

JFK – Stock Footage ([00:07](#)):

In many ways, the growth problems and the conservation problems of California are the same kind of problems that our country faces. We surmount these growth problems only if we work together. It is a pleasure for me to permit us to look at this Valley and others like it across the country where we can see the greenest and most richest earth producing the greatest and richest crops in the country and then a mile away see the same earth and see it brown and dusty and useless and all because there's water in one place and there isn't in another.

Narrator ([01:04](#)):

Water supply issues are among the most important and least understood issues around the world. Satellite images captured over the last few decades indicate that our freshwater supplies are rapidly changing. Dry areas are getting drier, as wet areas are getting wetter. Some are at risk of losing access to the water we need to survive. It took 200,000 years for the world's population to reach 1 billion. In the past 200 years, it has expanded to 7.7 billion. As human populations explode, many places are already seeing their demand for water outstrip supply.

George Miller ([01:52](#)):

It's a worldwide phenomenon. It's why China's building dams in the Tibetan plateau, so they won't have to send water to Cambodia, Laos, it's just played out here, uh, in a different venue and different set of circumstances. It's the same game. Get me water first. The hell with the other people..

Peter Gleick ([02:13](#)):

Water is a big problem. Uh, there's conflict over water. There's violent conflict over access to water worldwide. Uh, we have the reality of climate change, which is fundamentally a water issue. As humans take more water out of the natural environment. The ecosystems on which we also depend are increasingly suffering. We're seeing our fisheries die. We're seeing our rivers dry up. We're seeing our wetlands disappear and the birds that migrate thousands of miles every year that depend on those ecosystems perish as well. We have to figure out a way to provide water for human uses, but also for the natural ecosystems that depend on the same water resources.

John Herrick([02:54](#)):

It's hard to explain why California, as a supposedly leader in, many, many things in the world, can't address these issues.

Kate. Poole (3:02):

California in particular has really overallocated our supplies for a long time.

Dante Nomellini ([03:12](#)):

There's no basic ethic in water. Unless you're strong enough to stop them from doing things, they just do it.

Doug Obegi ([03:20](#)):

Power matters. And you know, I think one of the central themes of Chinatown is that you know, the powerful, uh, get to take what they want.

Sarah Wolf (3:28):

Water is so valuable that you're going to fight over it. You're going to fight for every last drop.

John Herrick (3:34):

The water wars is the reference to everybody fighting each other to keep their share or take someone else's share. And it gets a little bitter and nasty sometimes.

Peter Gleick 4 (3:45)

California is not unique in its water challenges. Uh, we are unique perhaps in the sense that we have the money, we have the institutions, we have the brain power to solve our water problems and we haven't solved them yet. But if we can't solve them here, it's going to be difficult to think about how we're going to solve water challenges around the world.

Narrator ([04:28](#)):

The drought from 2012 to 2016 was California's worst on record.

NBC News Footage (4:35):

The state of California is resorting to drastic measures tonight to combat its severe drought.

Narrator (4:39):

Op-eds in the LA times questioned if people would soon run out of water. Homes and businesses were asked to significantly cut back their water use.

Gov Jerry Brown – NBC Stock Footage ([04:51](#)):

We're in a historic drought and that demands unprecedented action. It's for that reason that I'm issuing an executive order mandating substantial water reduction across our state.

PBS News Footage ([05:04](#)):

The mandatory rules are designed to reduce water use by 25%.

Narrator (5:09):

Homeowners pulled out their lawns and replaced them with artificial turf.

Stock Footage – Press Conf ([05:14](#)):

I'm here today to show you and we've got some of the graphics behind me, the new character, Lawn Dude, something that we think will be appealing to a variety of customers.

Narrator: 6 ([05:24](#)):

Drought shaming became a popular form of vigilantism.

CBS News Stock Footage (5:31):

Mikey Barnum wrote, "way to hose down your entire sidewalk... twice." Are you okay with being called a water snitch? I am. I totally am

Narrator (5:35):

Meanwhile, the media narrative was that agriculture was suffering across the state.

NBC News Stock Footage (5:41):

California farmers are losing billions of dollars every year that we have this drought.

Jon Rosenfield ([05:48](#)):

While that's happening, the acreage of not crops is skyrocketing. These crops are tremendously valuable on the export markets. Uh, the San Joaquin Valley is now the nut supplier to the world. And so we're delivering water that belongs to the California public and that is needed by the fish and wildlife and water quality that we rely on to the San Joaquin Valley to grow a lot of crops that are being exported, uh, out of the country to China, the middle East, etc.

Char Miller ([06:24](#)):

When Jerry Brown went up onto the mountain top to declare California in the worst drought in a long, long time and asked people to change their behaviors, there was a caveat. Urbanites were supposed to change their behavior, but the central Valley agricultural districts were not, they were voluntary. We were required. And that tells you everything about the power of ag. Because after all, ag uses 80% of all water in California and Nevada and Arizona and every other state, and they're going to hold that water because the law says they can.

Juliet-Christian Smith\* ([07:00](#)):

We've had the highest grossing agricultural years on record during this drought and during the last drought. And that kind of money buys influence. It buys lawyers, lobbying firms.

Mike Hudson\* ([07:17](#)):

We could never flush our toilets again. And never let the water run again while we're brushing the teeth for what, for, 4% of water savings on all of that water that we're saving has already been sold to the irrigators so that they can grow the export crops and ship them to Europe or China and make a buck on it. And that drop of water that you save by not flushing your toilet or by shutting down the water while you are brushing your teeth. It didn't amount to nothing.

Narrator ([07:49](#)):

During the drought, the governor's water restrictions applied only to communities not to agriculture. Many believed the drought put a spotlight on destructive government policies, prioritizing agricultural corporations over at citizens.

Gary Bobker ([08:05](#)):

For half a century, we've been managing water resources in the state of California in a very unsustainable way.

Narrator ([08:23](#)):

Trillions of gallons of water from the snowpack of the Sierra Nevada has traveled down streams and rivers to support life in California. The state sees an influx of a truly incredible amount of water.

Peter Gleick ([08:41](#)):

Before there was a big population in California, before we had our 40 million people and an enormous economy, we had two great rivers: the Sacramento river and the San Joaquin river. And they flow together to create the California Sacramento—San Joaquin Delta, sort of the heart of California's rich environment, but also the heart of our water system. And the water of those two rivers form the Delta and then they flow out into San Francisco Bay and then out under the golden gate.

Richard White ([09:13](#)):

When Americans come to California, the California Delta is probably the most mysterious landscape in the state. If you look at the old land survey maps, which you'll find they survey the rest of the state and the Delta just remains this blank spot. They don't even draw the township lines and the reason they can't draw the township lines is they can't really get into it. It's going to be heavily tule land. It's hard to say--it depends on the time of day whether it's going to be land or water. It's absolutely immense. It's full of mosquitoes. It's a place you could just get lost and you can travel through it if you know the way through the swamps, but it's constantly changing.

