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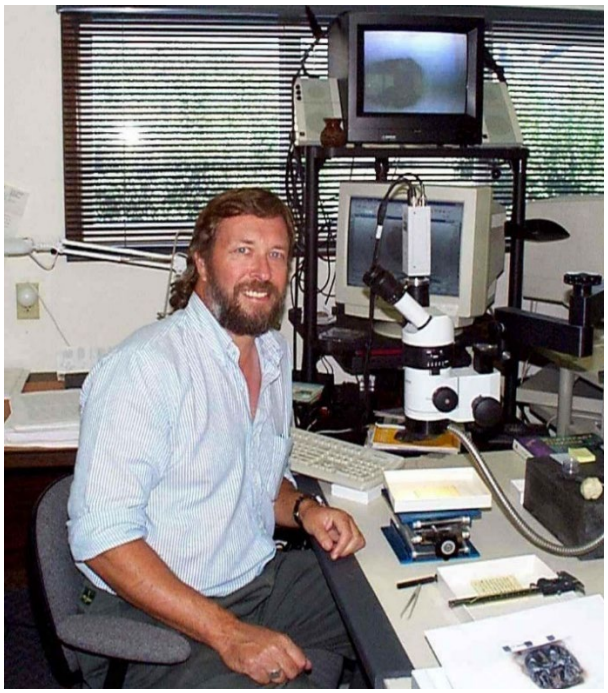

Ted Fremd
August 19, 2020

Interview conducted by Vincent Santucci
Transcribed by Teresa Bergen
Edited by Molly Williams

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Interviewer: Vincent Santucci
Date: August 19, 2020
Signed release form: Yes
Transcribed by: Teresa Bergen
Reviewed by Interviewee: Yes

Transcript

[START OF INTERVIEW]

Fremd: He [Arnold Shotwell] died before we could get anybody there to interview him. And he had some really important information, such as writing the justification for John Day Fossil Beds back in the day. So I'm delighted you're doing this.

Santucci: Yeah. I'll email you a list of everybody that I've interviewed to date. I interviewed Ernie Lundelius regarding his work at Carlsbad Caverns.

Fremd: Of course.

Santucci: I interviewed Jim Martin. He had a lot to say about you.

Fremd: What did he – was it all good?

Santucci: It was all good. I'll send you the transcript. (laughter)

Fremd: Okay. There was one point where he and I had a bit of a disagreement about BLM. How BLM fossils should be treated versus Park Service fossils or something. There was a, and especially in terms of curation. He didn't like the idea—well, I'm sure you're familiar with the premise issues with Badlands.

Santucci: Yes. Mm hmm. So I'm going to just start off with a brief introduction. Then we'll jump into a series of questions. I try to go chronologically as best we can, but it's not always feasible. So we'll give it a go.

Fremd: Sounds good.

Santucci: Thanks. Today is Wednesday, August 19, 2020. My name is Vincent Santucci. I'm the senior paleontologist for the National Park Service Paleontology Program. Today we are conducting an interview with retired NPS paleontologist Ted Fremd. Ted served as a paleontologist at Fossil Butte National Monument, the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, as well as serving as the science advisor for the National Park Service's Pacific West Region. Today, Ted is a research associate at the University of Oregon. The interview is being conducted by telephone from Ted's home in Oregon. And I am at my home in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. So thank you very much, Ted.

Fremd: Yeah. Delighted. Thank you for having me.

Santucci: Sure. So the hardest question is the first one. When and where were you born?

Fremd: (laughs) I was born in New York. I lived in New York for a grand total of, I think, nine months before my dad got fed up with the city and the advertising business and moved to Colorado where I grew up.

Santucci: Very good. So before you went to college or university, any experiences that you had or any mentors or influences that got you interested in geology or paleontology?

