

The Human Habitat

Visual Resource Management

Use of the Public Land

- Oil and Gas
- Coal
- Metals/Minerals
- Uranium
- Wind
- Geothermal
- Energy transmission
- Aggregate
- Communication systems

2004 - 119 percent growth rate in the West.

56 million people live within 30 minutes of BLM administered lands



Use of the Public Land

Level of activity across the BLM landscape (256 Million acres)

Oil Shale Tar Sands
(10 million acres)

Wind Energy
(20 million acres)

Solar Energy
(119 million acres)

Geothermal
(143 million acres)

Energy Corridors
(3,500 Ft. corridors)

Oil and Gas



Visual Resource Management



A collaborative planning and design tool for visually integrating proposed activities into the natural landscape setting

Clarifications

- Visual Inventory Classes & VRM Management Classes are NOT the same thing
- VRM is/does NOT
 - discretionary, is not a “soft” decision
 - subjective,
 - prohibit surface development in VRM Class II
- VRM applies to existing valid mineral rights
- VRM Management Class IV does NOT mean the area has low visual value

Legal Authority for Managing Scenery

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) 1969

- Assure aesthetically pleasing surroundings
- Require agencies use a system based on environmental design arts for planning and mitigation

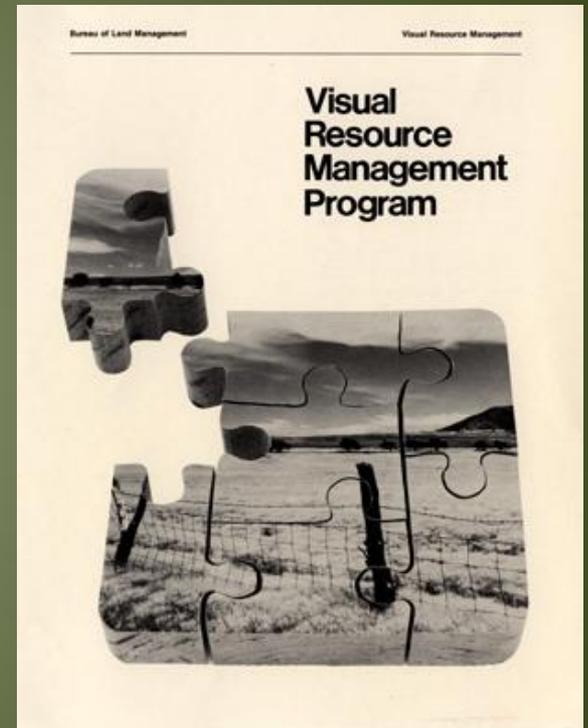
The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) 1976

- Protect scenic values
- Maintain an inventory of scenic values
- Minimize damage to scenic values

BLM Policy for Scenery

BLM Policy: Manual Section 8400: Visual Resource Management (1984)

The inventory and planning actions taken to identify visual values and to establish objectives for managing those values; and the management actions taken to achieve the visual management objectives.



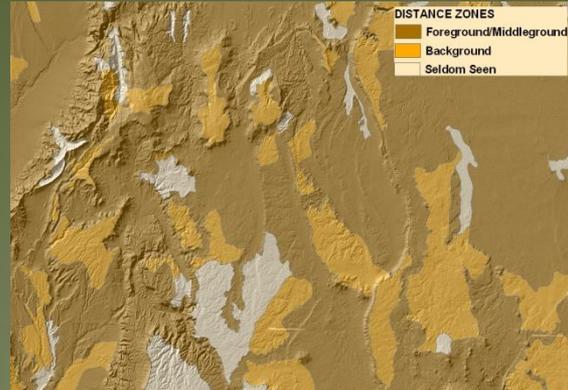
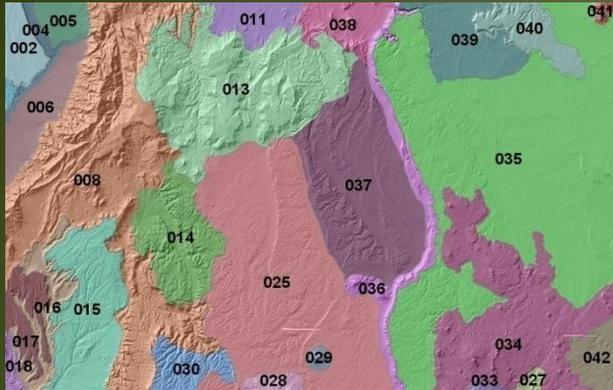
Each BLM program has responsibility role with VRM

