

# Proposed Demonstration Project and Hatchery Reactivation

Wister Unit of the Imperial  
Wildlife Area

A stylized silhouette of a mountain range in a darker shade of teal, located at the bottom right of the slide.

# Outline for Stakeholders' Meeting

- ◆ Rationale for this proposed project
- ◆ The shape of the pieces
- ◆ Project objectives
- ◆ Other potential alternatives or additional opportunities
- ◆ Land use, costs, and ecological considerations to weigh
- ◆ Timelines, and factors which affect them
- ◆ Plans for engaging stakeholders and the public
- ◆ Feed back from stakeholders

# Why do a Demonstration Project?

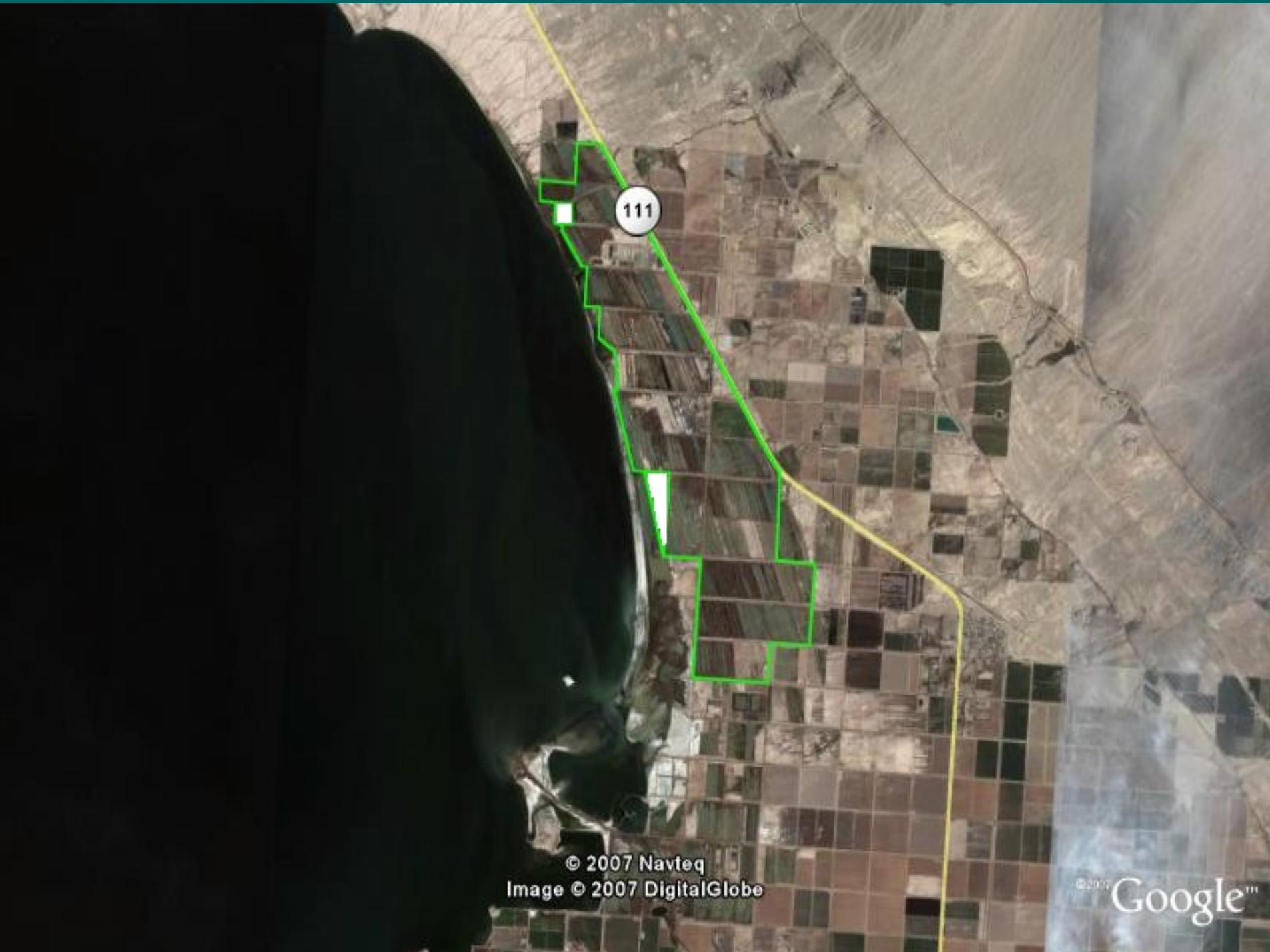
- ◆ Uncertainties remain about habitat creation
- ◆ Questions should be answered before committing to construct 1000's of acres
- ◆ USGS experimental ponds did not examine the conditions anticipated for Saline Habitat Complex
- ◆ Project on DFG land would avoid the cost and delays of land acquisition.
- ◆ No land use conflicts
- ◆ Site proximity to avian resources

