

A satellite map of the Salton Sea region in California. The Salton Sea is a large, dark, irregularly shaped body of water in the center. The surrounding area is mostly flat and brownish, indicating a dry or semi-arid environment. Several roads are visible, including Interstate 805 (I-805) running north-south on the right side, Interstate 805 (I-805) running north-south on the left side, and Interstate 78 (I-78) running east-west at the bottom. The city of Mecca is labeled in the top left, and Calipatria is labeled in the bottom right. The text "The Salton Sea & Southern California's Water Future: Part II" is overlaid in large white font in the upper half of the image.


The Salton Sea & Southern California's Water Future: Part II

Michael Cohen
Pacific Institute

Law of the (Colorado) River

June 22, 2017

MYTHBUSTERS

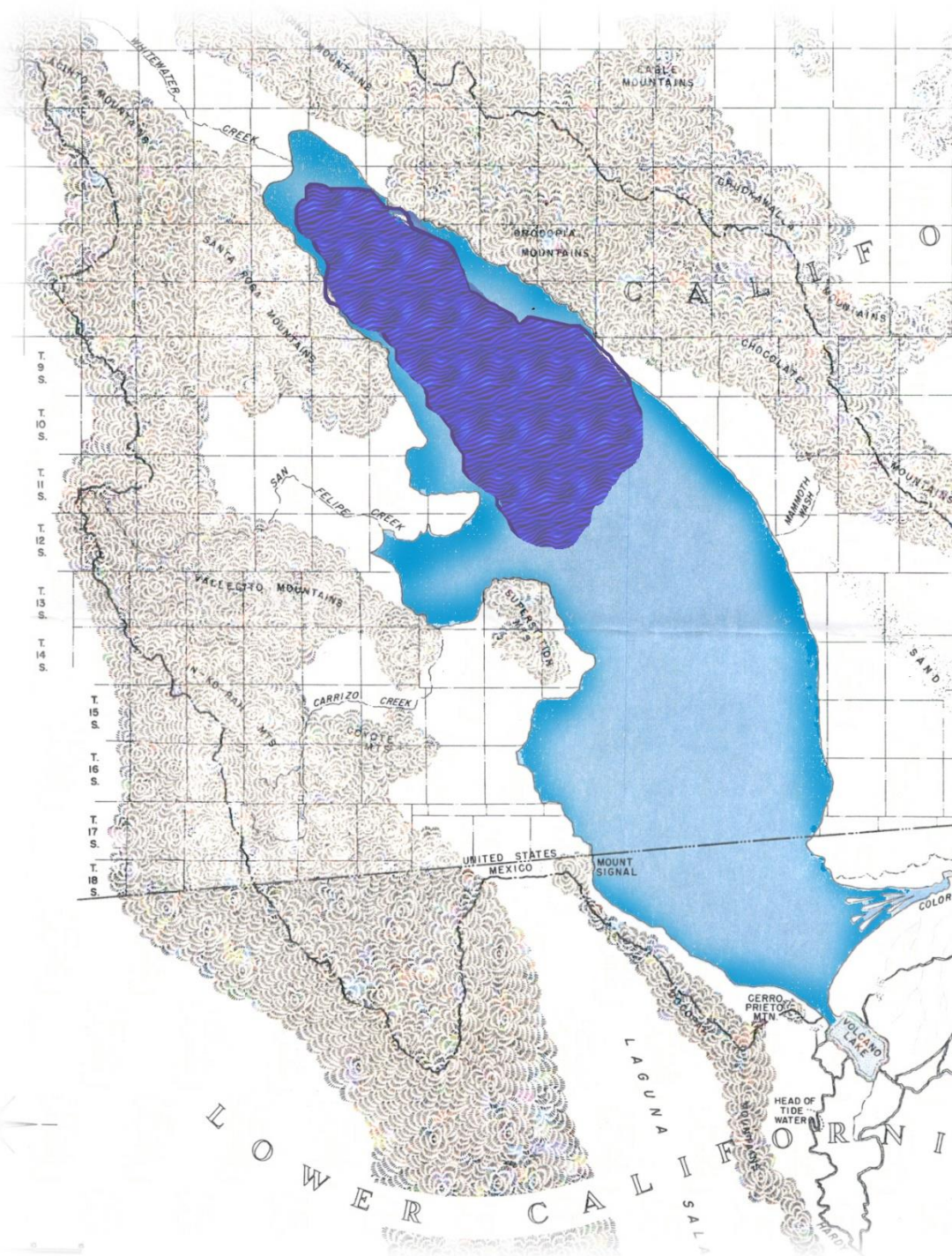


Salton Sea Myths

- Accidental Sea
- Birds will go elsewhere
- Current actions ok
- Ocean Pipeline a solution
- Intractable Issue

~~Accidental~~ Salton Sea

- CO River Delta
- Lake Cahuilla
- Birds don't care



Birds will go ~~anywhere~~ here?