Principle Components of VRM System

- 1 • Inventory Scenic Values (Classes) - Handbook H-8410-1
 - Scenic Quality, Sensitivity Level, Distance Zones
 - (Required for every acre of BLM land)
- 2 • Establish Management Objectives (Classes) - Land Use Planning level
 - (Required for every acre of BLM land)
 - Part of land use decisions that considers visual values and land uses
- 3 • Design/ Evaluate activities to meet objectives (Project level)
 - Contrast Rating Form – Handbook H-8431-1



Visual Resource Inventory Classifications



- VRI Class 1
- VRI Class 2
- VRI Class 3
- VRI Class 4

Visual Sensitivity Levels

		High			Medium			Low
Special Areas		I	I	I	I	I	I	I
	Scenic Quality	A	II	II	II	II	II	II
B		II	III	III*	III	IV	IV	IV
C		III	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV	IV
		f/m	b	s/s	f/m	b	s/s	s/s
		DISTANCE ZONES						

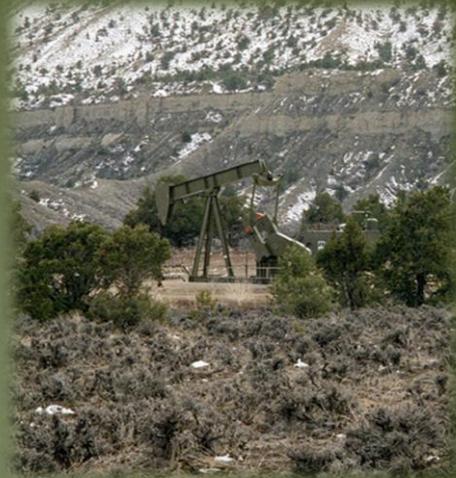
Visual Resource Management Classifications

VRM Class 1 - Preservation/very low level change/ not detectable

VRM Class 2 - Retention/low level of change/does not draw attention

VRM Class 3 - Modification/moderate level of change/ may attract attention, but not dominate the view

VRM Class 4 – Major modification/major focus of attention/may dominate the view



Change should repeat the basic elements found in the natural landscape form, line, color, & texture

Land Use Planning Handbook

Appendix C

Land Use Plan Decisions.

Manage visual resource values in accordance with visual resource management (VRM) objectives (management classes). **Designate VRM management classes for all areas of BLM land, based on an inventory of visual resources and management considerations for other land uses.** VRM management classes may differ from VRM inventory classes, based on management priorities for land uses (see BLM Handbook H-8410-1 for a description of VRM classes).

Land Use Planning Handbook Appendix C

Implementation Decisions:

Manage resource uses and **management activities consistent with the VRM objectives** established in the land use plan. **Design all BLM resource uses, management activities, and other implementation decisions to meet VRM objectives established in the land use plan.** Utilize visual resource design techniques and best management practices to mitigate the potential for short- and long-term impacts. **Contrast ratings are required** for all major projects proposed on public lands that fall within VRM Class I, II, and III areas which have high sensitivity levels (see Handbook H-8341-1 for contrast-rating procedures).

