

SODA LAKE RAILROADS, SN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Feb. 14, 2024

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 Tonopah and Tidewater Railway passed along the western edge of Soda Lake and the eastern slope of the Soda Mountains. Here two salt railroads were built.

The almost always dry Soda Lake had a veneer of evaporite minerals that formed and reformed annually. Two groups of entrepreneurs attempted to collect and beneficiate these salts in the vicinity of Soda Springs (later to become Zzyzx, Vredenburg, 2022). This enterprise was attempted by the Pacific Coast Soda Company which purchased 22 mining claims from Russ Avery in October 1907. A mile and a half long 30 inch gauge spur line was built out into Soda Lake from a plant near Soda Springs. Around 1911 another company, the Pacific Salt and Soda Company, built a plant north of Soda Springs to process the chemical salts. The track for this company's short railroad was 36-inch gauge. These operations did not last very long, and little is known about them. (Chappell, 2005, p. 47-48; American Mining Review, 1908).



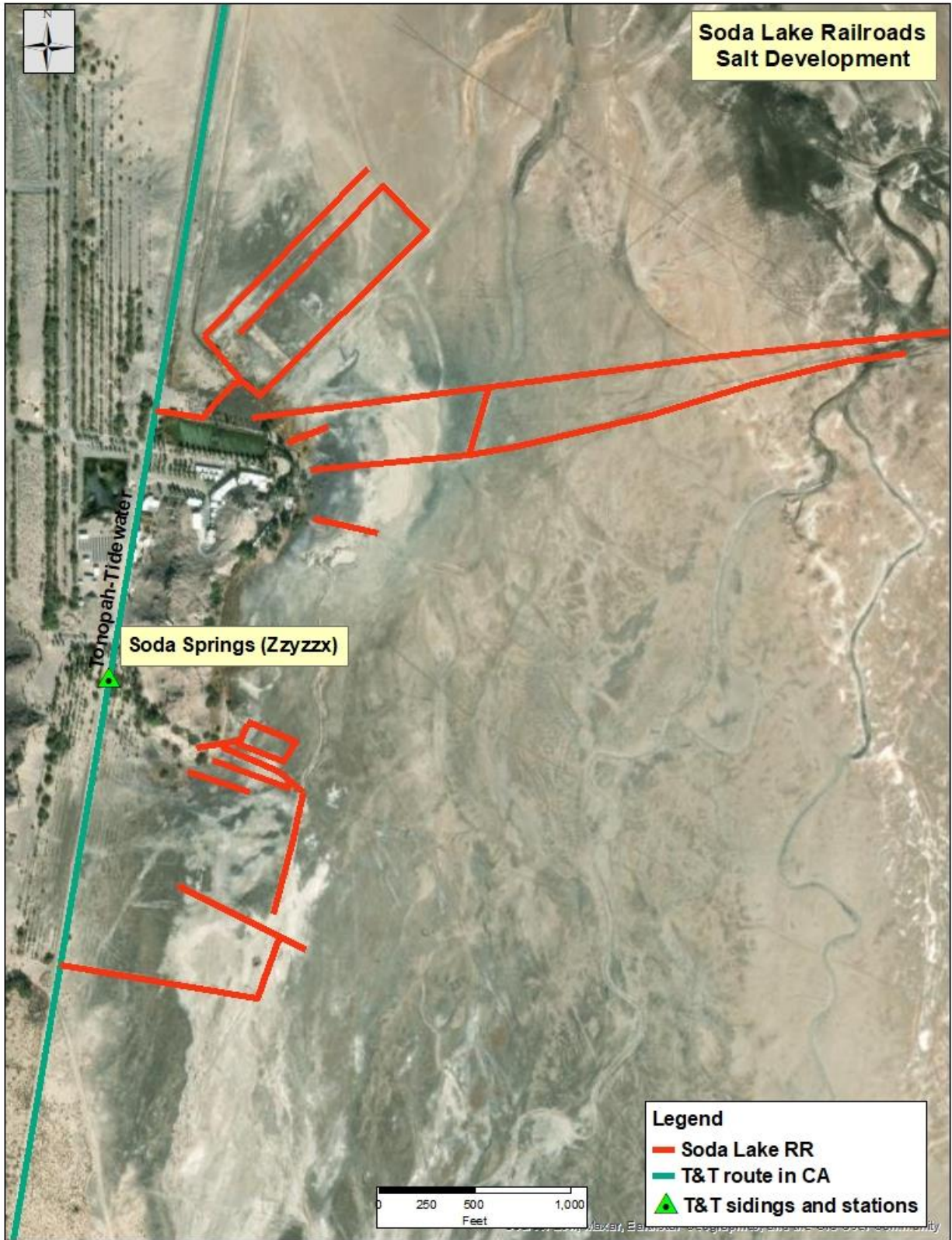
Caption: Soda Lake Railroad ties. By Walter Feller. From <https://mojavedesert.net/railroads/railroads-061.html> accessed Nov. 15, 2023.



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Caption: Old rail bed across the salt flats of Soda Lake. Photo by John Crossley. March 23, 2013; 9:18 am .From https://www.americansouthwest.net/california/mojave/soda-lake-rail-bed_1.html accessed Nov. 15,2023,



REFERENCES

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