NUCLEAR WASTE CONSULTANTS INC.

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March 3, 1986

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009/3.1/DBS.001 RS-NMS-85-009 Communication No. 32

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Division of Waste Management Geotechnical Branch MS-623-SS Washington, DC 20555

Attention: Mr. Jeff Pohle, Project Officer

Technical Assistance in Hydrogeology - Project B (RS-NMS-85-009)

Re: Salt Site Familiarization Report, Subtask 3.1

Dear Mr. Pohle:

This cover letter transmits to the NRC staff the Site Familiarization Subtask Report for Salt, Subtask 3.1 of Contract No. RS-NMS-85-009. This report has been prepared by the Drs. Daniel Stephens and Fred Phillips and Mr. Robert Knowlton of Daniel B. Stephens and Associates (DBS), the site team for Salt, under subcontract to Nuclear Waste Consultants. The report has received a management and technical review by Mark Logsdon of Nuclear Waste Consultants.

Nuclear Waste Consultants calls to your attention three specific technical matters concerning the hydrology of the Palo Duro Basin that have been raised by DBS in their review of the data and of conceptual models of the hydrogeology in the Salt literature. These technical matters include:

- The potential for horizontal flow in mudstone interbeds of the HSU-B aquitard under ambient horizontal gradients.
- The potential for membrane filtration of brines to induce pressure anomolies within the basin that could affect interpretations of flow.
- Significant differences in modeling assumptions and inputs between INTERA and TBEG which may have impacts on developing and evaluating conceptual models.
- 4. Apparent inconsistencies between hydrodynamically-based and geochemically-based estimates of residence and circulation times of waters within the basin. DBS considers that considerable additional effort will have to be applied to developing conceptual models that are consistent with the chemical as well as the physical characteristics of the system.

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Distribution:

WM Project 10, 11, 16 Docket No.

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)Pohle (Return to WM, 623-SS) The Statement of Work for all three tasks calls for comment on the NRC staff's hydrologic issues. DBS has already provided comment on the Salt issues, presented in the NWC letter report on the NNWSI issues hierarchy. Additional comment on the NRC issues is provided in this letter report, with particular comment on the potential significance of providing additional guidance in the issues on the roles of deterministic and stochastic models.

The submission of this letter report meets the contractual deliverable for Subtask 3.1 of Contract Number RS-NMS-85-009 and completes the Salt Site Familiarization subtask.

If you have any questions concerning this report or related matters, please contact me immediately.

Respectfully submitted, NUCLEAR WASTE CONSULTANTS, INC.

Mark J. Logsdon, Project Manager

Att: BWIP Site Familiarization Report, Subtask 2.1

cc: US NRC - Director, NMSS (ATTN: PSB)

DWM (ATTN: Division Director) - 2
Barry Bromberg, Contract Administrator

WMGT (ATTN: Branch Chief)

bc: M. Galloway, TTI

R. Knowlton, DBS

L. Davis, WWL

• GROUND-WATER CONTAMINATION • UNSATURATED ZONE INVESTIGATIONS • WATER SUPPLY DEVELOPMENT •

February 28, 1986

Nuclear Waste Consultants, Inc. 8341 So. Sangre de Cristo Road Littleton, Colorado 80127

Attention: Mark Logsdon, Project Manager

Re: Site Familiarization Report, Subtask 3.1

Dear Mr. Logsdon:

This letter serves as our report for Subtask 3.1, Site Familiarization, as required by our subcontract to Nuclear Waste Consultants. This correspondence also includes our comments regarding Hydrology Issues for the Palo Duro Bedded Salt Basin, Palo Duro STP-1.0, Draft, August 1984. After your review of this report, please forward it to Jeff Pohle at the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Background

Nuclear Waste Consultants, Inc. (NWC) was awarded NRC project RS-NMS-85-009 entitled "Technical Assistance in Hydrogeology - Project B - Analysis" on September 28, 1985. Daniel B. Stephens and Associates, Inc. (DBS) is subcontracted to NWC for review of hydrogeologic investigations of the Salt Repository Project (SRP). Robert G. Knowlton, Jr. (SRP Project Manager) and Daniel B. Stephens (SRP Technical Director) attended the project kickoff meeting at the NRC offices in Silver Spring, MD on October 22-25, 1985. As discussed in the October travel report for this trip, we were introduced to the NRC project officers and staff personnel, as well as personnel from Williams and Associates, contractors on the NRC project RS-NMS-85-008 entitled "Technical Assistance in Hydrogeology - Project A - Testing".

In addition to meeting personnel involved with the project we were given a copy of the NRC bibliography pertaining to SRP documents. We were given specific direction at this meeting to focus our familiarization and review activities on the Palo Duro Basin bedded salt sites in the Texas Panhandle. Attachment A contains a list of documents which we now have in our library. Documents recently requested but not yet received are listed in Attachment B.

Document Data Base

The bibliography shown in Attachment A is part of a computerized data base cataloging the documents in our library. Document searches can be accomplished by entering complete or partial titles, author's name, document number, or some keyword. The bibliography will be modified shortly to include information pertaining to reviewed documents. Documents that have been reviewed formally or informally will be listed as such. The reviewers name, date of the review, and any other index information will also be included. This should aid us later for formal reviews and continued familiarization activities. Informal reviews and document readings are entered on a format such as that shown in Figure 1. These reviews are catalogued for future reference.

Site Familiarization

Our current familiarization and understanding of the hydrogeology of the Palo Duro basin has been derived from numerous documents, including the following:

DOE, 1984, 'Draft Environmental Assessment', Deaf Smith County Site, Texas

OF-WTWI-1983-4, 'Identification of Recharge-Discharge Areas of the Palo Duro Basin, Texas Panhandle', 1983, R.K. Senger and B.C. Richter.

OF-WTWI-1984-22, 'Geostatistical Analysis of Potentiometric Surface of the San Andres Formation, Texas Panhandle',1984, A.R. Dutton and E.D. Orr.