Land Use Planning Handbook

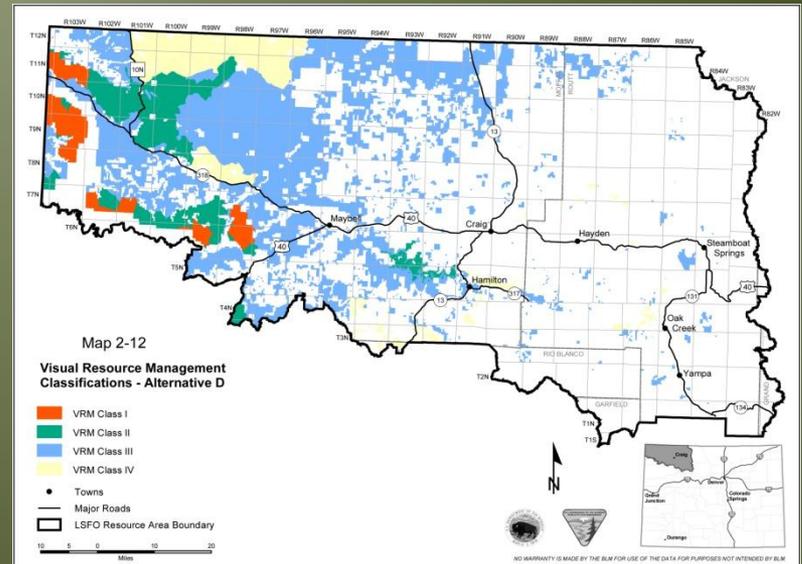
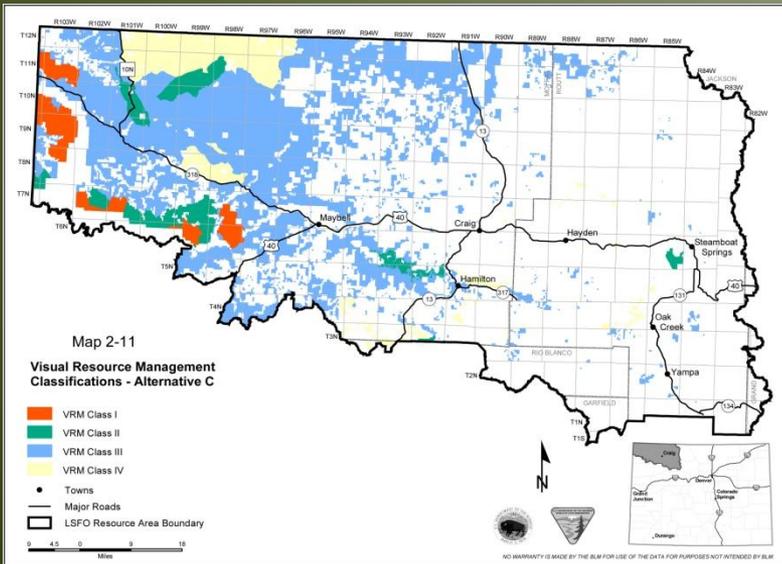
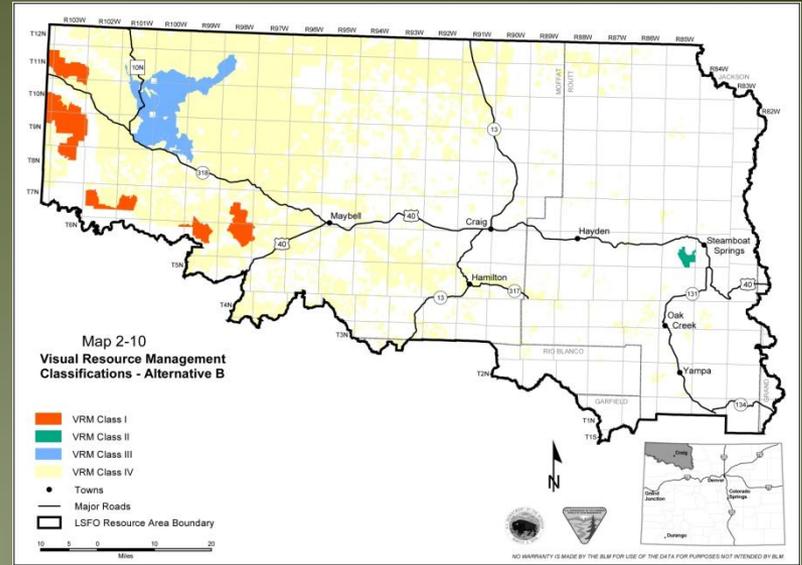
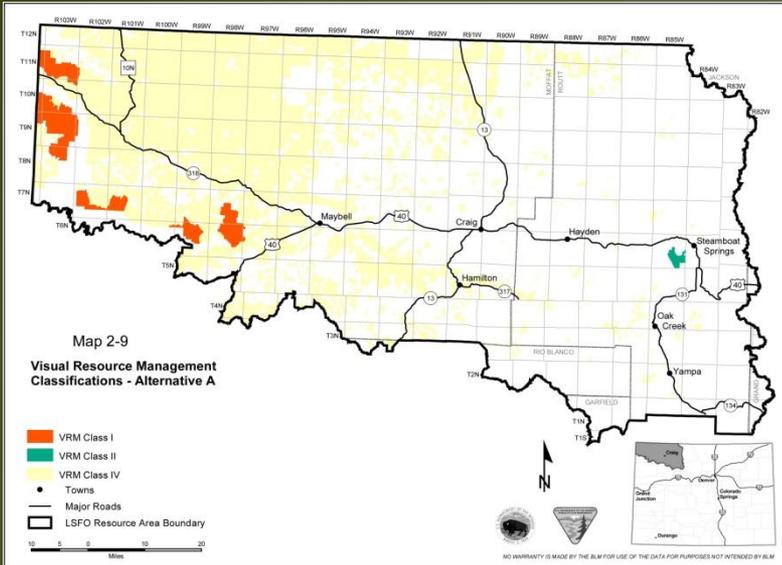
Appendix C

Implications on:

