

# FRONTIER FELLOWSHIP

ARTS FELLOWSHIP  
IN GREEN RIVER - UT

2019-20

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## Frontier Fellowship 2019-20

*The Frontier Fellowship provides creative practitioners the opportunity to live and work with Epicenter in Green River, Utah. Fellows generate new work that is informed by the region's history, the surrounding desert landscapes, and the local residents. While in residence, Fellows execute community-based projects that align with Epicenter's mission and long term goals.*

*Visit [frontierfellowship.org](http://frontierfellowship.org) for more information.*

Epicenter is honored to receive dozens of applicants from around the world, but only a select few are accepted to participate annually. Fellows are selected based on the quality of recent work and must possess a proven sensitivity to and enthusiasm for working in small communities, a strong history of collaboration, and a demonstrated ability to develop and creatively leverage resources. This year, we invited a past Fellow, a local community member, a local artist, and our new Enterprise Rose Fellow to join the selection committee process.

We are honored to present Epicenter's next round of Frontier Fellows, an exciting group of folklorists, designers, musicians, artists, and other creative practitioners who will be focused on teaching self-documentation skills and strategies, sharing tools for self expression and cultural exploration, and engaging the community in co-designing new affordable housing for Green River.

After the success of last year's pilot Emerging Fellowship, we've decided to host two sessions! We continue to develop the Emerging program, now with help from artist and recent Fellow Sarah Lillegard. Emerging Fellows receive direct technical assistance from Epicenter such as portfolio and CV assistance, network connections, mentorship, and more.

We welcome back one past Fellow as a Returning Fellow: Thomas Richardson, a Research Fellow via Utah Humanities, returns to Green River this fall. In line with a long term Epicenter goal (*Build local leadership within town*) as outlined in our strategic plan, this year also marks the first year we've had a local resident as a Fellow [Sarah Burnett as Emerging Fellow]. Finally, we were graciously approached by Utah Humanities to sponsor a Frontier Fellowship session; we'll welcome Brian Laidlaw and Ashley Hanson in October of 2019 to Green River.

Finally, we want to reiterate how critical the Frontier Fellowship is to the mission and long term goals of Epicenter. The Fellowship builds local leadership within town by sharing self-documentation skills and lifting up local artists. The Fellowship increase local housing options by giving Epicenter creative tools to engage the community in co-designing new housing strategies. The Fellowship increases town vibrancy through events and beautifies the built environment through community-based installations. The Fellowship ensure organizational resiliency through expanding our network and developing new resources. Finally, the Fellowship helps develop Epicenter as a model for other rural communities; we share and consult on the residency program with other rural communities throughout the world.

Art is at the core of Epicenter. Thank you to all past, future, and returning Fellows for making Epicenter what it is today!



[samwcox.com](http://samwcox.com)  
Graphic Designer & Filmmaker

## Sam Cox

**Raleigh, NC**

Sam's work investigates the ways our beliefs and identities are shaped by the places we inhabit. His work is a theoretical and personal response to hyper-individualistic and transient American culture. He is fascinated by geography, Eastern Christian mysticism, indigenous cultures, maps, and the desert. He hopes to live, die, and be buried on the same piece of land.

His current film, *New Men*, chronicles the life of a Russian Orthodox Monastery in West Virginia where 28 men, mostly young American converts, have renounced the world to follow a 1,700-year-old ascetic tradition.



What about Green River & the Frontier Fellowship excites you most?

Spending time in the desert. Breaking out of the normal rhythm of life in order to think and listen. Having opportunities to interact with people outside of my bubble.

[erinelder.com](http://erinelder.com)

## Erin Elder

### **Albuquerque, NM**

Erin Elder is an independent artist and curator guided by interests in land use, experimental collaboration, and non-traditional modes of expression. Her research-driven projects take highly participatory forms, working with a broad definition of art to bring audiences into a direct experience of particular places.

