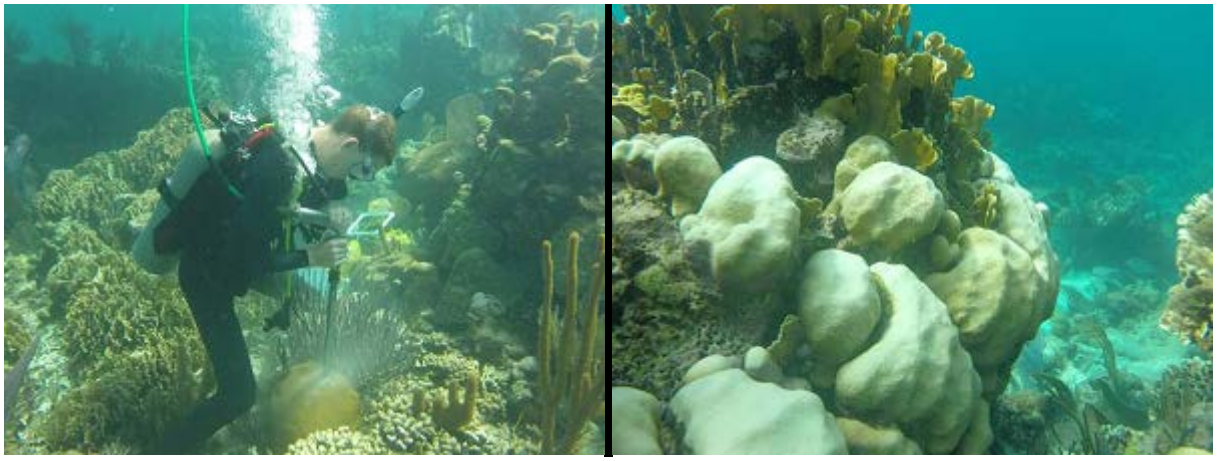
Project Update: November 2015

My lab mates and I just returned from year 2 of our work in Belize. Last year we surveyed the coral communities at 13 reef sites in Belize. These reef sites were grouped into three categories: low, moderate, and extreme temperature stress. We saw differences in community composition between these three categories. In order to understand how temperature has impacted coral communities within each site we will correlate coral growth records with temperature records. We collected cores of two species of coral at eight of our sites. These cores will be CT scanned and annual bands will be measured and counted in order to reconstruct growth patterns.



Left: Using a pneumatic drill (powered by compressed air) to core a mounding coral. Right: Due to the strong El Nino this year as well as the additive impacts of ocean warming, we saw increased percentages of paleness and bleaching at all of our sites this year. This *Orbicella annularis* is quite pale, indicating that it is recovering from summer bleaching.