Fremd: You know, Vince, I believe, I'm not sure. I went to twelve years of private Catholic school. And I think the nuns from grade school could tell you I always wanted to either be a paleontologist somewhere or a national park affiliation of some kind. Because here I am from Colorado. My folks used to take me up to the mountains, and to Rocky Mountain National Park and to places like that. And I just loved the idea of parks. But they also used to take me to what was then the Denver Museum of Natural History. And that's when I first saw dinosaurs and a wonderful skeleton of a Columbian mammoth they had and sabretooth cats. And stegosaurs. And as a kid, I was so, and in fact, that was a large, very formative part of my whole life was wondering what one could do to actually be employed in a career to do paleontology or to do something to do with the Park Service. And you can't make this stuff up, Vince. It's true. That's what I wanted.

So I'd have to say two things influenced me. My parents' love of the mountains and always taking me up to various national parks and monuments as a boy, places like Navajo National Monument. Rocky Mountain Park, of course. Black Canyon of the Gunnison. Mesa Verde blew me away. On and on. But then also going to various museums and looking at a bunch of different kinds of reconstructions of prehistoric life. As you know, it's very fascinating. And once that kicks in it's hard to deny it.

Santucci: Absolutely. So, viewing fossils in a museum and viewing them in rock strata is a different experience. Do you recall one of your first times of actually seeing fossils in sedimentary rock units?

05:14

Fremd: It would probably be one of two. And I'm afraid it was all Mesozoic. I can't honestly remember seeing anything Cenozoic until high school. But it would have been the big road cut that they were building, Interstate 70, I think, through – or one of the highways near Golden, Colorado, where there were some dinosaur bones exposed. But then also meeting Tobe [Wilkins] and Jim [Adams] at Dinosaur National Monument as a kid was a huge thing. I had to really pressure my parents to take me to Dinosaur, because they didn't think it was going to be that great. They were wrong. (laughter)

Santucci: So tell me more about that experience, meeting with Tobe.

Fremd: Well, we could go on this whole 45 minutes on that. I loved those guys. And was it Tobe or Jim that had Parkinson's? Do you remember?

Santucci: I don't.

Fremd: I think it was actually Tobe. But as you know, they were road crew guys. And they were pulled in by, I guess Russ King pulled them in. No, Ted White did, actually. Realized that they were useful fellows that knew how to run jackhammers and weren't afraid of equipment. And rather than wanting some ivory tower people with delicate constitutions, he wanted people who could actually do some work excavating. But Tobe, I digress here, Tobe, I think it was, had Parkinson's. And he made a joke of it. His hand would flutter really hard. He had a bad version of hand shaking. But he told me it was actually a real blessing because it enabled him to have sort of like his own little built-in pneumatic hammer that he used his little scribe off of. They were really cool guys, and they really encouraged me. They could see I had the bug bad. I don't remember how old I was, but I remember they were maybe in their—I don't know—forties? You don't think of that when you're a kid, do you? They're either an adult or they're not.

Santucci: Right. Very good. Well, that's a great experience that you had early on. When you went on to college, where did you attend college? And were you in a geology program or what was your undergraduate focus?

Fremd: Well, initially, as I mentioned, I was torn. And I went to Colorado State University because I'd had a very, very profound visit – I spent a week shadowing a man by the name of Tom Thomas who was the chief of interpretation at Rocky Mountain National Park at the time. I went to J.K. Mullen High School, which is sort of a privileged school, graduating class of thirty (fifty). And the administration there had set up a week for me to spend at Rocky Mountain with a park person. So he strongly encouraged me to go to Colorado State University, which then was one of the two really good land management schools. And it was sort of a Park Service embryo place. A lot of Park Service people had been there. So I first began at Colorado State University with an emphasis on interpretation, as we used to call it, and outdoor recreation and resource management. But my hope was that I could interpret geology and science and paleontology somehow with that sort of degree. But Tom Thomas wasn't real hopeful that would ever happen. At that time, there was only one paleontologist in the Park Service. And the chances of there being another one was zero. So that was my focus to Colorado State for some time. I did not graduate from Colorado State. There was a lapse and I ended up instead going to the University of Alberta.