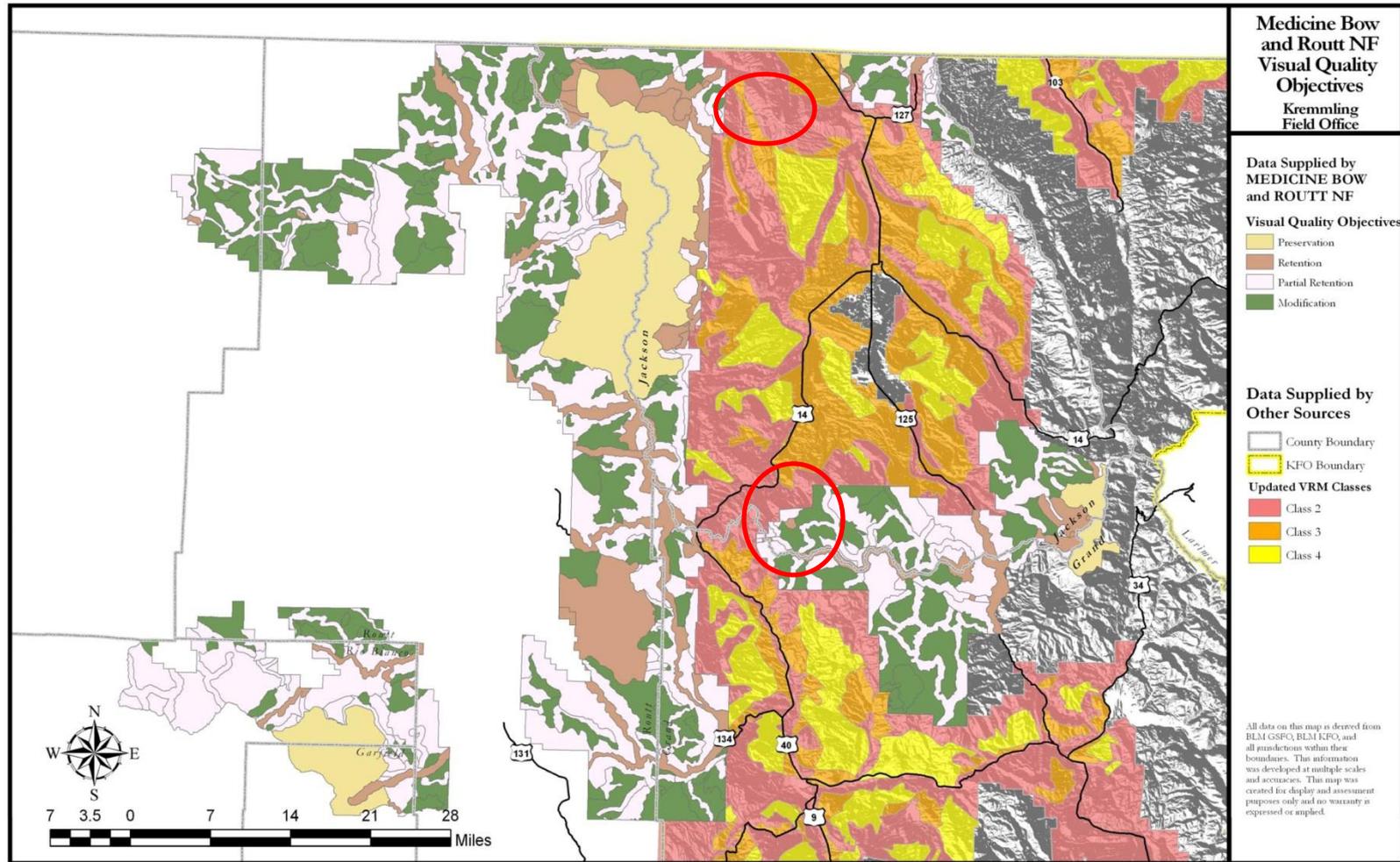
- Recreational settings and landscape character
- Cultural resources – historic settings (trails and sites), Native American religious sites
- Local community socio-economic values



