

11/22/2020

81-biden-Transcript

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Speaker 2: Hi and welcome to the women in archaeology podcast. A podcast about, for, and by women in the field. My name is Chelsi Slotten and I'll be your host for this episode. Today we will be chatting with co-hosts Emily Long and Kirsten Lopez about the presidential election and how a Biden presidency might impact the cultural heritage landscape in the US.

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Speaker 1: whoo Biden presidency.

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Speaker 2: A sigh of relief

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Speaker 1: Yes. Sorry. I was really excited.

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Speaker 2: I think that we're all pretty excited. We all have been watching the last four years as the Trump Administration has done a lot of really damaging things- enacted legislation, appointed certain people to high positions that have been damaging to the national parks, the public lands, particularly to tribes and tribal relationships. So I for one am really looking forward to an improvement to those relations in the next four years, but do either of you ladies have, like, immediate takes you want to jump in on

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Speaker 1: Sure. I mean I can say pretty quickly. It's one, and I know it's probably true for all of us, that the election itself since it lasted for a few days was incredibly stressful just the not knowing what was going to happen and whether or not we'd have another four years of these really destructive practices perpetuated by this Administration on multiple levels. And so just having that brief sigh of relief. I mean, it's hard to know what this Administration will hold but if they hold true to what they've been putting out in terms of their plan, things will definitely be considerably better for culture resources and to science the fact that we will believe in science again, and then of course, there's just the really just deep feeling of just like finally of having a woman at a higher position and more than just that a woman of color.

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Speaker 3: Agreed on all notes. I would also like to say if they hold up to their past, both of them have really good records for relationships with culture and the Arts and I wasn't able to find a whole lot on the relationship with tribes, but it looks like you were Emily able to dig some stuff up but between Biden's history as a senator with Delaware or for Delaware over the years and his actions through time with relationship to supporting things such as the Smithsonian museums, of the National Museum of African American History and Culture. And approving and being part of the advocacy for what will hopefully become the Smithsonian Museum of the Latino American.

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Speaker 1: that would be amazing.

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Speaker 3: So that's something that's on the drawing board as well, but they both have a track record for supporting the Arts and museums. So that's one side of it. Of course archaeology has other facets and I think some of Biden's discussion on his plan for development in rural areas and in support of research and development appear to be in support of, or at least would help buttress archaeology as a practice we'll see.

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Speaker 1: yeah. I mean the big thing is we don't have to fear for our jobs quite so much.

Speaker 2: Yeah, and Kirsten I would say you bring up a really interesting point that it's not just specific legislation that you know a Biden Harris ticket is going to make improvements upon, but we're going to have people who consider tribal sovereignty and the archaeological record in with their other proposals and even the work that they want to do towards combating climate change is going to have a huge impact on the archaeological record. So I do think that you have to maybe zoom back a little bit or look outside the box to see some of the full positive impacts that this new president vice-president, their Administration might have on an archaeology specifically but the broader cultural heritage realm as well.

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Speaker 1: That's a really good point just before we get too deep into potential policy and what not. Chelsi, I'm very curious from an overseas perspective. What was the election like for you?

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Speaker 2: Yeah, so I will say I am very glad that there is a five hour time difference. I've talked to some friends and family who talk about election night where it really did look like Trump was leading and might take the presidency because all of those mail-in ballots still needed to be counted and I slept through all of that because I wasn't going to stay up until, you know, two, three o'clock in the morning. So when I woke up, I think Biden was ahead by three or five electoral college votes according to the BBC so I didn't have to live through those absolutely terrifying. Oh God, not again moments. So that was that was really nice and there has been some focus in the UK on kind of what a Biden Harris Administration might mean for trade agreements particularly with the UK, particularly coming down to the wire on brexit and we still don't have an agreement, a trade agreement with the EU and Trump was kind of cozy with Boris Johnson came to like him. With Biden, so there's still some disagreement with what that will mean. There's the Good Friday agreement which basically says there can't be a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and it's the agreement that ended the troubles. Which is the IRA with bombings and shootings and like very bad things were happening and that, that agreement Boris Johnson is kind of said like well, maybe we can do things that invalidate the Good Friday agreement.

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Speaker 1: Why would he want to do that?

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Speaker 2: Because they didn't think through their Brexit strategy and they've backed themselves into a corner and there's a big issue with trade and borders and what's going to happen in terms of Customs Etc. as all of this changes and one of one solution was to put a border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. But the Good Friday agreement says that that can't happen and that was only signed in 1998. But Biden is, his ancestry is Irish and Biden feels very strongly about agreeing and upholding regulations that have been passed in the past. So yeah, a lot of the focus kind of come down to does Downing Street, does the British government, do something different? Because now there's power in the US that might say hey, this is not okay. There might be some more kind of consequences for breaking that agreement.