Underscoring Erin's work is a commitment to the creative process and to artists. From 2009 - 2013, she cooperatively founded and directed PLAND, an off-the-grid residency program near Tres Piedras, NM. From 2012 - 2015, she was the Visual Arts Director at Santa Fe's Center for Contemporary Arts, where she curated 50+ exhibitions and many public programs. She has also produced projects with a variety of institutions throughout the US and Germany.

Her writing has been published by University of Minnesota Press, University of Houston Press, various regional magazines; she recently self-published a book. Erin is contributing faculty at a number of universities and colleges. She is a 2017-2019 research fellow with Nevada Museum of Art's Center for Art + Environment. With an MA in Curatorial Practice from California College of the Arts and years of experience in the art world, Erin operates Gibbous, a consulting service that supports committed artists at pivotal moments in their careers.



### What about Green River & the Frontier Fellowship excites you most?

I am appreciative of the time and support to produce a new chapter of my ongoing research project, The Rites of Land. The project looks at the land use history of a specific place through drawings, writing, physical exploration and other forms of creative, place-based research. Green River and its environs will be the subject of a new book as part of this growing series.

[jenniferemerling.com](http://jenniferemerling.com)  
Visual Storyteller

## Jenn Emerling

### California

Jennifer Emerling is an independent visual storyteller specializing in travel, editorial, and documentary photography. Jenn's long-term work seeks to understand how identity, personal memories, the history of Westward Expansion and tourism intersect with cultivating feelings of awe, wonder, wildness, and love. Her calling card is her saturated, otherworldly perspective—using a documentary approach combined with magic realism, she mindfully works in the pursuit of joy, highlighting the uniquely American experience that's

both familiar and slippery in all of its wonderfully exaggerated folklore and whimsy. Jenn's thoughtful thirst for the world keeps her on the road most of the time, but when she's when not chasing the perfect golden light tripping down the cosmic highway in the American West, she calls California home.



### What about Green River & the Frontier Fellowship excites you most?

I have been looking for more opportunities to combine community service with my art practice, and to pass on the transformative powers that are uniquely felt within the great, wild expanse of the Western Landscape through art. There seems to be something magical brewing in Green River, and I'm excited for this opportunity immerse myself in rural life and get to know the people who make Green River so special. My intentions are to gain a deeper understanding into a way of life that I might not otherwise ever get to experience, be a positive influence, an ambassador for others, and walk away a more enlightened, empathetic human being.



[grahammark.net](http://grahammark.net)  
[lostmountainwave.blogspot](http://lostmountainwave.blogspot)  
Artist Professor

## Mark Allen Graham

***Brighton, UT***

Mark Graham received his EdD degree from Teachers College of Columbia University and his MBA from New York University. He currently serves as the chairman of the Art Education Policy Review, The Teaching Artist committee and recently co-directed field study programs in India, Nepal, and Malawi. Dr. Graham is an internationally known illustrator and has illustrated thirty children picture books. He has exhibited his work at the Society of Illustrators exhibition and the Bologna Children Book exhibition. He continues to create various kinds of art objects, including mandalas and complex installations. Graham

received the Manual Barkan award from the National Art Education Association and has published work in Studies in Art Education, Education Journal, Art Education, and has written chapters for numerous books in the field of art education. His scholarship includes place-based education, graphic novels, ecological/holistic education, secondary art education and assessment, and Himalayan art and culture.



What about Green River & the Frontier Fellowship excites you most?

Planting some melons, working with community residents, painting.



[brianlaidlaw.com](http://brianlaidlaw.com);  
[publictransformation.org](http://publictransformation.org)

Teaching Artists / Musicians

## Ashley Hanson & Brian Laidlaw

### *Granite Falls, MN*

ASHLEY HANSON is a theater artist, community organizer and advocate for the arts in rural areas. She is the founder of PlaceBase Productions and the Department of Public Transformation, and was recently named a 2018 Obama Foundation Fellow for her work with rural communities.