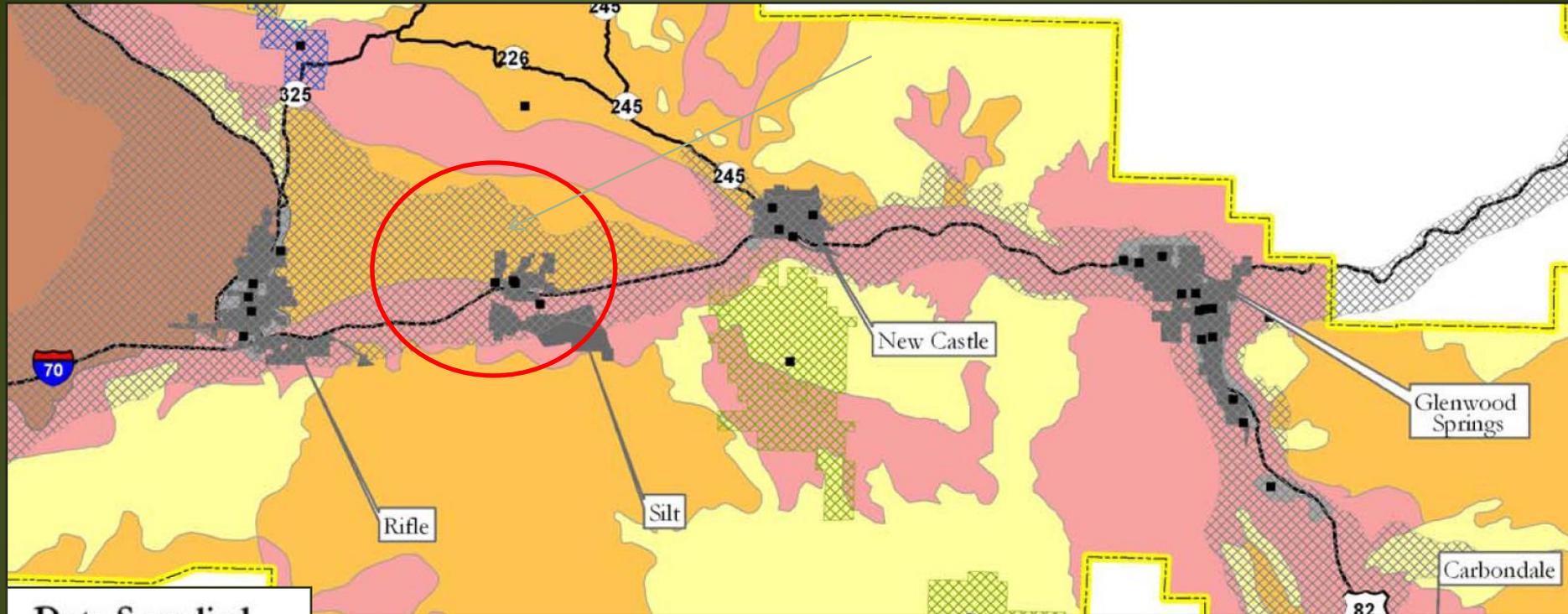
Range of Alternatives



Sensitivities of Adjacent Jurisdictions



Sensitivities of Adjacent Jurisdictions



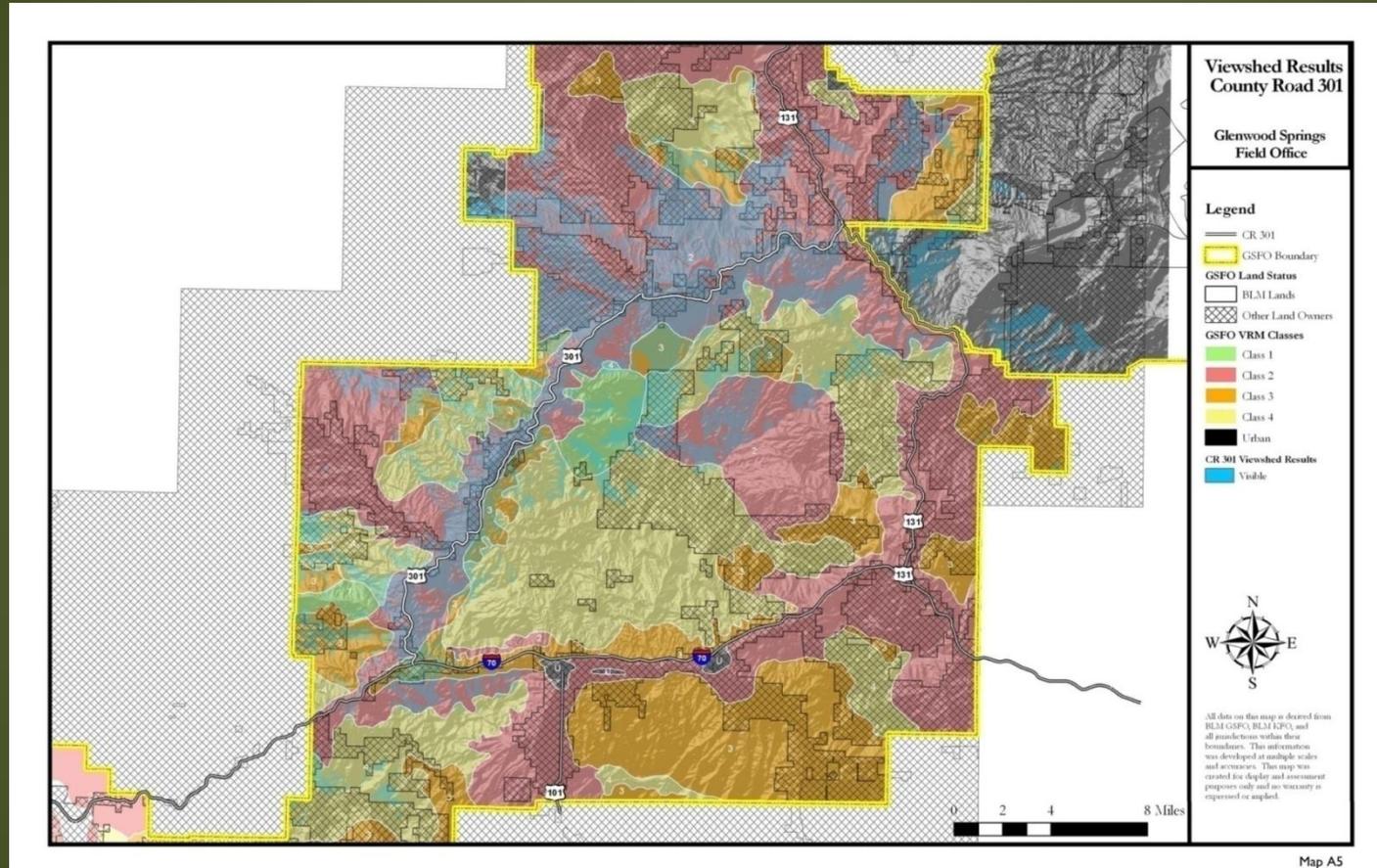
Data Supplied by GARFIELD COUNTY

- City
- VisualCorridor
