

## 4.19. VISUAL RESOURCES

All of the alternatives would impact visual resources to varying degrees. Generally, the greater the degree of surface disturbance, the greater the impact would be to scenic quality. Abandoned mine lands, fire, minerals development, trail maintenance and construction (both non-motorized and motorized), special designation areas, recreation, grazing, visual resources, and woodland-forest management would introduce new visual elements into the landscape, altering the line, form, color, and texture that characterize the existing landscape. These visible, surface-disturbing impacts, measured as line, form, color, or texture contrasts with the natural environment, would impact scenic quality.

In assessing the degree of surface-disturbing impacts on scenic quality, viewer perception (measured as viewing distance), viewer sensitivity to impacts, and Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class objectives are also considered. Areas with lower scenic value (managed as VRM Class III and VRM Class IV) are allowed a wider range of impacts on visual resources than areas with higher scenic value (VRM Class I and VRM Class II).

All surface-disturbing activities, regardless of alternative or management action, would be subject to the VRM Class objectives of the area within which the activity takes place. The visual resource contrast rating system is used as a guide to analyze the potential site-specific impacts of surface disturbance as well as facility design and placement. Surface-disturbing activities and facilities would then be designed to mitigate their visual impacts and conform to the area's assigned VRM Class objective. See Figures 39–44 for depictions of the proposed designation of VRM Classes within the VPA for each alternative.

### 4.19.1. IMPACTS COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

#### 4.19.1.1. ABANDONED MINE LANDS

Under the Proposed RMP and all alternatives, the AML safety program priority would be to clean up and address AML physical safety/hazard concerns in proximity to developed recreation sites and areas with high visitor use. The reclamation of abandoned mine sites within the VPA would have an impact on scenic quality. Capping and/or removing tailings piles and mine wastes; and removing and disposing of mining and milling equipment, mining debris, and hazardous wastes would directly and indirectly enhance scenic quality. Beneficial impacts would be produced through site reclamation that would likely modify these sites (by reducing surface disturbance visual contrasts) to be more compatible with or similar to the surrounding landscape.

#### 4.19.1.2. FIRE MANAGEMENT

Fire management decisions, including use of prescribed fire, vegetation treatment, and fire suppression, would impact visual quality under the Proposed RMP and all of the alternatives. Mechanical and/or chemical treatments, prescribed burning, and seeding treatments would have direct and indirect effects on the existing visual characteristics of the landscape. Prescribed burning impacts on visual quality would tend to be adverse in the short term and beneficial in the

long term. Burning and/or chemically and mechanically removing vegetation and then seeding would produce direct impacts that alter the color and the textural, formal, and linear attributes of the existing landscape. Indirect impacts to the color, line, form, and texture of the landscape would be produced by fences or barriers used to exclude livestock from the treated areas.

The impacts of fire suppression on visual resources, for the Proposed RMP and all of the alternatives, would also vary depending upon the methods used for suppression. The application of fire retardant to the landscape would produce minor, short-term, adverse visual contrasts because of its bright color, but this effect would dissipate relatively quickly. Access to burned areas and areas in the vicinity of dozer lines and firebreaks would be restricted in the short term, but limiting this access would have minor, beneficial effects in the long term by reducing further impacts. Fire suppression-related construction of firelines, firebreaks, dozer lines, and access roads for fire crews and equipment would produce both short-term and long-term beneficial and adverse impacts on visual resources. Beneficial impacts on visual resources would be produced by the preservation of vegetation not intended for fire treatment. Adverse impacts would be the potentially strong linear, color, texture, and form contrasts produced by the construction of highly disturbed strips of land denuded of vegetation for firebreaks, firelines, and temporary access roads. If not effectively rehabilitated, these fire-suppression features could remain as long-term visual impacts.

Long-term beneficial impacts to visual resources from fire management would be produced by: 1) the reduction in the potential for catastrophic, stand-destroying wildland fires; 2) the recreation of historic fire regimes; 3) increased biodiversity, with a reduction in diseased, stressed, and infested trees; and 4) the creation of a visual mosaic of vegetation that would tend to improve scenic quality.

#### **4.19.1.3. LANDS AND REALTY**

Land and realty management decisions would have impacts on visual quality under the Proposed RMP and all of the alternatives. Withdrawal of lands open to mineral leasing within the Green River Scenic Corridor is a management action applicable to all of the alternatives. The impacts of this action on visual resources would be protection-related in the short term and long term because these lands would be preserved from the potentially adverse visual effects caused by mineral exploration and development (see below for mineral and hydrocarbon effects on visual resources).

#### **4.19.1.4. MINERALS**

Minerals and hydrocarbon leasing would have direct and indirect adverse impacts on visual quality under the Proposed RMP and all of the alternatives, in the short term and long term. The effects on visual quality would include strong visual contrasts from (and not limited to) the construction of well pads, access roads, drilling rigs, pipelines, and processing and support facilities. Indirect impacts to visual quality, both short-term and long-term, would be the result of soil erosion from disturbed areas, fugitive dust from disturbed areas, and/or regional haze from compressor and generator emissions that could obscure or degrade scenic vistas.

#### **4.19.1.5. RECREATION**

Recreational OHV use would tend to cause direct and indirect adverse impacts to visual quality, in the short-term and long-term, under the Proposed RMP and all of the alternatives. Direct visual quality degradation would be caused by visual contrast-creating disturbances in natural areas from trail expansion and trail widening, particularly on highly visible steep slopes and ridgelines. Indirect impacts would be caused by visibility-reducing fugitive dust from trails, potential adverse impacts to cultural resources that possess visual or scenic attributes such as petroglyphs, pictographs, and prehistoric structures, and soil erosion contrasts.

#### **4.19.1.6. VISUAL**

Visual resource management (VRM) would have impacts on visual quality under the Proposed RMP and all of the alternatives. Visual Resource Management Classes I and II would provide the highest level of visual resource protection, with direct, short-term and long-term, protection and preservation-related impacts on visual quality; VRM III and VRM IV would be less protective, allowing more surface-disturbing impacts than VRM I and II.

#### **4.19.1.7. SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS**

Special designation areas are proposed under the Proposed RMP and all of the alternatives. These areas include ACECs, WSAs, and portions of rivers identified as being suitable for designation under the Wild and Scenic River System. Generally, ACECs, and Wild and Scenic Rivers are established to protect wildlife, vegetation, cultural resources, scenic quality, or recreational opportunities, each of which has direct, preservation-related impacts on the scenic quality component of an area. Each of the designations proposed would have direct, short-term and long-term preservation-related impacts on scenic quality within the designated areas by requiring all surface-disturbing activities to conform to the goals and objectives of the particular special designation area. The direct impacts on scenic quality would be the same for all the alternatives (see Section 4.19.2.9).

Air Quality, Forage, Paleontology, Rangeland Improvements, Special Status Species, Wild Horses, and Wildlife and Fisheries management decisions would have negligible effects on visual resources. These resources are not analyzed further.

### **4.19.2. ALTERNATIVE IMPACTS**

#### **4.19.2.1. IMPACTS OF CULTURAL DECISIONS ON VISUAL RESOURCES**

##### **4.19.2.1.1. PROPOSED RMP**

Under the Proposed RMP, high-density archaeological and historical sites (and thus visual resources) would be protected from OHV-use disturbance by limiting this activity to designated routes in the Uinta Foothills, Little/Devils Hole, Upper Willow Creek, and Four Mile Wash areas. These management actions would have direct, short-term and long-term protection and preservation-related impacts on visual quality. Compared to Alternative D (No Action), the

Proposed RMP would be more protective of visual resources because OHV travel would be limited designated routes and leased for minerals development under stipulations that would protect cultural sites. Under Alternative D (No Action) these sites would not be specifically protected and OHV use would be designated as open to cross-country OHV use.

#### **4.19.2.1.2. ALTERNATIVE A**

Alternative A decisions would have the same visual impacts on cultural resources as discussed under the Propose RMP because the decisions are the same.

#### **4.19.2.1.3. ALTERNATIVE B**

Under this alternative, the protection and preservation-related impacts on cultural (and thus visual) resources would be similar to those discussed for Proposed RMP. Compared to Alternative D (No Action), this alternative would be more protective.

#### **4.19.2.1.4. ALTERNATIVE C**

Under Alternative C, high-density cultural sites and traditional sacred properties would be protected in the Uinta Foothills, Devils Hole, Upper Willow Creek, and Four Mile Wash areas as well, via the exclusion of oil and gas leasing and OHV use. These management actions would have the greatest direct, short-term and long-term protection and preservation-related impacts on visual quality. Compared to Alternative D (No Action), this alternative would be more resource protective.

#### **4.19.2.1.5. ALTERNATIVE D (NO ACTION)**

Alternative D would not limit OHV use near high-density cultural sites, and high-density cultural sites would be open to oil and gas leasing. This alternative would have long-term, adverse impacts on visual quality by permitting these regulated, surface-disturbing activities near high-density cultural resources.