*California's Dwindling
Wetlands*



1780:

5 million acres

1999:

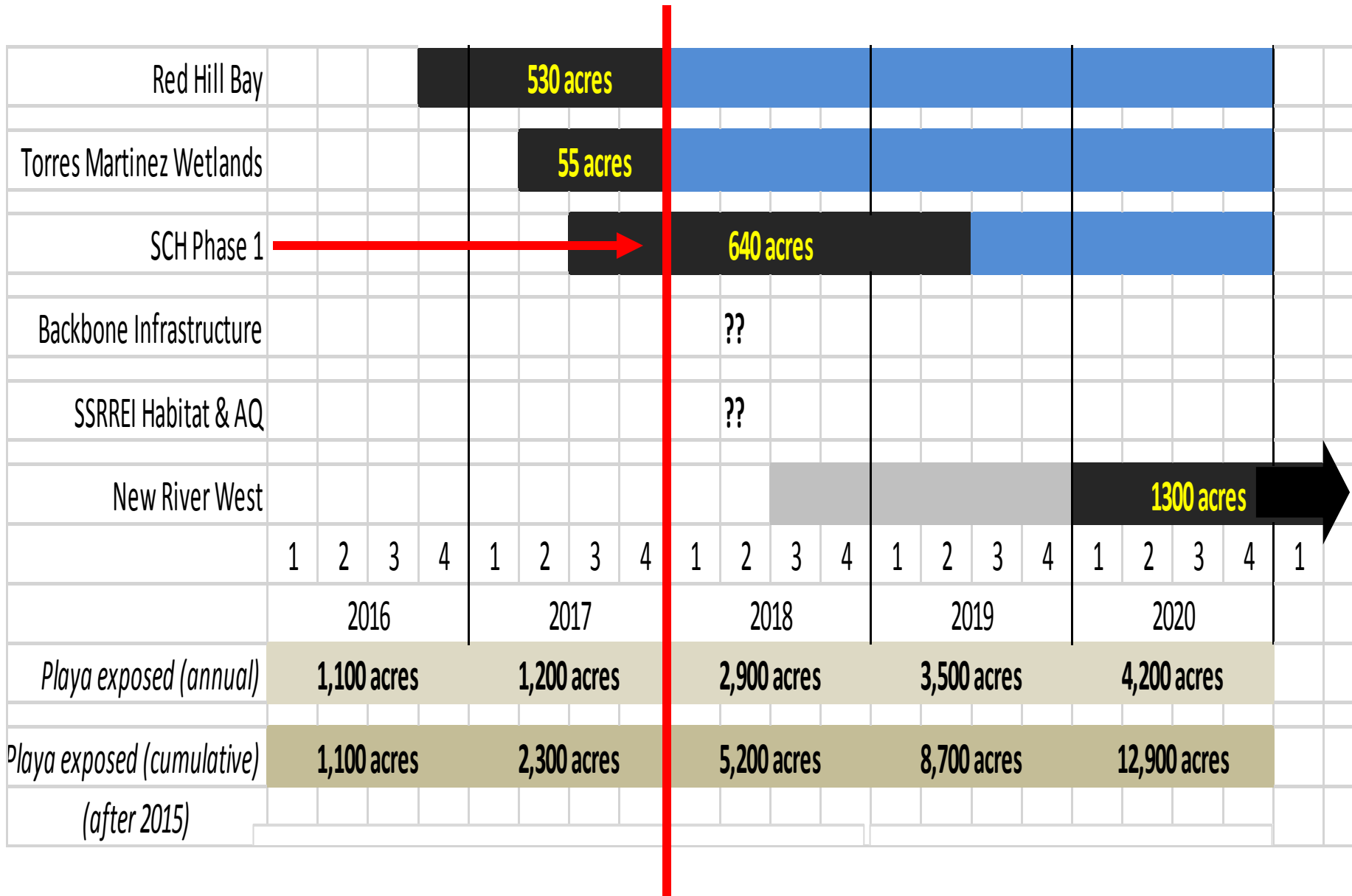
450,000 acres

“California has lost more than 90 percent of its wetlands since European discovery, more than any other state.” – CA SWRCB fact sheet

Progress to Date



Schedule from April 2016 “Shovel-Ready” report to CA Legislature



Re-pipelines?

