Introduction
• The Salton Sea is located on Southern California's San Andreas Fault, 236 ft below sea level.
• Until 1500, the waters of Lake Cahuilla covered the current Salton Sink (see Figure 1).
• The flood of 1905 widened the Colorado River and gave birth to the Salton Sea.
• The Salton Sea Atlas, published by the University of Redlands in 2002, manipulates the lake’s variegated history to appeal to stakeholders and politicians.

Research Objective & Methods
• We aim to expose the Atlas’ self-serving approach by recentering the narratives of those who have suffered most from the greed and neglect wrought upon the region.
• There were two parts to our research process:
  1. Reading the Atlas and flagging misleading claims.
  2. Exploring credible literature to fact-check the Atlas.

Findings
• The Atlas creates a “resurgence” narrative, claiming the Salton Sea has a bright economic future (see Table 1 and Figure 3). Why?
  1. To exonerate themselves.
  2. To attract businesses to the region.
  3. To dissuade policy makers from diverting water away from the Salton sink.
• Through text size and images, the authors hide facts that clash with their ulterior motives (see Figure 2).

Erasure & Environmental Racism
• The Atlas does not properly acknowledge the role of settlers in erasing Cahuilla culture (see Table 2).
• The authors present the reader with a culturally-biased and inaccurate history of Cahuilla lives.
• The Atlas makes no mention of neighboring Latino communities suffering most from poor air conditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Resurgence Narrative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Atlas</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Sea is full of life.” (pg. 36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Salton Sea was not polluted.” (preface)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion
• The Salton Sea is full of contradictions, from being a vital bird habitat to the site of massive die-offs, an unintentional creation to a popular tourist destination, and its future is imperilled.
• More perspectives are needed to reach appropriate solutions.
• Due to the Atlas' biases and misleading statements, we recommend that the Western Waters Archive diversify their collection of readings on the Salton Sea.

Recommended additions to the archive:
• Haven or Hazard: *The Ecology and Future of the Salton Sea* by Michael J. Cohen, Jason I. Morrison, and Edward P. Glenn
• *The Settler Sea: California's Salton Sea and the consequences of Colonialism* by Traci Brynne Voyles

Table 2. Burying Stories
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Atlas</strong></th>
<th><strong>Outside Research</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Population estimates of the Cahuilla people before Spanish contact in 1774 were at 10,000 (...) Today, there are only about 1,000 Cahuilla in the Salton Basin.” (21)</td>
<td>“The Cahuilla (...) would not be able to support themselves if the theft of their land and water continued.” (Bean, 91).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Spaniards, Mexicans, and Americans each made contact the Cahuilla, exposing them to new people, new ways, and disease.” (22)</td>
<td>“Miles of dusty shoreline are exposed to desert winds. This creates perilous respiratory health conditions for nearby communities, the majority of which are nonwhite, non-English speaking, and economically vulnerable.” (Voyles)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. The Salton Sea sits on ancient Lake Cahuilla
Figure 2. Burying facts with small fonts
Figure 3. In one day in August 1999, 7.6 million fish died.
Bibliography


