

35. Merdon, Weaver & Bogdanos: Cultural Resources Management

0:00:00 Kendall Lott: Hey PMs, I've discovered a few other PM-related podcasts that you may find interesting. The first that I'll recommend today is Elise Stevens's Fix My Project Chaos. With over 100 published episodes, her focus is on what you can do to be an exceptional project manager, providing practical knowledge on topics such as organizational change, networking, PMOs, and portfolio management. You can find it at Fix My Project Chaos on iTunes or on her website, fixmyprojectchaos.com, as well as on Facebook and LinkedIn.

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0:00:34 Christine Merdon: Critical path at the beginning of the project was fixing all the cracks. So we were measuring productivity in inches.

0:00:40 Robert Weaver: The big thing was the fact that you had a whole town there with the grocery stores and boarding houses and everything else, so you're starting to think, "Well, okay, how much of that is going to be there?"

0:00:52 Colonel Matthew Bogdanos: The planning phase, I don't know, 12 hours? It was pick the people, pick the skill sets we needed, put them in vehicles, and get up there, and as we're going, do more planning.

0:01:08 KL: According to Wikipedia, Cultural Resources Management is the vocation and practice of managing cultural resources such as the arts and heritage. In this episode, we cover three very different projects: Restoring the dome of the US Capitol, digging up and cataloging a turn-of-the-century railroad town, and tracking down thousands of stolen Mesopotamian antiquities that all fall under the rubric of Cultural Resources Management. Sometimes you fix it, sometimes you dig it out of the ground, and sometimes you protect it. It's all part of managing the artifacts of our past.

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0:01:41 Speaker 5: From the Washington DC chapter of the Project Management Institute, this is PM Point of View. The podcast that looks at project management from all the angles. Here's your host, Kendall Lott.

0:01:54 KL: Serve, preserve, and inspire. That's the mission of the Architect of the Capitol, where Christine Merdon serves as the Chief Operating Officer. An engineer with a wide-ranging resume, she is responsible for 2,500 government employees, more than 600 acres of property, and 17 million square feet of buildings--that's equivalent to over six Empire State Buildings--which include the Capitol Building, the Senate and House Office Buildings, the Library of Congress, and the Supreme Court among others. For the past few years, Christine and her staff have overseen the restoration of the Capitol dome. Even if you don't live in the DC area, you may have seen images on TV or in the

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news of the elaborate, sometimes actually stunning scaffolding covering the dome. You think your project is hard? Think about fixing one of the most iconic architectural shapes of Western democracy. I was able to meet Christine last spring in her office, over 200 years old, in a lower level of the Capitol Building, not far from the rotunda below the dome, which was still fully sheathed at the time.

0:02:52 KL: Is it a renovation, a reconstruction, a fix, a repair? What do you call it?

0:02:56 CM: A little bit of everything. We had over 1,300 cracks, each crack ranging from a few inches to a few feet. And we were having water leaking into the space of the rotunda, the interior space. Interesting enough, it is a cast iron dome, and it was constructed during the Civil War, when cast iron was also used for other things to fight the war, cannons and cannon balls. And we are all very impressed with the craftsmanship, but it does need work and it is old.

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0:03:24 KL: When did this project start, and when does it end?

0:03:32 CM: We embarked in 2014, and all the scaffolding will be down by Inauguration.

0:03:38 KL: And I'd say that's probably a milestone. So the scaffolding coming down and the dome being considered done will happen January 2017 or December?

0:03:48 CM: It will be well done by that.

0:03:49 KL: So it's about a two-year project. What is the size in terms of budget and the number of people working on it?

0:03:54 CM: It was actually done in two whole phases. The first phase was a skirt, which was the base of it, started in 2012. And then we finished that, took a break for the Inauguration, and then started up on the next phase which is...

0:04:11 KL: I remember that. I remember seeing some scaffolding at work and thought, "Why are they fixing it again?" [chuckle]

0:04:16 CM: No, no, no.

0:04:18 KL: But it's 'cause it's a different part that's being addressed.

0:04:19 CM: Yes, because it's actually three sub-phases. There's the phase one and phase two, and there's phase 2A, B, and C for this one, and that's the dome, that's the interstitial space, the space in-between the interior dome and the exterior dome.

0:04:31 KL: So it's a double dome!

0:04:33 CM: Yes.

0:04:36 KL: And phase 2A? This one that started in '14 is for the inter...

0:04:37 CM: The exterior 2A, and 2B is the space in-between the two domes, the interstitial space. And then the rotunda's 2C. Actually, three of them are going on concurrently right now. The interstitial space will probably finish first along with the dome, and then finishing up the rotunda space.

0:04:58 KL: And that dome part, parts 2A, 2B, and 2C, that cost was about how much?

0:05:03 CM: About 124 for everything, and I think \$106 million for the work that you see now inside and exterior.

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0:05:09 KL: What is the number of people working on it?

0:05:18 CM: 900. But you have to remember, it's not only the guys turning the wrenches, it's the designers, it's the inspectors, it's the project managers, it's the support staff, it's the security, it's the people that are re-casting. There's just a lot, many, many players in here that have to come in. And since there's different phases, we have different skill sets that are needed. So they're not there all the time, they come in at different phases.

0:05:47 KL: You're having to capture some history, I guess. It's not just fixing things, but it's make them look like they did, hence, the design work, right?

0:05:54 CM: Yes, absolutely.

0:05:56 KL: There's an artisan component to this.

0:05:57 CM: Yes.

0:06:00 KL: Is it to mimic or to be able to repeat what had been built before?

