Visual Resource Management

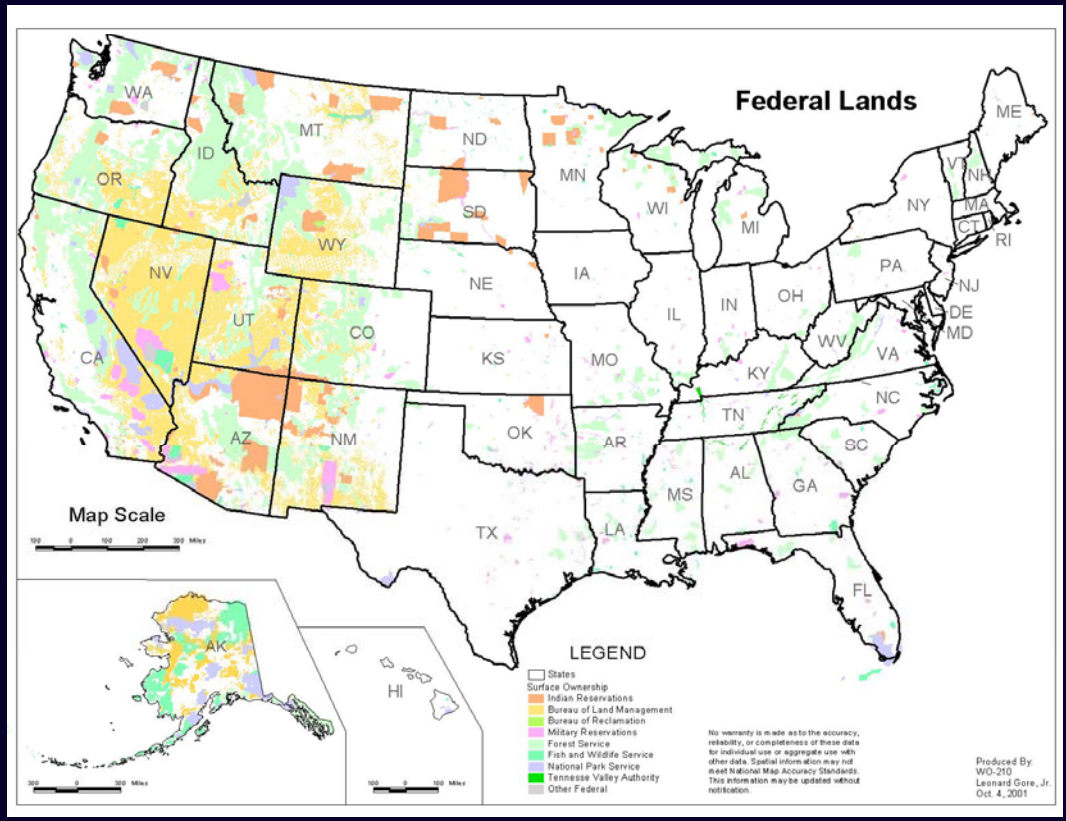
Aldo Leopold ***Red Rock Canyon, NV***

Las Vegas, NV November 3 - 7, 2008

Visual Resource Management

BLM lands are:

- *Economically vital*
- *Ecologically critical*
- *Visually spectacular*
- *Culturally significant*
- *Emotionally profound*



The challenge of
simultaneous protection of all values

Use of the Public Land

- **Oil and Gas**
- **Coal**
- **Metals/Minerals**
- **Uranium**
- **Wind**
- **Geothermal**
- **Energy conveyance**
- **Aggregate**
- **Recreation**
- **Communication systems**

2004 - 119 percent growth rate in the West.

22.2 million people live within 25 miles of BLM administered lands

Use of the Public Land

Level of activity across the BLM landscape:

Oil and Gas

Oil Shale Tar Sands
(10 million acres)

Wind Energy
(20 million acres)

Solar Energy
(119 million acres)

Geothermal
(143 million acres)

Energy Corridors
(3,500 foot corridors)

What is Visual Resource Management

Visual Resource Management (VRM) is a systematic way

- inventory the visual resources,
- prescribe land use visual performance standards, and
- guide project design to meet these standards.

Visual Resource Management

Our challenge to bring resource development together with protection of the visual setting:

- **Population /Urban interface / 22 million / ½ hour away**
- **87% observed through sense of sight**
- **First impressions / final opinions**
- **Public involvement**

Overall Course Objective

After attending this course, you will be able to:

- Describe the basic principles and concepts of the VRM system
- Communicate the role of visual resource management in BLM land use planning and activity planning
- Demonstrate the skills and knowledge necessary to:
  - inventory visual resources
  - analyze the landscape
  - develop mitigation for minimizing contrast to the landscape from activities.

