

14. a. Records Search; ARMS: Date(S): August 1, 2000 Names(s): Martin Goetz
BLM Office: Date(s): July 31, 2000 Name(s): Chris Lowry
List Sites within .25 miles of Project: LA 77969, 84819, 100765, 113653, 113654, 116478,
83680, and 116479
Show sites within 500' on Project Map

b. Description of Undertaking:

The proposed undertaking is the placement of a 400 foot by 400 foot square well pad, the Oxy USA Rocky Road #1, and a 127 foot long access road. Total area surveyed and size of the area of "potential effect" is 4.0 acres. The proposed well pad is located approximately 30 miles east of Artesia, New Mexico just north of Highway 82. Pits and other ground disturbing activities will follow the well site plans provided to the Bureau of Land Management.

c. Environmental Setting (NRCS soil designation; vegetative community; etc.):

Soils in the area of the well pad are described as Largo complex, with a 0-5 percent slope. This soil is usually occurs on upland alluvial fans and is slightly eroded. Largo soils consist of deep reddish-brown, calcareous, gently sloping soils that developed in alluvium derived from sedimentary materials. The surface layer of the Largo complex is characterized as a sandy loam up to 4 inches thick. The ground surface is described as billowy to hummocky, with hummocks reaching from 1-3 feet in height. Sub-soils (up to a depth of usually 47 inches) are described as silty loams. The surface layer is moderately permeable to water and subject to wind and rain erosion, but the lower layer of soil, usually up to 47 inches deep holds water well in the occasional rains of the area. The area usually receives 10-14 inches of rain annually and has a mean annual temperature of 60°-64° Fahrenheit (Chugg 1971).

The immediate project area is dominated by dunes with desert grassland vegetation, in this case predominantly shinnery oak (*Quercus havardii*), which acts as a support mechanism for stabilizing the dune environment as well as a food source (Sebastian and Larralde 1989). Other floral species in the area include mesquite (*Prosopis juliflora*), sand sagebrush (*Artemisia filifolia*), broom snakeweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*), and various grasses, including black gramma (*Bouteloua eriopoda*) and tobosa (*Hilaria mutica*).

d. Field Methods:

The proposed well pad and access road was subjected to an intensive pedestrian survey with a one-person crew at a maximum interval of 10 meters. Flagging tape was used at the end of transects to ensure non-overlapping coverage. This flagging tape was removed at the end of the survey to avoid confusion with surveyor's markings. Approximately 50-75 percent of the surface was obscured by shinnery oak causing low surface visibility, particularly along the low dunes in the area. However, blowouts between dunes offered good ground visibility and additional attention was given to these areas during survey. These areas have the highest potential to yield surface cultural materials.

15. Cultural Resource Findings:

a. Identification and description

No new cultural resources were discovered during this survey. No isolated manifestations were located within the relocated 400 feet by 400 feet pad area or the proposed access road. However, one adjacent archaeological site is within the perimeter of the proposed well pad and may be impacted during ground-disturbing activities in the project area. This site was revisited and evaluated by the Geo-Marine, Inc., archaeologist and is discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

LA 83680 is a fairly large lithic-ceramic scatter with thermal features. Based on the artifacts present, the site dates to between AD 200-1100 (Early pithouse-Late pithouse). The western end of the site has been impacted by a well pad (see Sciscenti and Griffiths 1990), while the southern portions have been impacted by Highway 82. The proposed well pad for this project, as placed, will impact a portion of the site (see map). This area is characterized by shinnery oak coppice dunes ranging in height from .5 to 2 meters. Visibility is good in blowout areas, but poor in the shinnery oak covered areas. All encountered artifacts and features were located in blowouts. Most cultural material is located along the Highway 82 ROW fence and consists of burned caliche features, chipped stone debris (flakes, angular debris, and tools of chert and chalcedony), ground stone, and a few ceramics (primarily El Paso brownwares with a single sherd of Chupadero B/w and an unknown plain ware sherd also noted. Reconnaissance of the site for updating purposes