0:06:03 CM: What we decided to do... It wasn't our job to design a better dome. We wanted to repair it, but it took some analysis. So the National Academy of Sciences was approached. They gave us some recommendations on how to repair it. We're not welding the cast iron, we're using a technique that they use on large diesel engines that you would find on an ocean liner called Lock-N-Stitch.

0:06:27 KL: Interesting.

0:06:28 CM: That's one aspect. The other aspect is identifying how many cracks that we have because a contractor has to bid on it. They can throw you a bid but giving them more information so they can give you a very good bid, so they know what they're getting into and bringing in the right tradespeople.

[music]

0:06:50 KL: Are you the project manager or do you have multiple project managers working for

you? How would you phrase that?

0:06:54 CM: I'm not the project manager, but I have responsibility over it. We have some very talented construction executives and project managers and project engineers on the team, and they are the true expertise on how this project is managed and how it's scheduled and how it's budgeted. We set the parameters, and my job is to support them. And if there's some way I can use my position to help give the team what they need, talking with my peers at the contractor, working through issues at an executive level, I provide that expertise.

0:07:25 KL: Like clearing barriers.

0:07:26 CM: That's correct.

0:07:26 KL: So, let's hear about the methodology. How would you describe the project management methodology that's being used to coordinate all of this?

0:07:33 CM: I think in Planning and Project Management, they have over 500 active projects.

0:07:40 KL: So you have a group called Planning and Project Management?

0:07:41 CM: Exactly.

0:07:41 KL: There we go. So tell me about the institutionalization of project management.

0:07:44 CM: Sure. Say, the Senate jurisdiction will have a need. They'll have a need to do a restoration at one of their buildings. But they're competing with other needs, say, from the House, so we actually start out with a project prioritization process. We do facility assessments prior to that. Everything gets racked in the stacks on the projects based on the need, significance, urgency, and then that becomes our Capitol budget submission.

0:08:09 KL: That's annual. This is an annual process you go through?

0:08:11 CM: Exactly. So based on that, those are the projects that we're doing for that year. It's the larger projects. It's the Capitol projects. And so, deciding the team for providing consultants, such as construction managers, designers, bringing those folks on the team, planning it out. Not every project's the same. The dome was a process based on best value. So you had one team evaluating the cost, and you had one team evaluating their qualifications. So the contractors going forth, we have a project construction executive who manages multiple projects. This particular construction executive manages the projects at the Capitol Building, for the dome. And then we have a project manager, we have two project managers doing different phases of the dome; one's doing the exterior, one's doing the interior spaces. We hire consultants to do scheduling, provide that expertise.

0:09:12 KL: Oh, really? Just focusing only on the scheduling?

0:09:14 CM: Yeah. We do need a lot of granular information on keeping this on schedule. We have a tight timeline and this is a no-fail timeline. So we identified the areas that we know are gonna be on the critical path, and making sure that we track those very rigorously. It's not how much steel is

getting placed or how much concrete is getting placed, what ended up being on the critical path at the beginning of the project was fixing all the cracks. So we were measuring productivity in inches to make sure that they were meeting their productivity on the timeline that was a critical part of the work because there are not a lot of people that understood that Lock-N-Stitch method. So making sure that we could bring people in. We can't find people in two days, they actually have to be sent out two weeks to training, and then then maybe a month later, they're on a productive mode.

[music]

0:10:08 KL: You're using your earned value method for that, for comparing the limitations?

0:10:10 CM: Earned value and productivity indexes, cost productivity and schedule productivity indexes. But we're also, this one, we... We went a little bit deeper and looking at those specific elements that we knew were gonna be a little problematic for us and really driving production on that. And we did that hand-in-hand with the contractor.

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0:10:42 KL: Institutionally, how do you manage and address risk? And what are some of the unique risks you see when working in the space of the Architect of the Capitol?

0:10:52 CM: So we have a very rigorous risk program, and we spend a lot of time with the team analyzing risk working with GA or Government Accountability Office, and their recommendations for managing risk, working with key consultants coming in, bringing their expertise in. We use a lot of partnering, especially on what we call our mega projects.

0:11:17 KL: What does partnering mean?

0:11:18 CM: Partnering means that the project team is aligned in the goals of the project. So that's easy to say. But having a process, the executives getting together at one level, the project managers getting together at another level, but also coming together on a regular basis and checking in, in your partnering meetings, are we meeting our goals for the project?

0:11:40 KL: Who's the other partner?

0:11:41 CM: The partners would be the contractor, the designer. On the Dome Project, it was the contractor, which is a joint venture, the designer, our construction management consultant, and our team. We even include members, the Historic Preservation, this is part of our team, and getting together on a regular basis. About a year ago, we actually had a risk management meeting where we had the consultant go out and interview everybody on the project, and individually and anonymously, say, "What do you think the risks are for the job?" And we were able to get a really good sense of what popped up in a lot of different discussions, and what were some that we never even thought of, and coming up with risk mitigation plans for all of that.

0:12:23 KL: What kind of risks do you face here that are unique perhaps?

0:12:26 CM: For the dome, it's the fact that it's on TV, 24/7.

[laughter]

0:12:32 CM: We're part of the legislative branch of government, the Architect of the Capitol. That's one uniqueness that we have. And we represent Congress and we wanna make sure that this institution is represented in a very respectful way. So if we start falling behind on schedule and everybody is asking the question, "Why are you behind?" it may not reflect well on this institution.

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0:12:57 KL: Traditional construction risks probably also are here.

