t any cultural tour to give people that real,
authentic cultural experience on the peninsula. That’s … almost unheard of around here. ... I believe there will be a market for it. If I were to go to another country, let’s say I go to Madagascar. I wouldn’t just go and go diving or fishing, I … really would want to see the people and how they operate, wouldn’t you? ... Right. And I think because nobody ever offers that, nobody knows about it – I’m sure they want to, but nobody really does it. [Interview July 15, 2014].

Recognizing this market for heritage tourism, Jerry also discussed how a relative of his had envisioned creating a local historical room for education about traditional cooking and sharing Kriol cuisine in Placencia:

My (relative) is very into something like that for Placencia, but it’s very difficult to – for one, her big dream would be to have like a room or like a miniature - something let’s say the size of this conference room here – dedicated to tools and equipment that was used way bak’ den. Like at one point she said when she was a kid, the irons that they used to use is the ones full metal and you put it over the fire hearth or stove or whatever and the iron gets hot, and then you press it and iron it, and … then when the metal gets cold, you’ve got to put it on the fire again. That’s how she grew up, that’s what she knew – cooking over a fire hearth, using these basic, basic technology(ies) for then. You had certain tools that you ... used when you were using a fire hearth. We had this thing that’s called a kiss-kiss. It’s like ... a big ... pair of thumb(s) ... that you use to cook with, but made of wood. And you hold it like that and that’s how you lift your sheets of baking sheets and stuff off of the fire hearth. ... And then there’s this other instrument that’s – ... well I’ll describe it as like a kneading bowl, but like a flat kneading bowl, big, made of pure wood, and you know … certain of the tools and kitchen equipment and stuff they use bak’ den that really don’t exist anymore. ... She also ... formed the first women’s group here in the village, and they did like … a history night. They had the foods, they had the equipments and stuff – she
actually got it on the radio too. It was … a very educational thing, but usually Placencia if it’s not partying and drinks and stuff, oftentimes people aren’t interested. [Interview July 15, 2014].

Like Jerry and Kel, other residents also recognize the potential for a local cultural tourism market, but some discussed the need for suitable personnel to encourage its growth as Ann disclosed during an interview when I asked about local interest in promoting cultural tourism in Placencia:

Oh yeah, ... I’ve been trying for years to get a local guide to do tours of Placencia. I mean there’s all kinds of funny and interesting stories. All kinds of ghost stories. There’s a story about the bishop and why the sidewalk is here. You could stop at different gift shops, and you could stop at a couple of restaurants for like appetizers, and main courses. You know, you could kind of spread the wealth around that way … But … if it’s not snorkeling or guiding or the jungle, they just don’t want to do it. It doesn’t pay as much because it’s only like a four hour tour, right? ... I think there’s a potential for them. It’s just finding the right people to do them.

Alongside the Placencia fishing cooperative’s proposed fishing history museum and heritage tourism program and plans for a local museum of history and culture in Seine Bight (Interview June 25, 2013), these resident conceptions of cultural tourism for Placencia illustrate a range of possibilities for building heritage tourism capacity within the widely shared resident vision of sustainable development for the peninsula as a small-scale, integrated and “local” resident maintained, overnight tourism destination. Results from surveys and interviews carried out through this study suggest that foreign tourists, Belizean workers and visitors, and peninsula residents alike recognize cultural diversity on the peninsula as a tourism asset and express interest in cultural tourism, especially though culinary-based attractions and a cultural / history museum centered on fishing livelihoods. However, the dynamics of this market have yet to be adequately ascertained. Currently advertised tourism attractions on the peninsula like culinary tours and festivals such as Lobsterfest, which draw from local foodways and history, as well as ethnic handicrafts can be packaged as part of an emerging cultural tourism product in line with
recommendations in national sustainable tourism and cultural policies (NICH 2014:25, 33-34, 38; Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a:11, 21, 36; 2011b:46). Alongside marine-based ecotourism (diving / snorkeling and sport fishing guiding in particular), cultural (heritage) tourism provides an alternative livelihood option for local fishers to apply their embodied heritage and coastal environmental knowledge to tourism ventures (Peninsula 2020 Initative 2011:7-8), specifically centering their own livelihoods and culture. Cultural tourism is outlined in the Placencia Producers Cooperative’s five year development plan (2013-2017) along with alternative fishing livelihoods like seaweed farming, lionfishing, and sea cucumber mariculture (PPCSL 2014; Vernon and Young-Westby 2014:34) and is identified in the Peninsula 2020 vision statement (Peninsula 2020 Initiative 2011:8) as a means of reducing pressure on commercial fisheries and promoting sustainable development in Placencia. Additionally, a livelihood transition to cultural tourism may be easier to facilitate for some impoverished community residents since village tours currently do not require a tour guide license, and thus investment in a formal BTB tour guide training course (although this may change with new BTB statutes; Informal interview July 12, 2014).

Moreover, following National Culture Policy recommendations (NICH 2014:35-36) and previous research findings (Boles et al. 2011:38-39), an emerging market for heritage tourism on the peninsula together with sustained marine and estuary-centered ecotourism may assist with coastal environmental conservation and educational efforts since many coastal environmental areas and fishing spots (cayes, reefs, MPAs, etc.) are recognized as community heritage by Placencia residents (see Table 5). Describing tourism’s contribution to conservation and management of MPAs like Laughing Bird Caye National Park, a representative of SEA explained during an interview:

Well those are really attractive sites. We make thousands of dollars every year. ... As a result of the support from tourists – mainly Americans and Canadians, significant Europeans, and foreigners, Central Americans – mainly Guatemala, Mexicans, Hondurenians, who come and enjoy the beauty of the cayes and the sandy islands – beach. And remember, we have the second largest reef in the Western Hemisphere. So we have to have wonderful sites for fishing, snorkeling, scuba diving, and fishing – fly fishing and sport fishing – and so we are an amazing
attraction, and we need to keep those reefs and rocks clean. We need to educate people to protect, preserve, conserve those marine resources so they can be sustainable for the future. [Interview July 14, 2014].

However, complicating the status of popular coastal environmental attractions like Laughing Bird Caye as “World Heritage” to support marine-based ecotourism and potential heritage tourism markets along the reef, in particular, UNESCO listed the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System (BBRRS) on its “World Heritage in Danger” list in 2009 (UNESCO 2013). UNESCO (2016) cited the risk of oil exploration in the World Heritage Site, concerns about development and privatization of mangrove cayes, and the lack of a sufficient regulatory mechanism to protect and manage its constituent sites and surrounding coastal ecosystems in its decision, but may reconsider this designation with the recent approval and implementation of Belize CZMAI’s Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMAI 2016a, b). Other barriers to developing a cultural (heritage) tourism market on the peninsula include the need for local entrepreneurial capital for residents to start cultural tour operations (Peninsula 2020 Initiative 2011:9) in addition to tourism infrastructure and specialized training and education in communities like Seine Bight on the peninsula whose residents often recognize the potential to package their cultural heritage as an asset for local tourism development (Koenig et al. 2016; also see Morozova 2016:75-77 for a similar discussion of constraints for sustainable community-based tourism among Garifuna residents in Hopkins). Furthermore, foreign investors often dominate marketing of tourism attractions on the peninsula due to tourism industry membership, partnerships, and financial resources as national tourism promotional media such as Destination Belize illustrate by highlighting predominately foreign-owned resorts, tour companies, and lodging on / around the peninsula in advertising space over businesses and hotels owned by long-time Placencia residents and Belizean citizens (e.g., BTIA 2013:119-123; 2014:83-85). For the Placencia fishing cooperative, recurring debt, dwindling membership, and a transition period without an operations manager further complicate the success of
future heritage tourism initiatives – notably, their proposed local fishing history and culture museum and heritage tourism program.

Despite this suite of challenges, many local residents including fisherfolk are enthusiastic about the opportunities and potential benefits of an emerging cultural (heritage) tourism market for the peninsula. This type of development is especially salient for the peninsula since it is recognized as a key avenue for sustainable development across local and national sustainable tourism development visions (e.g., Peninsula 2020 Initiative 2011:9; Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a, b) and objectives in national integrated coastal zone management (Clarke et al. 2013:108-109) and cultural policies (NICH 2014:16-17, 33, 37-38). Particularly encouraging to stimulate this type of tourism development are the commitments in the National Culture Policy under NICH to “promote training of cultural practitioners” (including traditional skills and handicrafts), “to outline strategies for cultural infrastructure, including cultural centres and other community-level spaces for cultural and artistic expression, such as museums, Houses of Culture, Creative Art Centres,” “to promote culture industries and entrepreneurship, particularly among youth and women,” and finally “to encourage marketing synergies between Culture and Tourism agencies for destination and event promotion” under objectives 7.13, 7.15, 7.16, and 14.2.7, respectively (NICH 2014:16-17, 25, 38). Thus, efforts to cultivate a cultural (heritage) tourism market on the peninsula hypothetically have the institutional backing of the Belizean national government, at least in policy letter.
CHAPTER VIII: CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

8.1 Concluding Remarks

8.1.1 Placencia Fisher Collaborations and Livelihood Strategies

Considering changes in community dynamics, coastal policies, occupations, and the environment accompanying rapid tourism and associated development as well as regional climatic and weather events over the past 20-25 years on and around the Placencia Peninsula, this research documents various approaches fishers, environmental NGOs, and residents are pursuing to sustain local livelihoods while conserving coastal environments and heritage. For Placencia fishers in particular, many are seeking out alternative livelihoods (full or part-time) targeting non-traditional marine species (such as invasive lionfish), engaging in marine mariculture (especially seaweed farming), working with environmental NGOs, or transitioning to employment based in the expanding tourism industry as tour, sport fishing, and dive guides or in service sector positions. For those working with environmental NGOs, alternative livelihood strategies respond, in part, to the socio-economic challenges associated with “delegated co-management” (Goetze and Pomeroy 2005), where fishers are seeking ways to be meaningfully incorporated into multi-layered management structures to benefit their livelihoods considering limited human and financial resources among NGOs to regulate and enforce coastal resource management policies (Burris 2007).

