

# Reshaping the Western United States, from Ag to Urban During the Drought

IWRA Conference  
Scotland, May 2015  
Therese Ure



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# Ag-Urban Transfers

- Food Production
- Cooperation
- Rotation
- Urban Reinvestment



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# Western Water: Three Fundamental Principles

1. Beneficial Use
2. Diversion
3. Appurtenance





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# First Principle: Beneficial Use

“Beneficial use is the basis, measure and limit of all rights to the use of water.”





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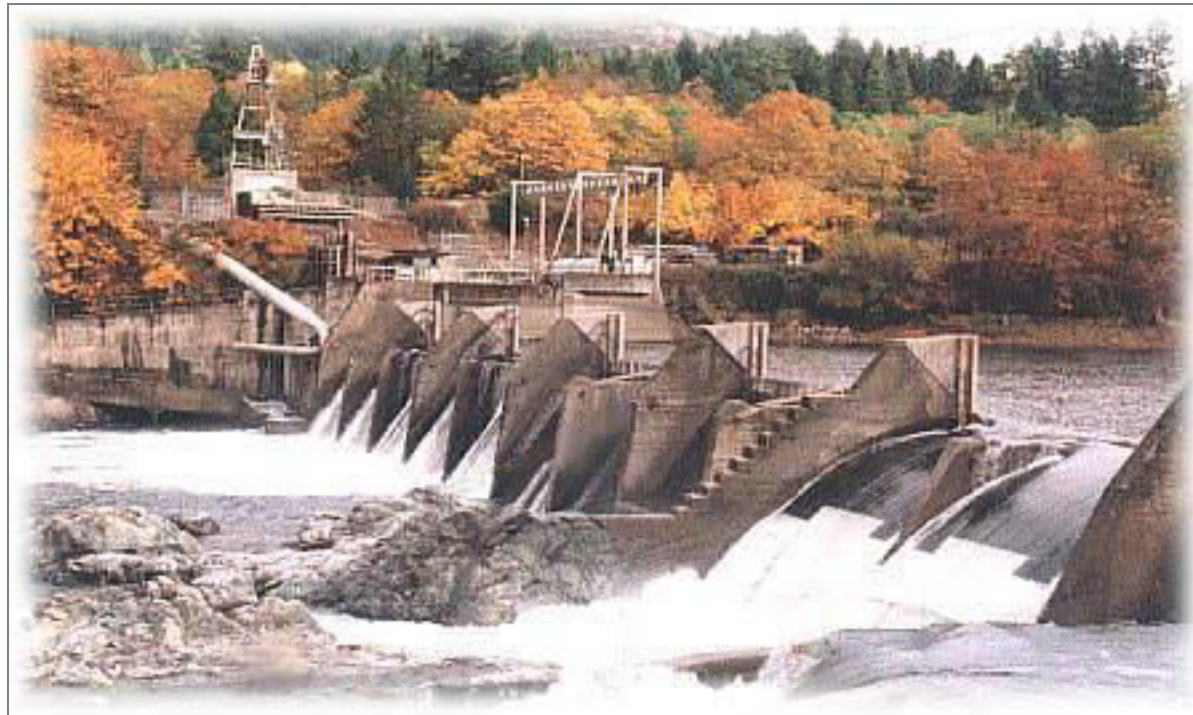
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## Second Principle: Diversion

Right to use water awarded to the first to divert it from the natural course



**“First in time, first in right”**



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# Third Principle: Appurtenance

Water right is appurtenant to the land where perfected

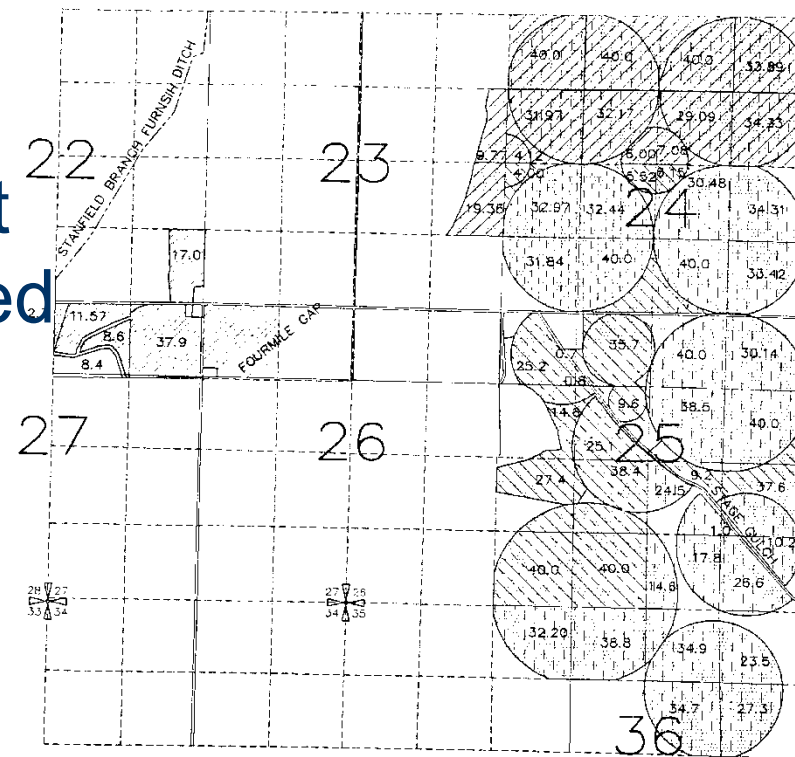
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