09:45

Santucci: Okay. And was that in a geology program?

Fremd: Yeah. In fact, one of the reasons I was drawn to it was they were starting the very first program, called Honors in Geology and Zoology. Which in, I don't know if you're familiar with the Canadian system, but the honors program is very much geared, it's assumed you're going to go on to graduate work. And a fellow by the name of Paul Johnston, who later got his PhD on bivalves in Australia, and I were the very first two Honors in Geology and Zoology students, under the guidance of the irascible Richard C. Fox. And he personally guided our education from 1974 to 1979. With the strong emphasis on fieldwork. Unlike a lot of schools, he ran a program where three months every summer, Paul, I and he and one or more field assistants would go into the various outcrops and collect. I mean, most of my education was those field trips, frankly. More than I got out of the classes. (laughs) But he was for example, we'd sit around the campfire on the evening. And having come in like the Douglas Badlands, for example, which you're

familiar with in Wyoming. And Chadronian, Orellan rock. And we would go through what we'd collected that day. And Fox wasn't content to just ask, "Well, what is this?" He would want to know not only what part of the animal it was, but which side, if need be. How old the animal was, what family it was in. ″Tell me something about the evolutionary history of the group". Taphonomy. I mean, every imaginable thing. We'd sit around and do that pretty much on a, not every evening, but pretty much every evening for some years. So I've always urged people to find a program where they find a disproportionate amount of time in the field versus in the classroom. Mind you, the classroom work is essential. It's absolutely mandatory.

So I was there, Vince, from '74 to '79. I was offered and had planned to do graduate school there. That summer, there was an opening for a museum technician at, guess where?

Santucci: Fossil Butte.

12:42

Fremd: Fossil Butte. Very good. (laughter) Yeah, they were advertising for a four-month seasonal position at Fossil Butte. And both Skylar and I applied for that, and we both received the seasonal job. And our plan had been okay, we'll go to Fossil Butte. We'll work for four months. I'm so excited, I get to work for the National Park Service. You know how this is. And I thought I came very well equipped with my University of Alberta training, frankly. And we got there with the idea that we would then go to graduate school at the University of Wyoming. So we went and visited with our mutual friend, Jay Lillegraven, who really liked Skylar a lot and thought she would be an excellent graduate student. And I would be okay. The thing was, that fall, Roger Martin, who had been the superintendent of Fossil Butte, received permission to hire a permanent museum technician job at Fossil Butte. And he essentially offered it to me. So I was really torn. God, should I forego finishing a PhD? Or should I take the job at Fossil Butte? And actually, Jay Lillegraven was very helpful. He said the whole point of you getting that work would be so that you would be able to get a job like you're being offered. And he very much said, "You need to go to Fossil Butte and work there." So I did.

Santucci: Well, that's really exciting. What year was it that you were hired?

Fremd: Seventy-nine.

Santucci: Seventy-nine. Okay.

Fremd: It was a seasonal on April thirtieth, I think. Something like that. It's a matter of record, I guess. In 1979. And then I became permanent, oh, geez, October '79, probably? But the hiring date in terms of computing retirement and all that was when I started as seasonal. I don't know if they do that anymore. But that was the way it was. And then I took the permanent job in September or October of that year. Still with the idea that okay, is there some way I could work for the Park Service but still pursue a PhD? And I fiddled with that for a good ten years before I realized that this was a waste of time. I don't need to do this anymore. I can make a career in the Park Service without it. And Skylar decided she wasn't all that terribly interested in the appendicular elements of the taeniodont that Jay wanted her to work on. So she sort of dropped any career aspirations and stuck with her love of zoology.

Santucci: So it sounds like you met Skylar fairly early on.

Fremd: I met her in ’72. So, yeah. We’ve been together what, 47 years now?

Santucci: Wow.

Fremd: I know, right? (laughs)

Santucci: That is amazing.