BRIAN LAIDLAW is a poet-songwriter nearing completion of a Ph.D. in Creative Writing at the University of Denver. His books include *THE STUNTMAN* and *THE MIRRORMAKER* (both from Milkweed Editions); he has also had lyrics in *American Songwriter Magazine* and *Songwriting Consultant* credits on multiple Grammy-Award-winning and -nominated albums.

Ashley's life as a site-specific artist and Brian's life as a Creative Writing educator and craftsperson intersect here: at a commitment to helping communities and individuals create powerful, issue-based poems, songs and stories about their towns and landscapes. They work with local artists, musicians and theater-makers to offer workshops in a variety of genres and formats, all with the goal of helping residents reflect - both compellingly and accurately - the joys and challenges of living in rural places.

### What about Green River & the Frontier Fellowship excites you most?

Brian and Ashley have previously visited Epicenter and spent a little time in Green River, but they are overjoyed to have the opportunity to get to know the community and its surroundings in a deeper and more concentrated way. The duo will be on a month-long tour in partnership with the Utah Humanities Festival, and will get to have Epicenter as a home base for their travels and programming throughout that time!



[jenniferjoyjameson.net](http://jenniferjoyjameson.net);  
[chrismerchant.tv](http://chrismerchant.tv)

Public Folklorist;  
Photographer

## Jennifer Joy Jameson & Chris Merchant

**Los Angeles, CA**

Originally from Southern California, Jenn spent a decade outside the state working as a public folklorist, collaborating with communities and cultural practitioners in Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi. She later moved back west to work for the Alliance for California Traditional Arts, where she manages cultural arts programs, grants, and media. Jenn often finds herself at two poles—one has her leaning more into the creative practices of a fieldworker, writer, and curator, and the other has her leaning deeper into activism and cultural organizing. Her best contributions find the balance between.

Chris studied filmmaking at the University of Texas in Austin and currently works as a creative researcher in the film industry, while simultaneously pursuing his

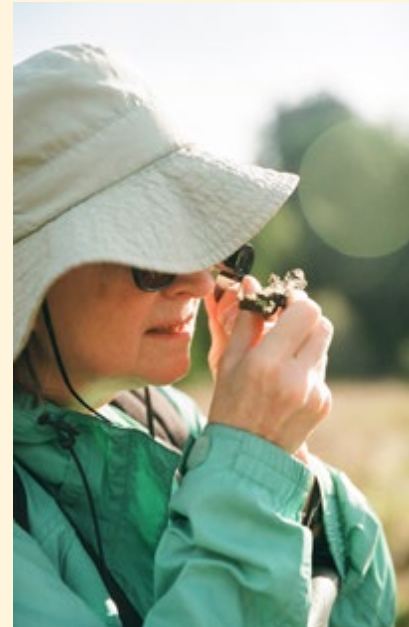
photographic practice. His photography draws on his fascinations for American regionality, artist-built environments and hobbyist subcultures. He has spent time documenting the worlds of mycology, rockhounding, and the natural landscapes of the American west.

Together, they plan to combine these backgrounds (ethnographic methods, photography, archival research, writing, and curation) in the projects that they produce. They look forward to seeing how this work will develop, and to what they can learn from the citizens of Green River and Epicenter.

### What about Green River & the Frontier Fellowship excites you most?

As partners, we've enjoy exploring themes of vernacular art, cultural landscapes, rituals, belief systems, archives and personal collections. As well as racial and cultural equity, how to build and keep community, ecosystems and environmental sustainability, and how we can and should relate to these things now and into the future.

We see the Frontier Fellowship as an opportunity to engage closer with these dynamics: between the two of us, with Epicenter, and the larger community of Green River, Utah.