- State Recreation Areas
- State Wildlife Areas
- County
- Parks

Updated VRM Classes

- Class 1
- Class 2
- Class 3
- Class 4

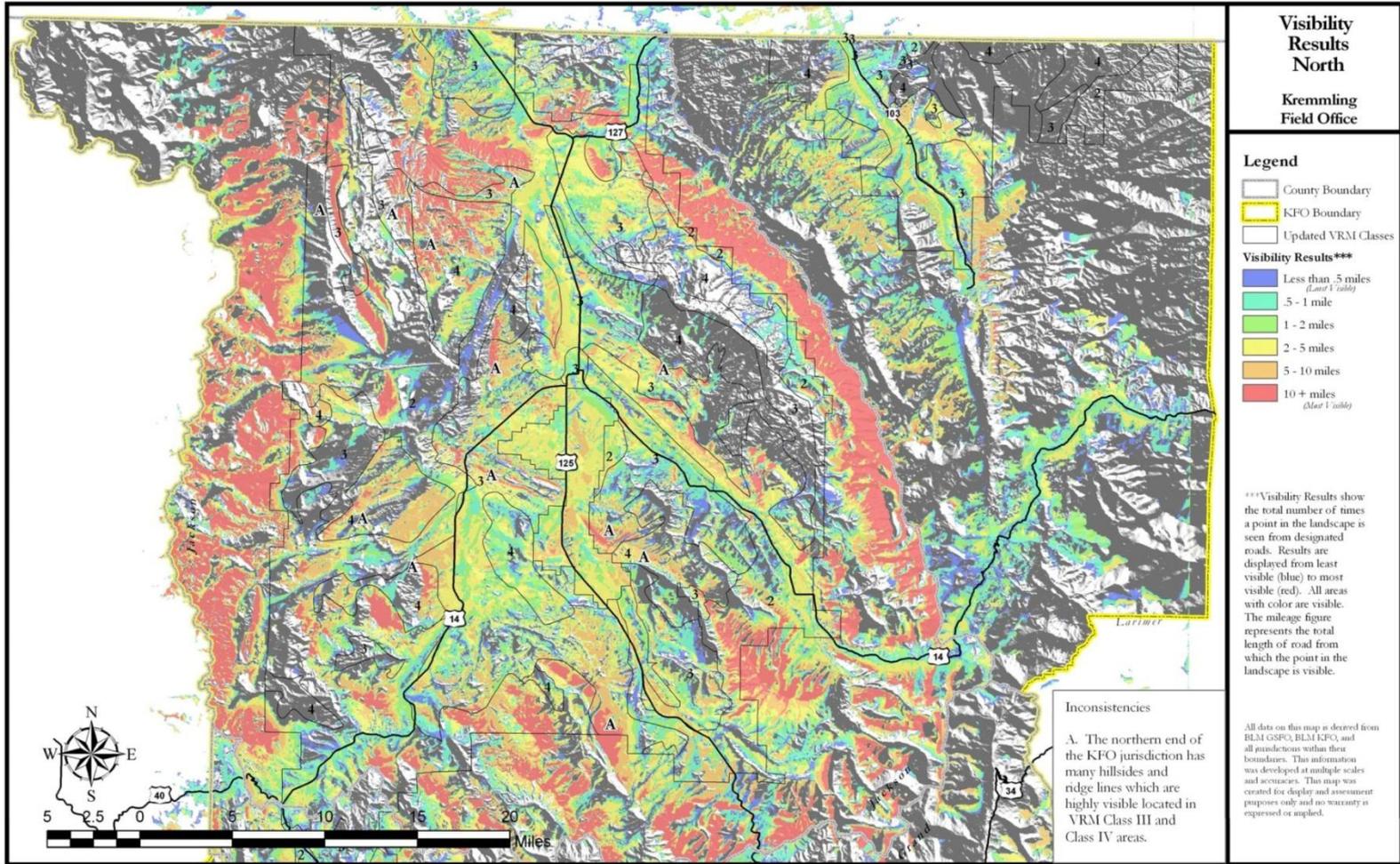
Understanding the compatibility between Visual Values and Resource Activities