Peter Gleick ([09:50](#)):

Some of the early sailing ships would find so much fresh water flowing out the Bay, out the golden gate into the ocean that they could draw fresh water in the middle of the ocean. Uh, today, that's not the reality today because of human demands on the Delta. We take so much water out of the Sacramento and the San Joaquin rivers and out of the Delta itself, that the natural flow has been dramatically reduced.

Narrator ([10:26](#)):

Today, California has the largest and most complicated water system in the world because massive cities and agricultural corporations were built away from freshwater

Doug Obegi (10:37):

Building more than 1400 dams across the state, the largest conveyance system to move water from the North where it is more plentiful to the Central Valley and the South where the demand is highest.

Bettina Boxall (10:51):

We have an incredible plumbing system. I mean, it's really a remarkable engineering feat regardless of, you know, what you think of it from a philosophical standpoint, from a practical standpoint, you have to admire it.

Felicia Marcus (11:08):

It was developed before more modern environmental sensibilities, and as a result of that, we've simply taken more water out of the ecosystem than any ecosystem anywhere has been able to survive.

John Herrick (11:15):

It's very likely that in the not too distant future, we'll be at the river's end.

Narrator (11:26):

The California Bay Delta is located East of San Francisco Bay. It is the largest inland estuary on the West coast. This means California's major rivers meet the sea here and it serves as a crucial habitat for about 500 different plant and animal species. However, since the Delta is flush with fresh water, it also serves as the hub of California's water infrastructure. Over two thirds of the state's residents get water that would normally flow through the Delta, including the residents of Los Angeles, San Diego, Silicon Valley, San Francisco, and the San Joaquin Valley.

Doug Obegi ([12:06](#)):

Three quarters of Californians don't know where the Delta is, and for most people, the water that comes out of their tap comes out of a black box. It rains someplace, and then there's a big black box and then you turn on your tap and water comes out. It is that ignorance, that lack of knowledge about where our water come from and the effects that that has on the Delta and communities there and salmon fishermen that really aides and abets what has happened over the last several generations in terms of the decline of the Delta and our native fish and wildlife.

Al Medvitz\* ([12:57](#)):

Water from all the rivers that flow out of the Sierra Nevada, North and South, flows into the central Valley and all flows here and then the water for 20 million people at least leaves here, goes South. This provides water for the entire state. I mean it's a, it's a remarkable place.

Char Miller ([13:24](#)):

The Bay Delta is the big story in California. I think it is emblematic of lots of stories like it across the planet, not just in the United States, particularly in the Anthropocene, this world that in which the human beings have so dramatically shaped nature that we're now having to think about how we exist within nature if we want to exist at all.

Narrator ([13:49](#)):

Caught between the competing interests of cities, agriculture, and the environment that Delta has become the battleground of California's latest water Wars.

Rogene Reynolds\* ([14:09](#)):

Where are you are is the far South Delta. This is the San Joaquin river. This is old river. It goes to the pumps by Tracy and this is reclamation district five 44 this is Undine road and this is right here. This is where we live. We're just on two acres right here. The Delta is an estuary. It is a beautiful patchwork quilt of farms and waterways. Most of our families have been out here since the late 1880s or the early

1900's. Family farming here is production, but on a small scale, smaller than the Southern San Joaquin Valley. The Delta is quiet, the Delta is productive. It's home to a lot of people who are committed to keeping it as beautiful as it is. It's home.

Narrator ([15:11](#)):

The Delta naturally flows to the ocean, but as more fresh water is diverted from the Delta, salty ocean, water is sucked in. Water diversions are hurting the ecosystems and economies of the Delta.

Rogene Reynolds\* ([15:30](#)):

It really is an existential problem for us. We either get to live here with good water or we end up having to leave. We being, I'm talking about the farming community. We have to leave because the salt has ruined the land.

Brett Baker ([15:49](#)):

That's it. That's what all the fuss is about. But this is our, this is absolutely our lifeline. This, this is what sustains us. If somebody comes up to you and says, Hey, give me your wallet and you might laugh them off, but if they come back with a knife, they come back with a gun and say, Hey, give me your wallet. You know, it's an entirely different situation and we feel very much in that sort of a situation where our livelihoods, our way of lives, what we know what we feel are is rightfully ours is being threatened because somebody stands to make a buck from it. 25 million Californians are getting there some of their drinking water from here. Of course they get it from the Colorado river. They get it from elsewhere. It's not everything to anybody, but it's something to everybody. If you look at all the fish overall, populations across the board have dropped in in my lifetime and I think if you look at the amount of water that's been exported from the Delta, they, they correlate almost perfectly.

Narrator ([17:07](#)):

Family farmers who call the Bay Delta home farm responsibly to protect native fish and wildlife, but they cannot stand the tide of water diversions. Fish and wildlife in the Delta are disappearing daily.

Jon Rosenfield ([17:22](#)):

The Delta is really a microcosm of a lot of other problems. We've got six endangered species in the Delta and of course globally we're in an extinction crisis, but here right in the backyard of San Francisco in the heart of a state that prides itself on being, you know, the center of environmentalism. We have six endangered species in this ecosystem. Delta smelt, longfin smelt, spring run Chinook salmon, winter run chinook salmon, green sturgeon and migratory rainbow trout, which are called central Valley steelhead. Those six species have very different ecological needs and very different behaviors, and the fact that all of them are on the precipice of disappearing from an ecosystem that they've inhabited for millennia really speaks to the damage that we've done to this ecosystem.

George Miller ([18:16](#)):

But it's under constant, constant political pressure and tension to try to move more of those water resources year-round drought or no drought, and into a, into the central Valley mainly. And then into Southern California.

Hal Candee ([18:31](#)):

It's a little hard to understand why we're completely screwing up this Western environment and lavishing these subsidies so that very successful corporations can grow a highly profitable crop and ship it overseas without paying mitigation for the impacts they are causing.

Julie Zimmerman\* ([18:51](#)):

The fall run Chinook salmon are spawning right now, so Chinook salmon or alternative is King salmon. They're the biggest of all the salmon species. I think they're hanging on, but in most places they're hanging on by a thread and if you remove the hatcheries, they would probably blink out in some fairly short time period.

Narrator ([19:18](#)):

California takes so much water out of the environment that if it weren't for fish hatcheries North of the Delta salmon would go extinct. This has decimated the fishing communities surrounding San Francisco Bay.