[caledonianorthern.org](http://caledonianorthern.org)  
[growingrightproject.com](http://growingrightproject.com)  
Community-Based Folklorist  
& Documentary Artist

## Jess Lamar Reece Holler

***Columbus, OH***

Jess Lamar Reece Holler is a community-based applied folklorist, oral historian, public historian, exhibit co-curator, and multi-media producer based in Columbus and Caledonia, OH. Her projects imagine cultural work for social change at the intersections of food, health, environmental justice, place and memory, with a particular attention to vernacular perspectives and beliefs and activism around ecology, everyday toxicity, and toxic heritages. She is the Project Director and Founder of the Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association's Growing Right Oral History Project, documenting the rise of organic farming in Ohio as an intersectional social movement, and experimenting with multi-modal ways to engage the public and cultivate transformative listening from oral history materials. Jess leads Caledonia Northern Folk

Studios, an oral history and folklife consultancy rooted in community-collaborative practice and co-curated oral history-to-exhibition workflows. Both projects engage questions of site-based installation and the role of place, context and ecology as participants in documentation, exhibition and reception. Jess is working to complete Growing Right's first experimental short film, on ecological farming in the fracklands of Eastern Ohio.



### What about Green River & the Frontier Fellowship excites you most?

After so much deep, place-based work in the places I am from, I'm thrilled to come to Green River and explore if and how to do ecologically-sensitive, deep-listening work in a community where I'm an outsider. Much of my work explores the complex attachments people have to place -- especially when their places have been impacted by environmental trauma, redevelopment, outmigration, extractive industry, or forced removals. I'm especially curious to explore these dynamics in Green River, and to continue working towards a community-collaborative ecological documentary practice that seeks to amplify and make public what we'd ordinarily keep as private memories and experiences with space, place and environment. I'm also very interested in site-specific work and the particular environment(s) of Green River as locations for exhibition, encounter and exchange of this and other work! I can't wait to come join you all!

[calistalyon.com](http://calistalyon.com)  
Artist

## Calista Lyon

***Columbus, OH***

Calista Lyon is a visual artist living and working in Columbus, Ohio. Her research lives at the intersection of non-human and human worlds in our time of climate breakdown, prompting questions around human response-ability and care. In 2006, she earned a Diploma of Art in Applied Photography from Melbourne Polytechnic, Australia. Relocating to the United States in 2012 she earned a BA in Studio Art at California State University, Los Angeles. Presenting a solo exhibition at the Murray Art Museum Albury, Australia in 2017 along with group shows at DAAP Galleries, University of Cincinnati (2018); Cultural Arts Center, Columbus (2018); Angela Meleca Gallery, Columbus (2018); Beeghly Library, Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware (2018); Fine Arts Gallery, California State University, Los Angeles (2017) and The Luckman Gallery, Los Angeles (2015) among others. Lyon will present a solo exhibition at ROY G BIV Gallery in Columbus, Ohio in 2019. Lyon was awarded the 2016/17 University Fellowship at The Ohio State University where she is currently undertaking her MFA.



### What about Green River & the Frontier Fellowship excites you most?

Epicenter has offered me the gift of listening and engaging with the community of Green River—both the non-human and human—presenting a new challenge in working with a community that I don't presently have ties with. I'm looking forward to researching the history of Green River and the ways I might understand place through past, present and future entanglements.



[maguirecommasophie.com](http://maguirecommasophie.com)

# Sophie Maguire

**Vancouver, BC**

Originally from New York and having spent much of her life in the American northeast Sophie Maguire now resides in Vancouver, BC. A choreographer and landscape designer working at the intersection of drawing, history, and performance Sophie is currently a project designer at PFS Studio, an adjunct professor at UBC School of Architecture + Landscape Architecture and a choreographer/maker.

