

Program Staff



Leigh A. R. Cominiello
Laboratory Assistant

M.A., History/Historical Archaeology, University of West Florida

Leigh joined the Crow Canyon team in 2017 with 20 years of archaeological experience in the field and laboratory; she has worked in state, federal, academic, and private sectors. As Crow Canyon's laboratory assistant, she enjoys sharing her passion for teaching and lifelong learning with students and adults. In the lab, she teaches artifact identification, analysis, and interpretation. Her current research interests include cultural interactions at historic trading posts, as well as the decline of the Chaco regional system. Leigh is a Ph.D. candidate in anthropology at the University of New Mexico.



Steve Copeland
Field/Lab Archaeologist

B.A., Anthropology, University of Colorado

Steve has worked at Crow Canyon since 2006 as a field archaeologist. During the program season, Steve is responsible for teaching students and adults archaeological field methods, so if your program includes site excavation, he'll show you how to dig, screen, measure, map, and document your finds. (Winter finds him in the lab, compiling and entering data from the preceding field season.) Steve's research interests include architecture and Southwest studies; on his days off, he enjoys mountain biking, backpacking, hiking, and spending time with family.



Paul Ermigiotti
Educator

B.A., Anthropology, Penn State University

Paul has worked at Crow Canyon since 1990; before that, he worked at Mesa Verde National Park. He specializes in creating replicas of ancestral Pueblo artifacts, including pottery, projectile points, atlatls, and bone tools. He helps lead Crow Canyon's Pueblo Farming Project, working in collaboration with traditional Pueblo Indian farmers. Paul directs planting and harvesting of the experimental gardens and collects data from them each week. Outside of work, Paul's interests include music, biking, skiing, and birding.



Sean Gantt
Assistant Director of Education

Ph.D., Anthropology, University of New Mexico

Sean is a visual and public anthropologist with training in archaeology, ethnography, and documentary video techniques. He specializes in southeastern and southwestern U.S. Native American studies and focuses on Native American identity and self-representation, as well as cultural performance and preservation. He is currently working on projects to incorporate traditional indigenous knowledge and approaches into the ongoing education programs at Crow Canyon, and he is developing reciprocal partnerships with local tribal communities.



Becky Hammond
Educator

A.F.A., Fine Arts, Institute of American Indian Arts

Becky joined Crow Canyon as an educator in 1997 and in the years since has taught participants of all ages in many different campus programs. As a member of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, she brings an American Indian perspective to Crow Canyon's work. In addition to being a teacher, Becky is also a bead artist. Taught by her grandmother in traditional beading techniques, Becky enjoys drawing on both traditional Ute and ancestral Pueblo designs to create her own contemporary style of artwork.



Kate Hughes
Laboratory Education Coordinator

M.A., Applied Anthropology, Northern Arizona University

Kate began working in Crow Canyon's lab in 2015. As laboratory education coordinator, she develops and teaches lab education programs, processes and analyzes artifacts, and assists with curation concerns. She also serves as Crow Canyon's internship coordinator. A Crow Canyon lab intern in 2006, Kate has since worked for cultural resource management companies in the Four Corners region and in the Great Basin. Her research interests include textiles, lithic technology, and public archaeology; on her days off, she enjoys gardening, fiber arts, and exploring the outdoors.



Tyson Hughes
Educator

B.A., Anthropology, Fort Lewis College

Tyson is an educator at Crow Canyon. He has been involved with Crow Canyon since he attended programs here as a child. As an archaeologist, he has worked in many areas throughout the country, but his passion lies in the archaeology of southwestern Colorado where he grew up. As an educator, he enjoys sharing his knowledge of this region with students. He is an avid flintknapper and specializes in prehistoric lithic technologies. When he is not at work, he enjoys exploring the mountains, canyons, and rivers of this beautiful Four Corners region with his family and friends.