# What a Demonstration Project will NOT accomplish

- ◆ Not significant habitat creation
- ◆ Not a start to implementing the Preferred Alternative

# Proposed Project Elements

- ◆ Hatchery Reactivation
- ◆ North Pond Site
- ◆ South Pond site



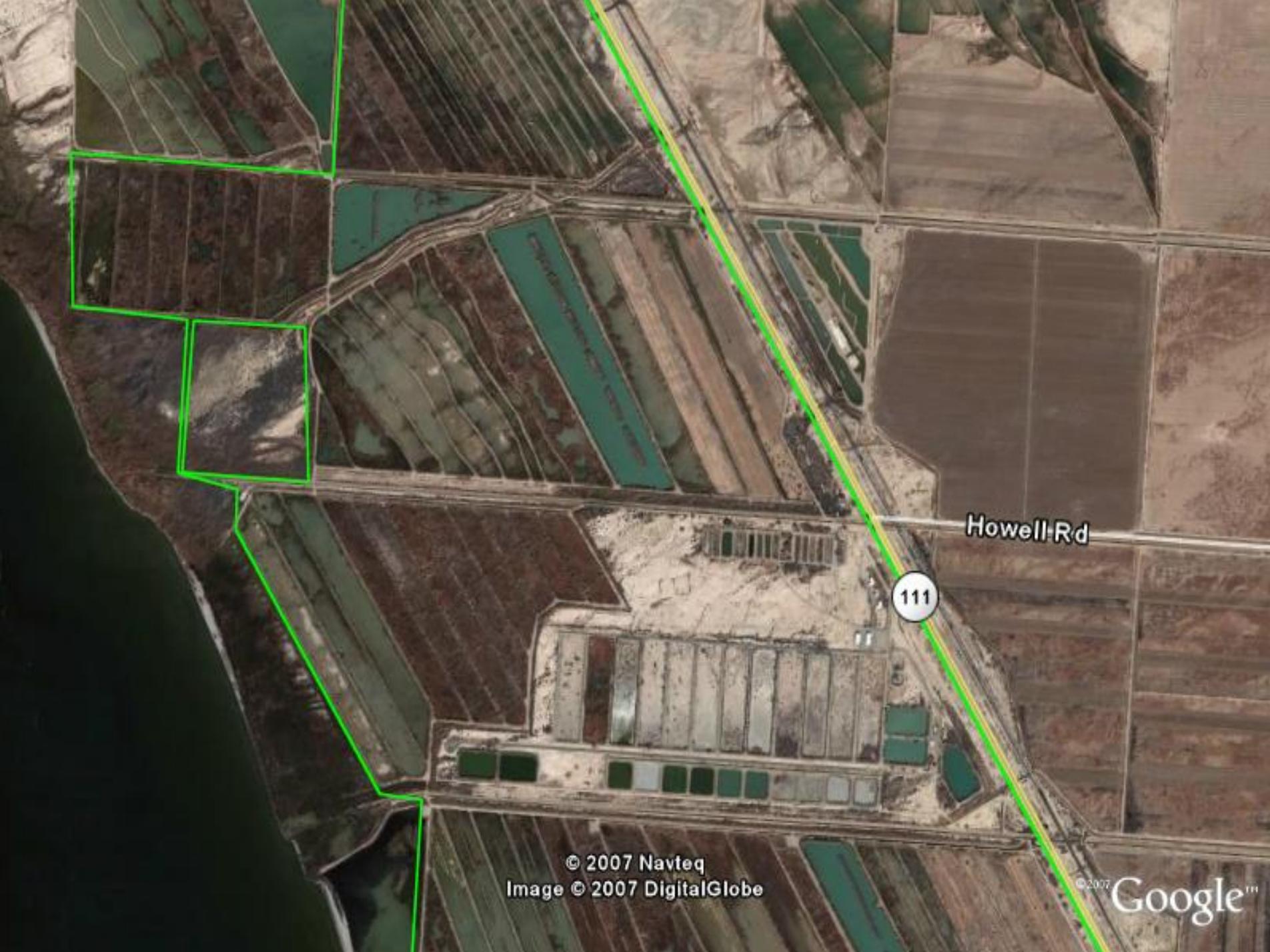
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# Warm Water Hatchery Reactivation