Resident fishers and many regional NGO representatives and tour guides are keenly aware of the impacts poaching (by foreigners and Belizeans alike), environmental degradation (attributed to overfishing, climatic events, pollution, and poorly regulated coastal development), and new fisheries regulations and educational outreach are having on the sustainability of traditionally exploited commercial fisheries (notably conch, lobster, and fin-fish). Similar to cases of other local groups in coastal settings applying environmental knowledge of coastal and wetland ecosystems for subsistence,
ecotourism, and environmental conservation, among other uses and functions (Berkes 2012; King 1997; Neves-Graça 2006; Smardon 2006), many residents on the peninsula value the conservation of the barrier reef system and Placencia lagoon estuary system to promote environmental education and support local livelihoods over the long-term. This system of environmental knowledge and the industries in which it is applied constitute a form of “intangible cultural heritage” that extends beyond Berkes’ (1993) classic definition of “traditional ecological knowledge” in that it is dynamically experienced, embodied, shared, and shaped between local residents in addition to being transmitted between generations (Ruggles and Silverman 2009; UNESCO 2003; Zarger 2011:371-372, 377). This conception of coastal intangible heritage is linked to some extent with recognition of the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System as a Natural World Heritage Site (UNESCO 2013, 2015), used in “authorized heritage discourse” (Smith 2006, 2012) by the Government of Belize to variably support environmental conservation and tourism marketing efforts in the country (Medina 2012:230-231). However, its manifestation on the peninsula is culturally and historically embedded in and shaped by local events, experiences, economics, and political momentums accompanying rapid development, demographic shifts, and environmental change over the past several decades.

Numerous fishers and tour guides on the peninsula alike recognize their marine environmental knowledge, skills, and livelihood experiences as critical to maintaining the integrity of coastal environments to sustain their livelihoods and the significance this “embodied ecological heritage” (Baines 2012, 2015) has for economic diversification strategies including seasonal transitions between fishing and tour guiding. Similar to “Maya” heritage practice in Santa Cruz, Belize, which residents conceive as intimately linked to their embodied experiences, wellbeing, livelihood strategies, and cultural identities (Baines 2012:8-9; 2015), many fishers in Placencia have drawn on their environmental knowledge and experiences in coastal waters to engage in conservation initiatives, mariculture, and tourism-centered livelihood transitions, especially as fishing, snorkeling, and diving tour guides. Utilizing their experience-based knowledge of seasonal marine species fluctuations, the locations and characteristics of coastal cayes, and weather conditions as well as navigational, fishing, diving, and culinary skills to pursue
alternative occupations fosters fisher resilience and wellbeing through sustained connection to marine-centered livelihoods and the sea (Spang 2014b:41, 43, 64-68) in the context of rapid tourism development and capture fisheries decline on the peninsula.

Many residents observe synergies between fishing and tourism, especially the dual role they hold in Placencia’s development and history and for education about coastal environmental conservation. However, like other cases (e.g., King 1997; Moreno 2005), residents involved in these industries often see the negative impacts of erosion, dredging and mangrove clearing, sedimentation, pollution, nutrient discharge, and greater seafood demand accompanying coastal tourism, particularly with large-scale developments spurred by foreign investment, on near- and off-shore fisheries and ecosystem dynamics.

In light of these issues, and with increasing (inter)national influence, funding, and support to conserve coastal resources, the tourism and fishing (including shrimp aquaculture) industries, environmental NGOs, and governmental departments have been developing participatory, collaborative, and inter-sector efforts to sustainably manage coastal environments while accommodating a diversity of livelihood strategies in this context (Cho 2005; Clarke et al. 2013; Pomeroy et al. 2003). While the “no human consumption” protected area strategy barring extractive traditional livelihood activities like fishing and hunting (Salafsky and Wollenberg 2000:1422; West et al. 2006) still applies for particular marine protected areas or various zones within them, coordinated resource management efforts for estuary and reef ecosystems surrounding the Placencia Peninsula are increasingly adopting a model that seeks to link incentives for biodiversity conservation with local livelihoods (Cho 2005; Clarke et al. 2013; Pomeroy et al. 2003; Salafsky and Wollenberg 2000:1424-1425). Through community consultations, educational outreach and training, and stakeholder engagement mechanisms, this model of integrated coastal zone management seeks to increase accountability to local stakeholders in decision-making processes, coordinate efforts across government agencies, economic industries, and environmental and development organizations, and adapt coastal management plans and policies to balance biodiversity conservation with fisheries extraction, tourism development, and other land-based activities along the Belizean coastline (Cho 2005; Clarke et al. 2013). This model draws heavily from tenets of “community-based natural
resourcement management” that sees decentralized management, access, and use of a common pool of resources by local groups of people as more viable than privatized and state management schemes since communities better understand the complexities of local ecology, livelihood practices, and human-environmental relationships (Berkes 2006; Brosius et al. 1998:158). For marine (and other) protected areas in Belize in particular, this resource management scheme often involves “delegated co-management” arrangements in which the national government (through departments in the Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries, and Sustainable Development) organizes various non-governmental organizations to govern, manage, monitor, research, and enforce environmental and other coastal regulations and policies in protected areas in ideally participatory ways through involving surrounding stakeholder communities in these efforts (Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:18-19). For example, the Belize Fisheries Department through co-management partnerships with environmental NGOs like SEA is allocating special and traditional use fishing licenses for fishers who in turn assist with monitoring efforts in particular MPAs / MPA zones as part of its Managed Access program (50in10 2015). Alongside the Managed Access Program, the Fisheries Department, environmental NGOs like SEA and Fragments of Hope, and some fishing cooperatives are promoting “sustainable alternative livelihoods” for fishers, supporting initiatives like seaweed farming, sea cucumber mariculture, and coral planting to assist with reef restoration, reduce pressure on marine capture fisheries, and to encourage alternate sources of income generation for fishers (Belize Fisheries Department 2014).

Many of these initiatives are relatively nascent to the fishing industry in Belize, and so markets for alternative fisheries (like lionfish) and mariculture products (like dried seaweed and sea cucumber) are still being developed at local, national, and international levels. Some Placencia fishermen remain hesitant about the viability of these markets considering the extra training and processing required (especially in the case of lionfish) and, in some cases, lower market value for products than traditionally exploited commercial fisheries. Furthermore, as other cases of participatory coastal resource governance in the Caribbean illustrate (e.g., Burris 2007; Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:28-29; Pomeroy et al. 2003; Tompkins 2003:ii, 1, 22), the viability of small-scale coastal fisher livelihoods often is complicated by imbalanced
knowledge sharing between stakeholders, restrictive MPA use regulations, conflicting property and tenure rights and access, and indistinct management of trans-boundary coastal resources. Notably, some fishers and other residents are concerned about limited opportunities to participate in managed access programs and emerging alternative fishing livelihoods initiatives, although environmental NGOs like SEA and the Fisheries Department are actively working to consult and involve local fishers in these efforts. Moreover, some local fishers are apprehensive about how coastal sustainability momentums like the drive to make the Placencia Lagoon a National Protected Area permitting traditional fishing use access will impact their local livelihoods. As with other case studies of coastal environmental management (e.g., Burris 2007), residents also have discussed how complex overlapping policies and institutions involved in coastal resource management and preservation efforts in addition to limited human and financial resources (notably under delegated co-management schemes (Goetze and Pomeroy 2005:18-19)) have contributed to a regulatory environment with limited enforcement, enabling the degradation of coastal ecosystems through mangrove clearing, dredging, and filling, especially along the shoreline of the Placencia Lagoon.

Finally, insufficient enforcement of environmental laws and regulations threaten the security of local fishing livelihoods and coastal fisheries (Peninsula 2020 Initiative 2001:7-8) by enabling the continuation of illicit fishing practices including poaching (especially by foreigners), gillnetting, and expatriate appropriation of traditional fishing spots.

Despite these challenges, members of the Placencia Producers Cooperative Society Limited are actively pursuing opportunities for alternative fishing livelihoods and sustainable fisheries management as part of the Cooperative’s development plan in collaboration with regional environmental NGOs and the Fisheries Department and with support from international environmental NGOs as well as conservation and development programs (PPCSL 2014). Chiefly, these alternative fishing livelihood projects include: 1) marine cultivation of seaweed and processing and marketing of value-added seaweed products, 2) development of a lionfishery for local, national, and international markets, and 3) creation of a fishing heritage tourism program and local fishing history museum centered on Placencia’s fishing industry – including its history, prominent characters, technologies, and livelihoods. Underpinning these initiatives
is an acknowledgment by numerous Placencia residents that fishing is fundamental to the village’s identity, legacy, and heritage. This recognition is especially pronounced among current or former fishers who seek to leverage their marine experiences and heritage as an asset to pursue alternative livelihoods, notably in occupations directly or indirectly associated with the tourism industry. In this sense, the fishing industry may be said to occupy both “public” and “private” heritage domains (Chamber 2006:3-4) in Placencia since it is recognized as a centerpiece of the history and identity of the village by many residents and represents a form of cultural inheritance for fisher livelihoods, skills, and knowledge passed down through generations of fisherfolk. Through packaging local fishing stories, history, livelihoods, technologies, and experiences as a potential product for local tourism development and a repository for coastal heritage conservation, a community museum focused on the fishing industry and fishing livelihoods in Placencia can contribute another facet of “local distinctiveness” (Hodges and Watson 2000:232-233) in the village’s tourism marketing efforts.