Fremd: (laughs) And the fun thing was that she would, the first summer with Fox, it was just Paul and I. And you’ll recall I told you Fox took us to all these localities. He decided one summer, actually it was ’75, the summer of ’75, he took just Paul and I to all of the astonishing localities in the interior west. So we went and spent time down at the Niobrara Chalk. We went to the Bug Creek Ant Hills. We went to the Douglas Badlands. We went to the Niobrara Chalk. We went to all these places where he would just basically download everything he knew about the field and those localities to Paul and I for three months at a time. And there’s nothing like learning, as you know, in the field situation.

But I will say he had a dim view of the parks. And he scorned my admiration for Park Service philosophy and methodology. He thought they were a bunch of tree huggers and waste of time. And why would they let fossils just erode out in the Badlands when they should be collected? Blah, blah, blah.

Santucci: So when you arrived at Fossil Butte—

Fremd: Blah I was going to translate, Vince. Strike that. Put etcetera, etcetera.

Santucci: (laughter) Okay. So when you arrived at Fossil Butte to take the museum position, had you ever visited there previously?

18:00

Fremd: I had not. And I will say when I first got there, Vince, my very first experience with the National Park Service, first day on the job, Roger Martin took Skylar and I out to the park. And sometime in the previous week, someone had taken a chainsaw to the little visitor contact station that was there. And cut it open. And had stolen everything that looked valuable inside the trailer. But they were really stupid people, because all they took was the casts. (laughs) They stole a cast of Boavus and they stole a cast of icaronycteris ingens, of course, from Princeton. And they stole a cast of a mioplosus consuming a [indium?]. 18:47 They stole what we used to call xiphotrygon. I think now it’s heliobatis. They stole the cast.

But imagine my shock. I mean, we drove up in this government vehicle. I was all excited. I’d ordered my uniform. And here’s this huge hole in the side of a trailer. And Roger Martin just went, “Oh, God darn it, look what they went and done!” And he was upset. And shocked. And that was the first day on the job.

Santucci: Wow.

Fremd: Seeing that, there, is this the concept of fossils as marketable commodities. That was pretty much my first experience in that. Although I did have someone steal a specimen I was excavating in the Niobrara Chalk. For the most part, I thought everyone saw fossils the same way you and I do, as objects to be, well, if not venerated, certainly not treated as curios and marketable things.

By the way, that same summer, I had the good luck, I guess you'd say, of meeting your good friend Peter Larson.

Santucci: You met with him?

Fremd: (laughs) Silence. Let the record show there was a long silence. (laughter) Sorry, I do that. Yeah, a guy named Bob Farrar, is that right?

Santucci: Yes, Bob Farrar.

Fremd: Bob Farrar and Peter Larson stopped by while I was in uniform as a seasonal at Fossil Butte. And they were openly scornful. And that really surprised me. They just were laughing. And I heard these guys. I was talking to some other visitors. And they were in the trailer just hooting about how, oh, look at those preserve and protect. Skylar and I had prepared all the exhibits that were in that trailer for that summer. And these guys were laughing and very disdainful about the idea of if you see a fossil on the butte, please leave it for others to enjoy. They thought that was the worst, stupidest thing they'd ever heard. And so I engaged them in a conversation. And boy, they were openly bragging about collecting things off of BLM land in the Wasatch Badlands. Coryphodon material. And talking about how they were planning to do this whole enterprise. Of course at the time, they'd already been doing it for some years. This was '79. And it was a real eye opener that summer. First having someone cut into the visitor contact trailer with a chainsaw, and then meeting two very virulent commercial collectors.

But trying to be friendly about it and wearing a uniform, you know, you're a public servant, I couldn't really get into an argument with them. So I invited them to meet me at the Triangle Club or the Oasis Bar. I don't remember which. You've been there, Vince, in the Triangle in Kemmerer, Wyoming.

Santucci: Yes. Uh huh.