Her research spans an array of topics including the informal design of adventure playground in the UK, India's stepwells, landscape architecture's role in non-urban geographies, differences in interpretation of 'giving back' between indigenous and non-indigenous societies, and the marginalization of teenagers in public space. Sophie's writing has been published in Landscapes|Paysages,

Testing Ground Journal, SAD Magazine and Harvard's publication Kuala Lumpur: Designing the Public Realm. In addition, her performance work has been shown throughout the northeast of the United States and in British Columbia at venues including The Dance Centre, The Shooting Gallery, The Asheville Fringe Festival, Westbeth Artists House, Triskelion Arts, Gowanus Art + Production, the Current Sessions/ Wild Project and inSitu Dance Festival.

Sophie holds a masters degree in landscape architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design (2017) and a Bachelors of Art in dance and political science from Connecticut College (2010).



## What about Green River & the Frontier Fellowship excites you most?

I was beyond excited to learn of Epicenter and the incredible work being done in Green River, UT. The opportunity to learn from designers who live and practice rurally is especially intriguing to me; as well as the chance to get to know the community within which I will be working (a practice fading from landscape practice). The local knowledge amassed by rural communities concerning their surrounding environment is especially unique and one I am particularly excited to engage with. I can't wait to learn more about the desert and what it means to be a human living in such a landscape.

[erin-mallea.com](http://erin-mallea.com)

Artist

## Erin Mallea

### ***Pittsburgh, PA***

Erin Mallea is a multidisciplinary artist based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Her art practice is rooted in a generative research process in which she maps social dynamics and politics embedded within relationships to land and the environment. Working in video, sculpture, and photography, Erin often collapses natural and national history to examine taxonomies and systems of producing knowledge, national memory, and ideology within natural and cultural landscapes. She enacts a methodology of site-specific fieldwork that is analytical and playful to amplify and scrutinize embedded cultural and institutional assumptions and histories. Contextual, processual, and sometimes public in nature, Erin's work often implicates herself as an individual navigating local organizations, bureaucratic systems, archives, and institutions of memory.

She has exhibited and produced educational programming nationally. Erin has used a picnic table beside a lake in the Mt. Hood National Forest as a collaborative art-making space, presented a proposal to the Allegheny County chapter of the "Colonial Dames of America" advocating for the ethical memorialization and representation of an historic oak tree, and recently spent the summer with biologists to learn more about conservation and land-use in the rural Mountain West. Erin is currently a MFA Candidate ('19) at Carnegie Mellon University.

### What about Green River & the Frontier Fellowship excites you most?

I am eager to spend time under the Utah summer sky, and learn more about Green River's past and present.





[huixolita.com](http://huixolita.com)  
Artist

## Blanca Villalobos

### **Beaumont, CA**

A proud, queer daughter of immigrants, Blanca S. Villalobos holds ancestral connections in Jalisco, MX home to the Wixarika people, and was raised on Cahuilla & Serrano territory in the San Geronio Pass of Southern California. A lover of deserts and mountains, she spent the majority of her twenties in the Pacific Northwest organizing cultural happenings with and for communities of color while simultaneously developing her performance practice. She now lives in the same home and on the same land that raised her, teaching young people and community members alike how to care for the land they live, play and pray on. This return has centered themes of 'home', intergenerational trauma & its counterpart resilience among others.

Villalobos' art practice is often informed by dreams, memories & relationships; of course these topics are also the center of her community offerings related to Mexican traditional medicine for communities of color. Currently, she is running a DIY artist residency from her home in the Pass area where her research has taken a non traditional methodology: rest, pleasure & play. After three years of hustling with a full time job and artist collective Villalobos has made it her goal to slow down and return home to herself.



### What about Green River & the Frontier Fellowship excites you most?

What I am looking forward to the most at Green River and as a Frontier Fellow is the opportunity to take part in an equitable housing project by and for residents. I love meeting new people, learning about their passions and being able to witness their resiliency. My hope is to center joy and knowledge sharing while in communion in such a beautiful landscape.

As for my art, I am excited to shift my practice so that I may create from a place of joy rather than from trauma. This is not to negate or dismiss my own journey in healing, on the contrary I look forward to cultivating moments of bliss.

