

Appendix M
Visual Resources Supporting Data

APPENDIX M – VISUAL RESOURCES SUPPORTING DATA

Information in this appendix was compiled to support the discussion of visual resources in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. Included as aids are photographs representing selected project-level scenery rating units, a table listing the agency-approved key observation points (KOPs), contrast rating worksheets from each KOP location, and associated visual simulations. Further information regarding the development of the Energy Gateway South Transmission Project’s (Project) visual resource assessment including methods and results is provided in the Project’s Visual Resource Technical Report.

As described in Section 3.2.18.4, project-level scenery rating units were developed within a 6-mile-wide corridor centered on the reference centerlines across all jurisdictions (visual resource study corridor). To aid the reader in understanding the scenery crossed by the Project, photographs representing selected project-level scenery rating units have been included in this appendix (Exhibit N1). The selected scenery rating units include typical landscapes representing Class A, Class B, and Class C landscapes (as applicable) in each state as well as key landscapes described in Section 3.2.18. For a complete set of project-level scenery rating unit worksheets, including representative photographs, please refer to the Project’s Visual Resource Technical Report.

To comply with *BLM Manual Section 8400 – Visual Resource Management*, in particular Visual Resource Management (VRM) Handbook 8431-1, contrast rating worksheets were developed from each agency-approved KOP location. To maintain consistency across all jurisdictions crossed by the Project, contrast rating worksheets were completed for Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), tribal, and state-administered lands as well as from private lands. These contrast rating worksheets were used to verify the impact model, document visual contrast resulting from the Project, and identify areas where the Project would not meet the definition of the federal agency visual management objective (BLM VRM Objectives or USFS Visual Quality Objectives [VQO]), which may require an amendment to the applicable agency management plan (BLM resource management plan [RMP] or USFS land and resource management plan [LRMP], referred to in this document as land-use plan amendments).

A total of 147 KOPs were identified for analysis and are listed in Table N-1 (Exhibit N2). The table includes nine components for each KOP:

1. KOP identification number,
2. KOP name (viewing location name),
3. concern level factors (viewing duration, volume of use, concern for aesthetics, scenic or historic status, type of use, and overall concern level),
4. the associated Project link number(s),
5. whether the view is from BLM- or USFS-administered lands, view of BLM- or USFS-administered lands, or would both be located on and view non-federally administered lands (e.g., state-administered lands and private lands),
6. whether the KOP is of national significance,
7. whether a visual simulation was identified,
8. approximate distance from the Project, and
9. a brief rationale describing why each KOP was selected.

Please note, the concern levels identified for viewing locations not represented by a KOP can be found in the Project’s Visual Resource Technical Report. Following the table, each KOP has a completed contrast rating worksheet (Exhibit N2) and where applicable, a visual simulation depicting the existing condition and simulated condition with the addition of the Project (Exhibit N3). Visual simulations were developed to demonstrate the potential impacts and associated contrast generated by the addition of the Project in a variety of landscape settings. A total of 51 simulations were prepared from 47 viewpoints throughout the Project area including views from residential areas, travel routes, recreation areas, and special designations. In addition, a total of 42 cumulative effect simulations were prepared from 38 viewpoints to present the cumulative effect associated with the incremental modification of views through the addition of the Project, TransWest Express Project, and/or the Energy Gateway West Project. The methodology describing the development of visual simulations is contained in the Project Visual Resource Technical Report.