A Very Brief History of the Salton Sea

WATER RESOURCE INSTITUTE
The Formation of the Salton Sea
California Development Company brings water to the desert.

Imperial Land Company sells land to farmers.
Silt blocks original intake.

Unprotected cut made just below the border.

Additional unprotected cut made farther south.
E.H. Harriman
President,
Southern Pacific Railroad Company
Southern Pacific spends millions to control the river.
The Pioneers

- Capt. Davis
- Gus Eiler
- Helen Burns
Helen Burns, Salton Sea Beach
The War Years

Seaplane Operational Area, Salton Sea
Seaplane Operational Area, Salton Sea 1939-1942

Date Palm Beach Resort
Sandy Beach
Permanent Seaplane Base Site
Salton Sea Test Base (1946 – 1961)

• Army Manhattan District – Sandia Laboratory 1946

Salton Sea Facility taken over by NAF, El Centro in 1961 for parachute testing

• 1964 – U.S. Navel Aerospace Recovery Facility.
• 1973 – National Parachute Test Range
• 1979 - Parachute Testing Transferred to China Lake.
The Boom Times

- Real Estate Development
- The Yacht Clubs
- Water Sports
- Sport Fishing
North Shore Beach

- Yacht Club
- Motel
- Boat Landing/Marina
- Beach & Play Ground
- Landing Strip
- Proposed Real Estate Development
North Shore:
* Beach
* Yacht Club
* Motel
Salton Riviera (Salton City)

- 19,600 Acre Subdivision
- 260 Miles of fresh Water Lines
- 250 miles of Paved Roads
- Electrical & Sewer Service
Sales:
• 4.25 Million Dollars in Sales – 1958
• 32,000 Residential Units Sold between 1958 and 1964.
Salton City Today
Desert Shores:
WELCOME TO
BOMBAY BEACH
Water Sports at the Salton Sea
Boat Racing at the Salton Sea
Boat Racing
Swimming & Picnicking at the Salton Sea
Boating
Water Skiing
Santa skis the Salton Sea
Fishing at the Salton Sea
31+ Species of Fish introduced into the Salton Sea in 1951

Only Corvina, Sargo, and Gulf Croaker survived.
Sport Fishing on the Salton Sea
The Bust Times:

• Floods
• Water quality declines.
• Sport fishing dies out.
Flooding

- Increased Irrigation
- Hurricanes/Tropical Storms:
  - Kathleen - 1976
  - Doreen - 1977
Flooding
The Salton Sea has never recovered from the economic devastation of the late 1970s.
Thank You!

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