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Speaker 1: That's interesting and didn't Boris Johnson already refer to Biden as like the incoming president therefore kind of saying we acknowledge that he is the incoming, regardless of the Trump administrations being a being a bit ridiculous about the election outcome.

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Speaker 2: Yeah Boris Johnsons has acknowledged that Biden has won the election and actually one briefing he even referred to the Trump Administration as the previous administration even though they're not out of office yet. But it's also worth noting that win elections happen in the UK. This kind of a lame duck period is much shorter. Hmm. So the idea that you can have an election on November third, kind of know the results within a couple days, have the official ratification a month later. And then it's another what six or seven weeks till January 20th. That's a very foreign concept in the UK. Why would you leave someone in power who's lost the confidence of the country?

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Speaker 1: That's a really good point. *laughter*

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Speaker 2: But yes Johnson has definitely recognize the Biden will be the next president.

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Speaker 3 So yeah, I always kind of wondered about that time weirdness as well. But getting to know the transition process because it's not being allowed to happen right now. A lot of hoopla about it. It does give you or at least it gave me a little bit of a like "Oh, that's why it takes so long because there is so much that needs to be done in order to successfully transition power". You have to have an entirely new staff and everyone is switched out basically and that's a lot of ways to do hiring for and screening for and, I mean generally, I'm sure he has people in mind but it's quite a process because it's such, I mean we're a very large country. I mean even looking at the person who's going to be evaluating the Department of Interior transition, looking at and seeing how many employees and volunteers and individual locations that is just for that one agency is mind-boggling.

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Speaker2: yeah, Biden has not sat in office for basically, since he left in 2017. You know, obviously when Trump came in he hadn't been a governor, he hadn't been a congressperson, or Senator, but just getting the incoming Administration access to the security reports like the military information. You need to get people up to speed so that they can land and start running and that is one way that the UK and the US are different. In that the UK you don't actually vote for a person you vote for a party and then the party elects someone from within their own membership who's a sitting member. So you're guaranteed that whoever's going to be prime minister has at least been in the government and kind of has that Runway to prep in a way that isn't always guaranteed in the US.

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Speaker 1: Yeah, that's interesting. I mean if you, especially if you look at I mean this current Administration and who's been put in positions of power who really shouldn't be there on many levels, but going back to that that transition period I find it fascinating looking at kind of the end of the Obama Administration and I could be remembering this incorrectly but wasn't Bears Ears like pretty latent and in like a last-minute type thing in his last term when it was created and it just makes me wonder during this transition period what's going to be pushed through? In the last couple weeks here.

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Speaker 2: Yeah, so I will say the one kind of positive and kind of fits all like rumor-mongering but the one positive that I've heard of rumors from within the White House is that even if he hasn't publicly said it that Trump has kind of internally accepted that he's lost and he's really starting to think about what comes next whether it's

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Speaker 1: jail.

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Speaker 2: Or a book deal. He's floated doing this this Republican Super PAC, but if he's focused on what comes next there's a bit of me that hopes that he's not going to try to ram through anything terrible at the last minute and you still have the Senate. Yeah, you know approving conservative judges to lifetime appointments and like there are problematic things happening. But yeah, Emily, I think you're right that Bears Ear was late, but positive news on Bears Ear and Grand Escalante front, one of the things that Biden his said about those two sites is that he hopes to roll back some of the damage that Trump has done and more firmly established their status as a protected sites. So that's really good.

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Speaker 1: Definitely. And if people don't remember per se with the Bears ears Grand staircase-escalante. We do have an episode about The Monuments and what the Trump Administration was doing with them and using the Antiquities act in a very different kind of way by dismantling national monuments as opposed to creating national monuments. And so we have discussed that in the past if you're interested in checking out that episode, but I do wonder is this going to be just a consistent

like flip flop or a political issue for every different Administration. Will Bears ears be consistently one of those things where it's like let's increase now, let's decrease Acres, lets increase, now decrease and it does make me wonder- how can we transition it from like a more vulnerable National Monument to something that's less vulnerable? Because as we've seen even in this Administration national parks are even under threat and so how can we make places like this, like the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the issue with Organ Pipe, the Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument. Is that right? How can we make these places safer after a Biden administration?