#### **4.19.2.1.6. ALTERNATIVE E**

To protect areas of high cultural resource site density and traditional sacred properties, the Uinta Foothills, Devils Hole, Upper Willow Creek, and Four Mile Wash areas would be closed to oil and gas leasing and OHV use under Alternative E. These management actions would have the greatest direct, short-term and long-term protection and preservation-related impacts on visual resources because of restrictions on surface disturbances. Compared to Alternative D (No Action), this alternative would be more resource protective.

In summary, the Proposed RMP and Alternatives A, C, and E would provide the greatest level of landscape (visual resource) protection, because they also provide the highest levels of cultural resource protection. Alternative B would provide some visual resource protection, but less than

would the Proposed RMP and Alternative C. Alternative D (No Action) would provide the lowest level of cultural resource (and visual resource) protection.

#### **4.19.2.2. IMPACTS OF FIRE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS ON VISUAL RESOURCES**

##### **4.19.2.2.1. PROPOSED RMP, AND ALTERNATIVES A, B, C, AND E**

The Proposed RMP and the action alternatives would allow for prescriptive fire treatments on approximately 156,425 acres per decade. The impacts of fire management decisions on scenic quality would vary, depending upon the location, size, and timing of the burned areas and the type of fire management treatment conducted (as described in Section 4.17.1 of the Draft RMP/DEIS). Short-term impacts of fire management decisions on visual resources would be largely adverse, affecting the color, line, form, and texture of the vegetation by creating strong visual contrasts between burned and unburned areas. However, the use of prescribed fire as part of a fire management program would, in the long term, decrease the frequency, intensity, and size of unmanaged wildland fires and reduce smoke generation, both of which would benefit visual resources by limiting landscape-obscuring haze and preserving the desired vegetation component of the scenic landscape (see Section 4.19.1 Impacts Common to All Alternatives for a discussion of fire management decisions). Further, use of prescribed fire under the Proposed RMP and these alternatives would introduce long-term vigor and variety to the vegetation element of the landscape, creating a vegetation mosaic that would enhance scenic quality. The Proposed RMP and Alternatives A, B, C, and E, when compared to Alternative D (No Action), would have greater beneficial impacts on visual resources because prescribed fire would be applied to more area under these action alternatives than under Alternative D (No Action).

##### **4.19.2.2.2. ALTERNATIVE D (NO ACTION)**

Alternative D (No Action) would use prescriptive fire methods (including but not limited to prescribed burning) on up to 27,950 acres in the Book Cliffs area and would manipulate 22,950 acres within the Diamond Mountain area. The potential impacts, either adverse or beneficial, would be similar to those described under Alternative A and Section 4.19.1, Impacts Common to All Alternatives, but to a lesser degree and smaller scale than the action alternatives.

In summary, assuming that fire management would have long-term, beneficial impacts on scenic quality, the Proposed RMP, and Alternatives A, B, C, and E would have equivalent impacts on this resource. Alternative D (No Action) would have the least beneficial impacts on scenic quality due to the increased risk of wildland fires.

#### **4.19.2.3. IMPACTS OF GRAZING DECISIONS ON VISUAL RESOURCES**

##### **4.19.2.3.1. PROPOSED RMP AND ALTERNATIVE B**

Under the Proposed RMP and Alternative B, grazing could be allowed in the Nine Mile Acquired Area; however, this management prescription would control livestock grazing to prevent adverse impacts to recreation values (including scenic quality) and thus have direct,

protection-related impacts on visual resources. Compared to Alternative D, the Proposed RMP and this alternative would provide more protection from grazing to riparian areas because management prescriptions under Alternative D (No Action) are unspecified.

#### **4.19.2.3.2. ALTERNATIVE A**

Under this alternative, the Nine Mile Acquired Area would be grazed, which would preserve existing visual resources in the area. This alternative would be more beneficial than Alternative D (No Action) because, as mentioned above, there are no specific livestock and grazing management decisions under Alternative D (No Action).

#### **4.19.2.3.3. ALTERNATIVE C**

Alternative C would prohibit grazing in the Nine Mile Acquired Area. This alternative would have beneficial impacts by preserving scenic resources within the riparian corridor, the same as discussed under Alternative A. Compared to Alternative D (No Action), this alternative would provide more protection from grazing and livestock, as discussed under Alternative A.

#### **4.19.2.3.4. ALTERNATIVE D (NO ACTION)**

Under Alternative D (No Action) grazing and livestock management decisions are unspecified in the Nine Mile Acquired Area. This alternative would not have adverse impacts on visual quality if the loss of riparian vegetation to grazing did not conflict with or detract from recreation/scenic values along the riparian corridor. Based on the lack of specific management actions for this alternative in the Nine Mile area, the grazing impacts on scenic quality in the riparian corridor are unknown.

#### **4.19.2.3.5. ALTERNATIVE E**

Under Alternative E, lands acquired in Nine Mile Canyon would not be grazed in order to protect this area's riparian and watershed values. This would directly protect the vegetation component of the scenic landscape and visual resources within the riparian zone. Livestock grazing on the uplands outside the riparian zone would follow standards and guidelines for rangeland health. This would result in proper levels of livestock grazing and, probably, construction of some grazing facilities (e.g., fences and water features). The impacts to the vegetative component of the landscape would not be noticeable, but construction of facilities would introduce human-made features to the landscape. Compared to Alternative D (No Action), this alternative would provide more protection to the scenery of the riparian landscape from grazing.

Alternative E (along with the Proposed RMP and Alternative A, B, and C) would protect the scenic quality of riparian areas from grazing. The Proposed RMP and Alternative B would provide more protection than is given under current management, but less than that given by Alternatives A, C and E. Alternative D (No Action) would provide no specific protection to visual resources.

#### **4.19.2.4. IMPACTS OF LANDS AND REALTY DECISIONS ON VISUAL RESOURCES**

##### **4.19.2.4.1. PROPOSED RMP**

Described in Section 4.19.1 Impacts Common to All Alternatives, the Proposed RMP would pursue locatable mineral withdrawals in order to preclude mineral entry into the Green River Scenic Corridor in Browns Park, the White River, Lears Canyon, potential and developed recreation sites, and the Book Cliffs Natural Area. The proposed withdrawals, totaling 24,202 acres, would have direct, protection-related impacts on scenic quality in these areas.

Under the Proposed RMP, 106,178 acres managed as non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics would be ROW-avoidance areas, which would prevent surface disturbance and changes to the landscape, thus protect existing scenic quality. Compared to Alternative D (No Action), the Proposed RMP would provide more protection than Alternative D (No Action) because of the additional protection given non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics. However, the proposed withdrawal of locatable minerals leasing on 24,202 acres would be less beneficial than Alternative D (No Action) because it would be less than the currently managed withdrawal of locatable minerals leasing on 35,900 acres.

##### **4.19.2.4.2. ALTERNATIVE A**

The impacts of proposed locatable minerals withdrawals would have the same impacts on visual resources as the Proposed RMP because the decisions are the same (with proposed withdrawal of 24,202 acres). However, non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics would not be designated under this alternative and the acreage proposed for locatable mineral withdrawal would be less than currently managed under Alternative D (No Action). Therefore, this alternative would have less beneficial impacts than Alternative D (No Action).

##### **4.19.2.4.3. ALTERNATIVE B**

Under this alternative, the same acreages would be proposed for locatable mineral withdrawals (19,202 acres), with the same impacts on scenic quality as discussed under the Proposed RMP.

When compared to Alternative D (No Action), this alternative would provide less protection than Alternative D (No Action) for the same reasons as discussed under the Proposed RMP (fewer acres of protection than is currently being managed).

##### **4.19.2.4.4. ALTERNATIVE C**

The impacts to visual resources under this alternative would be the same as those discussed above for the Proposed RMP, except that locatable mineral withdrawals would also be pursued on 10,170 acres within the proposed Lower Green River ACEC. Under this alternative, a total of 29,372 acres of proposed withdrawals would receive scenic quality protection from potential impacts due to locatable minerals surface disturbances. As discussed under the above alternatives, Alternative C would provide less protection than Alternative D (No Action).

**4.19.2.4.5. ALTERNATIVE D (NO ACTION)**

Alternative D (No Action) would pursue mineral withdrawals in the Green River Scenic Corridor, relict vegetation areas, the Lower Green River ACEC, and 5,000 acres of mineral withdrawal within developed and potential recreation sites, for a total of 35,900 acres of mineral withdrawals. Mineral withdrawals under this alternative would have beneficial protection-related impacts on visual resources.

**4.19.2.4.6. ALTERNATIVE E**

Alternative E proposes mineral withdrawals in order to preclude mining in the Green River Scenic Corridor in Browns Park, the White River, Lears Canyon, the Book Cliffs Natural Area, and the Lower Green River ACEC. The proposed withdrawals, totaling 29,372 acres (the same proposed acreage as Alternative C), would prohibit hardrock mining in these areas and the surface disturbance associated with mining. The result would be no lands and realty-related changes to the landscape and to scenic quality in these areas. Under Alternative E, 277,596 acres of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics would be managed as ROW-exclusion areas, closed to new road construction, and recommended for withdrawal from mineral entry. These actions would prevent surface disturbance and changes to the landscape, thus protecting the existing scenic quality.

When compared to Alternative D (No Action), Alternative E would provide more protection to visual resources because more area would be proposed for locatable mineral withdrawal and non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics would be managed to restrict surface disturbances.