Complications for the development and long-term sustainability of these PPCSL projects have been discussed in previous sections of this thesis, but the major challenges seem to be uncertainty about the viability of emerging markets for alternative fisheries (especially lionfish), recurring financial troubles, and the need for a capable operations manager to effectively link local fisher cooperative member’s products to a diversity of markets. Several of these issues parallel insights for successful community-based heritage management projects; namely that the projects are inclusive in scope, have effective administration and leadership, are coordinated with existing local organizations and institutions, and garner community ownership and interest in preservation of local history and culture (Hodges and Watson 2000:238-242). Among the fishing cooperative’s initiatives, the seaweed farming project, now nearing the end of its sixth year, appears to be the most successful and viable for the future development of the cooperative, especially considering the cooperative’s branding of many of its fishers as the “Placencia Seaweed Farmers” in recent years (PPCSL 2014). Parallel to McKercher and du Cros’ (2002:120-122) discussion of developing recognized heritage assets into cultural tourism products, labeling the institution in this way may assist the PPCSL with developing its fishing heritage tourism
product in the future by communicating a clear and consistent identity in its marketing efforts to visitors to encourage “familiarity” with current fisher livelihoods and initiatives. Along with seaweed farming, some fishers in the PPCSL and fisheries researchers see other mariculture products such as sea cucumbers as potentially lucrative options to promote the sustainable development of the cooperative (Personal communication with Arlenie Rogers, June 14, 2016; PPCSL 2014). However, additional research on these initiatives, the markets for seaweed, sea cucumbers, lionfish, and fishing heritage tourism as well as longitudinal studies of existing programs are needed to assess the potential long-term viability of such alternative fisheries development approaches in Placencia and other coastal communities in Belize.

8.1.2 Conceptions of Fishing as Heritage and Market Implications for a Community Cultural Museum

To better understand the potential market for a local heritage museum (one centered on fishing in particular), I examined relative interest in the development of a local history and culture museum on the Placencia Peninsula between peninsula residents, workers, and tourists. When determining markets for heritage products like a fishing heritage museum, some heritage professionals discuss the need to consider the appropriate scale for heritage production, tourism flows and access, its accessibility to visitors, and supply and demand in public and private sectors by various stakeholder groups (Howard 2003; Johnson and Thomas 1995:170-172). Notably, as Peter Johnson and Barry Thomas (1995:173-176) explain, the scale of heritage production can be estimated by assessing the extent to which heritage assets are or may be consumed by visitors in addition to considering required resources and costs for a heritage venture as well as discerning the relative valuation of tourism markets and available heritage assets at a given time. KoBo survey results indicate that relative interest in a local history and culture museum on the peninsula is high across respondent types with approximately 79 percent of foreign tourists, 90 percent of Belizean non-peninsula residents, and roughly 95 percent of peninsula residents noting that they were at least “interested” in the seeing the development of such a museum. The majority of respondents representing differing gender, ethnic, national, economic, residence, and generational backgrounds expressed interest in the development of a local history and culture museum, suggesting a potentially broad appeal and
market for a heritage museum on the peninsula among Belizean nationals and foreigner visitors alike, although limited sample sizes for some demographics, particularly foreign tourists, senior citizens, and residents of communities other than Placencia and Seine Bight limit the strength of this interpretation. These visitors likely represent differing types of “cultural tourists” (McKercher and du Cros 2002:140, 144) whose enthusiasm for potential heritage tourism attractions like a fishing history museum vary based on their personal motivations and expectations (including perceived authenticity of an attraction (Bruner (2005:95, 98, 149-150; MacCannell 1976, 1999)) when visiting a destination.

Community members on / around the peninsula in particular expressed the greatest enthusiasm for the development of a local heritage museum with nearly 61 percent of residents surveyed responding that they were “very interested” in seeing such a museum, especially one centered on fishing livelihoods and local Kriol culture among residents of Placencia and Maya Beach. However, like some heritage professionals discuss when considering successful cultural heritage production (Johnson and Thomas 1995:187, 171-176; McKercher and du Cros 2002:120-122), a few residents were uncertain about how best to approach financing a heritage museum and organizing information within it.

Building on exploratory analyses of relative interest in a local heritage museum, I also investigated the ways and extent to which resident and tourist conceptions of local heritage, especially understandings of fishing as heritage, and Placencia as a tourism destination intersected, drawing from results of the targeted surveys, semi-structured and oral history interviews, and participatory mapping activities carried out through this research project. As several anthropology of tourism scholars and heritage professionals confer (e.g., Bruner 2005; Chambers 2006, 2010; Crooke 2010; Herbert 1995; Howard 2003; Jackson 2012; Lowenthal 1996; MacCannell 1999; McKercher and du Cros 2002; Minetti and Pyburn 2005; Silverman 2011; Smith 2006; Urry and Larsen 2011), interpretations of what heritage is and its perceived significance, valuation, and authenticity can vary drastically depending on stakeholder interests and expectations, tourism marketing schemes, historical understandings, associations with place, and existing socio-economic, political, and legal contexts. Thus, considering the multi-ethnic and multi-national demographic composition of Placencia village and a diversity of types of tourists visiting the
peninsula, one might expect that interpretations of fishing as heritage could vary widely between these stakeholder groups. Survey results, however, indicate that the vast majority of peninsula and other Belizean residents across demographic categories considered fishing, and to a lesser extent Lobsterfest, to be a part of local heritage. Almost a fifth of resident respondents conceived fishing or places and events associated with fishing (such as the Placencia pier and Lobsterfest, respectively) as the most significant thing associated with their heritage, especially among Placencia residents, Kriol and Mestizo / Spanish / Hispanic community members, local fishers and tour guides, and teachers / educators. However, the largest proportion of residents conceived local people including the local friendly vibe and community spirit (over ten percent of respondents) or one or more ethnic groups (i.e., Kriol, Garifuna, and Maya) and ethnic / cultural diversity on the peninsula (nearly 22 percent of respondents) as the most significant aspect of their heritage. To a lesser extent, residents also noted cultural practices (about 13 percent of respondents) including cultural performances like dance, drumming, and music, and local cuisine as well as village recreation / tourism (roughly 12 percent of respondents) including Placencia and Seine Bight villages, diving / snorkeling, beaches / relaxation, and local tourism as the most significant aspects of heritage on the peninsula. This valuation of local cultural practices and village recreation / tourism is likely due to the recognition among residents of connections between local livelihoods (cultural performers, restaurant workers, tour and dive guides, etc.), ethnic identities, and various types of marketed tourism attractions on the peninsula. Some residents noted coastal environments, especially the sea / ocean and the barrier reef or cayes as well as atolls and the Placencia Lagoon as the most significant features of local heritage surrounding the peninsula. Although only about nine percent of peninsula residents described coastal environments as the most significant element of local heritage, the vast majority of Belizean residents surveyed highly valued the contribution and conservation of the coastal environment, especially reefs, to local livelihoods.

In the semi-structured interviews and participatory mapping activities, fishers, tour guides, environmental NGO representatives, and general residents identified the cayes, the reef, the Placencia Lagoon, the pier, the fishing cooperative, traditional fishing methods, and the annual Lobsterfest
celebrations in particular as key aspects of fishing heritage in Placencia, often drawing connections
between local livelihoods, ethnic identity, coastal health, island lifestyles, and fishing history. Notions of
the relationships between these coastal environmental places, fishing practices and events, and local
identities by many long-time residents may be said to reflect their “embodied ecological heritage” (Baines
2012, 2015), which is variably applied to support local livelihoods and personal and community
wellbeing. Many peninsula residents and other Belizeans alike recognize that fishing and other forms of
local heritage generally are well maintained on the peninsula and shared the narrative and imaginary of
Placencia’s transformation from a small (Kriol) fishing village into an emerging multi-cultural
international tourist destination, which is conveyed in (inter)national tourism industry marketing media
about the peninsula to some degree (e.g., BTB 2013b; BTIA 2013, 2014).

Foreign tourists, however, did not widely recognize this “tourism imaginary” (Salazar 2010) of
Placencia. Fishing seemed to be only a secondary or cursory consideration among foreign tourists from
varying backgrounds in their expectations of Placencia village’s “cultural authenticity” (Bruner 2005;
MacCannell 1976) when asked to describe significant local heritage during the surveys, despite national
and local tourism marketing media noting the legacy of fishing in the community. Rather, their “tourism
imaginary” (Salazar 2010) or “tourist gaze” (Urry and Larsen 2011) of Placencia’s heritage, drawing
partly from national and local tourism marketing media of major attractions on the peninsula and resident
and visitor hearsay, generally highlights beaches and relaxation, the Belize Barrier reef and cayes, and
especially the local friendly vibe, “quaintness,” and cultural diversity of people. Thus, residents and
foreign tourists shared some sense that the local friendly vibe and people, authenticity, and ethnic /
international integration of the peninsula, and Placencia in particular, is a vital aspect of local heritage and
what makes the peninsula special as a tourism destination, although this heritage imaginary varied to
some degree between tourists from differing demographic backgrounds. To a lesser extent, foreign
tourists also recognized local cuisine and surrounding coastal and inland tourist attractions (notably
snorkeling and diving tours and Maya archaeological sites), which are marketed as key attractions for the
peninsula in national tourism marketing media (e.g., BTB 2013b; BTIA 2013, 2014), as significant
aspects of local heritage. Explanations of major tourist attractions on the peninsula by tourism industry representatives, especially local tour guides and hoteliers, during the interviews conducted through this research indicate that those involved in the tourism industry generally share these “tourism imaginaries” (Salazar 2010, 2011) of Placencia to some extent and are actively involved in mediating narratives about Placencia as a destination through tour guide training courses and consumption of guidebooks, magazines, and other tourism industry media in addition to personal interactions with tourists.

