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BLM CARSON CITY DISTRICT RMP PLANNING FACT SHEET *Visual Resource Management*

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The BLM Carson City District (CCD) is developing the Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Carson City District planning area. The Carson City RMP will provide detailed information about the current state of resources on public lands within the planning area, and set forth a plan of action for managing those resources for the next twenty or so years under the BLM's multiple use mandate.

WHAT IS VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT?

The BLM's *visual resource management* (VRM) process provides a method to inventory and analyze the scenic value of public lands in order to assist the BLM in determining appropriate levels of land management. The VRM system helps to ensure that permitted activities or development taking place today will not degrade the visual qualities associated with BLM landscapes, thereby protecting those visual resources for the future.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

During the Carson City RMP revision, all public land within the planning area will be evaluated by collecting data for three key components; scenic quality, viewer sensitivity levels, and visual distances from areas or routes of travel. This data is then entered into a matrix and analyzed to create four types of inventory units or Visual Resource Inventory Classes. These units are then mapped out so planners can visualize how the units fall within the landscape. With this data, the process then moves into the management objective phase.



VRM CLASS DEFINITIONS

VRM Class I: Assigned to all special areas where the current management situation requires maintaining a natural environment essentially unaltered by man, such as Wilderness Areas or Wilderness Study Areas.

VRM Class II: Highest visual value assigned through the inventory process and based on the combination of Scenic Quality, Visual Sensitivity Levels, and Distance Zones.

VRM Class III: Moderate visual value based on the combination of Scenic Quality, Visual Sensitivity Levels, and Distance Zones.

VRM Class IV: Low visual value based on the combination of Scenic Quality, Visual Sensitivity Levels, and Distance Zones. The VRM is composed of three criteria that are considered together in a map overlay method to assign a Visual Resource Inventory Class (Class I are most highly valued visual landscapes while Class IV are the least.)

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MANAGEMENT APPROACH

During the management evaluation, impacts to visual values are analyzed under each alternative in order to determine the most appropriate VRM Class designation that factors in protection of visual values, resource management priorities and desired outcomes. Visual values that were established in the VRI process are weighed along with other resource considerations including but not limited to, valid existing rights and reasonable foreseeable development for minerals, geothermal, recreation, ROW, travel management and communication to establish the visual management classes.

DEMANDS ON PUBLIC LANDS

With increased demand for use of public lands for recreation, tourism, renewable energy, and development, preservation of scenic values and visual open space have received increased attention from the public and federal land management agencies. Preservation of sensitive viewsheds will continue to compete with other land use allocations and impacts, including energy development, mining, infrastructure needs, recreation, and various other surface activities.

All resource management proposals will be evaluated in an effort to minimize conflicting management objectives, including VRM.

The BLM wants your input. . .

Do you have a favorite area where you think the scenic values should be protected ?

How should the BLM manage sensitive viewshed corridors such as Hwy 50 , Hwy 95, or Hwy 395 ?

What are the current/potential conflicts with managing VRM values and how can they be mitigated?

VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CLASSES

Class I: Preserve existing character of landscape; level of change to characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.

Class II: Retain existing character of landscape; level of change to characteristic landscape should be low.

Class III: Partially retain existing character of landscape; level of change to characteristic landscape should be moderate.

Class IV: Provide for management activities which require major modification of existing character of landscape. Level of change to characteristic landscape can be high.

For example, when land use is not discretionary, such as in areas with valid existing rights, the use must be allowed, but its effect on visual quality can be minimized through project design standards or paint schemes.

Final VRM class boundaries and management objectives designated in the land use plan will result from and reflect resource allocation decisions made in the RMP process.

CCD Planning Webpage:
http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/carson_city_field.html

Comments can also be mailed to:

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