With recommendations for locatable mineral withdrawal and exclusion of ROWs, the Proposed RMP and Alternative E would provide the greatest level of landscape protection for visual resources from mining, construction of utility lines, and other lands and realty-related actions. Alternative D (No Action) would provide a high level of protection to visual resources, with Alternatives A, B, and C to lesser degree than the other alternatives.

**4.19.2.5. EFFECTS OF MINERALS/ENERGY DECISIONS ON VISUAL RESOURCES**

As described under subsection 4.19.1, Impacts Common to All Alternatives, minerals-related exploration, development, and facilities and infrastructure construction and operation would create surface disturbances that would adversely affect scenic quality. As mentioned in the introduction, an assumption made during analysis of visual resources is that the greater the numbers of acres available for mineral exploration, the greater the potentially adverse impacts to visual resources. The proposed acreages available for minerals leasing are tabulated below in Table 4.19.1.

**4.19.2.5.1. PROPOSED RMP**

The Proposed RMP would allow Standard and Timing and Controlled Surface minerals leasing and mining on a total of 2,143,223 acres, with potential impacts to visual resources as discussed

under subsection 4.19.1. Under the Proposed RMP alternative, 106,178 acres of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics would be closed to oil and gas leasing in order to protect their wilderness values and would be managed under VRM II objectives. This closure would reduce surface disturbance caused by mineral development within the VPA and would protect the scenic quality within these areas. The Proposed RMP also proposes a total of 24,202 acres in the Green River Scenic Corridor, White River, Lears Canyon, and the Book Cliffs Natural Area for locatable minerals withdrawals, which would provide additional scenic quality protection. Compared to Alternative D (No Action), the Proposed RMP would make available 98,291 more acres for minerals development than Alternative D (No Action); however, when protection of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics is considered, the Proposed RMP would provide greater long term, beneficial protection of visual resources than Alternative D (No Action).

#### **4.19.2.5.2. ALTERNATIVE A**

Alternative A would allow Standard and Timing and Controlled Surface leasing and mining on 2,320,825 acres (276,486 more acres than Alternative D, No Action), with impacts as discussed under subsection 4.19.1. This alternative also proposes the same acreage for locatable minerals withdrawals as the Proposed RMP, with the same impacts on visual resources as discussed under that alternative. Compared to Alternative D (No Action), this alternative would potentially have more adverse impacts on visual resources and scenic quality than Alternative D (No Action). This is because less acreage would be protected from surface disturbances through minerals withdrawals than under the No Action, and more area would be available for surface disturbances under mineral leases and mining than under Alternative D (No Action).

#### **4.19.2.5.3. ALTERNATIVE B**

This alternative would pursue locatable mineral withdrawals on the same number of acres as discussed under the Proposed RMP, with the same impacts to visual resources within the 24,202 acres in the Green River corridor, White River, Lears Canyon, recreation sites, and the Book Cliffs Natural Area. This alternative would also allow Standard and Timing and Controlled Surface Use leasing stipulations and mining on 2,376,920 acres (332,581 more acres than Alternative D, No Action) that would potentially have long term, adverse affects on scenic quality from surface disturbances. Compared to Alternative D (No Action), Alternative B would have more potentially adverse impacts to visual resources than Alternative D (No Action) because more acreage would be available for surface disturbances to scenic quality.

#### **4.19.2.5.4. ALTERNATIVE C**

Alternative C would pursue locatable mineral withdrawals for the areas discussed under the Proposed RMP, with additional withdrawals pursued within the Lower Green River ACEC (10,170), totaling 29,372 acres. The impacts would be the same as discussed under the Proposed RMP but to a slight greater degree, but still less than the current 35,900-acre protection provided to these areas under Alternative D (No Action). This alternative would allow Standard and Timing and Controlled Surface Use leasing stipulations and mining on 2,116,201 acres within the VPA (71,862 more acres than available under Alternative D, No Action). Compared to Alternative D (No Action), this alternative would have more potentially adverse impacts on

visual resources for the same reasons as discussed above under Alternative B: more acreage would be available for surface disturbances to scenic quality than currently available under Alternative D (No Action).

#### **4.19.2.5.5. ALTERNATIVE D (NO ACTION)**

Alternative D (No Action) precludes locatable mineral withdrawals on 35,900 acres within the Green River Scenic Corridor, relict vegetation areas, the Lower Green River ACEC, and developed and potential recreation sites, with beneficial long term protection-related impacts on scenic quality. This alternative also currently allows Standard and Timing and Controlled Surface Use leasing and other mining on 2,044,339 acres within the VPA, with potentially adverse impacts to scenic quality as discussed above under subsection 4.19.1.

#### **4.19.2.5.6. ALTERNATIVE E**

Alternative E would allow Standard and Timing and Controlled Surface Use leasing and other mining on 1,931,353 acres within the VPA (112,986 fewer acres than available under Alternative D (No Action), and the least area of all the alternatives), with potential impacts to scenic quality as discussed under subsection 4.19.1.

Under Alternative E, 277,596 acres of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics would be closed to mineral leasing in order to protect their wilderness values and would be managed under VRM Class I objectives. As discussed under the Proposed RMP alternative, this closure would prevent surface disturbance caused by mineral development and would protect the scenic quality within these areas.

Alternative E proposes mineral withdrawals in order to preclude mining in the Green River Scenic Corridor in Browns Park, the White River, Lears Canyon, the Book Cliffs Natural Area, and the Lower Green River ACEC. The proposed withdrawals total about 29,372 acres (the same as Alternative C), and their withdrawal would prohibit locatable (hardrock) mining in these areas and the surface disturbance associated with mining. Thus, there would be mining-related changes to the landscape and to scenic quality in these areas.

In summary, the greatest acreage of potential minerals-related surface disturbance (and potential degradation of visual quality) would occur under Alternative B, followed by the Proposed RMP, and then Alternative C. Alternatives D and E propose the least acreage be available for potential mineral surface disturbance because of proposed mineral withdrawals and oil and gas leasing closures within non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics.

**Table 4.19.1. Mineral Leasing Acreages**

	<b>Proposed RMP</b>	<b>Alternative A</b>	<b>Alternative B</b>	<b>Alternative C</b>	<b>Alternative D (No Action)</b>	<b>Alternative E</b>
Oil and Gas – Standard Stipulations, Timing and Controlled Surface Use	1,640,381	1,780,860	1,819,397	1,627,085	1,536,030	1,499,641
Mineral Materials – Open	389,788	415,395	432,953	388,699	387,700	344,682
Phosphate – Open	76,208	87,724	87,724	63,571	84,600	52,063
Gilsonite (miles / acres)	172 / 36,846	172 / 36,846	172 / 36,846	172 / 36,846	168 / 36,009	163 / 34,967
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,143,223</b>	<b>2,320,825</b>	<b>2,376,920</b>	<b>2,116,201</b>	<b>2,044,339</b>	<b>1,931,353</b>

#### **4.19.2.6. IMPACTS OF NON-WSA LANDS WITH WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS DECISIONS ON VISUAL RESOURCES**

##### **4.19.2.6.1. PROPOSED RMP**

Under the Proposed RMP, 106,178 acres would be managed to protect non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics. These lands would be managed under VRM Class II objectives to preserve their wilderness landscapes. Closing these areas to oil and gas leasing and limiting OHV use to designated routes would have long term, beneficial impacts on scenic quality by protecting these areas from minerals and OHV caused surface disturbances.

##### **4.19.2.6.2. ALTERNATIVES A, B, C, AND D**

Under these alternatives, no management decisions would be prescribed to specifically protect the wilderness values of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics, and thus there would be no direct impacts to visual resources.

##### **4.19.2.6.3. ALTERNATIVE E**

Under Alternative E, 277,596 acres in 25 areas would be managed to protect their wilderness characteristics (see Section 3.10 Non-WSA Lands with Wilderness Characteristics). To achieve this objective, these lands would be managed under VRM Class I objectives to preserve the characteristic landscape. These areas would be closed to surface-disturbing activities, subject to valid existing rights. These actions would prevent changes to the characteristic landscape (the lines, forms, colors, and textures) and protect the scenic quality of these lands.

#### 4.19.2.7. IMPACTS OF RECREATION DECISIONS ON VISUAL RESOURCES

##### 4.19.2.7.1. PROPOSED RMP

The Proposed RMP would manage a total of 133,560 acres of SRMAs within the VPA, with scenic quality protection through SRMA-specific management plans: 42,729 in Blue Mountain, 1,014 acres in Pelican Lake, 18,490 acres in Browns Park, 24,259 acres in Red Mountain-Dry Fork, 69 acres in Fantasy Canyon, 44,168 acres in Nine Mile Canyon, and 2,831 acres along the White River as SRMAs. This would have direct, beneficial, short-term and long-term impacts on scenic quality by limiting surface-disturbing activities to ensure that satisfying recreational opportunities are available within the proposed SRMAs.