OF-WTWI-1984-30, 'Stratigraphy of the Palo Duro Basin - A Status Report', 1984, Ruppel et al.

OF-WTWI-1984-32, 'Modeling the Effects of Regional Hydrostratigraphy and Topography on Ground-water Flow, Palo Duro Basin Texas', 1984, R.K. Senger and G.E. Fogg.

OF-WTWI-1984-44, 'Vertical Hydraulic Conductivity, Flux, and Flow in the Deep-Basin Brine Aquifer, Palo Duro Basin, Texas', 1984, E.D. Orr and R.K. Senger.

OF-WTWI-1984-54, `Hydrodynamic Development of the Palo Duro Basin and Other Mechanisms Creating Possible transient Flow Conditions', 1984, R.K. Senger

Figure 1 - Short-Form Document Reviews	for NRC
Document Title:	
Document Authors:	
Document Number:	Publication Date:
Document Read By:	Reviewed Date:
Summary of Document:	
Major Review Conclusions:	i
General Comments:	

BMI/ONWI-578, 'The Organic Chemistry of Deep Ground Waters from the Palo Duro Basin, Texas: Implications for Radionuclide Complexation, Ground-water Origin, and Petroleum Exploration', 1985, J.L. Means and N.J. Hubbard, Battelle Memorial Institute, ONWI.

ONWI/E512-02900/TR-31,410A-00G-17A, 1984, `Second Status Report on Regional Ground-water Flow Modeling for the Palo Duro Basin, Texas', INTERA, Inc.

'Hydrochemical and Isotope Hydrology Results for the Palo Basin, Texas Panhandle: A Summary Report of Material Presented at the June 5, 1984 Discussion Meeting, Columbus, Ohio', 1984, Prepared by Norman Hubbard/ONWI.

In reviewing these documents and others we have developed some initial impressions and concerns that may help guide our further study of the hydrogeology of the Palo Duro basin.

The Conceptual Model

The hydrogeologic framework of the Palo Duro Basin is rather well established, particularly with regard to the stratigraphy and geologic structure. In a regional sense, details of the depositional environments and geologic history appear to be especially well developed. Although there are few control points (deep wells) near the proposed sites, there seems to be adequate control for developing a geologic framework for the conceptual model, owing to lateral uniformity within areally extensive strata.

The hydrologic data available are considered to be adequate at the regional scale to define general direction of ground-water flow within the principal hydrostratigraphic units.

In the conceptual model for ground-water flow which we have inferred from available data and reports, there are three regional hydrostratigraphic units (HSU). The shallow unit is HSU-A, which is an aquifer that includes the Ogallala formation and Triassic Dockum group. The middle unit, HSU-B, is an aquitard which is on the order of 4000 feet thick and includes relatively low permeable shale, anhydrite, carbonate, mudstones and siltstone of Permian age. The repository is to be located near the center of this sequence and within Unit 4 of the San Andres formation. The lower unit is HSU-C, a deep-basin brine-aquifer comprised of the lower Permian Wolfcamp carbonates and underlying units, including the granite wash. HSU-C overlies crystalline Precambrian basement rocks.

The shallow aquifer system, HSU-A, is recharged mostly by



infiltration of precipitation; and discharge is principally by wells and by springs. Ground water generally flows eastward and some is presumed to leak downward and flow vertically across the HSU-B aquitard. However, sparse data within the HSU-B San Andres formation indicate that there is also a horizontal flow component to the southeast. In the deep-basin brine aquifer HSU-C, ground water flow is to the northeast. Recharge to this unit is believed to occur mostly in outcrop areas to the west in New Mexico. Sources of discharge have not been clearly identified.

General Comments on the Conceptual Model

Through the review of the available literature, general areas of relative weakness have been identified in the conceptual model. Some of our concerns may be addressed in forth-coming new documents or documents which we have ordered but have not received. Some of our concerns may diminish in importance to us as our understanding of the hydrogeologic system deepens through subsequent data-base management and quantification activities, whereas others may become the basis for additional, more detailed investigation. Below we present a brief discussion of our preliminary concerns regarding the information available to us at this time which pertains to hydrogeologic conceptual models.

DOE's conceptual model stresses vertical flow downward in the HSU-B aquitard toward the deep-basin brine aquifer. There are numerous layers of mudstone within the salt section which could have horizontal hydraulic conductivities that are much greater than that of the adjacent salt. Inasmuch as horizontal hydraulic gradients have been inferred from widely spaced wells in this unit, there is the possibility of lateral flow within mudstones of HSU-B that has not been addressed thoroughly. The implications of anisotropy in the HSU-B zone also have not been thoroughly discussed. High concentrations of brine across semi-permeable clay membranes may cause anoualous pressures within the basin that could affect interpretations of flow; this potential problem has not been addressed completely.

Numerical models have been applied as tools to understanding the conceptual model of the ground-water system. These modeling efforts were undertaken independently by the DOE subcontractor INTERA, Inc. and by the Texas Bureau of Economic Geology (TBEG). The models differ significantly in many respects, including the type of numerical model, choice of boundary conditions and parameterization, for example. We believe that differences between models should be closely examined for their implications to the conceptual model interpretations. Wherever possible, combined results of both efforts should be used in developing the conceptual model, and areas of contradiction should be identified and resolved with additional studies.

Another issue of concern is the rates of ground-water circulation through the salts and beneath the salts through the clastic and carbonate basin sediments. Preliminary numerical models of the basin by various groups (TBEG and INTERA) has produced roughly similar results, with cross-basin circulation times on the order of 10⁶ to no more than 10⁷ years. However recent geochemical dating of the ground-water by ONWI has produced much older age estimates, in fact they have implied a connate origin (i.e. Permian/Pennsylvanian) for the oldest waters. This discrepancy has cast doubt on the entire conceptualization of the flow system, and requires resolution. The problem of vertical transport through the salt section, although not so subject to conflicting interpretations, is equally ambiguous, given the state of knowledge concerning hydraulic conductivities in the salts. Geochemical evidence (e.g., isotopic dating) could yield considerable insight here. Also ground-water age dating and stable isotope analyses may be most useful in checking the rates of ground-water flow and sources of recharge.

