



History of the Walker River

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**Nevada Division of Water Resources
Nevada Water Resources Association**

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History of the Walker River

Introduction

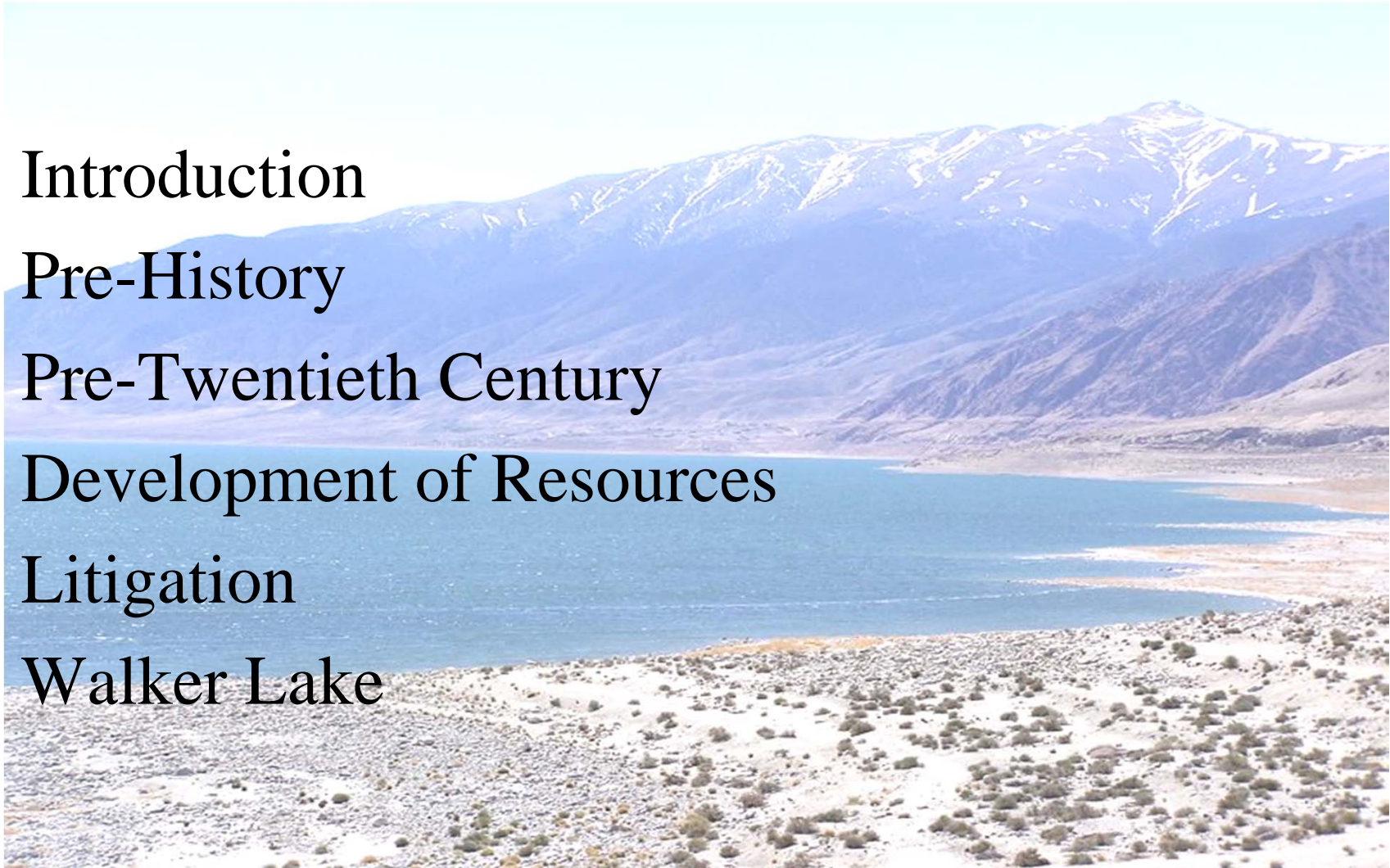
Pre-History

Pre-Twentieth Century

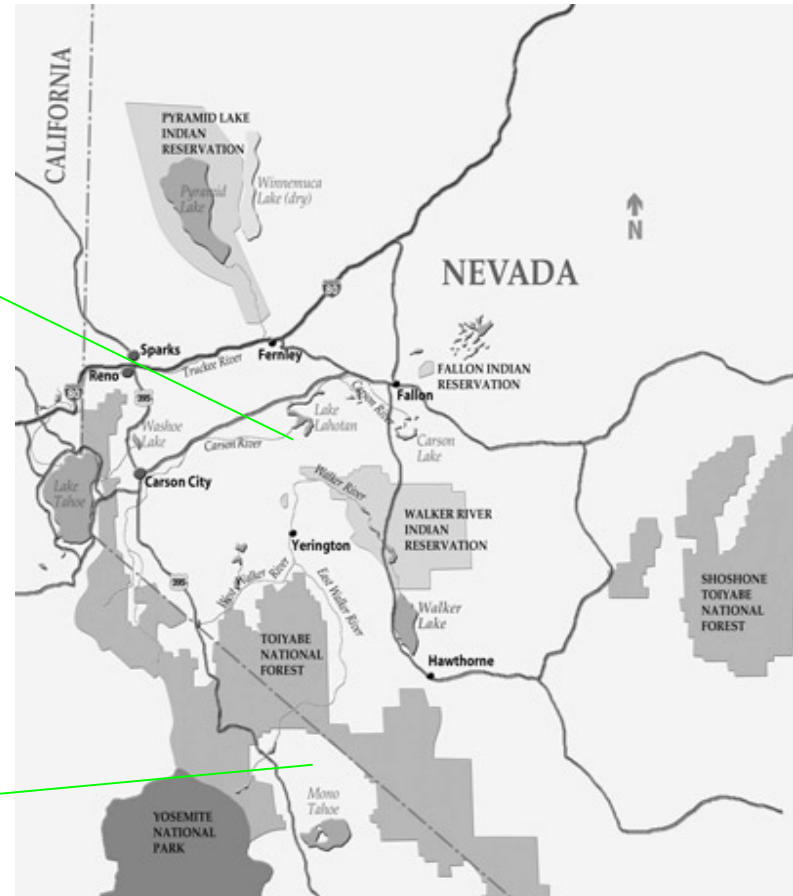
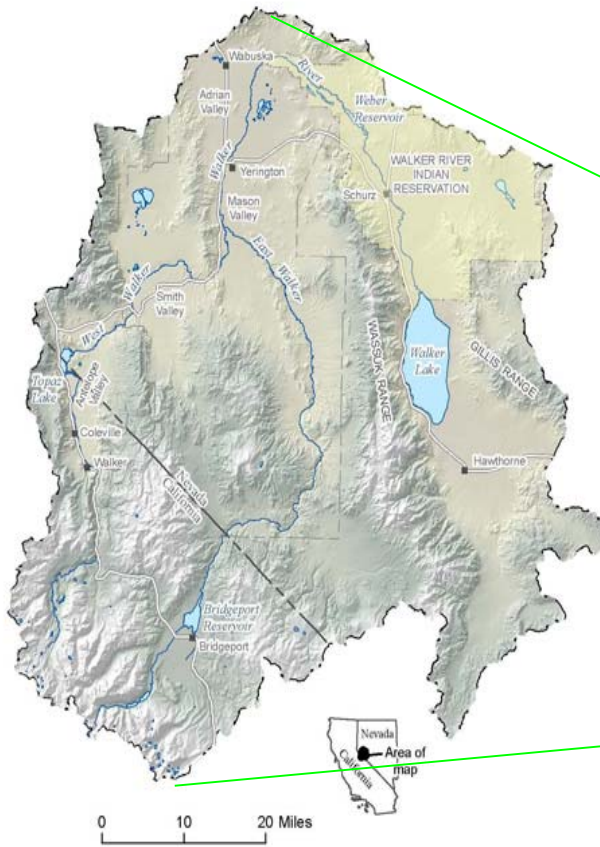
Development of Resources