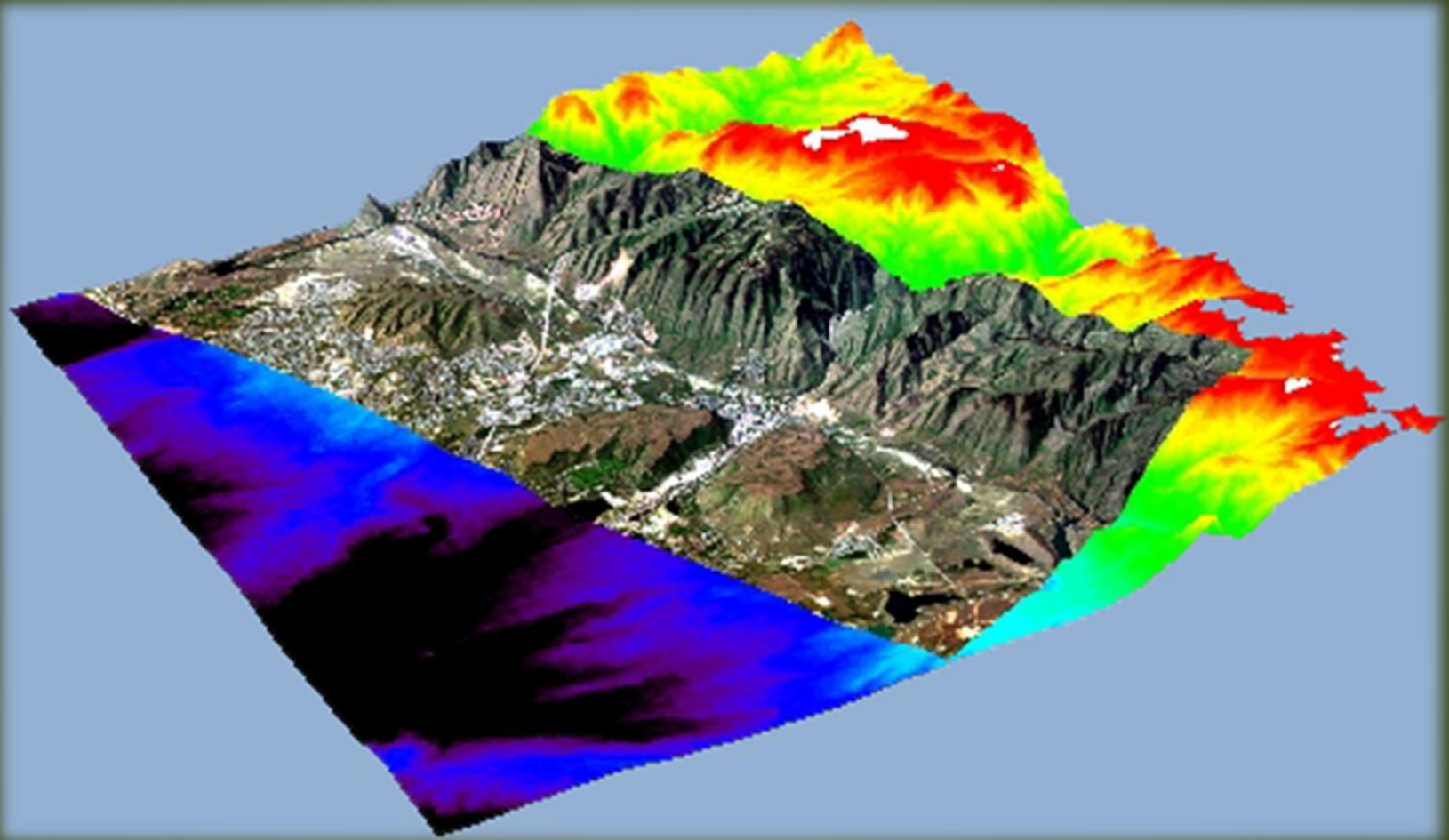
Viewshed Analysis

Wind and Solar (power tower) is beginning to redefine the extent of the viewshed

Understanding the compatibility between Visual Values and Resource Activities



Understanding the compatibility between Visual Values and Resource Activities



Understanding the compatibility between Visual Values and Resource Activities



What about Plan Amendments?

What if there is a scenario that you didn't foresee?