We believe that additional effort is needed to present a conceptual model which is consistent with the chemical, as well as the physical, characteristics of the system.

Comment on Hydrology Issues

The draft NRC report on staff hydrology issues is a good, general guidance for organizing technical issues to be addressed for the Palo Duro Basin. Issues 1.1, 1.3, and 1.5 appear to be most relevant to our contract. However, there is one area we would like to comment on.

In regard to subissue 1.1.3, additional clarification on the types of models is suggested in order to establish the basis for model selection. Analytical or numerical models selected for application to the salt site will be either deterministic or probabilistic (stochastic). Deterministic models are usually most appropriate when there are few available data. hydraulic properties are assigned to large areas of the hydrogeologic system, and the predicted values of hydraulic head or velocity do not explicitly reflect the element of uncertainty in the input parameters. On the other hand, probabilistic models, which may, for example, include the spatial correlation structure of hydraulic properties or transient variability in boundary conditions, are usually most appropriate when there are sufficient data to statistically predict an outcome within specified confidence limits. Inasmuch as there are inherent uncertainties in the hydrogeologic parameters, the preferred modeling strategy would provide estimates of probabilities associated with a given model prediction. The probabilistic approach appears to be consistent with 10 CFR 60.122 (Siting Criteria) which requires that "the favorable conditions present are sufficient to provide

a reasonable assurance that the performance objectives...will be met".

Summary

The Site Familiarization subtask of the project has been successfully completed. The DBS team has developed a basic understanding of the hydrogeology of the Palo Duro basin, and along with our bibliographic data base, puts us in a good position for performing formal reviews and other tasks.

Sincerely,

Daniel B. Stephens & Assoc., Inc.

Robert G. Knowlton, Jr.

Project Manager

RGKJr/mt

ATTACHMENT A

SALT REPOSITORY PROJECT

HYDROGEOLOGY BIBLIOGRAPHY February 26, 1986 BMI/SRP-5002, 'Well Completion Report - Dissolution Zone Water Wells (PD-8, PD-11, PD-12, PD-13) Palo Duro Basin, Texas: Unanalyzed Data', 1984, Stone and Webster Engineering Corp.

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Geology, v. 12, p. 314-317, 1984, 'Deformation of Permian Strata overlying a zone of salt dissolution and collapse in the Texas Panhandle', A.G. Goldstein and E.W. Collins.

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NRC-10CFR Part 60, 'Disposal of High-Level Radioactive Wastes in Geologic Repositories; Technical Criteria'.

NRC-10CFR Part 60, 'Disposal of High-Level Radioactive Wastes in Geologic Repositories; Licensing Procedures'.

Nuclear Waste Policy Act, H.R.3809.

EPA-40CFR Part 191, 'Environmental Standards for the Management and Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel, High-Level and Transuranic Radioactive Wastes; Final Rule'.

WMGT Document Review, on BMI/SRP-5010, by Grant Buma, 1984.

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WMGT Document Review, on BMI/SRP-5011, by Adrian Brown, 1984.

WMGT Document Review, on ONWI-504, by Adrian Brown, 1984.

WMGT Document Review, on BMI/SRP-5010, by Williams and Associates, 1984.

WMGT Document Review, on BMI/SRP-5005, by Williams and Associates, 1984.

WMGT Document Review, on BMI/SRP-5020, by Williams and Associates, 1984.

WMGT Document Review, on Draft - ONWI-556, by Williams and Associates, 1984.



WMGT Document Review on OF-WTWI-1983-13, 'Hydrogeochemistry of the Palo Duro Basin, Texas Panhandle', and OF-WTWI-1984-36, 'Regional and Isotopic Hydrogeochemistry: Deep-basin Brine Aquifers, Palo Duro Basin, Texas Panhandle', review by Walton R. Kelly.

WMGT Document Review on OF-WTWI-1984-50, 'Amount and Nature of Occluded Water in Bedded Salt, Palo Duro Basin', review by Walton R. Kelly.

WMGT Document Review on OF-WTWI-1984-11, 'Host Rock Geochemistry of the Palo Duro Basin, Texas', review by Walton R. Kelly.

Letter from Adrian Brown to Eileen Poeter, Re: Data Review visit to Columbus, Ohio, May 14-18, 1984.

WMGT Document Review of 'Test Plan for Multiple-Well Hydraulic Testing of Selected Hydrogeologic Units at the RRL-2 site, Basalt Waste Isolation Project, Reference Repository Location (DOE Doc. No. SD-BWI-TP-040) by Randolph Stone, P.M. Rogers, A.lt. Lu, and R.W. Bryce, Dated 1985, By Fred Marinelli, Michael Galloway, and Mark Logsdon.

ATTACHMENT B

SALT REPOSITORY PROJECT

DOCUMENTS REQUESTED

Documents Requested

Report #/
Title

Author

Log #

Document Date

Carpenter 00108 780000
Origin and Chemical Evolution of Brines in Sedimentary Basins
(Oklahoma Geological Survey Circular 79) pp. 60-77

DeBuchananne 00013 810501 USGS ltr to CHeath, DOE (w/cover ltr frm Neff, NWTS)-comparison of geologic and hydrologic characteristics of salt domes and salt beds.

U.S. DOE Transcripts from Public Hearings in Texas on Proposed Nomination of Sites for Site Characterization & Recommendations of Issues for Environmental Assessments & Site Characterization Plans, (Vol. 1 & 2), Hereford, TX (5/16/83) & Tulia, TX (5/17/83)

McCauley 00075 840000

Draft DOE Document - Expected Nuclear Waste Repository NearField, Perfomance in Three Salt Basins, Part II: Brine Migrations (Techinical Review by Walton Kelly)

McNulty 00074 840200

Draft DOE Cocument - Expected Nuclear waste Repository NearField, Perfomance in Three Salt Basins, Part 1: Thermal Conditions.

