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BEOVAWE AREA SHALLOW SEISMIC REFLECTION SURVEY

LANDER COUNTY, NEVADA

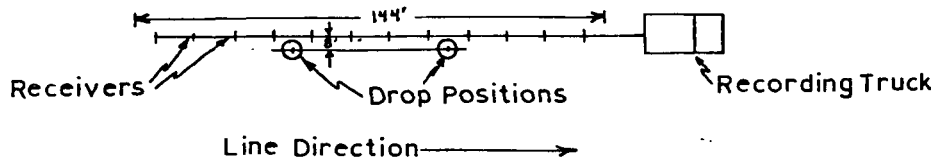
I. Introduction

During the period from May 13 through September 1, 1975, a shallow seismic reflection survey was carried out in the southwest part of the Whirlwind Valley, Lander County, Nevada, near the small town of Beowawe (see Figure No. 1, Location Map). Approximately 17.5 miles of data were recorded, consisting of four northeast-southwest lines (Lines BW-1 through BW-4) and four northwest-southeast lines (Lines BW-5 through BW-8). The purpose of the survey was to investigate the geologic structure, especially faulting, as an aid to continued exploration for geothermal steam in the area.

II. Technique

Line positions in the field were established by reference to topographic features, as the magnetic compass tended to be sometimes erratic in the presence of so much magnetite-bearing lava. After the position of a given line was established, stations were located along it at intervals of 165 ft. (50M) by chaining with a measured drag rope 165 feet long. Difficult terrain made it necessary for parts of lines BW-3, BW-6 and BW-7 to depart from the program positions.

The seismic source used for the first two lines recorded (Line BW-1 and Line BW-6) was a 300 lb. steel weight dropped free-fall a distance of $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet for approximately 1000 ft. lbs. of energy per drop. Three drops per station on the average were made and summed in the field. Detection was by means of a receiver array of 12 digital grade 10 Hz geophones inline spaced 12 feet apart. Where possible, the source weight was dropped one or two times at each of two locations beside the one-third positions of the receiver array and offset about 8 feet laterally (see sketch below).



Recording was done by a Seaman Nuclear Corporation engineering type single-channel seismograph (with summing digital memory) modified to include frequency filters, programmed gain expansion, a paper strip chart recorder, and a magnetic cassette digital recorder. A recording length of 0.5 second after weight impact was used. As successive drops were recorded at each station, the summed results were viewed by the operator on a cathode ray tube. When the operator judged that enough thumps had been recorded (the number varied from one to six) the summed data were recorded on paper and magnetic tape and the crew moved on to the next station.

During the recording of BW-1 and BW-6 it became evident that though the data in the top 1,000 feet were good, the rate of energy decay with depth was unusually great. As a result, the operation was suspended in late May and the equipment returned to Albuquerque for modifications. A new and larger weight drop system using a 700 pound steel weight which could be dropped as much as $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet was built, and the type of programmed gain expansion was changed to allow far greater range in rate of gain increase with time. When the modifications were complete and field-tested, the crew returned to the Beowawe area, renewing work July 21, 1975. The remaining lines of the project (BW-2 through BW-5 and BW-7 through BW-8) were recorded dropping the 700 lb. weight about $5\frac{3}{4}$ feet free-fall for about 4000 ft. lbs. of energy per drop. This increased source energy plus the improved available gain increase allowed the recording of 1.0 second as opposed to the previous 0.5 second. Practical depth of penetration was increased from about 1,000 feet to about 2,500-3,000 feet, which considerably improved ability to detect faults. The change, however, was not all favourable; the quality of data in the top 1,000 feet was noticeable reduced, as shown by a comparison recorded on Line BW-1. Consequently, after completion of the Beowawe survey and before initiation of the next (Hot Springs Point) survey, experimental work was done in an attempt to find an energy input level which would provide penetration deeper than 1,000 feet but without sacrificing detail or quality in the top 1,000 feet. In this experimentation it was found that dropping the 700 lb. weight $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet (for about 2,500 ft. lbs. of energy) greatly improved the data in the top 1,000 feet while sacrificing little in the way of depth penetration. It is therefore recommended that in any future shallow reflection work in the Beowawe area this level of energy input be used.