Three Options

1. Deny
2. Mitigate
3. Amend the Plan



Minimizing Visual Contrast



without VRM



with VRM

Minimizing Visual Contrast



without VRM



with VRM

Minimizing Visual Contrast



without VRM



with VRM

Minimizing Visual Contrast



without VRM



with VRM

Minimizing Visual Contrast



without VRM



with VRM

Checklist Items - IM 2008-090

1. Updated resource management inventory?
2. Visual Resource Inventory Class Map in Chapter 3?
3. Inventory in GIS format and 3-terrain?
4. Current RMP VRM management classes is the No Action Alternative?
5. Full range of VRM alternatives?
6. VRM class designations reflect resource allocation and desirable outcome decisions?
7. Is VRM carried forward into the Record of Decision?

Considerations

- Update the Visual Resource Inventory
- VR Inventory to be reflected in Affected Environment with map
- Understand the difference between VRI classes and VRM classes
- Make sure management classes reflect decisions made in the existing RMP.
- When a plan amendment is necessary for an unforeseen land use and VRM and management classes not assigned.
- Intrusion into a VRM Class objective requires a plan amendment
- Need to consider the full range of alternatives in RMP
- ROD - mix elements from within the alternatives – the analysis of impact will be present
- Plan protests – VRI and compatibility with land uses

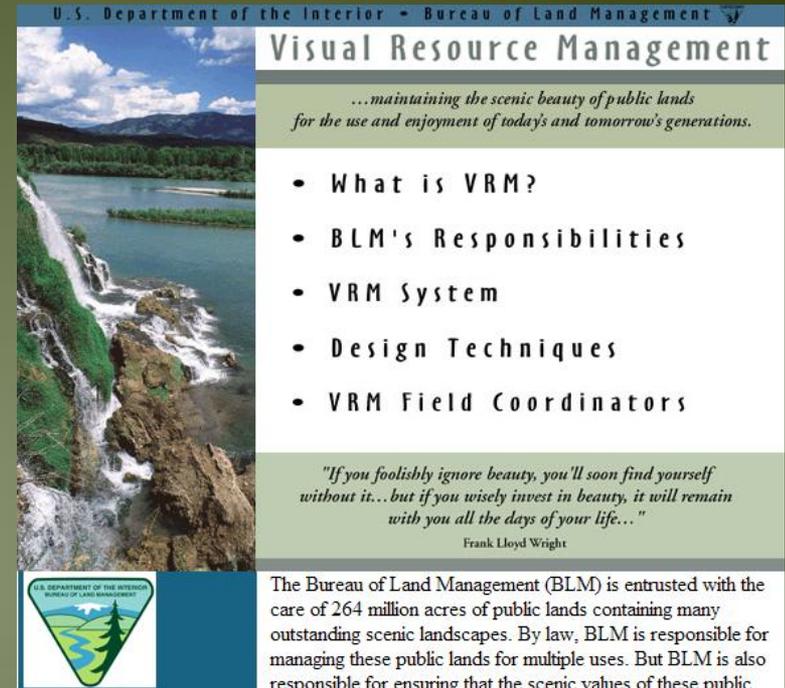
VRM Activities

1. VRM Clarification IM
2. Tech Note 407 Update
3. Visual Risk Assessment mapping – DOE grant application
4. VRM Manuals and Handbooks
5. Research on affect of distance on wind turbine visibility
6. Turbine color treatment research
7. Camouflage technology
8. Software development for contrast rating
9. Oil and gas cumulative effects thresholds
10. Wyoming Reclamation Policy
11. VRM Training program expansion – 2 day short course
12. National Scenic & Historic Trails Settings Management Handbook

Online Information Resources:

Other information resources:

- BLM VRM - www.blm.gov/nstc/VRM/
- BLM National Training Center
<http://www.ntc.blm.gov/krc/>
- BLM Fluid Minerals - www.blm.gov/
- Scenic America – www.scenic.org
- CALP – Univ. of British Columbia - www.calp.forestry.ubc.ca/
- Syracuse University of New York - www.esf.edu/es/via/
- BC Ministry of Forest and Range -
www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/values/visual/index.htm#staff



U.S. Department of the Interior • Bureau of Land Management

Visual Resource Management

...maintaining the scenic beauty of public lands for the use and enjoyment of today's and tomorrow's generations.

- What is VRM?
- BLM's Responsibilities
- VRM System
- Design Techniques
- VRM Field Coordinators

"If you foolishly ignore beauty, you'll soon find yourself without it... but if you wisely invest in beauty, it will remain with you all the days of your life..."
Frank Lloyd Wright

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is entrusted with the care of 264 million acres of public lands containing many outstanding scenic landscapes. By law, BLM is responsible for managing these public lands for multiple uses. But BLM is also responsible for ensuring that the scenic values of these public

