Honey Wasp Nests
and Nests of other Wasps

North of Senahu, Alta Verapaz, Guatemala

Photos by Javier Archila,
March 18, 2025

Text by Nicholas Hellmuth

FLAAR Reports, FLAAR (USA) and
FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala)

June 2025

Panal 6a, Finca Tusbilpec, Cahabon, 12:27pm, tall columnar nest

We photographed a nearly identical columnar-shaped nest at 10:47am on March 6th, 2025, along the highway from Senahu to Teleman (and published in that separate FLAAR Reports).

The tall wasp nest on March 18th was photographed near Finca Tusbilpec, towards Municipio de Cahabon, 12:27pm. So clearly there are lots of these columnar wasp nests in the Muncipio de Senahu and also in adjacent Municipio de Cahabon.

Until a kind individual can donate so we can acquire an 800mm lens, we do not yet have photos of the wasps that are making this size and shape of nest. But in the meantime, it would help to learn from entomologists if they can estimate at least the genus based on the size and shape of this columnar nest, already this height in mid-March.

We found an even taller columnar-shaped wasp nest at Posada Ecological Caribe, Arroyo Petexbatun, that is published on-line on our www.maya-ethnozoology.org website:

”Tallest Wasp Nest ever documented so far for Peten, Guatemala, Posada Ecologica Caribe, Arroyo Petexbatun, Municipio de Sayaxche, Peten” by Nicholas Hellmuth, 2025.

Panal 6b, Finca Tusbilpec, Cahabon, 12:28pm

Panal 6b, Finca Tusbilpec, Cahabon, 12:28pm.

Panal 6d, Finca Tusbilpec, Cahabon, 12:38pm, on a vine

Panal 6d, Finca Tusbilpec, Cahabon, 12:38pm, on a vine.

Understandably wasp entomologists identify wasps based on the coloration pattern on their head, thorax and abdomen. But we suggest that it would be super helpful for a biology student to do a PhD on wasp nest size and shape and which wasp species builds which size and shape of nest.

Panal 6e,
Finca Tusbilpec, Cahabon, 12:41pm

Panal 7, cross-roads to Tusbilpec, 12:54pm, glued to tree trunk

This is one of my favorite sizes and shapes of wasp nest. These wasps are *Synoeca septentrionalis.*

This is a perfect example of one of many “wasp goals”: to be able to identify a wasp species by the size and shape of its nests.

We found the identical size and shape of wasp nests in Macho Creek, Municipio de Livingston, Departamento de Izabal. Plus in front of the hotel El Sombrero Ecolodge, at the entrance to the Yaxha portion of PNYNN, Peten.

From these other examples I estimate that the bottom portions are constructed first, then the upper segment. The final segment at the top is only “half finished”. It will be closed in a few weeks.

Panal 8, center of Tusbilpec, 2:25pm, attached to a palm frond

Panal 9, Finca Dinelda, 3:27pm, white winged wasp

These wasp have white on the end of their wings. Based on these being in Guatemala and having this size and shape of a nest, I hope a wasp specialist can suggest at least the genus.

Panal 10a, Finca El Plan, Alta Verapaz, 3:49pm

Panal 10a, Finca El Plan, Alta Verapaz, 3:49pm.

This is another example that having an 800mm telephone lens for the Sony camera would help a lot.

Panal 10b, Finca El Plan, 3:54pm, March 18, 2025

I estimate that due to their similar size and shape, and because both are not far from each other, that both may be the same wasp species.

At the left, Panal 10b, 3:54pm.

At the right, Panal 10c, 3:57pm.

Panal 10c, Finca El Plan, 3:57pm

Summary for Wasp Nests found on Tuesday, March 18, 2025:

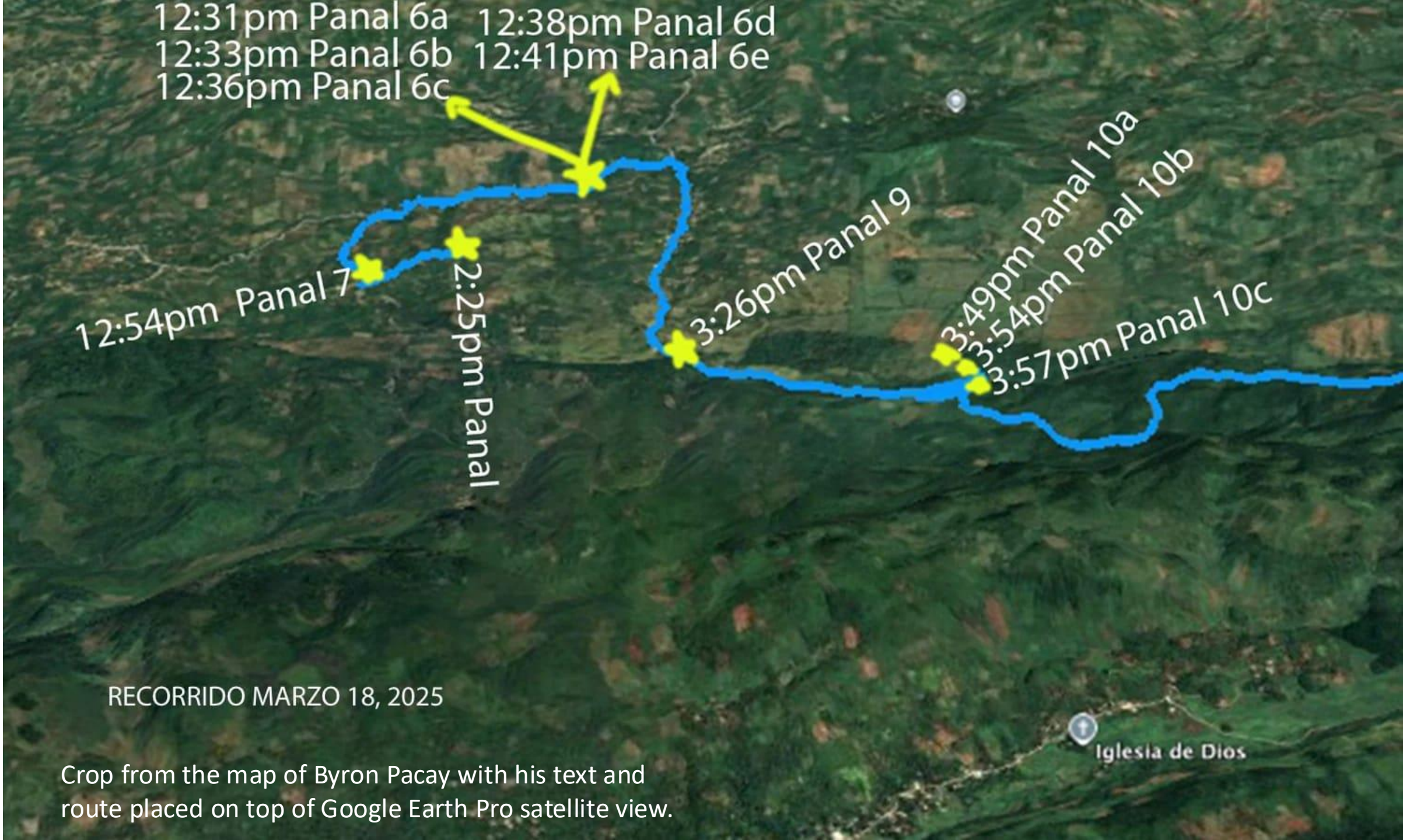
Panal 6a, Finca Tusbilpec, Cahabon, 12:27pm, big, up in a tree
Panal 6b, Finca Tusbilpec, Cahabon, 12:33pm, up in a tree
Panal 6c, Finca Tusbilpec, Cahabon, 12:36pm, tall and thin
Panal 6d, Finca Tusbilpec, Cahabon, 12:38pm, on a vine
Panal 6e, Finca Tusbilpec, Cahabon, 12:41pm, on a tree limb
Panal 7, cross-roads Tusbilpec, 12:54pm, on tree
Panal 8, center of Tusbilpec, 2:25pm, palm tree
Panal 9, Finca Dinelda, 3:27pm, white winged wasp, tree
Panal 10a, Finca El Plan, 3:49pm
Panal 10b, Finca El Plan, 3:54pm
Panal 10c, Finca El Plan, 3:57pm

The highway maps are on the following two pages.

I was able to identify the wasps of Panal 7 without even seeing a close-up of the actual wasps based on research for the following publication. Panal 7 is also included in this earlier report, posted on-line in early June 2025:

HELLMUTH, Nicholas
2025 The Unique Surface Pattern of Wasp Nests of *Synoeca septentrionalis*,Izabal, Alta Verapaz, Peten and many other areas of Guatemala. Remarkable Wasp Nest Architects, Engineers and Workers. FLAAR Reports, FLAAR (USA) and FLAAR Mesoamerica (Guatemala). 20 pages. Easy download on www.Maya-ethnozoology.org