# Emerging Fellows



ig: @buttercupsdream  
fb: Sarah Burnett Photography

Photographer, Artist, Daydreamer

## Sarah Burnett

### *Green River, UT*

Sarah Burnett is a photographer and artist. 10 years ago, Sarah found herself wandering aimlessly and was told to find a hobby. After hearing negative commentary about her hometown, she wanted others to see the beauty she saw. Sarah took up photography and started posting them on Facebook. Soon all her friends were checking her newsfeed for the next picture and asking where these landscapes and wildflowers were located and to their surprise she answered, Green River, Utah! Her favorite quote is “Blessed are those who see beautiful things in humble places” by Camille Pissarro. Sarah is self taught and does not have any professional training so each day is a new adventure of trial and error. In 2017, Sarah won a First place ribbon at the Utah State Fair in Salt Lake City of a photogenic lizard called “Swaseys’ Dragon”. She also has a photo mural in the Tamarisk

Restaurant and sells postcards at the John Wesley Powell Museum in Green River. Sarah also likes to doodle, draw, and paint. Some of her favorite shows are cartoons. Namely Steven Universe on Cartoon Network, she watches to learn how to draw the artists drew the characters and develop her own style and characters. Sarah loves exploring by going on desert rides, listening to summer thunderstorms, and being the local paparazzi for her nieces and nephew. Sarah loves making others smile and feeling comfortable around her.



### What about Green River & the Frontier Fellowship excites you most?

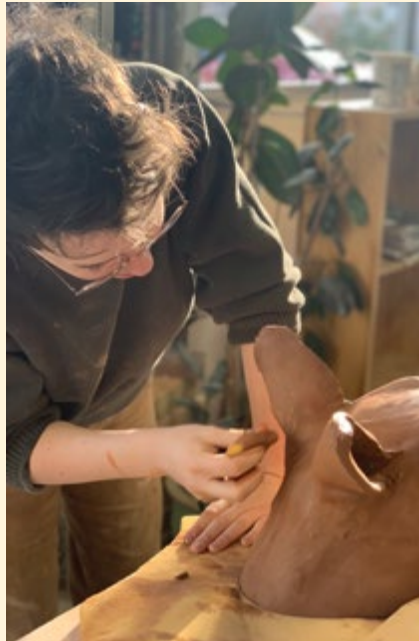
Meeting with other creative minds and being able to bounce ideas that maybe were not a thought if I were alone. I love showing off my hometown and things I find interesting, and I would love sharing that with someone else, to maybe help them obtain a better understanding of how the community of Green River comes together.

[waxmothco.com](http://waxmothco.com)  
Artist

## Summer Orr

**Reno, NV**

Summer Orr is a 22-year-old multimedia artist working out of the Sierra Nevada foothills. She is primarily interested in creating animal forms that transfer between various mediums, often clay, paper or skin. These forms examine personal experience/memory but have a penchant for the flora and fauna of the desert where she has lived most of her life. Predator/prey based imagery is often used in current works, playing with metaphor as well as exploring human social structures and power systems. With her work, Summer hopes to express/recreate/make sense of feelings of isolation, fear, and the grotesque and often grounding beauty of the natural world.



What about Green River & the Frontier Fellowship excites you most?

Making small ripples in a community outside of the one I have lived in my whole life, making connections through artistic means in a way that is important and examining how my work evolves when I am not in my comfort zone.

