

# APPENDIX F

## GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF VRM CLASSES

### CLASS I

This class provides primarily for natural ecological changes; however, it does not preclude very limited management activity. Any contrast created within the characteristic environment must not attract attention. This class is applied to wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, some natural areas, portions of the wild and scenic rivers, and other similar situations where management activities are to be restricted. All nonexempt resource management program actions that will modify the landform, waterbodies, vegetation, or structures will comply with required VRM contrast rating objectives. The contrast rating shall not exceed nine points when all mitigating measures have been applied, allowing a one year recovery period from project completion date.

### CLASS II

Changes in any of the basic elements (form, line, color, texture) caused by a management activity should not be evident in the characteristic landscape. A contrast may be seen but should not attract attention.

Class II requires that management activities be designed and located to blend into the natural landscape and not be visually apparent to the casual visitor. A management activity may repeat the visual elements common in the characteristic landscape only if this repetition does not evidently change the essential quality of the existing dominance factors (e.g., pattern, intensity, amount).

Structures located in the foreground distance zone (0-1/2 mile) often create a contrast that exceeds the VRM class even when designed to harmonize and blend with the characteristic landscape. This may be especially true when a distinctive architectural motif or style is designed. Proposals will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine whether such structure(s) meet the acceptable VRM class standards and, if not, whether they add acceptable visual variety to the landscape.

All nonexempt resource management program actions that will modify the landform and waterbodies, vegetation, and structures will comply with required VRM contrast rating directives. The following resource management guides shall apply.

#### Forest Management

Clearcuts must not be seen unless they simulate adjacent natural openings. No geometrical shapes are allowed.

Shelterwood cuts permitted, with a maximum cut of 60 percent to reduce modification of textural contrast with resulting openings that appear natural. If modifications of vegetative texture are made the contrast will be minimal.

Thinnings are acceptable if maximum cut does not exceed 40 percent. This is a modification of vegetative texture and the contrast will be minimal if stumps are cut flush with the ground and slash is removed from the first 400 feet within the foreground visual zones.

Roads must not be seen from major travel routes or recreation sites and must be designed to minimize cut and fill areas.

#### Range Management

Vegetative manipulation projects must appear as natural openings and shall follow existing breaks in vegetation and landform. There is no limit on size. Stockpiling of plant material will not be allowed.

Spring development will generally be allowed. Handwork may be required on some projects. Pipelines shall follow existing contours. Dozers will not drop blades to clear lines. Watering tanks will be painted to blend with surroundings.

Fence posts shall be natural in color with no white tops. Fences should follow natural breaks in vegetation and avoid straight lines (can be changed to green or red posts with white tops where wildlife conflicts occur).

Roads shall not be constructed but will be developed through vehicular use. Dozers will not drop blades.

Structures such as corrals and loading chutes will generally be allowed if constructed of wood and if no clearing is necessary.

#### Structures

Structures must incorporate the natural lines, colors, form, and materials of the landscape. Skylined structures will not be allowed from key observation points. Structures should take advantage of all opportunities for concealment.

#### Roads

Required roads shall be concealed by vegetation if possible, follow natural landforms, and be rehabilitated when the road is no longer needed. Cut and fill areas will be minimal and shall not exceed five feet.

#### Contrast Rating

All activities listed above as well as others (i.e., recreation, wildlife, access, etc.) will be subject to the contrast rating procedures. No project shall exceed ten points when all mitigating measures have been applied, allowing a two year recovery period from project completion date.

## CLASS III

Contrasts to the basic elements (form, line, color, texture) caused by a management activity may be evident and begin to attract attention in the characteristic landscape. However, the changes should remain subordinate to the existing characteristic landscape.

This class provides that management activities may be evident to the casual visitor; however, the activity should remain subordinate to the visual strength and natural character of the landscape.

A management activity may repeat the dominant qualities common in the landscape and may visually change the essential character of existing dominance factors in the landscape. However, these changes must be relatively small in scale and generally subordinate to the visual strength of the natural landscape.

All nonexempt resource management program actions that will modify the landform and waterbodies, vegetation, and structures will comply with required contrast rating directives. The following resource management guides shall apply.

### Forest Management

Clearcuts may be seen but must simulate typical natural openings. No geometric shapes are allowed.

Shelterwood cuts permitted, with a maximum initial entry cut of 60 percent to reduce modification of textural contrast. Resulting openings should appear natural.

### Range Management

Vegetative manipulation projects must appear as natural openings. No limit on size.

Springs can be installed with equipment except in some instances where hand-tools will be necessary to protect the visual resource. Dozers will not drop blades to clear lines. Watering tanks will be located in areas that will screen them from major travel routes and key observation points.

Where possible, fences will not be constructed in long straight lines. No white topped posts are allowed (can be changed to red or green posts with white top where wildlife conflicts occur).

Roads shall not be constructed but will be developed through use and minimum work with a dozer blade to bypass obstacles. Dozers will not be used to construct roads to range developments unless they are absolutely necessary to install projects.

### Structures

Structures should incorporate the natural lines, colors, and materials of the natural landscape.

## Roads

Roads should be partially concealed by vegetation, follow natural landforms, and be seeded as soon as possible.

### Contrast Rating

All activities listed above and others (i.e., recreation, cultural, lands, etc.) will be subject to the contrast rating procedures. All projects shall not exceed 16 points after all mitigating measures have been applied, allowing a five year recovery period from completion date.

## CLASS IV

Contrasts may attract attention and be a dominant feature of the landscape in terms of scale; however, the change should repeat the basic elements (form, line, color, texture) inherent in the characteristic landscape.

Class IV provides that management activities may be visually apparent to the casual observer and may also become dominant in the landscape.

Establishment of strong visual linkages between the management activity and the characteristic landscape is critical to reduce visible impacts. When viewed as foreground or middleground, the management activity may be dominant but may not appear to completely borrow from natural established dominance factors. However, when viewed as background, the management activity must be those of natural occurrences within the characteristic landscape.

Management activities, which are visually apparent, may be located in critically sensitive areas such as prominent features, long view duration areas, enframed views, and other critical focus areas if such modifications are subjected to sensitive analysis by the recreation planner or other visual design arts specialists.

All nonexempt resource management program actions that will modify the landform and waterbodies, vegetation, and structures will comply with required contrast rating directives. The following resource management guides shall apply.

### Forest Management

Clearcuts may be seen but must incorporate the non-geometric lines of the natural landscape. Shelterwoods can be of any size.

### Range Management

Vegetative manipulation projects shall not be geometric in shape. New roads will follow natural contours.

## APPENDICES

### **Structures**

Structures should incorporate the natural lines, colors, and form of the landscape (can be changed to allow the use of red or green fence posts with white tops where wildlife conflicts occur).

### **Roads**

Roads should follow the natural landforms and be rehabilitated as soon as possible.

### **Contrast Rating**

All of the activities listed above and others (i.e., recreation, operations, etc.) will be subject to the contrast rating procedures. All projects shall not exceed 20 points after all mitigating measures have been applied, allowing a five year recovery period from project completion date.

### **CLASS V**

Change is needed or change may add acceptable visual variety to an area. This class applies to areas where the natural character has been disturbed to a point where rehabilitation is needed to bring it back into character with the surrounding landscape. This class would apply to areas identified in the scenic evaluation where the quality class has been reduced because of unacceptable cultural modification. The contrast is inharmonious with the characteristic landscape. It may also be applied to areas that have the potential for enhancement, i.e., add acceptable visual variety to an area/site. It should be considered an interim or short-term classification until one of the other VRM class objectives can be reached through rehabilitation or enhancement. The desired visual resource management class should be identified.