Wilson 00014 801021 Report of Trip to Asse and Konrad Mines, Federal Republic of Germany, by LBL.

GLGYB Roedder 00107 811100 Problems in Determination of the Water Content of Rock-Salt Samples and Its Significance in Nuclear-Waste Storage Siting, by Geology, Vol. 9 #11, pp. 525-530.

NUTYB 00091 831200 Letters to the Editor - Remarks on "Migration of Brine Inclusions in Salt", by Nuclear Technology Vo. 63 (pp. 507-510)

NUTYB Pigford 00092 820200 Migration of Brine Inclusions in Salt, by Nuclear Technology Vol. 56 (pp. 93-101)

Report #/ Author Log # Document Title Date

ORNL-5774 Shor 00099 810000 Consolidation & Permeability of Salt in Brine, by Union Carbide Corporation for DOE

ORNL-5818 Jenks 00077 811200
Brine Migration in Salt and Its Implications in theGeologic
Disposal of Nuclear Waste, by ORNL for DOE

ORNL-5950 Baes Jr. 00023 830900
The Effect of Water in Salt Repositories: Final Report, by ORNL for DOE

Report 98 Myers 00046 690700 Compilation of Results of Aquifer Tests in Texas, by Texas Water Development Board

Battelle 01249 840501 Questions & Answers About the Potential Effects of a Repository on the Ogallala Aquifer.

Goldstein 00613 820000
Quantitative Analysis of Regional gravity Data - Texas Panhandle Region, The University of Texas at Austin, Bureau of Economic Geology.

Gustavson 00614 810500
Selected Aspects of the Geology of the Palo Duro Basin, Texas Panhandle, Field Trip Guidebook, The University of Texas at Austin, Bureau of Economic Geology.

Handford 00610 810000
Regional Cross Section of the Texas Panhandle: Precambrian to Mid-Permian, The University of Texas at Austin, Bureau of Economic Geology

Sewell 01037 840000 Palo Duro Basin Brine Samples (Tables 1-4)

Stone & Webster 01058 831208
Thickness of Thick Salt Bed in Lower San Andres Unit 4 in Northern Palo Duro Basin (Sketch 13697-36-A-2)

Stone & Webster 01059 831208 Inferred Faults in Northern Palo Duro Basin (Sketch 13697-37-C-2)

Report #/ Author Log # Document Title Date

Stone & Webster 10160 831228 Zone of dissolution of Lower San Andres Unit 4 Salt (Sketch 13697-37-D-1)

Stone & Webster 10161 831229
Wolfcamp Potentiometric Surface after Culling Depressured,
Overpressured, & Underpressured Data in Northern Palo Duro Basin
(Sketch 13697-37-E-1)

Stone & Webster 10162 831229
Pennsylvanian Potentiometric Surface after Culling Depressured,
Overpressured, & Underpressured Data in Northern Palo Duro Basin
(Sketch 13697-37-F-1)

Stone & Webster 10163 840223 Wolfcamp Potentiometric Surface after Culling Depressured, Overpressured, & Underpressured Data in Palo Duro Basin (Sketch 13697-37-H-2)

SWEC 01078 821200 Springs and Seeps in the Palo Duro Basin Area, Texas, Draft Report

SWEC 01109 841114
Forwarding aerial photographs for proposed sites in Swisher County & Deaf Smith County in Texas.

Univ. of Texas 01077 840314 Characterization Status Report entitled: (332 FJ) Host Rock Geochemistry (6.1), by University of Texas at Austin, Bureau of Economic Geology.

Zaikowski 01044 000000 Progress on Radiometric Dating of Wolfcamp Brines Using $^4\mathrm{He}$ and $^4\mathrm{OAr}$.

BMI/SRP-5028 Bendix Eng. 01122 850100 U, Th, and Ra Concentrations in Brines From Four Deep Wells in the Palo Duro Basin, Texas: Unanalyzed Data, Technical Report, by Bendix Field Engineering Corporation.

DOE/NWTS-80(2) Battelle 01247 810400 Geologic disposal of Radioactive Waste: Program Plan for Field Tests in Salt, by NWTS Program Office.

Report #/ Author Log # Document Title Date

No. 102 Handford 00606 800000 Lower Permian Facies of the Palo Duro Basin, Texas: Depositional Systems, Shelf-Margin Evolution, Paleogeography, and Petroleum Potential, The University of Texas at Austin, Bureau of Economic Geology, Report of Investigations No. 102, for DOE.

OF-WTWI-1983-1 Budnik 01188 840709 Tectonic History of the Palo Duro Basin, Texas Panhandle

OF-WTWI-1983-10 Baumgardner 01196 840718 Geomorphic Processes of the Texas Panhandle

OF-WTWI-1983-11 Smith 01197 840718 Surface Geology of the Palo Duro and Dalhart Basins Area, Texas

OF-WTWI-1983-2 Budnik 01189 840709 Tectonic Framework of the Palo Duro Basin, Texas Panhandle

OF-WTWI-1983-3 Collins 01190 840709 Fracture Studies of the Palo Duro Basin, Texas Panhandle

OF-WTWI-1984-1 Chapman 01160 840705 A Comparison of the Depositional Environment of the San Andres Formation in the Palo duro Basin to Recent Evaporitic Environments Geochemistry.

OF-WTWI-1984-10 Caran 01081 840000 Late Quaternary Paleoclimatology of the Southern High Plains of Texas--Implications for Disposal of Nuclear Waste, by Bureau of Economic Geology for DOE

OF-WTWI-1984-16 Machenberg 01175 840523 Modern Eolian Processes on the Southern High Plains

OF-WTWI-1984-2 McGookey 01161 840515 Uplift, Tilting and Subsidence of the Palo Duro Basin Area.

