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Jane C. Waldbaum Scholarship Recipient Report

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I completed a five week field school at the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center right outside of Cortez, Colorado in the southwestern corner of the state. The school was conducted under the direction of Dr. Susan Ryan and this was the fourth year students from universities all across the country have come to Cortez to participate in this excellent opportunity. Crow Canyon, itself, is a nonprofit organization complete with its own campus that houses college students as well as middle school students, high school students, and interested adults during summer programs in which all attendees are allowed to excavate and learn about archaeological techniques and protocols specific to the United States. In addition to Crow Canyon's incredible outreach and demonstration of what public archaeology can do, their mission also includes reaching out and consulting with descendants of indigenous tribes. These communities in the southwest include Pueblo peoples as well as the nearby Navajo and Ute Mountain Ute tribes that now own many Pueblo archaeological sites due to the assignment of reservation boundaries.

Our five weeks in the Pueblo region of the southwest was complete with field trips, excavation, lab analysis, and survey. During our field trips we toured Mesa Verde National Park, we were told part of the Navajo creation story under the shadow of Ship Rock on the Navajo Reservation in New Mexico, we volunteered with a summer children's program on the Ute Mountain Ute Reservation, and visited many yet unexcavated sites in the central Mesa Verde region.



A photo from our trip to the Cliff Palace ruin in Mesa Verde National Park. Most of the artifacts from the park are located in Helsinki as this was originally excavated by a Swedish archaeologist in the early 1900s.

Our excavation days were completed at the Haynie site named after the former private landowner, Ralph Haynie. Haynie is one of three archaeological sites in what is referred to as the Lakeview group. All three sites are located less than a half mile from each other and can be dated to the Pueblo II period (between AD 950 – AD 1150). The archaeologists at Crow Canyon are still trying to figure out why Pueblo peoples would have built structures so close to one another. Could it have been a larger community or neighborhood? Were they doing this for protection or to define a certain boundary? Were there ceremonial reasons why the structures were placed in such a way? There are many possibilities!

A photo of our 4 meter by 8 meter excavation unit at the Haynie site. Off to the left, you can see the Mesa Verde range and to the right is the Sleeping Ute Mountain.



Throughout each of the five weeks we would follow up two days in the field with a day completely devoted to analysis in the lab. This is a large part of archaeological work and interpretation as most of the time it is hard to completely understand the purpose of a given chipped stone or hard to see all of the detail on a pottery sherd without a microscope. Our lab time was focused on several types of artifacts including chipped stone analysis, ground stone analysis, pottery sherd analysis, dendrochronology, and flotation.

The last day of each week was dedicated to archaeological survey. Our survey took place completely on private land, which is actually not unique in this region. Many landowners will inadvertently find large deposits of pottery sherds and cores or flakes on their property and would like archaeologists to come take a look. This is quite a common concern because the concentration of archaeological sites is so dense throughout this region – so much so, that it only took us a few hundred meters of walking on our first day to find three Pueblo sites. These sites are often fairly easy to recognize and define as there is almost always square room blocks to the north (marked by bump on the landscape), with two circular kivas slightly to the south (marked

with two landscape impression), and finally to the very south is often an increased density of lithic material, pottery sherds, and faunal remains that indicate the boundaries of the midden, or trash pile, for the occupants.

Such clear markings throughout the region makes it very easy to tie all of these communities together in a temporal and spatial context. During the Pueblo II period, we definitely see several very specific architectural decisions and features on the landscape that are very similar to Chaco Canyon several hundred miles to the south. In fact, one of the main questions we have when excavating at the Haynie site, is how exactly sites this far north may have interacted with Chaco. This interaction often leads to additional questions about how Chaco Canyon is defined. Were these early people using Chaco simply as a marketplace/trading center without any permanent residents? Were small groups of people living permanently at Chaco for maintenance purposes or was Chaco completely inhabited with hundreds if not thousands of people? It may take the analysis of hundreds of additional sites in this region to begin to understand the answers to these questions, but once such questions can be answered our greater interpretation of community construction of Pueblo people may improve immensely.





A photo of a great kiva at Pueblo Bonito in Chaco Canyon. During its use, the top would be covered with a wooden roof and people would have sat at the benches along the outer edge during ceremony.

Finally, I think my favorite part of my field experience was the opportunity to talk to tribal community members of the Southwest. I think Crow Canyon has fostered a really great and open line of communication among indigenous descendant communities of the southwest. This is not always an easy task in the archaeological world, but I think it's necessary and invaluable to share archaeological findings with descendants as a way to be respectful and also to correctly interpret a piece of the past from someone who may know its true cultural significance. The pursuit of gathering information in a scientific fashion should be encouraged, but in the field of humanities like that of anthropology, it is also important to incorporate respect into this scientific inquiry. I applaud Crow Canyon for teaching me so much about what this kind of mission looks like and it has given me so much hope for what the protection of material cultural heritage will look like in the decades to come.



From our weekend trip to the Grand Junction in Bears Ears National Monument. The preservation of this site was incredible! There were still charred corn cobs within some of the cliff dwellings and metates (used to grind corn) near the hearth features.