



# Visual Resource Management



*Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness, NM*

**Santa Fe, New Mexico**

**September 24-29, 2007**

# 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

Santa Fe, New Mexico September 24 – 28, 2007



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

## UNIT 1

# Materials

- Course Notebook
- Resources and References in Appendix
- Handouts

- Tools/Awareness +

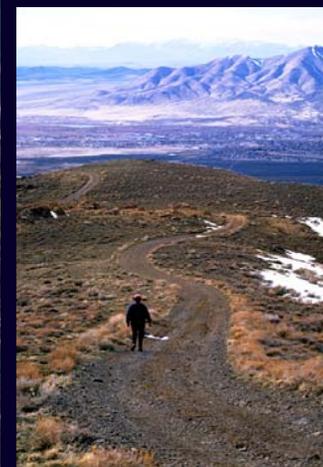
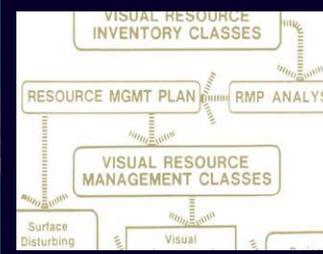


ork= ~Difference

- Introductions

UNIT 1

# 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

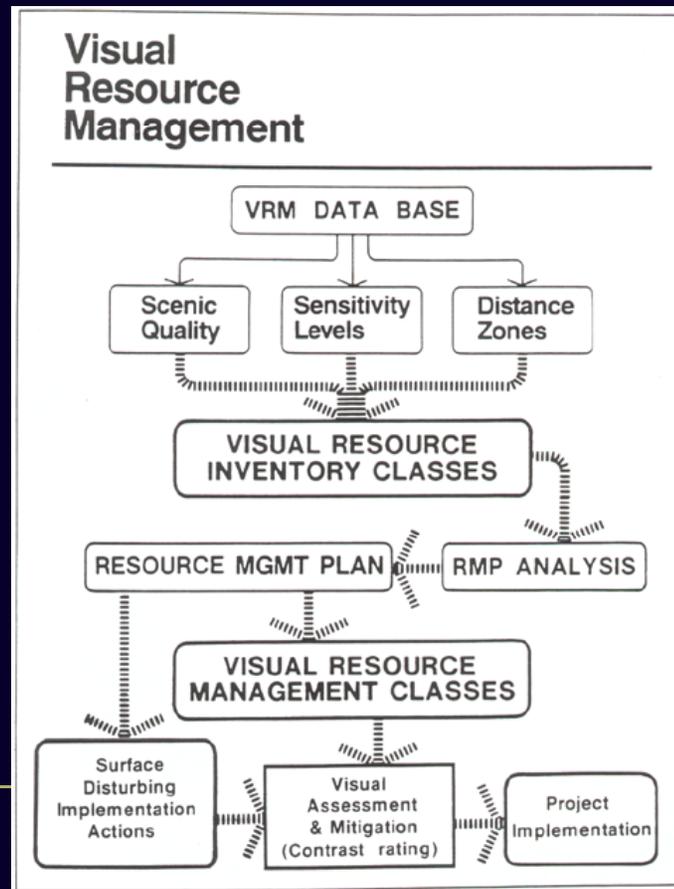
What is VRM?

Why do we manage scenery?

How do we manage for scenery?

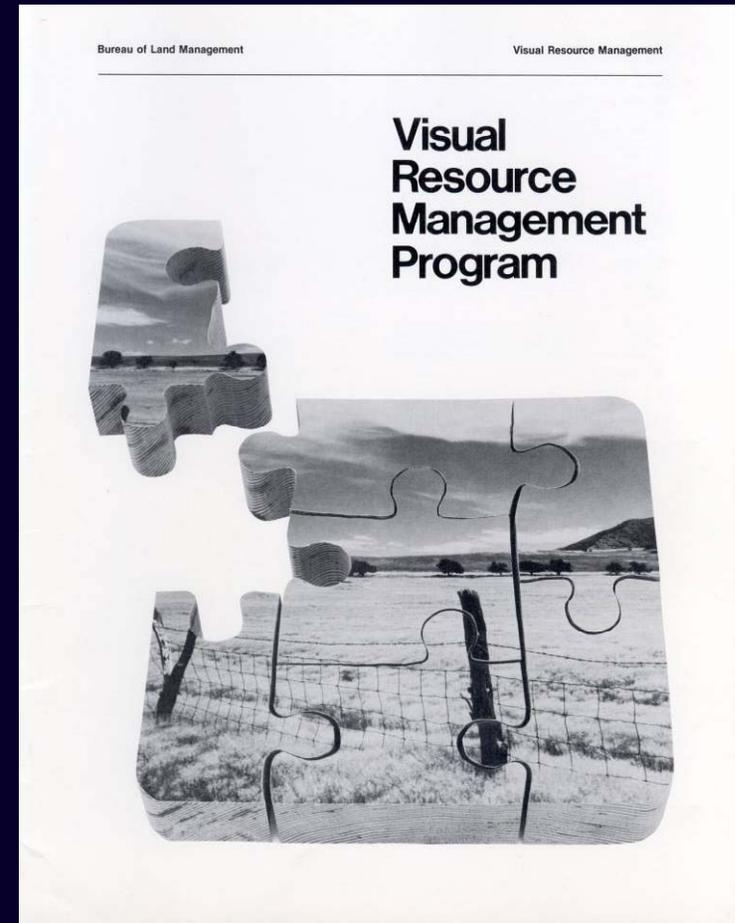
# Visual Resource Management (VRM)

