



Episodes related to the Salton Sea and environs:

#204 "HEAD FOR THE BORDERS"

A trip to the southernmost and northernmost towns of the state: enjoy a taste of the Horseradish Festival in Tulelake, near the Oregon border, the Horseradish capital of the world; **and experience the sights and sounds of Calexico, a town that reflects its rich Mexican heritage.**

#207 "PRESERVING THE PAST"

Take a tour of the little, quaint town of Locke, founded and settled by Chinese on the Sacramento River Delta; **hear ancient Cahuilla Indian bird songs sung by members of the Cahuilla tribe**, and participate in a threshing bee and antique engine show featuring old farm vehicles and machinery.

#302 "A CLOSER LOOK"

Travel to the sand dunes of El Centro where portions of a wooden plank road, which once stretched from Imperial County to Yuma, Arizona, have been preserved; and attend a reunion at Camp Lockett which brings together members of the last mounted unit in the Army.

#512 "KEEPING COOL"

Californians have done everything imaginable to keep cool in their blistering deserts. Join Huell as we look at two ways of cooling off: first, in the amazing old "desert submarines" of Indio County, and at an honest-to-goodness oasis near Palm Springs.

#804 "Mt. San Jacinto"

The San Jacinto Mountains are one of the most impressive natural wonders in our entire state. No other mountains on this continent rise so high so fast - in slightly less than seven horizontal miles, the peak rises from 800 to 10,804 feet above sea level!

But these mountains hold another distinction as well. They are the site of two of the greatest engineering accomplishments ever attempted by man.

In this adventure, host Huell Howser first visits the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway which takes passengers from the warm desert floor to a snowy alpine environment in a matter of minutes. This tramway which opened in 1963 was constructed on such a sharp slope that it was impossible to build roads, and the only way to construct it was by helicopter. In fact, the construction of the tramway was such an engineering challenge that it has been labeled "the 8th wonder of the world," and has been designated a historical civil engineering landmark.

Huell continues his adventure by traveling to the base of the San Jacinto Mountains for a journey that is both historic and truly exciting. This trip takes him through a 13-mile tunnel dug through the mountains during the 1930s as part of the Colorado River Aqueduct which brought water to Southern California. This huge and extremely complicated engineering project still ranks as one of the most difficult ever attempted. The 16-foot tall tunnel usually flows with 1.2 billion gallons of water a day, but once every five or ten years the water is cut off for a day or so to allow an inspection. Huell takes advantage of this opportunity to explore the tunnel and also to make some unusual discoveries once inside. Whether on the top of the mountains on a tram, or under the mountains in a tunnel, Huell discovers that the San Jacinto Mountains are very much a part of California's Gold.

#806 "Slab City"

The California desert has always been a place filled with mystery ... and surprises! When you travel through our desert

you're never sure what you're gonna see, who you're gonna meet, or what strange and wonderful experiences you're gonna have. Huell Howser discovered that first hand on a recent trip to the Salton Sea community of Niland. At first glance, Niland is a sleepy little agricultural town once known as a major grower of tomatoes. But a few miles out of town -- out in the middle of nowhere -- Huell discovered two honest-to-goodness, little-known pieces of "California's Gold."

First Huell visits with self-taught artist and desert character Leonard Knight and gets a tour of "Salvation Mountain," a huge multicolored mosaic of scripture, flowers, trees and the American flag all sculpted into the side of a mountain with adobe, straw, and as much bright paint as Leonard can lay his hands on. "Salvation Mountain" is an on-going labor of love that Leonard started ten years ago and he shares his enthusiasm and his mountain with Huell.

About a half mile down the road, Huell next visits a town that is like no other in our state. Everyone lives rent free. There are no landlords, no official rules and there are no utilities or houses, yet over 3,000 people call it home during the winter months. It's called "Slab City" and it sits on the site of an old abandoned Marine Base. Its citizens are a hearty bunch of independent, self-sufficient folks who have turned this desolate, yet beautiful part of the desert into an unofficial RV park. Huell spends a day touring "Slab City" in a twenty-five year old dune buggy, meets many of its colorful residents, and finds out why so many of them keep coming back year after year.

It's a real desert adventure as Huell Howser goes way off the beaten track to find two fine examples of "California's Gold."

#903 "Blue Angels"

They're one of the most famous air squadrons in the world -- serving as positive role models and goodwill ambassadors not only for our Navy, but for our country. We're talking about the Blue Angels who, since first formed in 1946, have been demonstrating their flying skills and maneuvers to literally millions of spectators each year.

And for over 30 years the Blue Angels have been a part of "California's Gold." Since 1967 the squadron has spent the winter at Naval Air Facility, El Centro, training pilots and new crew members. The good weather and open spaces make this a perfect place to practice and, over the years, squadron members have become a welcome part of the community in Imperial County during their three months of intensive preparation for the 70 air shows they fly each season.

On this particular adventure host Huell Howser accepts an invitation to spend a couple of days with the Blue Angels and ends up not only watching them train, but actually gets to go up with them in an F/A18 Hornet for the ride of a lifetime. Huell also meets former Blue Angel pilots who talk about the "good old days," and visits with local citizens who talk about the pride the community of El Centro feels in having the squadron there each winter.

All in all, it's a fast-paced, high-powered, high altitude adventure in search of "California's Gold."

#909 "Big Things in the Desert"

We all know our deserts here in California are big. They cover huge areas of our state. And in this episode of "California's Gold," producer/host Huell Howser travels to the desert in search of big things -- and finds them!

First, he travels to the Palms Springs area to visit one of six major wind farms in the world. Over 4,000 giant windmills are here -- some almost two hundred feet tall -- making clean, pollution-free energy representing the future of energy production.

Next, Huell travels to the little town of Boron to see a big hole and a big truck. The big hole is the open pit mine where about 50 percent of the world's borax comes from. To get the borax out of that huge open pit, there are trucks so big you won't believe them even when you're seeing them! They're two stories high, wide as a two-car garage, longer than a city bus and weigh as much as one hundred and eleven mid-size cars.

Finally, Huell travels to the remote Goldstone area of the Mojave desert to visit the largest and most sensitive scientific telecommunications systems in the world - The Deep Space Network. Huell and cameraman Luis Fuerte find out just how big when they're given the opportunity to climb inside one of the dishes and walk around .

All in all, it's a big adventure in a big desert -- an adventure where we discover some big pieces of "California's Gold."

#2005: "MUDPOTS"

In this muddy adventure, Huell travels to some very remote areas to take an up close and personal look at "mudpots". Mudpots only occur three places in the US and one of them is right here in California. Our first stop is the Imperial Wildlife Area. Huell and a member of the Fish and Game take a look at huge mounds of bubbling, oozing, popping and exploding mudpots. This is a public area that is open to mud lovers one and all.

Next its off to some privately owned land which has some extraordinary mudpots. Photographer Jack Hobart has made some amazing images with still and video cameras over the years at this secret spot which he shares with Huell.