

## Unit 8: Building a Rain Forest

**Narrator:** Home to thousands of living animals and about 20 million specimens, the California Academy of Sciences is the largest green museum in the world.

**Chris Andrews:** Creating a living rain forest inside a building, in San Francisco, is a challenge.

**Narrator:** The rain forest exhibit is like nothing else in the world. Guests can walk up a spiral ramp, inside the glass dome, all the way up through the trees to the canopy. They can also ride a glass elevator all the way down to a tunnel under the forest. A lot of work was put into bringing the rain forest to life. Inside the dome is a towering rain forest that's rich with life. Chris Andrews was one of the many people involved in creating this rain forest.

**Chris Andrews:** We're standing here with this great view, sort of halfway up the rain forest, if you will. And you're seeing the birth of a rain forest. We've got our major trees in here now; that are about seven of those and those are obviously going to grow in over time and reach the top of the dome in here. So it's hot, it's humid—it will feel like a rain forest, it will smell like a rain forest; we've toyed with the idea of getting some mosquitoes and letting them go in here so you'll—just kidding—so you'll get the whole experience. But the goal really is to have people get kind of an essence of rain forest. You can never ever replace nature with these kinds of exhibits. But hopefully what you can do is give people just an inkling of what it might be like.

**Narrator:** Beneath the rain forest, the new aquarium has the deepest tank for a coral reef in the world. You could fill 5000 bathtubs with all the water in the tank. Where does all that water come from? Straight from the Pacific Ocean. So the fish and corals are all living in real ocean water. Water is let in through valves and it takes several hours to fill the coral reef tank. Chris Andrews describes bringing in the animals to their new home.

**Chris Andrews:** It's like a modern-day Noah's ark, in a way, where except the animals aren't coming in two by two, they're coming in dozens or hundreds, or sometimes only in ones. And it's the ones that are in ones that are obviously extremely precious.

**Narrator:** And one of those precious animals is Diego, a turtle, who was carefully transported to his new home.

**Animal Handler:** He's doing good; he's very relaxed inside the tub here so it should be really easy to move at this point.

**Narrator:** Diego is only one of the many types of animals living in this artificial coral reef. There are now many other species such as stingrays and sharks, as well as four thousand other fish at the California Academy of Sciences.