0:13:01 CM: It is a high-risk job. There's been no lost time injuries on the project and we're very proud of that. The contractor is very focused on the safety of the job. When you walk into the contractor's trailer, they have many metrics and big screens, and they'll know exactly where people are working and the weight-loading on there. They'll know exactly what type of work is being done, so they don't over-stress a certain section of the scaffolding. And all of us had to go through scaffolding training, including myself.

0:13:36 KL: Scaffolding training, you have to tell us something about that. Okay.

[chuckle]

0:13:41 CM: We learned about safety, about edges, about climbing, about how many people can get on the ladder. [chuckle] But I'm up there about every week.

0:13:50 KL: Oh, you get up there yourself? You're going up?

0:13:52 CM: Yeah. It's such a high-profile job that I can't wait a month to hear if anything is going wrong or if somebody needs support. We all are very in tune to what's going on and resolving problems with the contractor, at they're executive level, to make sure if there're some resource issues, they're addressed promptly, or if say they're waiting for an answer from us that's addressed promptly, that's... The schedule is so tight that we have to have that constant communication.

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0:14:22 KL: What is your interaction as an executive, when you literally go up onto the construction site?

0:14:28 CM: We have acorns that may be smaller than your fist, but have all the etchings that a normal acorn would have. But that's actually 200 feet up on that scaffolding that nobody would see unless when the scaffolding is gone. So it takes a lot of care and time and attention to do this type of work. So when I see it, and I understand the work, and we're being asked by stakeholders, "What's going on, why is it taking so long?", we can tell them exactly. It's important that both the architect, and me being the deputy, are very well aware of any issues so they can be resolved quickly. So I interact with the project management team. I talk to the painters. I don't give them direction, but just to see what they're doing. The project team is just such an outstanding team. I'm not trying to manage them, just have some awareness on where we are.

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0:15:21 KL: How do you manage and monitor quality? And actually, what constitutes quality?

0:15:27 CM: It's known by the contract documents. There are some parameters in the contract documents, and then some expectations worked out amongst the team on what the quality meant, having some examples of the work quality. And I will say the quality of the job has been great, but I think everybody will be talking to their grandchildren about this. So there's some personal responsibility and some personal pride on this project.

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0:15:56 KL: How do you manage your stakeholders? What are some of the classes of stakeholders?

0:16:00 CM: Most importantly the public American people. I can't walk into a coffee shop without somebody saying, "How's the dome going?"

[chuckle]

0:16:07 CM: But everybody is very invested in it. Congress, of course. And also, the staff that we work with, our oversight. But we didn't start talking to them when we started asking for money. These relationships have been built over a very long time.

0:16:22 KL: Right.

0:16:23 CM: And being forthright with them and honest with them, and also showing them. We did a spend a lot of time before we made the request for appropriations to take them to the site, to take them to go see what the problems were, to take them to go see where the water was leaking in, so they had a much better understanding of what was going there. And they really enjoyed it. We do that a lot with our projects where we take our stakeholders to the site so they can see what the conditions are, so they can experience and talk to the people that work in the conditions, so they can better understand and explain to the senator or the member of Congress that they work for, why we need the money.

0:17:01 KL: That's an important... I don't know if it's a best practice, but it sounds like a very good practice, is you're saying an educated stakeholder is a more helpful stakeholder for you.

0:17:09 CM: Absolutely. We provide briefings on a regular basis. So if I work maybe for the executive branch, that could be twice a year. But here, they're down the hall and upstairs.

0:17:21 KL: [chuckle] They're in... You're all in the same office building.

0:17:22 CM: So every... At least once a month, sometimes twice a week, or sometimes we'll have a special presentation. So then they start to get very interested in what we do, and they become champions for us.

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0:17:39 KL: What do you see as the role of history? How does that change your approach or your expectations of how the project is completed, and what it means to complete the project?

0:17:49 CM: I think for me and for our team, yeah, they show up on site, they're wowed by the project, but then they get invested in the history: What was going on at the time? What was the intent of the architect? Why did they build it this way? This was a time when the country was being pulled apart. So it was a symbol of unity and hope, too, especially when the country is being pulled apart that people still were invested in its success, and the fact it was for the long term.

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0:18:19 KL: While some PMs might flinch at having to work in such close proximity to their primary stakeholders, in this case, the members of the US Congress who are in and out of the Capitol on a daily basis. The Architect of the Capitol has actually turned that into an advantage; actively keeping her stakeholders abreast of progress and problems in real-time. And the project worked. This podcast episode is being released just one week after the 2017 Presidential Inauguration, a full two months after the successful completion of the project. And it was there for all to see, the dome of the US Capitol, rising proud and bright over their proceedings.

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0:19:03 KL: Historical archaeology is the study of material remains from an era of written documentation. The historical record contextualizes the findings, while the findings can augment the historical record.

0:19:14 KL: In 1966, Congress passed the Historic Preservation Act, which requires each US federal agency to establish its own historic preservation program for the identification, evaluation, and protection of historic properties. My next guest, Robert Weaver, is the owner of Environmental History based in Seattle. He specializes in historical archaeology, historical site characterization for cleanup projects, and environmental and historical research for litigation. I had heard about an interesting project he did in Sandpoint, Idaho, so I placed a call from Washington, DC to Washington State.

0:19:49 KL: I saw a project that you described that really had a lot of moving parts, and I think it was in this world of mitigation under cultural resource management when you didn't actually know what you had. This is the Sandpoint, Idaho Project?

