

EPSOM SALTS MONORAIL, SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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INTRODUCTION

This report is part of a research project that describes the relationships between mines and railroads in the Mojave Desert and southwestern Great Basin of southeastern California and southwestern Nevada. t

The collection can be accessed at
<http://www.greggwilkerson.com/railroads.html>

Italics indicate quotations.

HISTORY

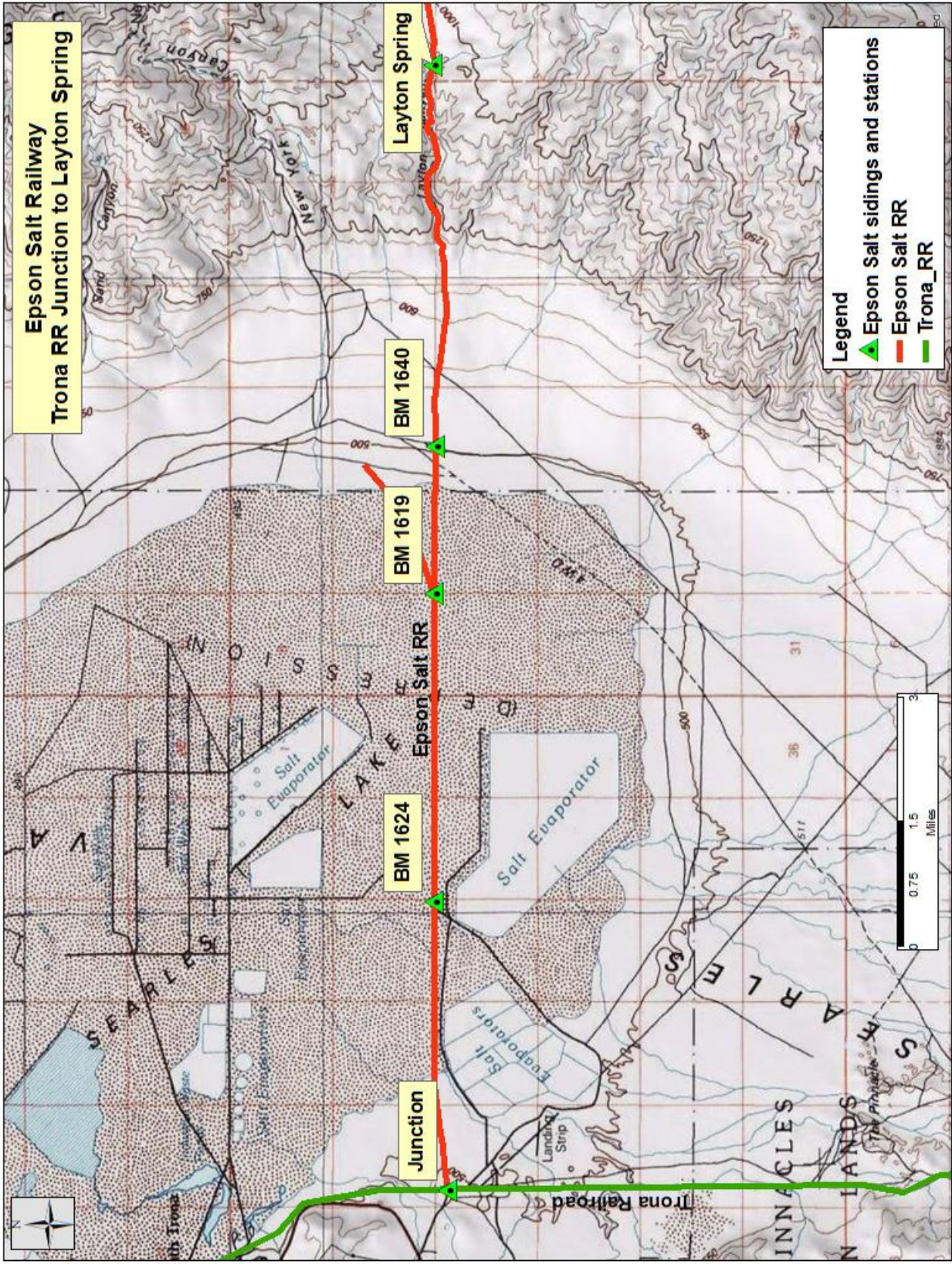
The Epsom Salt Monorail Railroad connected to the Trona Railway at the southwestern end of Searles Lake.

The Epsom Salt monorail (ESM) was part of a mining venture promoted by Thomas Wright who was a Los Angeles florist. The unique railroad was built from 1923 to 1924. It was made of Douglas Fir. It operated through 1926 and was sold for scrap in 1930 (Myrick, 1963:808-814; Rapp and Vredenburg, 1992).