Larry Collins\* ([19:40](#)):

Here's how bad it is. If you come over here and look, this represents somebody fishing for four days all up and down the Marin coast for four days. This is what they caught: Seven fish. They're beautiful, they're tasty, they're delicious. But I've done those four days for 250 fish not that long ago. That's what happens when you take the water out of the equation. The numbers get so low that you can't make a living. When I started fishing, there was 5,000 salmon boats in California. Now there's about 300 left. You know, families, families and families lost their livelihoods. Guys are blown their brains out. Uh, you know, I can tell a million stories about guys that, you know, because fishermen don't just fish for a living. Fishermen are who we are. It's not like you can, you know, retrain us to go do something else any more than you can retrain a farmer or retrain somebody that had been doing that four or five generations, you know,

Jon Rosenfield ([21:01](#)):

So the salmon that spawn in the watershed and that then migrate through the estuary, go out into the ocean where they feed Orca whales and Marine mammals and bird life and other fish. The decline in salmon production from the central Valley is evident in this starvation really of Orca whales in the ocean. And that's just one example. The estuaries are really this nursery for things in the nearshore ocean environment. And when we decimate the Delta and the rest of the estuary, we're really harming those resources as well.

Narrator ([21:44](#)):

The thirst for water from the Delta cannot be quenched. The demand from large cities and agricultural interests, South of the Delta is growing lawyers, PR agencies and former high ranking government officials are employed to take as much water as possible from the Delta.

Brett Baker ([22:06](#)):

It's all about the money honey and or the water. And yeah, James Dean has that quote, you know why they robbed banks, right? Cause that's where the money is. My grandfather told me, my grandfather told me a couple things about water. He said, there may come a day son, when you'll have to go sit on that pump with a shotgun.

KCRA Stock Footage ([22:37](#)):

California's water war is heating up. The governor has just unveiled a new \$14 billion plan to build two tunnels underneath the Delta transferring water from Northern California to Southern California. The governor says his plan will create a reliable water supply and still maintain a healthy ecosystem in the Delta. This proposal balances the concerns of those who live and work on the Delta, those who rely on it for water and those who appreciate its beauty, its fish, waterfowl and wildlife

KCAL 9 Stock News Footage ([23:08](#)):

Breaking news. Now the metropolitan water district has approved nearly \$11 billion in funding.

Narrator ([23:13](#)):

When Jerry Brown was governor of California, he proposed a new method of water conveyance from the Delta known as the water fix or twin tunnels.

Hal Candee ([23:24](#)):

Can we turn off the camera for a second? Is that possible?

Juliet Christian Smith\* ([23:32](#)):

Does you feel comfortable talking about it? Um, we, we hear it. Lots of different opinions about the twin tunnels project. I'm not allowed to talk about it.

Tom Birmingham: ([23:45](#)):

Simple answer to that question is yes.

Daniel Wilson\* ([23:57](#)):

Earlier plan of the Delta, I found out my house was going to be a location of a, what they call a muck pond, which is essentially a 300 acre pond full of about 20 feet full of mud that came out of the tunnels. When I found out about it first in the newspaper.

Narrator ([24:18](#)):

The tunnels project is one of the most controversial in California's history. The project was proposed to fix a variety of complex issues, one of which is to reduce the environmental impacts of the powerful pumps in the South Delta.

Gary Bobker ([24:35](#)):

Currently we have giant pumps in the South door that just pull water across the Delta from the Sacramento river, which is very damaging. It disrupts the migration of fish. Uh, it makes the lower San Joaquin river run backwards and it destroys millions of fish each year at these pumps.



Char Miller (24:55):

One of the bypasses, one of the fixes, another technical fix is to bore these two tunnels underneath the Delta, move water through. And so you can let the river maybe become more like a river at once was if that's the case, despite the billions that would be spent on it. The question we'll have to ask is whether it's worth the cost to do it that way,

Narrator (25:19):

But the project is seen by many as destructive. The creation of these tunnels or mismanagement of these tunnels could spell the end of the Delta as we know it.

Rogene Reynolds\* (25:31):

The water supply up here in the Delta is limited, but they've over pumped that supply and the issue of the tunnels is that they will have a, an even deeper straw into the Delta and we will have no control over how much finally gets taken out of here.

Jared Huffman (25:49):

The system is broken. Uh, but the question is what do we do about it? And the idea that we would find a new point of diversion higher up on the Sacramento river and then make that facility so huge that it could take the entire flow of the river is pretty scary, uh, to people like me.

Richard White (26:07):

The twin tunnels are posed as this dual solution that can make Southern California happy by delivering more water to Southern California, but supposedly they're also going to help rescue the environment of the Delta. People with very good reason have a great deal of skepticism that they're going to help the environment of the Delta.

Unknown\* (26:29):

We need to become more water independent and stop destroying the very sensitive Delta stop destroying the way of the American Indians, fisheries. We have to stop destroying our native habitat and let us support local water projects and local jobs here in LA and orange County. Thank you.

Kate Poole (26:53):

The bigger issue is that we just take too much fresh water out of the ecosystem, so we need to let more flow down from the rivers out into the Bay and the tunnels do nothing to mitigate that. You know, we don't want to turn the Delta into Lake Erie and have it shut down because it's not suitable to drink and your dog dies if it goes swimming in it. But that's, that's what's going to happen if they operate this the way they plan to.

George Miller (27:20):

And that sort of led us to where we are today, where they think they can build these massive tunnels and just take the water on. In Northern California, you can drive Greyhound buses through these. This

was way larger than I guess in the, uh, the English channel, you know, so, so we're talking about major traffic where now these tunnels or all the water in Northern California.

Richard White (27:26):

But they're sold as an environmental remedy by taking the water out higher up than dumping it down the aqueduct. Later on, you will actually be able to regulate the flows in the Delta better than you can now, and environmental considerations help San Francisco Bay. But there's another consideration, a lot of the drinking water in Northern California, especially around the Bay area, comes from the Delta. So if you have salt intrusion there, you're screwing up the sources of drinking water. So you're really pitting now two major urban areas: San Francisco and Los Angeles, and you're putting together two agricultural areas: the Delta and the San Joaquin Valley. So you have huge players on both sides coming into battle. And it is a story, as you well know, with twists and turns that nobody can ever predict. Every time you think you know what's going to happen, the twin tunnels had been defeated. It rises up again. It is unkillable in one sense, at least so far what will happen on that is something I would never predict on film because I would be wrong within 24 hours the way things are turning out.

Narrator (28:50):

Then in 2019 Gavin Newsom was sworn in as the next governor of California.

Gavin Newsom Stock Footage (28:56):

I do not support the water fix as currently configured, meaning I do not support the twin tunnels. We can, however, build on the important work that's already been done and that's why I do support a single tunnel.