- ◆ 250 acre site; 77.5 acres of ponds:
  - 12- 5 acre ponds
  - 10- 1 acre ponds
  - 15- ½ acre ponds
- ◆ Fresh water source IID ag water
- ◆ Salt water pumped from Salton Sea
- ◆ Four part infrastructure rebuild:
  - Site access control
  - Remove/replace housing
  - Repair utility buildings
  - Install water line from Salton Sea
- ◆ Cost estimate \$500,000 ?
- ◆ 15 ½ acre ponds could be excluded/phased



Howell Rd

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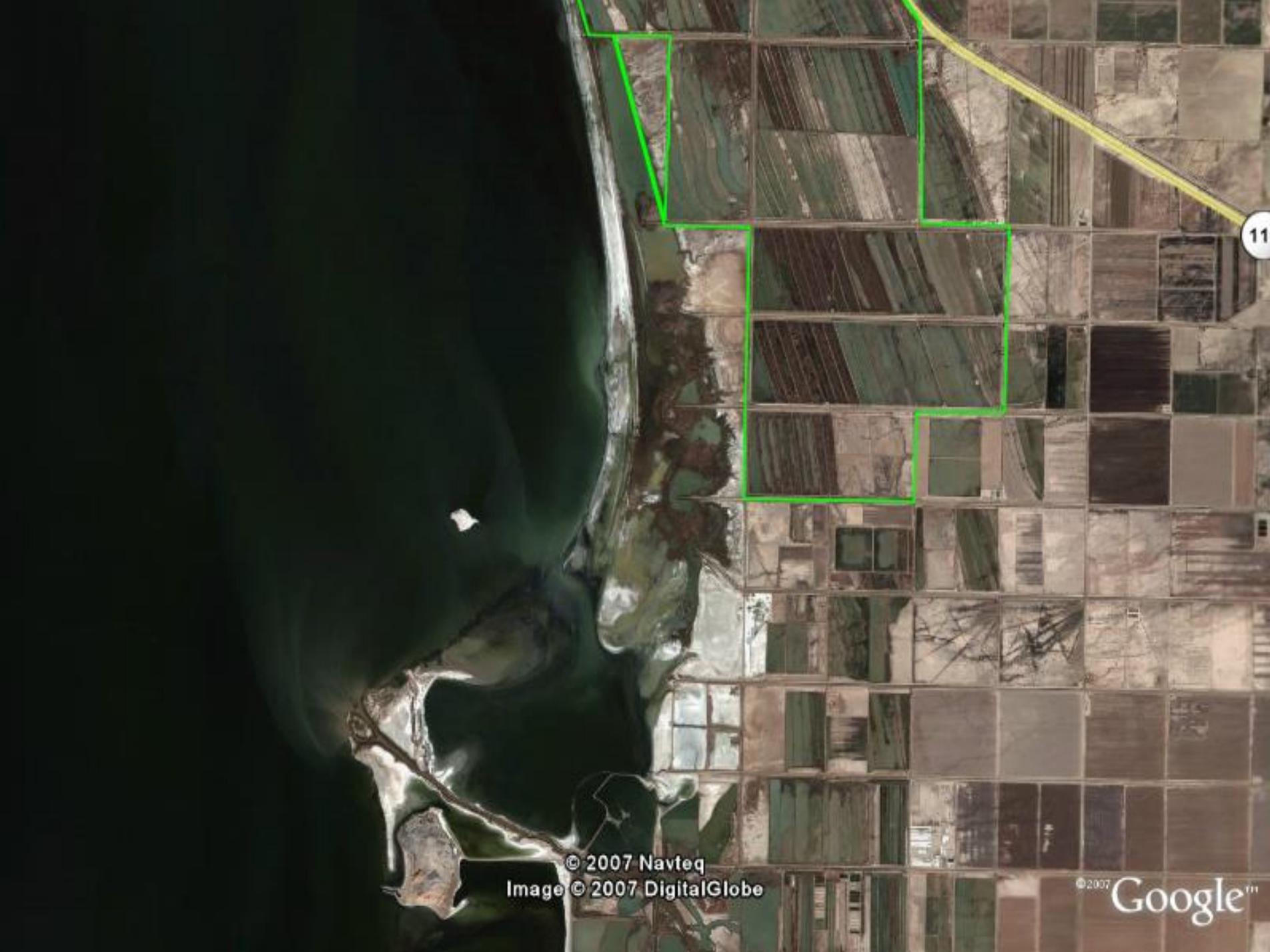