0:20:02 RW: That was a long-term mitigation project where the State Highway and Federal Highway Program wanted to take the major highway and get it out of downtown Sandpoint, Idaho. And the engineers didn't have a clue that the original town of Sandpoint was where they were running their highway.

0:20:28 KL: The original town was in a place that the current town wasn't, and people had forgotten?

0:20:33 RW: Correct.

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0:20:39 RW: Sandpoint originally has grown up as essentially a railroad town with the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad, and originally was on both sides of the tracks on this very small peninsula with a big lake on one side and a stream on the other side, Sand Creek. That had disappeared by about 1907. In fact, the railroad had asked people to move off their property, because a new town site had been planted across the other side of the creek.

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0:21:15 KL: Let's think of this now as a project, as a temporary endeavor. You're gonna have a beginning and an end. What did you sit down and plan for?

0:21:24 RW: First of all, I review what has been done in the past, and then make recommendation as to what needed to be done in the future. I did a bunch of historical research. For example, one of the tools we use, actually both in archeology and in environmental, are Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, which give you the layout of the town and where the buildings are, and what the buildings are being used for. I basically came to the conclusion that this was an area which could or should have Native American remnants, but obviously, the big thing was the fact that you had a whole town there for close to 30 years, with the grocery stores and the boarding houses and everything else. So you sit down and try and think, "Well okay, how much of that's going to be there, and how much of that is going to be destroyed by the project?"

0:22:28 RW: The engineers were saying, "Oh, but we're just going to fill on top of it so it's not going to be destroyed." I just sat there and shook my head because they knew that they would have to strip at least the top two or so feet regardless, and the archaeology was going to be potentially in the top two feet. And so, "Sorry, guys, you aren't going to just bury it, you're gonna blow through it."

[music]

0:23:00 RW: So we then started preparing what we call research design, trying to lay out what you might run into, and outlines the methods that you will use to find the materials and evaluate the materials, which in that area, went from being the Native American assemblages through the fur trade, right up into the 1920s, and proposed valid research questions that would relate to all of those things, so that we could then refer to the research questions and what we were finding in the field to determine whether we were finding anything of value.

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0:23:46 KL: Now in this document, how does this get plugged in to getting money, and finding out who all needs to be on the team? Does this drive that?

0:23:57 RW: In a sense, it does. The money primarily comes from the Federal Government because this was one of the highway projects that was significantly funded by the Feds.

0:24:11 KL: Do you come up with the budget?

0:24:13 RW: In a sense, I mean even even at that point in time, you're somewhat flying blind,

because you haven't got down in the ground yet.

0:24:22 KL: So you have an initial budget which you have to refine based on what types of techniques you may have to do to get things out of ground?

0:24:27 RW: Right. And that's part of the whole project management planning is identifying the stages.

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0:24:40 KL: What are the big phases of this project?

0:24:43 RW: Being simple about it, you have an exploratory or testing phase. Then depending on what you discover with the testing phase, as well as the background research, you'd go into actual mitigation, excavation, systematic type of activity.

0:25:04 KL: So the initial exploratory is also excavation perhaps, but not the systemic...

0:25:08 RW: It is. It is.

0:25:09 KL: Systematic...

0:25:10 RW: It's the first excavation.

0:25:11 KL: I see.

0:25:11 RW: For example, since I knew that predominantly we were dealing with a historical site, and we wanted to find the higher concentrations of artifacts, we have to get oriented. And one of the things I've done was to research the location of buildings and what they were used for, ranging from a Chinese laundry to a red light district, essentially, to the main town site, and then a blacksmith shop, and the major industry of the town from about 1900 to 1930, which was a huge sawmill. So we knew what our targets were, and we actually went out and got a backhoe.

0:26:06 KL: What you're describing is that first excavations during the exploratory phase and testing.

0:26:11 RW: Correct.

0:26:12 KL: And then based on that, you get ready for the actual, in this case, mitigation. What do you mean by mitigation here?

0:26:18 RW: Mitigation with archaeology means you are recovering not only artifacts, but the locations of the artifacts, the associations of the artifacts, in a very systematic manner. Basically, you're creating a representation of the site in electronic files and notebooks. [chuckle]

0:26:40 KL: So we're mitigating the lost history, and that includes all the associations and locality of things.

0:26:45 RW: Right.

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0:26:50 RW: We had probably about eight or nine people in the field to begin with during mitigation. We were up to a crew of about 20 people. We grid off, like put up a central grid across an entire area, and then we dig by the squares within the grid. And you're there for a couple of months, at least.

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0:27:17 KL: What happens after mitigation in the big picture?

0:27:20 RW: After the get-it-out-of-the-ground phase, you have the catalog-it phase, which is kind of like creating a library. We're taking the artifacts, cleaning them up, identifying their traits, and putting that information into an electronic database. "A bottle from Sandpoint Pharmacy was found in this square, and it relates to medicines and pharmaceuticals." There's a whole bunch of different characteristics that you're trying to look at and put into the database, particularly when you get, as we did, somewhere in the neighborhood of 570,000 artifacts, to have somebody have to go into those boxes to do another study in the future is not terribly practical unless you have, again, a roadmap for them to work off of which is this database.

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0:28:22 KL: Where are you doing that assessment against your research questions?

0:28:25 RW: When I'm out in the field excavating, one of the things that I put into the research design was that we would evaluate what was coming out at any particular point in time. And if it appeared that we were getting redundant information, then we'd stop.

0:28:47 KL: What happens after cataloging then? Is that the end of the project?