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Speaker 3: Yeah, that's a really good point. And I wonder if there's a way to help to pass some sort of legislation. I mean and this is sort of the plus and minus to I guess the US system, but any legislation can be passed basically at any point, which can do pretty much anything within the structure or to the structure of the government and how it functions, and just being in volatile moment everything kind of feels like it's impermanent, but I do wonder if because there's always been, and I mean most of us were taught as archaeologists in our cultural resource management courses, if we had the privilege of taking them In undergrad or grad school, I that a lot of those laws are very precarious and not well, not supported. Yeah, not well supported not well-worded. They're not very solid. They're kind of mushy.

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Speaker 1: They're great ideas.

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Speaker 2: What enforcement agencies are there that have teeth that guarantee that people have to follow the rules or there will be consequences.

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Speaker 1: There really aren't. I mean it's so it's more, it's a good way to think of our CRM legislation like the national register, or sorry National Historic preservation act, its guidance. And the repercussions is that the agency, if you don't follow the guidance, is you can be sued. So by whatever stakeholder is interested in protecting said resource, so if it's birders archaeologists etcetera, but this guidance can also be used in a way be like look we want to build a mall on top of Mesa Verde. Well the guidance if we go through all the steps properly and excavate and recorded everything they could still put them all on top because you followed the guidance. It doesn't necessarily mean specific protection of cultural resources and Kirsten you're exactly right. That's where it gets gooshy

because even the archaeological resources protection act. It's really hard to prosecute somebody under that too.

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Speaker 3: Yeah. That is like the closest thing there is to something with teeth and it has to be proven that the person is knowingly doing this against the law for one. And they kind of have to be caught red-handed is the best way to put it. There have been prosecutions after the fact for sure, usually like glaringly obvious. It's really hard to prosecute someone who's been doing it on the down low or who's like, you know has a family collection and has been adding because

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Speaker 1: These are usually big profile cases.

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Speaker 3: Yeah, so it's hard to really do much with that as is. So maybe with any luck, you know, that could be something that we can look forward is something with more teeth, but I don't necessarily have my hat hanging on that before we get there. We need to just kind of establish. Everything is okay to start.

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Speaker 1: Yeah, hopefully like that the house and senate will hopefully help with that. Even if we have a divided Congress altogether that hopefully they'll support Biden's plans to reinstate these places and potentially make them more permanent. I think definitely our biggest hope.

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Speaker 2: I do want to say two things. One, the Georgia elections in January are going to be very, very important for what the administration can get done particularly in the first two years of Biden's presidency, but I also think that over the last 40-ish years a lot of changes to government have been made that have weakened some of the checks and balances. I mean even recently with the Supreme Court nomination process where the Republicans decided to make it a simple majority to confirm someone rather than needing I think it was 60 seats, the super majority prior and now it's just a simple majority, but just going back in and if you could change some of those, those laws back to require some of that bipartisan support and I realized that that's going to be a hard sell for some people to swallow because there are people out there who say oh like let's just go back and roll things back. And you know Democrats could win two seats in Georgia and Harris becomes the tiebreaker like we can you know take advantage, but I think it's really important that like the

Democrats don't use the same tricks from the Republican Playbook to kind of force through what they want to force through. I think that it's really important that whatever happens has bipartisan support and luckily, you know, there are, during government shutdowns like people got really pissed that they could go to the Smithsonian so the next time it happens like the Smithsonian stayed open and they had a mini funding bill because people got tired of having their constituents calling and yelling at them. So it's like call and yell at your Senators if you don't like what they're doing because they don't like being yelled at and they might do something to change.

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Speaker 1: yes, bother your Senators do it.

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Speaker 3: Yes phone I think phone calls actually makes a difference the emails less so, phone call are what makes the difference.

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Speaker 2: So make those phone calls, get involved and kind of re-put in some of those checks and balances that forces in a bipartisan support and that also can be used to strengthen some of the laws that we have on the books. And with that we are ever so slightly over the 20 minute mark, so we will see you after the break we will discuss some more specifics of what we expect to see in the incoming Administration.

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Speaker 2: Hi and welcome back to the women in archaeology podcast. On today's episode we have been discussing the incoming Biden Harris Administration and what we think might happen in regards to cultural heritage management, tribal relations, and archaeology. In this section, we're going to dive a little bit more into Biden's relationships with tribal members. We mentioned last section that Biden was working with transition teams to kind of prep for inauguration day and a recent addition to that transition team is the University of Iowa College of Law Dean Kevin Washburn. So he has been tapped to lead the transition team reviewing the Department of the Interior and Kevin Washburn is a member of the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma, and he also has earned degrees at the University of Oklahoma, and Yale law school. He's taught a variety of different universities around the U.S. so he's got some interesting perspectives, I think, to bring to the table and it's also really encouraging to see indigenous people being brought in to high levels of government to have their voices heard.

