

The Salton Sea

***The Beating Heart
of the Colorado River Delta
and
a Lynchpin to
Water Security in the West***

Presented by:

G. Patrick O'Dowd,

Executive Director

www.SaltonSea.com



May 9, 2025

FEDERAL-STATE FEASIBILITY REPORT
SALTON SEA PROJECT-CALIFORNIA
GENERAL MAP

JULY 1973



MISCELLANEOUS RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
OF SALTON SEA

Mr. Hewes described the Salton Sea as dedicated for use as a drainage and waste cesspool for Coachella and Imperial Valleys. A shortage of water in the future will make it impossible to ever keep the water of the lake of such quality to make it desirable, or even passable, for recreational purposes. That it must be considered there will be a greater pollution of Salton Sea than they have in the Great Salt Lake in Utah, and up to the present time the ingenuity of man has not been able to devise any method where the Great Salt Lake can be used for major recreational purposes. Mr. Hewes declared that the most water they can ever expect to have available under ultimate development is about 800,000 acre-feet of water to reach the sea. They will need that much water to leach the salts that come into their irrigation projects from the irrigation water from the Colorado River, but that will not be enough to freshen the sea. From now on the sea will continue to become saline much more rapidly.

In the last three years the salt in the water reaching the Salton Sea by way of the Alamo River has increased from the short side of two tons per acre-foot of water to over three tons per acre-foot. The New River, in the last three years, has increased to around two and a half tons. Mr. Hewes stated that if they continue to put tile drains in their farm lands in Imperial Valley at the rate they have the past three years, the leaching of salts out of the soils may cause the saline content of the water in Salton Sea, fed from the two rivers, to go to between four and five tons per acre-foot in the next five years.

Mr. Hewes concluded by stating that in his opinion the Salton Sea will very rapidly become less and less desirable for any kind of recreational purposes.