After each day's field work, the records made during the day were corrected to a reference plane of +5000 feet using a correction velocity of 3,000 feet per second (determined at the start of the survey by refraction probes recorded on Line BW-1 near the Chevron Ginn No. 1-13 well). The paper records were then colored, trimmed and combined to form corrected variable area/wiggle trace record sections (see Enclosures Nos. 1 through 8). These record sections were then studied and picked, with an attempt being made to recognize both reflections and diffractions, the latter for their value in fault detection (see Enclosures Nos. 9 through 16). The timed events were then converted to depth using a velocity function fitted to the pseudo-sonic log data from the Chevron Ginn No. 1-13 well, located within the prospect (see Table No. 1). Migrated depth sections were next made using the point-arc method (see Enclosures Nos. 17 through 24). In this method, which is well suited to shallow single-channel recording, for each event picked on the record section a circular arc is swung from each station at which the event is picked. This arc has its center at the station position (at reference plane elevation) and its radius equal to the depth calculated

For the event at that station. A curve is then drawn tangent to each of the arcs representing a given event at successive stations. If the velocity function is accurate such curves are a good representation of the corresponding reflectors. In cases where three or more arcs from a single event intersect at a single point, the event is probably a diffraction. Such apparent diffraction centers are indicated on the migrated sections and are often helpful in fault interpretation.

After completion of field recording in the Beowawe area, the locations of 12 of the 16 line intersections were determined by plane-table triangulation from three known positions (see map, Enclosure No. 25). In cases where a given point could be shot from all three triangulation stations, the apparent error indicated was less than 30 feet, so that these intersections can be regarded as very accurately located. The four intersections involving Line BW-4, unfortunately, could not be shot in from the triangulation stations, and are consequently less certain in location. However, even these are probably actually located within 100-200 feet of their mapped positions.

III. Results

The seismic results obtained in the Beowawe area are generally of poor quality. Experience elsewhere, however, suggests that in this complexly-faulted area the data are almost certainly superior to data which might be obtained by more conventional seismic techniques. In hindsight, it appears that the improvement gained by using 50 meter (165 feet) spacing rather than 100 meter (330 feet) spacing as in other prospects was probably not worth the additional cost (almost twice as much per mile). However, the Beowawe area, because of its complexity, was a particularly good test example to determine if the closer spacing is worth the additional cost in exploration of this type.

The writer's interpretation of the structure of the project area is shown by the Structure Contour Map, Enclosure No. 25. This map is drawn on a seismic phantom which it is hoped may be at approximately the same stratigraphic position throughout the area. Because of the difficulty of correlating from one fault block to another, however, the likelihood of its being the same horizon everywhere is not good. The general structural form shown, however, is probably reasonably accurate.

Folding in general appears to be of much less importance than faulting. Only one fold, the east-plunging anticlinal nose in Section 14, seems to suggest that it may have formed independently of and prior to the present fault system.

Only faults judged to be of importance are shown. Many lesser faults are indicated by the seismic data. The faults considered

to be of greatest significance are those shown on the map by heavier green lines. Two faults in particular are believed worthy of notice. These are (1) the arcuate fault at the foot of the Malpais Range (extreme southeast margin of the survey area) and (2) the opposing subparallel fault near the northwest edge of the survey area (and cutting Line BW-1 at Stations 55-56). Between these two major faults there appears to be a significant graben trending northeast-southwest and creating the smaller southwest extension of Whirlwind Valley which is the survey area. About $2/3$ of a mile northwest of the main Malpais Range frontal fault is another fault set, also down to the northwest. Between these step faults and the main Malpais Range frontal fault is a fault block intermediate in depth between the valley graben and the Malpais Range. Its most obvious manifestation is the large hill in the south half of Section 18. The remaining fault considered of major importance crosses the valley graben north-northwesterly in the east half of section 13. This fault may not be of great throw, but it does appear to mark a major dip reversal in the graben and cause the northwest quarter of Section 13 to be the lowest point in the graben. It (the fault) was probably penetrated at shallow depth in the Chevron Ginn 1-13 well (SE/SE Sec. 13).

A few faults are shown which are not believed to be of great importance, at least in the survey area proper. Of particular interest is a set of faults encountered along the northeast side of the survey. These faults appear to strike a few degrees north of east and evidently die out westward near the position of Line BW-2. Those faults of this set which lie southeast of the center of the southeast quarter of Section 12 are apparently downthrown to the north; those farther northwest are apparently downthrown to the south. It seems likely that these faults are the west ends of a step fault system forming the main Whirlwind Valley graben to the east. If this is true, it would appear that the deepest downthrown part of the main Whirlwind Valley graben to the east lies about $3/4$ of a mile north of the Malpais Range front, making the Whirlwind Valley graben highly asymmetric.

Seismic evidence regarding the attitudes of the major faults in the survey area can be seen in several places. On Lines BW-1 and BW-4, the main Malpais Range frontal fault appears to dip about 70 degrees northwest (corrected for line angle on BW-4). The large step fault system about $2/3$ mile northwest of the main Malpais Range frontal fault evidently dips about 60 degrees northwest on Line BW-2, and about 75 degrees on Lines BW-1, BW-3, and BW-4. The large cross-graben fault in the east half of Section 13 is apparently nearly vertical, but does dip southeast, as seen on Lines BW-1, BW-6, and BW-7. The large fault on the northwest side of the survey area graben also appears to be nearly vertical but does evidently dip southeast (see Line BW-2 especially). In summary, all the major faults appear to be normal faults, with dips ranging from about 60 degrees to nearly vertical. Only one or two doubtful cases of possible minor high-angle reverse faults were observed.