Litigation

Walker Lake



Introduction



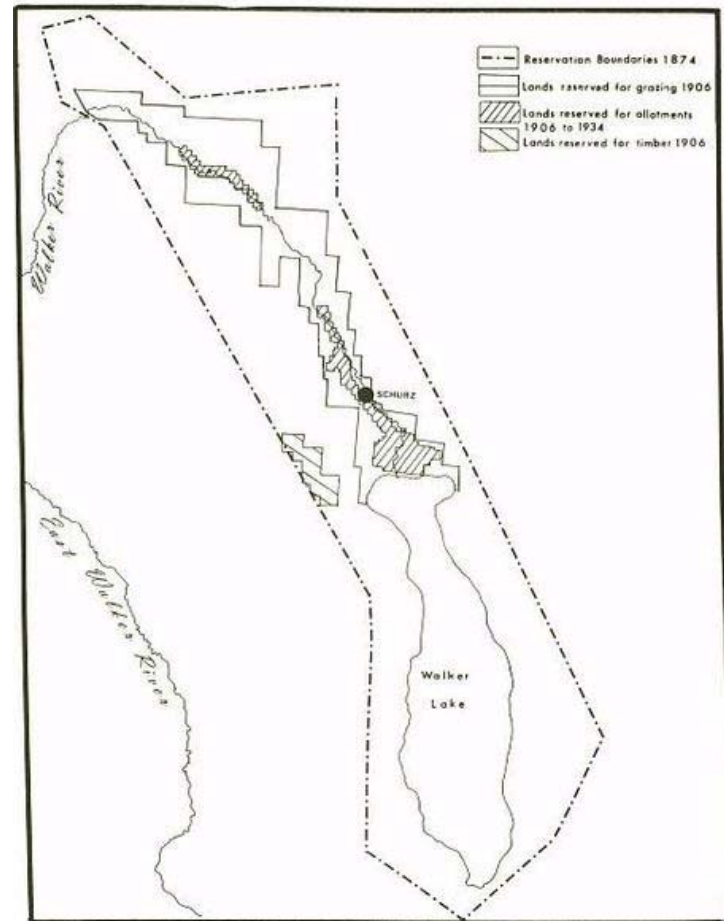
Prehistory

- Covered by prehistoric Lake Lahontan
- Prehistory native people inhabited the area and became dependent on the river system



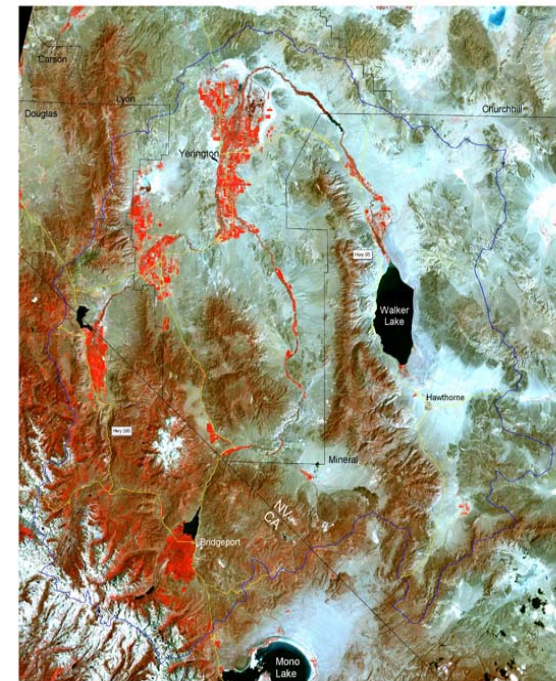
Pre-Twentieth Century

- 1833 the first recorded passage by explorers
- 1856 first settlement established
- 1859 establishment of Walker River Indian Reservation



