

# Becoming California

## *Suggested Station Member Guide Text*

California has long been the symbol of change... constant, exuberant change. From its tumultuous geologic origins to the transformative technologies of today, the region we call California defines environmental change in ways even reckless hyperbole is unable to describe: astounding, astonishing, beyond belief. California is also a paradox. The land that triggered the gold rush – the siren call of industrial transformation that spurred on a frenzy of technologic exploitation – is also the inspiration of John Muir and the forefront of preservation and environmentalism. These two strikingly different trajectories in California's past not only define us, but they also provide clues to our sustainable future.

Narrated by Jane Fonda and with original music by Pat Metheny, *Becoming California* is the epic story of environmental change on America's western edge. From the fog shrouded redwoods of the northern coast to the sun drenched deserts of the south, it is the story of natural change across deep time – how colliding landforms interact with the ocean and atmosphere to create one of the most beautiful, diverse and biologically rich places on earth. It is also the modern, cautionary tale of human transformation, in which California's natural wealth is mined with textbook abandon. But these stories of change – ancient and modern, natural and human – are merely the preface to an even greater story: the California of tomorrow.

Using California as its inspiration, the film resonates on a national and international level as it tackles one of the most important questions of our time: Can nature and civilization coexist? *Becoming California* examines this question by exploring California's tremendously diverse, beautiful and yet astonishingly transformed environments, as well as through compelling interviews with top scientists, educators and business leaders, as well as stories of how Californians today are discovering ways to forge new partnerships with nature.

The film tells this story in three acts. The first act, *Assembling California*, explains how California came to be, how it naturally functions and how the accelerating pace of change may now signal widespread environmental collapse. In the second act, *Reinventing California* explores how population growth, resource exploitation and technology transformed California into the richest, the most populated and the most radically changed region in North America. Rather than dwell on what has been lost, act three, *Reconciling California*, celebrates opportunity. From reweaving the fragmented tapestry of redwood forests in the north to eradicating desert invaders in the south, from revitalization of the Los Angeles River to sustainable agriculture, living architecture and more, *Reconciling California* shows how nature and civilization are no longer adversaries but indispensable partners in a statewide effort to engineer healthy functioning ecosystems amidst thriving economies.

Award winning Producer/Director Kit Tyler brings these stories to life through stunning cinematography, astonishing aerials from across the state, over 40 interviews with top scientists, educators and business leaders, and through personal and inspiring stories of how everyday Californians are creating a new and hopeful story – one in which we reconcile the needs of nature with the demands of civilization.

Please visit <http://blogs.kqed.org/pressroom/becoming-ca-pressroom-page/> for press photos and additional info.