

Ecology, Behavior & Conservation of Manatees & Dolphins in Belize

August 4-17, 2012

Field Class Policy & Liability Release

COMPLETE, SIGN, INITIAL, AND RETURN BY REGISTRATION DEADLINE

As your instructors, it is our responsibility to ensure that students, staff, colleagues, and associates are familiar with and understand field course policies. As a student participant, you are required to read, fill out, and sign this document where indicated. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about our Field Class Policy & Liability Release Form.

Return this signed document via mail, FAX, or Email at the same time you submit your Registration and Signed Syllabus (page 4 only). Also, be sure to send copies of your **Passport, Dive Card, DAN Card, and Flight Itinerary ASAP, but not later than 60 days prior to fielding**, to: Caryn Self-Sullivan, 200 Stonewall Drive, Fredericksburg, VA 22401-2110; Email: cselfsullivan@sirenian.org; Phone: 540.287.8207; FAX: 888.371.4998

As Principal Investigator and Lead Instructor, I am responsible for:

- ensuring policies are followed;
- ensuring that risks are minimized to the best of my ability;
- ensuring that students or staff are removed from the course if they, in my sole judgment, are in violation of these policies and/or present a danger to the safety and/or success of the course.

Should a student become seriously injured or leave the course early for any reason, I will inform the student's emergency contact that they have left the course and why. Your signature below authorizes me to do so! Please complete your emergency contact information:

In case of emergency or my removal from this course, please contact the following person(s):

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone(s): _____

Email(s): _____

Relationship to Student: _____

Student Signature: _____

CONSENT TO INHERENT RISKS

Some of the characteristics that make a field course attractive to students may also put the student or their property at risk. To reduce this risk, all services from arrival to and departure from Philip S. W. Goldson International Airport (PGIA, airport code BZE) are provided by Hugh Parkey's Belize Dive Connection (BDC), which has over 20 years of experience in Belize and also has liability insurance in place.

Each student agrees to purchase international medical travel insurance in the form of a **DAN Preferred Membership** (Divers Alert Network) to cover his/her expenses in case of an emergency. This policy can be purchased online at <http://www.diversalertnetwork.org/> under the MEMBERSHIP tab. Sign up as an Individual (not a student) and select the BEST: Preferred Membership Plan (\$110). Note: you do not have to be a certified diver to purchase DAN Preferred Membership. Some of the potential risks inherent to this course are listed below. **Initial Here:** **Yes** **No**

Climate: Students must be prepared to spend long days in hot, humid, and wet conditions. The tropical sun is very strong. Risks include dehydration, sunburn, and other heat related illnesses. Students agree to take precautions as advised by instructor and staff to prevent illness. Students agree to notify instructor immediately if they are feeling ill.

Insects: Sand flies and mosquitoes can be problematic on the caye. Sand flies are believed to be a vector for leishmaniasis in some regions of Belize, but this has not been reported for the cayes. Mosquitoes may transmit a number of diseases (see Diseases below). Botflies (*Dermatobia hominis*) are also reported in Belize, and mosquitoes may transmit their larvae to human hosts where the larvae will grow and develop. This is not life threatening, but can be painful and unpleasant. Students agree to keep instructor informed of insect bites.

Marine life: Fire corals, several species of stinging jellyfish, sharks, sea urchins, lionfish, and other potentially dangerous marine organisms can be found in the study area. These can inflict painful and occasionally severe stings or bites, which may become infected if untreated. Those with a serious allergy to bee or wasp stings may have a similarly dangerous reaction to corals and jellyfish. The best prevention is to avoid touching unfamiliar plants & animals. Students agree to notify instructor immediately if they are injured as a result of an interaction with marine life. Students with known allergies must notify instructor on this form and bring their own medications and an 'epipen' as prescribed by their physician.

Snorkeling: All the inherent risks of snorkeling are obviously present, including the effects of environmental conditions, marine life and other risks specific to your own physical/medical history. Snorkeling is optional. Students who chose to snorkel should bring their own gear (mask, snorkel, fins, wet suit or skin) and know how to snorkel safely without hyperventilating. A snorkel "check-out" by the instructor will be conducted on day 2 of the course.

Boats: We will be aboard a small fiberglass boat for all fieldwork. All boats should have ladders and a bimini cover for sun protection; however, in some instances we may use a boat that lacks a ladder or shade. Deck surfaces of boats will become slippery and may place you at risk of slips, falls, and injuries that result from these accidents. All boats are operated by a licensed captain, employed by BDC. Students are not allowed to operate boats during the expedition.

