
4.8 VISUAL RESOURCES

Proposed Action

Direct Impacts

Sensitive receptors in the Salt Wells area include hikers, off-highway vehicle users, equestrians, visitors to the Pony Express Trail, and people traveling on Highway 50. Construction and operation activities would be visible in the project area. However, these activities would be temporary, resulting in short-term impacts on the visual quality of the landscape. Also, it is assumed there would be no bright spot lights to illuminate site activities at night. Therefore, there would be no impact on nighttime light.

Once operations ceased, the wells would be capped and the sites would be reclaimed. The remaining structure would represent a noticeable human-made object in an area with few human-made structures. This would constitute a long-term impact on the visual quality of the landscape. Due to the size of the capped well, it would not be highly visible.

Indirect Impacts Based on a Reasonably Foreseeable Development Scenario

Future actions based on the reasonable development scenario could result in indirect impacts. Future development and production could involve new structures, roads, and operations. These would be near areas where expansive vistas are available, where recreation takes place, or where minimal nearby development exists. Potential risk exists for impacts on scenic vistas, the visual character of a site, and nighttime lighting. Future development and production would involve a site-specific environmental analysis. Geothermal resource developers would be required to comply with general lease stipulations in order to address the potential impacts on visual resources. Subsequent NEPA analysis would determine the actual impact to visual resources.

No Action Alternative

There would be no impacts on visual resources.