

Discover Lecture Series

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Uncovering the ancient Nile: How collaborative science tells the story of Egypt's desert pyramids

Abstract

Join Associate Professor Tim Ralph as he describes a modern-day adventure, working with Egyptian scientists on an international team, using remote sensing, landscape analysis and sediment sampling to find the long-lost Ahramat Branch of the Nile River.

The Nile, Egypt's lifeblood, has been studied for centuries. The Nile is a dynamic landscape feature, changing its shape and location in response to environmental conditions. Over millennia, Egyptian settlements, communities, and their monuments rose and fell with the river.

Tim's research shows this ancient river course once extended over 60 km, flowing past 31 known pyramids on the Western Desert margin. River access to these sites eventually declined as the waterway moved to the east. Understanding how the Nile evolved over time could help discover and conserve more cultural sites from Egypt's fascinating past.

Biography



Associate Professor Tim Ralph is an environmental scientist who studies the geomorphology of rivers and wetlands in dry landscapes (i.e. Australia, Egypt, South Africa, Botswana, and Tanzania). His research seeks to understand how and why rivers and wetlands adjust over time, the key drivers of change, and interactions between people and the environment.

Open Access journal article: [‘The Egyptian pyramid chain was built along the now abandoned Ahramat Nile Branch’](#)

The Conservation article: [‘We mapped a lost branch of the Nile River – which may be the key to a longstanding mystery of the pyramids’](#)