OF-WTWI-1984-20 Collins 01179 840611 Jointing History of the Palo Duro Basin

OF-WTWI-1984-26 Fisher 01184 840624 Geochemical Environment of the Evaporite Aquitard and Deep-Basin Brine Aquifer, Palo Duro Basin, Texas.

OF-WTWI-1984-3 Gustavson 01147 840000 Salt Dissolution: Examples from Beneath the Southern High Plains, by the Bureau of Economic Geology for DOE

Report #/ Author Log # Document Title Date

OF-WTWI-1984-31 Hovorka 01199 840723 Composition of Unit 4 Halite in Deaf Smith and Swisher Counties, Texas Panhandle.

OF-WTWI-1984-36 Fisher 01207 840822 Regional and Isotopic Hydrogeochemistry: Deep-Basin Brine Aquifer, Palo Duro Basin, Texas Panhandle (Technical Review by WKelly)

OF-WTWI-1984-43 Ruppel 01214 840919 Stratigraphic Studies of the Palo Duro Basin: An Update

OF-WTWI-1984-48 Fisher 01169 841002 Textural and Chemical Zones in Bedded Halite, Permian Lower San Andres Formation, Palo Duro Basin, Texas.

OF-WTWI-1984-49 Caran 01170 841011 Quaternary Stratigraphy and Geologic Mapping, Western Rolling Plains of Texas.

OF-WTWI-1984-50 Fisher 01172 841029 Amount and Nature of Occluded Water in Bedded Salt, Palo Duro Basin, Texas

OF-WTWI-1984-53 Caran 01229 841219
Reconstruction of the Late Quaternary Paleoclimate of Northwestern Texas -- Progress Report

OF-WTWI-1984-55 01227 841221 Structural Geology and Tectonic History of the Palo Duro Basin, Texas Panhandle.

OF-WTWI-1984-9 Gustavson 01168 840312 Structural Control of Physiography, Geomorphic Processes, and Lithofacies, Texas Panhandle.

OF-WTWI-1985-1 Caran 01230 850130 Radiocarbon Age of Quarternary Deposits, Western Rolling Plains of Texas.

OF-WTWI-1985-2 Dutton 01231 850206 Hydrogeology and Hydrochemical Facies of the San Andres Formation in Easten New Mexico, West-Central Texas, & the Texas Panhandle.

OF-WTWI-1985-7 Gustavson 01235 850307 Structure Control of the Development of the Canadian River Valley, Texas Panhandle: An Example of Regional Salt Dissolution and Subsidence.

Report #/ Author Log # Document Title Date

TP-83-133 Smith 01052 831006 Modeling the Deep Basin Hydrogeology of a Potential High-Level Radwaste Site in Texas - Presented at Association of Engineering Geologists Annual Meeting in San Diego, CA

249 Bell 01245 800700
Analytical Study of the Ogallala Aquifer in Swisher County,
Texas, Projections of Saturated Thickness, Volume of Water in
Storage, Pumpage Rates, Pumping Lifts, and Well Yields, by Texas
Department of Water Resources.

288 Knowles 01251 840500 Evaluating the Ground-Water Resources of the High Plains of Texas, Volume 1, by Texas Department of Water Resources

80-11 Finley 00601 800000 Climatic controls on Erosion in the Rolling Plains and Along the Caprock Escarpment of the Texas Panhandle, The University of Texas at Austin, Bureau of Economic Geology, Geological Circular 80-11, for DOE

81-5 Finley 00602 810000 Lineament Analysis Based on Landsat Imagery, Texas Panhandle, The University of Texas at Austin, Bureau of Economic Geology, Geological Circular 81-5, for DOE

Bradshaw 00591 680000
Properties of Salt Important in Radioactive Waste Disposal, The Geological Society of America, Inc., Special Paper 88.

DOE/NWTS-80(2) NWTS 00584 810400 Geologic Disposal of Radioactive Waste: Program Plan for Field Tests in Salt, prepared by Office of NWTS Integration, Battelle (Technical Review by RJohnson, MPendleton, JRhoderick)

SAND81-7054 Gnirk 00587 810900 State-of-the-Art Review of Brine Migration Studies in Salt, by Sandie for DOE

UCRL-53476 01030 831000
Thermal Conductivity and Diffusivity Permian Basin Bedded Salt at !
Elevated Pressure and Temperature (fiche only)

Report #/ Author Log # Document Title Date

EEG-18 Spiegler 01104 830300
Origin Of The Brines Near WIPP From The Drill Holes ERDA-6 and WIPP-12 Based On Stable Isotope Concentrations Of Hydrogen And Oxygen, By Health And Environment Department, State of New Mexico

NUREG/CR-2324 840100

o User's Manual for the Sandia Waste-Isolation Flow and Transport Model (SWIFT) Release 4.81

NUREG/CR-3490 840300

o The Rold of Geochemical Factors in the Assessment and Regulation of Geologic Disposal of High-Level Radioactive Waste.

NUREG/CR-3832 840800

o Uncertainties in Long-Term Repository Performance Due to the Effects of Future Geologic Processes

NUREG/CR-3847 840600

o Climatic Calibration of Pollen Data

NUREG/CR-4042 850100

O A Three-Dimensional Computer Model to Simulate Fluid Flow and Containment Transport Thru a Rock Fracture System

NUREG/CR-3612 840300

o Prediction of Far-Field subsurface Radionuclide Dispersion Coefficients from Hydraulic Conductivity Measurement.

