

Visual Resource Management and the RMP Planning Process

**San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area
Resource Management Plan
Educational Forums: Visual Resources**

August 2013

What is Scenery?

- Scenery is a combination of features that give identity to a place
 - Physical
 - Biologic
 - Cultural



Finite Resource



Visual Resource Management (VRM)

- **Objective:** to manage public lands in a manner which will protect the quality of the scenic (visual) values of these lands
- **Why manage visual resources?**
 - BLM manages lands with inherent scenic value
 - Multiple uses have potential to create scenic impacts
 - Importance of recreation in tourism and rural economics





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VRM is BLM's System to:

- Identify and establish visual/scenic values
- Provide a way to look at and manage the landscape setting





Authority

- Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, 43 U.S.C. 1701 et. seq.
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 43 U.S.C. 4321 et. seq.

Policies/Guidance

- BLM VRM Manuals 8400, 8410, and 8431
- BLM Resource/Supplemental Program Manuals 1616, 1620, and 1621
- VRM Policy Restatement Information Bulletins Nos. 98-135 and 98-164

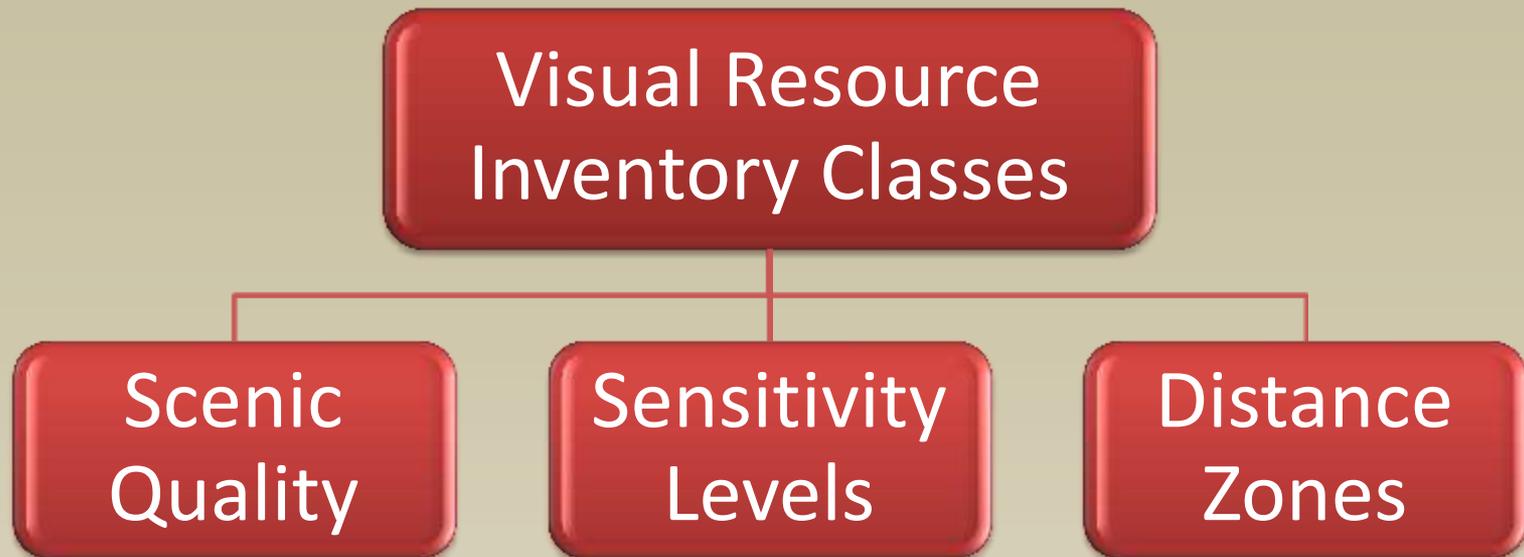
Elements of BLM's VRM System

- Inventory scenic values
 - Visual Resource Inventory (VRI) Classes
- Establish management objectives
 - VRM Classes
- Evaluate/design activities to meet management objectives
 - Contrast rating



