

Appendix H
Bureau of Land Management
Visual Contrast Rating Worksheet

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
VISUAL CONTRAST RATING WORKSHEET

Date
District
Resource Area
Activity (program)

SECTION A. PROJECT INFORMATION

1. Project Name Toquop Energy Project	4. Location Township <u>13S</u>	5. Location Sketch See attached Figure 1 showing the location of KOP 1
2. Key Observation Point <u>1</u>	Range <u>69E</u>	
3. VRM Class <u>III</u>	Sections <u>5,8,16,17,20,28,29</u>	

SECTION B. CHARACTERISTIC LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

1. LAND/WATER		2. VEGETATION		3. STRUCTURES	
FORM	Flat desert terrain in foreground. Mountains in the distance. No water bodies evident.		Low-lying sparse vegetation typical of a desert landscape.		KOP 1 (Figure 2a) shows the existing paved frontage road in the immediate foreground (approximately 20 feet wide), and where it changes to a dirt roadway.
LINE	Horizontal line created by ground surface at base of mountains. Horizontal line created by paved frontage road. Vertical line created by unpaved continuation of frontage road (dirt road) through the center of photo (Figure 2a)		Cleared swath of land (vegetation removed exposing bare soil) along existing dirt roadway and cleared area where road turns (lower portion of photo in Figure 2a).		KOP 1 (Figure 2a) shows the existing paved road, the dirt road, and roadway signs on both signs of the dirt road.
COLOR	Tan and light brown in foreground. Mountains appear shades of gray and brown in distance.		Vegetation appears as shades of brown, reddish brown, with minor hues of yellow.		Paved road is charcoal gray with a double yellow median stripe and white lines marking the roadway edge.
TEX-TURE	Gravel and bare soil provide texture.		Vegetation throughout the photo (Figure 2a) provides texture.		Minimal texture provided by existing paved and dirt roads.

SECTION C. PROPOSED ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

1. LAND/WATER		2. VEGETATION		3. STRUCTURES	
FORM	Paving the dirt road would occur, with widening the existing paved and unpaved road shown in the photo (Figure 2b).		Vegetation would be removed on both sides of the existing paved and dirt roadway to allow for roadway widening, creation of 2-foot shoulders, and the addition of ditches along the road (Figure 2b).		Roadway lanes widened to 24 feet, with 2-foot shoulders on both sides of the road, and 8.5-foot-wide dirt ditches (Figure 2b).
LINE	Minimal noticeable change to the horizontal line created by the paved frontage road. More noticeable vertical line created by paving the dirt road, resulting in moderate landscape change. Diagonal line created by dirt ditch on west side of road; this addition is a low to moderate change to the landscape.		Low to moderate change created by the clearing of vegetation due to dirt ditches. Low landscape change from the removal of vegetation due to roadway widening.		KOP 1 (Figure 2b) shows the proposed paved road, dirt ditches, and roadway sign.
COLOR	Tan and light brown in foreground. Mountains appear shades of gray and brown in distance.		Vegetation appears as shades of brown, reddish brown, with minor hues of yellow. Slightly less vegetation visible in Figure 2b when compared to Figure 2a.		Charcoal gray roadway with yellow and white striping.
TEX-TURE	Gravel and bare soil provide texture.		Minor change in vegetation due to vegetation removal for roadway widening results in little to no change in texture.		Minimal texture provided by proposed widened road.

SECTION D. CONTRAST RATING SHORT TERM LONG TERM

1.	DEGREE OF CONTRAST	FEATURES												2. Does project design meet visual resource management objectives? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (Explain on reverse side)		
		LAND/WATER BODY (1)				VEGETATION (2)				STRUCTURES (3)						
		Strong	Moderate	Weak	None	Strong	Moderate	Weak	None	Strong	Moderate	Weak	None			
ELEMENTS	Form		X					X					X	3. Additional mitigating measures recommended <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (Explain on reverse side)		
	Line		X	X				X	X			X	X		Evaluator's Names Wendy Haydon/CH2M HILL	Date November 22, 2002
	Color			X					X				X			
	Texture			X					X				X			

SECTION D. (Continued)

Comments from Item 2.