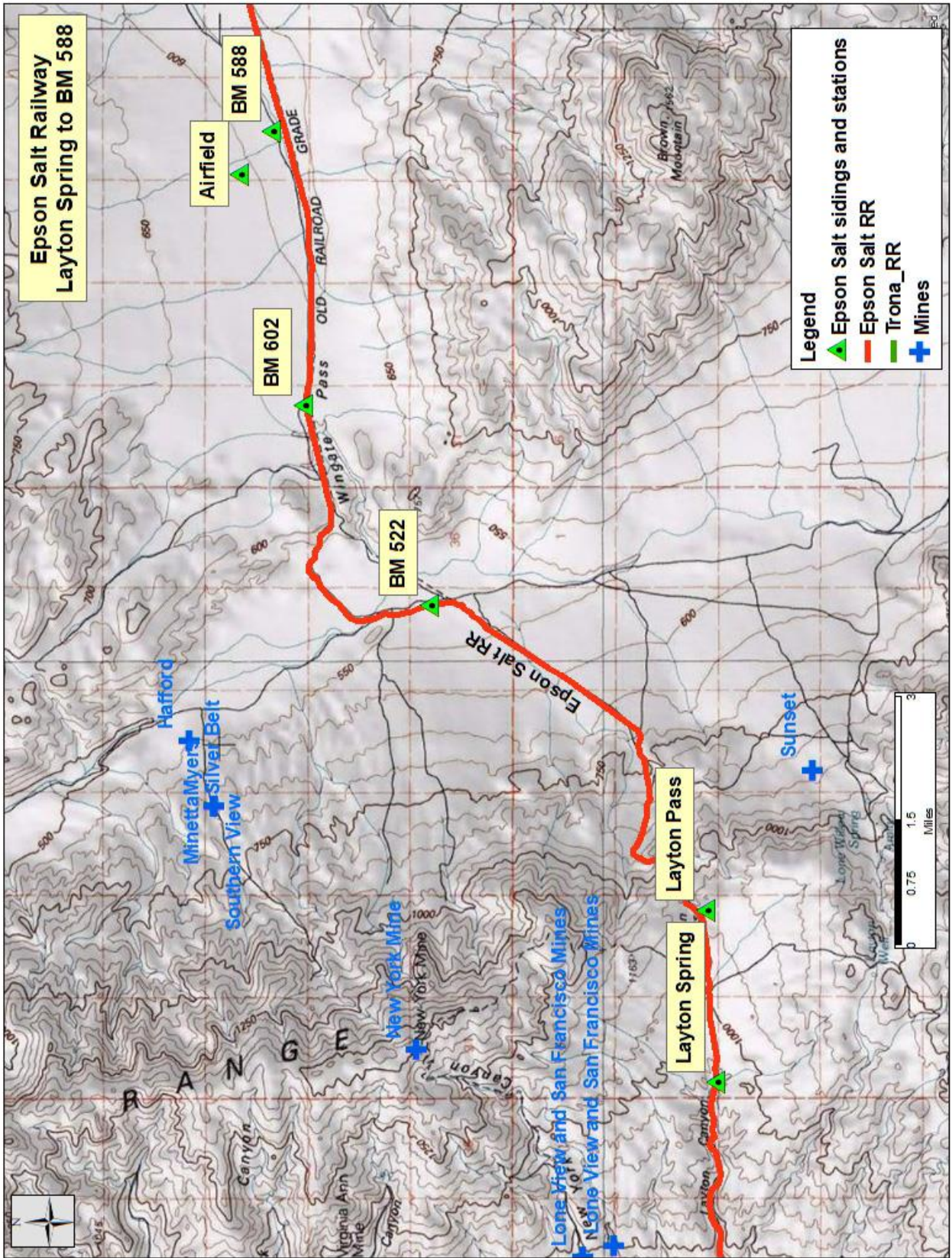
The monorail started at Magnesia siding on the Trona Railroad, the line went west across Searles Lake to the mouth of Layton Canyon (500 meters) in the Slate Range. From there it went west up the canyon to Layton spring.



