

would evaluate or cause to have evaluated the information provided to determine if it is an historic property and eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

3.6 Invasive, Non-native Species

There are no known populations of noxious weeds within the project area. However, on the adjacent grazing allotment within 10 miles of the project area, there are known populations of African rue. Key characteristics used to identify this perennial species include bushy growth habit, fleshy stems and leaves, and a five-petal white flower. African rue is spread by seed, roots, and root fragments. The known populations exist primarily along the shoulders of county-maintained roads which are the main access routes into the project area.

3.7 Wastes, Hazardous or Solid

There are no known hazardous or solid waste issues in the area of the proposed well.

3.8 Water Quality

3.8.1 Surface Water

Surface water within the area is affected by geology, precipitation, and water erosion. Factors that currently affect surface water resources include management of livestock grazing, oil and gas development, recreational use, and brush control treatments. No perennial surface water is found in the area. Ephemeral surface water within the area may occur within tributaries, playas, and stock tanks.

3.8.2 Ground Water

Groundwater in the area occurs in basin-fill deposits and in consolidated rock. The basin-fill aquifers consist mainly of unconsolidated to semi-indurated sedimentary deposits. The material is generally of Quaternary and Tertiary ages and ranges from poorly-sorted to moderately-sorted mixtures of gravel, sand, silt, and clay from consolidated rock in the nearby mountain ranges. Evaporite deposits, limestone, conglomerate, and volcanic rocks are present in places. Groundwater in the basins is primarily recharged by ephemeral streams draining the surrounding mountains and discharging either across the permeable alluvial fans at the mouths of the steep canyons or by underflow in these canyons, which enters the alluvial fan directly. Discharge can occur by evapotranspiration, movement to rivers and streams or groundwater withdrawals. Factors that currently affect groundwater resources in the area include management of livestock grazing, groundwater pumping, and possible impacts from brush control treatments. Most of the groundwater in the area is currently used for rural domestic and livestock purposes.

The proposed well is located on the geomorphic feature of Otero Mesa which is the western edge of the Salt Basin and is included in the Basin and Range Province. More importantly, the area is included as part of the Rio Grande Rift Valley. The Rift Valley, by its nature, connotes faulting and fracturing of the rocks both on the surface and subsurface. The proposed well location in the western portion of the Salt