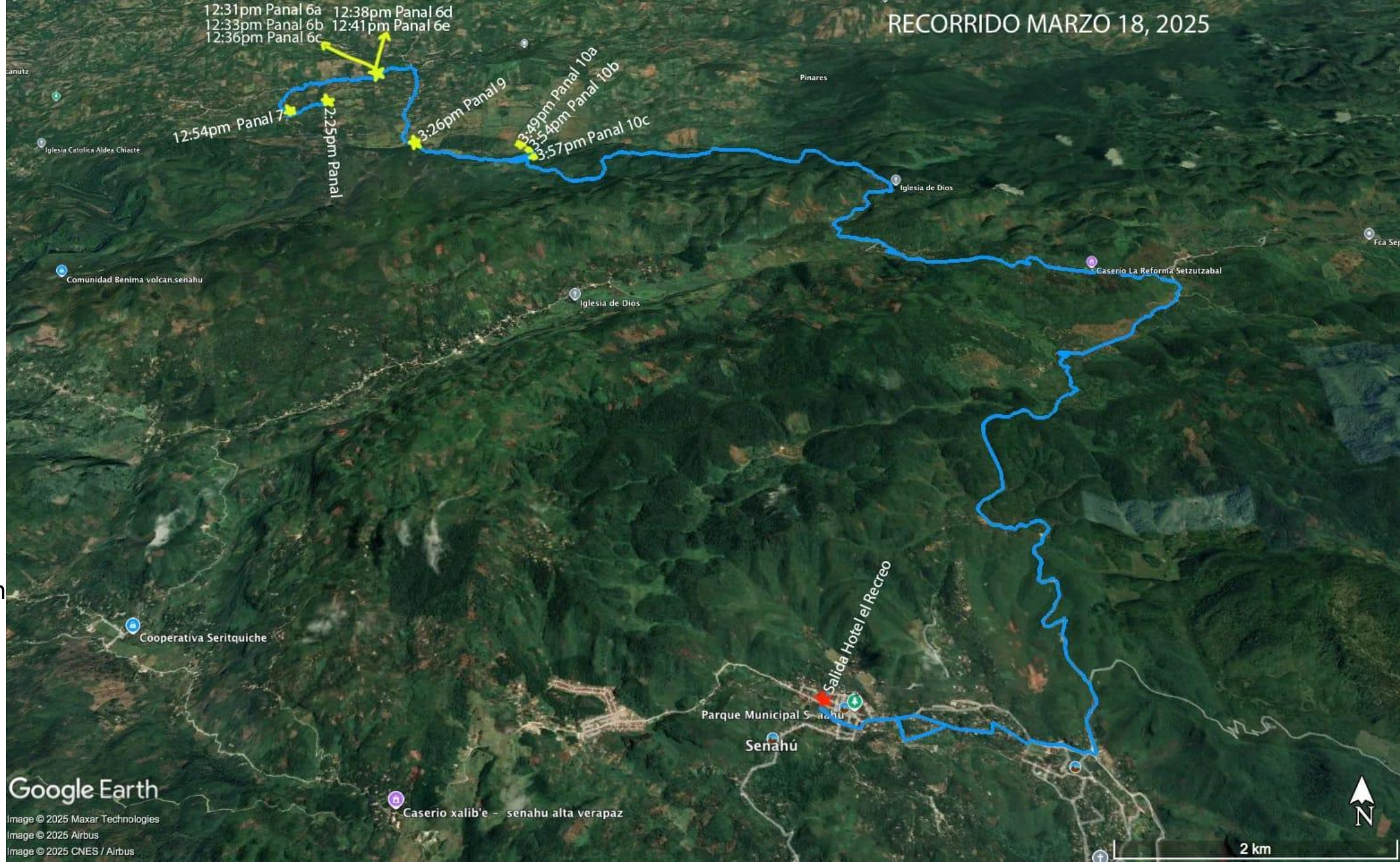
Panal 8 is the nest at 2:25pm .



Crop from the map of Byron Pacay with his text and route placed on top of Google Earth Pro satellite view.

Drawing by Byron Pacay on Google Earth Pro satellite view.

The town of Senahu is at the lower middle. This is where we spent each night.



FLAAR Mesoamerica Field Work Research Team:

Nicholas Hellmuth, field trip concept organizer and photographer
Byron Pacay, helps packing the equipment then as driver (while Nicholas drives, then Byron is the co-pilot).
Norma Cho Cu, organizes all the equipment and packing, and photographer
Senaida Ba Mucu, field trip assistant for over a decade.
Franklin Xol, the husband of Senaida who works in the office and also field trips
Javier Archila, lead photographer, video photographer, and drone pilot (from Coban, Alta Verapaz).
The two children of Senaida and Franklin came in the vehicle from Guatemala City to Senahu; then Fernanda stayed with her paternal grandmother. 10-month old Nicolas came along with her mother Senaida every day of both the pre-trip and the mid-March field trip.

Each day a local Q'eqchi' Maya individual comes along as a helpful guide, Manolo Mucu Chub worked with us the first morning (it began to rain after lunch). He also worked with the team all the following days.

The grandfather of Senaida Ba, Tomas Mucu Choc, assisted us on Wednesday. Domingo Ba Chub also assisted us on Wednesday. We brought a large selection of food for each family that welcomed us to their homes and surrounding property.

Vivian Hurtado is research project manager for FLAAR Mesoamerica. She works from her home office and from the office of FLAAR Mesoamerica.

If you are a wasp entomologist, please contact Vivian Hurtado via email: flaar-mesoamerica@flaar.org You can write in English o en español. Please include Sergio Jerez, botany-zoology@flaar.org