On some of the seismic lines the nearest reflector to the mapped phantom shows a large number of diffraction points (see especially Lines BW-2 and BW-8). This may indicate that the horizon is an unconformity with a great deal of irregularity (not strange in a volcanic sequence) or is perhaps a thick, competent unit subject to a great deal of small faulting and fracturing.

IV. Conclusions

- A. The survey area appears to be basically a smaller graben extending southwestward from the main Whirlwind Valley graben.
- B. Folding in the area seems to be very minor compared to faulting.
- C. All the major faults as interpreted are evidently normal faults, with dips in the range from 60 degrees to nearly vertical.
- D. The seismic reflection method seems to be clearly applicable to exploration of this type, despite the complex faulting present.

V. Recommendations

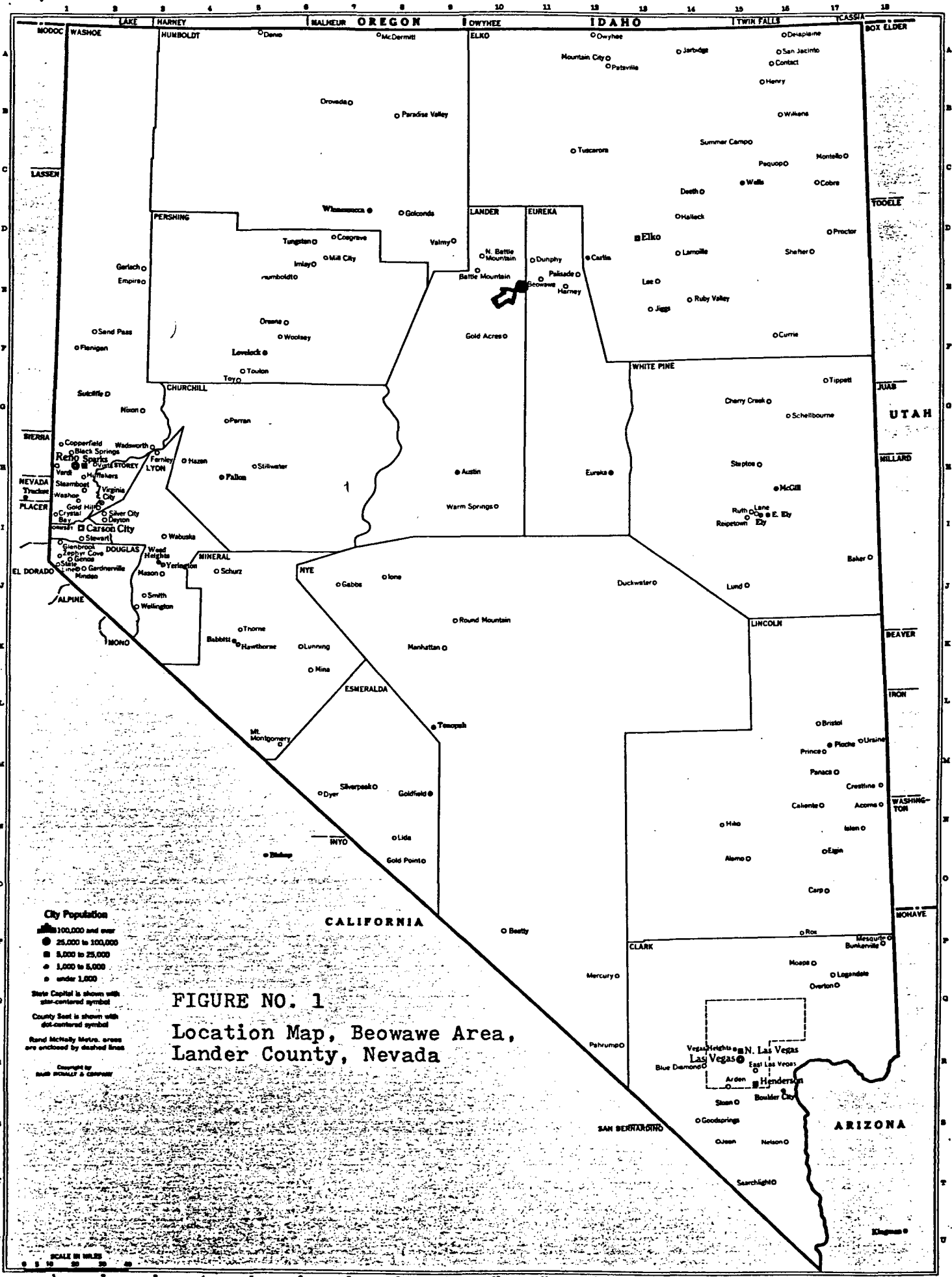
- A. To penetrate the main Malpais Range frontal fault at about 4000 ft. depth, wells should be located on the down-thrown side about 1200 feet from the fault as mapped.
- B. In future investigations of this type, close station spacing (165 feet or 50M) should be reserved for cases where increased detail is needed, and normal station spacing (330 feet or 100M) should be the standard, for reasons of economy.