Desalination proposals would use desalination plants instead of pumping water back to the ocean. One plan calls for the construction of 7 "Carlsbad-style" desal plants, to create 400 KAF/yr of pure water. This would cost about \$6 billion and would require about 270 Megawatts, enough to power 200,000 homes (and almost 50% of the existing geothermal capacity in Imperial Valley)



Source: pacinst.org/publication/salton-sea-importexport-plans/

-  Approximate Route to Pacific Ocean
-  Approximate Route to Gulf of California
-  Irrigated land in the Colorado River delta
-  Upper Gulf of California and Colorado River Delta Biosphere Reserve
-  Vaquita Refuge and vaquita sightings
- KAF** One thousand acre-feet, enough water for 3,000 families for a year

- Sea-to-Sea Challenges**
- high infrastructure costs
 - high energy requirements & costs
 - may require new treaty with Mexico
 - would require at least 30 years to stabilize the Salton Sea
 - would not solve short-term or medium-term ecological or public health hazards
 - many competing priorities at the state and federal levels



The vaquita is a small, extremely rare porpoise - fewer than 100 are believed to still exist.

Salts, Excess Phosphorus, Toxic Algae, Selenium

The Intractable Salton Sea

- Water – ✓
- Stakeholder support – ✓
- Funding – ✓
- Leadership – ?
- Long-term Commitment – X