Salton Sea Authority

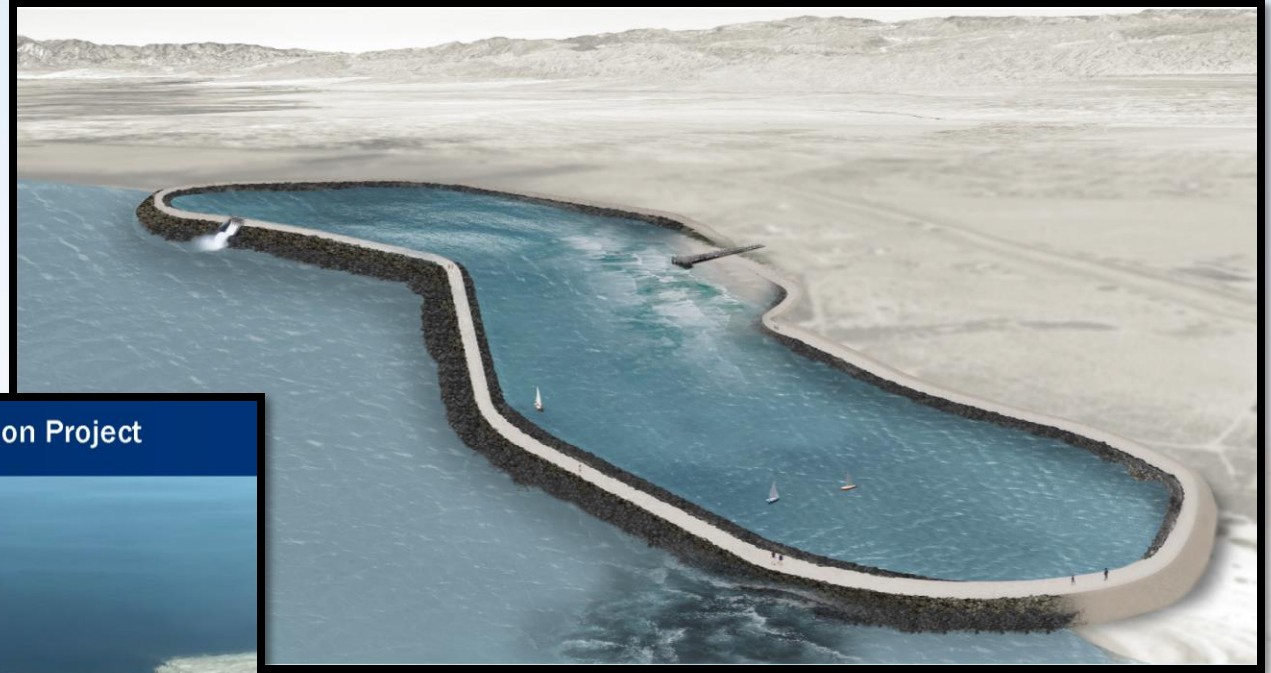




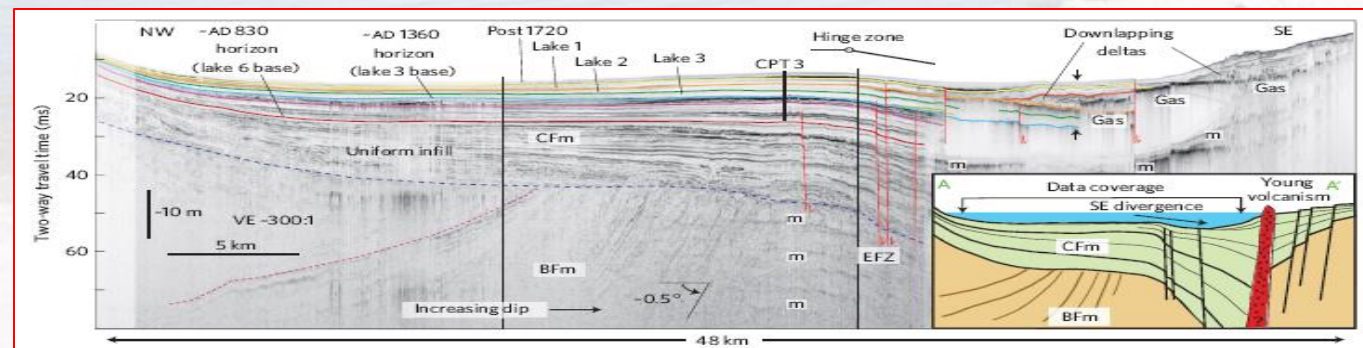
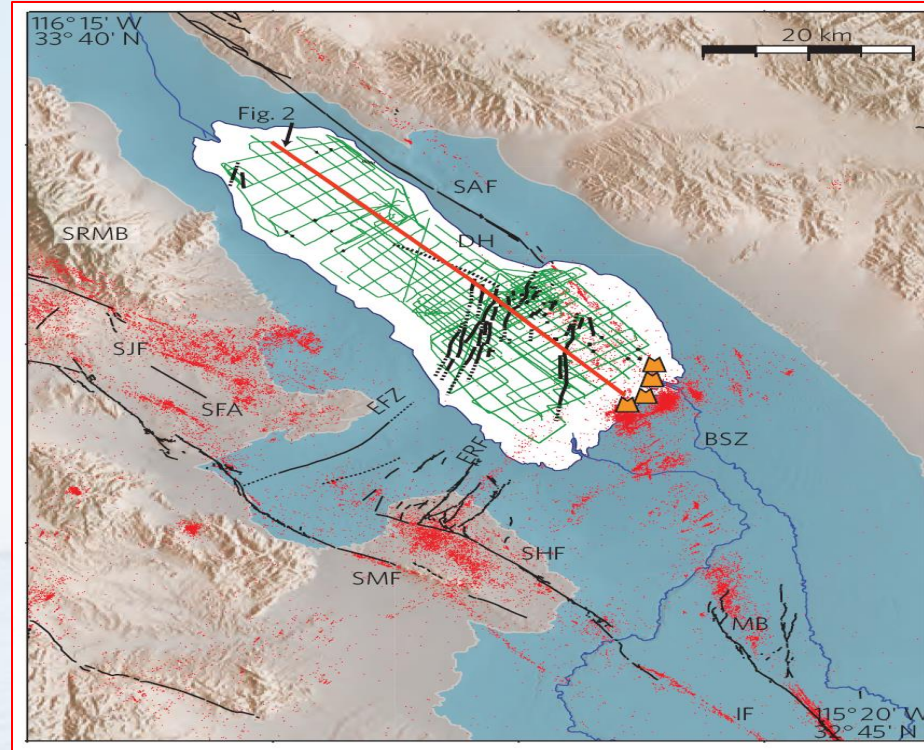
The “QSA”



Salton Sea Management Program



Community Impacts



KEY

-  Bosque Scrub
-  Emergent Wetland
-  Treatment Cells
-  Shallow Lake/Open Water Habitat
-  Cells
-  Water Transfer Gates

