



Welcome to the River!

LESSON 1

Friends of the LA River

“Bringing the River to the People and
the People to the River” since 1986



Student Objective

Today I will be able to...

- Summarize the history of the LA River
- Understand Indigenous people's relationship to the River
- Know where the River begins and ends

Welcome to the LA River



Discussion

Close your eyes and imagine a river.

What comes to mind?



What was the River like in the past?



This land was home to several groups of Indigenous people.



<https://native-land.ca/>

Indigenous people of LA

- **The Tongva:** most of LA
- **The Gabrieleno-Kizh:** most of LA
- **The Tataviam:** the San Fernando Valley
- **The Chumash:** Malibu-area and west



Tongva language

Indigenous people have their own rich languages.

Write down one word that stands out to you...

- River – paxaayt
- Owl – muuhut
- Ocean – moomat
- Moon – mwaar
- Bear – huunar
- Fire – chaavot
- Bird – yayaayt
- Coyote – 'iitar
- Sun – taamet
- Star – shuur
- Dear – shukaat
- Island – kavuukar
- Sunflower – paaxar
- Wild rose – 'ochuur

The Indigenous people of LA lived in harmony with nature.

They relied on nature for food, water, medicine, and shelter.

Since they relied on nature and the River for survival, they treated nature with respect and reciprocity.





Watch: hear from some Tongva descendants!

<https://youtu.be/Ty2U3pg4jI0>

Colonization

The Spanish arrived in Southern California in the 1700s, seeking fertile land to produce crops and hoping to spread their religion.



Discussion

What do you notice about this painting?



Past: LA River

As the city of Los Angeles grew, people built homes closer and closer to the River's banks.



An 1887 aerial photo of Los Angeles, taken from a balloon.

Past: LA River

The LA River was moody;
one year it would overflow
in a rage, and the next it
would be desperately dry.



The Great Flood of 1938



The Great Flood of 1938



Watch: footage of the flood

https://youtu.be/TTf8zQbr_6E

Which plan did the City pick?



The Olmstead Brother's
"Emerald Necklace"
park-filled plan



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' idea
of a concrete flood control channel

Which plan did the City pick?



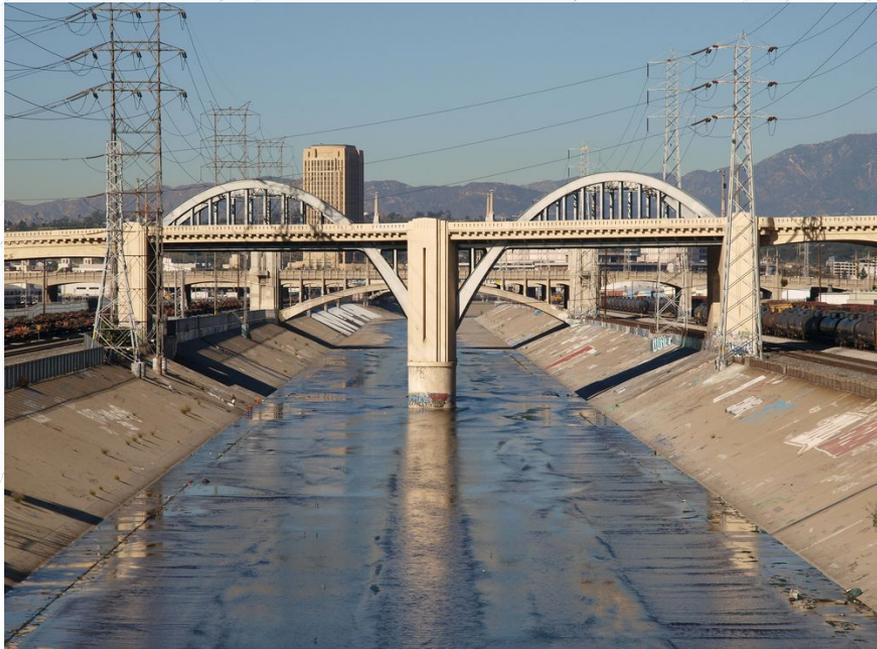
The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' idea
of a concrete flood control channel

Channelization of the River

Paving over the River took about **20 years**, 17,000 employees, 3-million barrels of concrete, and removed over 800,000 dump truck loads of soil.