**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

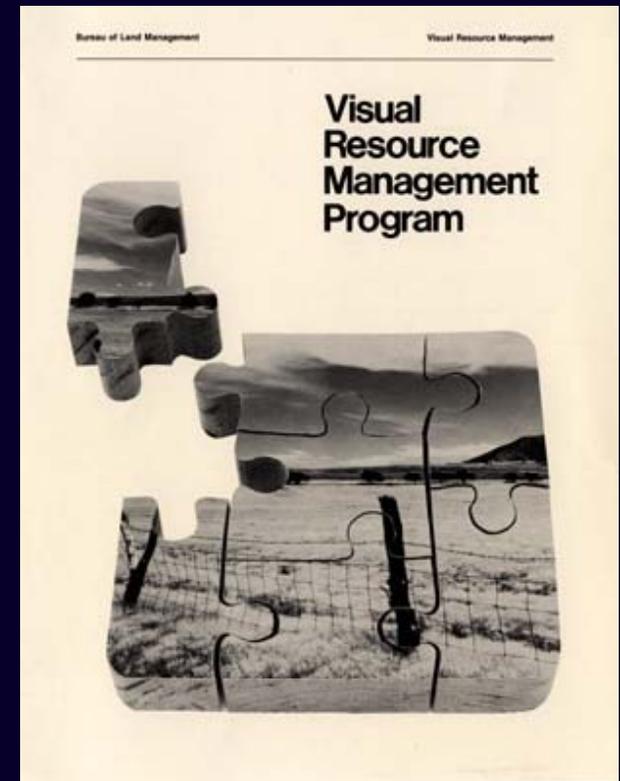
## The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) 1976

- 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  
*(Puzzle pieces and the stove pipes)*
- 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...**

**UNIT 1**

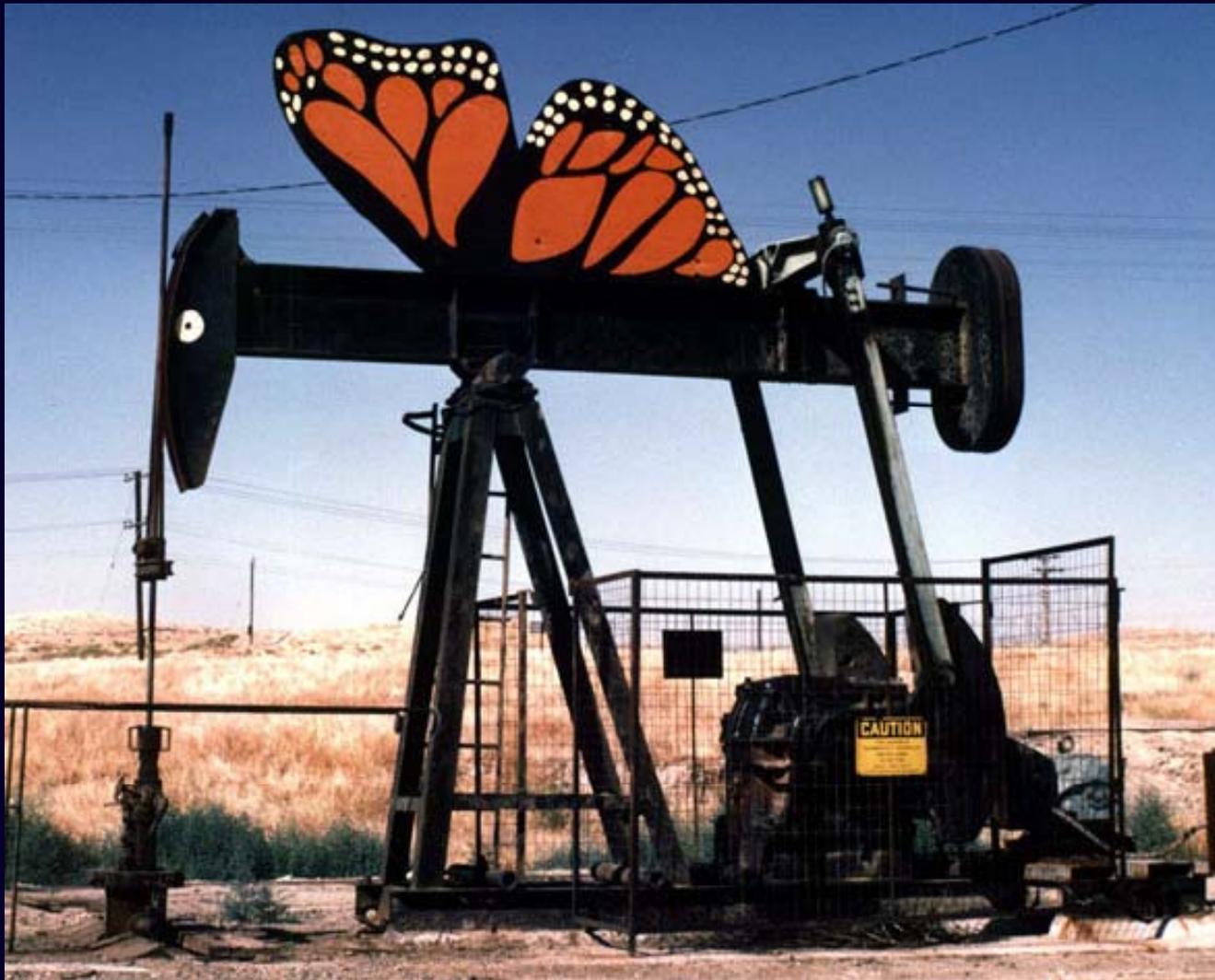
BLM manages lands with inherent scenic value...