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Speaker 1: Exactly. Unfortunately, if we're looking at the current administration in looking at Trump's treatment of tribes, indigenous peoples and so forth, unfortunately we've seen a pretty disrespectful approach to tribes and their lands. We saw during part of the administration that tribal lands where he tried to take, the Trump Administration tried to take land away from the Mashpee Wampanoag tribe. They had land that was put into a trust by the government for them and Trump tried to take that away. He's been disrespectful to Navajo code talkers. He's been disrespectful to people of indigenous ancestry. So unfortunately, we got four years of a pretty terrible approach to tribal relations in a greater history of terrible relations with Tribal peoples unfortunately, and so I think it is incredibly encouraging like you said, Chelsi that we already see the Biden team working hard to a point Native Americans to these positions and there's even a commitment to appoint Native Americans at high-level government positions once he's actually in office in the administration is up and running.

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Speaker 3: Yeah, one of the things I really appreciated about Washburn's position is he's, to start not a stranger to the DOI. He was during the Obama Administration Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs and is not the first indigenous person to serve in the BIA. However, as an overseer of the transition team for the entire Department of Interior is a whole different level and I think that is something that I really appreciate about the Biden team in the way that they're approaching this is not just like well we're going to have you know, the person or a person who is represented by this agency involved in an agency, but overseeing the entirety of the larger agency structure and how it has been conducted and how they want it to be conducted so they have power to potentially influence changes that will, will take into consideration, or I feel like it's more likely to take into consideration, the viewpoints of needs of different tribal entities and Nations and perspectives from across the country because there's so many. Well forget that like, oh, well, you know, we have you know, an Indian in the BIA it's great. That's all we need to do, right, but that's so far from what is necessary. I mean presidents have been doing that since the mid eighteenth hundreds, you know?

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Speaker 2: Yeah, that's a really good point that it's often common to have indigenous people in the Bureau of Indian Affairs the Indian Health Services, but it's about so much more than that. Even on Bidens website, he talks about appointing Native Americans to high-level governmental positions, not just within the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Services but like we're seeing

Washburn in the Department of Interior and during the Obama Biden administration there were indigenous people in many positions across government including the Deputy Secretary of the Interior, senior members of The White House Domestic Policy Council, the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, the US ambassador to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva and Biden also appointed the first native female judge to a US district court and Biden has committed in the Biden Harris Administration to continue this trend to ensure that tribal Nations have and I quote from his website “a strong voice and role in the federal government” and that's just really important to say because again going back to what I mentioned earlier about recognizing the intersectional nature of a lot of these policies. If not just laws that specifically deal with tribal affairs that impact indigenous live, it's not just archaeology loves that can affect cultural heritage. So it's really important to have this diversity of representation and viewpoints represented throughout the entire structure of the government.

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Speaker 3: Exactly

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Speaker 1: Excellent point because yeah if we're looking at the past its, your right it's primarily very, very specific roles. And it'd be great across the board if we can have greater representation. So yeah, I hopefully that will go a long way because I think for a long time, even looking at just our CRM regulations, people tend to do the bare minimum and like if you consult that's all you need to do. It's is like no, no, no, we need to bring in bringing everybody and I thought one of the cool things on Biden's website about how that he wants to work with Tribal Nations is to have them provide a greater role in the care and management of public lands that are of cultural significance to tribal Nations so it's not so much just even having them consult on which land should be protected or which areas or that kind of, it's actually with the management itself and greater designation. Just these larger roles instead of just being like where the archaeologist we're going to be in charge and will consult with you in a few months. That type of thing. It's like no it's from the get-go. And I think that's fantastic.

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Speaker 2: Yeah. I also think it's really important, and I'm just going to throw this out here, you hear people talk about like diversity hires and this is not that, there was a recent study looking at biological animal as well as vegetation diversity in the US and Indigenous managed sites have some of the highest levels of biological diversity. Indigenous organizations are experts. They know what

they're talking about. They know what they're doing. This isn't token. This is a putting the best people for the job into the job and I think that's really important to note as well. I'll see if I can find that article and link to it in the show notes.

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Speaker 3: Yeah, that's a really good point and we've spoken on this, touched on this before in some of our previous episodes with indigenous management for fires and other Land Management discussions. It's just something that's become in the far west and here in the Northwest in particular something that's become almost a routine in certain areas in regards to certain keystone species such as salmon management in the Pacific Northwest hear the tribes are heavily involved. So it's great to see that the administration is taking the progress that's been seen in certain corners of the country, in certain parts of Land Management, for certain aspects of Land Management and hoping to create that sort of positive change in the rest of the country.