• GROUND-WATER CONTAMINATION • UNSATURATED ZONE INVESTIGATIONS • WATER SUPPLY DEVELOPMENT •

February 28, 1986

Nuclear Waste Consultants, Inc. 8341 So. Sangre de Cristo Road Littleton, Colorado 80127

Attention: Mark Logsdon, Project Manager

Re: Site Familiarization Report, Subtask 3.1

Dear Mr. Logsdon:

This letter serves as our report for Subtask 3.1, Site Familiarization, as required by our subcontract to Nuclear Waste Consultants. This correspondence also includes our comments regarding Hydrology Issues for the Palo Duro Bedded Salt Basin, Palo Duro STP-1.0, Draft, August 1984. After your review of this report, please forward it to Jeff Pohle at the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Background

Nuclear Waste Consultants, Inc. (NWC) was awarded NRC project RS-NMS-85-009 entitled "Technical Assistance in Hydrogeology - Project B - Analysis" on September 28, 1985. Daniel B. Stephens and Associates, Inc. (DBS) is subcontracted to NWC for review of hydrogeologic investigations of the Salt Repository Project (SRP). Robert G. Knowlton, Jr. (SRP Project Manager) and Daniel B. Stephens (SRP Technical Director) attended the project kickoff meeting at the NRC offices in Silver Spring, MD on October 22-25, 1985. As discussed in the October travel report for this trip, we were introduced to the NRC project officers and staff personnel, as well as personnel from Williams and Associates, contractors on the NRC project RS-NMS-85-008 entitled "Technical Assistance in Hydrogeology - Project A - Testing".

In addition to meeting personnel involved with the project we were given a copy of the NRC bibliography pertaining to SRP documents. We were given specific direction at this meeting to focus our familiarization and review activities on the Palo Duro Basin bedded salt sites in the Texas Panhandle. Attachment A contains a list of documents which we now have in our library. Documents recently requested but not yet received are listed in Attachment B.

Document Data Base

The bibliography shown in Attachment A is part of a computerized data base cataloging the documents in our library. Document searches can be accomplished by entering complete or partial titles, author's name, document number, or some keyword. The bibliography will be modified shortly to include information pertaining to reviewed documents. Documents that have been reviewed formally or informally will be listed as such. The reviewers name, date of the review, and any other index information will also be included. This should aid us later for formal reviews and continued familiarization activities. Informal reviews and document readings are entered on a format such as that shown in Figure 1. These reviews are catalogued for future reference.

Site Familiarization

Our current familiarization and understanding of the hydrogeology of the Palo Duro basin has been derived from numerous documents, including the following:

DOE, 1984, 'Draft Environmental Assessment', Deaf Smith County Site, Texas

OF-WTWI-1983-4, 'Identification of Recharge-Discharge Areas of the Palo Duro Basin, Texas Panhandle', 1983, R.K. Senger and B.C. Richter.

OF-WTWI-1984-22, 'Geostatistical Analysis of Potentiometric Surface of the San Andres Formation, Texas Panhandle',1984, A.R. Dutton and E.D. Orr.

OF-WTWI-1984-30, `Stratigraphy of the Palo Duro Basin - A Status Report', 1984, Ruppel et al.

OF-WTWI-1984-32, 'Modeling the Effects of Regional Hydrostratigraphy and Topography on Ground-water Flow, Palo Duro Basin Texas', 1984, R.K. Senger and G.E. Fogg.

OF-WTWI-1984-44, 'Vertical Hydraulic Conductivity, Flux, and Flow in the Deep-Basin Brine Aquifer, Palo Duro Basin, Texas', 1984, E.D. Orr and R.K. Senger.

OF-WTWI-1984-54, 'Hydrodynamic Development of the Palo Duro Basin and Other Mechanisms Creating Possible transient Flow Conditions', 1984, R.K. Senger

Figure 1 - Short-Form Document Reviews	s for NRC
Document Title:	
Document Authors:	
Document Number:	Publication Date:
Document Read By:	Reviewed Date:
Summary of Document:	
Major Review Conclusions:	
	!
General Comments:	·

BMI/ONWI-578, The Organic Chemistry of Deep Ground Waters from the Palo Duro Basin, Texas: Implications for Radionuclide Complexation, Ground-water Origin, and Petroleum Exploration', 1985, J.L. Means and N.J. Hubbard, Battelle Memorial Institute, ONWI.

ONWI/E512-02900/TR-31,410A-00G-17A, 1984, Second Status Report on Regional Ground-water Flow Modeling for the Palo Duro Basin, Texas', INTERA, Inc.

'Hydrochemical and Isotope Hydrology Results for the Palo Basin, Texas Panhandle: A Summary Report of Material Presented at the June 5, 1984 Discussion Meeting, Columbus, Ohio', 1984, Prepared by Norman Hubbard/ONWI.

In reviewing these documents and others we have developed some initial impressions and concerns that may help guide our further study of the hydrogeology of the Palo Duro basin.

The Conceptual Model

The hydrogeologic framework of the Palo Duro Basin is rather well established, particularly with regard to the stratigraphy and geologic structure. In a regional sense, details of the depositional environments and geologic history appear to be especially well developed. Although there are few control points (deep wells) near the proposed sites, there seems to be adequate control for developing a geologic framework for the conceptual model, owing to lateral uniformity within areally extensive strata.

The hydrologic data available are considered to be adequate at the regional scale to define general direction of ground-water flow within the principal hydrostratigraphic units.

In the conceptual model for ground-water flow which we have inferred from available data and reports, there are three regional hydrostratigraphic units (HSU). The shallow unit is HSU-A, which is an aquifer that includes the Ogallala formation and Triassic Dockum group. The middle unit, HSU-B, is an aquitard which is on the order of 4000 feet thick and includes relatively low permeable shale, anhydrite, carbonate, mudstones and siltstone of Permian age. The repository is to be located near the center of this sequence and within Unit 4 of the San The lower unit is HSU-C, a deep-basin brine-Andres formation. aquifer comprised of the lower Permian Wolfcamp carbonates and underlying units, including the granite wash. HSU-C overlies crystalline Precambrian basement rocks.