22:19

Fremd: And we went to the bar. And it didn't go well. (laughter) We'll leave it at that. And I realized wow, there are people out there who actually are the enemies of scientific conservation and curation and preservation of fossils for everyone to appreciate. I really hadn't realized that. So it was an eye opener and a career changer, in some ways.

Santucci: Did you know who they were when you first met them?

Fremd: Not when I first met them. No. I didn't. And they later, we stayed in touch, surprisingly. In fact, after Peter got out of prison, he was very cordial and tried to strike up a friendship. That was a lot of water under the bridge at that point. But no, I didn't know that there were people like

that. And I had not heard of them or anything. Later on, of course, they began the, they didn't used to be the Black Hills Institute of Geologic Research. They were just the Black Hills Institute. And in my conversation with them, there was no pretense of saying that things would be collected for the benefit of science, at all. They never said anything like that. it was sometime later that they came out with a code for collecting that I'm sure you're familiar with. But that was never their motivation, at least in my conversation with them.

Santucci: So during those early years, although you were there early, the park was established in October of 1972. So during those first years after you arrived, was there any sort of negative perspectives by locals that the federal government was managing a monument? Or was it fairly supportive?

24:40

Fremd: Actually, the people in Kemmerer really seemed to love the monument. And I got to know a lot of the local people closely. I thought that was important to not be some person that just lives there but didn't talk to locals. So I went to school groups a lot and participated in different programs. I offered a geology class through Western Wyoming College that I taught in Kemmerer. And a lot of the locals went to it. And I'd have to say that they were very supportive of it. The people who seemed a little bit dismayed the way things were going were some of the—not all of the—some of the commercial collecting families were less than thrilled that one of the first things Skylar and I did was remove all the references to the dominant commercial collectors that were active in the basin, as you well know. There was a, when we first got there, there was a very strong emphasis on go collect your own fish across the road. ″Here's what we do, we take skill saws, we dig these out." Everything was focused on commercial collecting.

And I think that, to get back to your question about the local perspective, the local perspective was that this is cool, there's a monument. But a lot of the reason that the fossils at Fossil Butte were of interest was because they were being marketed and sold as objects of art and things like that. I won't mention the families' names, but you know who I'm talking about.

Santucci: Sure. Yes. I'm trying to recall—

Fremd: The interesting thing, Vince, was during that time Skylar and I set up the exhibits, I spent a lot of time planning and begging for a new visitor center of some sort. That little cruddy trailer was pretty horrible. I worked a lot with Harpers Ferry and your friends Lance Grande and Paul Buchheim to change the emphasis on just this idea of the commercialization of fish and that to expand it for, that the paleo center should really talk about paleoecology. And the fact that there's a really long sequence of processes and events preserved in Fossil Butte. It's not just the 18-inch layer. Amazingly enough, all the emphasis when we got there—and I'm not exaggerating—was on that 18-inch layer. The rest of it was ″noise" that the Park Service didn't even try to interpret.

I was also fortunate to spend, I don't know, probably not cumulatively, not consecutively, probably two and a half years I was acting superintendent. And I didn't have a lot of people hindering the direction I thought the interpretive efforts should take, as well as the resource management efforts. As well as spending a disproportionate amount of time peripheral to the

monument boundary. And as you well know, the story of Fossil Lake is not told right there in the lake basin center. A lot has to be understood by the lake margins. And Paul Buchheim and Lance Grande and I were often out way far from the boundaries.

Santucci: Very good. Was the main park headquarters or office in Kemmerer? Or was it in that little trailer?

Fremd: No, it was in the – we shared an office with the Forest Service and the BLM. And it was a really fun thing and instrumental to what later developed into interagency agreements, when I think about it. Working with those guys together, we largely didn't think of ourselves, at least I didn't. And my friends with the BLM and Forest Service didn't. I'm sure the forest supervisor and the area manager and the superintendent were much more cognizant of the fact we were different agencies. But most of us with the Forest Service, BLM and Park Service that shared that space got along really well. And we shared resources. We all shared the same secretary, for example. We shared the same mail facilities. Sometimes we'd swap vehicles. The BLM guys and I would go in the field together sometimes. It was fun working with the geologist with the BLM, and working with Forest Service folks. So the headquarters was in Kemmerer, Wyoming. And that was a good thing.