Development of Resources

- Livestock Industry
- Agricultural production
- Mining



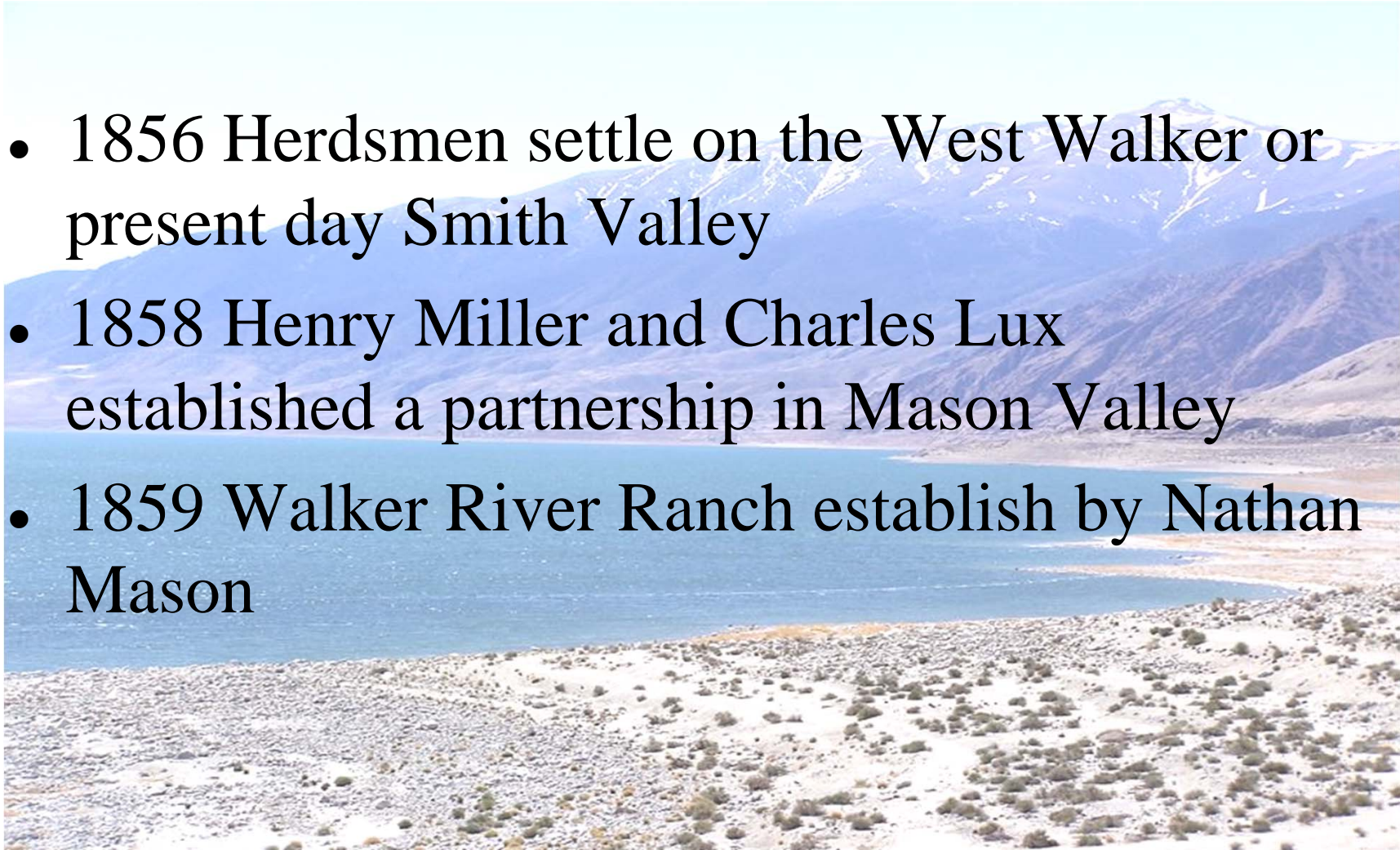
Legend
Water (Blue) River Network
Irrigated Lands
Riparian Corridors

Scale bar: 0 10 20 Miles

Landsat Thematic Mapper Satellite image of the Walker River Basin - Acquired August 7, 1995.
Bright red areas are irrigated lands and riparian corridors.