Disease: Diseases found in tropical regions include malaria, dengue fever, filariasis, leishmaniasis, onchocerciasis, trypanosomiasis (Chaga's disease), schistosomiasis, leptospirosis, rabies, brucellosis, hepatitis, and typhoid. Most diseases are preventable with basic safety cautions. Students certify that they have sought professional advice from a physician, local health department, or international travel clinic regarding immunizations against diseases.

Driving: Driving conditions in Belize are considered poor by US standards and pose inherent risks. All land transfers will be done by licensed drivers, employed by Hugh Parkey's Belize Adventures. Students will not be permitted to drive during the expedition.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Students may share photos, videos, and stories of the expedition with family, friends, local media, and in public forum for educational outreach purposes.

However, all information (data and images) shared or gathered during the expedition remains the intellectual property of PI Caryn Self-Sullivan (CSS) and Co-PI Katherine S. LaCommare (KSL). Students are strictly forbidden from co-opting or plagiarism of data, images or information gathered during an expedition for use in a scientific thesis, masters or PhD work, for profit, or for the academic or business use of a third party without the express written permission of CSS & KSL. Students are aware that data gathered during the interviewing of local people becomes the intellectual property of CSS & KSL.

Students are sometimes required to submit a written report reflecting what they have learned on a project, sometimes as a step toward receiving credit at their home institutions. Permission is hereby granted to students to use data and images for this purpose.

LIFESTYLE CHOICES

Our course does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, or sexual orientation; and we respect students' rights to privacy. However, students should be warned that their lifestyle decisions may offend or clash with the sensibilities of local residents in our area of operations, or potentially violate local laws. Further, certain lifestyle decisions and behavior that impacts fellow students or the instructor may result in an uncomfortable, hostile and/or unproductive work environment.

To ensure enjoyable and productive work conditions and smooth relations with local peoples, we have established the following code of conduct. Beyond practicing cultural sensitivity and showing common courtesy, please be mindful of the following limitations, and please remind and encourage all participants to practice sensitivity, courtesy, and compliance with these policies.

Fraternalization: Instructors, staff, colleagues, and associates are prohibited from becoming intimately involved with students during the duration of the field course. Romantic relationships between students that may otherwise seem permissible often create an unpleasant and/or unproductive work environment and are therefore strongly discouraged for the duration of the field course.

Sexual Harassment: The inter-personal dynamics that exist between field course instructors, staff, and students are considered student-teacher relationships. Therefore, please be aware of the following policies.

- Sexual harassment of students by the instructor or staff is prohibited.
- Likewise, sexual harassment of the instructor, staff, other students, or local people by students is also prohibited.

Sexual harassment infringes on an individual's right to an environment free from unsolicited and unwelcome sexual overtones of conduct either verbal or physical. Sexual harassment does not mean occasional compliments of a socially acceptable nature. Sexual harassment refers to conduct which is offensive, which harms morale, or which interferes with the effectiveness of field courses and research expeditions. Such conduct is prohibited. Lewd or vulgar remarks, suggestive comments, displaying derogatory posters, cartoons or drawings, pressure for dates or sexual favors and unacceptable physical contact or exposure are examples of what can constitute harassment. It is important to realize that what may not be offensive to you, may be offensive to other students, the local population, staff members, or an instructor.

Any individual who feels subjected to sexual harassment or has any knowledge of such behavior should report it at once to his or her instructor or staff members. All reports of sexual harassment will be handled with discretion and will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. Any student who is found to have engaged in conduct constituting sexual harassment will be removed from the course immediately. Any expenses involved in an early departure from the course are the responsibility of the student.

Drugs: The manufacture, possession, use, purchase and/or sale of illegal drugs as defined by the United States Code and/or Belize Law is strictly forbidden while participating in this field course. Prescription drugs may only be purchased and used by the individual indicated on the prescription, in keeping with the intended use guidelines.

Alcohol: Instructors and staff members are in a position of leadership and must therefore always be prepared to make responsible, timely decisions in any situation that may arise. If you decide to consume alcohol after course work and research has concluded for the day, please exercise your best judgment. Please respect local laws and customs. Intoxication can jeopardize your own safety, in addition to that of other students and staff.

Students who are US Citizens must be a minimum of twenty-one (21) years old to consume alcohol. Be prepared to show your identification to the HP staff prior to the purchase of alcoholic drinks. Per day limits on alcohol consumption are in place during the course. In addition, restrictions on the use, possession, sale, or purchase of alcohol are solely at the discretion of the instructors. Local statutes, customs, practices, ordinances, and regulations with regard to the use, possession, sale, or purchase of alcohol are applicable to all students, instructors, and staff participating in this course.

The instructor has the discretion to remove individuals from the course who consume alcohol in a time and manner that endangers the safety and/or productivity of other students, staff, the course, or any expedition.