0:28:50 RW: No. Then the real archaeology comes. What we have to do once cataloging is done, is provide at least some of the answers to the research questions that we posed. So, you are producing a report that at least touches upon some of the findings that you can make, also a report that documents sort of the whole process that you've gone through. And so, we actually prepared a four-volume report. Our volume three of that set actually dealt with the pre-history because we actually did come up with some prehistoric lithics that stylistically evidenced probably a continuous occupation at that particular area for at least 6,000 years if not longer.

0:29:48 RW: One of the things that I really believe in is providing information that is palatable not only to professional archaeologists, but also interesting and understandable to people in general because, hey, it's taxpayer dollars going into this, right? [chuckle] So Volume One was an attempt to tell a good story about what was going on in Sandpoint, Idaho in 1880 or 1885, or 1907, with the Restricted District or with the Chinese Laundry, based on what we could see from the artifact assemblages. That is the archeology in my mind.

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0:30:37 RW: You basically have to box everything up in a packaged manner that it can be readily retrieved, so people in the future can use that collection to address some of the other questions, because we're not able, in our recording, to address all of the questions that we even raised in the research design.

0:31:01 KL: So that kind of closes your project, but opens all the future research projects that could happen around it?

0:31:06 RW: Right. We actually have had some of the students picking up where we left off and running with it for things like theses and conference papers, and whatnot. So I felt very pleased that we had created a record that was essentially ongoing.

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0:31:28 KL: How long should this have all taken?

0:31:30 RW: We were dealing with somewhat of a stumbling block. We would propose a field schedule to go out, we'd recover artifacts and use up the budget, and need to propose more to finish things up, and that would slide us over into another summer. So it took like three summers.

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0:31:57 RW: And the way things normally would work, we'd have the support that we would say, "Go out for an entire summer."

0:32:04 KL: Ah, you just had to break it up over a series of years then.

0:32:07 RW: And basically, we had to box up the artifacts and put them in storage, whereas typically, you go out and do your field work in the good weather, and then you come back and you do your artifact cleaning and cataloging during the winter time.

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0:32:27 KL: You guys are really the project managers, because it sounds like there's a lot of stakeholders that are interested.

0:32:31 RW: Actually, the research design ultimately results in a Memorandum of Agreement between the Idaho Transportation Department and relevant stakeholders, which included, in this instance, the US Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Highway Program, State Historic Preservation Office, and we had one of the tribes that was designated as being the coordinating tribe for the tribal entities.

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0:33:08 KL: How do you track to this, or how do you watch or monitor this?

0:33:11 RW: I actually use a fairly simple spreadsheet, although with this project, it got a little bit

out of hand. [chuckle] It's a very simple Excel spreadsheet that I learned back in the 1980s, and we called it WPR or Work Progress and Replanning. And what it is is something that you would set up when you start a project. I actually use it for scoping purposes as well, if I'm trying to propose a budget. But you figure out how many people you need or have on hand, how many hours allocated to them to accomplish a particular task, and you actually project that out over a timeline. So, I'll have a spreadsheet that has Joe Blow, and he's got a budget of 170 hours, and it'll have the first week, he's got five hours, the second week, he's got 40 hours, the third week, he's got 36 hours, blah, blah, blah, until you go out to the tail end. And then, as your project is progressing, you go ahead and fill in with actual data, and it's set up with formulas, so that it has a column that's got "Done" and "To Do" in terms of hours or cost.

0:34:38 KL: Does this allow you to do projections as you're moving through then?

0:34:42 RW: So you go through and you may be in a situation where you've got Joe Blow again, and you had him budgeted for this stuff, and you sit there and think, "Well Joe has done 50% of the work, but he's used up 70% of the hours. What do we do about that?"

0:35:03 KL: That's earned value management. [chuckle]

0:35:06 RW: And so, what you do is figure out, "Well who is being more efficient? Who can I rob hours from?" That's the re-planning part of WPR. So, basically it's a good trend sheet. As you see the trends that are occurring, you then have to make adjustments, and the adjustments may be going back to the client for more money, but you know that half-way through the project instead of down at the end. [chuckle]

0:35:33 KL: Right. This is a really powerful technique you're using.

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0:35:40 KL: So what's the budget for this three-year project, and what does this look like?

0:35:44 RW: Well, it's more like a 10-year project by the time we got the cataloging done and all the writing done and the publishing done.

0:35:50 KL: Oh, good point, good point.

0:35:52 RW: And the budget's pretty high, it was over \$6 million.

0:35:58 KL: So when you think about historical archaeology where you're having to coordinate these kinds of stakeholders, where do they go wrong? What risks are you facing from a project management perspective?

0:36:09 RW: They can go wrong in a lot of ways in the boundaries of ethics because if you're not funding analysis and us having artifacts stored for two or three years, we had artifacts that were molding.

0:36:25 KL: Oh, I see. Well, what's another area where a project like this goes wrong?

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0:36:30 RW: You're trying to balance a whole number of things. You're trying to balance the cost against the value of the information that you're getting. You're trying to maximize return on investment essentially with the minimum of effort. I was starting our actual excavating where I thought there was going to be the greatest return, and my conceptual modeling played out to be pretty accurate.

0:37:02 KL: It's an interesting project then. It's an application of the conceptual with very much the get your hands dirty, and then you end up writing about it at the end. I like that trying to balance cost against the value of the information you're getting.