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Speaker 1: On a, looking at kind of a different direction. I genuinely wonder how this is all gonna play out in the Biden Harris Administration there was the incredible court case McGirt versus Oklahoma and there are podcast about it. This one called *This Land* that covers a lot of the story leading up to the court decision and what's fascinating with this court case is like essentially, the treaties with Native American groups, essentially, they should have all of Oklahoma and the Supreme Court upheld the federal government's treaty responsibilities to protect the Homeland in those areas. So hypothetically if the treaty is upheld most of Oklahoma now belongs to the tribes, but what's going to come from that, we don't know. This decision was in July and Biden has stated online that he will help uphold this court decision and uphold what's going on with there and uphold those regulations. Now what that's actually going to entail should be fascinating because I honestly don't know how that's going to work out as if the treaty was really being upheld the land would automatically revert and then state government would essentially be put into tribal government.

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Speaker 3: Well, there is part of Oklahoma. I think it was like the eastern half or a little bit more than the eastern half that had been Indian Territory, isn't it?

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Speaker 1: It's a big chunk.

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Speaker 3: Yeah it's a very large chunk. It really, I agree I it will be fascinating to see how that rolls out partly because I mean the way that treaty law have been carried out, it changes by Administration and always has and that's been the downside and a challenge with working with treaty law and Native American law through the years and I mean, I'm definitely not an expert at it, but it has been something that I've read up on occasionally here and there and just knowing that the tiniest tip of the iceberg. It is incredibly complex, and it is going to be a whole new way of interpreting treaty law and implementing. The implementation is what it's going to be interesting to see change because interpretation could be you know, one thing but that the way that that is carried out on the ground is something entirely different and this really addresses a lot of the trouble that has happened with State law versus Federal law, being able to, its the jurisdictional issue that is plagued reservations for decades or centuries depending on the group.

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Speaker 1: Well it's all overshadowed by a lack of good faith towards...

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Speaker 3: Definitely

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Speaker 2: I think this is another area where we need to have a conversation about what can be done to make it so that these rulings are, I mean it went to the Supreme Court, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of protecting indigenous homelands in Indian Country. What can the government do to make sure that it's harder to contest those because you know the Trump Administration, after that ruling came in, just expanded its efforts to make life harder for the tribes in the case and to threaten those the tribal homelands. This shouldn't be a partisan issue. You know, this is this is a treaty that the U.S. Government entered into and has failed to uphold its end of, you know, a binding international agreement quite frankly. This shouldn't be a partisan, there shouldn't be a debate, we signed on the dotted line, we need to uphold that and what can be done so that the next Administration, I think Biden has said that he's probably only going to run for one term whether Kamala runs again, I mean Trump has floated the idea of running in 2024, whether there are other people on the on the ballot, but no matter what happens beyond the four years what can the Biden Administration do to make sure that these responsibilities are adhered to in perpetuity.

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Speaker 1: Because as we've seen it doesn't take much to dismantle everything from clean air to clean water, to the concept of facts. So yeah, it's like how can this be a long-term.

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Speaker 2: So I would actually make an argument that the undermining of some of the checks and balances, I think I said this earlier, has been going on since the since the 1980s. Actually, I think that It's a super, super long term strategy that we're seeing come to its fruition and because it's kind of reached the this end stage it's now much easier to get rid of these regulations. What we need to see is to have some of the ease of changing things in a partisan way rolled back and put some more checks and balances in place, you know, make it harder to be assholes.

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Speaker 1: Yeah, but the silver lining in a lot of this it's just showing, should these plans go into fruition with this Administration. This is definitely a much better approach, a much better good-faith effort than has been done previously. And so hopefully we'll be able to see a much better relationship being fostered between two government entities essentially and that treaties will be supported, better programs will be created in consultation and with the support, and in these positions of Native American peoples that hopefully much better relationship will be fostered at the end of the day. Yeah and good would come from it, too.