Water Input from
Agricultural Field
Drain Water

SEDIMENT BASINS

TREATMENT CELLS

Drainage Channels

Existing Lake

Water Input From
Proposed
Groundwater Well

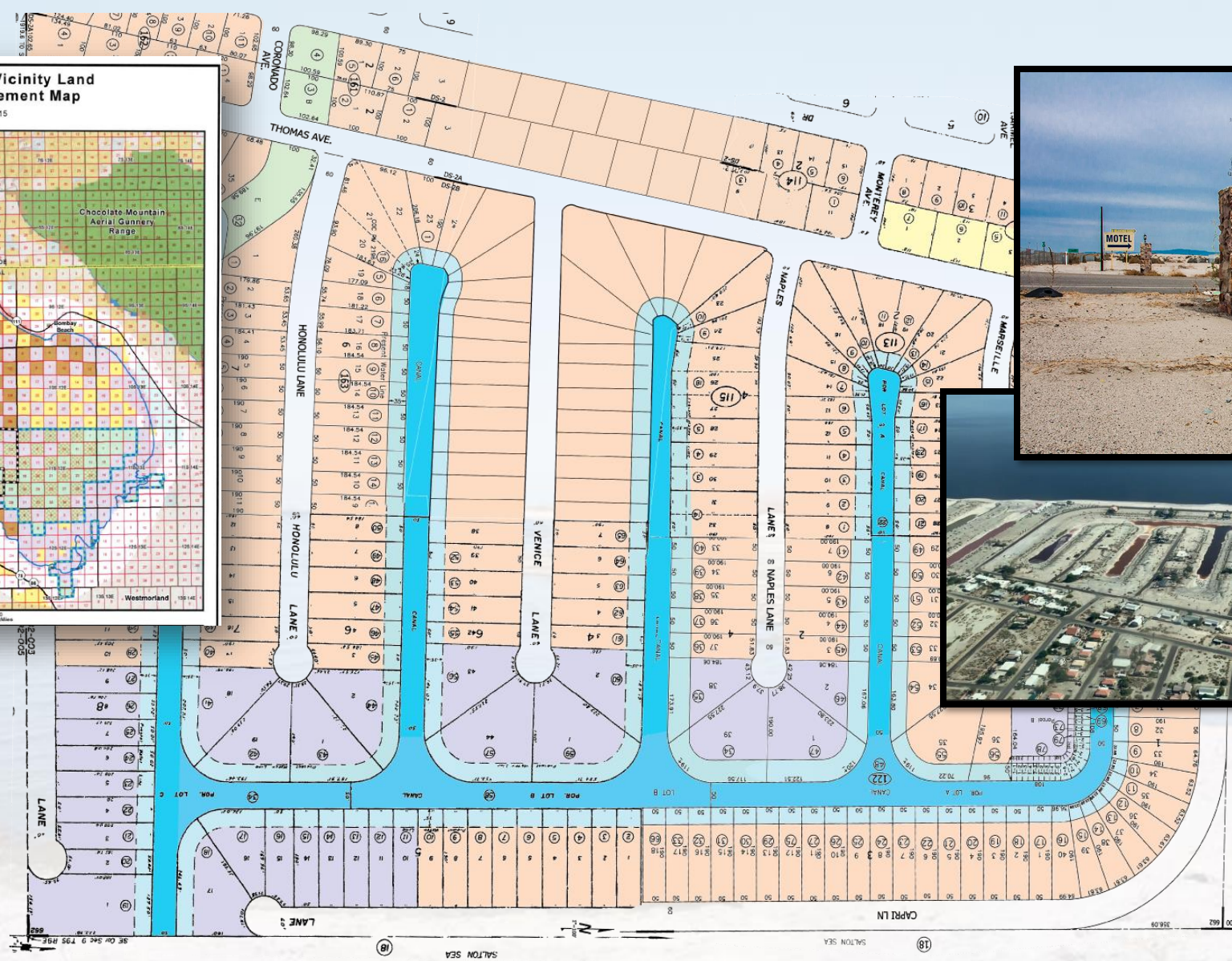
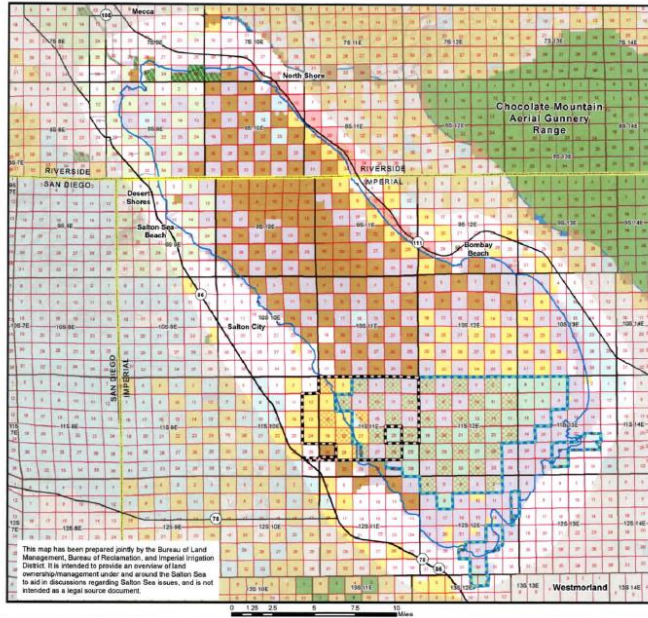
Drainage Channels