Some parts of the White River, Blue Mountain, Browns Park, and Nine Mile Canyon SRMAs include non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics, and managed within the SRMAs as closed to oil and gas leasing. The non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics would also be managed as VRM II and would limit OHV use to designated routes. These actions would restrict surface disturbances within the SRMAs, thereby protecting scenic quality and scenic values.

Under the Proposed RMP, the direct long-term, adverse impacts of light pollution adjacent to Dinosaur National Monument would be mitigated by requiring potential light pollution sources to operate at least 200 meters (656 feet) from the monument boundary.

Compared to Alternative D (No Action), the Proposed RMP would have more long term, beneficial impacts on visual resources because more area would be protected within SRMAs (including protection of scenic quality) than under current management. Under t Alternative D (No Action), 87,928 acres would be protected within the existing VPA SRMAs.

##### 4.19.2.7.2. ALTERNATIVE A

Alternative A would manage a total of 499,588 acres within the VPA under SRMA management plans to protect recreation resources (including scenic quality), an increase of 411,660 acres beyond the SRMA protection currently managed under Alternative D (No Action). The SRMAs under Alternative A would include expansion of the existing Browns Park (52,720 acres) and Nine Mile Canyon (81,168 acres) SRMAs, maintaining the Pelican Lake (1,014 acres) and Red Mountain-Dry Fork (24,259 acres) SRMAs, and designating the White River (24,183 acres), Blue Mountain (42,758 acres), and Book Cliffs (273,486 acres) SRMAs. The long term, beneficial, impacts to visual resources would be the same as discussed above under the Proposed RMP, but to a greater degree, as SRMA management plans would provide scenic quality protection to a larger area within the VPA.

The mitigation of light impacts would be the same as discussed above under the Proposed RMP alternative.

Compared to Alternative D (No Action), this alternative would have substantially greater beneficial impacts to visual resources and scenic quality because a much greater area would be

protect under SRMA management plans within proposed SRMAs than under current management.

#### **4.19.2.7.3. ALTERNATIVE B**

Alternative B would continue to manage the White River corridor for recreational use with minimal management oversight, which would potentially create scenic quality degradation due to unrestricted OHV use, unlimited recreational group sizes, potential concentrated use of certain recreational areas, and minimal monitoring of impacts to scenic quality from recreational use.

Alternative B would also manage the Book Cliffs for unlimited and unconfined recreation, which would have direct and indirect, short-term and long-term, adverse impacts from surface-disturbing activities associated with recreation.

Alternative B would continue to manage Browns Park as a 17,000-acre SRMA, Red Mountain-Dry Fork as a 24,259-acre SRMA, Pelican Lake as a 1,014 SRMA, and Nine Mile Canyon as a 44,181-acre SRMA to protect scenic, recreational, wildlife, cultural, and vegetation resources in these areas, which would result in long-term protection-related impacts to these areas. The proposed SRMAs under this alternative would encompass a total of 86,454 acres, the same as under current management.

Under Alternative B, the direct long-term adverse impacts of light pollution adjacent to Dinosaur National Monument would be mitigated the same as the Proposed RMP.

Compared to Alternative D (No Action), this alternative would have the same beneficial impacts on scenic quality and visual resources as discussed under Alternative D (No Action) because the management decisions for SRMAs would be the same.

#### **4.19.2.7.4. ALTERNATIVE C**

Alternative C would manage a total of 522,604 acres within the VPA through SRMA management plans to protect recreation resources and scenic quality (an increase of 434,673 acres beyond current SRMA management under Alternative D, No Action). Proposed SRMAs would encompass 273,486 acres within the Book Cliffs, 52,720 acres in Browns Park, 24,259 acres in Red Mountain-Dry Fork, 1,014 acres in Pelican Lake, 69 acres in Fantasy Canyon, 42,758 acres in Blue Mountain, 81,168 acres in Nine Mile Canyon, and 47,130 acres along the White River. These management actions would have direct, short-term and long-term preservation-related impacts on visual quality because either: 1) the SRMAs would use integrated activity plans in their management that provide for scenic viewing; 2) scenic vistas would be protected; or 3) surface-disturbing activities would be limited to those that complement recreational values (which usually include a scenic quality component).

Under Alternative C, the direct long-term adverse impacts of light pollution adjacent to Dinosaur National Monument would be mitigated through NSO leasing stipulations within one-half mile of the monument boundary and requirements for drilling operators to use light-reducing equipment and devices.

Compared to Alternative D (No Action), Alternative C would have impacts on scenic quality and visual resources the same as discussed under Alternative A because both alternatives would substantially increase the area currently managed under SRMA protection, including protection of scenic quality.

#### **4.19.2.7.5. ALTERNATIVE D (NO ACTION)**

Alternative D (No Action) would maintain the currently designated Browns Park as a 17,000-acre SRMA and Nine Mile Canyon as a 44,181-acre SRMA, the Pelican Lake SRMA as 1,014 acres, and the Red Mountain-Dry Fork SRMA within 24,259 acres. The SRMA total acreage under current management would encompass 86,454 acres, with long term, beneficial impacts to visual resources within this area from SRMA management plan protection of scenic quality. There would not be any light pollution mitigation adjacent to Dinosaur National Monument, with continuing long term, adverse impacts on night-time visual quality.

#### **4.19.2.7.6. ALTERNATIVE E**

Alternative E would manage 47,130 acres along the White River as an SRMA. Proposed SRMA management would also encompass the following areas: 273,486 acres in the Book Cliffs; 52,720 acres in Browns Park; 24,259 acres in Red Mountain–Dry Fork; 1,014 in Pelican Lake; 69 acres in Fantasy Canyon; 42,758 acres in Blue Mountain; and 81,168 acres in Nine Mile Canyon. Management of and the impacts of these SRMAs to visual resources and scenic quality would be the same as discussed under Alternative C and would provide direct, short- and long-term protection of visual quality because: 1) integrated activity plans would be prepared for the SRMAs that provide for scenic viewing; 2) scenic vistas would be protected; 3) surface-disturbing activities would be limited to those that would meet recreation (SRMA) objectives, including scenic quality; and 4) some portions of the proposed SRMAs would be closed to oil and gas leasing, reducing surface disturbance and impacts to visual quality.

Some parts of the White River, Blue Mountain, Book Cliffs, Browns Park, and Nine Mile Canyon SRMAs include non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics. The impacts of Alternative E would be essentially the same as those for the Proposed RMP, except that Alternative E would also manage 157,231 acres of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics in the SRMAs as closed to oil and gas leasing. The non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics would also be closed to solid mineral leasing and recommended for withdrawal from entry under the mining laws (157,231 acres within the SRMAs). These closures and withdrawals would prevent surface disturbances to the landscape from mineral and energy exploration and development, thereby preventing adverse impacts to visual quality in these areas. Other elements of the management prescription for non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics are also aimed at protecting their wilderness characteristics (management under VRM I objectives and closure to OHV use). These actions would restrict surface disturbances on 157,231 acres of the SRMAs, thereby protecting scenic quality and scenic values.

Under the Proposed RMP and Alternatives A, B, C, and E, the direct long-term adverse impacts of light pollution adjacent to Dinosaur National Monument would be mitigated, which would also benefit night-time visual quality in the VPA.

In summary, Alternatives E and C would provide the greatest level of scenic quality protection within the SRMAs, followed by the Proposed RMP. Alternatives B and D (No Action) would provide the least scenic quality protection. Compared to Alternative D (No Action), Alternatives C and E would provide the most visual quality protection from light pollution, followed by the Proposed RMP and Alternative B. Alternative D (No Action) would not protect the National Monument nor the area within the VPA adjacent to the Monument from night-time light pollution.

#### **4.19.2.8. IMPACTS OF TRAVEL/ROADS/TRAILS DECISIONS ON VISUAL RESOURCES**

##### **4.19.2.8.1. PROPOSED RMP**

The Proposed RMP would improve and/or develop up to 400 miles of hiking, horseback riding, and mechanized (non-motorized) trails. Developing additional trails would have an impact on visual resources and could affect scenic quality; however, the visual contrast rating system would be used to analyze the potential impacts of trail building and trail improvement, and trails would be designed to conform to an area's VRM Class objective. The surface-disturbing impacts on scenic quality would be minor.

Under the Proposed RMP, new permitted roads and trails would be obliterated and/or reclaimed after serving their useful purposes. This would have no net impact on scenic quality. Although the roads would be an adverse impact, reclamation would essentially reverse the impact by reducing scenic quality-degrading contrasts, restoring the existing character of the landscape, and reducing indirect adverse impacts caused by potential soil erosion and fugitive dust.

The Proposed RMP would also allow the improvement and/or development of 800 miles of motorized trails. Trail modification or construction would have direct, long-term, adverse impacts on scenic quality, but visual contrast rating analysis and conformance to the area's VRM Class objectives would mitigate the impacts of this surface-disturbing activity. Indirect, long-term, adverse impacts would be produced by soil erosion, trail widening, and unmanaged extension of the trail system by OHVs.

The Proposed RMP would not allow OHV use for off-trail, big game retrieval. This management action would have direct, long-term beneficial impacts on visual quality by reducing the creation or extension of OHV trails.

