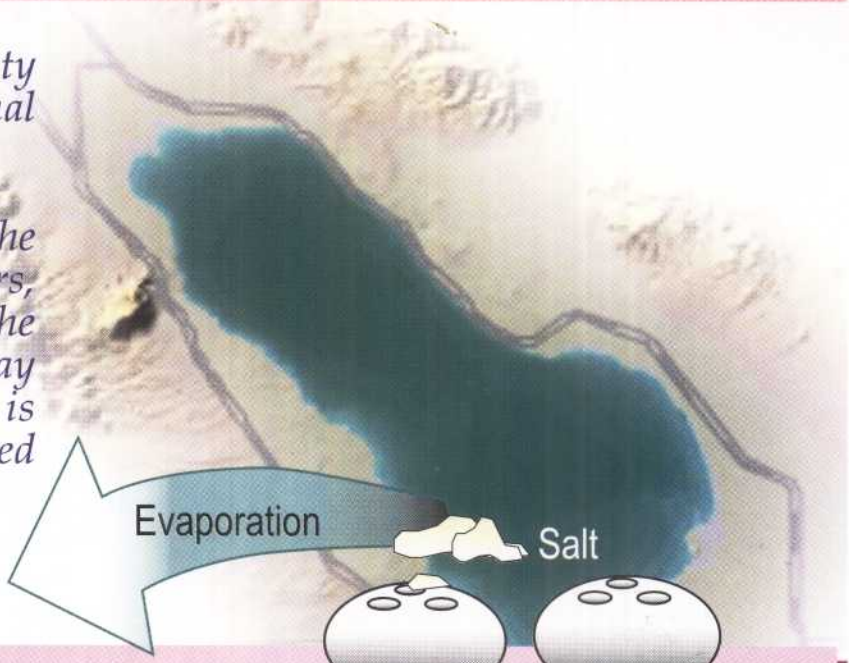
Salt Problems

SALTON SEA Restoration Project

SEA FACTS

The Salton Sea has a salinity problem because it is a "terminal lake," meaning it has no outlets.

Water flows into the lake from the Whitewater, Alamo and New rivers, bringing with it salt from the Colorado River. The only way Salton Sea water can leave is through evaporation. The imported salt is left behind.



