

Living in a Geologic Moment



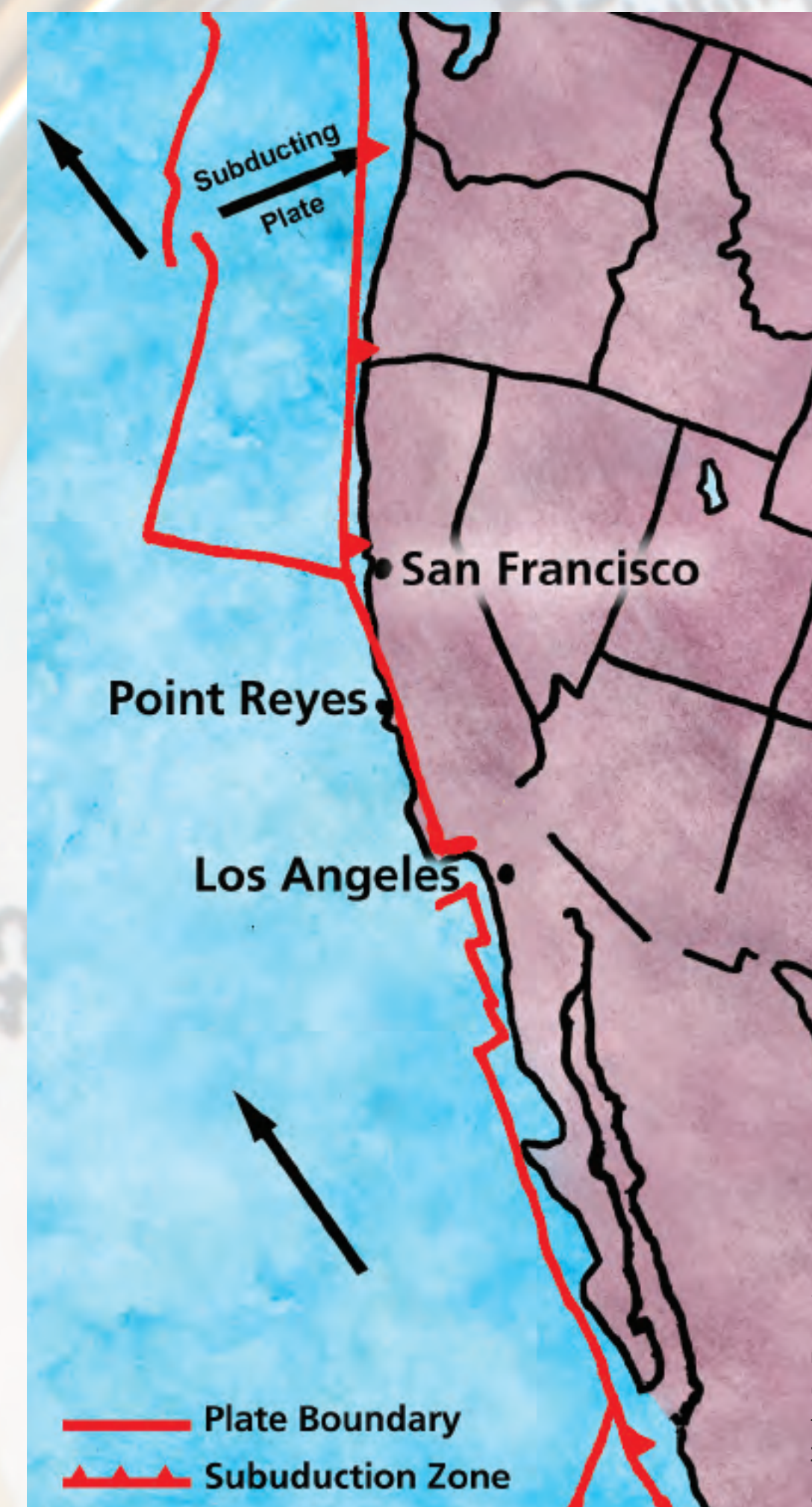
If lifetimes were measured in eons rather than years, we would witness tremendous movement and change along the western edge of North America. The San Andreas fault, the boundary between the North American and Pacific plates, is part of a 30 million-year geologic story that is still unfolding.

20 million years ago



The first continental sliver that included Point Reyes broke off the landmass and joined the Pacific plate as it moved northwest.

11 million years ago



More of present-day Southern California was transferred to the Pacific plate and Point Reyes continued traveling northwest along the fault boundary.

Today



Much of coastal California and Baja have now joined the Pacific plate. Point Reyes has traveled almost 300 miles along the San Andreas fault.

10 million years from now



The plate boundary will likely shift inland east of the Sierras. The Gulf of California will expand and most of California will be transferred to the Pacific plate.

Over millennia, the tectonic boundary has shifted inland as small pieces of the continent have joined the Pacific plate. Today, the San Andreas fault is the active plate boundary where relative movement between the plates averages two inches annually. In the future, the plate boundary will move inland east of the Sierras. As the process continues, North America will be radically altered.