Under the Proposed RMP, areas within the VPA designated as "open" to OHV travel would be limited to approximately 6,202 acres, a decrease of approximately 781,657 acres when compared to Alternative D (No Action). Limiting the number of open-designated acres would have long-term direct and indirect, beneficial impacts on visual quality by reducing the potential production of scenic-quality degrading fugitive dust, and soil and vegetation disturbances within the landscape.

Areas designated as "limited" to OHV travel would be increased to 1,643,475 acres (an increase of 756,200 acres from current management under Alternative D, No Action), which would have direct long-term beneficial impacts on visual resources by increasing the level of OHV

management and by reducing the extent of OHV-caused visual quality degradation within the VPA.

Designating areas "closed" to OHV travel would be increased from 50,388 acres (under Alternative D) to 75,845 acres and the number of miles of routes designated routes would increase from zero miles under existing conditions (Alternative D, No Action) to 4,860 miles. This increase in designated OHV routes would have direct, long-term beneficial impacts on visual resources by reducing the OHV-related disturbances to soil, water, and vegetation.

Under the Proposed RMP, proposed management of 106,178 acres of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics would allow OHV travel on designated routes only. This would reduce short term and long term, adverse OHV-caused disturbances to vegetation and soil, and limit the adverse impacts to scenic quality within these areas.

Compared to Alternative D (No Action), the Proposed RMP would have more beneficial impacts on visual resources and scenic quality because potential direct, cross-country OHV-caused surface disturbances allowed under current management, and indirect impacts from loss of vegetation and from soil erosion, would be substantially reduced.

#### **4.19.2.8.2. ALTERNATIVE A**

The impacts of travel management decisions under this alternative on visual resources would be the same as discussed above for the Proposed RMP because the proposed management decisions are the same.

#### **4.19.2.8.3. ALTERNATIVE B**

Alternative B proposes not obliterating or reclaiming new permitted roads and trails if they serve public interests, and developing up to 800 miles of motorized routes. The effects, consisting of fugitive dust, erosional impacts, and surface-disturbing contrasts from OHV use, would be directly adverse to visual quality in the long term. However, these roads and trails would conform to the VRM Class objective of the area within which they lie, and monitoring would prevent unmanaged extension of the trails or roads; thus, the surface-disturbing impacts on scenic quality would be minor.

Alternative B proposes OHV use for big game retrieval off designated routes, which could have short-term and long-term direct and indirect adverse impacts on visual quality as described under Section 4.19.1, Impacts Common to All Alternatives.

Areas open to OHV travel would decrease to 5,434 acres (a decrease of 782,425 acres when compared to current management as described under Alternative D, No Action).

Areas limited to OHV travel would increase to 1,659,901 acres, an increase of 772,626 acres from current management as described under Alternative D, No Action.

Areas closed to OHV travel would increase to a total of 60,187 acres (an increase difference of 10,799 acres compared to Alternative D, No Action), the least amount of all the alternatives.

The number of miles of routes designated would increase from zero miles under existing conditions (Alternative D, No Action) to 4,861 miles.

The effects of Alternative B OHV management actions on visual resources would be similar to those described under the Proposed RMP, for areas open to OHV travel. Areas designated as closed to OHV use would be somewhat reduced, which would provide more opportunity for overland OHV travel with subsequent potential degradation of visual resources. Alternative B would have long-term beneficial impacts on visual resources similar to those described under the Proposed RMP.

#### **4.19.2.8.4. ALTERNATIVE C**

Alternative C proposes to improve and/or develop up to 400 miles of mechanized (non-motorized) trails but would not allow improvement or development of 800 miles of motorized trails. This would have direct, long-term, beneficial, protection-related impacts on visual quality by reducing the level of surface disturbances, when compared to Alternative D, No Action.

Under Alternative C, new permitted roads and trails would be obliterated and/or reclaimed after serving their useful purposes. The effects would be similar to those described under the Proposed RMP.

Alternative C would not allow OHV use for off-trail big game retrieval. The impacts of this management action would be similar to those discussed under the Proposed RMP.

The impacts of OHV management decisions would be similar to those described under Proposed RMP. There would be 5,434 acres open to OHV travel (the same as Alternative B), and the impacts of open OHV areas would be similar to those described under the Proposed RMP.

Areas designated as limited OHV travel would be increased to 1,353,529 acres, an increase of 466,254 acres, from current management under Alternative D (No Action), with impacts similar to those described under the Proposed RMP.

Areas closed to OHV travel would be increased from 50,388 acres (under Alternative D, No Action) to 366,559 acres, which would have direct long-term beneficial protection-related impacts on soil, water, and vegetation, similar to those described under the Proposed RMP.

The number of miles of routes designated would increase from zero miles under existing conditions to 4,707 miles.

Alternative C would be the most restrictive of OHV use, with long-term beneficial impacts as described under the Proposed RMP.

#### **4.19.2.8.5. ALTERNATIVE D (NO ACTION)**

Alternative D (No Action) proposes 55 miles of trail development and proposes not obliterating or reclaiming new permitted roads and trails if they serve public interests. The effects, consisting of fugitive dust, erosional impacts, and surface-disturbing contrasts from OHV use, would be directly adverse to visual quality in the long term.

Current management practices designate a total of 787,859 acres as open to OHV travel, 887,275 acres as limited, and 50,388 acres as closed. No OHV routes would be designated under this alternative. Travel management under current conditions would maintain the current adverse impacts to visual resources. The adverse impacts of OHV-caused surface disturbances to soil, water, vegetation, and other components of visual quality would continue.

#### **4.19.2.8.6. ALTERNATIVE E**

Under Alternative E, up to 400 miles of trails would be developed or improved for hiking, horseback riding, and mechanized (non-motorized) use. The 800 miles of motorized trails proposed under the other alternatives would not be developed or improved under Alternative E. This would have direct, long-term, benefits to visual resources by reducing surface disturbances.

Developing additional trails would impact visual resources and scenic quality by introducing linear contrasts in the landform and vegetation elements of the landscape. Trail design would be mitigated, however, to meet VRM class objectives, and the long term impacts of surface disturbance on the scenery would be minor.

**Under this alternative, OHV travel (motorized) would not be permitted** in the proposed 277,596 acres of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics. Thus, OHV travel to dispersed campsites would not be permitted, preventing added disturbance to vegetation and soil, and the resulting impact on the scenic quality of the landscape.

Roads and trails authorized for construction would be rehabilitated after serving their intended purpose. In the short-term, road construction would result in linear contrasts in the landform and vegetation of the landscape, adversely impacting visual quality. In the long-term (sometimes beyond the life of the Plan), rehabilitation of roads would have no impact on scenic quality.

Alternative E would not allow OHV use off of designated routes or trails for big game retrieval. This action would directly benefit visual quality by reducing landform and vegetation disturbance caused by the creation of new OHV routes or an extension of existing OHV routes.

Under this alternative, there would be 5,434 acres open to cross-country OHV travel (the same as under Alternatives B and C) except in non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics. Cross-country travel in open areas would result in soil disturbance and vegetation damage, adversely affecting the scenic landscape. The extent of cross-country OHV travel effects would vary with the type of landform and vegetation. By limiting the areas open to cross-country travel, the adverse impacts to soil and vegetation would be reduced, preserving the scenic quality of the landscape.

Areas in which OHV travel is limited to designated routes would increase to 1,326,024 acres, an increase of 438,749 acres from current management under Alternative D (No Action). Limiting travel to designated routes would directly benefit visual resources by increasing the level of management of OHV travel and by reducing the extent of OHV-caused alteration of the existing landform and vegetation in the landscape. Reducing surface disturbance would preserve scenic quality.

Areas closed to OHV travel would be increased from 50,388 acres (under Alternative D, No Action) to 392,818 acres, which would directly benefit visual resources by preventing OHV surface disturbances to soil, water, and vegetation.

The number of miles of routes designated for motorized travel would increase from zero miles under Alternative D (No Action) (though not formally designated, OHV use is occurring on many of these routes) to 4,654 miles under Alternative E. Limiting motorized use to designated routes would confine soil and vegetation disturbance to those routes and not permit expansion to other undisturbed parts of the landscape. This would have a beneficial effect on visual resources.

In summary, travel decisions under Proposed RMP and Alternatives A, C, and E would have the greatest benefit to visual resources and scenic quality, followed by those under Alternative B. Alternative D (No Action) would have greater OHV impacts on visual resources than would the other alternatives because more acres are designated as open to OHV travel with potentially adverse cross-country-related impacts to visual resources.

#### **4.19.2.9. IMPACTS OF RIPARIAN/SOILS/WATERSHED DECISIONS ON VISUAL RESOURCES**

Surface-disturbing activities on steep slopes would tend to have direct and indirect, short-term and long-term, adverse impacts on scenic quality because of their high visibility. The larger the disturbance, the more visible it becomes from foreground and middle-ground viewpoints, and thus, the greater the impact on visual quality. Direct impacts would result from visual contrasts between surface disturbance and the surrounding landscape; indirect impacts would result from contrasts caused by erosion-related surface disturbance.