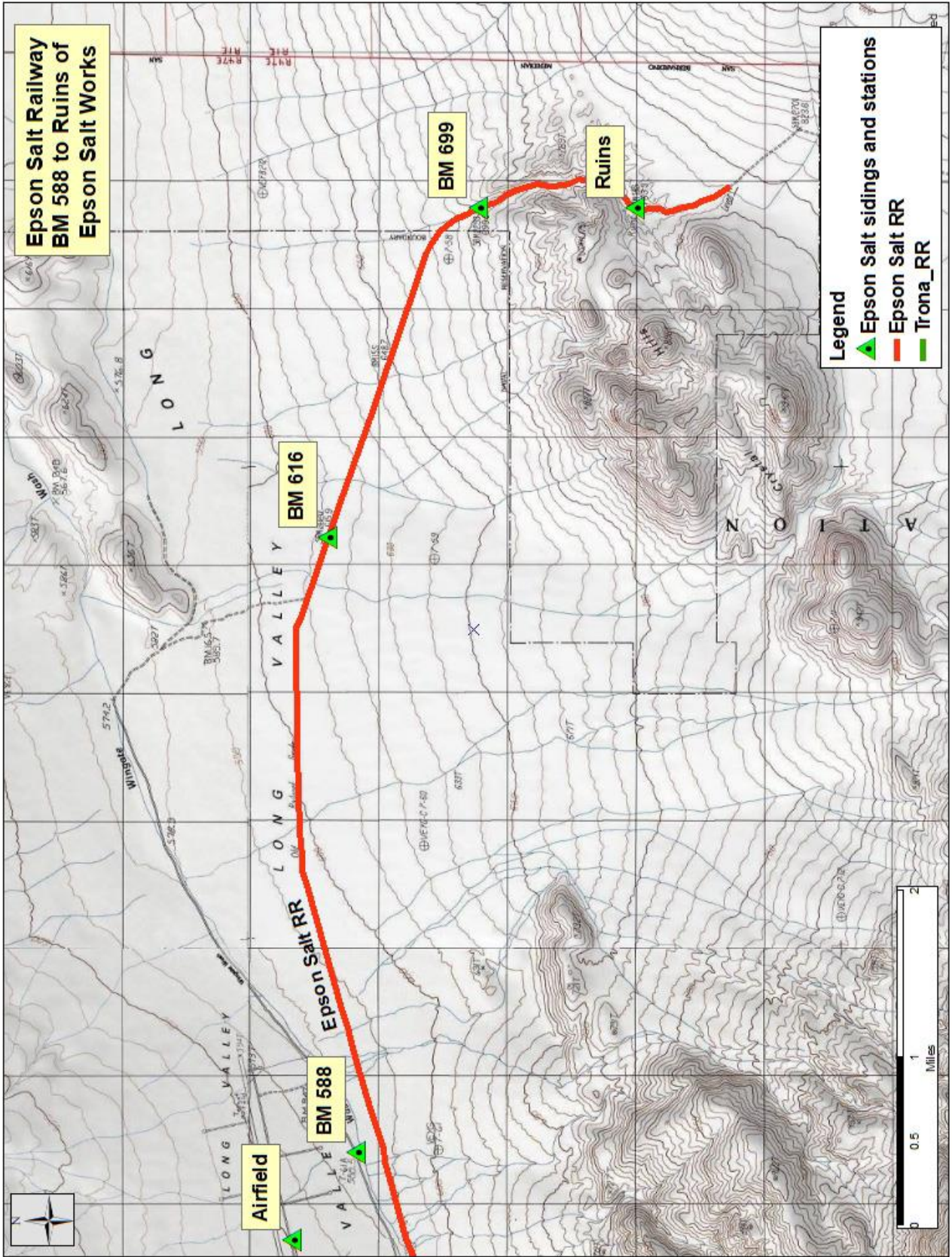
Caption: Epsom Salts Monorail. From the Brush Collection Photo No. 14. Courtesy of the Mojave Desert Heritage and Cultural Association.



From **Layton Spring**, the ESM went east to **Layton Pass** at 1055 meters having risen 525 meters from Searles Lake. The line then dropped down an unnamed canyon to the western edge of the Slate Range thence northeast across the Panamint Valley to Windgate Pass near **BM 602**. From there the line went down to Windgate Wash to **BM 588**.



From **BM 588**, the ESA circled clockwise around an eastern prominence of Brown Mountain (Crystal Hill) to the **ruins** of Epsom Salt Works. The monorail was 28 miles long, made of Douglas fir and completed. Construction started in 1922 and was completed in 1924. (Myrick, 1962:808-814, map of route on pages 808 and 809; Wright and others, 1953:183; Rogers, 2014).



The Epsom salt mine excavated magnesite in Tertiary clays and processed it in a plant 6 miles south of Trona. The project was abandoned in 1927 (Rapp and others, 1992:9; U.S. Geological Survey, 1984; Wright and others, 1953: Magnesium Table, p. 183; Jahns, 1951, Hewett and others, 1936:96; Newman, 1924:742).



Caption: Epsom Salts Monorail. From the Brush Collection Photo No. 14. Courtesy of the Mojave Desert Heritage and Cultural Association.

REFERENCES

All references in this report are available at
<http://www.greggwilkerson.com/iv-references.html>