RECREATIONAL DAYS

As an instructor and part-time resident of Belize since 1998, we (CSS & KSL) are familiar with local conditions and activities that may place the student at risk. Depending on the size of the student body, students may be given options for recreational day activities, but all activities must be conducted through BDC or their authorized agents. Potentially dangerous recreational day activities will not be allowed, as they may jeopardize your safety, the safety and well being of students, and ultimately, the success of this long-term research project.

Students will occasionally have unsupervised free time before and after classes & discussions/field trips/research sessions. Activities undertaken during unsupervised time will be at your own risk.

IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY: GOOD SAMARITAN ACTIONS

In the event of emergencies, instructors, staff, and students must make certain judgments. While we have made an effort to ensure that qualified people make the most informed decisions possible, occasionally First Aid must be administered and other immediate steps taken by expedition participants who are not officially certified to make these decisions. We have safety protocols and emergency procedures in place. However, in rare, unforeseeable emergency situations, you are not restricted from exercising your best judgment with regard to your own safety. We do not restrict "good Samaritan" actions, or actions taken to assist fellow participants during emergency situations in the field. In the event of an unforeseen contingency that has not been provided for in BDC's emergency plan, we will take all reasonable steps to assist students and each other, with the understanding that we do not expect you to take steps that unreasonably jeopardize your own safety or that of others.

STUDENTS AND DRIVING

Students are not allowed to drive project vehicles or boats during the field course. Students may not transport themselves, other students, staff, or equipment in a vehicle of any kind, including their own. Students may only drive a project vehicle or boat, transport other students or perform errands in the field in case of an emergency and when no authorized drivers are available.

SCUBA, DIET, ALLERGIES

I (AM) or (AM NOT) (circle one) certified to dive using **SCUBA** equipment by _____; _____ (certifying organization). If certified, my certification level is _____; my certification number is _____; and I have attached a copy of my **Dive Card** to this form.

Dietary Preferences (circle one): Vegan Vegetarian Carnivore Omnivore
Allergies (circle one): NONE FOOD (list below) DRUGS (list below) OTHER (list below)

REFUND POLICY

I hereby acknowledge that if I cancel my registration before May 1st, I will receive 100% of my deposit less a \$50 service fee to cover bank and processing costs. If I cancel between May 1st and June 1st, I will forfeit my \$500 deposit, but will receive a full refund of any balance paid above the deposit, less a \$50 service fee. No refunds will be given after June 1st. However, if the course is canceled by the instructor for any reason, I understand that I will receive a full refund of all payments made. I agree that I will NOT purchase my airfare until the instructor has confirmed that the course has made minimum enrollment. **Initial Here:** Yes ___ No ___

PERMISSION TO RELEASE YOUR IMAGE AND INFORMATION

I hereby consent to Caryn Self-Sullivan, the Hugh Parkey Foundation, and Belize Dive Connections releasing or using photographs of me taken during my field course & research expedition. **Initial Here:** Yes ___ No ___

I hereby consent to Caryn Self-Sullivan releasing or using information gathered about me in the course of my field course & research expedition, except for contact and medical information and/or information that is otherwise agreed to be kept confidential. **Initial Here:** Yes ___ No ___

ASSENT TO POLICIES

I have read and understand the policies, rights, and responsibilities expressed in this document. I accept the policies above as a condition of participating on this field course and I accept the consequences described above for gross negligence or serious violations of course policies.

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** ___ / ___ / ___

RELEASE OF LIABILITY

I understand the potential hazards and risks attendant to the field course that is described in the syllabus, course briefing, and this policy document. By signing below I agree to participate in the field course at my own risk. I declare that I am in good health. I declare that I, and my heirs, in consideration of my participation in the *Ecology, Behavior & Conservation of Manatees, Dolphins, Turtles* field course from 18th to 31st May 2011 in Belize, hereby release Caryn Self-Sullivan, course instructors, and visiting scientists from any and all liability for damage to or loss of personal property, sickness or injury from whatever source, legal entanglements, imprisonment, death, or loss of money, which might occur while participating in this course. I am aware of the risks of participation, which include, but are not limited to, the possibility of injury or death. I hereby state that I am in sufficient physical condition to accept a normal level of physical activity during long-term exposure to the sun and heat. I understand that participation in this program is strictly voluntary and I freely chose to participate. I understand that the course does not provide medical coverage for me. I verify that I have purchased travel insurance equivalent to DAN Preferred Membership and that I will be responsible for any medical costs I incur as a result of my participation.

However, I do not release Caryn Self-Sullivan, course instructors, and visiting scientists from liability on account of any injury, loss, or damage to me directly caused by the gross negligence or wanton or reckless misconduct of Caryn Self-Sullivan, course instructors, and visiting scientists.

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** ___ / ___ / ___