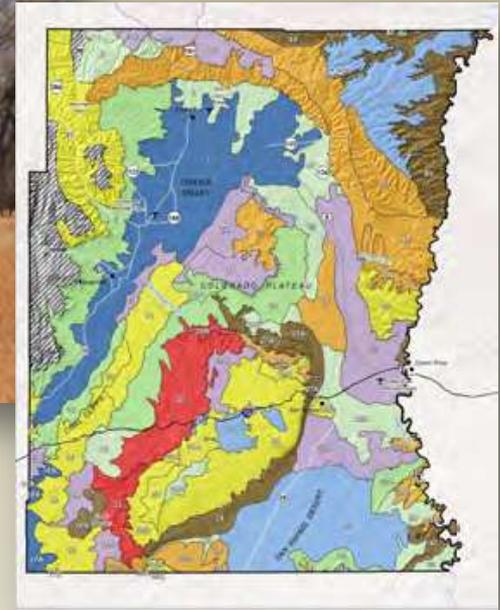
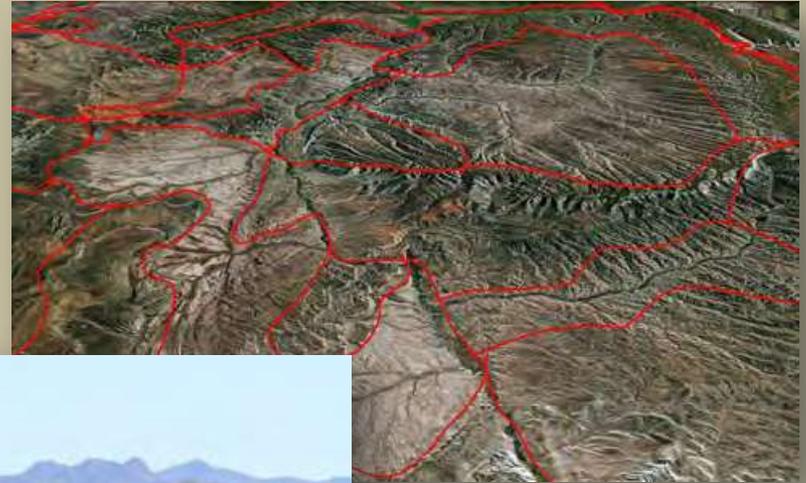
Visual Resource Inventory (VRI)

- Visual inventory classes represent the relative value of the visual resources



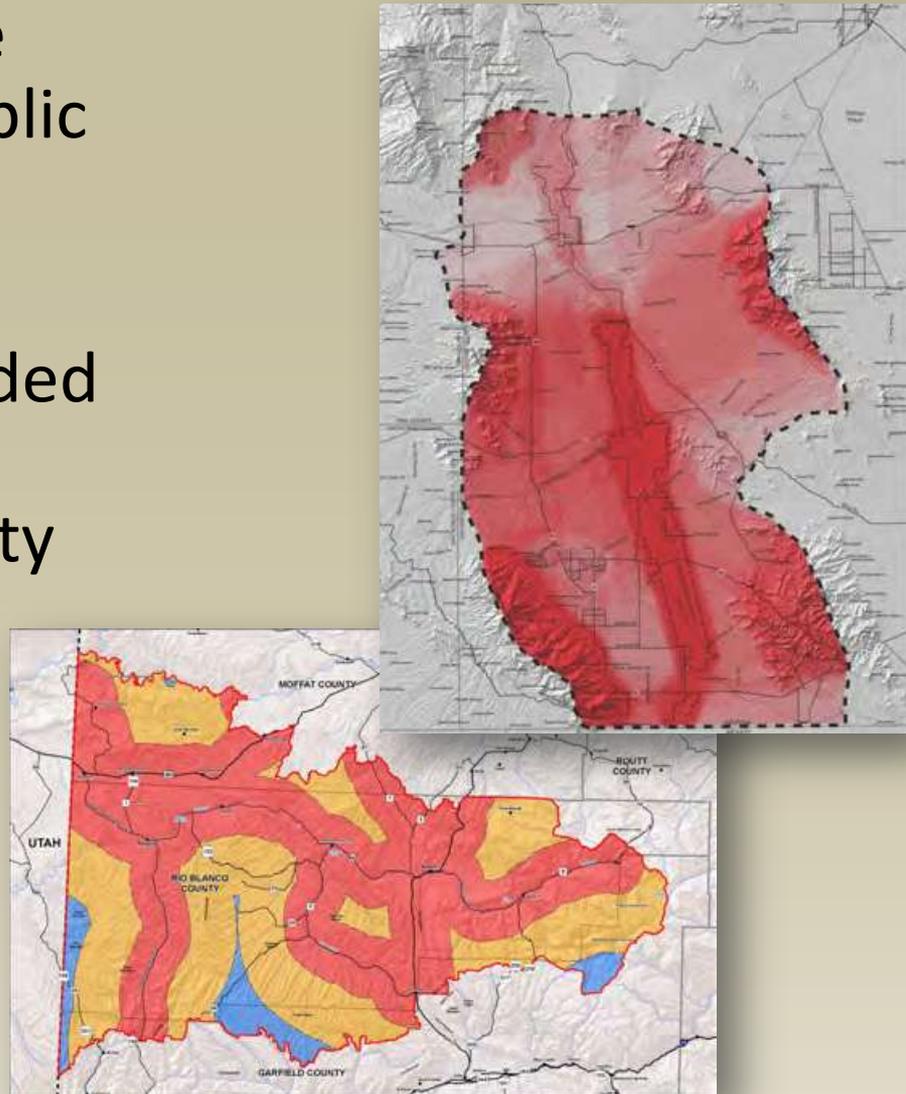
VRI- Scenic Quality

- All lands have scenic value
- Landscapes with the most variety and most harmonious composition have the greatest scenic value