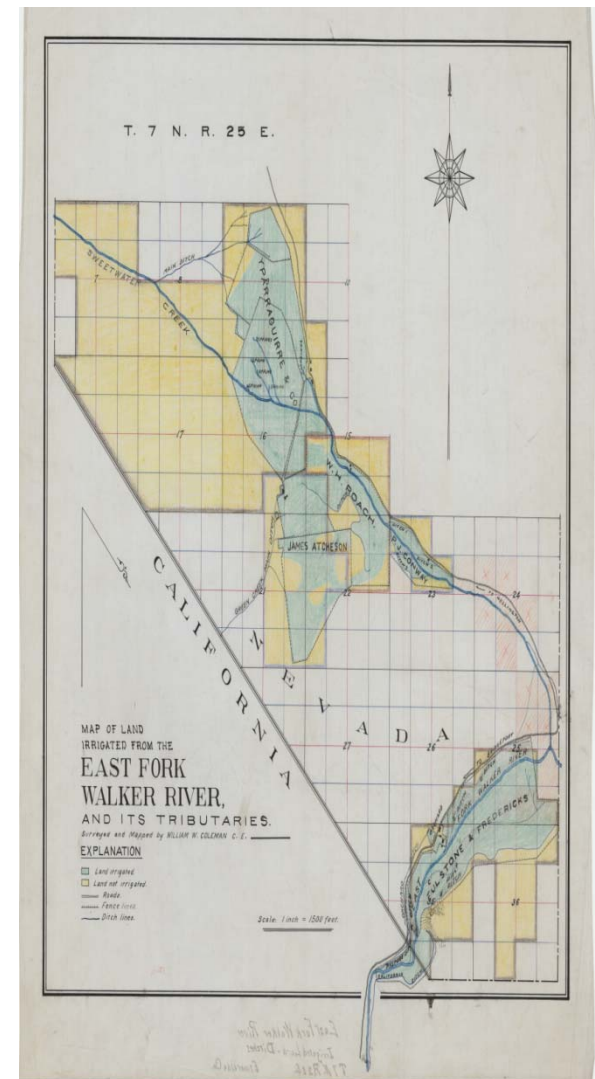
Livestock

- 1856 Herdsmen settle on the West Walker or present day Smith Valley
- 1858 Henry Miller and Charles Lux established a partnership in Mason Valley
- 1859 Walker River Ranch establish by Nathan Mason



Agricultural Development

- 1860 Irrigation first reported
- 1919 Formation of Walker River Irrigation District
- 1922 – 1923 Topaz and Bridgeport Reservoir constructed
- 1933 Weber Reservoir constructed on the Walker River Indian Reservation



Mining

- 1859 Discovery of gold in Bodie Hills
- 1861 Gold discovered in Aurora
- Late 1860's Pine Grove & Rockland District
- 1881 Discovery of copper in the Singatse Range
- 1918 Anaconda opened as Empire Nevada Mine (Weed Heights)
- 2015 Pumpkin Hollow Project project to start