Under the Proposed RMP and Alternatives A, C, and E, surface disturbance impacts on 21–40% slopes would be mitigated through an erosion-control strategy developed in accordance with VRM objectives. Under Alternative B, disturbance of slopes greater than 40% would require an approved plan. The Proposed RMP, and Alternatives C and E would not allow any surface disturbance on slopes greater than 40%, and Alternative D (No Action) would not allow mineral-related activities on these slopes.

In summary, the Proposed RMP, and Alternatives A, C, and E would provide a high degree of protection of scenic quality by mitigating erosion through erosion-control strategies, GIS modeling, and project design. The Proposed RMP, and Alternatives A, C and E would provide the most protection of scenic quality by prohibiting steep slope disturbances greater than 40% in addition to erosion control and GIS modeling. Alternative B decisions would provide some protection. Alternative D (No Action) would provide the least protection to scenic quality by protecting slopes in excess of 40% from mineral disturbances only.

**4.19.2.10. IMPACTS OF SPECIAL DESIGNATION AREA DECISIONS ON VISUAL RESOURCES**

The effects of special designation areas on visual resources for each of the alternatives are tabulated below in Table 4.19.2.

Under the Proposed RMP and all of the alternatives, WSAs would be managed to maintain their suitability for designation as Wilderness (according to and as directed in the IMP) until Congress either designates an area as Wilderness or releases an area from wilderness consideration. Wilderness Study Areas within the VPA encompass 53,058 acres (see Special Designation Section 4.16 for a detailed discussion of these areas). Until Congressional designation or release, these area would be managed under VRM Class I objectives, with long term, beneficial preservation-related impacts on scenic quality.

Alternatives C and E would provide the most long-term visual resource protection by designating the most acres as ACECs and by recommending the longest stretches of waterways for protection under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (Alternatives C and E would designate 681,310 acres as ACECs). This is based on the assumption that the VPA goals and objectives for special designation areas "where special management is required to protect and prevent damage to ... scenic values and natural systems and process" would maintain scenic quality within these areas. Alternative A management decisions would offer the second-best level of protection to visual resources (designating 345,850 acres), followed by Alternative B (through designation of 170, 886 acres). The Proposed RMP would provide some visual resource protection (by designating 131,700 acres as ACECs). Alternative D (No Action) would provide the lowest level of protection to visual resources, because it designates the fewest ACEC acres and recommends protecting the fewest waterways under the Wild and Scenic River system. A summary of Alternative E impacts from special designation decisions are shown below in Table 4.19.2.

**Table 4.19.2. Impacts of Special Designation Areas on Visual Resources <sup>1</sup>**

Special Designation Areas	Proposed RMP	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D (No Action)	Alternative E
<b>ACECs</b>						
Bitter Creek	Potential long-term adverse visual quality impacts by not protecting the area as part of an ACEC.	Long term, beneficial impacts from designating 68,834 acres as an ACEC to protect old growth pinyon, cultural resources, and watersheds, and OHV use closed or limited to designated routes.	Same impacts as Proposed RMP.	Long-term beneficial visual quality impacts by designating 147,425 acres as an ACEC to protect old growth pinyon, with OHV use closed or limited to designated routes.	Unspecified management decisions under the current RMP.	Same impacts as Alternative C, with additional scenic protection within non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics (VRM I, closed to wood cutting, and closed to OHV travel).
Brown's Park	Long-term beneficial visual quality impacts by designating 18,490 acres as an ACEC to protect high-value scenic views, and from OHV use closed or limited to designated routes.  Those portions of the ACEC open to leasing with timing limitations or controlled surface use would allow for some landscape change that would have adverse effects on scenery but that would still meet VRM objectives.	Same Impacts as Proposed RMP, except 52,721 acres would be designated as an ACEC.	Long-term beneficial visual quality impacts by designating 18,474 acres as an ACEC to protect high-value scenic views, and from OHV use closed or limited to designated routes.  Those portions of the ACEC open to standard leasing and timing limitations or controlled surface use would allow for some landscape change that would have adverse effects on scenery but that would still meet VRM objectives.	Same Impacts as Alternative A.	Long-term beneficial visual quality impacts by designating 52,721 acres as an ACEC, but potential adverse impacts from areas potentially open to OHV use.  Minerals leasing impacts the same as Alternative B.	Same impacts as Alternative C, with additional scenic protection within non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics (VRM I, closed to wood cutting, and closed to OHV travel).  Outside of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics, minerals leasing impacts the same as Alternative B.

Table 4.19.2. Impacts of Special Designation Areas on Visual Resources <sup>1</sup>

Special Designation Areas	Proposed RMP	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D (No Action)	Alternative E
Coyote Basin-Snake John-Kennedy Wash ACEC	Potential long-term adverse visual quality impacts by not protecting the area as an ACEC.,	Long term, beneficial protection of scenic quality from designation of 87,743 acres to protect critical wildlife habitat. Long term, adverse surface disturbance impacts on 83,250 acres open to Standard leasing stipulations within the ACEC.	Long-term protection of visual quality by designating 47,659 acres as an ACEC. Long term, adverse surface disturbance impacts on 47,282 acres open to Standard leasing stipulations within the ACEC.	Long-term beneficial visual quality impacts by designating 124,161 acres as an ACEC. Long term, adverse surface disturbance impacts on 94,821 acres open to Standard leasing stipulations within the ACEC.	Unspecified management for this area	Same Impacts as Alternative C.
Four Mile Wash ACEC	Potentially long-term adverse visual quality impacts by not protecting the area as an ACEC.	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP	Long-term beneficial visual quality impacts by designating 50,280 acres as an ACEC to protect scenic values, with OHV use limited to designated routes and closed to oil and gas leasing.	Unspecified management for this area	Same Impacts as Alternative C, with additional scenic protection for areas that lie within non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics.
Lears Canyon	Long-term, beneficial visual quality impacts by designating 1,375 acres to protect relict vegetation	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP
Lower Green River Corridor and Expansion ACEC	Long-term, beneficial visual quality impacts by designating 8,470 acres of the Lower	Lower Green River Corridor impacts same as the Proposed RMP. Additional long term	Lower Green River Corridor impacts same as the Proposed RMP.	Impacts the same as Alternative A.	Long-term beneficial visual quality impacts by designating 8,470 acres as an ACEC,	Same Impacts as Alternative C.

**Table 4.19.2. Impacts of Special Designation Areas on Visual Resources <sup>1</sup>**

Special Designation Areas	Proposed RMP	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D (No Action)	Alternative E
	Green River Corridor as an ACEC, with NSO stipulations within line-of-sight or ½ mile from river centerline.	beneficial impacts from designating the 1,700-acre Lower Green River Expansion to protect scenic values.			managed as VRM Class II, limited or closed OHV use, and no allowed surface-disturbing activities.	
Main Canyon	Potentially long-term adverse visual quality impacts by not protecting the area as an ACEC.	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP	<p>Long-term beneficial visual quality impacts by designating 100,915 acres as an ACEC, with VRM I or II management, and closed to OHV travel or limited to designated routes.</p> <p>Those portions of the ACEC open to leasing subject to standard, timing limitations, and controlled surface use would allow surface disturbance that would alter the landform and vegetation and that would have a minimal effect on the visual quality of the canyon, while still meeting VRM objectives.</p>	Unspecified management under the current RMP.	Same Impacts as Alternative C, but with additional protection of scenic quality within non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics that lie within the proposed ACEC.

Table 4.19.2. Impacts of Special Designation Areas on Visual Resources <sup>1</sup>

Special Designation Areas	Proposed RMP	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D (No Action)	Alternative E
Middle Green River ACEC	Potentially long-term adverse visual quality impacts by not protecting the area as an ACEC.	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP.	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP.	Long-term beneficial visual quality impacts by designating 6,768 acres as an ACEC, with OHV use limited to designated routes.  Long term, adverse surface disturbance impacts to visual quality on 4,858 acres open to Standard leasing stipulations within the ACEC.	Unspecified management under the current RMP.	Same Impacts as Alternative C.
Nine Mile Canyon ACEC	Long-term beneficial visual quality impacts by designating 44,168 acres to enhance scenic vistas.  Long term, adverse surface disturbance impacts to visual quality on 26,736 acres open to Standard leasing stipulations within the ACEC.	Long-term beneficial visual quality impacts by designating 48,000 acres as an ACEC to enhance scenic values.  Long term, adverse surface disturbance impacts to visual quality on 27,109 acres open to Standard leasing stipulations within the ACEC.	Long-term protection of visual quality by designating 44,181 acres as an ACEC.  Long term, adverse surface disturbance impacts to visual quality on 15,274 acres open to Standard leasing stipulations within the ACEC, and 21,022 acres open to Timing and Controlled Surface Use leasing stipulations.	Long-term beneficial visual quality impacts by designating 81,168 acres as an ACEC with OHV use closed or limited to designated routes.  Long term, adverse surface disturbance impacts to visual quality on 49,182 acres open to Standard leasing stipulations within the ACEC, and 19,032 acres open to Timing and Controlled Surface Use leasing stipulations.	Same Impacts as Alternative B.	Same Impacts as Alternative C, but with additional beneficial impacts to those areas that lie within non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics.