Cara McCain
Educator

B.A., Anthropology/Archaeology, Brigham Young University

Cara started working as an educator for Crow Canyon in 2016. Cara loves traveling and has lived and worked in the Middle East and Asia. She loves being able to combine her formal education experience with her love of archaeology. She likes experimenting with ancient technologies, especially weaving and basket weaving. When not at work, Cara enjoys visiting historically and culturally relevant places, doing genetic genealogy research, and jewelrymaking.



Jamie Merewether
Collections Manager

B.A., Anthropology, University of Colorado

Jamie has worked in Crow Canyon's research laboratory since 1997; before that, she gained extensive survey, excavation, and laboratory experience throughout the West. As collections manager, Jamie is responsible for keeping track of the thousands of artifacts and samples that come in from the field every year, making sure they are inventoried, cataloged, and analyzed correctly; she also manages the maps, photos, and other field documentation related to Crow Canyon excavations. When not at work, Jamie enjoys traveling, hiking, bird watching, and exploring the wilderness areas of the western U.S.



Susan Ryan

Director of Archaeology

Ph.D., Anthropology, University of Arizona

Susan has worked at Crow Canyon since 1998. She codirected the Shields Pueblo excavation project from 1998 to 2000 and was project director of the Albert Porter Pueblo excavation project from 2001 to 2004. As director of archaeology, Susan aligns the Center’s mission with ongoing field, laboratory, and online report publication activities. Her research interests include the nature and extent of Chacoan influence in the northern Southwest, the A.D. 1130–1180 drought, and the built environment.



Kari Schleher

Laboratory Manager

Ph.D., Anthropology, University of New Mexico

Kari has worked at Crow Canyon since 2011. She is in charge of designing and implementing artifact analysis methods, and she teaches artifact analysis to both students and adults. Her specialty is the analysis and interpretation of Pueblo pottery; she is particularly interested in production technology and what pottery can tell us about connections between different groups of people who lived in the past. Kari enjoys traveling, especially to learn about cultures around the world, and she has worked on archaeological projects all over the American Southwest and in Peru.

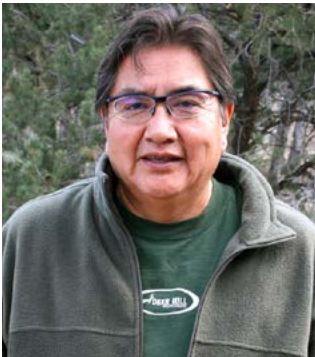


Becca Simon

Field Archaeologist

M.A., Anthropology, Colorado State University

Becca started working at Crow Canyon in 2014. She grew up in Washington, D.C., where she developed a love of history and archaeology by visiting the many museums of the Smithsonian Institution. She has worked for afterschool programs, museums, and cultural resource management companies where she obtained archaeological field experience in Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, and southern Jordan. Her professional interests include Southwest archaeology, the protohistoric era, historic photography, public outreach, and historic preservation.



Dan Simplicio

Cultural Specialist

B.A., Anthropology, University of New Mexico

Dan joined Crow Canyon in 2014. An enrolled tribal member from the Pueblo of Zuni, New Mexico, he is fluent in the Zuni language. Dan has done archaeological fieldwork throughout the Southwest and has worked as a cultural resource specialist for the Zuni Historic Preservation Office. His experience includes lithic and ceramic analysis, NAGPRA repatriation and consultations, and sacred site identification. He has also taught Zuni language and culture at the high school level. In addition, he is an accomplished silversmith and fetish jeweler.



Caitlin Sommer

Supervisory Archaeologist

M.A., Anthropology, University of Colorado

Caitlin has been a field archaeologist at Crow Canyon since 2010, instructing students and adults in proper field methods and techniques—from digging and mapping to “reading” stratigraphy. She is the supervisory archaeologist for the Northern Chaco Outliers Project. Her research interests include Southwest and Great Basin archaeology, with a focus on understanding connections among different groups of people through time and across space. When not doing archaeology, she enjoys mountain biking, skiing, hiking, and spending time with family.