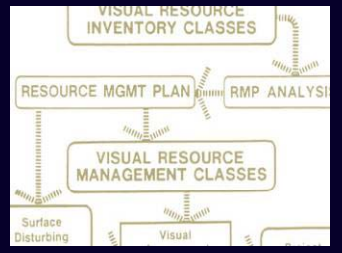
Course Outline

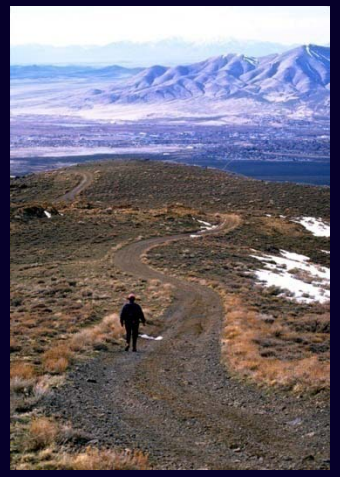
Visual Resource Management

Las Vegas, NV November 3 – 7, 2008

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
UNIT 1 Overview of VRM UNIT 2 Looking at Landscapes UNIT 3 Land Use Planning/ VRM Inventory Field Exercises Landscape Analysis Scenic Quality Exercise	UNIT 4 Land Use Planning RMP Development UNIT 5 Project Planning and VRM UNIT 6 Design Fundamentals UNIT 7 Design Strategies UNIT 8 Environmental Factors UNIT 9 Types of Projects Field Problem	UNIT 10 Project Analysis and Evaluation Field Exercise Contrast Rating UNIT 11 Visual Simulation UNIT 12 Writing Good EAs UNIT 13 Experience Examples Glenwood Canyon Recreation Oil & Gas UNIT 15 Stump the Experts	Final Class Project Travel to Field Prepare Simulation and Oral Presentations Evaluations - Future Commitments – On-line Resources	Evaluations - Future Commitments On-Line Resources UNIT 15 Class Project Presentations UNIT 16 Course Wrap-UP

Overview of VRM





UNIT 1

Unit 1 Objective

Provide an :

- Introduction to the course,
- convey the importance of protecting scenic values, and
- explain in general terms, the process the BLM uses to manage for scenery via the Visual Resource Management System (VRM).

Unit 1

What is VRM?

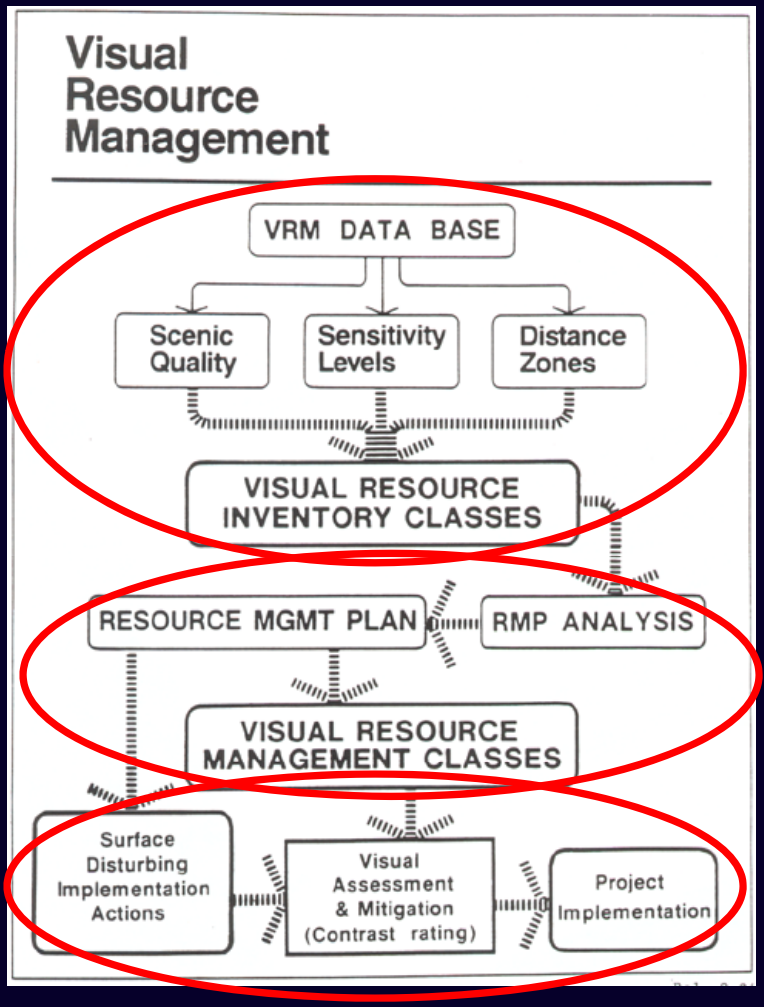
Why do we manage scenery?