Table 4.19.2. Impacts of Special Designation Areas on Visual Resources <sup>1</sup>

Special Designation Areas	Proposed RMP	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D (No Action)	Alternative E
Pariette Wetlands	Long-term beneficial visual quality impacts by designating 10,437 acres to protect wetlands, wildlife, and plant habitat.	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP.	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP.			
Red Creek Watershed	Long-term beneficial visual quality impacts by designating 24,475 acres as an ACEC to protect the Red Creek watershed.	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP.	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP.			
Red Mountain-Dry Fork Complex	Long-term protection of visual quality by designating 24,285 acres as an ACEC to protect watershed, vegetation, crucial habitat, and recreation.  Long term, adverse surface disturbance impacts to visual quality on 495 acres open to Standard leasing stipulations within the ACEC, and 21,994 acres open to Timing and Controlled Surface	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP.	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP.	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP.	Long-term beneficial visual quality impacts by maintaining 24,285 acres as an ACEC.  Long term, adverse surface disturbance impacts to visual quality on 19,955 acres open to Timing and Controlled Surface Use leasing stipulations within the ACEC.	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP.

**Table 4.19.2. Impacts of Special Designation Areas on Visual Resources <sup>1</sup>**

Special Designation Areas	Proposed RMP	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D (No Action)	Alternative E
	Use leasing stipulations.					
White River ACEC	Potentially long-term adverse visual quality impacts by not protecting the area as an ACEC.	Long term, beneficial impacts to visual quality from designation of 17,810 acres as an ACEC to protect scenic quality and riparian ecosystems.  Long term, adverse surface disturbance impacts to visual quality on 1,438 acres open to Standard leasing stipulations within the ACEC, and on 7,371 acres open to Timing and Controlled Surface Use stipulations.	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP.	Long-term beneficial visual quality impacts by designating 47,130 acres as an ACEC.  Long term, adverse surface disturbance impacts to visual quality on 27,087 acres open to Standard leasing stipulations within the ACEC, and on 6,683 acres open to Timing and Controlled Surface Use leasing stipulations.	Unspecified management under the current RMP.	Same Impacts as Alternative C.
<b>WSRs</b>						
White River segments	Long-term adverse visual quality impacts by not protecting the river segments as suitable for consideration as Wild and Scenic.	Long term protection of visual quality by classifying Segment A as Scenic.  Long term protection of visual quality by classifying Segment B as Scenic.  Adverse impacts to visual quality by not	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP.	Long term protection of visual quality by classifying all river segments as suitable for designation into the NWSRS (44 miles).	Long term protection of visual quality of all river segments until suitability findings are made.	Same Impacts as Alternative C, except that a portion of a stream segment would be managed as eligible, but not recommended as suitable, until a permitting process has been completed.

Table 4.19.2. Impacts of Special Designation Areas on Visual Resources <sup>1</sup>

Special Designation Areas	Proposed RMP	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D (No Action)	Alternative E
		identifying Segment C as suitable for designation.				
Lower Green River segment	Long term protection of visual quality by continuing to protect previously recommended segments.	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP.	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP.	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP.	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP.	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP.
Middle Green River segment	Long-term adverse visual quality impacts by not protecting the river segment as suitable for consideration as Wild and Scenic.	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP	Long-term protection of visual quality by recommending designation of a segment of the Middle Green River as suitable for consideration as Wild and Scenic (approximately 36 miles).	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP	Same Impacts as Alternative C.
Nine Mile Creek segments	Potential long-term adverse visual quality impacts by not protecting segments as suitable for consideration as Wild and Scenic.	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP	Long-term protection of visual quality by recommending designation of segments as suitable for consideration as Scenic and Recreational (2 segments of approximately 13 miles and 6 miles).	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP	Same Impacts as Alternative C.

**Table 4.19.2. Impacts of Special Designation Areas on Visual Resources <sup>1</sup>**

Special Designation Areas	Proposed RMP	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D (No Action)	Alternative E
Upper Green River segment	Long-term protection of visual quality by continuing to protect previously recommended segments as suitable for consideration as Wild and Scenic	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP
Evacuation Creek, Argyle Creek, and Bitter Creek segments	Potentially long-term adverse visual quality impacts by not protecting any of these creek segments as suitable for consideration as Wild and Scenic.	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP	Same Impacts as the Proposed RMP	Long-term protection of visual quality by recommending designation of segments along these creeks as suitable for consideration as Wild and Scenic. Recommending Evacuation Creek, Argyle Creek, and Bitter Creek as suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System would limit surface disturbance, providing long-term protection to visual quality.	Same as Proposed RMP for Argyle Creek. Impacts would be the same as Alternative C for Bitter Creek and Evacuation Creek because, though suitability findings would not be made, protection would be maintained for these river segments, which would also directly protect scenic quality.	Same Impacts as Alternative C.

<sup>1</sup>As noted in section 4.19.2.9, VRM acreages used in this analysis of impacts on visual resources include all lands within the VPA, not only BLM administered lands. This is because the VRM analysis includes foreground, middle ground, and background views that could encompass federal, state, and private property.

#### **4.19.2.11. IMPACTS OF VEGETATION DECISIONS ON VISUAL RESOURCES**

##### **4.19.2.11.1. PROPOSED RMP, AND ALTERNATIVES A, B, C, AND E**

The Proposed RMP, and Alternatives A, B, C, and E would allow vegetation treatment via prescribed fire on 156,425 acres per decade (see also Section 4.19.2.1, Impacts of Fire Management Decisions on Visual Resources). The short-term and long-term direct impacts of this vegetation treatment are described under Section 4.19.1, Impacts Common to All Alternatives. The effects of prescribed burning on visual quality would be adverse in the short term. Removing vegetation with fire and then seeding would alter the form, line, color, and texture of the existing landscape. Short-term, indirect impacts to these landscape elements would also result from the construction of fences to exclude livestock from the treated areas.

Long-term beneficial impacts to visual resources from prescribed fire would be produced by: 1) the reduction in the potential for vegetation and stand-altering wildland fires; 2) the re-creation of historic fire regimes; 3) increased biodiversity with a reduction in diseased, stressed, and infested trees; and 4) the creation of a visual mosaic of vegetation (added variety in the vegetative element of the landscape) that would tend to improve scenic quality.

Compared to Alternative D (No Action), the Proposed RMP and these action alternatives would be more beneficial because more area within the VPA would be treated to improve scenic quality in the long term.

##### **4.19.2.11.2. ALTERNATIVE D (NO ACTION)**

Alternative D (No Action) would allow vegetation treatment via prescribed fire on up to 27,950 acres in the Book Cliffs area and on 22,950 acres in the Diamond Mountain area. The impacts of vegetation treatment are described under Section 4.19.1, Impacts Common to All Alternatives.

In summary, the Proposed RMP and Alternatives A, B, C, and E would have the greatest short-term adverse impacts and the greatest long-term beneficial impacts to visual resources from more VPA acreage that would be affected by proposed vegetation treatments. Alternative D (No Action) would have the fewest adverse and long term beneficial impacts on visual resources because a smaller area would be affected by vegetation management.

#### **4.19.2.12. IMPACTS OF VISUAL DECISIONS ON VISUAL RESOURCES**

The proposed designation of VRM Class acreages for each alternative are tabulated below in Table 4.19.3. As discussed above in Section 4.19.1 Impacts Common to All Alternatives, VRM Class I- and VRM Class II- designated areas would receive the highest level of visual resource protection, with direct, short-term and long-term, beneficial protection and preservation-related impacts on visual quality. The designated VRM Class III and VRM Class IV areas would receive less visual resource protection, which would allow more surface-disturbing impacts than VRM Classes I and II.

Under the Proposed RMP, approximately 106,178 acres of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics would be managed under VRM Class II objectives in order to preserve their wilderness characteristics and values, which would have long term, preservation-related, beneficial impacts on scenic quality and visual resources.

**Table 4.19.3. VRM Class Acreages by Alternative**

VRM Class	Proposed RMP	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D (No Action)	Alternative E
VRM I and	57,776	63,136	52,764	145,781	53,086	334,516
VRM II	231,911	294,773	114,030	362,660	113,686	259,694
VRM III	786,612	716,186	199,179	580,846	199,192	535,586
VRM IV	643,641	645,845	1,353,967	630,653	1,353,976	590,144
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,719,940</b>	<b>1,719,940</b>	<b>1,719,940</b>	<b>1,719,940</b>	<b>1,719,940</b>	<b>1,719,940</b>
VRM I and II	289,687	357,909	166,794	508,441	166,772	594,210
VRM III and IV	1,430,253	1,362,031	1,553,146	1,211,499	1,553,168	1,125,730

Under Alternative E, approximately 277,596 acres of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics would be managed under VRM Class I objectives in order to preserve their wilderness characteristics and values (see Table 4.19.3). Based on these visual management objectives, Alternative E would provide the highest degree of protection to scenic quality under VRM I and II, followed by Alternative C, then Alternatives A and the Proposed RMP. Alternatives B and Alternative D (No Action) would provide the least protection to scenic quality under combined VRM I and II acreages.

