NMAS
New Mexico Archaeological Services, Inc.

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Reconnaissance
Excavation
Analysis
Explanation
Curation

10 March 1979

Mr. Norris Nelson
President
Zia Energy, Inc.
P.O. Box 603
Hobbs, New Mexico 88240

Dear Mr. Nelson:

Enclosed please find NMAS' Archaeological Clearance Report for Zia Energy, Incorporated's proposed Alternate Federal Well No.1, Preferred Federal Well No.1, and for the Modifications to Existing Roads on federal lands in Lea County. No cultural resources were recorded during this reconnaissance; consequently, NMAS is suggesting clearance for the locations as well as the road projects.

If you have any questions, please call my office. Thank you for asking NMAS to do this reconnaissance.

Yours sincerely,

J. Loring Haskell

Dr. J. Loring Haskell
Principal Investigator

Enclosure

cc: Ms. Ann Ramage, BLM, Roswell
Mr. Jim Simms, USGS, Hobbs
Mr. Stewart L. Peckham, Laboratory of Anthropology, Santa Fe
Mr. Thomas W. Merlan, SHPO, Santa Fe

as

Archaeological Clearance Report

for

Via Energy, Inc.

Alternate Federal Well No.1
Preferred Federal Well No.1
Modifications To Existing Ranch Roads

Prepared

By

Dr. J. Loring Haskell

Submitted

By

Dr. J. Loring Haskell
Principal Investigator
New Mexico Archaeological Services, Inc.
Carlsbad, New Mexico

19 March 1979

Permit No. 78-NM-120

[illegible]

In 1[illegible] March [illegible], New Mexico Archaeological Services, Inc., (NMAS), Carlsbad, undertook for Zia Energy, Inc., Hobbs, an archaeological reconnaissance of lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Lea County, New Mexico. Reconnoitered areas will be impacted by the construction of a drill pad and tank battery at either the Alternate "or the Preferred" location. In addition, portions of two existing roads were investigated as well. This project was administered by Mr. Farris Nelson, President, Zia Energy, Inc., and Dr. J. Loring Haskell, Principal Investigator, NMAS. Dr. Haskell conducted the reconnaissance under excellent field conditions.

Survey Technique

Each of Zia Energy's locations was examined for evidence of man's past activities by walking them in a series of 20 ft wide, close interval (15° or less), zigzag transects. An added zone embracing 20 ft on each side of both locations, and hence lying beyond the 400 X 400 ft work area, was investigated as well. Existing roads were surveyed by a similar means. Methodologically, this technique served to promote optimal conditions for the visual examination of areas to be impacted by construction-related activities.

Zia Energy, Inc.
Alternate Federal Well No.1

Location

As proposed, this location will measure 400 X 400 ft and will be situated 2160 ft from the south line and 2210 ft from

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] will be situated in the:

[illegible], Section 17, T22S, R37E, [illegible] County, [illegible]

[illegible] is situated on an existing ranch road which will be discussed below.

Map Reference: USGS Eunice Quadrangle, 7.5 Minute Series, 1969.

Terrain

Topographically, this area is coextensive with the Eunice Plain being characterized by a broad, generally flat landform with localized collapse, or subsidence, structure. Drainage is toward the southeast and ultimately into Monument Draw. Surficial deposits, which largely aeolian in nature; are stable. Soil individuals belong to an intergrade of the Typic Torripsamment subgroup and are thermic. Peds are composed of fine- to medium-grained sandy clay loams and sandy loams which invariably lack lithic inclusions. Consolidated sand underlies the project area as does indurated caliche.

Floristics

Key components of the floral community's overstory include Prosopis juliflora and Quercus havardii, which are codominant, as well as infrequent representatives of Acacia greggii and Koeberlinia spinosa variant. Most commonly observed forbs and grasses are Gutierrezia sarothrae, Euphorbia spp., Aristida sp., Setaria macrostachya, Sporobolus sp., and Bouteloua eriopoda. Of the Gramineae, Bouteloua eriopoda is decidedly infrequent.

