



Owens Valley, California



Water is Power: *The Doctrine of Prior Appropriation & Indigenous Erasure in California*

Tenenbaum Tutorials
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Payahuunadü- Place of Flowing Water

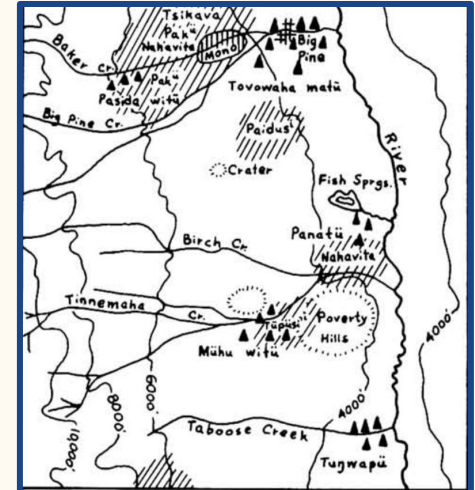
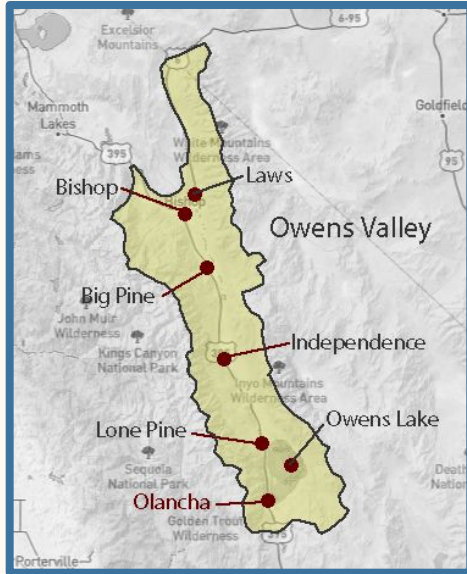


Fig. 7. Location and extent of irrigation on Baker Creek, near Big Pine, as indicated by Steward (1933:Map 2). Irrigated land indicated by vertical hachure. Redrawn from Steward (1933:Map 2).