Brett Baker (29:34):

So yeah, this is our war room. This is where we have our monthly water agency meetings. We've got all kinds of wonderful color maps of the Delta about every which way you could draw it and we have the most recent rendition of the Delta water fix. It might've still been called BDCP at that point in time and it looks very familiar to this 1965 rendition of the hypothesized plan for a peripheral canal so you can see not much has changed in their minds and we're still fighting over some of the same issues that have been fought over and will continue to be fought over for generations lifetimes. The tunnels project has been around in various forms for over half a century. In the 1940s it was the peripheral canal in the past decade it has gone through numerous names and proposals. Newsom single tunnel plan is not half the size of the twin tunnels. A single tunnel would be much larger than one of the two tunnels for many. This distinction just serves to rearrange deck chairs on the Titanic.

John Herrick (30:50):

The water fix is a good case study for the problems of both California water and the Delta. And that's because it's the most recent iteration of that ongoing water fight. The Wars that we've been talking about, those who need water are supposed to be bound by restrictions that say you can have water, but it has to be surplus to the other areas. The amount of surplus when it's available and the amount they can take is insufficient for their needs. And so they have to keep trying and they've been trying for 50 years to get additional water through I'll say any means necessary.

Dante Nomellini\* ([31:26](#)):

I, I describe it as, uh, a dog that kills chickens, this institution, which is really guided in major part by metropolitan water district of Southern California. And we look like chickens. That dog is not a terrible dog, but he's a chicken killing dog.

Narrator ([31:53](#)):

The tunnel project will almost certainly be paid for by a powerful organization in Southern California known as the metropolitan water district.

Jeffrey Kightlinger ([32:03](#)):

Yeah. Metropolitan is a water wholesaler and which means we provide water to the cities that provide water to people. Uh, we represent six counties, Ventura County, Los Angeles, San Diego, orange County, uh, parts of Riverside and San Bernardino. What's pretty amazing about that six County area is there is 19 million people in there. One out of every two Californians or looking at it another way, one on every 16 Americans lives in Southern California and our mission is to provide water to them. Metropolitan staff has supported this project for the last decade. This project is a necessity for the state of California.

Kate Poole ([32:38](#)):

The metropolitan water district is certainly the 800 pound gorilla in California water politics.

George Miller ([32:48](#)):

They're rich. They can buy all the, all the influence and all, all the talent they want.

Doug Obegi ([32:55](#)):

Their business model is based on selling imported water from the Delta and if they can shore up and make that more reliable or increase the amount of water they're willing to do it.

Narrator ([33:06](#)):

Those who fear the tunnels point to history. Southern California has a terrible track record.

Char Miller ([33:12](#)):

We tend to flow water towards money regardless of whether it's uphill or downhill. It really doesn't matter. It's going to go to where the capital is located. So, yes, LA has prospered mightily because of the LA aqueduct, the state water project and the Colorado river aqueduct. But that is also despoiled landscapes and limited the possibilities of the places from which that water has come.

Narrator ([33:37](#)):

Many in the Delta believe that if you want to understand their story, you have to know the story of the Owens Valley, the story that inspired the film. Chinatown,

CHINATOWN Footage ([33:49](#)):

Gonna it be a lot of irate citizens when they find out that they're paying for water, that they're not going to get, Oh, that's all taken care of. So you Mr. Gittes, you bring the water to LA or you bring LA for the water.

John Herrick (34:03):

The Owens Valley case is, is, is sadly the precursor to where we are now. And there was a slight lull between that and the modern day destruction of various areas. But nothing's changed. It's the same fight. It's the same arguments. And in my view it's the same, um, avoidance of the law.

Narrator (34:28):

The Owens Valley, like the Delta gets its water from the Sierra Nevada mountains. It is located about 250 miles directly North of Los Angeles. And over 200 miles East of Monterey.

Narrator (34:44):

As ecologist Aldo Leopold wrote there once were men capable of inhabiting a river without disrupting the harmony of its life. For centuries, the harmony of the Owens Valley was preserved by the Paiute native Americans

Alan Bacock (34:59):

Our people have existed within this location for time and Memorial. And we say because of all the resources available to us here in this Valley, unlike our brothers and sisters to the North of us and to the South of us who really had to travel very long distances to be able to get what they needed. We had it right here within the Owens Valley as settlers came up. Uh, they, they looked at this land and, and they saw land that was open. Their thought is land is for humans, water is for humans. Therefore I'm going to make my peace and began taking hold of, of land within the Valley. You know, I, I say putting up fences, blocking access and no longer than was the Valley able to provide for the tribal people as it once did. And what that meant to our people is starvation.

Narrator (36:09):

As ranchers moved in to take the water rich lands, native Americans were evicted from the Owens Valley in a bloody conquest with great loss of life, but the ranchers didn't have long to enjoy their spoils. Los Angeles was rapidly expanding at the beginning of the 20th century, city planners realize that for Los Angeles to sustain its growth, it would need to secure an additional source of water.

Char Miller (36:38):

And Mulholland and Fred Eaton and all of these really interesting water engineers, water buffaloes, you might call them, started stalking the land, literally trying to find out where water was that they could purchase. Fred Eaton and Mulholland and others began to recognize that one of the key places, one of the key environments was the Eastern Sierra, not that far from Los Angeles where the fabulous river, the Owens river that flows through that region. It had an agricultural industry and orchard industry. The native peoples had already been taken out through various warfare's and expeditions, so there's not going to be that resistance proved to be from an Los Angeles point of view, easy pickings.

Richard White (37:25):

Mulholland and sells this project which is going to be very expensive to Los Angeles by telling Los Angeles, if you don't take this water, you won't need it. By that, he means that in fact, if you don't get this water, let's say I just, it's not going to expand.

Narrator (37:42):

Frederick Eaton, former mayor of Los Angeles went out to the Owens Valley with JB Lippincott of the U S reclamation service because Eaton and Lippincott told ranchers they were working together to create a friendly federal irrigation project. Most ranchers agreed to sell their land for what seemed above market value

Char Miller (38:02):

And so he start sopping up this area and buying water rights. He doesn't tell anybody what it's for. Um, and ultimately Los Angeles will purchase his right and other people's right and they won't tell them what it's for.

Narrator (38:14):

Meanwhile, LA based land speculators with secret insider knowledge bought up land in the San Fernando Valley. The area intended to be the end of an Owens Valley aqueduct to Los Angeles. This syndicate also worked hard to pass the bond they would pay for the aqueduct Harrison. Greg Otis, a central member of the syndicate was publisher of the LA times and used his power to publish scare articles about a dire need for more water. The tactic was successful and a bond passed to begin construction on the world's largest aqueduct designed to drain the Owens Valley.