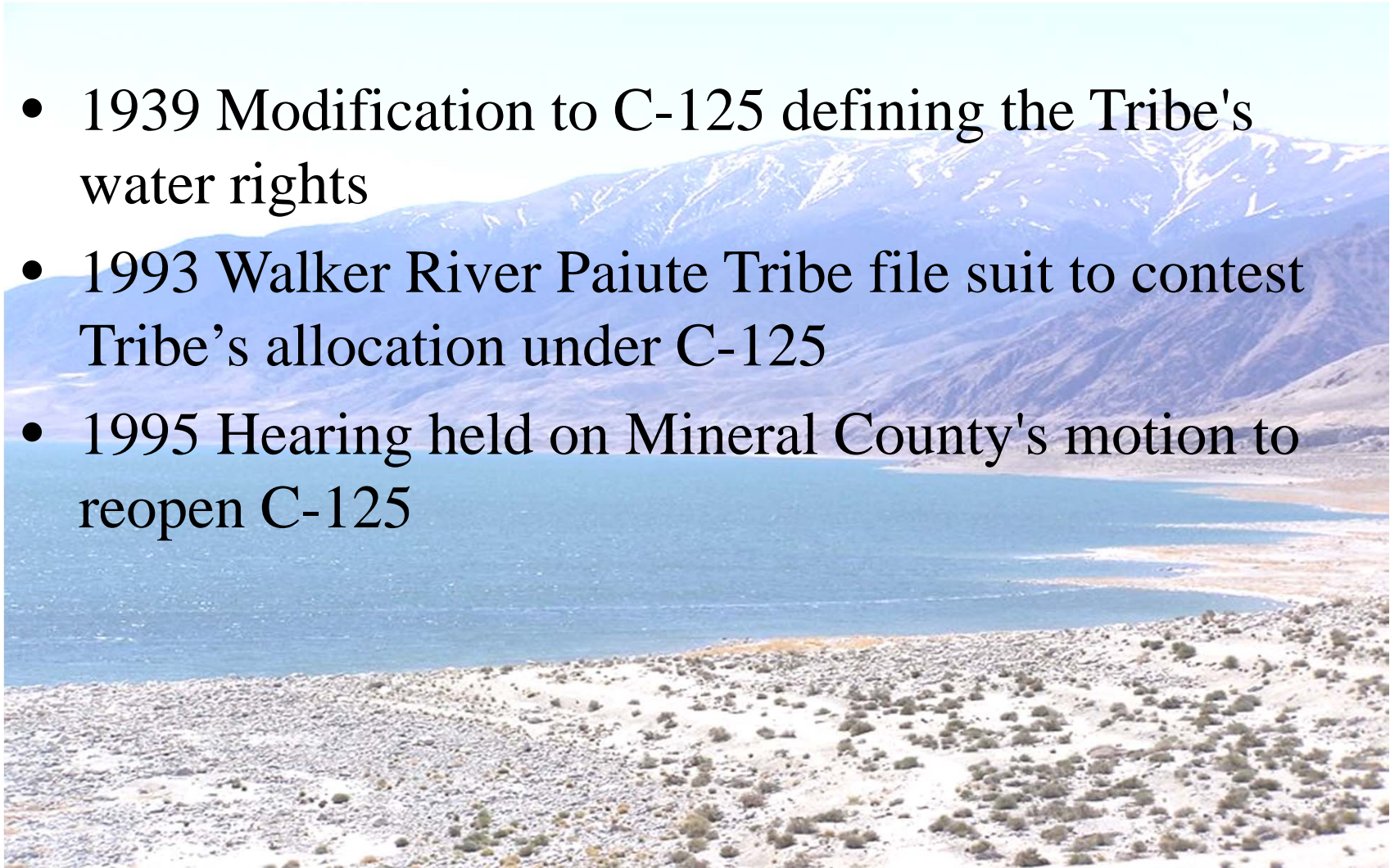


Litigation

- 1902 *Miller et Lux v. Rickey* suit filed
- 1919 Issuance of Decree 731, *Pacific Livestock Company v. Antelope Valley Land and Cattle Company*
- 1924 *United States v Walker River Irrigation District* filed to define Tribes water rights relative to upstream users
- 1936 Final Decree, USDC Nevada Equity C-125, *US v. Walker River Irrigation District*