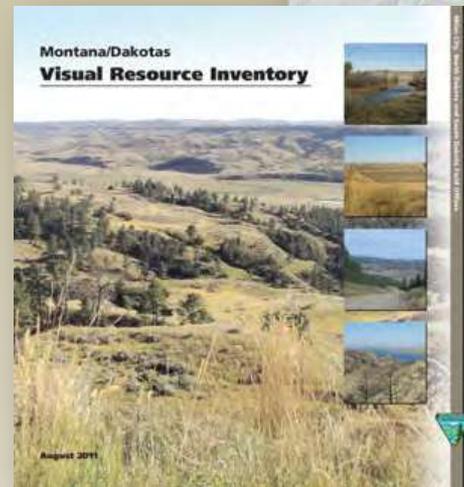
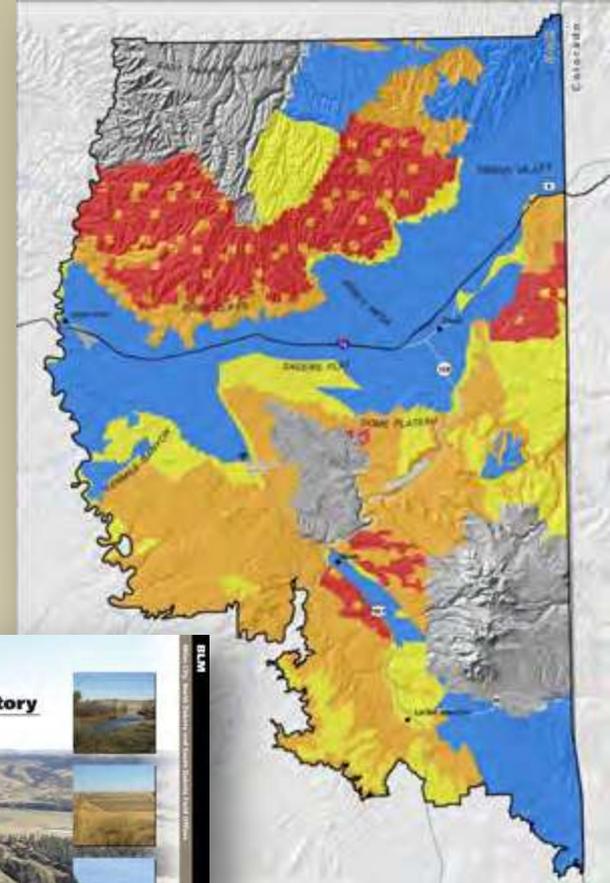
VRI - Sensitivity Levels and Distance Zones

- Sensitivity levels are measures of the public concerns for scenic quality
- Landscapes are divided into distance zones based on the visibility from significant viewing platforms



VRI Classes

- Categories assigned to lands that represents the relative value of the visual resources
- Class I, II, III, and IV
- Class I are areas designated for preservation



Inventory vs. Management Classes

Inventory Classes

- Relative quality, quantity, and value of the visual resource
- What you have now

Management Classes

- Managing the integrity of the visual resource
- What you want to achieve/maintain

VRM Classes

- Provides the visual management standards for :
 - Design and development of future projects
 - Rehabilitation of existing projects
- Landscape designated from Class I to Class IV
 - Based on management decisions made in Resource Management Plan (RMP)



Class I Objectives

- Objective: to **preserve** the existing character of the landscape
- Level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low
- Management activities must not attract attention



Class II Objectives

- Objective: to **retain** the existing character of the landscape
- Level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low
- Management activities may be seen, but should not attract that attention of the casual observer



Class III Objectives

- Objective: to **partially retain** the existing character of the landscape
- Level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate
- Management activities may attract attention, but should not dominate the view of the casual observer



Class IV Objectives

- Objective: to provide for management activities which require major **modifications** of the existing character of the landscape
- Level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high
- Management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention

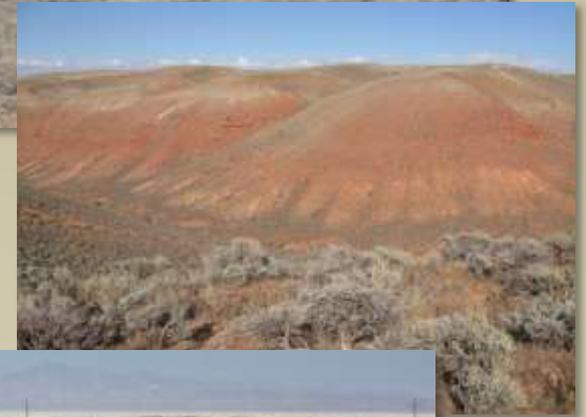


Compatibility between Land Uses

- Review of other programs goals/issues
- Recognizing stewardship opportunities
- Visual values are weighed along with other resource considerations
- Determine compatibility with other resources
- Managing the viewshed experience

Visual Resource Contrast Rating

- Measured by comparing the project features with the major features in the existing landscape
 - Form
 - Line
 - Color
 - Texture
- Evaluated from the most critical viewpoints/key observation points (KOPs)



Contrast Rating Form





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Questions?



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Thank you!

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