Char Miller (38:53):

And suddenly from the Owens river Valley point of view, they had just been destroyed by LA

Mike Prather (39:10):

The locals began to panic. There began to be some violence up here. Three or 400 people keep drove down from Bishop and big pine and opened up the aqueduct and dumped the entire flow of the aqueduct back into the Owens river. And they just wanted Los Angeles to talk. None of the negotiations went the way the locals wanted it. And suddenly a few nights there were explosions along the aqueduct where the, the wall of the Aqua duck was blown out. So eventually by the mid-thirties, Los Angeles did the final buyout. Uh, about a fourth of the people moved away because everything had changed. And so even to this day, there's property in each of these towns that are owned by the city of Los Angeles. They own the entire Valley floor. And so in most of the issues that deal with, with, uh, water have LA next to them.

Alan Bacock (40:17):

We called this place Pine Paiute. The name embodies this idea that water is present, that water is flowing, that water is here. It was vastly different than what someone from Los Angeles driving up now would see out of their window.

Narrator (40:33):

In just 13 years of operation, the Los Angeles aqueduct dried up Owens Lake thereby creating the single largest source of dust pollution in the United States.

Alan Bacock (40:47):

The city of Los Angeles is used as a model. The Los Angeles aqueduct is used as a model to move resources from one to the next.

Narrator (41:01):

The Los Angeles department of water and power did not tell residents of the Owens Valley that Frederick Eaton was buying land on the city's behalf, nor that those purchases would end Valley life as they knew it. Now, the metropolitan water district is not telling residents of the Delta why the organization is buying their land, nor what those purchases mean for life in the Delta.

John Herrick (41:22):

It's an interesting question as to why metropolitan water district purchased islands in the Delta.

Hearing Footage (41:29):

The 10,000 plus residents who signed and sent letters and comments are a small sampling of the millions of people and the Bay Delta region who oppose Mets purchase of the Delta Island.

Q Stock Footage (41:42):

The metropolitan water district of Southern California voted Tuesday to purchase five islands, bolding Island, bacon Island, web tract, most of Holland tract and the Western tip of chips Island.

John Herrick (41:55):

It's probably true that the reason they bought those islands is to make sure that they could facilitate the building of the tunnels because you need large areas to dump all the muck. They dig out. You need staging areas, trucking, all sorts of things.

Brett Baker and Chuck Baker\* (42:16):

An ongoing conversation for the two of us really, and it, most of them, it has occurred either on this porch or in the, in that living room right there. No, they'd get these big pushes and each time we feel like it's an assault on our lifestyle and our life and want to take it, turn it back to nature and ship all the water down to the desert. It doesn't seem to make much sense to me. You know, and I don't care how many arguments they throw out me that's they've just about ruined all the fishing in the Delta already by over pumping. And I don't know what makes anybody in their right mind think that if they take more water, that it's going to get better. You know, regardless of the point they take it

Mike Prather (42:58):

The people that live in the city that pride themselves on caring about people and wanting clean air and clean water. Um, and, and do they, do they want to tolerate people living out in these, these working landscapes. The water titans are just out to, to crush what's ever in the way and to get as much water as they can. And that's, that's what they talk about. And often they'll be blunt enough to tell you that.

Char Miller (43:29):

Some of what the Bay Delta folks are arguing is that this is simply an echo of earlier struggles over water that included the Owens river Valley. Los Angeles is implicated without question in this struggle. It's not the only player and it's not the only enemy.

John Herrick (43:56):

Delta farms, we have farms from, you know, five, 10 acres to a couple of hundred acres and some people have over a thousand acres, but not contiguous. But when you have the water going down the

canals that encouraged large scale operations, it's almost a different world. Thousands and thousands and thousands of acres. Again, I don't, that doesn't make them wrong or bad, but that just sort of increases the demand and the pressure on people running those large scale operations to make sure that there's a return on the initial money. So it's the big guy versus the little guy story. That's oftentimes true.

Narrator (44:38):

California is the number one food producer in the United States, more than doubling the farming output of the second and third States on the list and topping all other agricultural producing regions around the world. California owes the success to the production capacity of the central Valley.

Tom McClintock (44:560):

The central Valley has a, one of the best growing seasons, um, and land, uh, uh, in, in, in the United States, the only thing it lacked was water. That's what the uh, uh, our water projects in the 1950s, sixties and 70s brought, uh, and it produced an agricultural cornucopia uh, that has not only supported many, many jobs, uh, but also, uh, uh, produced an abundant crop every year.

Gary Bobker (45:27):

Agriculture is an important part of the self-image of California and there's no question that it's an important and health and should be an important part of our economy. I think all of us are proud of the diversity of agriculture in California, but I think that folks in agriculture are also very good at selling that image.

William Bourdeau\* (45:580):

It's kind of a big marketing campaign. Everyone's kind of trying to put out there as growing food, wasting water. I don't think it is, but let's make peace. Let's let people make that decision on their own.

Peter Gleick (46:16):

The one place where agriculture stands out of courses is in its water use. In California, the water that humans use is about 80% used for agriculture and about 20% for the rest of society. But at the same time, it's not a huge part of California's economy. It's a \$50 billion a year industry. In a more than \$2 trillion a year economy.

Gary Bobker (46:37):

And you know, they're very, very good at making the case that cutting their water supplies will be devastating for, for California agriculture, our food prices will rise. Uh, people will go hungry and you know, that's just really not the case. So what really is happening is not that we're running out of water for California agriculture, it's that California agriculture has been so successful that it's growing to the point where it constantly wants to expand its irrigated acreage to the point where it just is breaking the system.

Narrator (47:15):

Farming South of the Delta is described by local author Mark Arax acts as the most industrialized farming in the history of man. California's top crop is not however fruits or vegetables. It is almonds and

it takes a gallon of water to produce a single almond. Over a million acres of almonds are farmed in the central Valley. Each year, almond farms use 35 times more water than the entire city of San Francisco. The majority of these almonds are exported out of the country. In fact, 80% of the world's almond supply comes from California, but the water to grow the world's almonds is diverted from the Delta at the expense of native fish and wildlife.

Richard White (48:02):

We don't necessarily need pistachios. We don't necessarily need almonds. We don't need all of this land to be in production. And in many cases, some of these crops can be replicated elsewhere. And this is not going to be popular with farmers. Farmers don't think of it that way. They think of themselves forced into it. They think of promises made to them, but these promises were made to them because they solicited these favors. They lobbied Congress very heavily to get these and they have struck very good deals and they want to keep those deals in place.

Hal Candee (48:30):

When you have the second longest river in the state of California going dry because of upstream diversions from the federal dam and other diversions, uh, that gives you an idea of the magnitude of these exports in these diversions and the effect of course, to the ecosystem. This amazing Bay Delta ecosystem.

Jon Rosenfield (48:50):

Agriculture and the San Joaquin Valley uses water from the San Joaquin river. So much of the San Joaquin river that it actually goes dry, but that amount of water has not been enough for the San Joaquin Valley. Uh, and so they've also drained their aquifers to the point where the surface of the earth actually is collapsing.

