

Visual Resource Management

Phoenix Historic Trails Workshop



Oregon Trail Ruts Near Guernsey, Wyoming

Management of Historic Trails

- Two important aspects to historic trail management
- Protection of the physical trail remains
- Management of the setting that surrounds the trail
- A natural setting contributes to the value of the trail remains and
- Greatly enhances the experience of the visitor

Management of Historic Trails

- * The objective of this session is to tell you about one of the ways in which the BLM can achieve successful management of the historic trails and the setting in which they're located
- * Visual Resource Management

Visual Resource Management

Resource Management Plans

- Sets Visual Objectives for all public lands
- Maintains Visual Character of trail setting
- Foreground – Middleground
- Recommend Class I or II for eligible trail segments in contributing settings

Language for VRM Objectives

- * **Class I** Preserve the existing character of the landscape. Provides for natural ecological change. Projects must not attract attention.
- * **Class II** Retain the existing character of the landscape. Management activity may be seen but must not attract the attention of a casual observer.

Language for VRM Objectives

- **Class III** Partially retain the existing character of the landscape. Projects may be seen and attract attention but may not be dominant.
- **Class IV** Projects may be seen and dominate the view of the casual observer. Provides for industrial development.

Historic Trail and Historic Landmark



A view of Split Rock with the Oregon/California Trail
in the foreground

Visual Resource Management

- * The previous view shows:
- * Historic Trail Corridor
- * Setting which is all
 Foreground – Middleground
- * High Visual Sensitivity
- * High scenic value
- * Class I and II VRM Class

Visual Resource Management

- **Historic Trail Corridors are Living Landscapes**
 - * **Mixed Land Ownership**
 - * **Mineral Activity**
 - * **Rights-of-way**
 - * **Livestock Grazing**
 - * **Recreation**



Visual Resource Management



Visual Resource Management

- * Historic Trail Corridors cover large areas
- * Resource use and development will continue



Visual Resource Management



Visual Resource Management

- We need to use professional design and mitigation techniques to minimize the adverse effects of development on the visual character of the landscape

Visual Resource Management

- For project design or evaluation we
Focus on:
 - * Proper Siting and Location
 - * Repeat Landscape Character Elements
 - * Minimize Surface Disturbance
 - * Good rehab & reclamation

Visual Resource Management

The point is to minimize the amount of **visual contrast** between the project and the surrounding landscape

Proper Siting and Location

- * Avoid Hill tops
- * Use existing landforms and vegetation to screen project from view
- * Locate project away from critical viewpoints

Proper Siting and Location



Repeat Landscape Character Elements

Form – Line – Color - Texture

- Use appropriate environmental colors
- Follow lines in the landscape
- Repeat texture
- Duplicate forms

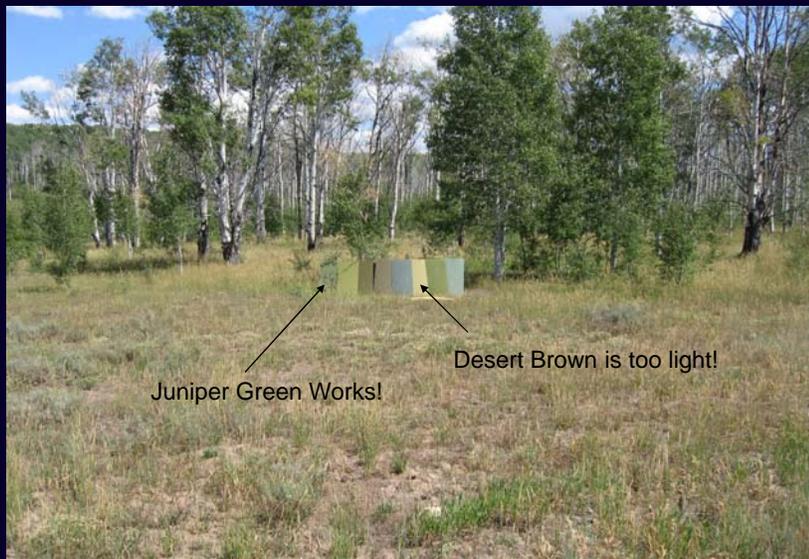
Color Selection



Selecting Appropriate Colors



Selecting Appropriate Colors



Minimize Surface Disturbance



Visual Resource Management

- **Cultural Resource Managers Adopt VRM Procedures**
- **Guidelines for Determination of visual effects of an undertaking on the integrity of a historic setting**

Step 1: Determine Need for Assessment

- If there is a known historic property near project,
- If historic property is eligible for NR
- If the historic property is legally accessible,
- If setting assessment is not excluded,
- Will physical features of project be seen from the historic property (i.e., trail, etc)
- If setting (surrounding landscape) is unmodified<
- **Assessment is required**

Step 2: Conduct Visual Contrast Rating

- If landscape contains modern features that dominate setting -- **No Adverse Effect**
- If landscape contains no modern features that dominate the setting
- We determine by judgment or simulation whether proposed project will dominate the setting

Visual Contrast Rating

- Analysis determines No Contrast:
No Adverse Effect
- Analysis determines Weak Contrast:
No Adverse Effect
- Analysis determines moderate or strong contrast: **Adverse Effect from the proposed project is likely**

Good Reclamation and Rehab