0:37:14 RW: Yeah. In fact, we had a couple of very well-respected, but more senior archaeologists, and we had encountered what essentially was a dugout that had gotten filled, but that zone is pretty sterile, or if it does actually have artifacts in it, they're coming from someplace else and you don't know where it came from. And so these people couldn't stop doing the applied archaeological method of carefully peeling back to a particular stratigraphic surface and using camel hair brush and everything else. Everything was sacred to a certain extent. And I was sitting there saying, "No, just hog it out. Just shovel it out. We don't have the money or time to waste documenting wheelbarrow fill." Again, that's sort of the decision-making process that's going on on-the-fly essentially as you're out in the field.

[music]

0:38:17 KL: You just said two big key tenets that we need to think about a lot in project management. One is, ultimately, you do the project because there's expected to be a return. Here, the return is on the value of information from a cultural asset perspective. And the other one is the idea that good old iron triangle was imposed, trying to find the best return. There's only so much scope you can do.

0:38:38 RW: If I hadn't been this sort of decision maker, adaptive, interpretive, and what is valuable and what's not valuable in this particular situation, we could have spent a heck of a lot more money.

[music]

0:38:56 KL: When you think about this project, what made you happiest about it?

0:39:00 RW: That we managed to pull it off [chuckle] in a way that I felt benefited our society in general. We created a display for the local Sandpoint Museum. We created teaching kits, using surplus artifacts for fourth and fifth graders. We had somebody write a history book about the Humbard Mill site collection that went into the University of Idaho.

0:39:31 RW: And there's still a highway there. We didn't stop the highway, the highway went through.

0:39:35 RW: We did not stop the highway.

[music]

0:39:45 KL: Colonel Matthew Bogdanos enlisted in the United States Marine Corps Reserve while he was still in college. He went on to get his law degree from Columbia University, and was working in the Manhattan District Attorney's office on 9/11. Recalled to active duty, he shipped out to Afghanistan where he received a bronze star for counter-terrorist operations. Later, he was in Iraq when the Iraq Museum was sacked, and thousands of valuable antiquities were stolen. During his two years in country, Colonel Bogdanos led a team to recover the artifacts and was awarded a National Humanities Medal for his efforts. He co-authored the book, "Thieves of Baghdad: One Marine's Passion to Recover the World's Greatest Stolen Treasures" which I highly recommend, because, let me tell you, this was one heck of a project. Bogdanos, who is currently an assistant district attorney in Manhattan, was kind enough to find time in his busy schedule to chat with me over the phone about how he pulled it off.

0:40:35 KL: So, one of the first things I wanted to clarify as I read through the book is, we look at schedule. I think I'm focusing on a timeframe here of your operation that was about five months, from April to September of 2003. Is that right?

0:40:47 CB: So you're gonna limit it to the time actually at the museum itself?

0:40:53 KL: And probably the lead-up to it. Now the lead-up in terms of being ready to go in and work with antiquities, how early did you start?

0:41:00 CB: There was no lead-up. I just happened to be in Iraq at the wrong place at the right time, found out about the looting of the Iraq Museum the same way most of the world did, from an outraged reporter; in my case, it was a BBC, British Broadcasting Corporation reporter, who came running up to my team and I one day, screaming that the finest museum in the world had just been looted. So let's call that my warning order, if you will. [chuckle] And I want to be really clear. I had one course in Mesopotamian History and Archaeology in grad school, but at least from that course, I knew that she had to be talking about the Iraq Museum, home to the single finest collection of Mesopotamian antiquities the world has ever or is likely to ever see.

[music]

0:41:57 CB: I also knew that in my team, made up exclusively of counter-terrorism experts, hardened combat veterans, I knew on my team that I had among the most talented people I had ever served with. What they did for a living was track down evidence of bad guys, of bad things, and it didn't really matter whether the bad things were drugs, weapons, human trafficking, terrorist financing. It ultimately didn't matter because the methodology is the same, and the skill set is generally the same. And I had on my team a little bit over a hundred people representing more than a dozen different law enforcement agencies, pretty much every agency with an acronym: CIA, DEA, FBI. And I knew we could do something. So I volunteered our team or a portion of the team to get to the museum and stop the tragedy.

[music]

0:43:09 CB: The planning phase, I don't know, 12 hours? And it was pick the skill sets we needed, determine what other missions needed other people. Ultimately, you've narrowed that down to about 15 that I could justify taking, put them in vehicles, and get up there, and as we're going, do more planning. The plan was simply to assess what had happened and provide some minimum level of

security within which trained professionals could then come in and do their jobs. I never knew or envisioned that we would be a one-stop shop.

[music]

0:44:02 KL: In hindsight now, what would you describe as the scope of what you had to undertake during that time period?

0:44:08 CB: Once we got there, I've realized we had it exactly backwards. So on the way there... If you're gonna ask me the scope on the way there, the scope was clearly, stop the bleeding, get the tourniquet on, keep the patient alive, and then the unstated assumption was, "Oh, UNESCO's gonna be there?"

0:44:31 KL: Ah, UNESCO. That's the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. UNESCO is responsible for coordinating international cooperation in education, science, culture, and communication.

0:44:43 CB: And all these international NGOs will show up here just waiting for someone to announce there's a secure, stable environment, right? That's generally what the military does. So that was the scope at first. So now we get there and now I see, "Oh, wait a second, it's a dozen buildings covering more than 11 acres. There's no security whatsoever, and nobody knows what really happened. And, oh, by the way, there's still combat going on because we are centrally located in a very strategically important position." So the next phase was, "Alright, let's stay here." And typical of the Iraqis, I asked for permission to live in the museum, so we could provide around-the-clock security, and they graciously said, "Of course," and we set ourselves up to living there.