Allan Clark\* (49:10):

This (water) well here was originally flush with the top of this concrete. This was where the dirt used to be flush here and it has dropped that much. It's actually dropped more than that, but lot of this casing has dropped with the ground.

JT Reager\* (49:30):

That's a rate of sinking of about a foot per year and you know, English units. So that's substantial.

Jon Rosenfield (49:37):

But that amount of water has not been enough for agriculture in the San Joaquin Valley. And so they have giant export pumps in the Delta that take water actually from the Sacramento system, from the Northern part of the state and export it from the Delta into the San Joaquin Valley. And even that has not been enough. There's actually a tunnel that brings water from the Trinity river and that tunnel delivers water from the Klamath watershed into the Sacramento down the Sacramento into the Delta, through the pumps to the Western San Joaquin Valley. So this is a voracious need for water for this one area



Narrator (50:17):

Over the past century, family farms in the central Valley, like those in the Delta, have gone out of business. They have been replaced by vast agricultural corporations whose water use outstrips that of surrounding communities. Billions of dollars are made in the central Valley and much of it from overseas exports. Consequently, agriculture here is represented by powerful irrigation districts. These organizations not only support the tunnel project, but are working to weaken environmental protections to seize as much Delta water as possible.

Tom Birmingham (51:07):

Westlands is sometimes identified as the largest irrigation district in the country, uh, in, in terms of gross acreage, that's not accurate. Imperial irrigation district in terms of gross acreage is larger than Westlands, but in terms of irrigable acres, Westlands is the largest irrigation district in the United States. Farmers in Westlands are able to produce yields that exceed yields anywhere else in the world. But as water has become more expensive, it's, it's been necessary for farmers to look to higher value crops. And, um, as a consequence, probably the most popular crop today is, uh, is almonds.

Brett Baker (51:47):

I don't have anything against Westlands, but if, um, if they weren't creating this issue, it wouldn't be a problem.

Doug Obegi (52:00):

So the Westlands water district is the nation's largest agricultural water districts, covers about 600,000 acres. So it's larger than the state of Rhode Island.

Kate Poole (59:08):

Westlands water district is a very large cooperative agricultural operations.

Doug Obegi (52:14):

And it has been politically powerful for decades. Westlands has made its name suing just about everybody. They typically lose, but they spend millions of dollars on some of the highest price lobbyists. And you know, generally have the ear of politicians. Westlands was created to get surplus water from the Delta. Their contract amount is more than twice the amount of water used by the 4 million people in the city of Los Angeles.

Narrator (52:47):

Harris ranch, a typical Westlands farm, is the largest cattle ranch in the Western United States. But they don't only produce beef. This agricultural corporation is also one of the country's largest almond producers.

William Bourdeau\* (53:02):

It's truly amazing how productive this farm land is, where we're able to grow more with less land, with less water, less resources. It's, it's truly incredible. And we're, we're growing safe, affordable, nutritious food in abundance if allowed to the, you know, one of our, uh, constraining factors is our water supply. It's how much the government decides to allocate us. And over the last few years, those allocations have dwindled for a variety of reasons, but primarily for environmental purposes.

Peter Gleick (53:42):

They typically get less water than they would like to get simply because we've overallocated the water in California, they've had to fight for getting more reliable water. They overdraft groundwater because they don't have reliable surface supplies and they've put a lot of money and effort into figuring out how to manage the political system in a way that helps them improve their ability to get the water when they wanted and where they want it.

Sarah Wolf and Allan Clark\* (54:25):

I'm Sarah Wolf and this is my dad, Allan Clark. There's never been enough water to go around and the least we can do is manage what we have better than we're doing now by sending most of it out to the ocean.

Narrator (54:45):

These disagreements around water in the Delta have created perhaps the greatest fault line in California's water politics.

Tom Birmingham (54:47):

There is a, um, a misconception that it's farmers versus fish and, and that's not the situation at all.

Larry Collins\* (59:08):

Westland, the same people that are trying to try to get these twin tunnels built for the rate payers to pay for them so they'd keep getting their free water.

Captain Rodger Thomas\* (55:16):

Well, we don't need almonds here. They need money to make almonds to make more money. That's why they're buying up thousands of acres every year buying almonds.

Nathan Vosburg\* (55:29):

We actually went to war right here in council with, uh, the water resource lady. She had said that they were, they were sending 75% of our fresh water that comes through the Hills, down to the Delta, and it was being used as, uh, our fresh water is being used as a salt water barrier in order to protect a fish.

Felicia Marcus (55:49):

We had actually said yes to cutting the additional fish flows and maintain flows that were essentially to maintain what's known as salinity control and had we not done those flows enough, salt water would have intruded and that water wouldn't have been good for agriculture, urban use in the Delta or for export. Not that I was expecting a thank you note or anything, but the, the dishonesty about it on the part of people who should have known better—it was really disappointing.

Jared Huffman (56:16):

The Delta smelt and where it fits into this discussion is really a textbook example of a fairly cynical but effective PR campaign by the Westlands water district primarily and some other Delta exporters. They don't want to talk about salmon.

Devin Nunes Stock Footage and Jared Huffman (56:35):

Well it's because their friends in the radical environmental community have decided that two inch minnows are more important than the people in my district. Well, the truth is Mr. speaker, you'd have to have the brain of a three inch fish to believe that narrative.

Jared Huffman (56:51):

Their PR efforts are prolific. They have a lot of allies and Fox news and other places that will come down to Westlands. You know, anytime

Sean Hannity Stock Footage (57:00):

Farmers in California, they are losing their land, their crops and their livelihood, all because of a two inch fish.

Jared Huffman (57:07):

That Donald Trump statement a few weeks ago was in the heart of the Westlands water district and he was surrounded by leaders of the Westlands water district.

Donald Trump Stock Footage (57:16):

And I've heard this from other friends of mine in California where they have farms up here and they don't get water. I said, Oh, that's too bad its the drought, you know, we have plenty of water. I said, what's wrong? Well, we shove it out to sea. And I said, why? And nobody even knows why. And the environmentalists don't know why. Now they're trying to protect a certain kind of three inch fish.

Gary Bobker (57:41):

People say, who cares about the Delta smelt? Um, it's, uh, the fact is that Delta smelt was probably the most common fish in the San Francisco Bay Delta estuary. So it was a hugely important part of the ecosystem, intimately tied with the food chain. Now this is probably the rarest fish in the ecosystem in the course of a half century. We've taken the most abundant fish in this ecosystem and we've made it the rarest.

George Miller (58:09):

They've tried every, every means possible to hoodwink the public into believing that they really care about two things at the same time, the health of the delta, the health of fish and Wildlife and getting all of the water under their political control that they can possibly get. Those two things are inconsistent with one another. They're inconsistent in the central Valley. They're inconsistent in, in Southern California and Northern California.