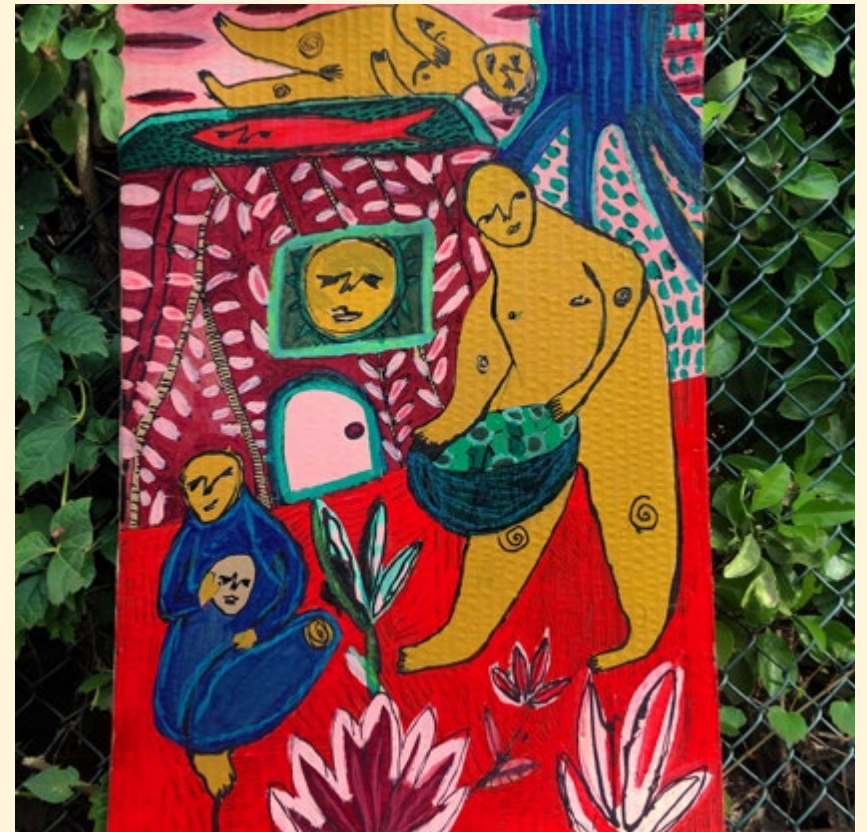


ig: @danzdance  
Artist

## Leah Danze

***Born in TX,  
currently in New Orleans, LA***

Leah is a painter from Texas who has a background working as a translator and paralegal for migrant farmworkers and as an art therapist working with youth and adults in a variety of settings including hospitals, shelters, and senior centers. Their artwork touches on themes related to intimacy, memory and the forgiveness of plants.



What about Green River & the Frontier Fellowship excites you most?

I'm looking forward to connecting with the people and land of Green River. I'm excited to collaborate and learn from those around me.

[patreon.com/dustinhamman](https://patreon.com/dustinhamman)

## Dustin Hamman

**Silver City, NM**

Dustin Hamman is a musician, writer, performer and activist. He primarily creates songs and performs them live either solo (under his own name) or with one of his two bands (“Run On Sentence” & “No! Wait, Yes!”). He is currently writing a screenplay and working to expand the ways in which his music and other creative talents intermingle with various aspects of the world.



What about Green River & the Frontier Fellowship excites you most?

Seeing what sort of symbiotic relationship I can enter into with the local environment.





frontierfellowship.org  
Ethnographic Folklorist

## Thomas Richardson

### *Santa Fe, NM*

Thomas Grant Richardson holds an M.A. in ethnomusicology and is currently completing his Ph.D. in folklore from Indiana University. He has worked for Traditional Arts Indiana, Utah Folk Arts Program, New Mexico Arts, Museum of International Folk Art, and the Birthplace of County Music Museum. He is currently an independent folklorist and documentarian based in Santa Fe, NM.



### What about Green River & the Frontier Fellowship excites you most?

Everyone has a story to tell, but not everyone is given the chance, or asked the questions they want to answer. I am excited by getting communities to connect in ways they hadn't previously, and to provide technical and narrative help to turn these conversations into something that has a greater impact for those in the community, as well as those visiting. Southern Utah is often exalted for its natural beauty. I'm excited about telling the world about its residents.