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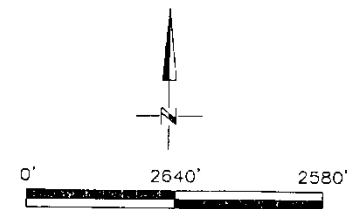
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-  1965 PERMIT NO.
-  1905 DECREE
-  PERMIT NO. G-2874
-  PERMIT NO. G-10452
-  APPL NO. G-8209 PRIMARY G-8209  
SUPPLEMENTAL G-8446
-  SUPPLEMENTAL PERMIT G-8446 & G-8209



NOTE: THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAP IS TO IDENTIFY THE APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF THE WATER RIGHT. IT IS NOT INTENDED TO PROVIDE INFORMATION RELATIVE TO THE LOCATION OF PROPERTY OWNERSHIP BOUNDARY LINES.

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Bob Gottlieb and Peter Wiley  
"Selling Water, or Selling Out?" pp 28-34, *Western Water Made Simple*, High Country News, 1987



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## Water Rights Characteristics Subject to Change

- Place of Use
- Point of Diversion
- Type/Manner of Use
- Season of Use
- Rate
- Duty





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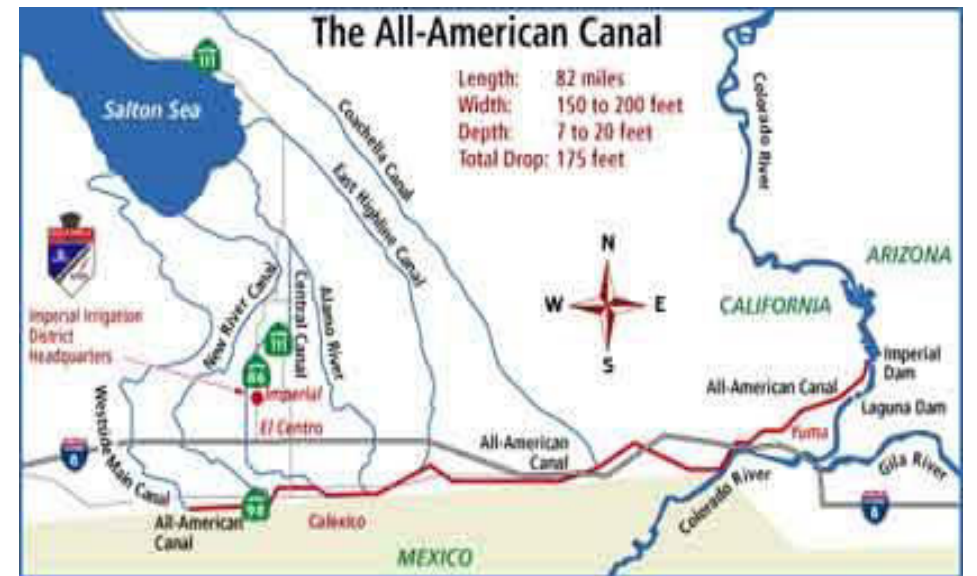
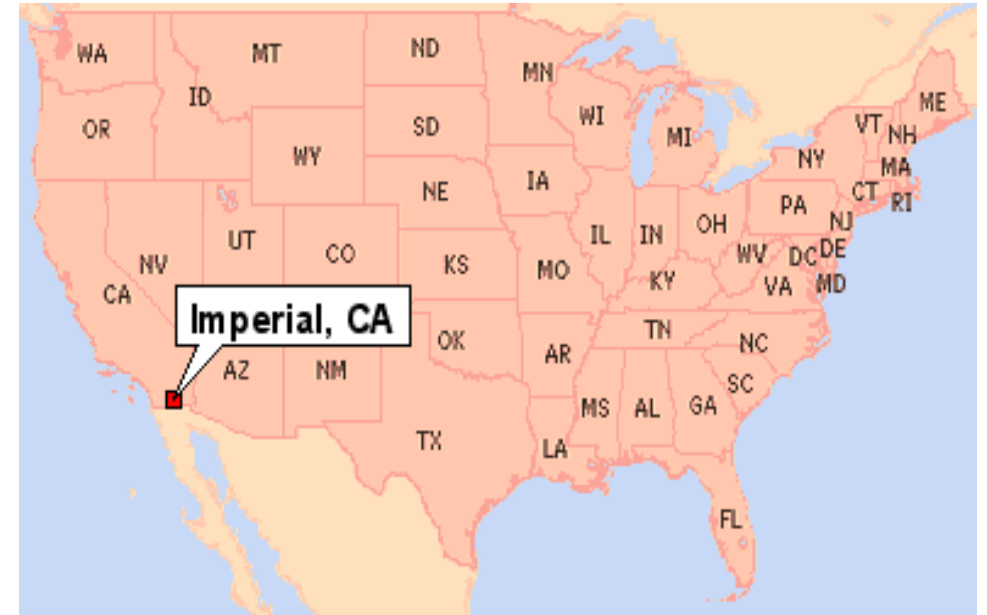
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# Southern California

