

Geological Data
Fresh Water Aquifers
in the Area of the
Proposed Eunice Monument South Unit
Lea County, New Mexico

The proposed Eunice Monument South Unit is located approximately 3/4 of a mile southwest of the Mescalero Ridge on the Eunice Plain.

The fresh water zones within the proposed Eunice Monument South Unit boundaries are the Quaternary alluvium, Pliocene Ogallala, and the Triassic Chinle and Santa Rosa formations.

The Quaternary aquifers are in recent sediments and are very localized in extent. They are made up of dune sands and sands filling channels or depressions in the underlying Ogallala. The sands are unconsolidated to semiconsolidated, fine to medium grained sands. They are found at the surface to a depth of approximately 100 feet.

The Pliocene Ogallala aquifer underlies the Quaternary alluvium and is present across the entire area but is not a major water source. The Ogallala is a calcareous unconsolidated sand containing some silt, clay and gravel. The Ogallala is found at approximately 60-125 feet.

The Triassic Chinle and Santa Rosa aquifers are the principal fresh water bearing zones in this area. They are both fine to medium grained sandstones interbedded with red clays and silt stones. At the northern end of the proposed unit, the Chinle is at a depth of approximately 50 feet and the Santa Rosa is at about 675 feet. At the southern end of the unit the Chinle is at approximately 200 feet and the Santa Rosa is at about 1000 feet.

Below the Santa Rosa are un-differentiated Permian and Triassic red beds. These "red beds" consist of red shales and red silty sandstones, and are not known to produce fresh water.

At the base of the Santa Rosa and/or the un-differentiated Permian and Triassic "red beds" is the Permian Rustler. At the top of the Rustler is an impermeable anhydrite bed, approximately 60-70 feet thick which provides an excellent barrier against contamination from brine waters in the Permian oil producing formations. The Rustler anhydrite is at approximately 1000 feet at the northern end of the unit and approximately 1400 feet at the southern end of the unit. There are no known fresh water horizons below the Rustler anhydrite.

For the protection of all fresh water zones within the unit boundary, cement will be circulated to surface around casing on all new injection wells and producing wells converted to injection wells.

Reference - Ground Water Report 6, USGS, 1961.

EXHIBIT NO. 36
Case No. 8397
November 7, 1984