How do we manage for scenery?

Visual Resource Management (VRM)

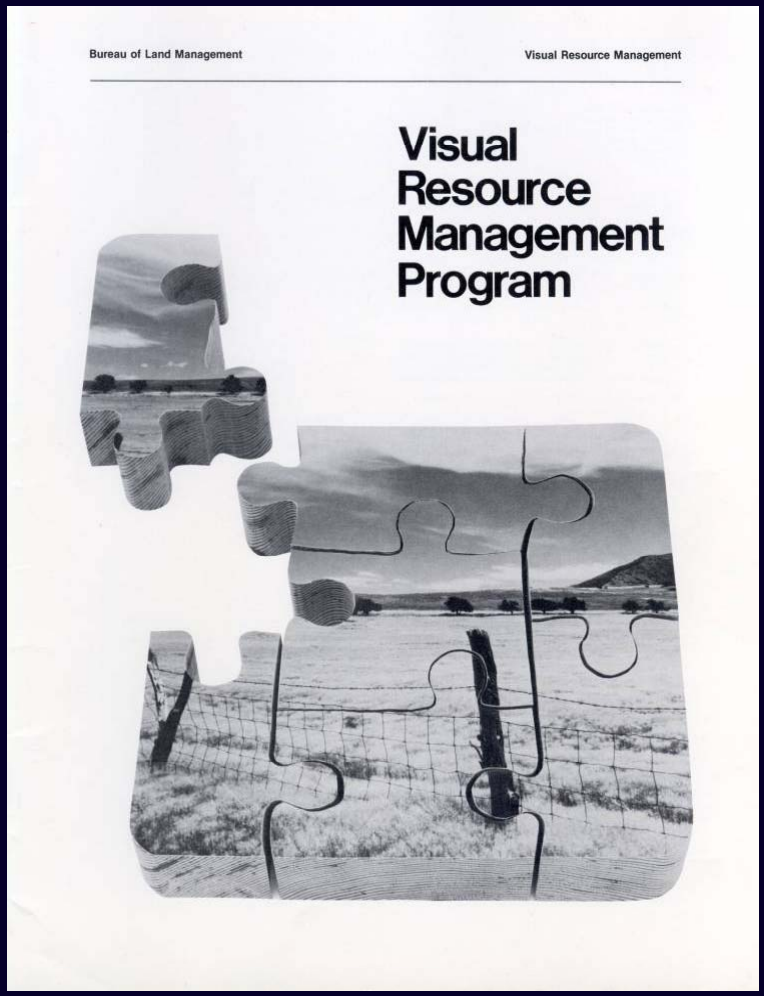
Definition:

The inventory and planning actions taken to identify visual values and to establish objectives for managing those values; and the management actions taken to achieve the visual management objectives



BLM Authority for Managing Scenery

- BLM has addressed since 1950's
- NEPA (1969)
- FLPMA (1976)
- VRM Policy 1970's-80s



Legal Authority for Managing Scenery

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) 1969

- **Assure aesthetically pleasing surroundings**
- **Require agencies use a system based on environmental design arts for planning and mitigation**

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) 1976

- **Protect scenic values**
- **Maintain an inventory of scenic values**
- **Minimize damage to scenic values**

BLM Policy for Scenery

BLM Policy: Manual Section 8400: Visual Resource Management (1984)