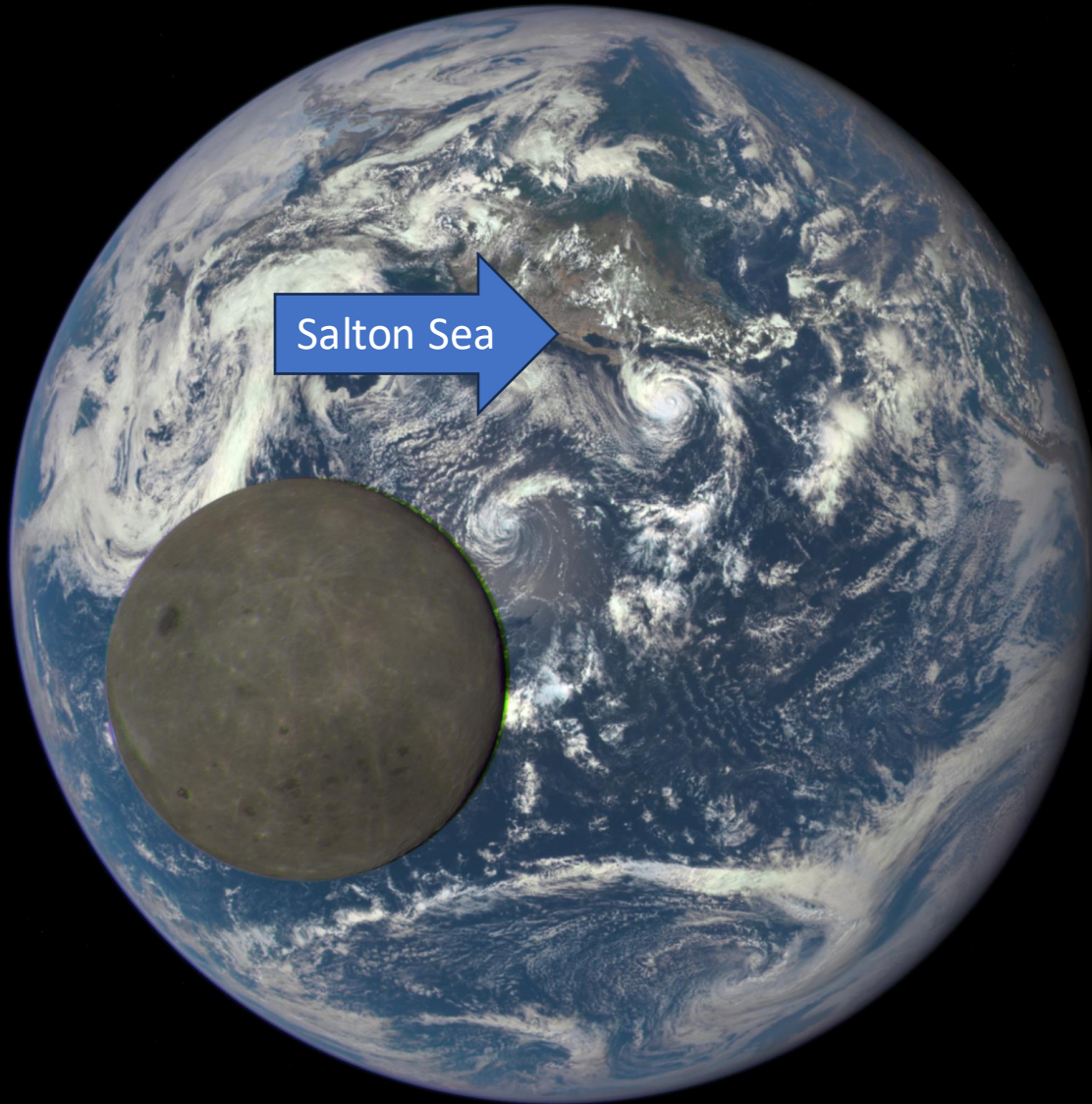


.25 Mile

General Salton Sea and Vicinity Land Ownership and Management Map

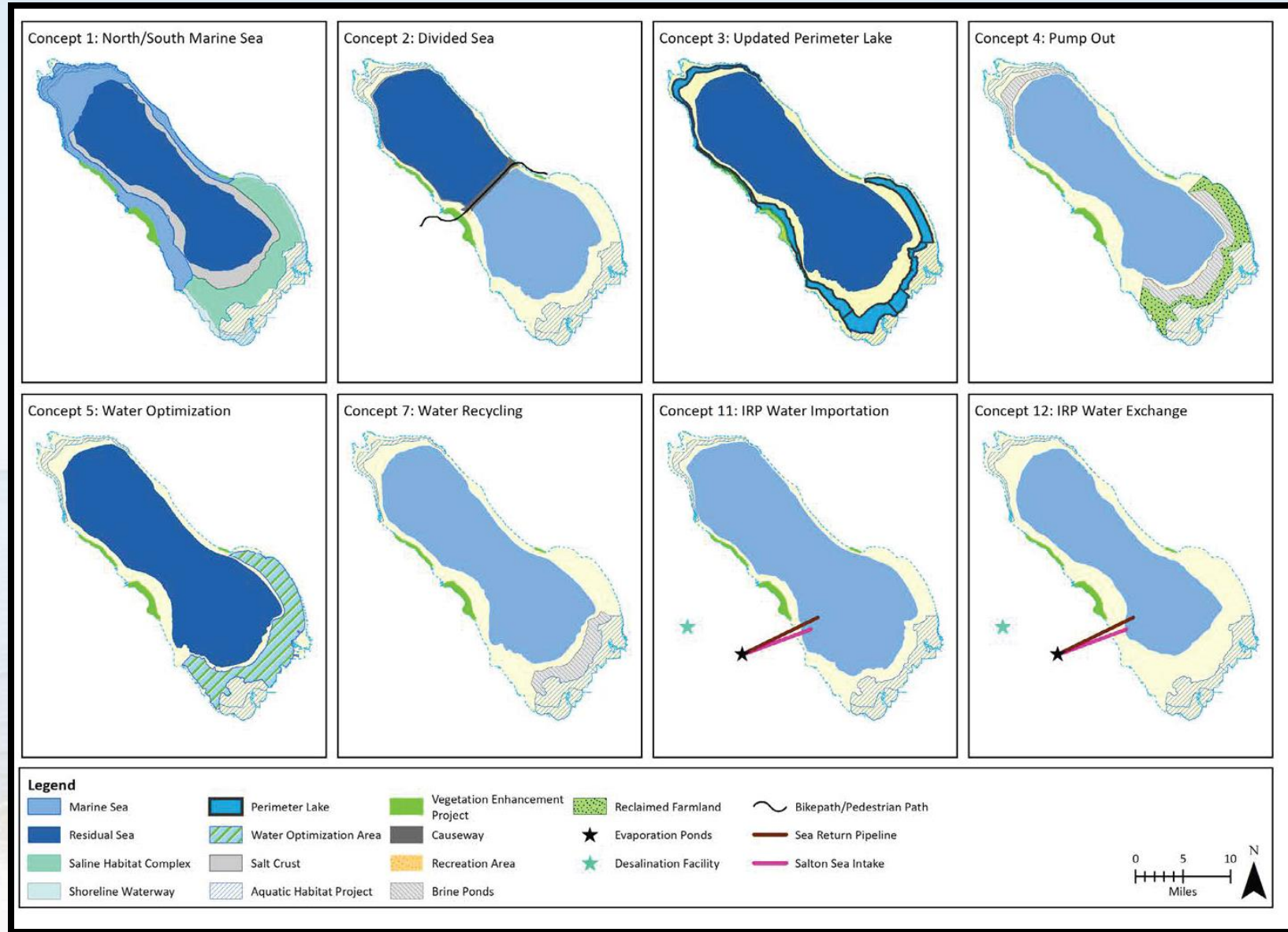
DRAFT Apr 16, 2015





Salton Sea





Long Range Plan

SEC. 3032. SALTON SEA RESTORATION, CALIFORNIA.

(a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) **SALTON SEA AUTHORITY.**—The term “Salton Sea Authority” means the joint powers authority established under the laws of the State by a joint power agreement signed on June 2, 1993.

(2) **SALTON SEA SCIENCE OFFICE.**—The term “Salton Sea Science Office” means the office established by the United States Geological Survey and located on the date of enactment of this Act in La Quinta, California.

(3) **STATE.**—The term “State” means the State of California.

(b) **PILOT PROJECTS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—

(A) **REVIEW.**—The Secretary shall review the plan approved by the State, entitled the “Salton Sea Ecosystem Restoration Program Preferred Alternative Report and Funding Plan”, and dated May 2007 to determine whether the pilot projects described in the plan are feasible.

(B) **IMPLEMENTATION.**—

(i) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to clause (ii), if the Secretary determines that the pilot projects referred to in subparagraph (A) meet the requirements described in that subparagraph, the Secretary may—

(I) enter into an agreement with the State; and

(II) in consultation with the Salton Sea Authority and the Salton Sea Science Office, carry out pilot projects for improvement of the environment in the area of the Salton Sea.

(ii) **REQUIREMENT.**—The Secretary shall be a party to each contract for construction entered into under this subparagraph.

(2) **LOCAL PARTICIPATION.**—In prioritizing pilot projects under this section, the Secretary shall—

(A) consult with the State, the Salton Sea Authority, and the Salton Sea Science Office; and

(B) take into consideration the priorities of the State and the Salton Sea Authority.

