

**Ice Ages, Packrats and Ancient Trees: Climatic Environmental Change in
the Salton Sea Region and Colorado River Basin**

(DRAFT 2)

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Any consideration of environmental change and the Salton Sea and vicinity must take two factors into account. The first is the local climate and environment of the Salton Sea Trough. As we shall see the climate and vegetation of this area of southern California has experienced marked changes in the geological past and in recent centuries. The second factor that must be considered is the flow of the Colorado River. The present Salton Sea is a creation of the river and the amount of water available to replenish the sea if so desired is dependent upon the flow of the Colorado. We will examine evidence of how the flow of the Colorado has varied in the last few hundreds of years.

The modern Salton Sea Trough lies at the intersection of two great deserts, the Mojave lies to the north and the Sonoran dominates the trough and areas to the south and west. The Mojave is typified by hot and dry summers. The winter brings rain, but also cold temperatures. Many places in the Mojave experience freezing during parts of the winter. Summers are also hot in the western Sonoran Desert, but they can also experience monsoon rains. Winter