



# 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

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## **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?



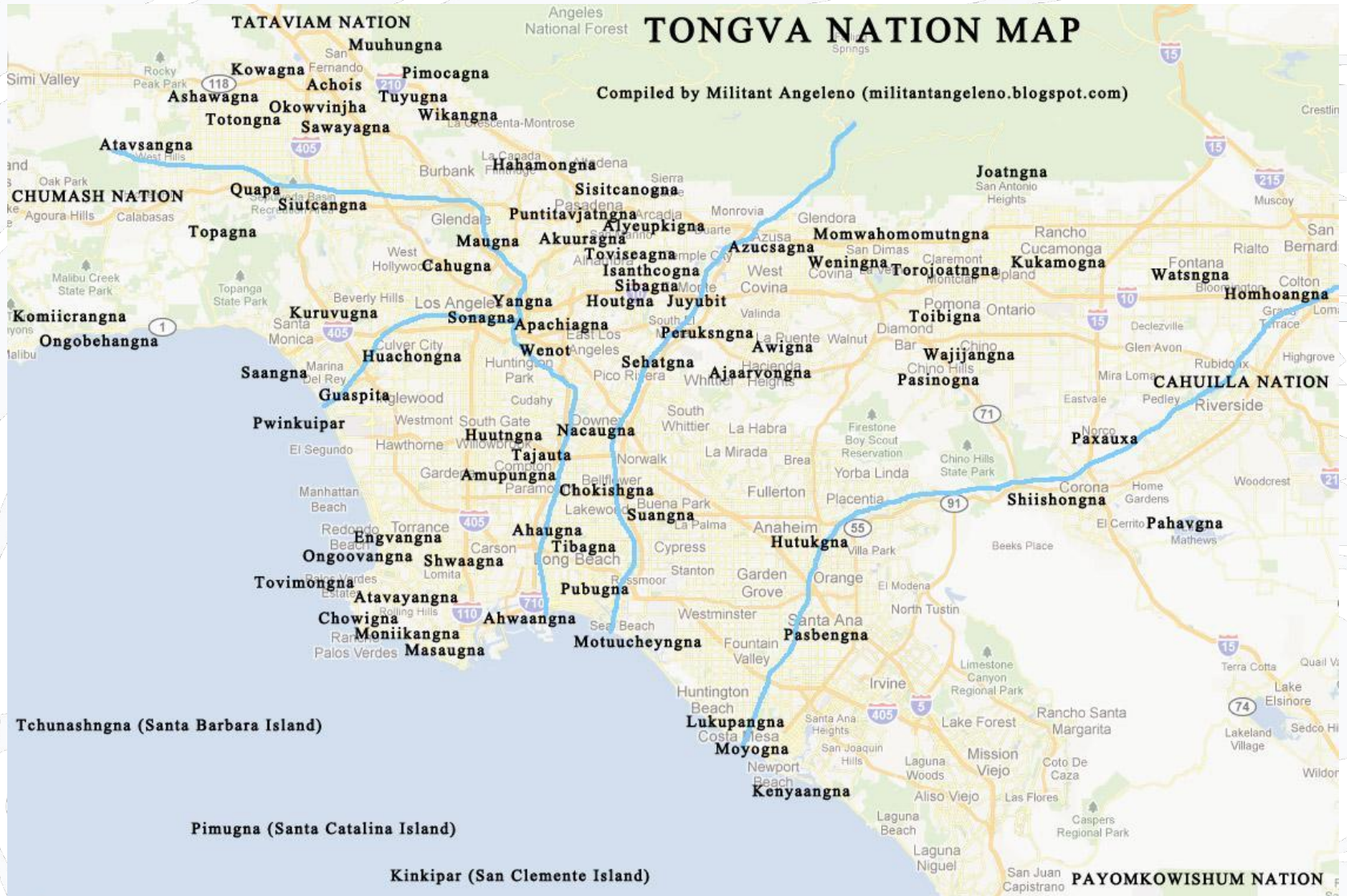
This land was home to several groups of Indigenous people.



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



Do you recognize any of these names?





# 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

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**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

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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](https://youtu.be/TTf8zQbr_6E)



# Which plan did the City pick?



The Olmstead Brothers' "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**.

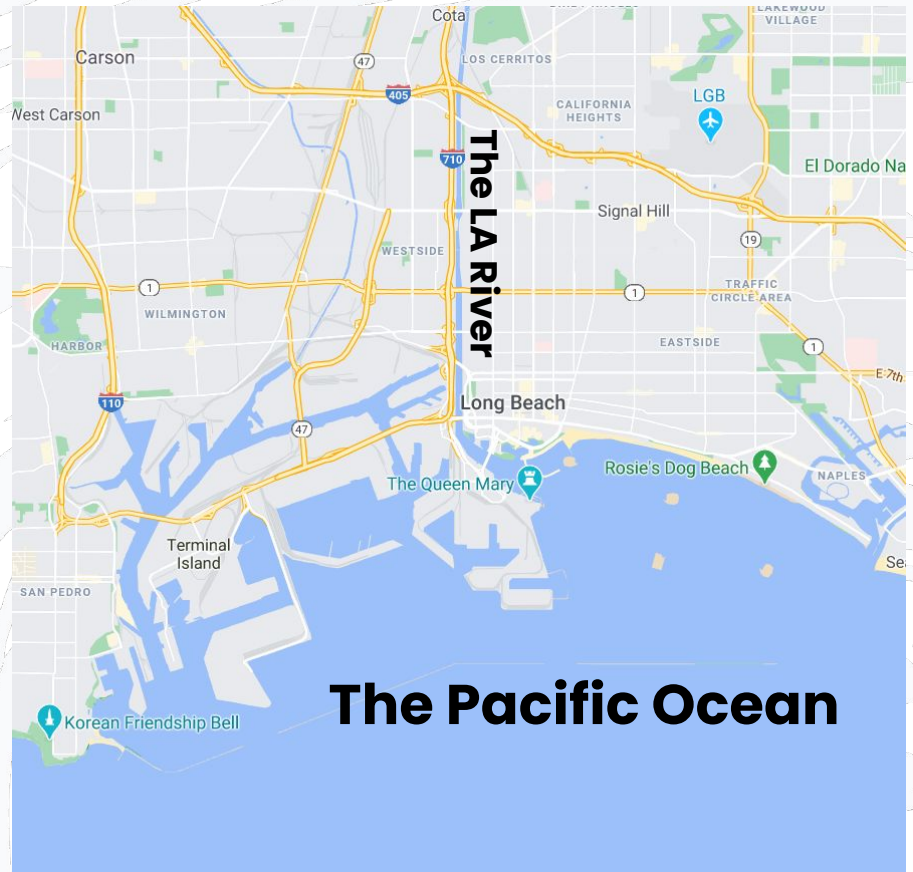


# Where is the LA River?





# 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.