John Herrick (58:35):

Westland's employees or consultants suddenly get hired by the administration and deal with the issue with Westlands and then when that administration is over, then they come back and work for Westlands again. Now that's not illegal, but it too from the outside sometimes that stinks a little bit.

Narrator (58:54):

The connections between Westland's leadership and the us department of the interior are well documented. Take for example, Jason Peltier, former Westland's, deputy general manager and former deputy secretary for the department of the interior.

Jason Peltier (59:09):

You're not going to piss me off, right? This isn't one of those things where we're starting out all even Steven. We've given an awful lot of money and water, uh, to the environment over the last 20 years. And are we willing to give more? No! God, I wish. I do not know why Westlands is such a target by, by Mr. Huffman or people in the environmental community. There are some environmentalists that they measure their successes, not by how healthy the fishery is and how healthy the ecosystem is, but how much they hurt Westlands water district. It's sick, it's sick. Sad.

Narrator (59:46):

After his role as Westland's deputy general manager, Peltier became executive director of the coalition for a sustainable Delta. Often regarded as a think tank, tax documents indicate that this coalition is run by high ranking employees of The Wonderful company, the largest farm in California. The wonderful company, which produces almonds, pistachios, clementines and pomegranate juice, typically uses more water each year than all the homes in the entire city of Los Angeles.

Jason Peltier (59:58):

I should say. Some of the challenges in the Delta that we face in trying to improve water management, improve the ecosystem are, I mean one of the biggest in my mind is the fact that we have 95% of the aquatic biota is invasive. Whether it's aquatic weeds from South America or 40,000, uh, Asian clams. They've done little to address the invasives and there and little to understand them. I would sure love to understand why there's decline. We, uh, we understand, we've been told that our, our water supply reliability is a function of the health of the ecosystem in these fish populations. I dare anyone to, to say we have the scientific proof that this is the problem behind the fisheries. There, there is no answer. If we knew it, we'd fix it. If it was simply more water, let's get on with it. Let's get, get more water to the fish.

Jon Rosenfield (1:01:36):

The science here is actually really clear. It's really obvious that we cannot continue to take half or more of the central Valley's runoff and divert it to agricultural and municipal uses and still maintain the species that have been here for millennia.

Tom Birmingham (1:01:50):

Jason Peltier was in interior. He left interior, came to work at Westlands water district, not because it's a revolving door, but because Jason as a result of his experience, um, was uniquely qualified to help shape water policy in California, and Westlands took advantage of his services just as metropolitan water district took advantages of services of David Hayes.

Doug Obegi (1:02:24):

A number of, uh, folks from the department of interior Jason Peltier have all come to work for Westlands and to lobby on their behalf and to Sue on their behalf. Today. Westlands has, uh, no more powerful ally than David Bernhardt who has been nominated as the interior secretary.

Mitch McConnell Stock Footage (1:02:49):

As I've discussed this week, David Bernhardt is no stranger to the department. He's served twice before. In fact, this body has confirmed him twice before.

Doub Obegi (1:02:56):

His law firm earned more than one point \$3 million from Westlands for lobbying Congress to weaken environmental laws, particularly endangered species act protections. Now the Trump administration under David Bernhardt is trying to greatly roll back our endangered species act protections in the Delta. And if he's successful, it will mean the end of Delta smelt and the end of winter run chinook salmon.

Narrator (1:03:21):

Some argue that increasing Westlands's water supply from the Delta would reduce rural poverty.

Hal Candee (1:03:29):

Another argument they made was that well, the, um, the poorer communities that are near these big irrigation districts would benefit.

Narrator (1:03:38):

Drought or no drought, the Westlands' farm workers have some of the worst living conditions in the country. Oxfam and the Rockefeller Institute found that Westlands was in the poorest congressional district in the U.S. Families of farm workers crowd together in shared homes, while Westlands farm owners often live outside this poor congressional district. Their tax money therefore goes elsewhere, and farm workers do not have the schools and other resources necessary to escape poverty.

Felipe Perez\* (1:04:03): *Translated from Spanish*

Where there are big farms, the disparity is huge because they don't like to raise salaries, and not only farms but big enterprises too. They think they're going to run out of money. They have enough money to live for the rest of their lives and let others live, but most of the time it's their way of thinking. Sometimes we see rich people that are poor and sometimes poor people that are rich. The poor rich doesn't want to give while the rich poor give everything they have.

George Miller (1:04:49):

They like to continue to be rich and they like to continue to be successful, but they're doing it on the backs of other communities. They're doing it on the backs of the environment. They're doing it on the backs of immigrants. They're doing it on the backs of school children because they clearly have the resources to prove to improve that life. But what do they do? They put them all on a bus and they send them to my office up here, a long bus ride. Many of them didn't have water. We had to go out and buy so they could rehydrate and they couldn't quite explain why they were in my office in Concord, California. So that's, you know, that's, that's their game. That's their game. Send them up there and they're just the, there's pawns, but they're pawns in the entire agricultural structure in the central Valley.

JT Reager\* (1:05:22):

Agriculture in California prioritizes agriculture at almost any expense. The water in California is a shared resource that is a public resource that is not a private resource. So the management of that water is something that needs to be considered in the public interest and we need to do a better job of making sure that the water that we need is going to be there for future generations.

Tom Birmingham (1:05:49):

People have said Westland's never should have been farmed. The lands in Westlands never should have been farmed. That may be correct, but that sound bite isn't an answer to the problem that exists today. Maybe the city of San Francisco shouldn't exist where it is because it doesn't have adequate water to support its needs. Maybe the city of Los Angeles shouldn't exist where it exists because it certainly doesn't have regional water supplies adequate to meet the demand for people in the Los Angeles. Now that's, that's ignoring the reality. San Francisco does exist. The city of Los Angeles exists. So let's begin to have an honest dialogue about how we're going to address these issues. And maybe the solution is take the lands in Westlands out of production. But if that is the solution, let's begin to address that question and, and, and identify the ways by which we are going to mitigate impacts to communities based on that public policy decision.

Rogene Reynolds\* (1:07:34):

But I know what you're getting at is, um, where is the will to solve the problem? Where's the will come from? Is it only come from the money? Um, I think, I think there's a lot of foolish things right now that I see the, uh, developing in terms of a distrust of science. People are slow to move unless they feel like they're immediately affected those kinds of problems. Just like this one that grinds over years and years, people turn their back on it. They just get to and forget about it or, yeah, at rain last year. So we don't need to talk about water for awhile.