Like Salazar (2010, 2011) documents among tour guides in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and Arusha, Tanzania, the Placencia Peninsula is becoming an increasingly international and “cosmopolitan” tourist destination with mobile residents visiting the United States and other countries around the world. Through the process of “glocalization” – the interactions, discourses, and practices connecting various groups between which performances are fashioned and financial and symbolic capital is unevenly circulated (Salazar 2010:16) - narratives of Placencia’s cultural and environmental heritage among many cosmopolitan residents may be converging with foreign tourism imaginaries of Placencia as a destination. Although a large majority of foreign tourists included fishing and Lobsterfest as aspects of their heritage imaginaries of the peninsula (consistent with Belizean resident conceptions of local heritage), no foreign tourists distinguished fishing in particular as the most important aspect of local heritage during the surveys despite sport fishing being marketed as a major attraction in national and local tourism marketing media. Therefore, foreign tourist heritage imaginaries of the peninsula seem to draw only partly from national tourism industry marketed attractions for the destination and overlap to some degree with resident conceptions of the peninsula’s heritage, although local cultural activities and traditional livelihoods are not key components of these imaginaries.

8.1.3 Visions for Sustainable Development and Cultural (Heritage) Tourism in Placencia

Finally, this thesis research sought to explore how resident conceptions of heritage and non-local heritage imaginaries of the peninsula, and Placencia in particular, fit within the scope of sustainable tourism development discourse in national and local sustainable tourism, coastal management, and
cultural policies and plans as well as among residents. Following McKercher and du Cros’ (2002:171-184) recommendatons, considerations of the legal and political context, exisiting and potential cultural tourism stakeholders, various heritage meanings and values, proposed tourism products, local geographic context and setting, and heritage “integrity” or “authenticity” can assist researchers and heritage professionals with evaluating the potential viability of cultural heritage products and attractions in tourism markets. Local and national sustainable tourism policies for the peninsula (e.g., Peninsula 2020 Initiative 2011; Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a, b) recommend cultural tourism as a secondary product for future tourism development on the peninsula in line with plans that aim to maintain the integrity of the peninsula as a “low impact,” “authentic,” “integrated, and primarily overnight tourism destination with beaches, a laid-back vibe, cultural diversity, and access to a variety of inland and marine-based attractions. Notably, in the local sustainable development vision statement for 2020, a broad range of peninsula stakeholders expressed a general degree of consensus about pursuing a pathway to future coastal development in which residents have greater control over decision-making processes, local small business owners are supported and promoted, and environmental regulations are adequately enforced (Peninsula 2020 Initiative 2011).

This consensus statement for future tourism development on the peninsula aligns with Erlet Cater’s (1993:85-85, 87-88) three prinicples for “sustainability” in tourism development efforts in that it seeks to increase participation of local people in tourism development decisions to directly benefit their livelihoods and well-being, proposes a vision to distinguish the peninsula’s local attractions in a competitive global tourism market, and seeks to protect and conserve the integrity of the coastal environment. To continue the development of the peninsula as a chiefly “low impact” tourism destination, consulted stakeholders recommended that mass tourism, particularly recent cruise ship developments, be excluded from this vision of sustainable tourism development for the peninsula, although many acknowledge the possibility for small-scale pocket cruise tourism (under 300 passengers per ship) in the future (Peninsula 2020 Initiative 2011:2, 12).

Resident visions of sustainable tourism development on the peninsula elicited through semi-structured interviews generally resonated with destination plan recommendations in sustainable tourism
(e.g., Peninsula 2020 Initiative 2011; Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a, b) and coastal zone management policies (Clarke et al. 2013; CZMAI 2016a), although several residents discussed their desire to perpetuate ecotourism as a primary tourism product alongside cultivating an emerging local cultural (heritage) tourism market. In this sense, many residents are advocating for a “low impact” - and primarily locally owned – rather than a “mass” ecotourism product guided by foreign investors (Weaver 2001) that supports resident income growth and job creation and promotes environmental education through ecotourism activities. In addition to considering ecotourism and highlighting the culture and history surrounding the fishing industry in Placencia, some residents discussed how culinary tourism and local festivals might be incorporated into future heritage tourism ventures as noteworthy tourism assets. Furthermore, some fishers, NGO representatives, and tour guides described the integration of tourism and fishing livelihoods to promote sustainable tourism development centered on fisher identities, alternative fisheries, and heritage consistent with recommendations for the fishing industry outlined in the Peninsula 2020 Initiative (2011:7-8). However, some residents acknowledged barriers to the development of a cultural tourism market including convincing local tour guides and other residents to launch cultural (heritage) tours in addition to the need for start-up finances, tourism infrastructure, and specialized training and education for local entrepreneurs seeking to make this transition, consistent with obstacles identified by many heritage tourism scholars (e.g., Chambers 2010:99-102; Hodges and Watson 2000:238-242; Johnson and Thomas 1995:170-176, 187; McKercher and du Cros 2002).

Recognizing these barriers, objectives set by NICH in the Belize National Culture Policy, if well executed, may support entrepreneural efforts and alternative livelihood initiatives to develop a cultural (heritage) tourism market and local museums / Houses of Culture on the peninsula as well as assist with branding and promoting this tourism industry product at a national level in collaboration with tourism agencies (NICH 2014:16-17, 25, 38). Moreover, heritage tourism entrepreneurship aligns with national policy for sustainable tourism development since cultural tourism is recognized as a first priority tourism product for Belize by 2030 along with nature-based tourism in the National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan (Tourism & Leisure et al. 2011a:10). In sum, although the future form, scope, and viability of this
emerging tourism market for the peninsula remains unclear, the broad range of resident conceptions and local and visitor interest in cultural (heritage) tourism attractions, especially a local culture and history museum, illuminate the possibilities of heritage tourism as one pathway, alongside alternative fishing livelihoods and other endeavors, to “bait coastal sustainability.”

8.2 Study Limitations

While this thesis project is fairly comprehensive in scope, encompassing a broad review of literature across the fields of anthropology of tourism, heritage studies, sustainable development, and coastal resource and fisheries management in addition to a multi-methods ethnographic approach and an extensive policy survey, I identify a number of general limitations and gaps in this research. First, the representation of peninsula resident, tourist, and worker perceptions of the issues examined in this research is inherently biased due to the snowball sampling and recruitment procedures used throughout data collection, especially for the participatory mapping collaborators. Most of the mapping collaborators who assisted with documenting heritage places in coastal waters, in particular, were recruited by convenience (after recommendations by other residents) essentially as paid tour guides due to the high price of gas and length of time required to visit near-shore and off-shore (fishing) locations. Furthermore, in addition to a limited number of coastal heritage mapping excursions and collaborators (four in total), all of mapping collaborators recruited to participate in this study were male (although a female Placencia resident accompanied for one of the excursions), contributing to a gendered bias in my synthesis of resident conceptions of coastal heritage locations associated with fishing. My selection and interpretation of stakeholder perspectives in the semi-structured and oral history interviews conducted as part of the larger PIRE social science research project on the peninsula included a broader diversity of resident voices across environmental NGO, fisheries, tourism, conservation, and other sectors. However, male perspectives were included in my discussion of interview results to a greater extent than female voices due to the proportionally dominant presence of men in the tour guide, diving, and fishing industries in Placencia – industries which this thesis centers much of its focus on.
For the verbally-administered KoBo-based surveys, a number of biases, some of which are briefly noted in the thesis discussion sections, limit the potential utility of any interpretations about differences and similarities between perceptions of local heritage, tourism, and the coastal environment by various demographics of tourists, Belizean non-peninsula residents, and peninsula residents. For example, language barriers and respondent difficulty in understanding particular survey questions was an issue for some residents, especially for a couple of Mestizo / Spanish / Hispanic respondents living in Seine Bight and a Chinese individual that our USF PIRE social science research team surveyed. Thus, except in the case of a couple of surveys, a respondent’s ability to speak English fluently was a precondition for recruitment and participation, excluding many recent immigrants to the peninsula (particularly Mestizo / Spanish and Chinese / Taiwanese residents). Furthermore, due to transportation constraints and longer travel distances to the villages of Maya Beach and especially Riversdale on the northern half of the peninsula, our survey sample was heavily biased toward the perspectives of residents in Placencia and Seine Bight villages. Where our team carried out surveys within the villages also may have skewed the results as we conducted surveys primarily with individuals and at businesses along the peninsula’s main road, Placencia sidewalk, and the beach rather than on the lagoon side of the villages (where many poorer community members are reported to reside). Furthermore, the sample of foreign tourists who participated in the surveys is biased toward the perspectives of young women since almost 71 percent of female respondents, comprising nearly 46 percent of all foreign tourists, were 35 years old or younger.