The shallow aquifer system, HSU-A, is recharged mostly by



infiltration of precipitation; and discharge is principally by wells and by springs. Ground water generally flows eastward and some is presumed to leak downward and flow vertically across the HSU-B aquitard. However, sparse data within the HSU-B San Andres formation indicate that there is also a horizontal flow component to the southeast. In the deep-basin brine aquifer HSU-C, ground water flow is to the northeast. Recharge to this unit is believed to occur mostly in outcrop areas to the west in New Mexico. Sources of discharge have not been clearly identified.

General Comments on the Conceptual Model

Through the review of the available literature, general areas of relative weakness have been identified in the conceptual model. Some of our concerns may be addressed in forth-coming new documents or documents which we have ordered but have not received. Some of our concerns may diminish in importance to us as our understanding of the hydrogeologic system deepens through subsequent data-base management and quantification activities, whereas others may become the basis for additional, more detailed investigation. Below we present a brief discussion of our preliminary concerns regarding the information available to us at this time which pertains to hydrogeologic conceptual models.

DOE's conceptual model stresses vertical flow downward in the HSU-B aquitard toward the deep-basin brine aquifer. There are numerous layers of mudstone within the salt section which could have horizontal hydraulic conductivities that are much greater than that of the adjacent salt. Inasmuch as horizontal hydraulic gradients have been inferred from widely spaced wells in this unit, there is the possibility of lateral flow within mudstones of HSU-B that has not been addressed thoroughly. The implications of anisotropy in the HSU-B zone also have not been thoroughly discussed. High concentrations of brine across semi-permeable clay membranes may cause anoualous pressures within the basin that could affect interpretations of flow; this potential problem has not been addressed completely.

Numerical models have been applied as tools to understanding the conceptual model of the ground-water system. These modeling efforts were undertaken independently by the DOE subcontractor INTERA, Inc. and by the Texas Bureau of Economic Geology (TBEG). The models differ significantly in many respects, including the type of numerical model, choice of boundary conditions and parameterization, for example. We believe that differences between models should be closely examined for their implications to the conceptual model interpretations. Wherever possible, combined results of both efforts should be used in developing the conceptual model, and areas of contradiction should be identified and resolved with additional studies.

Another issue of concern is the rates of ground-water circulation through the salts and beneath the salts through the clastic and carbonate basin sediments. Preliminary numerical models of the basin by various groups (TBEG and INTERA) has produced roughly similar results, with cross-basin circulation times on the order of 10^6 to no more than 10^7 years. However recent geochemical dating of the ground-water by ONWI has produced much older age estimates, in fact they have implied a connate origin (i.e. Permian/Pennsylvanian) for the oldest waters. This discrepancy has cast doubt on the entire conceptualization of the flow system, and requires resolution. The problem of vertical transport through the salt section, although not so subject to conflicting interpretations, is equally ambiguous, given the state of knowledge concerning hydraulic conductivities in the salts. Geochemical evidence (e.g., isotopic dating) could yield considerable insight here. Also ground-water age dating and stable isotope analyses may be most useful in checking the rates of ground-water flow and sources of recharge.

We believe that additional effort is needed to present a conceptual model which is consistent with the chemical, as well as the physical, characteristics of the system.

Comment on Hydrology Issues

The draft NRC report on staff hydrology issues is a good, general guidance for organizing technical issues to be addressed for the Palo Duro Basin. Issues 1.1, 1.3, and 1.5 appear to be most relevant to our contract. However, there is one area we would like to comment on.

In regard to subissue 1.1.3, additional clarification on the types of models is suggested in order to establish the basis for Analytical or numerical models selected for model selection. application to the salt site will be either deterministic or probabilistic (stochastic). Deterministic models are usually most appropriate when there are few available data. Average hydraulic properties are assigned to large areas of the hydrogeologic system, and the predicted values of hydraulic head or velocity do not explicitly reflect the element of uncertainty in the input parameters. On the other hand, probabilistic models, which may, for example, include the spatial correlation structure of hydraulic properties or transient variability in boundary conditions, are usually most appropriate when there are sufficient data to statistically predict an outcome within specified confidence limits. Inasmuch as there are inherent uncertainties in the hydrogeologic parameters, the preferred modeling strategy would provide estimates of probabilities associated with a given model prediction. The probabilistic approach appears to be consistent with 10 CFR 60.122 (Siting Criteria) which requires that "the favorable conditions present are sufficient to provide

a reasonable assurance that the performance objectives...will be met".

Summary

The Site Familiarization subtask of the project has been successfully completed. The DBS team has developed a basic understanding of the hydrogeology of the Palo Duro basin, and along with our bibliographic data base, puts us in a good position for performing formal reviews and other tasks.

Sincerely,

Daniel B. Stephens & Assoc., Inc.

Robert G. Knowlton, Jr.

Project Manager

RGKJr/mt

ATTACHMENT A

SALT REPOSITORY PROJECT

HYDROGEOLOGY BIBLIOGRAPHY February 26, 1986 BMI/SRP-5002, 'Well Completion Report - Dissolution Zone Water Wells (PD-8, PD-11, PD-12, PD-13) Palo Duro Basin, Texas: Unanalyzed Data', 1984, Stone and Webster Engineering Corp.

BMI/SRP-5004, 'Well Completion Report - Harman No. 1 (PD-8) Well, Palo Duro Basin, Texas: Unanalyzed Data', 1984, Stone & Webster Engineering Corp.

BMI/SRP-5006, 'Well Completion Report - Sawyer No. 1 (PD-3) Well, Palo Duro Basin, Texas: Unanalyzed Data', 1984, Stone & Webster Engineering Corp.

BMI/SRP-5008, 'Well Completion Report - Detten No. 1 (PD-6) Well, Palo Duro Basin, Texas: Unanalyzed Data', 1984, Stone & Webster Engineering Corp.

