

ENVIRONMENT

The project area will be located north of NM 128, west of the Eddy/Lea County Line. This undulating landform is characterized by stabilized sand dunes which range from 1-2 meters in height. These dunes are interspersed with deflation basins which have been formed by aeolian action. Local soils in the region consist of loamy sands which belong to the Kermit-Berino association. These soils are drained internally. Elevation in the project area is between 3430 ft and 3480 ft above sea level.

These plains are part of an environmental zone called the Lower Sonoran Life Zone. The most common plant varieties in the region are shin oak (*Quercus havardii*), mesquite (*Prosopis juliflora*) plains yucca (*Yucca glauca*), broom snakeweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*) and various grasses. Some of the common faunal types in area are mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), pronghorn antelope (*Antilocapra americana*), jackrabbit (*Lepus* sp.), cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus* sp.), coyote (*Canis latrans*), as well as other small mammals, birds and reptiles. Bison (*Bison bison*) also ranged in the region prior to their near-extinction in the nineteenth century.