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Speaker 3: That's the hope. So we'll see. I'm intrigued to see how the new Supreme Court effects some of these things both on the Tribal front as we were just noting, but also elsewhere. I think Roberts that has actually been thumbing the scale towards the more liberal side, even though he's a fairly conservative judge because of the way that the court has been put off balance and that was something I read recently that I thought was really interesting. I can't remember exactly which cases but just because his vote was unexpected in certain directions, but at the same time part of me is like that's the point. To being a judge like going to be fair and balanced and reading the law as it is and I know that there's two ways generally that laws are read as intended or as they should be and that's where RBG was very heavy on the as they should be like, Law changes with the intention of the times, with the culture of the times. More conservative judges tend to err on the side of what was intended by the original drafters of the law. So that's the difference with judges in a general broad stroke sense, but then there's been a lot closer look at how each individual judge has ruled on specific cases and how they feel and interpret, you know, the previous cases are landmark cases and that's something that's I mean, that's those are normal field questions for screening the judges as

they come to nomination, but it was...I don't know if either of you watched or listened to the nomination proceedings of Amy Coney Barrett, but we'll see how things play out because I mean Roberts is known to be a fairly conservative judge, but you know hasn't necessarily acted that way and I must say also with that Trumps appointment have been fascinatingly, like his judgment of character has been off, and a lot of cases which has been really interesting to see him appoint someone that he thinks is going to do something very specific and then they don't and that's not all of the cases but a couple of times I've taken note of that happening.

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Speaker 2:

Well, I think that the makeup of the Supreme Court is going to play a role for Generations particularly because Trump has nominated some younger individuals who have a chance to be on the bench for quite a long time. But, we are out of time for this segment. And when we return, we will be discussing some more issues with Land Management. See you after the break.

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Speaker 2: Hi and welcome back to the women in archaeology podcast. On today's episode we have been discussing what cultural heritage management might look like under the incoming Biden Harris Administration. We talked a little bit about the impact that we expect the Biden Harris Administration to have with tribes and tribal sovereignty and some broad strokes of what they're doing in the administration. In this segment, we're going to focus a little bit more on Land Management. Emily I know you've been itching to talking about this so take it away.

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Speaker 1: Oh, yeah. I'm excited. So, the current Administration has really been almost Anti-public lands in many respects. In the desire to open public lands from parks to monuments to refuges to opening them up to fracking, oil, fishing, and so on.

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Speaker 2: Destroying things along the border wall.

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Speaker 1: Oh, yes all the things and so it's very frustrating. Especially somebody, who my background is public Land Management and cultural resources, to see this dismantling of protecting these places and then opening up for business and then treating them more like a business entity as opposed to a place that were trying to protect for future generations. So it's really heartening to see

with the Biden plan going back to the original intent for a lot of these parks, monuments and so forth, that were actually trying to protect these for future generations and different land agencies they do have different missions in terms of like forest service you can have timber thinning within reason, and then like Bureau of Land Management you can have grazing within reason, and so it's going back to that within reason type of managing as opposed to like, let's open it all up for everything and so it's really good to know that his plan tends to be more conservation-minded and trying to go back to the original intent for a lot of the missions of these public land managing agencies. And so that's really good to know and then he's taking it a step further that he wants to have like the civilian climate core and having these groups of scientists and land managers working together to try to help the ecology and climate solutions of these fragile areas. Then on top of that he wants to, as we discuss in the previous segment, have tribes be an integral part of these land managing agencies, and then on top of that he wants to and I have no idea how this would work. He says he's committed to signing an executive order to conserve 30 percent of America's lands and Waters by 2030. And so 30% I don't know if that includes current public lands or 30% more and a lot of this is so that we can protect places of significant cultural heritage of significant biodiversity and so forth. How that's actually going to happen is beyond me as we've seen executive orders can go pretty far but they can be easily dismantled. So I'm not sure how he'd reach this goal, but it's heartening.

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Speaker 2: Does anyone have any idea how much of American land is currently under public...

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Speaker 1: I will google it.

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Speaker 2: Okay. Yeah, because that would be really interesting. I kind of have a hard time imagining that it would be an additional 30% but conservation of land that currently exists is super important for cultural heritage particularly if they've got sacred sites on them that's really important for Indigenous groups. You know, it's good for mental health, you know, we've certainly think that the Coronavirus pandemic that more and more people are walking and hiking and going outside and engaging with nature as kind of a way to deal that has been really positive for people's mental health with everything else that's going on. Also from a from a climate change perspective if we conserve land, you know, and again, you know treat the name within reason that's a real thing, but we can protect biodiversity. Trees are excellent at converting carbon dioxide into oxygen they can be a

really big ally in the fight to combat climate change. Certain types of bayous and swamps can be nitrogen which are really good.

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Speaker 1: Wetland, bogs.

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Speaker 3: Yeah.

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Speaker 2: So the conservation benefits the world. It benefits individual people. It benefits tribes. It benefits wildlife. It is it is profoundly positive.

