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**National Park Service
Great Basin National Park**

**“Under A Desert Sky: Life in the Great Basin”
Visitor Center Film**

**Final Script
Written by Donna Matrazzo, The Writing Works**

“Under A Desert Sky: Life in the Great Basin”

Visitor Center Film

Fade in:

A MONTAGE OF SCENES THAT SET THE STAGE FOR THE EXPERIENCE OF TIMELESSNESS IN THE GREAT BASIN AND BEGIN TO IMMERSE THE AUDIENCE IN THE WONDER OF THE PLACE

For example:

Music here and throughout: The film will have a custom sound track designed to evoke this spare western landscape.

1. A shooting star sweeps across the night sky, aglimmer with millions of stars.

Narrator: (voiceover)

Illuminated only by stars,
a vast landscape awaits the
dawn.

2. A timelapse of wide desert landscape with wisps of clouds changing shape and dissipating.

The warming sun reveals
broad valleys and high
peaks...

3. A grand vista surrounding Wheeler Peak, with a hiker, tiny in the distance at the trail summit.

... stretching , it seems,
to infinity.

4. A camera in motion comes around a bend to frame a view of pines.

Air pungent with sagebrush
and pines.

5. An aerial over a grand expanse of playa.

An enormous place...

6. An intimate closeup of a blooming desert flower.

7. A grey fox loping across a woodland or mountain habitat.

8. A child in Lehman Caves, looking up close at stalactites.

... rich with the intricate gifts
of nature.

9. A bristlecone grove.

An ancient landscape, still
living.

10. A desert scene with the sun and moon both visible in the vast expanse of
horizon and sky.

Like nowhere else,
 the Great Basin spans a
 singular continuum
 of time and space.

11. Title. The film's title will likely appear at the end of the opening sequence, but we will wait until after the shooting with the next draft to propose what we think it should be.

MUSIC UP AND OUT

dissolve to:

A SEQUENCE THAT INTRODUCES THE PEOPLE IN OUR STORIES, IN
 LANDSCAPE SETTINGS.

For example:

**SFX: A bird song or call in the
 background.**

12. In winter, a wide shot of a herd of cattle in the snow. A pickup is parked amid the cattle and two ranchers, Dave Baker and his son, grab bags of feed and spread it; the cows follow and eat.

Dave Baker: (voiceover)

[He might say something like this:]

**I run our ranch with my dad and
 my brothers. We're the third
 generation – my son and his
 cousins will be the fourth.**

13. We follow Jean Krejca as she shimmies through a tight spot in a cave.

Jean Krejca: (voiceover)

*[She might say something like this
 from her interview with Rory]*

"Caving is thrilling to me because there's always the possibility of discovering new places."

14. An extreme closeup of a pseudo-scorpion.

"These caves have several unique species."

15. A Native American doing work or living life in relation to the landscape. [We are continuing to work on this storyline.]

16. An extreme closeup of the person's hands, doing something in relation to the landscape.

Native American: (voiceover)

[Perhaps this person speaks about how their people have always survived on this landscape and how they innovate to stay here.]

17. The recreationist is driving a car on a long stretch of open road into Snake Valley; the camera looks out to the view from the windshield.

perhaps Becky Mills: (voiceover)

[She might say something like this from her phone interview with Donna]

"I love the high desert. I live in a big city. I keep coming back."

18. Inside the car, see the person driving.

"What you can see is such a big open space. You would think

you'd feel tiny. But it makes me feel at home."

MUSIC UP AND UNDER

dissolve to:

A SEQUENCE OF SPECTACULAR AERIALS THAT PRESENT A STUNNING TOPOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW OF THE BASIN AND RANGE LANDSCAPE

For example:

19. The camera rises up a steep western mountain face and soars over the top to reveal a 200-mile expansive view of mountains and valleys.

Narrator: (voiceover)

The Great Basin is a
landscape unique in
North America.

20. An aerial swooping low and across the valley floor in winter, perhaps with a dusting of snow.

The valley floors are high
desert, often fiercely gripped
by cold.

21. A panorama of the snowy mountains as backdrop for the winter desert.

Half the year the mountains
are draped with snow.

22. A close shot of Becky Mills putting on gloves and a hat.

- 23. A view down a hiking trail with everything covered in snow.
- 24. Abandoned mining equipment covered in snow.
- 25. A closeup of a nuthatch or jay or other common winter bird in the snow.

perhaps Becky Mills: (voiceover)

[something like:]

One thing about the high desert that draws me back is the silence. In the winter, especially, there's an incredible sense of solitude.

- 26. A series of aerials show the scale of the whole Great Basin and its striped pattern of parallel mountain ranges alternating with valleys.

Rising from the valleys are many long, parallel mountain ranges.

SFX: Airplane engine motor

- 27. Dave Baker is flying his Super Cub, checking his cattle ranging across the valley, with a mountain range in the background, exemplifying the Great Basin landscape.

Dave Baker: (voiceover)

[He might say something like this from his interview with Rory]

"I learned to fly when I was 16. With my plane, I can check my herds in an hour. If I drove it, it would take me half a day."

SFX: Airplane engine sounds fade out

28. An aerial flying low over a mountain with abundant trees, some snow is visible.

The mountains are
surprisingly lush above the
dry desert.

The earth is yet moving:
Mountains are still growing.

29. Swift-running water from the mountain flows into a springs, where it bubbles up.

Faults create springs,
deepened by snowmelt in
spring and summer ...

30. The camera moves across the surface of a large springs, like Gandy Warm Springs, brilliant blue with a glare of reflected sunlight bouncing off the water's surface.

... oases in the middle of a
dry land.

MUSIC UP AND OUT

SFX: Loud whooshing of gusting wind

dissolve to:

A SEQUENCE OF EXTREME CLOSEUPS ON THE TRUNK, BRANCHES AND ROOTS OF A BRISTLECONE PINE, CLOSE ENOUGH TO LOOK ABSTRACT.

For example:

31. An extreme closeup of an especially gnarled and tortured-looking bristlecone branch.

perhaps Becky Mills: (voiceover)
[something like this:]
**"I feel awed in the presence of
 the bristlecones."**

32. An extreme closeup of a bristlecone branch being buffeted by high wind.

**They've endured cold, wind and
 ice for thousands of years, to
 become some of the oldest
 living organisms on the planet.**

33. An extreme closeup of a dark purple, first-year cone whose scales are tipped with a claw-like bristle that gives the tree its name.

**As a survival strategy, tiny strips
 of bark on dead limbs connect
 the living roots to branches with
 green needles.**

34. Older cones that are sap-covered, which almost glistens when the light hits them just right.

35. Pan across to a grouping of needles that are bundled in groups of five, growing densely at the end of a branch.

**A inch-long needle can live 40
 years.**

36. An extreme closeup of a curving bristlecone above-ground root, with its striking striations of color.

37. An extreme trunk contortion of a trunk section that twists and swirls around back on itself.

38. A small mammal that would be common to find in the bristlecone alpine habitat.

39. Becky Mills, seated near a bristlecone pine and looking at it intently, either sketching it on a drawing pad or writing in a notebook.

"When you're standing between an old tree that has lived 5,000 years, and a young tree that may live 5,000 years ...

40. A timelapse of a grove of bristlecone going from a wide shot at day—to night, when their gnarled trunks and branches are silhouetted against the dark sky with its millions of stars.

"... where you are in time is in a 10,000-year perspective.

41. Accompanying her wrap-up thought, Becky Mills is on a trail silently facing the camera.

"It eclipses anything that you can imagine."

[To see the rest of this 29-page script, contact Donna Matrazzo at matrazzo@msn.com]