As of 2017, DEEPS officially partnered, for the first time ever, with Rice’s Traveling Owls program. Faculty in our department will serve as hosts and guides for one or two trips each year. This year, Professor Cin-Ty Lee was the host of a cruise to the Galapagos Islands in January. In 2018, we host two more trips, a spring cruise led by Andre Droxler to the coral reefs of Belize and Mayan ruins, and a summer trip to Churchill Canada to look at arctic wildlife led by Cin-Ty Lee. Traveling Owls trips are run by highly reputable tour companies. You will be taken good care of!

We are still early in the development of our travel programs, so we are open to new ideas. We are considering an informal alumni and friends of DEEPS trip to the gem and mineral show in Quartzsite, Arizona in early January 2018, which we may combine with a trip into the Whipple Mountains metamorphic core complex.

Please contact ctlee@rice.edu for more information, and watch our webpage at earthscience.rice.edu for upcoming activities.

**BELIZE TO TIKAL: REEFS, RIVERS & RUINS OF THE MAYA WORLD**

**March 10-18, 2018**

From $5,490 per person, double occupancy

Lindblad Expeditions
Andre Droxler, Ph.D., Professor of DEEPS

Join us in discovering the dazzling reefs of Belize and the breath-taking Mayan ruins of Tikal on a unique land-and-sea expedition. Begin your journey aboard the newest ship in our fleet, the National Geographic Quest, you can snorkel, kayak, and stand-up paddleboard the crystalline waters of Laughing Bird Caye National Park or Sapodilla Cayes Marine Reserve. Then discover the vibrant ecosystem of the Belize Barrier Reef, the largest reef in the Northern Hemisphere while snorkeling among numerous species of stony coral and exotic sea life. Then venture to Tikal, a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the most awe-inspiring archeological sites and urban centers of pre-Columbian Maya civilization. And while the Maya ruins are vast, you will have ample time to explore them. Hike nearby trails, or explore the little-visited Mayan ruins of Yaxha, the third largest ruin in the Maya world, all under the sure guidance of our unparalleled 10-person expedition team. You will be accompanied by an expedition leader, veteran naturalists, a Lindblad-National Geographic certified photo instructor, an underwater specialist, as well as a wellness specialist and video chronicler.

**POLAR BEARS & BELUGA WHALES**

**July 23-29, 2018**

From $3,995 per person, double occupancy

Orbridge
Cin-Ty Lee, Ph.D. Professor of DEEPS

Join us on this unique excursion north to discover the beauty and wilderness of Churchill, Manitoba. Known as the “Polar Bear Capital of the World,” this small town on the banks of the Hudson Bay is a summer home for these majestic animals, who spend the warmer seasons on the local shores before returning to the pack ice of the North Pole when it forms in early winter. In summer, this area is also home to more than 60,000 beluga whales and a fascinating variety of other wildlife. Come and witness this outstanding intersection of cold climate creatures that can only be found here in the Canadian north, and meet the local people who call it home. Pioneering spirits, welcoming smiles and abundant fresh air make this an amazing getaway from the bustle of everyday life.
DEEPS are now traveling with our alums! It started with the “Birding with Pete Vail” series two years ago. Many of you probably didn’t know that Pete Vail is quite the birder, so we are now conducting two Vail birding trips a year: a fall “Hawk Watching” trip to Smith Point, and a spring “Migration” trip at High Island. These trips are designed so that both beginners and veterans of all ages and mobility are welcome. Some come for the birds, some come for the camaraderie and reunion. On our last trip to High Island, we were graced with fantastic views of nesting roseate spoonbills and egrets at the High Island rookery, along with great Texas barbecue!

Professor Andre Droxler has begun taking friends and alums out to central Texas to tour 500 million year old stromatolites. The exposures are arguably some of the best preserved bioherms in the world, initially only accessible by kayak on exposures along the Llano river, and in the last five years, through the generous allowance of private land owners. - C.T. Lee