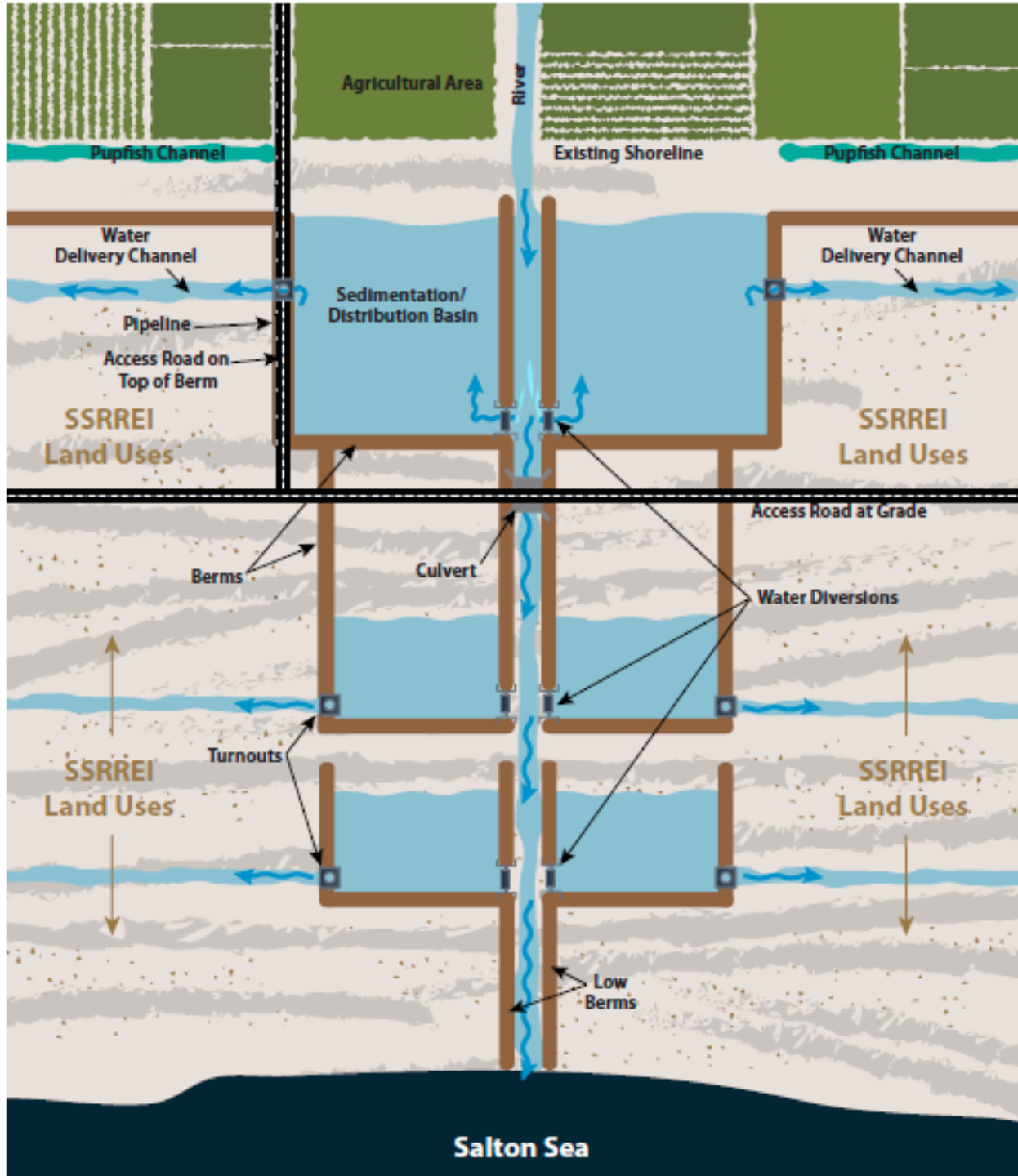
The Intractable Salton Sea

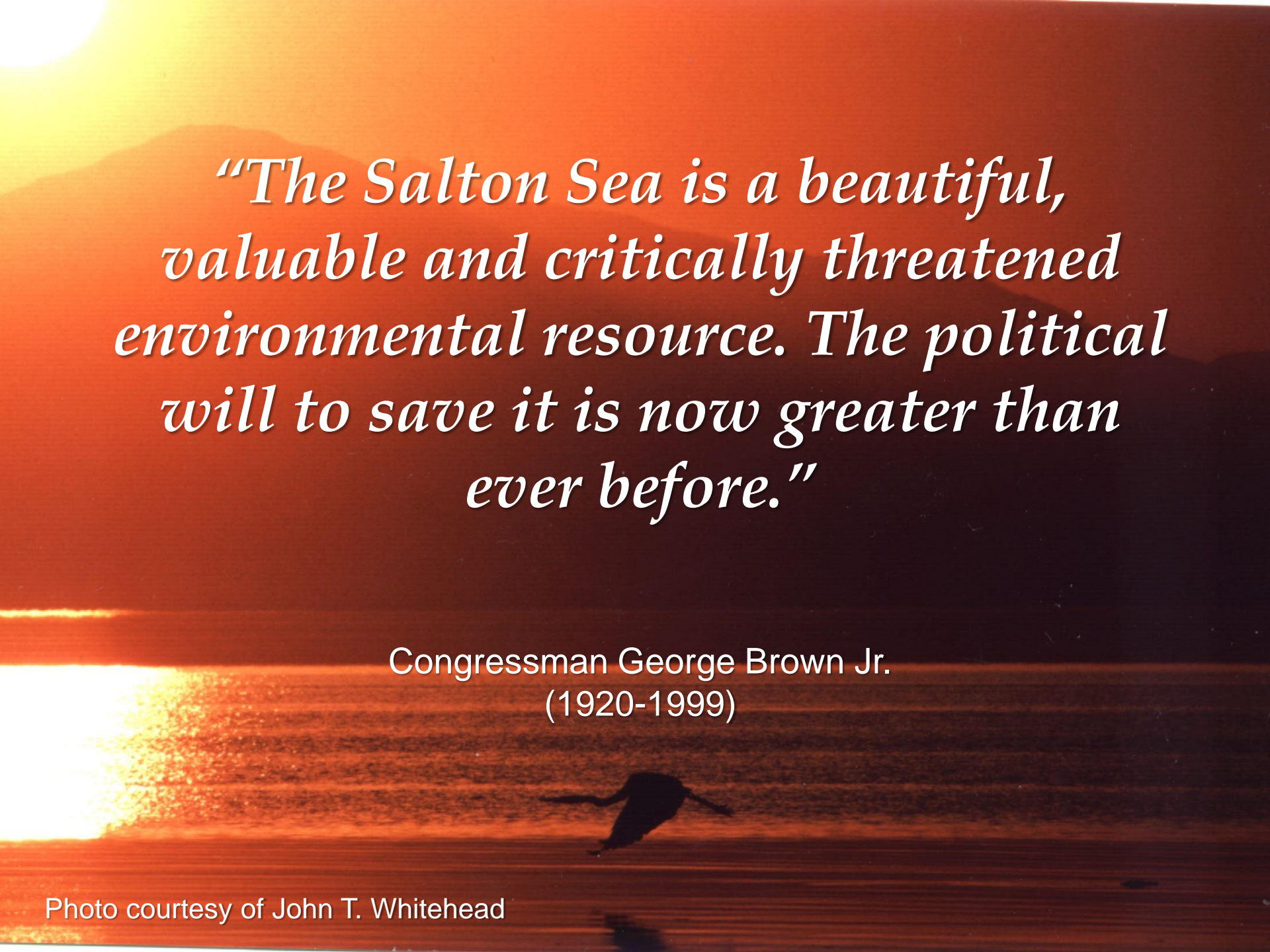
- **Consensus, no regrets solutions**
- **Proven projects**
- **Phased, incremental, functional**
- **Habitat, dust control, geothermal**
- **Federal O&M \$\$**

Salton Sea Ecosystem Monitoring Project



Reclamation/USGS Saline Habitat Pond



A sunset over a body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange and yellow glow. The water reflects the light, and a silhouette of a person is visible in the foreground. The background shows dark, silhouetted hills.

*“The Salton Sea is a beautiful,
valuable and critically threatened
environmental resource. The political
will to save it is now greater than
ever before.”*

Congressman George Brown Jr.
(1920-1999)