Present-day LA River



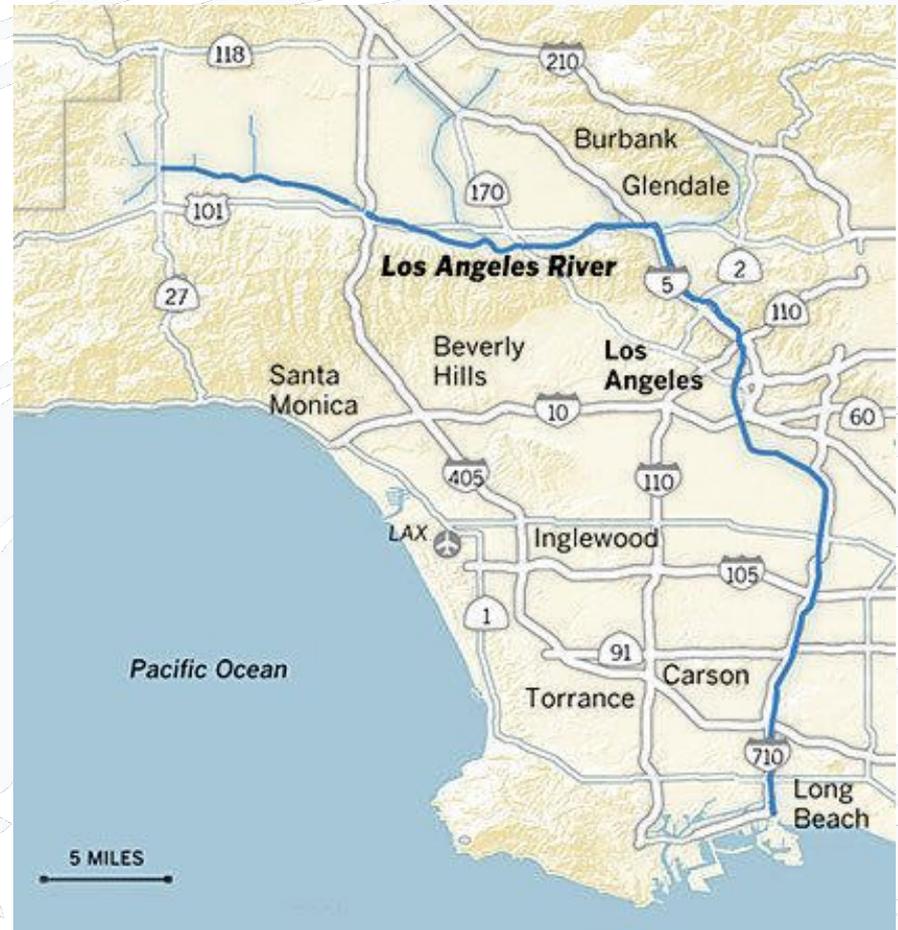
*Have you seen this before?
Did you know it was a river?*

Why is this important?

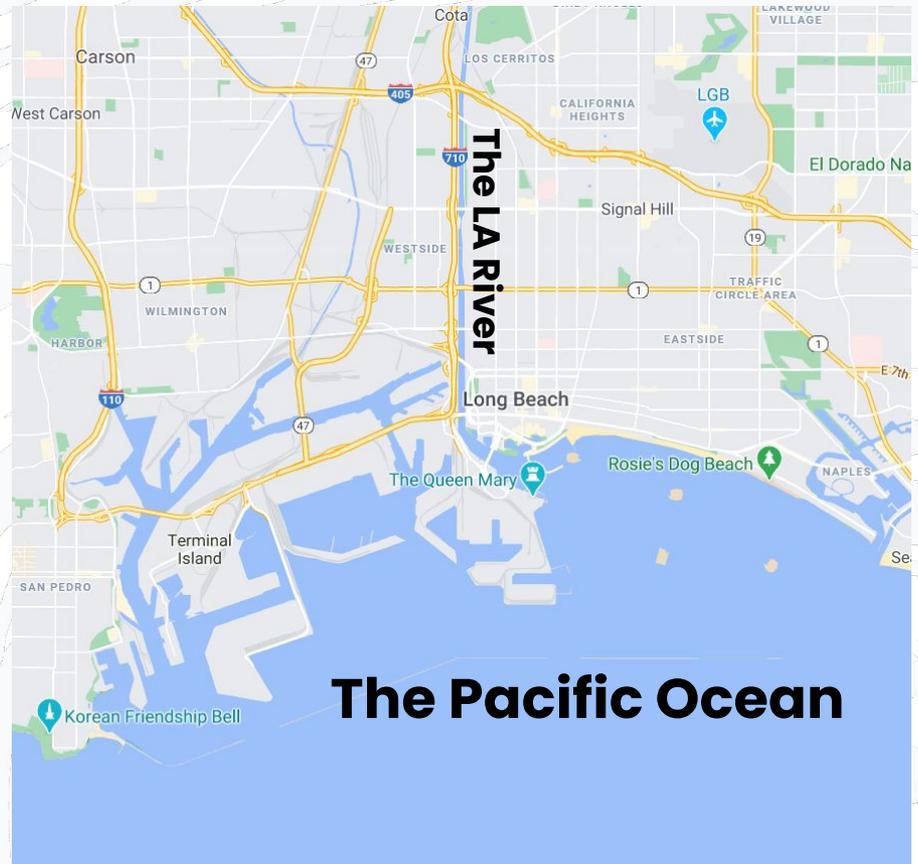
By understanding the past, humans can change the **future**.



Where is the LA River?



The LA River is connected to..



See you on the River Rover!



Thank you!

Be sure to write down any questions for
River Educators to answer during Lesson 2.