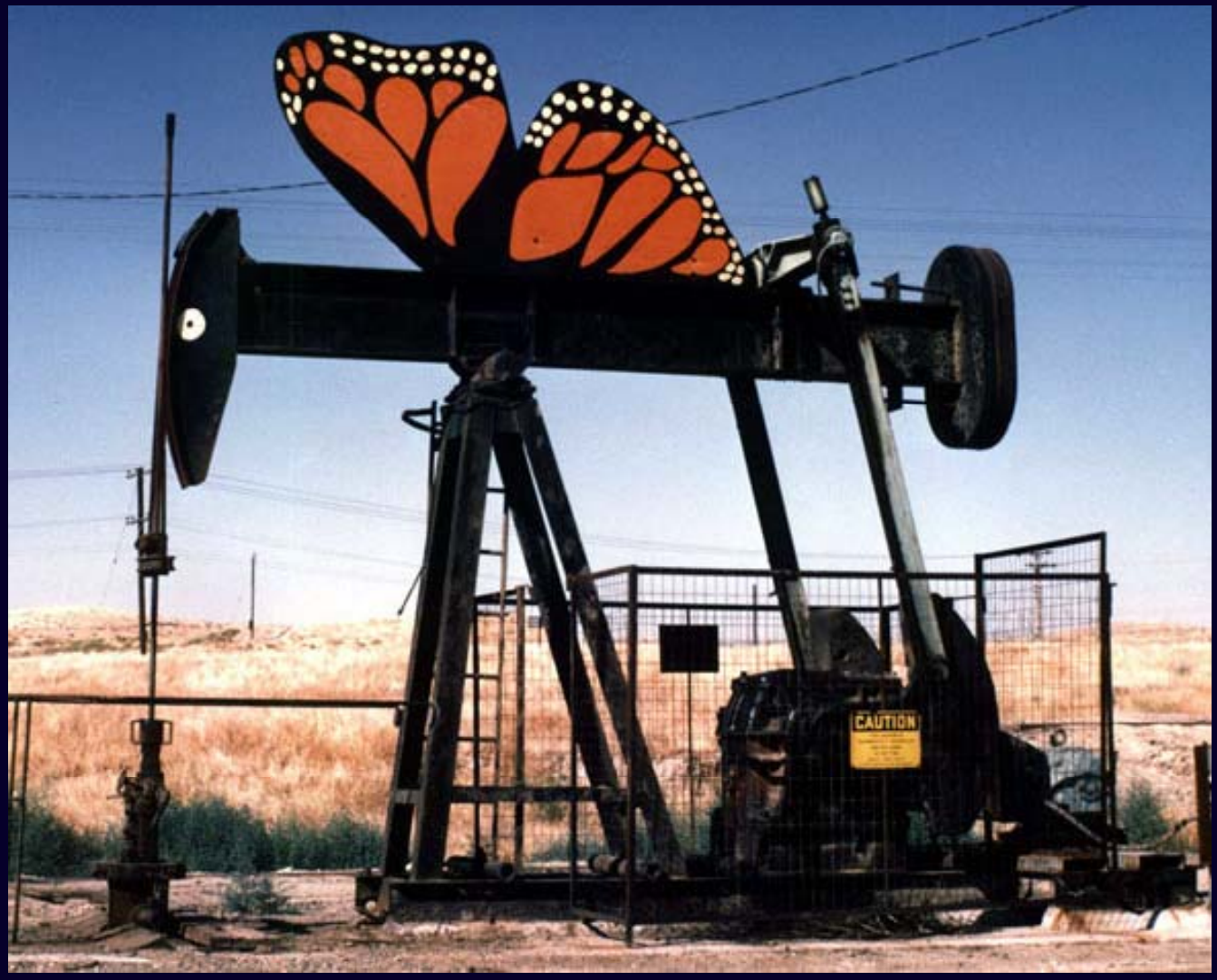
- **Basic stewardship responsibility**
- **Each program has responsibility**
- **Maintain inventory of visual values for all lands**
- **Develop VRM classes through Land Use Planning**
- **Design activities to meet classes**
- **Measurement of contrast between use and setting**

BLM manages lands with inherent scenic value…

Settings for great rainbow calendar shots

UNIT 1

Opportunities for Public Art



UNIT 1

Public lands contain a variety of scenic landscapes.

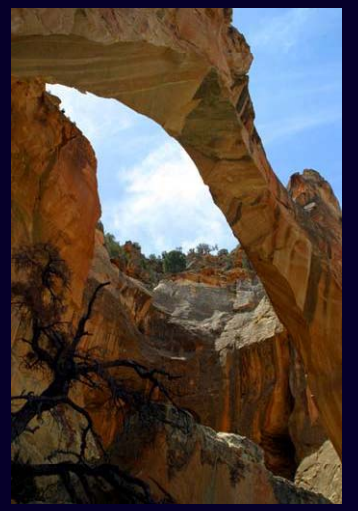
UNIT 1

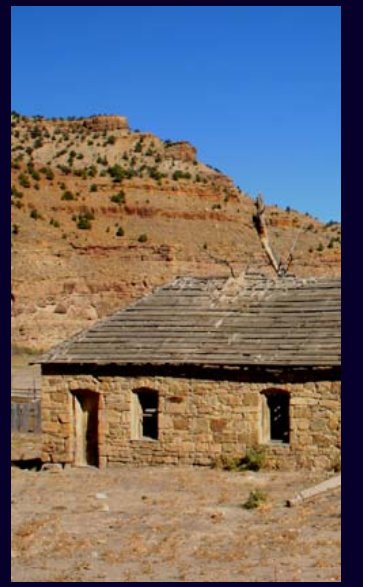
UNIT 1

UNIT 1

UNIT 1

The scenic significance of many landscapes is cultural or historic.