- Imperial Irrigation District
- Oldest water rights
- 2014:
  - 12,970 acres following
  - Savings 69,000 AF





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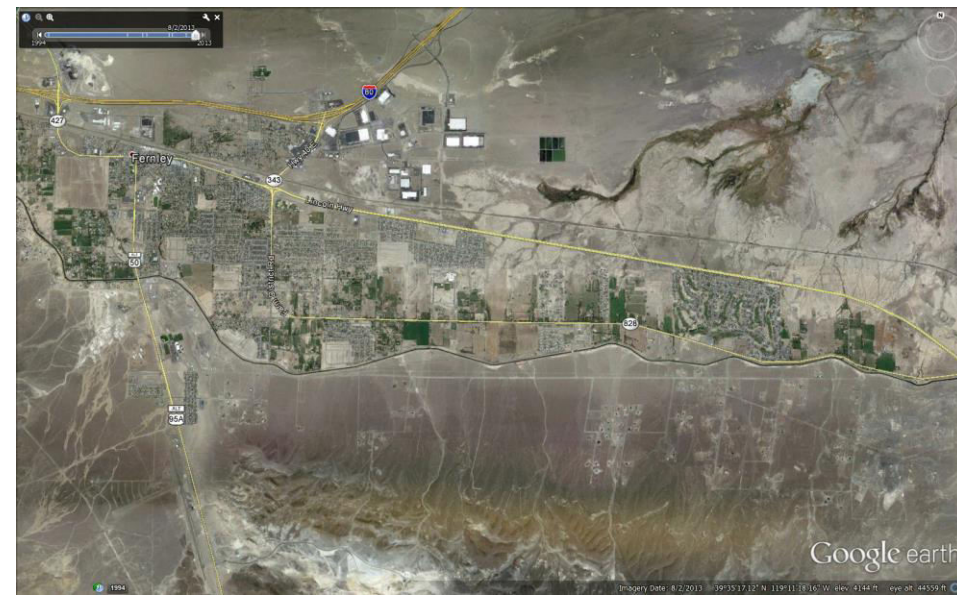
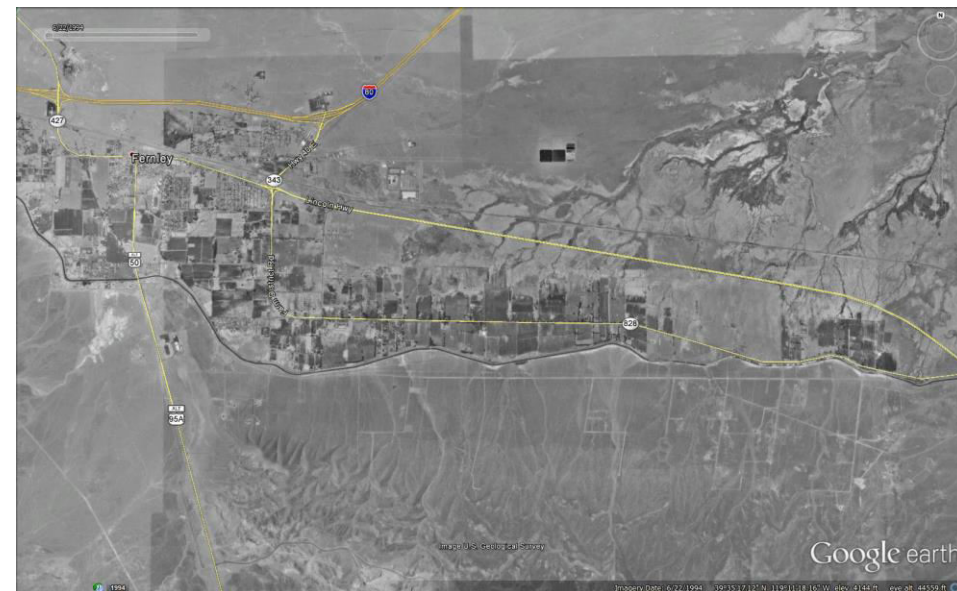
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# Northern Nevada

- Truckee River Operating Agreement
- Settlement w/o all interested parties
- Water shortages and decades long litigation





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# Las Vegas

- Southern Nevada Water Authority
- Groundwater pipeline
- BLM approval, followed by litigation





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# Ag-Urban Transfer Impacts

- Rural economies
  - Communities
- Ecology
- Food Security
- Increased Imports



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# Conclusions

- Food Production Protection
- Cooperation
- Rotation
- Urban Reinvestment



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Thank You  
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