Cultural Resources

Excepting contemporary detritus resulting from oil field operations, no cultural resources were recorded during this

[illegible]

[illegible] and [illegible] as well as near the rim of local collapse structures. These latter [illegible] often support Paleo-Indian resources as these features acted as receptacles for Pleistocene-aged lakes. In all probability man's activities in the immediate vicinity focused on hunting and hence was of an ephemeral nature.

Recommendations

NMAS recommends clearance for Zia Energy, Incorporated's proposed Federal Well No.1 and suggests that work-related activities proceed in accordance with their plans.

Zia Energy, Inc.
Preferred Federal Well No.1

Location

The "preferred" location will measure 400 X 400 ft on federal lands and will be situated 2310 ft from the south and 2310 ft from the west line of:

Section 17, T22S, R37E, NMPM, Lea County, NM

It is situated in the:

NE¼SW¼, Section 17, T22S, R37E, NMPM, Lea County, NM

It is situated on two existing ranch roads. (If an alledged pipeline is sufficiently well removed from the location, Zia Enegry, Incoprorated will use this location rather than the Alternate.)

Terrain

In general, the environs of this location are distinguished

[illegible] weathering processes to low hummocks, among the [illegible] delineate emerging portions of the local landform. The immediate vicinity is marked by a complex of collapse structures resulting from dissolution-created subsidence of Permian-aged salts. Formation of these features undoubtedly occurred during either Tertiary and Quaternary times. To the west, subsidence has continued into recent times with the formation of annular fissures and a bonafide secondary collapse structure being documented for San Simon Swale in 1938.

Floristics

Prosopis pulifloma uniformly occupies a niche provided by hummocks while intervening areas are filled by Quercus havardii. Associated plants, albeit occurring in varying frequencies, include Acacia greggii, Koeberlinia spinosa, Guterrezia sarothrae, Euphorbia spp., Setaria macrostachya, Sporobolus flexuosus, and Bouteloua eriopoda. Acacia, Koeberlinia, and Bouteloua are infrequent and often rare.

Cultural Resources

No archaeological sites or isolated manifestations were recorded during this reconnaissance. Owing to an absence of lithic material suited for the fabrication of flaked- and ground-tools as well as a paucity of potable water, usage of this landform, as least since terminal Pleistocene times, has been limited to the activities of social units engaged in hunting pursuits. Culturally, this area has been occupied by

[illegible]

Recommendations

[illegible] recommends clearance of this [illegible] location and suggests that work-related activities proceed in accordance with existing plans.

Modifications to Existing Ranch Roads

Location

Zia Energy, Incorporated proposes to upgrade portions of two existing ranch roads situated in the immediate vicinity. Road beds will measure 12 ft in breadth. For the "alternate location", it will involve 450 ft of road on the north and 660 ft on the east. If Zia decides to utilize the "preferred location", the modifications will embrace approximately 300 ft of road bed on the north and an additional 510 ft on the east. They are situated in the:

NE¼SW¼, Section 17, T22S, R37E, NMPM, Lea County, NM (BLM)

Map Reference: USGS Eunice Quadrangle, 7.5 Minute Series, 1969.

Terrain

Reconnoitered areas are situated on a generally eastward-trending slope which drains into Monument Draw during periods of excessive rainfall. Soil individuals tend to be deep, non-calcareous, fine- to medium-textured clay loams and sandy clay loams. Excepting occasional caliche cobbles, lithic inclusions are not present in pedons.

Floristics

and Quercus havardii. Prosopis, [illegible] .Torr, is restricted to the deeper soils associated with hummock[illegible] whereas Quercus tend to be confined to inter-hummock areas. Soils supporting Quercus invariably harbor Butiarrhena serotherus, Tumbergia sp., Aristida sp., and Boutelous eriopoda. Setaria macrostachya uniformly is associated with Prosopis.

Cultural Resources

No archaeological resources were observed during this reconnaissance. Locally, solitary projectile points should occur on a strictly random basis owing to the transitory nature of hunting-related tasks. Camp sites are largely confined to dune fields situated to the south and west. Significant sites are known from the Monument Springs area.

Recommendations

NMAS recommends clearance for the proposed modifications to be made to the existing ranch roads and suggests that work-related activities proceed in accordance with existing plans.