Interstate-15 (I-15) is a four-lane divided north/southbound freeway (two lanes in each direction) with paved shoulders in the vicinity of the Proposed Action access road. Near the access road, the freeway is oriented in an east/west direction. The speed limit along I-15 in the vicinity of the access road is 75 miles per hour. The East Mesa Interchange (Exit 109) is a truck parking lot; this exit provides access to the existing road that would become the project access road. The frontage road that parallels I-15 on both sides of the freeway at Exit 109 is a two-lane road. Access on both sides of the freeway from this exit is provided by 2 one-lane culverts that pass under the divided freeway.

The nearest I-15 offramp to the west of Exit 109 is Exit 100, located approximately 10 miles away. The closest I-15 offramp to the east of Exit 109 is Exit 112, located approximately 2 miles away. No services are offered at Exits 100, 109, or 112.

The northbound portion of the access road (See Figure 1) is only visible from I-15 when either northbound or southbound vehicles are passing by the frontage road where it turns northward. Visibility of the northbound dirt road is limited to approximately 0.4 mile from I-15. When vehicles are past it in either direction, it is screened from view due to the existing dirt/gravel roadbed being a little lower in elevation than the surrounding ground surface and low-lying desert vegetation.

No sensitive receptors are located in the vicinity of the proposed access road. The frontage road on the north side of I-15 that parallels I-15 is not visible from any of the lanes of I-15. Therefore, widening or other improvements to this section of roadway, as part of the Proposed Action, would not be evident.

Due to the steepness and narrowness of the paved shoulders along I-15 near Exit 109 and the high travel speeds of motorists on the freeway, it was deemed unsafe to take photographs for the visual simulation from the freeway shoulder. Photographs were taken from approximately 100 feet north of I-15, standing just north of a barbed wire fence that parallels the freeway, and approximately 100 feet south of the frontage road. Figure 2a shows the existing condition view of the frontage road and dirt road. Because of the inability to take the photograph from I-15, the simulated photograph (Figure 2b) depicts a closer view of the access road than what would be seen from the freeway. Even so, this simulated view was determined to have a Form, Color, and Texture contrast rating of weak, with the element Line receiving a weak to moderate contrast rating. In addition, view duration of the proposed access road would be only fleeting by motorists travelling at freeway speeds.