(3) **COST SHARING.**—Before carrying out a pilot project under this section, the Secretary shall enter into a written agreement with the State that requires the non-Federal interest for the pilot project to pay 35 percent of the total costs of the pilot project.

(c) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out subsection (b) \$30,000,000, of which not more than \$5,000,000 shall be used for any one pilot project under this section.

United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

Salton Sea and Tributaries, Riverside, Imperial, and San Diego Counties, California

**RESOLVED BY THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC
WORKS OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE**

Resolved by the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the United States Senate, The Secretary of the Army is hereby requested to review the reports of the Chief of Engineers contained in the preliminary examination report on flood control for all streams in San Diego and Imperial Counties, California, flowing into Salton Sea, dated July 15, 1943, and other pertinent reports to determine advisability of Federal participation in providing improvements for flood risk management, ecosystem restoration, and other water and land related resources for Salton Sea and the vicinity including all tributaries with a view towards restoration and protection of the environment, and improvements to public health and safety for Salton Sea and Tributaries, Riverside, Imperial, and San Diego Counties, California.


Chairman


Ranking Minority Member

Adopted: 4/28/16

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7575

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 30, 2020

Received

AN ACT

To provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes.

7 (e) **SALTON SEA, CALIFORNIA.**—In carrying out the
8 program to implement projects to restore the Salton Sea,
9 California, authorized by section 3032 of the Water Re-
0 sources Development Act of 2007 (121 Stat. 1113; 130
1 Stat. 1677), the Secretary is authorized to carry out a
2 study for the construction of a perimeter lake, or a north-
3 ern or southern subset thereof, for the Salton Sea, Cali-
4 fornia.

Federal Support



AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
AND
THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
AND
THE SALTON SEA AUTHORITY
FOR THE
IMPERIAL STREAMS SALTON SEA AND TRIBUTARIES FEASIBILITY STUDY, CA

THIS AGREEMENT is entered into this 16th day of December 2022, by and between the Department of the Army (hereinafter the "Government"), represented by the District Commander for Los Angeles District (hereinafter the "District Commander") and the California Department of Water Resources and the Salton Sea Authority (hereinafter the "Non-Federal Sponsors"), represented by the Director for California Department of Water Resources and the Executive Director for Salton Sea Authority.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Agreement, which shall become effective upon the date it is signed by the District Commander.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