[music]

0:45:41 CB: Now phase two is, "Okay, what happened?" So that we can measure the scope of the damage, like a missing person's, and that's how we viewed each of the pieces. The same question you would ask for a missing person; it's the same question we'd ask for an empty display case. "What was in there? When did you last see it?" And we quickly found out that there was no catalog, was no master inventory list. And so it was frequently the case that we wouldn't find out what was missing until it was returned.

[laughter]

0:46:16 CB: So that's when we said, "Okay, now let's plan the investigation."

[music]

0:46:25 CB: The investigation came in two phases. Phase one was investigate in concentric circles, starting in the epicenter, starting in the middle of the museum, and then move out, move out in circles; start with the storage rooms, move to the galleries, move to the above ground storage rooms, move to the neighborhood, move to Baghdad. Then it became, "Let's get to the borders and move in, because the borders are our last hope for stopping."

[music]

0:47:02 CB: Then we got to the borders and we were relatively confident that we had set up some minimum level of scrutiny, such that if things were continuing to pour out, it could be stopped. But we're not border guards, so that wasn't our job. Then we went to the international component because now it's gonna go underground. It's gonna disappear. It's gonna vanish. It's gonna go into a warehouse in Geneva. It's gonna go to an empty building in Beirut, or it's gonna go to the back storage room in Damascus. And then it's gonna disappear. So then you have to leapfrog ahead of the bad guys, 'cause the bad guys are always ahead of you, right? Then you leapfrog ahead of them and you go to the end game, the buyer, the New York, London, Paris, Tokyo buyer, and then you move backwards from the buyer: "Who's the buyer? Who's the gallery owner? Where did the gallery owner get it from? What shipper? How did the shipper get it through customs?" And that's what I've been doing for the last six years.

[music]

0:48:18 KL: I wanna get another point of view that project managers look out, which is stakeholder management, the people that have a vested interest in a project and who have the power basically to influence his direction or even to stop you. I was blown away, it was mind-boggling how much you had to do just to get sign-off on stuff, and that's just within your own chain and within your own group. But then as we start looking at different organizations on the US side, the Iraqis, the journalists, which is a whole section of your book, the interaction with journalists, and the international political community, how do you see handling that variety of stakeholders?

0:48:51 CB: Any time you're dealing with an international project of any kind and/or multiple stakeholders, you have to understand that everyone comes to the table expecting something differently, wanting something different, and being differently satisfied. With regard to US agencies, the best way to figure out what they cared about, what they wanted, I would go to the budget statement. Everyone has to speak before Congress, and that's public. So I would pull up the testimony of the Director of the FBI, of the Secretary of Homeland Security, whoever it was, and I would read through the testimony to say, "What did they say to Congress to get money?", and then I would find something that I could deliver, [chuckle] and X number of convictions, X number of seizures, whatever it was. And then I would say to the lead agent from that agency, "You see bullet point number 27 on your boss's, your boss's boss's testimony? I can give you that. You're gonna get that from us." And so that really... It's just that transparent. And these guys were great, they would say, "You've got it, we'll do it," and they would go through their own internal chain, they would come back and say, "Okay, can you do this? Can you give us the lead on these things? Can we do the press conference?" Truly, that worked very successfully for us.

[music]

0:50:23 CB: In any project in which you wanna enlist the aid of the public, you need journalists, you need journalists on your side. So, I had no problem horse trading. You give me information... 'Cause investigative journalists are damn good, [chuckle] they really are. They could do my job, and they could do my job better. And so we would horse trade, "I'll give you an exclusive, you give me information that leads to a raid, you will be the only reporter, the only journalist in the car during the raid." I don't regret that all.

0:50:57 KL: What we say in the industry is WIFM, "What's in it for me?" You identified what their

actual need was and just went right to trying to meet that. And it sounds like it required some homework.

0:51:06 CB: And for the Iraqi people, it was something entirely different.

0:51:10 KL: Yeah, that's cultural.

0:51:11 CB: Yes. It was not "what's in it for them?" Because there was clearly nothing in it for them, if by something, you only measure tangibles. What we did was convince the Iraqis that this stuff didn't belong to Saddam Hussein. Remember, they called the Iraq Museum "Saddam's gift shop". That was the Iraqi slang in Baghdad for the Iraq Museum. And so we were able to convince them that this is your material, your stuff, your heritage, and the response was overwhelming. Over 90% of all the material that we we recovered that had been looted, when I say looted, I mean classic looting, like random people rampaging through and grabbing whatever they could find. Over 90% of what they stole they've returned.

[music]

0:52:10 KL: Give us a quick rundown, given you only had one semester of Mesopotamian art, which is one more semester than anybody else probably has, listening right now. We're talking about 5,000, even up to almost 6,000-year-old pieces of artifacts here. What was taken? What are some of the classic pieces?

0:52:25 CB: Okay. Here's the way I'm gonna answer that. If there were ever a Who's Who in Mesopotamian archeology, there was a piece representing that in the Iraq Museum. For example, the Sacred Vase of Warka, believed to be the first naturalist depiction of human life. It's an alabaster vase, a little over three meters high, extraordinary, from about 3100, 3200 BC, and it depicted human life, starting from plant life and animal life to mankind. It was gone. Thank goodness, it was ultimately recovered. The bottom line is, every step you take in the Iraq Museum, you get to say The First. The losses were devastating, and the recoveries were just spellbinding.

0:53:21 KL: You had a great comment in the book, "These are definitionally priceless, because insurers can't insure them."