Bettina Boxall (1:08:39):

When people find out that I write about water, their eyes always get big and they talk about Chinatown and Oh, are we running out of water? And my standard response is, no, we're not running out of water, but we are running out of water to use it the way we did in the 20th century and the 19th century, which was thoughtlessly and wastefully. And without any regard to the impact on the environment,

Kate Poole (1:08:59):

We have clearly taken too much fresh water out of these systems to support the native species and the healthy functioning of the estuary. And that's what the decline of the Delta smelt. And some of these other species is telling us.

Char Miller (1:09:15)

Climate change is changing the conditions of life on this planet and we need to be more resilient, more nimble. Um, if we want to survive as a species. And I think there's no stage bigger than the Bay Delta to help us articulate what's going to make us more nimble, what's gonna make our communities more just and what's gonna make this planet still habitable by human beings.

Peter Gleick (1:09:43)

The good news is there are many solutions for what we need to be doing. We can build a portfolio for the 21st century that includes large amounts of high quality treated waste water that we used to throw away, but that ought to be considered an asset now, not a liability. We can capture more storm water that we now lose to the oceans during the wet periods and we can use it to recharge our over tapped aquifers.

Kate Poole (1:10:08)

LA's population has grown by over a million people in the last couple of decades and its water use overall has remained flat due to improvements in water use efficiency,

Peter Gleick (1:10:21)

Figuring out how to manage the power dynamics, the political dynamics is a much more difficult challenge for California. Then new technology or building desalination plants or figuring out how to, how to grow crops differently. The politics is really going to determine much of California's water future

Narrator (1:10:44):

Groups like the metropolitan water district of Southern California and the Westlands water district in the San Joaquin Valley want to maximize use of water from the Delta for their own interests, namely sending water down South.

Tom Birmingham (1:10:59)

Every interest group wants the Delta managed for their interest.

Narrator (1:11:05):

These same organizations also reject the scientific consensus that there isn't enough water flowing through the Delta to support native ecosystems, despite species being on the brink of extinction.

Jeffery Kightlinger (1:11:18):

We also believe though that there is sufficient water in the system for the environment and for native fish.

Narrator (1:11:24):

Therefore, restoring any semblance of a Delta's needed environment has been incredibly challenging.

Julie Zimmerman\* (1:11:30):

We have this diversity of ecosystem types in California and we just can't support that anymore. The way that we're managing it so that, you know, the bigger picture is, are we okay with that as a society,

John Herrick (1:11:43):

I think if you pulled Californians 95% and would say we would like to have rivers with some fish in them in the future. How you get there is the difficult part. But first you have to understand that we may not have rivers and we may not have fish, so do you want to do something?

JT Reager\* (1:12:08):

And so California water issues are really just a microcosm for what we're seeing around the planet and what we're able to monitor with satellite data. You know, for instance, on the India, Pakistan border here, the Indus river basin is a heavily stressed aquifer and this region of the country gets Brown water pumped substantially. So you know, a shared resource by two countries that needs to be well-managed in order to avoid political tensions. So as population keeps growing, we have increasing demand. There will not be enough water to support every need and every want at some point in the future. And so the realization of that has not really hit everyone yet. I fully, I think so where does your water come from? Is a basic question that everyone should be able to answer no matter where you live in the world. And with that knowledge there will be a trickle-down effect. I think that affects policy and therefore affects management. If we can't deal with our water issues in a place like California, how can we expect to deal with our water issues in other places of the world? I mean, in California we have everything we need to be successful. It's just about making the decision to do so. And that really means prioritizing water. And thinking about the future

Narrator (1:13:26):

And so in California, these issues are wrestled with before the state water resources control board in the hopes of setting a sustainable course for the future.

Jon Rosenfield (1:13:35):

Our analysis today shows there's no evidence that flows less than 50% or so. We've seen a huge decline in the Delta ecosystem and these water quality standards that are supposed to prevent a decline like that from happening have not been updated in now 25 years.

Kate Poole (1:13:56):

The state water board did a very comprehensive analysis of what it would take to restore healthy fish populations and basically concluded there. Right now we divert about half of the fresh water out of the Delta ecosystem and that to be healthy we needed to restore about 75% flows.

Felicia Marcus (1:14:21):

The conflict is intense is people see everything as a loss either cause they're worrying about fish and wildlife on the brink of extinction or you're a farmer or a community leader who's worried about the livelihood of your family or your people.

Gary Bobker (1:14:35):

We've tested the hypothesis that insufficient flow, despite the evidence will work. It hasn't. We've tested the hypothesis that doing more habitat without sufficient flow regimes will work. It hasn't, why don't we try testing the hypothesis that the amount of flow that the scientific evidence and your record suggests will work will work.

Jon Rosenfield (1:14:56):

But the water quality control plan, uh, because it's a plan under some laws created by this bureaucracy over many, many years, it doesn't get nearly the attention, uh, giant tunnels that you could like roll a



small aircraft through the water quality control plan will really define water quality conditions that support clean water and fisheries and can potentially save endangered species for decades to come.

Unknown\* (1:15:24):

There's a story I'm sure many people are familiar with called the giving tree by Shel Silverstein. The boy plays in the tree and eats its apples as a child and the trees very happy. The boy sells the apples when he's a teen to make a little bit of money in the trees, very happy. He harvest the branches to build a house as a young man and he cuts down the trunk in middle age to form, create a canoe and the trees all is happy to be there for him. And finally, as a uh, old man, he uses the stump of the tree to sit and think. And the story is very divisive. Um, some people see it as representing unconditional love, that this tree gives everything to this boy, whereas others see it as exploitation of nature. In other words, is it about a giving tree or taking person? And I think we need to ask that about our rivers. Are they giving rivers? Certainly they are. Are we taking people? Yes, we are.

Unknown\* (1:16:22):

This outdated plan allows more than half of the water needed for the Delta's ecological health to be diverted away largely for unsustainable industrial agriculture.

Unknown\* (1:16:31):

But if, if the state board takes action today, nothing happened in 2019 except litigation, there will be no on the ground projects. There will be no additional flows.

Doug Obegi ( 1:16:39):

If you think it's hard now, Imagine a world 15,20 years from now with greater reliance. On diverting more water from our rivers with climate change, making it harder and harder to satisfy all of our needs.

Unknown (1:16:51):

The mighty Bay Delta estuary is a gem. It is a treasure and it is worth saving

Unknown (1:17:00):

Californians deserve more than just a stump to sit on.

In December 2018. The CA State Water Board voted to increase flows through California's upper tributaries.

The was a historic first step in a long intended process to restore California's rivers.

Immediately upon taking office, Governor Newsome shut the process down.

The Delta smelt is one of many Delta species on the brink of extinction.

In 2019, for the second year in a row no Delta smelt were found in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's annual survey.

The interior Department under President Trump released plans to divert even more water from the Delta.

Much of this water will go to the Westland's water district.

Interior Secretary Bernhardt, Westland's former lobbyist, is current under investigation for conflict of interest

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