In addition to systematic biases in sample representation introduced throughout the recruitment process for the KoBo-based surveys, the ways particular questions were framed and asked during the surveys may have influenced participant responses. Considering the multi-select question asking respondents what they perceive to be heritage from a list of 13-15 items (the number of items depended on the particular field season) spanning local events, national holidays, cultural and economic activities, cultural (heritage) attractions, and various inland and coastal sites / environments, for example, the read-aloud option question design may have biased responses of what participants considered heritage, especially among tourists who might not have been familiar with some of the items dictated to them. Bias
also was introduced in my interpretations through processing and analysis of the survey data, especially considering the way that I chose to code and group survey responses for open response / write-in questions into particular categories as well as sort respondents into types based on coded demographic information. Particularly pertinent to my analysis, presentation, and interpretation of the survey results is how I coded and grouped responses into heritage categories based on marketed tourism attractions and other general respondent descriptions of culture and heritage for the write-in question asking participants what they perceived to be the one most important thing / place associated with (their conception of) culture / heritage on the peninsula. Thus, my interpretation of respondent conceptions of heritage was shaped to some extent by my knowledge of marketed tourism attractions in Belize as well as common descriptions of the peninsula or villages on it used by “local” people, workers, and visitors.

Finally, in addition to any potential influence on survey and interview responses introduced through my positionality and recognition by residents and tourists alike as both a foreign researcher and a tourist, I acknowledge that my use of the words “local,” “community member,” “foreigner,” and “expatriate” may be problematic, especially in how I chose to present and organize some of my discussion and interpretations of particular issues and themes around these terms. Although residents of the Placencia Peninsula (in addition to policy discourse) often use the terms “local,” “expatriate” (expat), and “foreign,” especially when describing the context of development and community relations, these words hold political meaning and are malleable depending on who is defining them. Explaining this complexity of “foreign versus local” relations on the peninsula, the Peninsula 2020 Initiative (2011:6) articulates:

It must be noted that the foreign / local split is not a simple cleavage. In all three geographic communities [Placencia, Seine Bight, and Maya Beach] there is a pecking order generally based on one’s longevity in the area, race, community service, blood relations, and intermarriage. So a white foreigner who came to Placencia decades ago, raised children here, owns a grocery and has a long record of village service is considered solidly “local”, while a man of similar age, born in
Placencia to an old Creole family, but raised abroad and only recent returned (with an American accent) may be considered for most purposes a foreigner.

A Placencia resident and NGO representative also told me during an interview that peninsula resident perceptions of who is “local” were at times contradictory, since residents born outside of Belize who established businesses and have been operating them for a number of years in Placencia and around the peninsula were often considered “locals” while some more recent immigrants, especially from the United States, Canada, Europe, and Australia, are regularly considered “foreigners” and “expats” (Interview June 15, 2015). Although I use “community member” in this thesis to describe anyone who self-identifies as a resident on the Placencia Peninsula, I tried to capture the general sentiment of peninsula residents about what constitutes “local” (often perceived as integrated in the village(s)) as opposed to “foreign” and “expatriate” (outsider) development / investment and individuals. Moreover, the term “expatriate” or “expat” is often used in a racialized and classist sense on the peninsula to describe predominately white, middle to upper class immigrants from North America, Europe, and Australia rather than immigrants from elsewhere in the world who generally are categorized into certain ethnic groups or nationalities (e.g., the “Chinese”). Despite the sometimes inconsistent application of these terms in resident discourse, they serve as useful analytical categories around which to frame discussions about sustainable tourism and coastal developments on and around the peninsula.

8.3 Future Research

Recognizing these study limitations, I offer a few recommendations for future research to address major gaps in the research findings and interpretations presented in this thesis including a more holistic consideration of markets for alternative fisheries and heritage tourism on the peninsula and in the region. This thesis has synthesized only a moderate fraction of data collected as part of the NSF PIRE interdisciplinary research project on the Placencia Peninsula investigating the impacts of tourism and water-energy development on the environment and local livelihoods, focusing on key themes including
heritage, sustainable tourism development, and environmental conservation as well as changes in fishing livelihoods and coastal fisheries in particular. Since the interpretations about Placencia fishing livelihoods, community heritage and imaginaries, and sustainable tourism development discussed here draw from predominately male voices and perspectives, future research should highlight and compare the viewpoints of women relating to these themes, especially those involved in alternative fishing livelihoods, fisheries conservation, and cultural (heritage) tourism ventures. Additional participatory mapping collaborators and interviewees, including women, and a more diverse range of fishers and tour guides from different ethnic backgrounds, age groups, and nationalities living in Placencia, Seine Bight, Riversdale, and Independence / Mango Creek might be recruited to document and describe coastal heritage places in order to contribute to a more comprehensive representation of fishing spots and other heritage locations of communal significance on / around the peninsula as well as support future (fishing) heritage endeavors.

A larger sample of survey participants also might be recruited, particularly for under-represented demographics including residents of Riversdale and Maya Beach and Mestizo / Spanish / Hispanic residents of Seine Bight and elsewhere, to acquire a more robust and representative sample of perspectives across the peninsula about the themes explored in this thesis. Such a sample would enable a wider range of statistical analyses to be performed to better assess significant differences and similarities in perceptions between respondents with varying demographic backgrounds. Similarly, additional surveys with domestic and foreign tourists alike should be carried out, especially targeting visitors from other national and ethnic / racial backgrounds than predominately white North American and European tourists to acquire a broader sense of the main types of tourists, tourism markets, and heritage imaginaries held among visitors to the peninsula. Furthermore, alternative forms of tourism marketing media such as travel blogs, other guidebooks, and hotel and local business websites could be examined through discourse analysis to expand the purview and representation of existing “tourism imaginaries” (especially those held by tourists and local entrepreneurs) about the Placencia Peninsula and Placencia in particular.
Finally, complementary studies, notably ones that are interdisciplinary and longitudinal in design and scope, are needed to examine the dynamics of emerging markets for cultural (heritage) tourism and alternative fisheries such as lionfish, sea cucumber, and seaweed mariculture on the peninsula and in the surrounding region. In particular, researchers should investigate how coastal development practices, conservation policies and initiatives, and tourism markets in the region are impacting existing local alternative fisheries enterprises undertaken by the Placencia fishing cooperative and others – including recruitment and participation in these endeavors – in order to assess the potential long-term viability of these alternative fishing livelihood approaches for future sustainable development.
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APPENDICES

**Appendix 1: List of Major Acronyms.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BAHA</td>
<td>Belize Agricultural Health Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBRRS</td>
<td>Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System (World Heritage site)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beltraide</td>
<td>Belize Trade and Investment Development Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHA</td>
<td>Belize Hotel Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>BTB</td>
<td>Belize Tourism Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>BTIA</td>
<td>Belize Tourism Industry Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>BWSL</td>
<td>Belize Water Services Limited</td>
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<tr>
<td>BZ(D)</td>
<td>Belize Dollar</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARICOM</td>
<td>Caribbean Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARIFORUM</td>
<td>Caribbean Forum of African, Caribbean and Pacific States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCAD</td>
<td>Central American Commission on Environment and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPACT</td>
<td>Community Management of Protected Areas for Conservation Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRFM</td>
<td>Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZMAI</td>
<td>Coastal Zone Management Authority and Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>CZMP</td>
<td>Coastal Zone Management Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOE</td>
<td>(Belize) Department of the Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>EIA</td>
<td>Environmental Impact Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>UN Food and Agriculture Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>FDA</td>
<td>U.S. Food and Drug Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FoN</td>
<td>Friends of Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOLBC</td>
<td>Friends of Laughing Bird Caye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIS</td>
<td>Geographic Information Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPS</td>
<td>Global Positioning Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IaDB</td>
<td>Inter-American Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICRAN</td>
<td>(UNEP) International Coral Reef Action Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICZMP</td>
<td>Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inVEST</td>
<td>Integrated Valuation of Ecosystem Services and Tradeoffs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISCR</td>
<td>(Belize) Institute for Social and Cultural Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUCN</td>
<td>International Union for Conservation of Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KoBo</td>
<td>KoBo data collection application for smartphones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDG</td>
<td>UN Millennium Development Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPA</td>
<td>Marine Protected Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBRS</td>
<td>Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NICH – (Belize) National Institute for Culture and History
NOAA – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPAS – National Protected Areas System
NSF PIRE – National Science Foundation Partnerships in International Research and Education program
NSTMP – National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan
PACT – Protected Areas Conservation Trust
PPCSL – Placencia Producers Cooperative Society Limited
SEA – Southern Environmental Association
TASTE – Toledo Association for Sustainable Tourism and Empowerment
TIDE – Toledo Institute for Development and the Environment
UNDP-EU – United Nations Development Programme – European Union
UNDP / GEF – United Nations Development Programme / Global Environment Facility
UNEP – United Nations Environmental Program
UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
USAID – United States Agency for International Development
USAID MAREA – Regional Management of Aquatic Resources and Economic Alternatives program
USD – United States Dollars
WCS – Wildlife Conservation Society
WWF – World Wildlife Fund

Appendix 2: Use Permissions for Copyrighted Materials.

Figure 2. National Protected Areas System Map (used with permission from Guadalupe Rosado).
Request to use National Protected Areas System Map in a Belizean Publication

Eric Koenig - ekoenig@mail.ucf.edu

My name is Eric Koenig, and I am a Master’s student in Applied Anthropology at the University of South Florida. As part of my Master’s thesis research, I am investigating connections between tourism development, environmental sustainability, and fisheries management on the Placencia Peninsula, and presented some of my preliminary findings at last year’s Belize Archaeology and Anthropology Symposium (BAAS) in San Ignacio.

I am currently working on a manuscript titled “Sailing Coastal Sustainability: Collaborative Coastal Management, Heritage Tourism, and the Future of Fisheries in Placencia, Belize” as an expansion of this presentation for publication in the annual proceedings of the BAAS. I hope to submit the manuscript to the Institute for Social and Cultural Research (ISCR) at UHCl within the next few days.