[music]

0:53:31 KL: I wanna ask a little bit something that you moved through that I thought was really interesting in your book; you had a very practical and pragmatic discussion in the book and I invite project managers to read the book for this, was your team management your team selection. Tells us little bit how you see skill definition in that alignment. What does it take to do that well?

0:53:49 CB: Sure. I had the benefit of having been with people in pressure situations, and I am a big believer in Churchill, "You can measure a man's character by the choices he makes under pressure." And it is frequently the case that you can get glimpses, but until someone has been tested, you really can't tell how well they will function. And the things that I was looking for, I was certainly looking for competence. But, honestly, competence and talent are among the least precious commodities. Interpersonal skills mattered more. The ability to function and thrive under pressure mattered more. The ability to think, to create. Every dead end is the beginning of a new trail. All

right, it's easy to say that, do it! And so, that's what I was looking for.

0:54:46 CB: I was looking for people that were damn good at their job but who could work with other people in different skill sets, in different cultures, from different backgrounds, who had a broader frame of reference that didn't always mean educated. Remember, I didn't have any academics or art historians, or anything like that in my team. Education helps, but it only helps to the extent that it broadens your ability to work and function with others who might not share your identical worldview. Anybody can work with someone who goes to the same golf club, right?

0:55:26 KL: Yeah.

0:55:26 CB: I was looking for people who could do that outside and be more creative, and also were all about result. My job is simply to state the goal and make sure that everyone shares that goal and understands it. What I call the "no comm plan", my job, if I'm your boss, is to give you enough of my vision and goal, so that if you and I don't talk, no comm, no communication, if you and I don't talk for the next week, you still know what you're doing.

[music]

0:56:05 KL: It's ultimately about project value. I'm a project manager, I did what I was supposed to do. I got my team to do it. We understand things. We met our scope, we were within schedule, we did what we could on budget. But, ultimately, it's about project value. And I noticed that there was two levels there. You're saving the cultural artifacts we just talked about, that is that training for our culture, and that you equated cultural theft to terrorism itself. And then, it turns out, this looting of the Iraqi Museum had many different types of looting going on, but one very clear element is, it was turning cash into terrorism.

0:56:38 CB: That's correct. And it shouldn't have surprised us, but it did. Terrorists are nothing if not adaptive, right? International law enforcement has done a really good job, post-9/11, of cutting down the more traditional sources of terrorist funding. And so they reacted; the Taliban started using opium to finance their campaign of terror. In Iraq, they don't have opium, but what they did have in tremendous supply were antiquities. And so, Al-Qaeda began using antiquities as a form of cash; call it an updated version of molasses to rum to slaves.

0:57:15 KL: Yeah.

0:57:15 CB: And that's why ISIS is now institutionalizing the financing of their campaign of terror and death with the wholesale looting of antiquities from Syria and Iraq.

[music]

0:57:37 KL: In a summary perspective, if this could be approached as a more discrete set of activities, what would you suggest would be the way to approach a problem like this, as we look at other cities and the looting that they have there?

0:57:49 CB: Multi-disciplinary, multi-perspective. The greater the breadth of experience and worldviews that people on the team bring to the project, the greater the likelihood of success of the project.

0:58:10 KL: I really appreciate, again, your service, your effort, and the fact you took the time, I don't know how you do it, to write a book about it, and a fascinating book at that. Again, Thieves of Baghdad, published originally in 2005?

0:58:21 CB: Yes.

0:58:22 KL: And then you had an update to it. I look forward to hearing more about what happens as you uncover, after these last six years of working in this space.

[music]

0:58:32 KL: Yes, that's right, this amazing saga has not yet reached its conclusion, as Colonel Bogdanos continues to locate artifacts and prosecute the ringleaders. You can find Thieves of Baghdad at bookstores and on Amazon. It's a fun and fascinating read.

[music]

0:58:48 KL: Safeguarding our history is a delicate and difficult business. And Cultural Resources Management is about protecting the future of our past. As you just heard, these projects come with an interesting mix of decisions, challenges and risks. For one thing, at least the projects we highlighted in this episode, the work can be very physical. You literally have to get your hands dirty. And as with any project, the team is crucial. So pick your people wisely.

0:59:11 KL: Sometimes, technical competency takes a backseat to critical and creative thinking tied to action. The trickiest parts though, in my mind, were all of the "ifs." Your starting point might be nothing more than a sketchy slate of possible outcomes. Before you can even begin to define your budget and scope, you have to work through some crucial questions. Does anything even remain? Is it worth saving? What exactly should be saved? And most of all, how can we best interpret and convey the stories the relics tell, so that current and future generations respect and appreciate their value? Because the ultimate stakeholders here encompass all of humanity.

0:59:48 KL: Thanks to my guests who have contributed so much to managing our cultural resources: Christine Merdon, Robert Weaver, and Colonel Matthew Bogdanos. Special thanks also to Frank Dominguez of Expat Guides, for connecting us to Colonel Bogdanos, and to Brian Martin, President of History Associates, for introducing us to Robert Weaver. If you are interested in learning more about Cultural Resources Management, I invite you to search for the Archaeology Podcast Network on iTunes, where you will find nearly 20 CRM-related podcasters covering many aspects of the field.

1:00:19 S5: Our theme music was composed by Molly Flannery, used with permission. Additional original music by Gary Fieldman, Rich Greenblatt, and Lionel Lyles. Post-production performed at M Powered Strategies, and technical and web support provided by Potomac Management Resources.

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