

APPENDIX C – VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CLASSES

Visual resource classes are categories assigned to public lands. The classes serve two purposes: (1) an inventory tool that portrays the relative value of the visual resources, and (2) a management tool that portrays the visual management objectives. There are four classes, I, II, III, and IV, as described below.

Visual resource management classes are assigned through RMP's. The assignment of visual management classes is ultimately based on the management decisions made in RMP's. However, visual values obtained through the visual resource inventory must be considered throughout the RMP process. All actions proposed during the RMP process that would result in surface disturbances must consider the importance of the visual values and the impacts the project may have on these values.

Management decisions in the RMP must reflect the value of visual resources. In fact, the value of the visual resource may be the driving force for some management decisions. For example, highly scenic areas which need special management attention may be designated as scenic Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and classified as VRM Class I based on the importance of the visual values.

Visual Resources will continue to be managed in accordance with the BLM 8400 Manual. All existing inventory data will be maintained and utilized when assessing visual impacts and needed contrast ratings for future management actions.

VRM	Class Objectives
Class I	The objective of this class is to preserve the existing character of the landscape. This class provides for natural ecological changes; however, it does not preclude very limited management activity. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.
Class II	The objective of this class is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.
Class III	The objective of this class is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.
Class IV	The objective of this class is to provide for management activities which require major modifications of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repeating the basic elements.