# Proposed South Pond Site

- ◆ 100 acres near the Alamo River
- ◆ IID land is leased and managed by DFG
- ◆ Brackish water pumped 5 miles from Alamo River
- ◆ Salt water pumped  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from Salton Sea
- ◆ Construction cost estimate \$2-3 million



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# Proposed North Pond Site

- ◆ 40 acres near the Hatchery
- ◆ IID land is leased and managed by DFG
- ◆ Fresh water source IID ag water
- ◆ Salt water pumped from Salton Sea
- ◆ Construction cost estimates \$1-2 million



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# Project Objectives: Hatchery

- ◆ Create invertebrate communities to support fish
- ◆ Determine suitability of substrate types
- ◆ Determine temp and dissolved oxygen tolerances
- ◆ Determine optimal salinities for target species
- ◆ Examine dynamics of pupfish and potential predators/competitors
- ◆ Raise fish in numbers, for investigators, and to stock habitat sites
- ◆ Ultimately, provide stocks for restoration habitats

# Project Objectives: Pond Sites

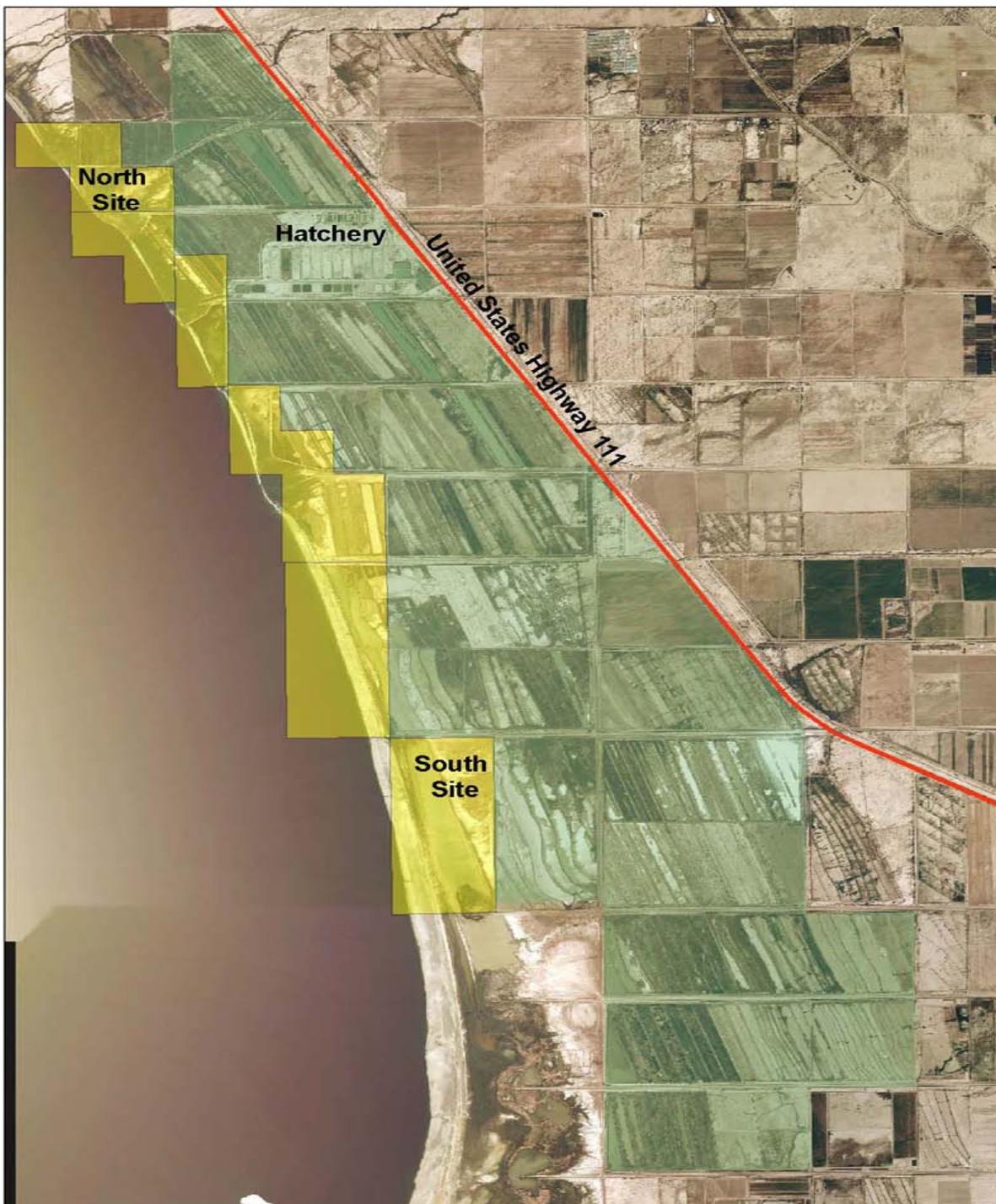
- ◆ Determine if pond characteristics will support the communities we want
- ◆ Assess productivity of selected fish and invertebrates
- ◆ Evaluate effects of habitat characteristics on productivity
- ◆ Determine operational protocols
- ◆ Select species for restoration habitats
- ◆ Evaluate construction methods and structural longevity