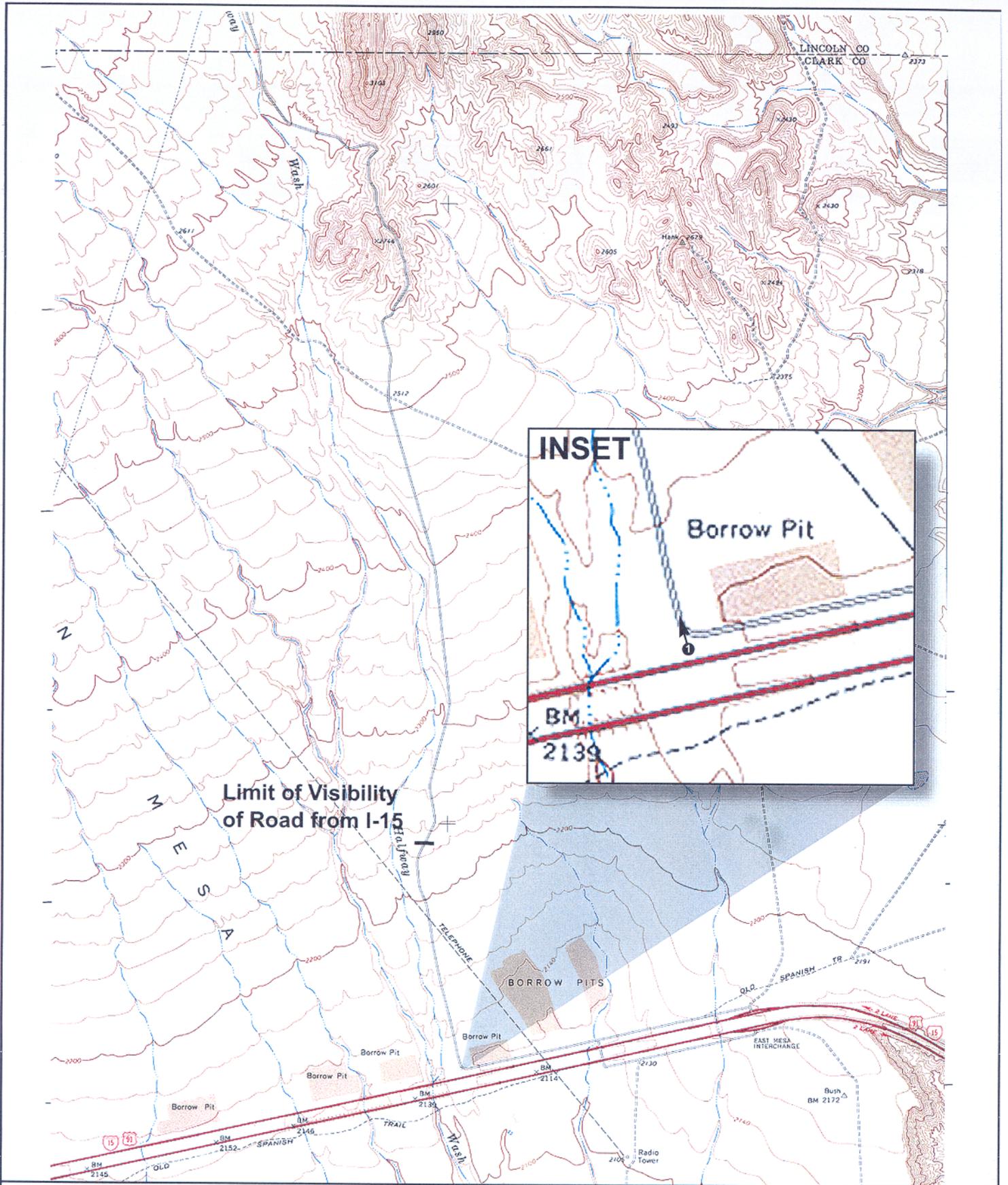
The upgraded access road would include paving, lane widening, the addition of paved shoulders, and the addition of 8.5-foot-wide ditches along the roadway. It is known that ditches on both sides of the roadway would not be necessary for the entire length of the access road. It has not been determined if a ditch would be required on both sides of the roadway in the 0.4 mile of the road that is visible from I-15. However, to represent the worst-case, the visual simulation was prepared assuming that a ditch would be required on both sides of the road. It was also assumed that the ditch on the west side of the road would continue south¹, rather than turning east where the road turns east to parallel I-15 (see Figure 2b).

¹ It is possible that the ditch would parallel the road, rather than continue south; however, the simulation depicts the ditch continuing south, to allow the roadway runoff to flow to the wash located to the west of the proposed access road.

Conclusion: Upgrading the frontage road and dirt road to that necessary for the Proposed Action would not degrade the existing view from I-15, would not dominate the view shown in Figures 2a and 2b, would not attract or focus the attention of the casual viewer away from the mountains in the distance, and would meet the objective of the BLM VRM Class III rating of the land.

Additional Mitigating Measures (See item 3)

None needed or recommended.



0 2500 FEET

1 = Key Observation Point (KOP)

Contour Interval 20 Feet

Location of Key Observation Point

SOURCE: Moapa Peak SE, Nev. 7.5 minute quadrangle map
 TOQUOP W112002004SAC Fig_1_SITE_MAP.ai 11-18-2002sbm

Figure 1



Existing condition view of the frontage road that parallels I-15 on the north side of the freeway. This is the view looking north where the frontage road turns northward.

KOP 1: Existing Condition

Figure 2a



Simulated view of project access road, upgraded for the Toquop Energy Project by widening, paving, and the addition of ditches for runoff on both sides of the road.

KOP 1: Visual Simulation

Figure 2b