Lands provide a place to escape and enjoy the beauty of nature.

UNIT 1

Public lands and the multiple use policy.

UNIT 1

BLM lands are the backyard of many western communities.

UNIT 1

If not carefully designed, activities have the potential to:

- modify character of landscape
- reflect on BLM image
- affect visitor experience and community quality of life
- cause project delays through protest, appeals
- increase long term costs due to restoration needs

Benefits if carefully designed...

Benefits

UNIT 1

Benefits

UNIT 1

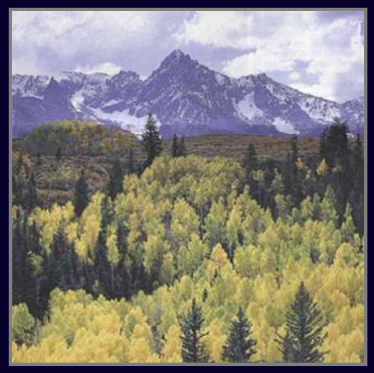
Benefits

Benefits

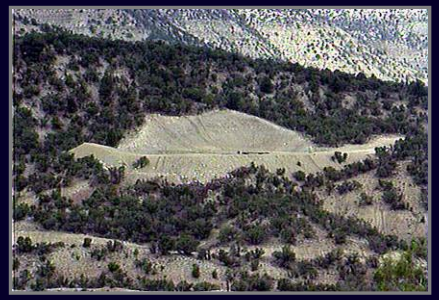
Fundamental Principles

- Language of Looking at Landscapes (Form, Line, Color, Texture..)



- Principle philosophy~ <u>Reducing Contrast in the Landscape</u>


BLM Policy for Managing Scenery

Land Use Planning Level

- Variety of Landscapes
- Maintain an Inventory of Visual Values
- Assign Visual Objectives

- **Handbook 8410**:
  - Inventory & VRM Classes
  - [land use planning]

BLM Policy for Managing Scenery

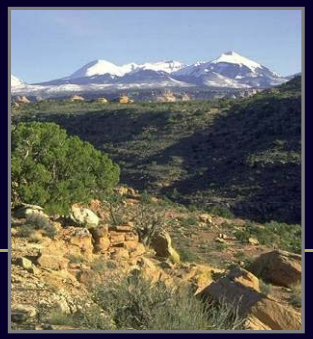
Activity/ Project Level

- Analyze the landscape
- Use design techniques to reduce contrast
- Manage activities to Meet VRM objectives

- **Handbook 8431**:
  - Contrast- Rating
  - [project analysis/ evaluation]

Principle Components of VRM System

1. • **Inventory** **Scenic** Values
   - Scenic Quality, Sensitivity Level, Distance Zones
   - (Required for every acre of BLM land)
2. • Establish Management **Objectives** (Land Use Planning level)
   - (Required for every acre of BLM land)
   - Part of land use decisions
3. • **Design/ Evaluate** Activities to meet objectives (Project level)
   - Contrast Rating Form



Washington Perspective

Status of VRM at the National Policy Level:

Issues with understanding VRM Policy and Procedures

- Inventory
- RMP review
- Tendencies in the implementation phase

Visual Resource Management

VRM Myths:

- VRM is discretionary,
- VRM is a subjective subject matter,
- Visual Inventory Classes & VRM Management Classes are the same thing
- VRM prohibits surface development – VRM Class II
- VRM Class IV is the only VRM class designation where I can do anything unrestricted (veg treatments, O&G development, etc.)
- VRM objectives do not apply to pre-existing leases

Unit 1 Recap

What is VRM?

Why do we manage scenery?

How do we manage for scenery?

Online Information Resources:

Other information resources:

- **BLM VRM - www.blm.gov/nstc/VRM/**
- **BLM Fluid Minerals - www.blm.gov/**
- **Scenic America – www.scenic.org**
- **CALP – Univ. of British Columbia - www.c**
- **Syracuse University of New York - www.es**
- **BC Ministry of Forest and Range -**

www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/values/visual/index.htm#staff