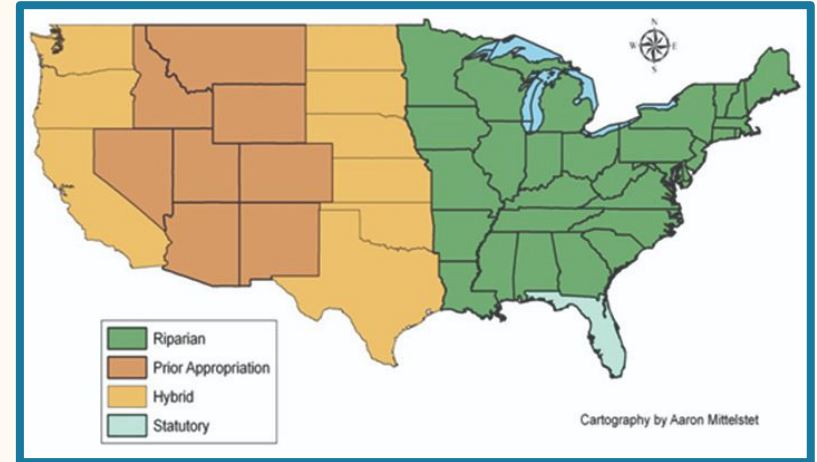


Built in a Desert - LA Aqueduct



Doctrine of Prior Appropriation

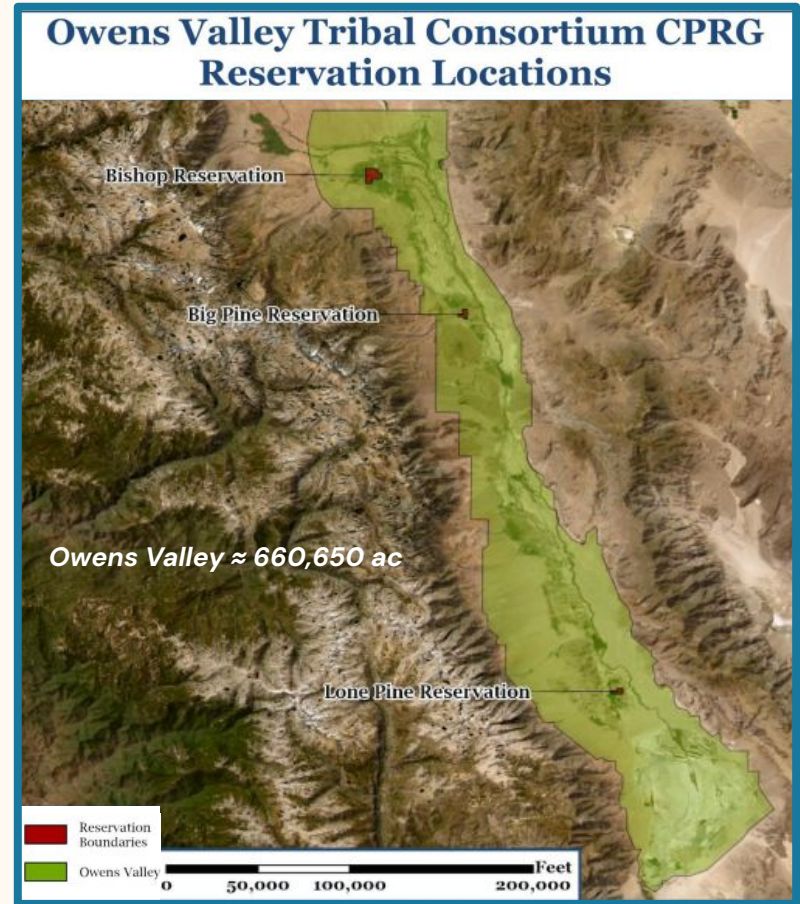
- California – complex water rights with hybrid systems
- West of the Mississippi – Doctrine of Prior Appropriation
- ***“FIRST IN TIME, FIRST IN RIGHT”***
- Use it or lose it rule
- Inherently exploitative



Usurped Land

- 1912 EO 1529: set aside 67,120 ac
- 1931 HR 11969: withdrew Paiute land
- *“For the protection of the watershed supplying water to the city of Los Angeles”*
- 1932 EO 5843: revoked EO 1529; left 2914 ac
- 1937 Land Exchange Act: less desirable 1932 ac of land → 3 reservations, no water rights

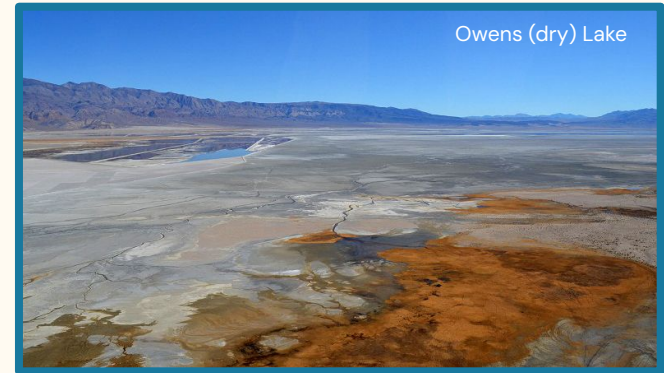
Paiute left with <3% of originally allocated land & <0.003 of ancestral lands but no associated water rights





Juxtaposition of Values

- Paiute are first inhabitants, actively using water since time immemorial
 - Should have water rights
 - **First in time, first in right**
- IF you are white*
- System depends on erasure of Indigenous people
 - Detrimental environmental impacts



Continued Injustice

- Paiute are 1st inhabitants, **actively using water since time immemorial**
- Prior Appropriation -> LA Water Rights
- Contractual -> Paiute Water Rights, lack of access
- LA provided about 80% of promised water
- Has since dropped to 17%

The Los Angeles Aqueduct & subsequent control of Indigenous lands perpetuates Indigenous erasure & oppression for the benefit of Los Angeles



Partial List of Consulted Sources

- The Paiute, Water Wars, and a Covered Up Agricultural Revolution, Senior Capstone, Nicholas Chambers
- Paya: The Water Story of the Paiute, self produced documentary
- Interview with Ian Bell, Environmental Specialist at OVIWC
- The Giant and the Water Baby, William J. Bauer, Jr.
- Ethnography of the Owens Valley Paiute, Julian H. Steward
- Water to the Angels: William Mulholland, His Monumental Aqueduct, and the Rise of Los Angeles, Les Standiford

Thank you!

