In 1517, the first Europeans laid eyes on one of the most significant historical features on the planet, something that native Mesoamericans had been exploring and living on for decades. This scar on the earth is on the most prominent links to a pre-history we as humans never knew.

**Origins of the Crater**

This scar is the Chicxulub Crater was the result of an impact from a massive astrological body almost 66 million years ago. The results of this impact were earth shattering. Its most terrifying effect was the mass extinction that it caused, wiping out almost all life on earth. At the time, the earth was ruled by dinosaurs while mammals took a back seat. After the extinction of most of life on earth, some mammals survived and were able to thrive, eventually turning into the human species. Now we use the crater to find out more about out ancient past, the life’s of our ancient ancestors, as well as the lives of our long lost foe.

Result of the Craters Impact

Just after the asteroid impacted the earth, vaporized all organic material within 700 miles, with a blast wave that went even further. This blast would have killed anything within it’s radius.

**Discovery of the Crater**

The Crater was first discovered by Francisco Hernández de Córdoba, a Spanish conquistador, in 1517. But before him, Mesoamericans had been fishing and settling around the rims of the crater for centuries. The inside of the crater proved useful for shipping, as the inside of the crater provides save calm waters, so not long after it’s discovery a small trade town was formed Costa Pantanosa. The town would be used for many years, even warranting it’s own lighthouse to assist during the foggy winters, however around the 1700s much shipping would head for Florida or the new United States of America. So the town’s population soon diminished and eventually became a ghost town. The ruins of the town can be explores, as it lies just north of the Costa Pantanosa Visitor Center.

**Hypotheses and Theories**

The craters origin had been hypothesized since the pre-Columbian times. While many written Mesoamericans records have been lost, oral history suggests that some cultures may have thought of this as the place of the gods, or even the birthplace of the gods. When the Spanish first arrived in the Yucatan, they hypothesized that this crater might have some kind of biblical connection, potentially the place where Lucifer fell from heaven, or possibly the spring from where the legendary biblical flood came from.

The first scientific theories for craters origin would arise in the early 1900s, a number of hypotheses would suspect that the crater was the result of an asteroid impact however, it was commonly discounted as it was thought to be impossible for an asteroid that large to impact the earth without killing all human life. At the time, the tools and processes for distinguishing the age of the crater was unavailable, so many thought that the crater was fairly recent due to its size. It wouldn’t be until the late 1970s when two Geophysicists, named Glen Penfield and Antonio Camargo, discovered evidence of a large celestial impact but the two were unable to provide any solid concrete evidence. Later in 1990, Penfield worked with Alan R. Hildebrand, together they collected more evidence to prove the crater was the result of a massive impact.

**The Foundation of the Park**

In the 1990s the area came under environmental threat from various fossil fuel companies and organizations. At the same time as evidence for the existence of the Chicxulub asteroid, a large number of oil deposits were discovered in and around the crater. Over the next few years a massive international dispute took place as advocates for the protection of the crater and advocates for oil drilling from all over the world began to petition the Mexican government to their side. Soon the event became some prominent the United Nations came together and voted to declare the area an “International Heritage Site.” The United States offered to cooperate with Mexican government in managing the site and in 2000, the National Park Server and CONANP (The National Commission of Protected Natural Areas) established Chicxulub Crater National Park.

**The Park Today**

Today the park has hundreds of thousands of visitors from all over the world exploring this strange and mysterious land. The park is filled with so many different animals and environments, ranging from costal cliffs and islands to wetlands and swamps. While the environment on land is thrilling, the underwater environment is just as stunning. Diving is a very common activity within the park, and the park along with private groups can transport divers all over the park to dive and explore the live that’s grown in the face of destruction.

The park is filled with many different and unique flora and fauna. Many of these creatures are endangered or threatened species that have come to thrive within the park where they are safe from illegal hunting and destruction. It’s important to remember to admire these creatures from afar so that they may continue to thrive within the park, and stay on designated trails as to no damage plants and animals.

**Motorized Water Vehicles**

Boating is only allowed in the park with a permit, which can be procured at any visitor’s center or ranger station.

Waterway Trails are reserved for non-motorized boats like canoes. Motorized water vehicles are not allowed within 50 meters of a waterway trail and can be fined up to $2,000 along with a permanent boating ban.

Do not use this map for navigational purposes, detailed navigational Ocean Survey charts can be purchased from any visitor’s center. Recommended charts for crater navigation are charts 204537, 204539 and 204540, but charts of the entire Yucatan coast are available.

**Fishing and Hunting**

Commercial Fishing is prohibited within park boundaries with minimum fine of $100,000. Recreational fishing requires a permit for both fresh water and salt water fishing. Hunting under any circumstance is prohibited within the park with a fine of $1,000 and up 5 months in Jail.

**Waterway Trails**

Waterway Trails are clearly marked with lighted buoys every 100 meters. Attempt to stay on the path at all times, traveling off the path could pose a hazard to you and motorized boats While traveling overnight a light of some kind is required that can be viewed from all angles. A permit is not required for traveling on waterway trails.

Backcountry Camping

A permit is required for backcountry camping which can be procured at any visitor’s center or ranger station. A special permit it required for camping on the rim islands.

Detailed Lore is on the second image, but the TLDR: This is a protected area of the Yucatan, jointly managed by the United States National Park Service and the Mexican National Commission of Protected Natural Areas. The two nations came together to protect the area in the late 90s when the crater came under threat by various oil and industrial organizations. This idea is extremely unlikely, I am aware, I just \*really\* like the Unigrid design style of the NPS.

I made this using Inkscape and I actually made the geography using a software called World Machine, which I used as a reference to make this. Hope you enjoyed the map!