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Speaker 1: So yeah, and obviously we need to, I mean I kind of get where some groups are coming from. Like yes, we need it to be within reason. Yes. We need resources like natural gas. Yes. We, like I can see then why there is pushback. So how can we do this so that there isn't a massive push back if the ministration swings the other way after the Biden Harris Administration. So it's like how can we do this within reason that but still support, you know policies to decrease climate change Etc and just real quick. It's 28 percent that the government owns

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Speaker 2: increasing that by 2% seems pretty reasonable.

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Speaker 3: Well, that number is as of September 2018, so we don't know how that's changed since then. I wonder if that incorporates the larger square footage, the area for Bears Ears and Grand Escalante because if those two are at their maximum, would it fill in that two percent

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Speaker 1: that's impossible.

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Speaker 3: So this may not be very far off from reality. The challenge with, and this is a pushback that I see often from some of the western states is that the majority of certain states are federally

owned and so there's a lot of pushback for example here in Oregon from some of the conservative counties because 90% of the county is federally owned.

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Speaker 1: Although it must be noted that what's interesting about that is that a lot of those land spaces are still open for grazing, timber, grass, like there's a lot of stuff that landowners can access, it's just they don't want to have to pay for it.

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Speaker 3: Yeah, Well the funny thing is, I mean this goes back to a very our very first episode is the Malheur occupation occurred because some ranchers decided that they didn't want to pay the fines for so many years of grazing, and they also tried to do a contained burned by themselves and it got out of hand. So that was another fine.

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Speaker 1: It should be noted like the grazing permit stuff in the grand scheme of things are pretty darn cheap.

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Speaker 3: It's so cheap. It's ridiculous. And that's where people are like but it's a fee, I'm like, yeah, it's yes we still have to pay people to manage that so.

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Speaker 2: But it is hard because, like my grandparents were farmers and it is hard, you know over the last half-century prices for beef, prices for various different crops, for milk have gone down, you know government subsidies aren't maybe what they once were . It's a really, really hard industry and if you're looking at a situation where you know, you're barely scraping by, and there are a lot of farmers who are barely scraping by and it's really unfortunate, and you start looking for things that you can cut and yeah land is expensive even in the US but there's so much there. Great Britain is tiny compared to the U.S. In terms of land mass there is so much space in the US but land is still really expensive. Yes, it is expensive but if you buy it and you own it outright, it's usually cheaper to do that than to pay rent for 30 years or 50 years or whatever it is. So I can understand and sympathize. I think that instead of just saying no, we're not going to sell off this land, you know, suck it up buttercup essentially, there needs to be a more nuanced conversation and there needs to be a conversation about support for ranchers, support for farmers and what can be done. I truly genuinely like and want to believe that people want to behave reasonably but if it's a decision

between, and there are notable exceptions, but if it's a decision between losing your farm and not wanting to give the government's money, I understand that that personal desire to protect you and yours.

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Speaker 1: And there is a lot of distrust of the government too. yeah, unfortunately, and if just to briefly note, there is that unfortunate level of distrust to0 because there have been situations where the government through eminent domain has taken land, and so there is that ingrained distrust of like well my grandparents used to own that grazing land. Why can't I still use it? So I do think there is definitely a valid argument that there needs, you're right Chelsi, a more nuanced argument about that situation and there are programs but I think just our farming and ranching system has changed dramatically from what it would have even been 100 years ago, 50 years ago that it's probably just no longer sustainable and it's just not profitable anymore for farmers and ranchers. So how can we change that? So I know that's kind of off topic, but I'm kind of interested in seeing how like the farm bill roll out plan will work under the Biden and Harris Administration versus now.

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Speaker 3: Well, especially since he does have a big focus on helping rural America and that's where archaeologists work. I mean we go into some of these areas that are sparsely populated and it's all cattle farms or cattle ranches and various other things.

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Speaker 1: They're full of historic ditches. I have recorded so many historic ditches.

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Speaker 3: Oh, yes. My favorites are the reservoirs and ditches that were pre-Army Corps of Engineers. There we go, because they didn't have, they would dig all of these things and then it wouldn't hold water. So it's those are fun, but that's an aside, but a lot of, you're right, a lot of these historic practices from, umm, the 19th century were incredibly unsustainable and to say that you want things to go back to how they were during the days of, you know, Westward Expansion is not going to happen period so whether you think it should or shouldn't that's just it's not sustainable. It was extremely extractive both for people and our natural resources and extraordinarily damaging in many ways. So...

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Speaker 1: that's what led to the Dust Bowl in many regards

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Speaker 3: Yes, and various other things, the displacement of all of the tribes, the deforestation situations and all parts of the US. So I, looking at how to approach extractive technologies that are necessary like you're saying and making it more sustainable over generations rather than looking to how their grandparents did it. Because how their grandparents did it wasn't going to be sustainable. I mean that's the way the US has done extractives since the founding of the U.S. basically.