# Options to Consider

- ◆ Consider the pieces as modules
- ◆ North site can't address water quality
- ◆ Rock is the largest cost variable
- ◆ Most objectives can be achieved at Hatchery, at a smaller scale
- ◆ Experimental complexity will have a cost

# Other Potential Opportunities for Demo Pond Placement

- ◆ Expanded South Wister Site
- ◆ Expanded North Wister Site
- ◆ Other IID-leased Land on Wister
- ◆ Other IID-owned land



**North Site**

**Hatchery**

*United States Highway 111*

**South Site**

# Expanded South Wister Site

- ◆ 160 acre pond (vs. 100 acres)
- ◆ Avian habitat present
- ◆ Waterfowl hunting area
- ◆ May support desert pupfish

# Expanded North Wister Site

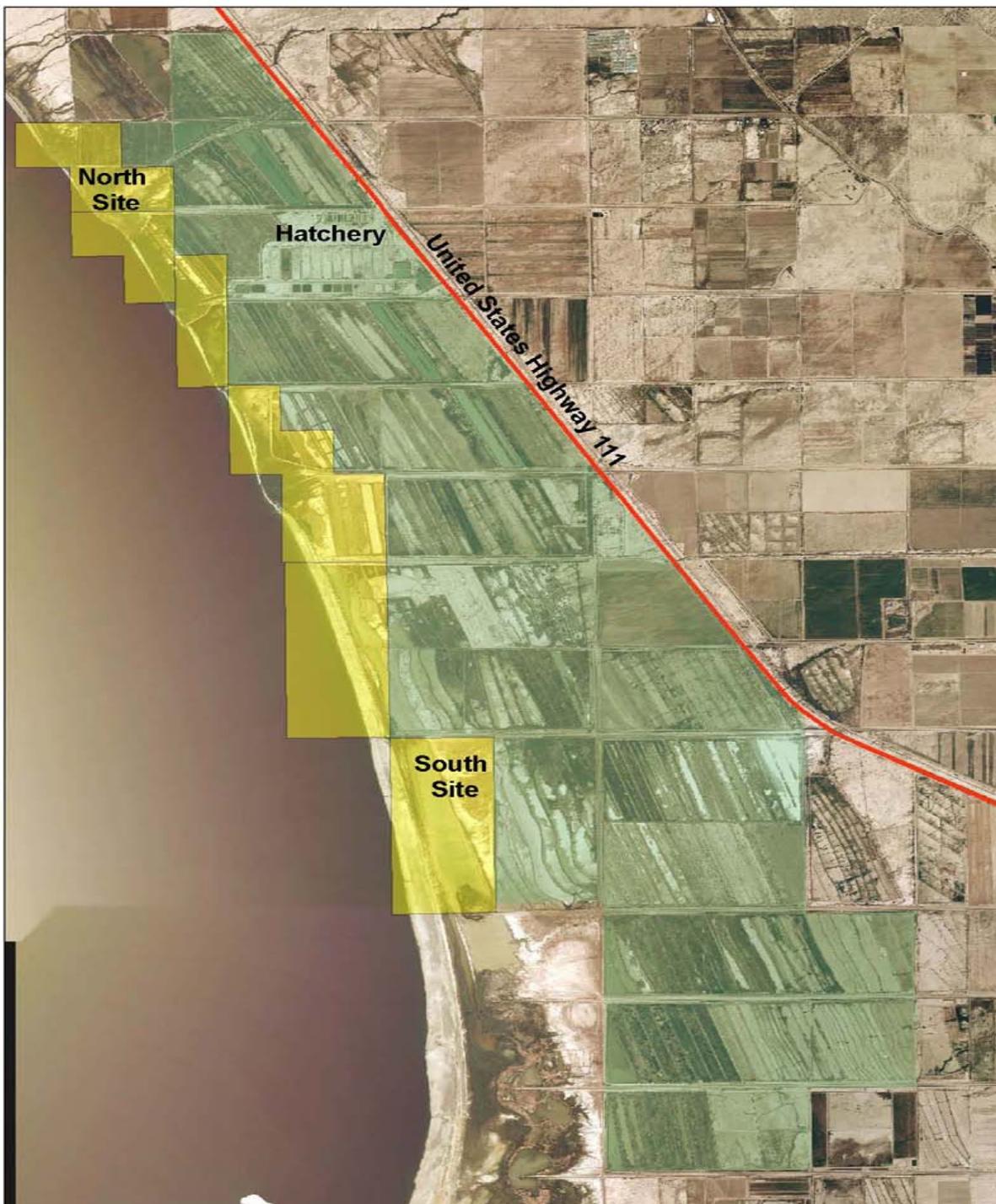
- ◆ 65 acre pond (vs. 40 acres)
- ◆ Avian habitat present

# Other IID-leased Land

- ◆ Between North and South Sites
- ◆ 40 to 100 acre sites
- ◆ At the Salton Sea's edge
- ◆ Partly managed for waterfowl and Clapper rails
- ◆ Partly unmanaged, but with high habitat value

# Other IID-owned Land

- ◆ South of Wister, along Davis Road
- ◆ Pond size from 40 to 60 acres
- ◆ Land is not managed
- ◆ Some habitat values



**North  
Site**

**Hatchery**

*United States Highway 111*

**South  
Site**

# Checklist of Considerations (Cost-driven)

- ◆ Land ownership issues
- ◆ Pond size, and depth
- ◆ Distance to drain water source
- ◆ Distance to salt water
- ◆ Current management practices of site
- ◆ Soil type for berm construction
- ◆ Amount of vegetation to clear
- ◆ Availability of electricity for pumps
- ◆ Site security

# Checklist of Considerations (Ecological)

- ◆ Current habitat value of site
- ◆ Presence of sensitive species habitat
- ◆ Presence of pupfish at site
- ◆ Opportunity to connect to future Early Start or SHC site

# Checklist of Considerations (Land Use Conflicts)

- ◆ Reduced opportunities for waterfowl hunting
  - ◆ Conflicts with geothermal resources
  - ◆ Land currently managed as habitat by DFG
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# Timeline (Subject to Change)

