

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Visual Contrast Rating Sheet and Photographs**

# VISUAL CONTRAST RATING WORKSHEET

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Activity: Grand County Water Load Out Facility

## Section A. PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name: Water Load-Out Facility

Location: on Hwy 279

Key Observation Point: KOP – Along Utah Highway 279, a state scenic driving byway

VRM Class: VRM II

### Section B. CHARACTERISTIC LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

	1. Land/Water	2. Vegetation	3. Structures
FORM	Horizontal	Rounded (low shrubs with dying tamarisk background)	High voltage power lines, uranium tailings project piles, buildings in City of Moab
LINE	Horizontal in foreground; triangular shapes of mountains in the background (travelling west).	Horizontal	High voltage power lines, uranium tailings project piles, buildings in City of Moab
COLOR	Browns and whatever color the Colorado River is at the moment	Gray greens and browns	High voltage power lines, uranium tailings project piles, buildings in City of Moab
TEXTURE	Mottled	Mottled	High voltage power lines, uranium tailings project piles, buildings in City of Moab

### Section C. PROPOSED ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

	1. Land/Water	2. Vegetation	3. Structures
FORM	Linear forms from clearing for road (on already disturbed land)	Some removal of vegetation - linear	Pump (not visible); water load out stand (visible); pipe (not visible); road (visible)
LINE	Horizontal	Horizontal	Largely horizontal stand pipe is upright)
COLOR	Darkish brown	Gray greens and browns	Brownish
TEXTURE	Mottled	Mottled	Smooth

**Section D. CONTRAST RATING**

	FEATURES											
	land/water				vegetation				Load Out Facilities			
	strong	moderate	weak	none	strong	moderate	weak	none	strong	moderate	weak	none
FORM			x				x					x
LINE			x				x					x
COLOR			x				x					x
TEXTURE			x				x					x

**Does project design meet visual standards?**

**Explain:** Surface-disturbing activities within 0.5 mile of scenic driving corridors must meet VRM II class objectives to protect the visual resources along scenic corridors. An exception could be granted if: (a) a view shed analysis indicates no impairment of the visual resources from the driving corridor or (b) the action is determined to be consistent and compatible with protection or enhancement of the resource values or the use would provide suitable opportunities for public enjoyment of these resources. Modifications or waivers to this management standard are not allowed.

The Scenic Byway is used primarily by non-local tourists who are attracted by panoramic views of the canyons of the Colorado River. The Scenic Byway is used all year, but traffic is higher in the spring and fall than in the summer when temperatures are hot and winter when temperatures are cold. Highway 279 (called locally “the Potash Road”) approaches the river at the project location and then travels west along the river itself. Visible man-made features at the location include three large overhead powerlines, a view of the town of Moab and the uranium mill tailings removal project on the adjoining Department of Energy property. Although the Potash Road becomes more undeveloped as it travels west, the area of the project itself is fairly developed and almost industrial-looking.

The project was evaluated in consideration of facilities that would be installed by Grand County, including a water pump, a pipeline, a water load out stand and a road turnaround. Grand County would paint all permanent aboveground structures a dullish brown to blend in with the numerous power poles. The access road would enter the work area from Highway 279. Although it utilized a previously disturbed area, the road would be visible to motorists on the Potash Road for approximately 14 seconds while travelling westbound (low hills hide the road from travelers going eastbound on Highway 279).

The pump would be at water level, approximately 80 feet from the road and 25 feet below grade. It would not be visible from the Highway. The pipe, if a dullish brown color, would also be substantially unnoticeable from the highway. The water load out stand would be about 15 feet tall; this pales when compared to the height of the adjacent power poles, which are approximately 80 feet tall.

A visual simulation was created using a person to simulate the placement of the water load out stand. The proposed location was evaluated for its impact to the viewshed from Utah Highway 279 by driving it in both directions at the normal driving speed, which is 55 mph.

The key observation point (KOP) is a moving point KOP from observers in a vehicle. The eastbound view features a distant view of the Arches National Park escarpment. In the foreground of this view, visitors see the Colorado River, a uranium tailings pile cleanup project (with its large areas of surface disturbance and working heavy equipment), three high voltage power lines and the City of Moab

Removal Project, with its large areas of surface disturbance and working heavy equipment. The eastbound visitor could see the load out stand for nine seconds, although it is likely that the stand would be obscured by the adjacent high voltage power lines. The road is visible for only a few seconds, because low hills in the highway right-of-way obscure the view of the proposed road.

Travelers going westbound see the LaSal Mountains, the Colorado River and the three high voltage power lines, which cross the Colorado River at the end of the highway straightaway. The tailing pile project is to the rear of westbound drivers (although they have just driven past it). The load out stand is visible for about 19 seconds (the road would be visible for about 14 seconds). Again, the load out stand is obscured by the presence of the high voltage power lines, which dominate the view.

The observers concluded that water load out facility would be substantially unnoticeable to visitors driving down Highway 279 because the new facility would not stand out amongst the existing facilities. While the load out would be visible to the westbound visitor for 19 seconds (as opposed to 9 seconds for the eastbound visitor), the viewers eye would naturally be drawn to the LaSal Mountains; the casual observer might very well not notice the new facility. The conclusion was that since visual resources were compromised in the proposed location, visual resources would not be further impaired by the addition of the facility.

See attached photos of the project location and proposed facilities. (See Appendix XX for additional photographs of the existing environment).



1 Pump to be located below highway



2 Water Load Out Stand (to be painted brown)



3 Pipe between Pump and Load Out Stand

Appendix E: Existing Visual Environment at Project Location Site



1: Looking East from Project Location



2: Looking West from Project Location