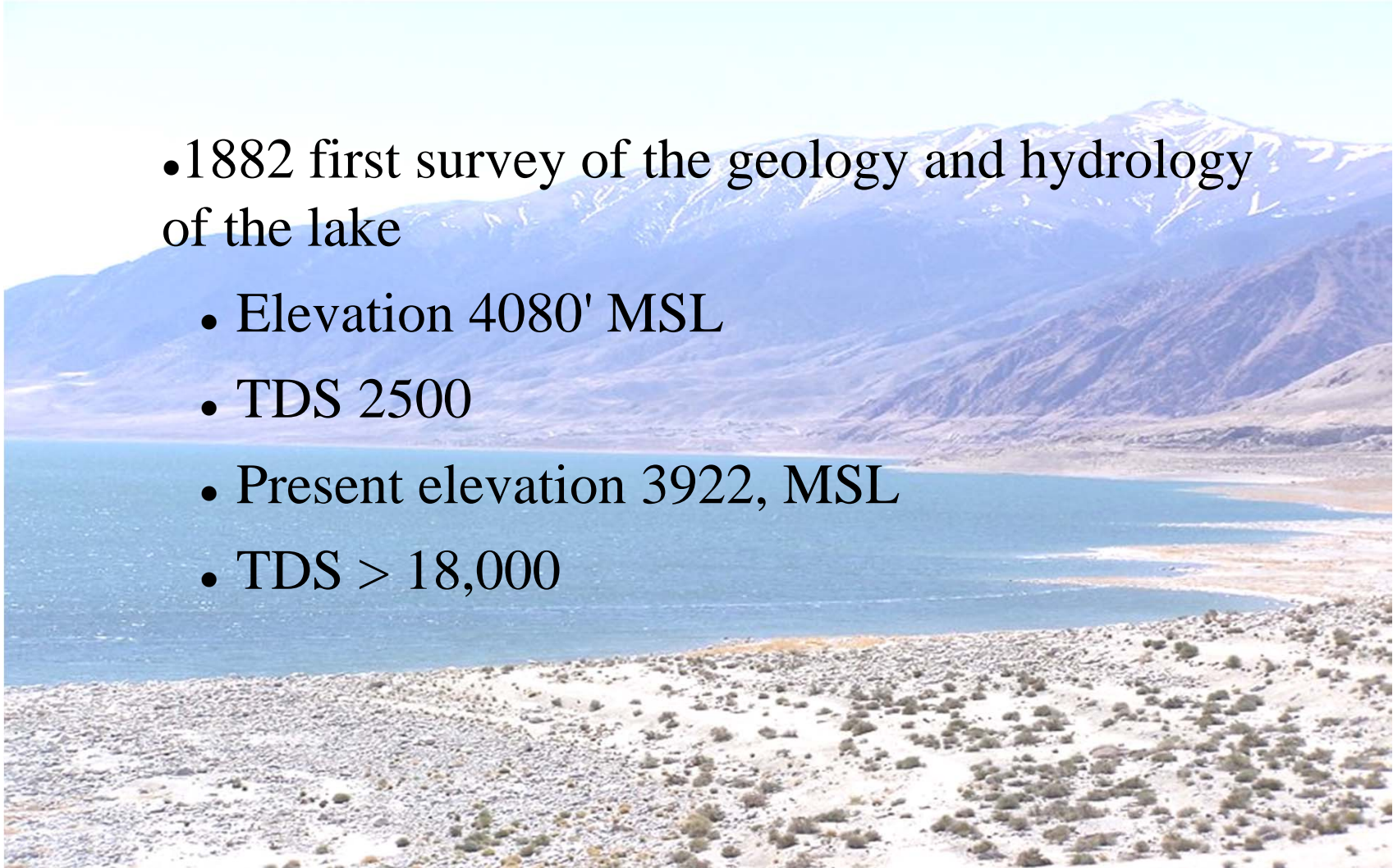
Litigation

- 1939 Modification to C-125 defining the Tribe's water rights
- 1993 Walker River Paiute Tribe file suit to contest Tribe's allocation under C-125
- 1995 Hearing held on Mineral County's motion to reopen C-125



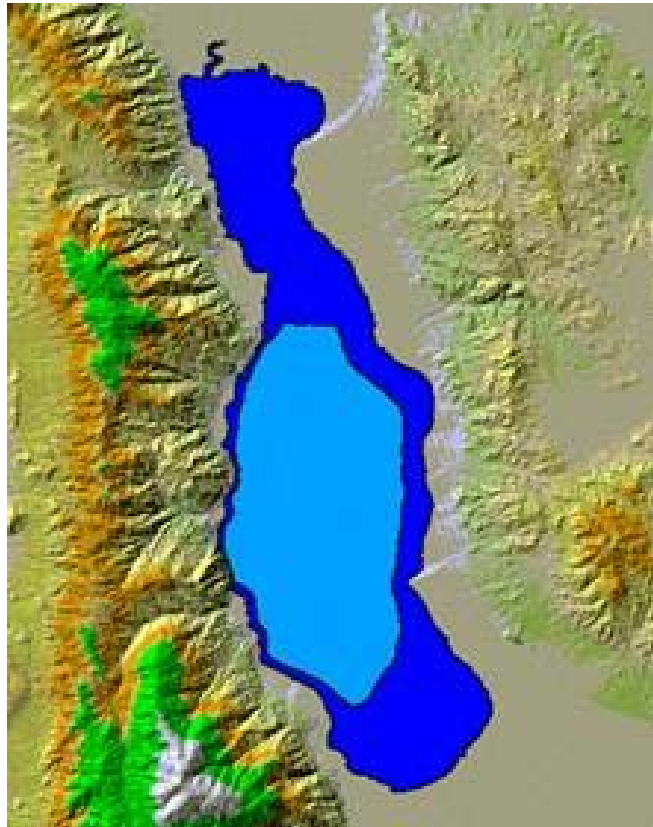
Walker Lake

- 1882 first survey of the geology and hydrology of the lake
 - Elevation 4080' MSL
 - TDS 2500
 - Present elevation 3922, MSL
 - TDS > 18,000