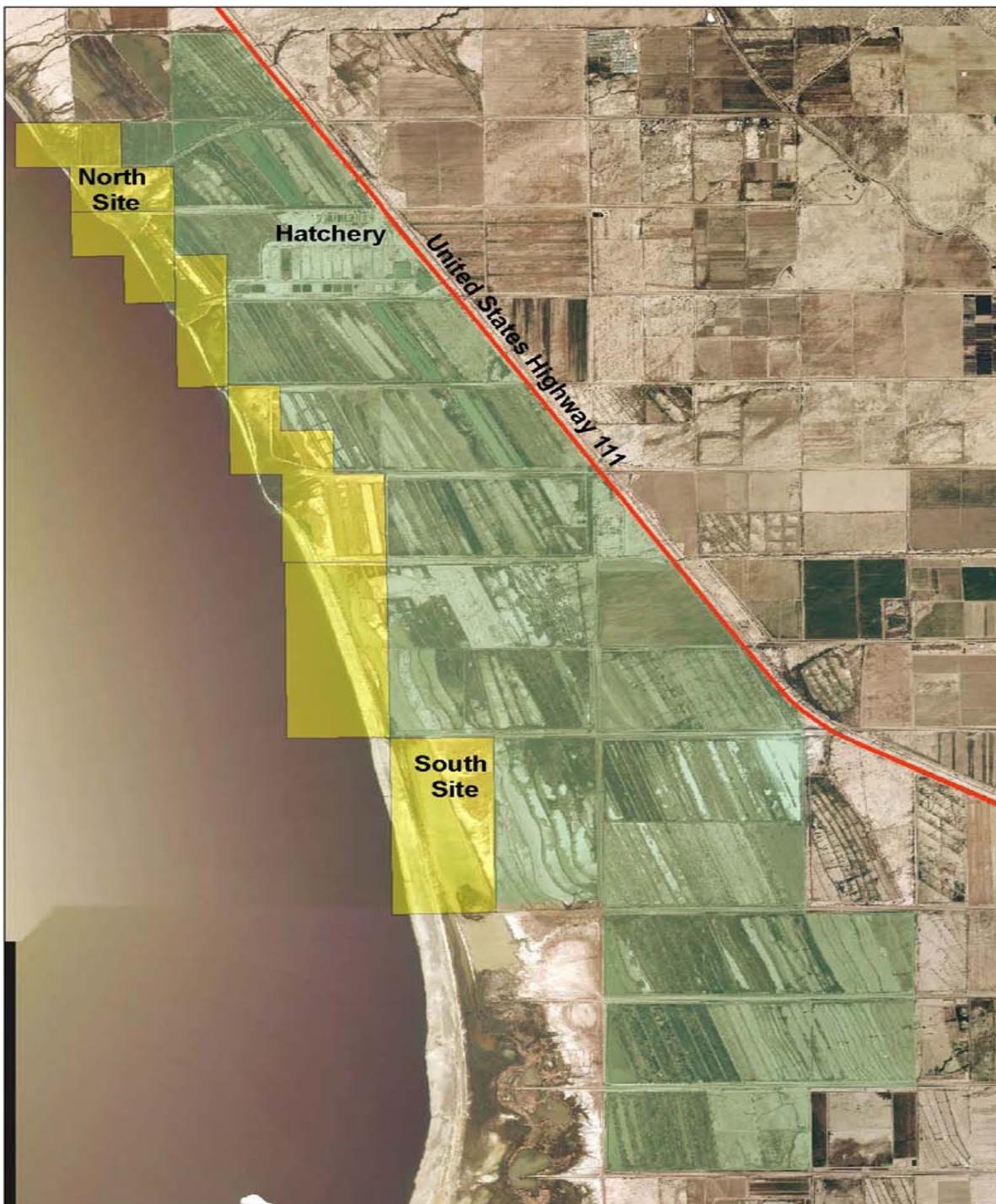
- ◆ Public Outreach will continue throughout project implementation
- ◆ Sensitive species surveys can be completed by mid-March, 2008
- ◆ Project design completed by beginning of 2008
- ◆ Permitting process completed by June, 2008
- ◆ Project construction begins September, 2008
- ◆ Operation and monitoring commences Spring, 2009

# Choices that Extend the Timeline

- ◆ Time for closer examination of other sites
- ◆ Non-Wister sites need IID buy-in
- ◆ Land acquisition adds another year
- ◆ Potential for increased surveys and mitigation

# Plans for Engaging the Public, Stakeholders, and Extramural Expertise

- ◆ Meet with regulatory agencies
  - ◆ Focused Technical Group meeting(s)
  - ◆ More Stakeholder briefings
  - ◆ Public Scoping meeting
  - ◆ Comment period for CEQA
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**North Site**

**Hatchery**

*United States Highway 111*

**South Site**