Geochemistry of the Salton Sea, CA
C. AMRHEIN, I. R. RODRIGUEZ, AND J. P. DE KOFF
University of California, California. Riverside, Dept. of Environmental
Sciences. (amrhein@ucr.edu)

The Salton Sea is a saline, closed basin lake 70 meters below MSL in the southern desert of California. The sea has a surface area of 945 km², a volume of 9.25 km³, a mean depth of 9 m, and an annual inflow of 1,600 million m³. The sea formed in 1905, and is sustained by excess irrigation water from the Colorado River and municipal wastewater. It is hyper-eutrophic due to fertilizer inputs from farm runoff, and has recently been identified has containing the highest density of fish of any body of water of this size. The salinity is currently 43,000-mg/kg, containing 10,200-mg/kg sulfate and 16,800-mg/kg chloride. The salinity of the sea is rising and there are concerns that within a few decades the fish will be gone. Plans are being considered for construction of a salt repository to control salinization and maintain the sea as a refuge for migratory waterfowl. Additionally, there is interest in reducing the phosphate loading to reduce algae blooms and improve water quality. Sulfate reduction is a major process of organic matter oxidation within the sediments and extensive outgassing of hydrogen sulfide occurs during wind events. Periods of anoxia throughout the water column can occur during the hot summer months and massive fish kills are common. Calcite, gypsum, pyrite, and green rust (II) are precipitating and accumulating in the sediments. We conducted an extensive sampling of the sediments and measured the amounts of these minerals. We have estimated the annual rate of mineral formation based on mass balance calculations and geochemical calculations. This information is needed to determine the rate salinity increase and the timetable for construction of a salt repository. Laboratory experiments indicate that coprecipitation of phosphate with calcite is an important mechanism reducing the internal loading of P and limiting algae blooms. Thus, source control of P from farmers’ fields will lead to significant reductions in algae blooms and a reduction in hydrogen sulfide production.

Iron isotopes in an Archean paleosol
A. D. ANBAR1, G. L. ARNOLD1, R. RYE2, S. WEYER3
1Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627 USA
(anbar@earth.rochester.edu; gail@earth.rochester.edu)
2Department of Earth Sciences, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA 90089 (rye@usc.edu) USA
3ThermoFinnigan MAT, Bremen, Germany
(sweyer@ThermoFinniganMAT.de)

Motivation and Methods
The Fe-depleted Mt. Roe #2 (W. Australia) paleosol was formed ~ 2.75 Ga. Low pO2 in the Archean atmosphere probably facilitated Fe loss. We have analysed the Fe isotope composition of this paleosol to gain insight into the mechanisms of Fe mobilization.

Iron isotope compositions were determined by high-resolution multiple-collector ICP-MS (Neptune, Thermo-Finnigan MAT, Bremen, Germany). Prior to analysis, Fe was extracted from samples using anion exchange chromatography. Instrument mass bias was corrected with a Cu “element spike”. Using a high-resolution entrance slit and low-resolution collector slits, isobaric interferences from ArO+, ArN+ and ArOH+ were resolved sufficiently to observe a mass-dependent relationship between δ56Fe and δ57Fe.

External precision (1σ) on δ56Fe and δ57Fe was better than ±0.05 and 0.08 ‰, respectively.

Figure 1: δ56Fe vs. % Fe retention

Results are shown in Fig. 1. δ56Fe is reported relative to the IRMM standard. Fe retention is calculated relative to the underlying basalt on a Ti-normalized basis.

δ56Fe of the basalt parent material is ~ -0.1 ‰; all other samples are enriched in 56Fe. Fe isotope fractionation confirms that low Fe concentrations in the sericite zone result from Fe loss, and reveals preferential loss of light Fe isotopes. δ56Fe in the sericite zone fits a Rayleigh trend (α ~ 1.00012) with initial δ56Fe similar to chloritic Fe. The data are consistent with Fe loss during chlorite formation and a kinetic isotope effect during weathering (Brantley et al., 2001), although other mechanisms are possible.

Reference