Santucci: Visitation numbers must have been pretty darn low. (laughs)

30:06

Fremd: Oh, yeah. Well, not, I don't know. I think there were around twenty thousand a year, something like that. There were days when the visitor center in the middle of summer would get over a hundred people. And I would just keep it open as long as it took. Sometimes people would show up just when I was locking up. But the thought of closing in when someone was pulling into the gravel in that little cruddy trailer, if they went all that far out of their way to visit this place, you had to stay open for them, right?

Santucci: Yes.

Fremd: So you'd have like over, but during the wintertime, visitation was laughable. In fact, I'm pretty sure we closed it. It would get forty below there, as you know.

Santucci: And so I imagine you had the opportunity to do fieldwork with Paul Buchheim?

Fremd: As I mentioned, yeah. He was extremely helpful and vice versa. I arranged for him to get different kinds of funds. For a while, I was on the University of Wyoming National Park Service National Cooperative Research Center team. We would have annual meetings up at Grand Teton and evaluate grant proposal and things of that sort. And I would always try to push for, in any park, to get more paleo and geology funding to the parks. So for example, Tony Barnosky and his work on —well, it's a long story. But yeah, I did get a lot of time with Paul in the field. Huge amount of time.

Santucci: So you began the planning for the visitor center that currently exists at Fossil Butte. How involved were you in that whole process?

Fremd: A hundred percent.

Santucci: Yeah, that turned out to be a remarkable facility. It's one that people that make that extra drive, they really feel rewarded. You've had the opportunity to be involved in two visitor center developments that focus on paleontology.

Fremd: Yeah. Yeah. Tremendous luck. The Fossil Butte paleo center, I don't think would ever get funded, it wasn't high on anyone's priority at all. And I was always disappointed in that. Because I thought that there were a lot of parks where the resources kind of have the ability to speak for themselves a little bit. I mean, Yellowstone needs a visitor center but you can kind of grok what the point of the place is. You can go see Old Faithful. Or you can go to the rim of the Grand Canyon and look over and get an idea for the significance of it. But as you know, a place like Fossil Butte is just this limestone cliff. Why is this a national anything? And a place like that, I always thought, deserves a disproportionate amount of visitor facilities. Particularly interpretive centers.

And I'm happy that Lorraine Mintzmyer and I became fairly regular contacts. She was an excellent regional director who helped me in a lot of ways help Fossil Butte get on the map in terms of allotting resources, both financial and just support, to the park.

Does that answer your question?

Santucci: Yes. So questions like the location of where the visitor center would go, were you part of those discussions?

34:17

Fremd: I was. And actually I will admit, my hope was that the center would be built not where it at all. I thought it would be really cool in terms of presenting a sense of anticipation if the center were located up in the Wasatch Badlands. And I really wanted it in there. (laughs) I thought that's where it should go. I didn't have any doubt about it. Because then you could also expand the theme to point out that this park isn't just about this 18-inch layer of fish. There's this wonderful Wasatch Badlands that contains this mammalian record. I mean, here's some of the earliest horses. On and on. You know the story. Isn't there some way we could expand the spatial and temporal significance of the exhibits? One way to do that would be to locate the center right smack in those Badlands. And the engineers – and I'm very glad they did – shot that whole idea down as soon as they went up and did some test drills. The whole thing, as you know, is undercut with all kinds of sinkholes. And it would have been an engineering nightmare to build a center up there. I still think it would have been a cool place to have it. But feasibly, no, it wouldn't work. But yeah, we went out in snow machines one year, including the regional director, to pick out the site where it would be. And where it ended up was, I think, second on the list. Because I thought the other nice place to have it would be up at Chicken Creek near the aspen grove.

Santucci: Okay.