#### 4.19.2.13. IMPACTS OF WOODLAND AND FOREST DECISIONS ON VISUAL RESOURCES

##### 4.19.2.13.1. PROPOSED RMP

The Proposed RMP would manage forests and woodlands to maintain and restore ecosystems to a condition in which biodiversity is preserved and occurrences of fire, insects, disease, and other disturbances do not exceed levels normally expected in healthy forests and woodlands. This alternative would maintain relict stands of vegetation for biological and genetic diversity. Forests and woodlands would be managed under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield without permanent impairment of the productivity of the land and the quality of the environment; and allow use of forest, woodland products, biomass, and certain vegetation products in areas specified for this use to meet RMP goals. The Proposed RMP would implement the National Healthy Forest Initiative and the National Fire Plan by conducting treatments to reduce fuel loadings, fire severity, and restoring historical disturbance regimes. 546,152 acres of forest and woodlands would be open to treatments or harvesting, including 13,606 acres within WSAs and 106,178 acres of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics that would not have woodland

product harvest or salvage (and directly affecting 131,809 acres of woodlands within the non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics).

The short-term, direct impacts of these actions on visual quality would be both adverse and beneficial: visual quality would be degraded by line, color, and texture contrasts created from woodland treatments, harvesting and salvage, and OHV surface disturbances in areas visible to the public where these vehicles are used to harvest and salvage woodland products. Beneficial visual quality impacts would result from the scenic variety created by the other management actions. Indirect, short-term and long-term, adverse, visual quality impacts would be produced by fences or barriers used to exclude livestock from the treated areas.

In the long-term, the woodland and forest management decisions would have beneficial impacts on visual resources by: 1) reducing the potential risk (by reducing woodland fuel loads) of stand-altering wildland fires that would adversely affect visual quality; and 2) improving visual quality through the creation of scenic variety found in the mosaic of vegetation types produced by vegetation treatments.

Compared to Alternative D (No Action), the Proposed RMP would have the same types of impacts on visual resources as Alternative D (No Action), but to a greater degree, as more acres of woodlands (257,852 more acres than under Alternative D, No Action) would be available for treatments or harvesting.

#### **4.19.2.13.2. ALTERNATIVE A**

The impacts of woodland harvesting and treatments on visual resources under this alternative would be the same as discussed under the Proposed RMP because the management decisions would be the same. However, under this alternative up to 552,152 acres would have treatments or be available for harvesting, including 13,606 acres within WSAs as discussed above. When compared to Alternative D (No Action), this alternative would have the same type and magnitude of impacts as discussed for the Proposed RMP because the acreages of woodlands available for harvesting and/or treatments are similar.

#### **4.19.2.13.3. ALTERNATIVE B**

Alternative B would allow the harvesting and salvage of woodland and forest products to achieve the greatest output of woodland and forest products, after vegetation treatments designed to achieve desired future conditions. Up to 554,108 acres would have fire treatments or be harvested. This would have direct, short-term and long-term, adverse impacts on visual quality by creating distinct line, color, and texture contrasts from woodland treatments, harvesting and salvage, and OHV surface disturbances in areas visible to the public. Indirect, short-term, adverse impacts would also be created by soil erosion in the disturbed areas, which would further contribute to the visual contrasts already described.

**4.19.2.13.4. ALTERNATIVE C**

Alternative C would have the same impacts on visual resources as the Proposed RMP and Alternative A, as 552,152 acres of woodlands would be available for treatments or harvesting.

**4.19.2.13.5. ALTERNATIVE D (NO ACTION)**

Alternative D (No Action) does not specify woodland and forest management decisions, except that up to 88,200 acres of forest and 200,100 acres of woodlands would have treatments or be harvested. The types of impacts of these management decisions on visual resources would be the same as discussed under the Proposed RMP, but to a lesser degree, as fewer woodland acres would be impacted by surface disturbances, exclusion fences, and a subsequently improved visual mosaic from vegetation re-growth.

**4.19.2.13.6. ALTERNATIVE E**

Under Alternative E, impacts to visual resources from forest and woodland treatment would be similar to impacts discussed under the Proposed RMP alternative. Approximately 421,133 acres within the VPA would have treatments or be available for harvesting under this alternative.

Woodland salvage and/or harvesting would be prohibited on 277,596 acres of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics, resulting in the reduction in the long-term benefits to woodlands because this form of fuel reduction and the accompanying reduction in wildland fire risks would not be conducted.

The short-term, direct impacts of these actions on visual quality would be both adverse and beneficial, as discussed above under the Proposed RMP.

In summary, woodland management under the Proposed RMP and Alternatives A, C and E would have the greatest benefit to visual resources from management actions to improve woodland stands (and indirectly improving visual quality). Alternative B would have adverse impacts on visual quality by allowing public harvesting for maximum output of woodland and forest products. Alternative D (No Action) would provide the least protection of visual quality because woodland management decisions under it are unspecified.

**4.19.2.14. SUMMARY OF IMPACTS FROM ALTERNATIVES****4.19.2.14.1. PROPOSED RMP**

The Proposed RMP would provide high scenic quality protection (though less than Alternatives E, C, and A) by:

- Proposing 133,560 acres for protection as SRMAs
- Recommending 106,178 acres of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics for withdrawal from mineral entry and establishing OHV designated route only use for mechanized travel within these lands

- Designating 289, 687 acres of VRM I and II for protection

#### **4.19.2.14.2. ALTERNATIVE A**

Alternative A would provide a high degree of scenic quality protection (but less than Alternative E and C) by:

- Proposing 499,620 acres for protection as SRMAs
- Designating 357,909 acres for visual protection under VRM Classes I and II

#### **4.19.2.14.3. ALTERNATIVE B**

Alternative B provides less scenic quality protection than the Proposed RMP, or Alternatives A, C, and E by:

- Opening the most area for minerals leasing and mining
- Protecting the least area within the VPA under VRM Class I and II designation (166,794) of all the action alternatives
- Protecting visual resources with the least area designated as SRMAs (86,454 acres), the same as Alternative D (No Action).

#### **4.19.2.14.4. ALTERNATIVE C**

Alternative C would provide a very high level of protection for scenic quality (but less than Alternative E) by:

- Opening the least area for minerals leasing and mining of all action alternatives (except for Alternative E)
- Protecting the most area under VRM Class I and II designation (508,441 acres), except for Alternative E
- Recommending the most acreage for protection of visual resources within SRMAs (522,604, 522,604, the same as Alternative E)

#### **4.19.2.14.5. ALTERNATIVE D (NO ACTION)**

This alternative provides the lowest level of protection for scenic quality by:

- Not establishing cultural site buffer zones
- Proposing the fewest acres and least scenic quality protection within SRMAs (86,454 acres), the same as Alternative B)
- Managing the least number of acres for protection under VRM Class I and II designation (166,772 acres)

**4.19.2.14.6. ALTERNATIVE E**

Alternative E would provide the highest level of protection for scenic quality (comparable to Alternative C) by:

- Establishing protection for areas of concentrated cultural resources
- Authorizing the fewest number of acres to be leased for mineral development (1,782,199 acres)
- Recommending 277,596 acres of non-WSA lands with wilderness characteristics for visual resource protection under VRM Class I designation and closed to OHV travel
- Proposing the largest acreages for designation under VRM Class I and II (594,210 acres)
- Proposing the most area within the VPA for protection under SRMAs (522,604 acres, the same as Alternative C)

**4.19.3. MITIGATION MEASURES**

All surface-disturbing activities, regardless of alternative or management action, would be subject to the VRM Class objectives of the area within which the activity takes place. The visual resource contrast rating system is used as a guide to analyze the potential site-specific impacts of surface disturbance as well as facility design and placement. Surface-disturbing activities and facilities would then be designed to mitigate their visual impacts and conform to the area's assigned VRM Class objective. Mitigation would include camouflage coloring, facility design, placement, and/or topographic screening.

**4.19.4. UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS**

Minerals exploration and development, trail construction, and woodland and vegetation treatments for fire management would cause short-term and long-term, unavoidable adverse impacts on visual quality that cannot be completely mitigated by camouflage coloring, facility design, placement, and/or topographic screening.

**4.19.5. SHORT-TERM USE VERSUS LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY**

The short-term construction of exploratory well pads and access roads would produce a long-term loss of scenic quality, particularly in areas where reclamation is problematic and/or unsuccessful. Similarly, short-term OHV trail use, such as woodcutting trails, seismic exploration, and unmanaged or unlimited recreational OHV use, would cause long-term losses in scenic quality if it occurs in highly visible or visually sensitive areas. The short-term adverse impacts of prescribed fire and other vegetation treatments would have long-term beneficial impacts on visual quality by improving the form, color, and line of vegetation, improving the vegetation mosaic, and reducing the potential for visual quality degradation from wildland fire.

#### **4.19.6. IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE IMPACTS**

Some cultural resources, such as petroglyphs, pictographs, and prehistoric and historically important structures, are considered to have a visual resource/scenic quality component. Projects or activities that cause damage to or loss of these resources would have irreversible impacts on the resource. Irretrievable visual impacts would occur to these sites if surface disturbances occurred or structures were built near cultural sites such that there was loss of cultural context or setting.

Irretrievable impacts to visual resources would also result from: 1) surface disturbance caused by construction during the life of a project; and 2) fire management (until vegetation re-growth).