

**APPENDIX C**  
**VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT EVALUATION**

# APPENDIX C. VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT EVALUATION

The Visual Resource Management (VRM) evaluation was based on techniques used by the BLM (1980). It is an analytical process that identifies, sets, and meets objectives for the maintenance of scenic values and visual quality, and is based on research designed to objectively assess aesthetic qualities of the landscape. The technique is used in various situations, including environmental assessments.

The VRM classification ratings range from I to V as follows:

**Class I** - Natural ecologic changes and very limited management activity is allowed. Any contracts (activity) within this class must not attract attention.

**Class II** - Changes in any of the basic elements (form, line, color, texture) caused by an activity should not be evident in the landscape.

**Class III** - Contrasts to the basic elements caused by an activity are evident but should remain subordinate to the existing landscape.

**Class IV** - Activity attracts attention and is a dominant feature of the landscape in terms of scale.

**Class V** - This classification is applied to areas where the natural character of the landscape has been disturbed to a point where rehabilitation is needed to bring it up to the level of one of the other four classifications.

The inventory/evaluation process consists of three steps: 1) assessment of the landscape's scenic quality; 2) estimating the sensitivity of the people to change; and 3) determining the viewing distance. Scenic quality is evaluated by giving a numerical rating to each of seven factors, with higher ratings indicating higher quality visual resources (Table C-1). A summation of the seven numerical ratings determines scenic quality. In the case of the Rocky Butte Mine area, the total score of 6 places it in the Class C scenic quality category, which means it is an area with features common to the physiographic region.

Sensitivity levels are determined by combining two factors--user attitude and use volume. User attitude reflects the concerns the public expresses about proposed changes in scenic quality. Use volume reflects the frequency of travel through the area. For the proposed Rocky Butte Mine area, user attitude was rated LOW and use volume HIGH (Table C-2), resulting in an overall value of MEDIUM.

The viewing distance is divided into foreground-middleground (zero to five miles), background (five to 15 miles), and seldom seen (more than 15 miles or infrequently observed). For the Rocky Butte area the foreground/middleground was most involved.

By combining the sensitivity level (MODERATE), the scenic quality (C), and the viewing distance (foreground/middleground), the WRB area is classified as Management Class IV (BLM, 1980:24).

## Literature Cited

United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management. 1980. Visual resource management program. U.S. Govt. Print. Off., Washington, D.C. 39 p.

## APPENDIX C. VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT EVALUATION

Table C-1. Scenic Quality Inventory/Evaluation Ratings and Scores for the Proposed Rocky Butte Mine Area, Campbell County, Wyoming

	Factor						
	Landform	Vegetation	Water	Color	Adjacent Scenery	Scarcity	Cultural Modification
Possible Scores*	1,3,5	1,3,5	0,3,5	1,3,5	0,3,5	1,2,6	-4,0,2
Rocky Butte Score	3	1	0	1	0	1	0

\* Higher scores indicate better scenic values.

Table C-2. Sensitivity Level Ratings and Scores for Proposed West Rocky Butte Mine Area, Campbell County, Wyoming

	Factor	
	User Attitude	Use Volume
Possible Scores	Low, Medium, High	Low, Medium, High
Rocky Butte Score	Low	High