BMI/SRP-5009, 'Well Completion Report - Zeeck No. 1 (PD-7) Well, Palo Duro Basin, Texas: Unanalyzed Data', 1984, Stone & Webster Engineering Corp.

BMI/SRP-5010, 'Pumping Test and Fluid Sampling Report - Sawyer No. 1 Well, Palo Duro Basin, Texas: Unanalyzed Data', 1984, Stone & Webster Engineering Corp.

BMI/SRP-5011, 'Well Completion Report - J. Friemel No. 1 (PD-9) Well, Palo Duro Basin, Texas: Unanalyzed Data', 1984, Stone & Webster Engineering Corp.

BMI/SRP-5012, 'Permeability Data Base - Palo Duro Basin: Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico: Unanalyzed Data', 1984, Stone and Webster Engineering Corp.

BMI/SRP-5013, 'Oil and Gas Well Data File - Palo Duro Basin, Texas and New Mexico: Unanalyzed Data', 1984, Stone & Webster Engineering Corp.

BMI/SRP-5014, 'Formation Pressure Data File - Palo Duro Basin, Texas and New Mexico: Unanalyzed Data', 1984, Stone & Webster Engineering Corp.

BMI/SRP-5022, 'Laboratory Testing of Rock and Salt Samples for Determination of Specific Gravity and Total Porosity of the Mansfield No. 1 Well (PD-4), Palo Duro Basin, Texas: Unanalyzed Data', 1984, Stone & Webster Engineering Corp.

BMI/ONWI-513, 'The Salton sea Geothermal Field, California, as a Near-Field Natural Analog of a Radioactive Waste Repository in Salt', 1983, University of California for ONWI



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BMI/ONWI-518, 'Major Salt Beds of the Palo Duro and Dalhart Basins, Texas', 1983, Stone & Webster Engineering Corp.

BMI/ONWI-524, 'Ogallala Aquifer Mapping Program', 1984, Stone & Webster Engineering Corp.

BMI/ONWI-542, `ERG Review of Salt Repository Sealing System', 1985, Technical Report

BMI/ONWI-564, 'Schematic Designs for Penetration Seals for a Repository in the Permean Basin', Dec. 1985, P.C. Kelsall et al.

BMI/ONWI-566, 'Hydrogeologic Investigations Based on Drill-stem Test Data: Palo Duro Basin Area, Texas and New Mexico', 1985, Stone & Webster Engineering Corp.

BMI/ONWI-567, 'Salt Dissolution Assessment at Seven Potential Nuclear Wast Repository Locations in Salt', 1985

BMI/ONWI-578, The Organic Chemistry of Deep Ground Waters from the Palo Duro Basin, Texas: Implications for Radionuclide Complexation, Ground-Water Origin, and Petroleum Exploration', 1985, J.L. Means and N.J. Hubbard, Battelle Memorial Institute, ONWI.

ONWI-102, 'Area Environmental Characterization Report of the Dalhart and Palo Duro Basins in the Texas Panhandle, Volume I. Dalhart Basin', 1982, NUS Corp.

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ONWI-200(4), 'Bibliography of Studies for the Salt Repository Project Office of the Civilian Radioactive Waste Management Program, April 1978 - September 1984', 1985, ONWI.

ONWI-242, 'Brine Migration Test for Asse Mine, Federal Republic of Germany; Final Test Plan', 1983, by Westinghouse for Battelle/ONWI.

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ONWI/E512-02900/TR-31,410A-00G-17A, 1984, Second Status Report on Regional Ground-water Flow Modeling for the Palo Duro Basin, Texas', INTERA, Inc.



ONWI/SUB/85/E512-05000-T36, 'Field Test Activities Report, Black No. 1 Well, Deaf Smith County, Texas', 1985, Stone & Webster Engineering Corporation.

OF-WTWI-1982-1, 'Hydrology of the Palo Duro Basin, Texas Panhandle', 1982, West Texas Waste Isolation Staff, The Bureau of Economic Geology, The University of Texas at Austin.

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ATTACHMENT B

SALT REPOSITORY PROJECT

DOCUMENTS REQUESTED

Documents Requested

Report #/ Title Author

Log #

Document Date

Carpenter 00108 780000
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Stone & Webster 01058 831208
Thickness of Thick Salt Bed in Lower San Andres Unit 4 in Northern Palo Duro Basin (Sketch 13697-36-A-2)

Stone & Webster 01059 831208
Inferred Faults in Northern Palo Duro Basin (Sketch 13697-37-C-2)

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Stone & Webster 10160 831228 Zone of dissolution of Lower San Andres Unit 4 Salt (Sketch 13697-37-D-1)

Stone & Webster 10161 831229
Wolfcamp Potentiometric Surface after Culling Depressured,
Overpressured, & Underpressured Data in Northern Palo Duro Basin
(Sketch 13697-37-E-1)

Stone & Webster 10162 831229
Pennsylvanian Potentiometric Surface after Culling Depressured,
Overpressured, & Underpressured Data in Northern Palo Duro Basin
(Sketch 13697-37-F-1)

Stone & Webster 10163 840223 Wolfcamp Potentiometric Surface after Culling Depressured, Overpressured, & Underpressured Data in Palo Duro Basin (Sketch 13697-37-H-2)

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OF-WTWI-1984-43 Ruppel 01214 840919 Stratigraphic Studies of the Palo Duro Basin: An Update

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OF-WTWI-1984-49 Caran 01170 841011 Quaternary Stratigraphy and Geologic Mapping, Western Rolling Plains of Texas.

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NUREG/CR-3832 840800

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NUREG/CR-3847 840600

o Climatic Calibration of Pollen Data

NUREG/CR-4042 850100

o A Three-Dimensional Computer Model to Simulate Fluid Flow and Containment Transport Thru a Rock Fracture System

NUREG/CR-3612 840300

o Prediction of Far-Field subsurface Radionuclide Dispersion Coefficients from Hydraulic Conductivity Measurement.