BY: *Julie A. Balten*
Julie A. Balten
Colonel, U.S. Army
District Commander

DATE: 16 December 2022

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER
RESOURCES

BY: *Cindy Messer*
Cindy Messer
Lead Deputy Director

DATE: 16 December 2022

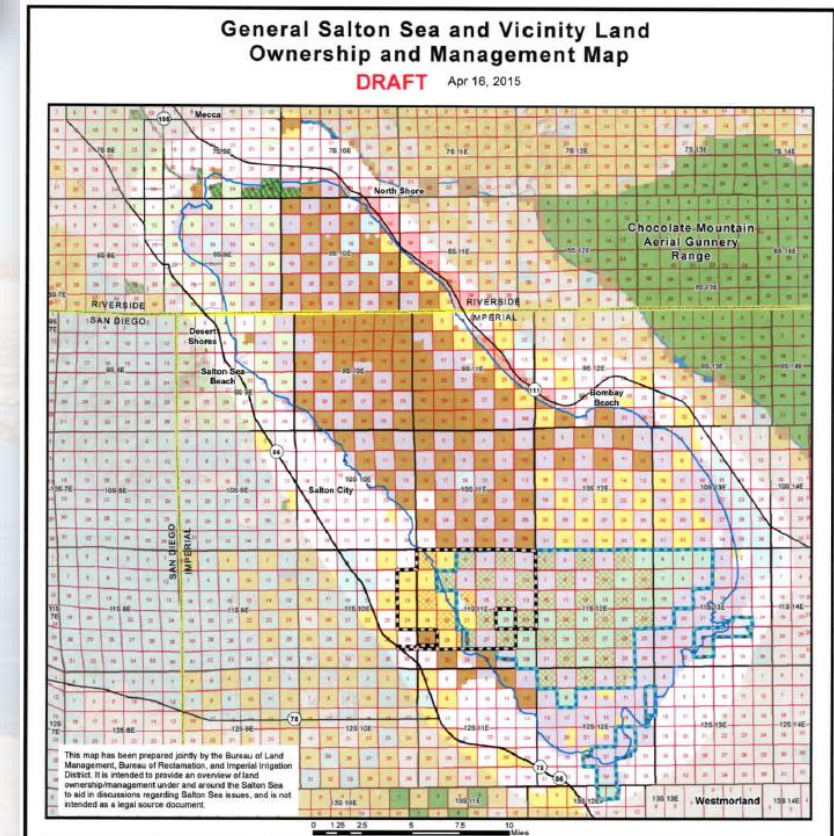
SALTON SEA AUTHORITY

BY: *G. Patrick O'Dowd*
G. Patrick O'Dowd
Executive Director

DATE: 16 December 2022



Feasibility Study



Water Resources Development Act

Salton Sea Authority

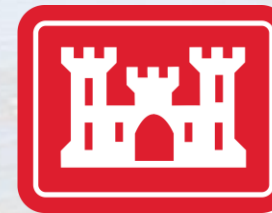
H₂O



Health, Habitat, Opportunities

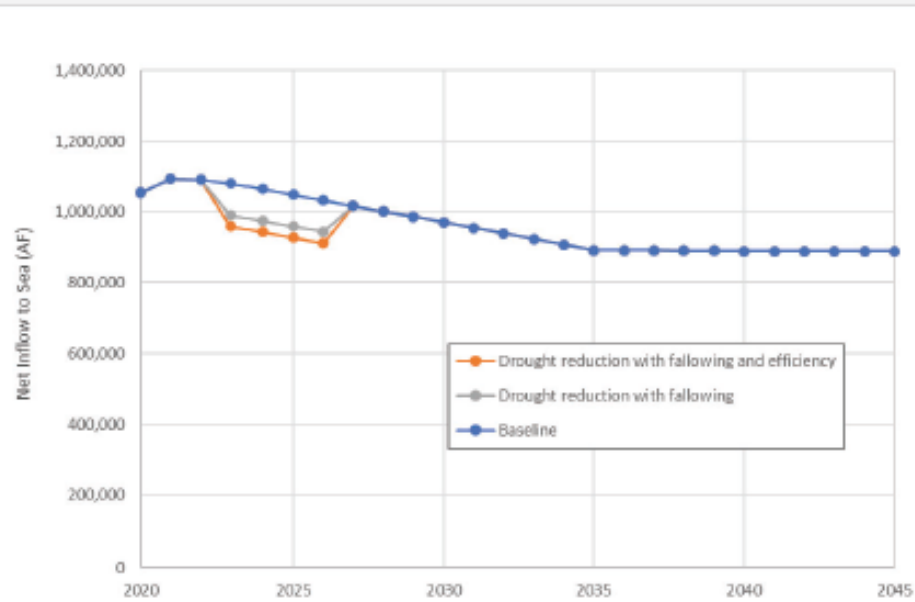
Salton Sea Authority

Members, Partners, and Stakeholders

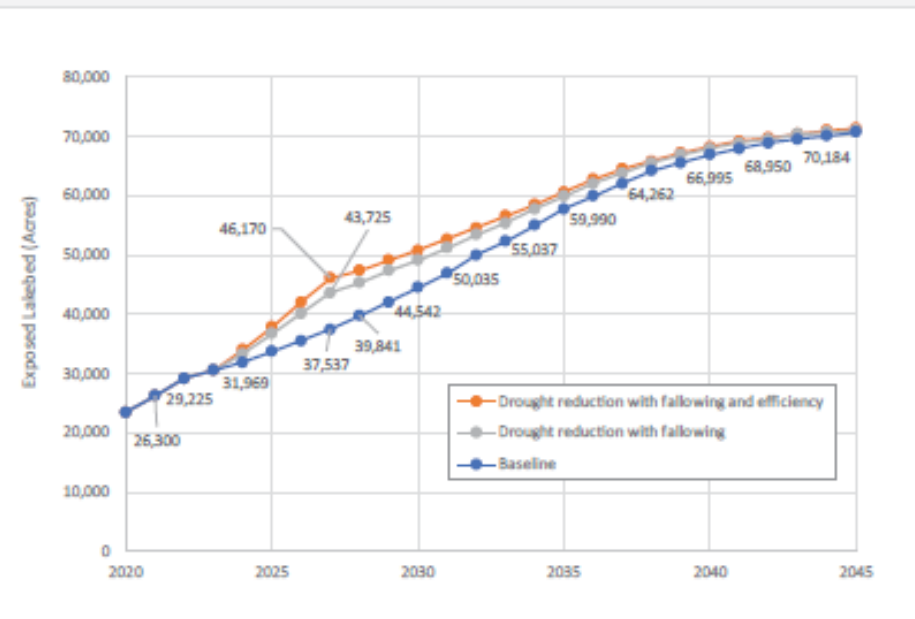


June 14, 2022

MODELED INFLOW SCENARIOS



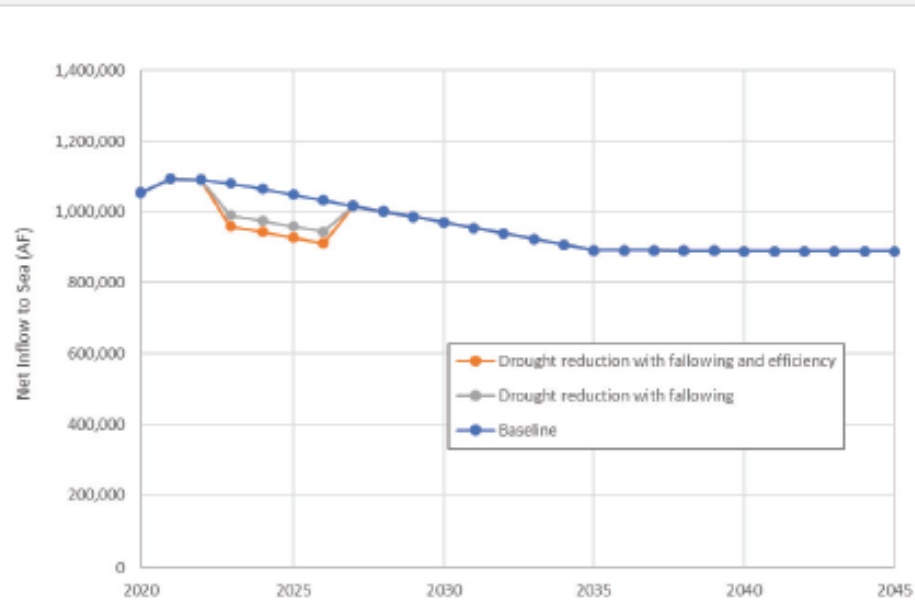
IMPACT TO EXPOSED LAKEBED FROM DROUGHT REDUCTION SCENARIOS (2020-2045)



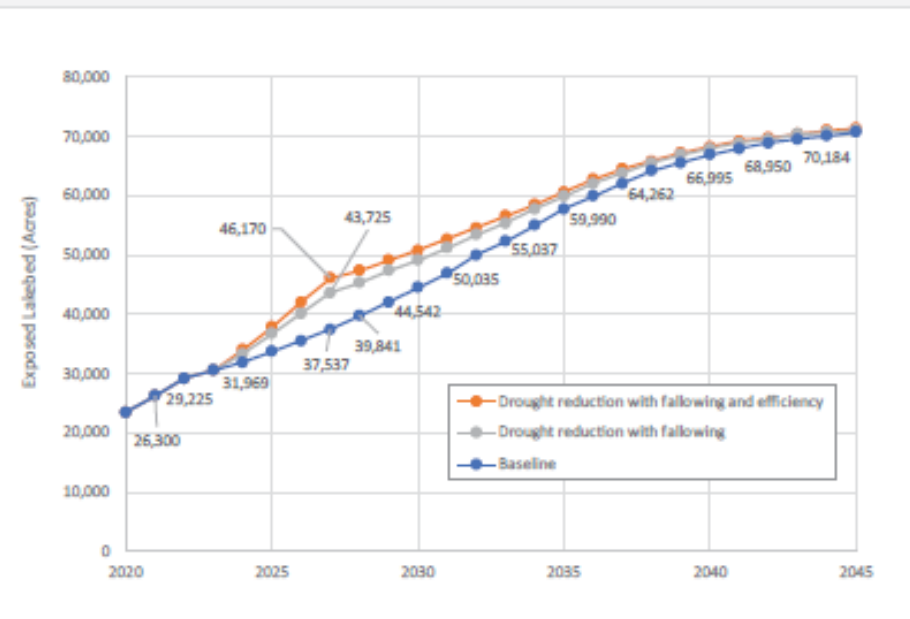
The maximum expected increase in exposed lakebed resulting from 250,000 AF of water conserved in Imperial County ranges from 6,200 acres to 8,600 acres, which would occur in 2027.

Colorado River Challenges

MODELED INFLOW SCENARIOS



IMPACT TO EXPOSED LAKEBED FROM DROUGHT REDUCTION SCENARIOS (2020-2045)



The maximum expected increase in exposed lakebed resulting from 250,000 AF of water conserved in Imperial County ranges from 6,200 acres to 8,600 acres, which would occur in 2027.

Colorado River Challenges

Salton Sea Management Plan

Annual Report Data

Project Year	Cumulative Required	Annual Increase	Annual Report Cumulative Acres*		Variance
			2021	2022	
2021	7,000		2,255	1,277	(978)
2022	8,750	1,750	5,755	2,800	(2,955)
2023	11,500	2,750	11,600	7,500	(4,100)
2024	14,200	2,700	TBD	14,200	
2025	17,600	3,400	TBD	TBD	
2026	21,600	4,000	TBD	TBD	
2027	25,600	4,000	TBD	TBD	
2028	29,800	4,200	TBD	TBD	

** 2021 Annual Report reflects "Completed and Planned"
but 2022 report is "Cumulative"*

Colorado River Challenges