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Speaker 2: Well, it makes you wonder about kind of training programs, but obviously fracking has been a big conversation.

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Speaker 1: Yeah, and Biden has said he doesn't not support fracking.

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Speaker 2: Yeah. So I think Biden grew up in Pennsylvania and fracking has you know has allowed a community stay in place and there is an issue with kind of rural community loss where people are leaving areas, their farms to go to the city because they don't see that lifestyle is being sustainable and even if that's where their friends are, even if that's where their families are, they feel like they're almost being driven off and also being pulled by the opportunities of the city and if you started to run some sort of program, and like the UK is doing an interesting retraining scheme, which is gotten some good press and bad press but, for people, noticeably only citizens if you're not a citizen, you can't take advantage of this, but citizens who work in industries that have been particularly hard hit like the Arts, you know bar work, retail that sort of thing, that you can go and get this retraining to fill jobs that are needed and whether that's, you know engineering, construction, computer work. I think a lot of it is construction right now, but these re-training systems could train people how to do setup and maintenance on solar fields, right? Because there are huge swaths the U.S. that get a ton of sun and solar energy is more renewable than energy from fracking. It's less damaging to the environment and it could provide jobs, but you do need some sort of scheme in place to bridge the gap, the knowledge gap and because University is so expensive in the U.S. it's really hard especially for someone to say, let me go and get this degree then try and get the you know, the startup seed capital that I need to buy these panels. I think that there does need to be something to fill in but if you government could figure out how to step it in such a way to help, you know, encourage

sustainability on farms and make sure that families and communities that wanted to stay in the same place could that could be really, really powerful.

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Speaker 1: Yeah, that could and I think I mean hopefully there will be plans like that and kind of what it comes down to for me with a lot of the Biden Harris Administration plans that I'm seeing online and what not it's making me cautiously, very cautiously optimistic. Yeah, and that is I think if there are potential programs that, like Chelsi what you're noting, if Biden looks into those types of things or if he even just like fulfills an iota of the plans that he has I think that's a good start. I don't know what you guys think?

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Speaker 3: Yes, I agree. I think it would be also, I like the retraining programs. I think that's what Obama had sort of in mind but never really got around to but doing something like that and maybe even integrating like land management employment so people living in areas, because I mean people who go and get degrees for land management often end up living in those rural areas sort of as you know, somewhat outsiders. I think it would be a good move to see about recruiting people into those programs that already live in those areas because it's that pride of place and pride of space much like tribes have for the same land and I think that might be a good step in that direction.

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Speaker 2: I think that's a really good point. I will say I do feel both a healthy dose of relief and also you know, some cautious optimism about the future, but I also think that it's vitally important that people continue the same level of engagement. There is a lot of work to do to heal the divides in the US and to help America kind of reach the potential that it has and I think that everyone kind of has to buckle down and do that work and that starts with like wear a mask. Stay home, look out you're your neighbor, if we kill everyone that doesn't help anything. It's not just about voting in an election every four years or even voting in an election every two years. You really have to do that community work and keep up pressure on lawmakers over the years, not just be engaged in the National level but like be engaging in state politics, be engaged in your local county politics, you know get on boards if you feel passionate and want to make a difference. so cautiously optimistic, but don't relent there's work to do.

1:00:01

Speaker 1: Oh, yeah, like now that we've got somebody who supports more Progressive policies the real work now begins.

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Speaker 2: Yeah, we've gotten onto the right road again. Know we just have to make sure we travel down it.

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Speaker 1: not too fast not too slow. Just drive

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Speaker 2: And it for everyone with us, you can't leave people behind but that's why I think a lot of people voted for Trump is because they did feel left behind and ignored.

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Speaker 1: So this road it's a giant pick up with a really big flatbed and we just know you have people yelling get in!

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Speaker 2: exactly.

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Speaker 3: So trying to make sure everyone that's in the truck is on the same page and you're not having people throwing you know balled up pieces of map at the driver telling them to turn left when there's no road that way.

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Speaker 1: I like this analogy.

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Speaker 2: that does bring us to the end of our episode. I think that's a good kind of visual to end on but ladies, as always it's so lovely to talk with you and thank you, and we'll see you again next month?

1:01:16

Speaker 1: Oh and check our check out our blog posts on www.womeninarchaeology.com. We're @WomenArchys on Twitter. And please feel free to email us if you have any interest in coming on the show, or if you have show ideas for us, the email it is womeninarchaeology@gmail.com. We would love to hear from you and don't forget to rate, review, and subscribe. Until next time.