Walker Lake

Pre-development surface area



Walker Lake

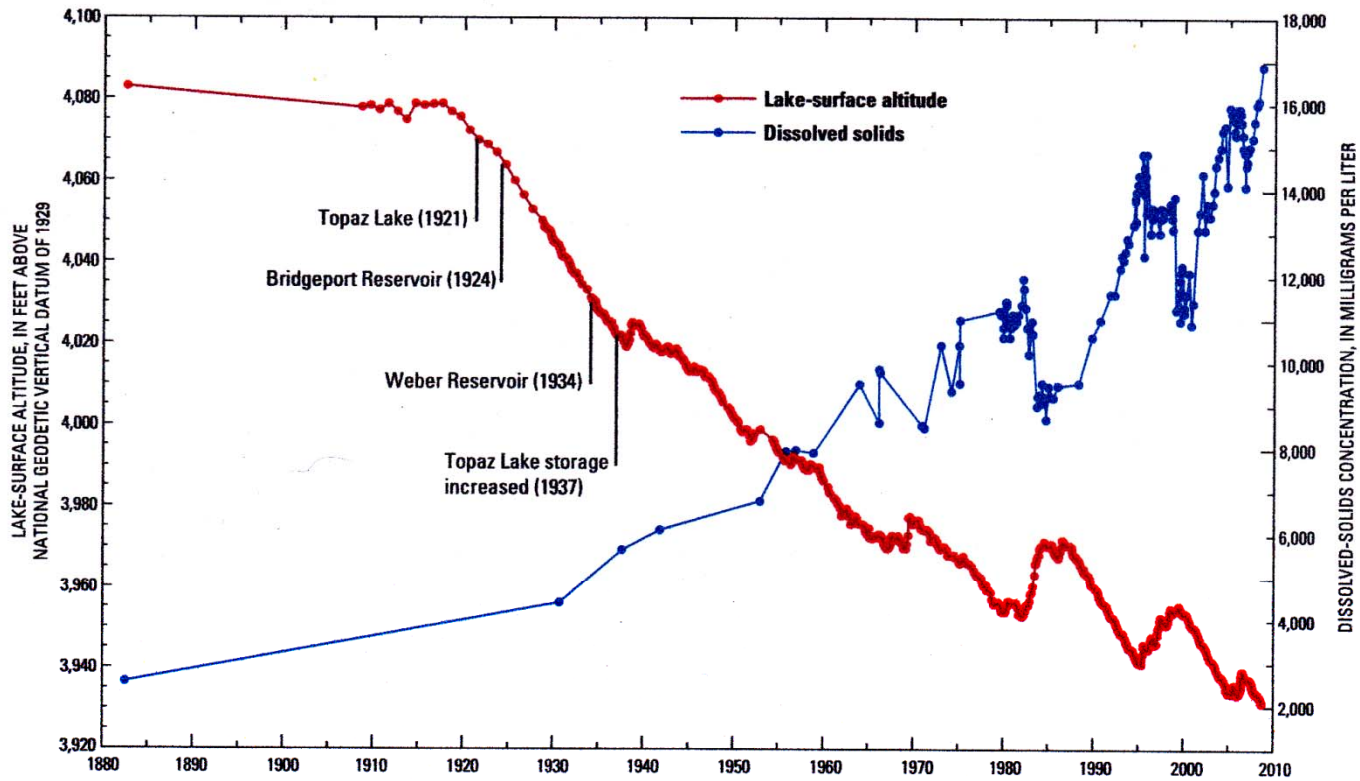


Figure 3. Lake-surface altitude and dissolved-solids concentrations of Walker Lake, Nevada, from 1882 through September 30, 2008.