I found the National Protect Areas System Map (attached) online at the NPAS website and was wondering if I could use it as a figure in the manuscript for publication. I would make no modifications to the map and be sure to properly attribute Guadalupe Rosado and/or the NPAS as the creator of the map.

Let me know if I can use the map in the publication. I can send you a final version of the paper if you are interested, but for the meantime, attached is an abstract of the paper for your reference.

- High Regards, Eric

2 Attachments

Guadalupe Rosado - who.npaas@fddc.gov.com

4/13/15

You may use the map freely. There are several versions of the map there including a jpeg and a png for presentations.

Does the path you downloaded seem to have errors? I’m seeing errors when I open on my computer but it may be an issue with my OS that I just updated. If there are problems with the download from the website, just let us know so we can rectify them.

Regards,

Guadalupe
*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent document(s) are only valid during the approval period indicated at the top of the form(s).

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45 CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:

(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval by an amendment.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

Kristen Salomon, Ph.D., Vice Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board

2013-2014 Ethnographic Research Letter and Permit
PERMIT TO CONDUCT ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

Permit No. ISCR/ H/2/10

Grantee:
This is to certify that Dr. Christian Wells (Principal Investigator), Dr. Rebecca Zarger (Co-Principal Investigator) and Dr. Linda Whiteford (Co-Principal Investigator) of the Dept. of Anthropology, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida, USA have been granted permission to conduct ethnographic research in Belize.

Research Title:
Impacts of Tourism, Wastewater, and Water-energy Development on Livelihoods and the Environment on the Placencia Peninsula of Belize

Location:
Placencia/ Seine Bight Peninsula, Stann Creek District

Validity:
This permit shall remain valid from 1 June 2013 – 1 June 2014 and shall be subjected to conditions hereunder and to the compliance by the Grantee with the NICH Act.

Conditions:
Permission has been granted by the Institute for Social and Cultural Research under the auspices of the National Institute of Culture and History (NICH) as contained in the NICH Act Chapter 331, Section 71 and 72 (a) Revised Edition 2003, of the laws of Belize. The Act requires the Institute for Social and Cultural Research to review and approve all proposed research involving humans that is conducted in the country of Belize.

Authorised by: 2 Mar 2013

Director
Institute for Social and Cultural Research
My Ref: ISCR/R/1/13 (4)

Christian Wells, Ph.D
Assistant Professor
Dept. of Anthropology
University of South Florida
Tampa, Florida
USA

03 April, 2014

Re: Application for Research Permit

Dear Dr. Wells,

In reference to the renewal of your research permit to continue your research project entitled, "Impacts of Tourism, Wastewater, and Water-energy Development on Livelihoods and the Environment on the Placencia Peninsula of Belize", permission has been granted. This approval is granted on condition of your compliance with the National Institute of Culture and History Act, Chapter 331, Section 71 and 72 (a), Revised Edition 2003, of the Laws of Belize. Permission has also been extended to your Co-Principal Investigators Dr. Rebecca Zargar and Dr. Linda Whiteford and is inclusive of your graduate assistants. Your permit has been renewed for the period 1 June 2014 – 1 June 2015 and is thereafter subject to renewal for each subsequent year.

As per normal you are required to provide the Institute for Social and Cultural Research with two (2) copies your final research paper, findings and any published paper resulting from this study. We also ask that you consider presenting your paper and findings in future forums and conferences hosted by NICB.

We thank you for your continued interest in conduct ethnographic research in Belize and look forward to reading your exciting findings. Please let us know if you require further assistance.

Nigel Enmolada
Director, ISCR

Institute for Social and Cultural Research
Culvert Road, Museum Building, Belize C.A. Phone: 501-822-3307 Fax: 501-822-3815
Email: iscr@nicbelize.org
PERMIT TO CONDUCT ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

Permit No. ISCR/ H/2/27

Grantee:
This is to certify that Dr. Christian Wells (Principal Investigator), Dr. Rebecca Zarger (Co-Principal Investigator) and Dr. Linda Whiteford (Co-Principal Investigator) of the Dept. of Anthropology, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida, USA have been granted permission to conduct ethnographic research in Belize.

Research Title:
Impacts of Tourism, Wastewater, and Water-energy Development on Livelihoods and the Environment on the Placencia Peninsula of Belize

Location:
Placencia/Seine Beight, Stann Creek District, Belize

Validity:
This permit shall remain valid from 01 June 2014 – 01 June 2015 and shall be subjected to conditions hereunder and to the compliance by the Grantee with the NICH Act.

Conditions:
Permission has been granted by the Institute for Social and Cultural Research under the auspices of the National Institute of Culture and History (NICH) as contained in the NICH Act Chapter 331, Section 71 and 72 (a) Revised Edition 2003, of the laws of Belize. The Act requires the Institute for Social and Cultural Research to review and approve all proposed research involving humans that is conducted in the country of Belize.

Authorized: 03 April, 2014

Nigel Encalada
Director
Institute for Social & Cultural Research

NICH
national institute of culture and history
My Ref: ISCR/R/2/15 (4)

Dr. Christian Wells
Dept. of Anthropology
University of South Florida
Tampa, Florida USA

May 13, 2015

Re: Application for Research Permit

Dear Dr. Wells:

Your permit application to conduct your research project entitled “Impacts of Tourism, Wastewater, and Water-energy Development on Livelihoods and the Environment on the Placencia Peninsula of Belize” has been reviewed and found in observance of the stipulations outlined in the Conditions for Historical, Anthropological and Socio-Economic Research. In that regard, you and your research team have been granted a permit to conduct research within Belize. This approval is granted on condition of your compliance with the National Institute of Culture and History Act, Chapter 331, Section 71 and 72 (a), Revised Edition 2003, of the laws of Belize. Permission has been granted for a period of one year effective 1 June, 2015 – 1 June, 2016. This permit is subject to renewal for each subsequent year.

As a condition of this permit you are asked to submit a field report to the Institute for Social & Cultural Research (ISCR), at the conclusion of the first year. The field report should include information about preliminary findings of your field research. Additionally, at the conclusion of your study, you are required to provide ISCR with two (2) copies of your final research paper and any published paper resulting from the research. We also ask that you consider presenting your paper and findings in future forums and conferences hosted by ISCR/NICH.

Please let us know if we can provide any other assistance for the successful completion of your study. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact us at any time. We thank you for your interest in conducting research in Belize.

Note: All social research involving persons under 18 years of age will require parental consent at the start of the study.

Mr. Nigel Encalada
Director
Institute for Social and Cultural Research
National Institute of Culture and History

Institute for Social and Cultural Research
Culvert Road, Museum Building, Belmopan, Belize C.A.
Phone: 501-822-3307 Fax: 501-822-3815
Email: iscr@nic.belize.org
PERMIT TO CONDUCT SOCIAL RESEARCH

Permit No. ISCR/ H/2/39

Grantee:

This is to certify that Dr. Christian Wells (Principal Investigator of Northern Kentucky University), Dr. Rebecca K. Zarger (Co-Principal Investigator of the University of South Florida) and Dr. Linda M. Whitford (Co-Principal Investigator of the University of South Florida) and their research team have been granted permission to conduct social research in Belize.

Research Title:

“Impacts of Tourism, Wastewater, and Water-energy Development on Livelihoods and the Environment on the Placencia Peninsula of Belize”

Research Location(s):

Placencia, Stann Creek, Belize.

Validity:

This permit shall remain valid from 1 June, 2015 – 1 June, 2016 and shall be subjected to conditions hereunder and to the compliance by the Grantee with the NICH Act.

Conditions:

Permission has been granted by the Institute for Social and Cultural Research under the auspices of the National Institute of Culture and History (NICH) as contained in the NICH Act Chapter 331, Section 71 and 72 (a) Revised Edition 2003, of the laws of Belize. The Act requires the Institute for Social and Cultural Research to review and approve all proposed research involving humans that is conducted in the country of Belize.

Authorized: May 18, 2015

Mr. Rolando Cocom
Mr. Nigel Encalada
Director
Institute for Social and Cultural Research
National Institute of Culture and History
Appendix 5: Semi-structured Oral History Interview Guide (2015). (Key questions examined for this thesis research are underlined.)

PIRE Placencia Peninsula, Belize – May – July 2015
ECW, RKZ, LW, ESK, ZD, AV  2.15.2015

Semi-structured oral history interviews will target village elders (generally men and women over 55 years old) referred by community members in the villages of Placencia and Seine Bight. The goal of these interviews is to situate local knowledge about water use, tourism, coastal health, and wastewater in an ethnohistoric context for the Placencia Peninsula in an effort to gain insight into past and present perceptions and strategies relating to water and wastewater management and (re)use, and coastal environmental and social changes on the peninsula. The oral history interviews also seek to illuminate the historical and cultural contexts of the villages of Placencia and Seine Bight, and the peninsula generally. Through the interviews, we aim to recognize prominent community perceptions of culture and heritage among older generations on the peninsula as well.

The following are possible questions we may ask the interviewees, organized by theme.

Opening
- What is / was your occupation?
- How many years have you lived here?
- (If from elsewhere) Where are you originally from?
- What is your favorite thing to do or place to visit on the Placencia Peninsula?

Water supply
- Is water important on the peninsula? Can you tell me a little bit about that?
- Can you tell me a little bit about how water is supplied to the peninsula? (types of collection)
- How did water used to be supplied and managed on the peninsula?
- What concerns do you have about water supply?
- How do you feel about the recent changes for water supply management (to BWS)?