Fremd: Up there. Although, what did we call it? Cundick Ridge?

Santucci: Yes.

Fremd: And that way, people would be able to be proximal to the little research quarry that Paul Buchheim and I started up there. I don't know what ever happened to that. And Prow Point. And people could see more of the park than what was then just a little—I don't think even 5% of the visitors to the park, Vince, when the contact station was that little trailer on that offshoot road off of the highway, very few people actually went into the park. They went into the driveway and they went to the trailer. We would try to talk people into taking the trail, because we'd written and installed some exhibits up so they could go to the little quarry there at Fossil Butte itself. But very few people took the trail, either. Much less drove up Chicken Ranch or any of the rest of the park.

Santucci: Back to the visitor center. So it sounds like you may have been involved in the development of the murals, the paintings.

37:18

Fremd: Yes. The initial paintings that we had done, I designed and worked with an artist in Salt Lake City to do the mural that was in the contact station. There was nothing there at all at the time. And I worked with those guys on that. The subsequent artwork that's in the current—is it still the same as when the center was done, Vince?

Santucci: No. Arvid has made some changes more recently.

Fremd: Yeah. Good. (laughs) But the artwork that graced the center when it opened in, what year was that, '85?

Santucci: Yes.

Fremd: I think it was '85. I went back there a couple of times to help. But no, I wasn't directly responsible for guiding the artist for the final artwork that graced the center.

Santucci: Okay. How about the selection of specimens that would be displayed?

Fremd: Initially, yes. I planned all of those with a lady by the name of Julia Holmaas, who I think you might have run into?

Santucci: Yes, uh huh.

Fremd: At Harpers Ferry. And we went through and decided a number of specimens to be displayed. But those, they're better. The choices that were made after I left, I think, were better choices.

Santucci: And then were you involved in ensuring that there was some sort of preparation lab?

Fremd: I wanted a bigger lab. And I also thought that there should be a space for curation. Initially it was a hexagonal structure. And I sat with the architect lots of times, including dinners at the Frontier Saloon, sitting around with blueprints and plans and thinking about how it would look. And I thought that it should have a curatorial facility. It should have, obviously, some offices. But a sixth of the space should be preparation. And I'm not sure how it ended up, off the

top of my head. I haven't been there in a while, Vince. Is it a sixth of the space preparation? I don't think so.

Santucci: Not quite. Again, I think if you're talking about the office space included in that, it would be far less than that amount.

40:03

Fremd: Yeah. And was there, yeah, I thought it should have had an accession storage like area, a dedicated storage area, and a full preparation lab.

Santucci: Probably 30% of the visitor center is office space and restrooms.

Fremd: Right. Right.

Santucci: So the preparation area is probably 5% of the visitor center, at most.

Fremd: Mm hmm. Yeah. That sounds right. Were you at the, was it the third fossil conference? Of course you were. When Rachel Benton was there?

Santucci: Yes. Uh huh.

Fremd: Yeah. Okay. I think that's the last time I've been in that building.

Santucci: Okay. That's a while back. There have been some changes. Were you involved in the original film for Fossil Butte?

Fremd: The original what?

Santucci: The film, the visitor orientation film?

Fremd: It was [unclear] I could tell you.

Santucci: Let's see. Paul Buchheim was associated with it.

Fremd: Right.

Santucci: It's probably after your tenure there.

Fremd: I think so. I think so. I went back there, as I said, for a couple of visits. There was a fellow by the name of Dale Ditmanson.

Santucci: Okay, yes.

Fremd: And I went back a couple of times to help him and then some others. I remember being very impressed with the film. I think Lance is in it, too, isn't he?

Santucci: Both Lance and Paul.

Fremd: Yeah, yeah. They were important people.

Santucci: Yeah. When you work at the visitor center, you hear that all day long. So I probably heard that at least ten thousand times, the film. (Fremd laughs) Any other thoughts regarding your tenure at Fossil Butte, and how did it influence your career over all?