Respectfully submitted,

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Certified Professional Geologist

1 Figure
1 Table
25 Enclosures



CHEVRON GINN 1-13 VELOCITY FUNCTION

LANDER COUNTY, NEVADA

$V_i = 2000 + 10.0Z$

$Z < 750'$

Breakover time 0.312

$V_i = 8000 = 2.0Z$

$Z \geq 750'$

Breakover time 0.172

(Accurate only to 4200' depth)

Datum +5000'

(T=one-way time)

(two-way) Time	(feet) Depth	(two-way) Time	(feet) Depth	(two-way) Time	(feet) Depth
ft/ms		ft/ms		ft/ms	
0.005	5	0.200	344	0.385	1110
0.010	10	0.205	357	0.390	1135
0.015	16	0.210	371	0.395	1161
0.020	21	0.215	386	0.400	1187
0.025	27	0.220	401	0.405	1213
0.030	32	0.225	416	0.410	1239
0.035	38	0.230	432	0.415	1265
0.040	44	0.235	448	0.420	1292
0.045	50	0.240	464	0.425	1318
0.050	57	0.245	481	0.430	1345
0.055	63	0.250	495	0.435	1372
0.060	70	0.255	516	0.440	1399
0.065	77	0.260	534	0.445	1426
0.070	84	0.265	552	0.450	1453
0.075	91	0.270	571	0.455	1480
0.080	98	0.275	591	0.460	1508
0.085	106	0.280	611	0.465	1535
0.090	114	0.285	631	0.470	1563
0.095	122	0.290	653	0.475	1591
0.100	130	0.295	674	0.480	1619
0.105	138	0.300	696	0.485	1647
0.110	147	0.305	719	0.490	1675
0.115	155	0.310	742	0.495	1704
0.120	164	breakover		0.500	1732
0.125	174	0.312	750	0.505	1761
0.130	183	0.315	764	0.510	1790
0.135	193	0.320	788	0.515	1819
0.140	203	0.325	812	0.520	1848
0.145	212	0.330	836	0.525	1877
0.150	223	0.335	861	0.530	1907
0.155	234	0.340	885	0.535	1937
0.160	245	0.345	909	0.540	1966
0.165	256	0.350	934	0.545	1996
0.170	268	0.355	959	0.550	2026
0.175	280	0.360	984	0.555	2057
0.180	292	0.365	1009	0.560	2087
0.185	304	0.370	1034	0.565	2117
0.190	317	0.375	1059	0.570	2148
0.195	330	0.380	1084	0.575	2179

(two-way) Time	(feet) Depth	(two-way) Time	(feet) Depth
	ft/ms		ft/ms
0.580	2210	0.840	4054
0.585	2241	0.845	4094
0.590	2272	0.850	4135
0.595	2304	0.855	4175
0.600	2335	0.860	4216
0.605	2367	0.865	4258
0.610	2399	0.870	4299
0.615	2432	0.875	4341
0.620	2463	0.880	4382
0.625	2496	0.885	4425
0.630	2528	0.890	4467
0.635	2561	0.895	4509
0.640	2594	0.900	4552
0.645	2627	0.905	4595
0.650	2660	0.910	4638
0.655	2693	0.915	4681
0.660	2727	0.920	4725
0.665	2761	0.925	4768
0.670	2795	0.930	4812
0.675	2829	0.935	4856
0.680	2863	0.940	4901
0.685	2897	0.945	4945
0.690	2932	0.950	4990
0.695	2967	0.955	5035
0.700	3002	0.960	5081
0.705	3037	0.965	5126
0.710	3072	0.970	5172
0.715	3107	0.975	5218
0.720	3143	0.980	5264
0.725	3170	0.985	5310
0.730	3215	0.990	5357
0.735	3251	0.995	5404
0.740	3287	1.000	5451
0.745	3324		
0.750	3361		
0.755	3397		
0.760	3435		
0.765	3472		
0.770	3509		
0.775	3547		
0.780	3585		
0.785	3623		
0.790	3661		
0.795	3699		
0.800	3738		
0.805	3777		
0.810	3816		
0.815	3855		
0.820	3894		
0.825	3934		
0.830	3974		
0.835	4014		

CHEVRON GINN 1-13 VELOCITY FUNCTION

August 18, 1975

Charles B. Reynolds & Associates