Health
- How do you decide if water is safe to drink?
- Is anyone you know, or have you heard of people, having concerns about their water source being bad for their health?
- If yes: Could you tell me a little bit about any concerns community members might have about health and water?
- Are there any common illnesses that are waterborne?
- What health issues and illness have you heard of, if any, related to contact with sewage (pooling or contamination) in the past? (e.g., prominent pathogens, rashes, etc.)

Sewage and Coastal Health
- Have you seen any connections between sewage / effluents and the health of the coastal environment? What kinds?
Local Coastal Water Use / Coastal Health

- Has the health of the coastal waters changed over the past 10 years? (Since Hurricane Iris?)
- What ways do local community members use coastal waters near the peninsula? (fishing, diving, etc.)
- What changes have you seen in these activities over the past 10 years? (Since Iris?)
- How is having to provide water and sewage for the tourists on the peninsula and cayes influencing the coastal environment? Do you think things will change in the future?
- What do coastal waters and water sources in the area mean to you?
  <> Do they have any benefits beyond economic value?

Who do you think decides how coastal areas are developed? What changes have you seen in who is “calling the shots” on the peninsula these days?
- [For fishing guides] What do local fisherman catch or produce on coastal waters? Where are major fishing stocks around the peninsula?
- Do you know of any existing sustainability plans / initiatives related to coastal health?
  <> (If the respondent knows) Can you explain them?

Tourism Industry

- How do you feel about foreign funding for tourism development here on the peninsula?
- What do you think about having cruise tourism on the peninsula?
  <> What kinds of impacts, if any, do you think cruise ship tourism will have on local livelihoods?
  <> What about on coastal health?
- How would you characterize the relationship between tourists and residents?
- What benefits and risk that you see with continued tourism development?
- Have you been personally affected by changes from tourism?
- Who (or what organization) do you think often decides how tourism works on the peninsula?
- Who should decide how tourism development goes from here on out?
- What do you think a “sustainable” tourism industry look like?
- What do you see as the future of tourism on the peninsula?
- [For Seine Bight residents and interviewees] Why do you think Seine Bight often passed over by tourists as a destination?

Local Culture, History, and Heritage

- What do you consider part of your cultural and environmental identity, history, and legacy on the peninsula?

- How would you explain local culture and heritage here?
  - What does it mean to you to be Garifuna? (Or Kriol, or Maya, or whichever ethnicity they identify with)
  - Have you seen any changes to local culture in the village over the past 30 years? If so, what changes have you seen?

What (specific) areas, places, or waters around the peninsula do you consider to be a significant part of your heritage?
  <> Have any of these places changed over the past 20 years? How so?
  <> Would you consider these places to be a part of your villages’ collective community heritage?
- How would you explain local history here?

- How do you think culture on the peninsula is portrayed by advertisements, online, in the media, or to foreign tourists?

- What do you think could be done to promote local culture and sense of community on the peninsula?

**Demographics**

- Do you have any other nationalities?
- How old are you?
- What is your gender?

**Closing**

- Is there anything else you would like to add?
- Is there anything that you wish I had asked that I did not?
- Do you have any questions for me?

- Thank the individual for their time and participation in the study
- Provide them with contact information for the interviewer (e-mail and / or mobile phone number) and the project PI, E. Christian Wells (ecwells@usf.edu)
Appendix 6: List of KoBo Survey Questions Considered for This Research (from the 2013 and 2014 field seasons).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Value(s)</th>
<th>Question Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Demographics Part I</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Do you live in Belize?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Single-response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other, Specify</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
<td>(If yes to 1) Do you consider yourself a community member of the Placencia Peninsula?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>C: (If yes to 1) Where do you live? (On the peninsula / in Belize)</td>
<td>Placencia Village</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Single-response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seine Bight</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maya Beach</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hopkins</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Riversdale</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mango Creek</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other, Specify</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b1</td>
<td>C: [Other Specify Question]: Where do you live? (On the peninsula / in Belize)</td>
<td>(write in)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c</td>
<td>C: How many years have you lived here (on the peninsula/your place of residence)?</td>
<td>(write in)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Numeric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2d</td>
<td>C: Where do you live in your village?</td>
<td>Lagoon side</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Single-response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>By the main road</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>On the beachfront</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>By the sidewalk, not beachfront</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In the bush / outside the village (&quot;back a bush&quot;)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other, Specify</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2d1</td>
<td>C: Other, specify. (Where do you live in your village?)</td>
<td>(write in)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>T: (If no to question 1 above): Are you here as a tourist?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Single-response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other, Specify</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3(1)</td>
<td>Other, specify. (Are you here as a tourist?)</td>
<td>(write in)</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>T: If yes, where are you staying? (hotel, place of lodging?)</td>
<td>(write in)</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>T: (If they are here as a tourist) What is the main reason you came to the Placencia Peninsula?</td>
<td>Beaches</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Multi-select</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural tourism (use judgment)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jungle / Rainforest</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maya &quot;ruins&quot;/archaeology</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reef / Diving / Snorkeling</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other, specify.</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b1</td>
<td>Other, specify. (What is the main reason you came to the Placencia Peninsula?)</td>
<td>(write in)</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>(If lives in Belize /does not live on Peninsula): Are you here as a visitor / tourist?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Single-response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a</td>
<td>(If lives in Belize / does not live on Peninsula): Do you work here?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Single-response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b</td>
<td>Enumerator: If the respondent is neither a community member nor a tourist. Please explain their status.</td>
<td>(write in)</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tourism, Coastal Health, and Public Health**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Very unhealthy</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Single-response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>In your view, how healthy is the coastal environment here on the Placencia Peninsula?</td>
<td>Somewhat unhealthy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral / neither unhealthy nor healthy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat healthy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very healthy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>T: How important is a healthy coastal environment to your</td>
<td>Very unimportant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Single-response</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>experience as a tourist?</strong></td>
<td>Somewhat unimportant</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral / neither unimportant nor important</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6(1)</strong></td>
<td>C: How important is the health of the coastal environment to you as a community member on the Placencia Peninsula?</td>
<td>Very unimportant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat unimportant</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral / neither unimportant nor important</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td>How important is the reef to you?</td>
<td>Very unimportant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat unimportant</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral / neither unimportant nor important</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td>C: Have you seen any changes to the coastal environment that you believe are due to tourism development (like lodging or home construction, impact on reefs)?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8a</strong></td>
<td>C: (If yes to Q 8) What changes have you seen to the coastal environment that you believe are due to the tourist industry (ask them to list)?</td>
<td>(write in)</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td>C: Has tourism development affected you personally (roads, prices, business, etc.)?</td>
<td>Very negatively</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat negatively</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat positively</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very positively</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cultural / Environmental Heritage</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>What do you consider the most important thing or place associated with (your) culture here on the Peninsula? ['What do you mean?' say: &quot;What would you consider as the most fundamental part of (your) culture here?&quot;]</td>
<td>(write in)</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Which of the following would you identify as &quot;heritage&quot; here, if any? (read off for residents and tourists)</td>
<td>Maya archaeological sites</td>
<td>Multi-select</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coral Reef</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mangrove</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jungle / Rainforest</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caves</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blue Hole</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lobster Fest</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sidewalk Arts Festival</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Garifuna Settlement Day</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St. George's Caye Holiday</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belizean Independence Day</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Traditional) Dancing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diving / snorkeling</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belizean Cuisine</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What do you mean?</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>C: Generally, do you think heritage is well-maintained on the Peninsula?</td>
<td>Not well at all</td>
<td>Multi-select</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not very well</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Well</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What do you mean? / 'What is “heritage” and “maintenance”?'</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>How would you rate your interest in seeing a local culture / history museum be developed here (in whichever community the particular survey is being administered)</td>
<td>Not at all interested</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in)?</td>
<td>Not interested</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral/neither interested nor disinterested</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Interested</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographics Part II</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>What is your gender?</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Single-response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other, specify.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14a</td>
<td>Other, specify. (What is your gender?)</td>
<td>(write in)</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>How old are you?</td>
<td>(enter number of years)</td>
<td>Numeric</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>prefer not to answer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>C: What is your ethnicity?</td>
<td>Creole</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Multi-select</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maya: Mopan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maya: Q’eqchi’</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maya: Yucatec</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spanish/Latino</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Garifuna</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other, specify.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16a</td>
<td>C: Other, specify. (What is your ethnicity?)</td>
<td>(write in)</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>What is your nationality?</td>
<td>Belizean</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Multi-select</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. / American</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Canadian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>European</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Central American</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other, specify.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17a</td>
<td>If Europe, what country are you from?</td>
<td>(write in)</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17b</td>
<td>If Central America, what country are you from?</td>
<td>(write in)</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17c</td>
<td>Other, specify. (What is your nationality?)</td>
<td>(write in)</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>C: What is the last level of schooling you have attended?</td>
<td>Some primary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Single-response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Some secondary / high school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary / high school</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vocational / professional school or certification</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sixth form / associates</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some university</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate or professional degree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other, specify.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18a</td>
<td>C: Other, specify. (What is the last level of schooling you attended?)</td>
<td>(write in)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>C: What is your work / occupation?</td>
<td>Does not work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Multi-select</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diving industry</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home maker</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher / educator</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lodging / hotels</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government employee / agency</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Real estate</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other, specify</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19a</td>
<td>C: Other, specify. (What is your work/occupation?)</td>
<td>(write in)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Do you work seasonally, part-time, or full-time?</td>
<td>Seasonally</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Single-response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other, specify</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20a</td>
<td>C: Other, specify. (Do you work seasonally, part-time, or full-time?)</td>
<td>(write in)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>C: Can you estimate your monthly income?</td>
<td>0-500 BZD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Single-response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>501-1000 BZD</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1001-1500 BZD</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1501-2000 BZD</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2001-2500 BZD</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2501-3000 BZD</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3001-3500 BZD</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3501 or more BZD</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>T: What is your ethnic group?</td>
<td>(write in)</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>-------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>T: What is the last level of schooling you have attended?</td>
<td>Middle school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Single-response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Some four-year college/university</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Four year college/university</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate or professional degree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vocational / professional school or certificate</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Some associates degree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Associates degree program</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other, specify.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23a</td>
<td>T: Other, specify. (What is the last level of schooling you attended?)</td>
<td>(write in)</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>T: What is your work / occupation?</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Multi-select</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Education / Academic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Healthcare Sector</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Service Industry</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Real estate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Water Sector</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Energy Sector</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tourism Industry</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Works at Home</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Construction Worker</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other, specify.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24a</td>
<td>T: Other, specify. (What is your work / occupation?)</td>
<td>(write in)</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>T: Can you estimate your bi-weekly income?</td>
<td>$0 - 1000 USD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Single-response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1000 - 2000 USD</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$2000 – 3000 USD</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$3000 – 4000 USD</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$4000 - 5000 USD</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$5000 - 6000 USD</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$6000 - 7000 USD</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$7000 – 8000 USD</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$8000 or more USD</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key:

