



NEWS RELEASE

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USI biology class going to Belize

Ten University of Southern Indiana students will embark on a biology field trip to Belize, a small Central American country, on May 25, 1998. **Dr. Deke Gundersen**, assistant professor of biology, will coordinate the 10-day trip.

The ten USI students attending are: **Perry Austin** of Henderson, Kentucky; **Carolyn Ellis**, of Henderson, Kentucky; **Amber Fetcher** of Francisco, Indiana; **Tracey Hayden**, of Evansville; **Kyle Lutz**, of Evansville; **Aaron Pugh**, of Mt. Vernon, Indiana; **Lori Tillman**, of Evansville; **Loretta Werner**, of Evansville, **Amanda Windland**, of Newburgh, and **Donald Windland**, of Newburgh.

They will spend half of the trip on mainland Belize and the other half in Ambergris Caye, Belize. While on the mainland, the group will visit the largest Mayan ruins in Central America called Tikal along with visiting the ruins of Cahal Pech and Xunantunich, the Belize Zoo, the Panti Medicine Trail, the Chaa Creek Butterfly Breeding Facility, and cave-river raft at Jaguar Paw.

In Ambergris Caye, the students will scuba dive and snorkel in day trips and night trips along coral reefs, mangrove and sea grass communities, and rocky shores observing the various marine ecosystems and the differences in daytime and night time marine activity.

Dr. Gundersen said the purpose of the trip is to allow students to actually see and experience some of the many ecosystems (coral reef, mangroves, sea grass communities, tropical rain forests, savannahs, limestone caves) that are covered in biology classes. He added, "The trip also exposes students to an area outside of the U.S. that they probably wouldn't get to on their own." As part of the course requirements, students attend lectures at USI in the weeks before they leave. The marine station staff in Belize will conduct lectures and students will keep field notebooks.

The field biology course is offered by the School of Science and Engineering Technology.