Fremd: Well, the idea of sharing offices with the Forest Service and BLM, I think ultimately is one of the impetuses for the visualization of managing fossils regardless of agency boundaries. I think the idea of having cooperative agreements and interagency memorandum, memorandums of understanding and all those sorts of things, struck me as a very doable thing. That the public is better served by recognizing that a lot of the resources that the National Park Service stewards also exists on other lands. And the common denominator, rather than a management agency, might be the strata containing the fossils. While at the same time, I wasn't and I'm still not naïve enough to not realize that everybody has different mandates. So one strong influence, it's funny you ask about the headquarters, because that certainly had something, I'm sure, to do with my thinking that we should all work together with a common purpose as agencies on scientific matters. Certainly not in terms of managing timber and livestock and things like that, I wasn't that naïve, but there's no reason why fossils, for example, couldn't be treated as something other than marketable commodities on all public lands. Hello?

Santucci: Yes.

Fremd: It sounds like you have another call or something?

Santucci: No, not me.

Fremd: I just got a big beep. So maybe I did [glitch] our 45 minutes is up.

Santucci: Well, let's pick this up another day. And we'll move on to John Day and other exciting parts of your life.

Fremd: Sounds like a plan to me, Vince.

Santucci: Hey, thanks, this was great. I really appreciate it.

Fremd: I'm sorry if I'm wandering quite a bit.

Santucci: No, no. This is good stuff.

Fremd: The scope and scale of those years, not just me, by any means. You can't help but kind of talk about yourself with all this. But believe it or not, a lot of the motivation that I think you and I shared with the parks was on the really grasping and embracing the idea of preserving, for the preservation for others to enjoy. It wasn't so much what we were doing. So the scale of this conversation is hard for me to reel in sometimes.

Santucci: So the final question is, what year did you leave Fossil Butte?

Fremd: Nineteen eighty-four, although I went back and forth several times until about ’86 for various visits that are either documented or not, I really don’t know. But yeah, I left Fossil Butte in the summer of ’84.

Santucci: Okay. So during your tenure there, you really gave birth to the monument and lots of really good ideas in terms of interpretation and resource management related to paleontological resources that I think generations of people afterwards have benefited from.

Fremd: Well, thank you very much.

Santucci: Well, thanks again. And we’ll correspond through email and try to arrange a time to go through the next chapter.

Fremd: Sounds like a plan, Vince.

Santucci: Thank you.

Fremd: Thanks for doing this on behalf of anyone who in a hundred years is going to be interested in the history of paleontology in the parks.

Santucci: Absolutely.

Fremd: No better documentarian could exist than you. Your enthusiasm is contagious.

Santucci: (laughs) Thank you.

46:35

Fremd: I remember you in what, ’86? When did we meet, Vince?

Santucci: Eighty-six.

Fremd: The first paleo conference?

Santucci: Yes. Uh huh.

Fremd: You may not remember this. You may have thought it was all your idea. (laughs) But I distinctly remember strongly encouraging you to take on a very broad perspective of paleo in the Park Service. And I’ll bet that whole time you were chuckling because you’d already planned to do that, didn’t you?

Santucci: No. That was a great conversation that we had. Actually, we had met the first time on an SVP field trip in Rapid City, on a field trip to Badlands National Park.

Fremd: Oh my God, I remember that, and Greg Retallack stole an oreodont skull and Jim about killed him. (laughter)

Santucci: We got that on tape now. (laughter)

Fremd: I remember that.

Santucci: Yeah.

Fremd: And I remember talking Jim down. Like no, it's okay. (laughter) That's too funny.

Santucci: Absolutely.

Fremd: All right. We will talk again.

Santucci: Give my best to Skylar. And thanks again.

Fremd: I will. And Vince, you take care of yourself in these truly bizarre times.

Santucci: You do the same. Thanks, Ted.

Fremd: All right, my friend. Bye.

Santucci: Bye, bye.

47:57

[END OF INTERVIEW]