**T** = Specific questions for Tourist respondents are in blue. (Use of the word “tourist” here describes anyone who does not live on the peninsula who is not visiting the Peninsula for solely business or work purposes or briefly visiting family members.)

**C** = Specific questions for Community members (anyone who self-identifies as a resident on the Placencia Peninsula) or Workers (people who work regularly on the peninsula) are in red.
Appendix 7: Participatory Heritage Mapping GPS Data Collection Template, Informal Interview Guide, and Demographic Information Collection Form (2013-2014)

For the collaborative heritage place mapping activities with local Placencia Peninsula residents, basic attribute qualitative information will be collected to give context to the spatial coordinate information and a photo for each place that is mapped. Local collaborators are asked a series of informal questions about each place being mapped that will elicit information to be sorted and filled into the fields (entries) for the GPS place documentation table template below. In addition to waypoint # and positional information, data entry fields include information about: what the feature is (e.g., a fishing spot); its local name; what it is used for or activities associated with it; its historical or environmental significance; its personal significance to the mapping collaborator; other cultural attributes; the environmental setting where it is located; its condition; and any observable or communicated social or environmental impacts that it has in the setting or factors / threats that have affected or may affect the condition of the place; and whether or not the mapping collaborator considers the place to be part of local community heritage.

GPS Heritage Location Mapping Information Collection Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental / Social Setting of Heritage Location (description, e.g., mangrove)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of Heritage place (what is it?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of place (provided by resident mapper)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate Information (latitude / longitude or UTM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses / Activities Associated with the Heritage Place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical / Cultural / Environmental Importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Cultural Information / Significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition of Heritage Place (poor, fair, okay, good, very good; or other scale)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections to Social or Environmental Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts of Social or Environmental Setting on Heritage Place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this Community / Public Heritage? (according to mapping collaborator)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yes / No
Follow-up Questions

1.) What does the word “heritage” mean to you?
   a.) [Probe] Can you provide any examples of heritage places that you know of on or around the peninsula? Which ones are significant to you?

2.) What does the word “sustainability” mean to you?
   a.) [Probe] Can you provide any examples of sustainability with respect to fishing / fisheries from your experiences here?

3.) Is there anything else that you would like to add?

4.) Do you have any questions for me?

Demographic Information Collection Form

Participatory mapping respondents were asked the following questions verbally or allowed to fill in the demographic information form below: (Choose the categories that best match your current personal identity and status. If you are not comfortable answering any of the listed questions in full, please check the “Prefer not to answer” box. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village / community of residence</th>
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</thead>
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Sex
- □ Male
- □ Female
- □ Other
- □ Prefer not to answer

Age
- How old are you? (how many years) _________________
- □ Prefer not to answer

Ethnicity / Ethnic Group (Check the ethnicity that you identify with the most. If you identify with multiple ethnicities, please check “Mixed Ethnicity” and write in the major ones.)
- □ Asian
- □ Garifuna
- □ Black / African
- □ Lebanese
- □ Caucasian / White
- □ Maya (Q’eqchi’)
- □ Creole / Kriol
- □ Maya (Mopan)
- □ East Indian
- □ Maya (Yucatec)
□ Mennonite □ Mestizo/Spanish/Hispanic
□ Mixed Ethnicity (write in) ________________ □ Prefer not to answer
□ Other (write in) ________________

Nationality (please check all that apply)
□ Belizean
□ Canadian
□ Chinese
□ English (U.K.)
□ German
□ Guatemalan
□ Honduran
□ Jamaican
□ Lebanese
□ Mexican
□ Salvadoran
□ U.S. / American
□ Other (write in) __________________________
□ Prefer not to answer

Level of Formal Education Completed
□ Pre-school
□ Primary
□ Some Secondary (High school)
□ Secondary (High school / GED)
□ Trade or Vocational Program
□ Some Post-secondary (Associate degree program)
□ Post-secondary (Associate degree program)
□ Some University (4-year university / college)
□ Bachelor’s Degree (4-year university / college)
□ Some Graduate or Professional Degree program
□ Graduate or Professional Degree
□ None
□ Other (write in) __________________________
□ Prefer not to answer
**Residency Status** *(Please check all that apply describing your current residency status on the Placencia Peninsula of Belize)*

1.) Do you live here (somewhere on the Placencia peninsula)?
   - □ Yes
   - □ No
   - □ Prefer not to answer

2.) (If yes) How many months out of the year? _________________

3.) (If a resident) Would you consider yourself a full-time, part-time, or seasonal resident?
   - □ Full-time
   - □ Part-time
   - □ Seasonal
   - □ Prefer not to answer
   - □ Permanent (lived on the peninsula more than a year)
   - □ Seasonal
   - □ Temporary (lived on the peninsula more than two months but less than a year)
   - □ Tourist
   - □ Visiting
   - □ Migrant Worker
   - □ Refugee
   - □ Other (write in) __________________________________________________________
   - □ Prefer not to answer

**Employment Status** *(check all that currently apply)*

1.) Are you formally employed in the work force?
   - □ Yes
   - □ No
   - □ Might be
   - □ Prefer not to answer

2.) (If employed in the formal workforce) Do you work full-time, part-time, or seasonally?
□ Full-time
□ Part-time
□ Seasonally

□ Employed full-time (work more than 30 hours per week for one or more job(s))
□ Employed part-time (work less than 30 hours per week for one or more job(s))
□ Seasonal Employee
□ Own business / self-employed without paid assistance
□ Own business / self-employed with paid assistance
□ Paid Employee
□ Unpaid Employee (Intern, etc.)
□ Employed, but not in Labour Force
□ Unemployed
□ Not Employed, but looking for work
□ Not Employed and not seeking work
□ Trade or Vocational Degree
□ Student
□ Retired
□ Day Laborer
□ Stay-at-home parent
□ Other (write in) _________________________
□ Prefer not to answer
Employment Industry (check all that apply to your current employment / occupational status)

☐ Accounting

☐ Advertising

☐ Architecture

☐ Agriculture

☐ Biotechnology

☐ Civil Officeholder (council member)

☐ Construction / Home Improvement

☐ Consulting

☐ Computers (hardware, software, technical component development)

☐ Day Laborer

☐ Education (teacher, administration, etc.)

☐ Entertainment / Recreation Services

☐ Finance / Banking / Insurance

☐ Fishing

☐ Food Service (Restaurants, etc.)

☐ Forestry

☐ Engineering

☐ Government

☐ Healthcare / Medical

☐ Import / Export (Shipping)

☐ Information Technology (Internet services, telecommunications, support)

☐ International Organization / Embassy

☐ Legal

☐ Manufacturing

☐ Marketing / Public Relations

☐ Military

☐ Natural Resource Extraction / Management

☐ Non-Governmental Organization

☐ Power / Energy Supply

☐ Private Sector

☐ (Public) Transportation (bus, ferry, boat, airplane, etc.)

☐ Real Estate

☐ Retail / Merchandise Store

☐ Student

☐ Tourism Service Industry (hotels, lodging, etc.)

☐ Unpaid Family Worker

☐ Waste Management / Services

☐ Other (write in) __________________________

☐ None

☐ Prefer not to answer
**Personal Income** (Respondents will be asked to give an estimate of their earnings per year. For verbally elicited responses, the respondent has the option of pointing to an earnings range category if it makes them feel more comfortable.)

On average, how much do you make per year / annually? __________________________

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☐ $0 - $5,000 BZE ($0 – $2,500 US) / Annually

☐ $5,001 - $15,000 BZE ($2500.50 – $7,500 US) / Annually

☐ $15,001 - $25,000 BZE ($7,500.50 – $12,500 US) / Annually

☐ $25,001 - $50,000 BZE ($12,500.50 – $25,000 US) / Annually

☐ $50,001 - $75,000 BZE ($25,000.50 – $37,500 US) / Annually

☐ $75,001 – $100,000 BZE ($37,500.50 – $50,000 US) / Annually

☐ $100,001 – $150,000 BZE ($50,000.50 - $75,000 US) / Annually

☐ $150,001 – $200,000 BZE ($75,000.50 - $100,000 US) / Annually

☐ $200,001 BZE ($100,000.50 US) or more / Annually

☐ Prefer not to answer