SALTS

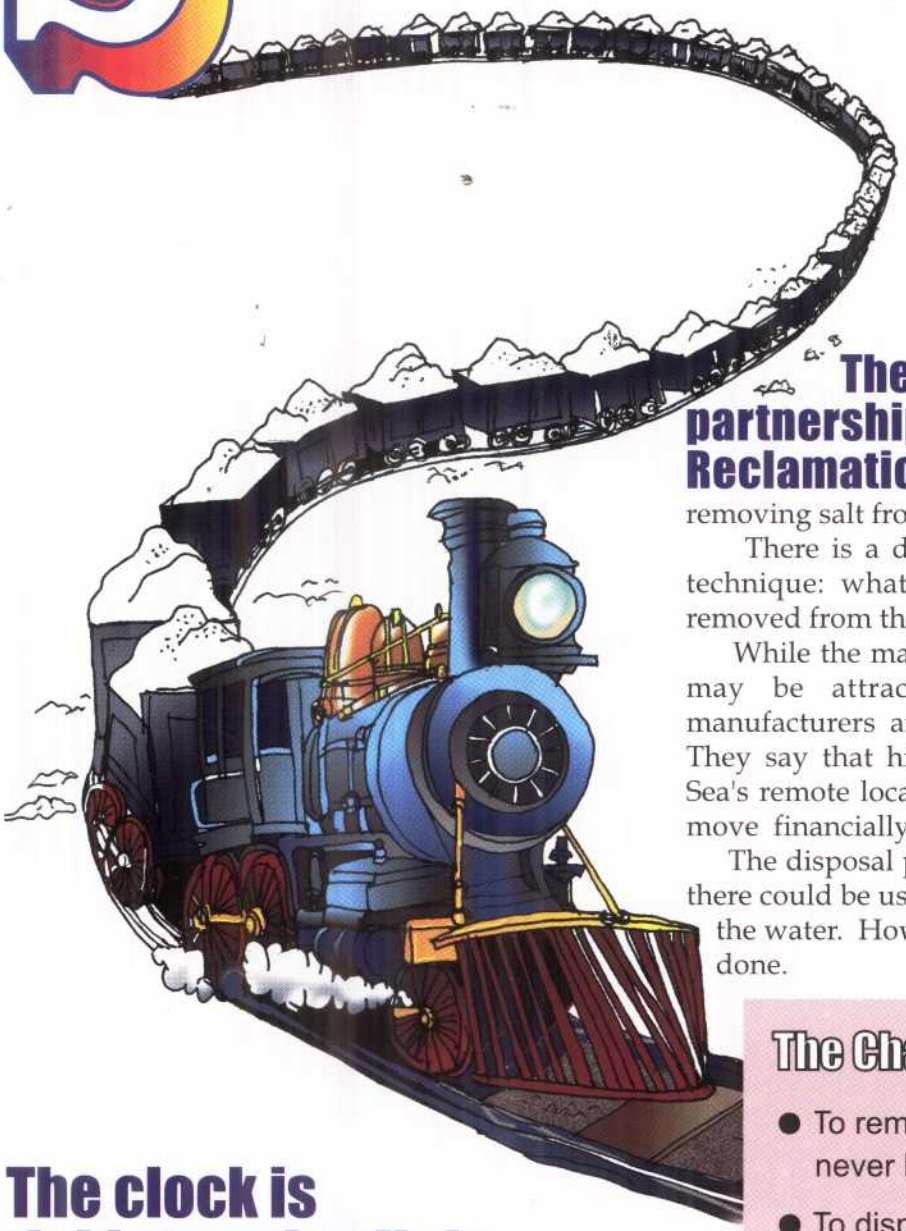
pose a serious problem because of the level of salinity in the lake. The Salton Sea is currently 25 percent saltier than the ocean and getting saltier every day. There are an estimated 500 million tons of salt in the Salton Sea.

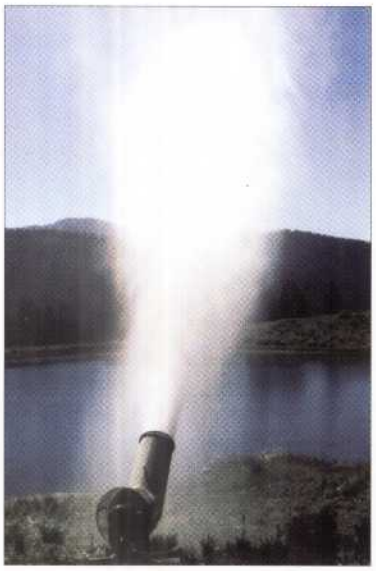
25%

Salinity has been called Salton Sea's "time bomb." Scientists are concerned that even a small increase could be enough to affect fish reproduction and ultimately survival, affecting not only fish but the birds that feed on them. The economic development of the area also could be adversely affected if salinity is not controlled.

Several million tons

of salt are added to the lake every year — an estimated train load every day. Even if that "train" were to be stopped, salinity would not be reduced because of continuing evaporation.





The use of enhanced evaporation systems is one of the methods being tested for removing salt from the Salton Sea.

The Salton Sea Authority, in partnership with the Bureau of Reclamation, is testing several methods for removing salt from the Salton Sea.

There is a dilemna, though, with any salt reduction technique: what should be done with the salt that is removed from the lake?

While the material may be of sufficient quality that it may be attractive to commercial markets, salt manufacturers are doubtful that it would be profitable. They say that high transportation costs from the Salton Sea's remote location to market centers may make such a move financially impractical.

The disposal problem, then, remains an issue. Perhaps there could be uses for some of the salts that come out of the water. However, much more work needs to be done.

The clock is ticking and salinity reduction is a priority.

The Challenges

- To remove salt at a scale never before attempted.
- To dispose of the salt removed.

The ultimate solution lies in a cost-effective, efficient method that stabilizes salinity levels so that we don't lose the fishery. The Salton Sea will never be a clear freshwater lake. But then again, our responsibility is to insure it does not become a dead sea.

SALTON SEA RESTORATION PROJECT
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