**UNIT 1**



**UNIT 1**



**UNIT 1**

Public lands contain a variety of scenic landscapes.



**UNIT 1**



# UNIT 1



# UNIT 1

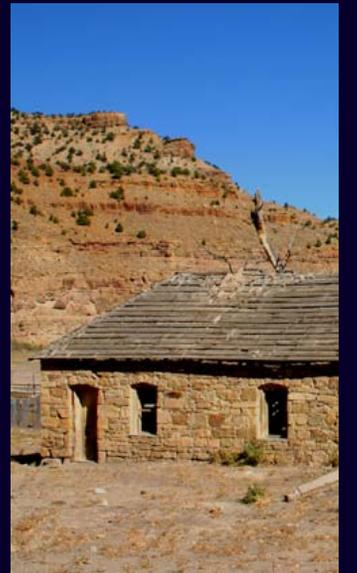
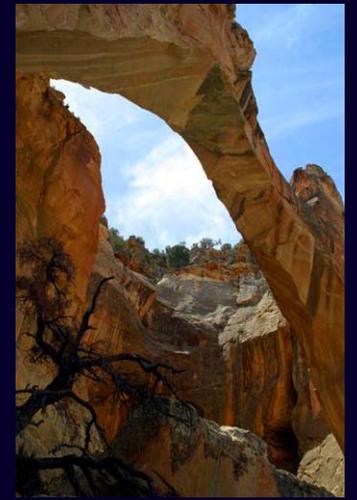


# UNIT 1



## UNIT 1

The scenic significance of many landscapes is cultural or historic.



**UNIT 1**



# UNIT 1

Public lands used, traveled and appreciated in a variety of ways.



**UNIT 1**



**UNIT 1**

Public lands provide settings for family and friends reunions.



**UNIT 1**

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



**UNIT 1**



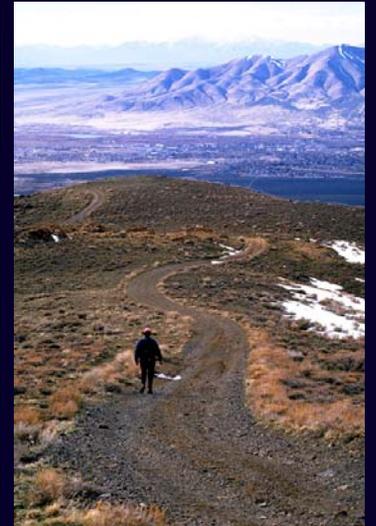
## UNIT 1

# Public lands and the multiple use policy.



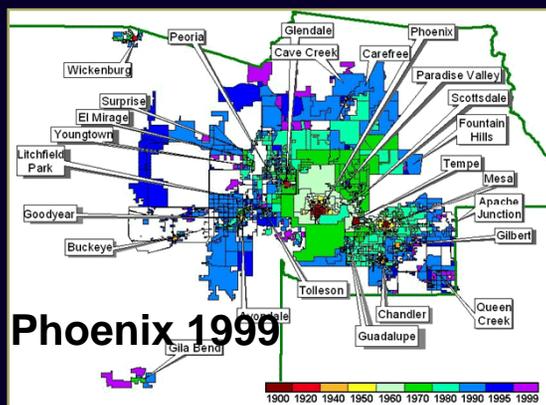
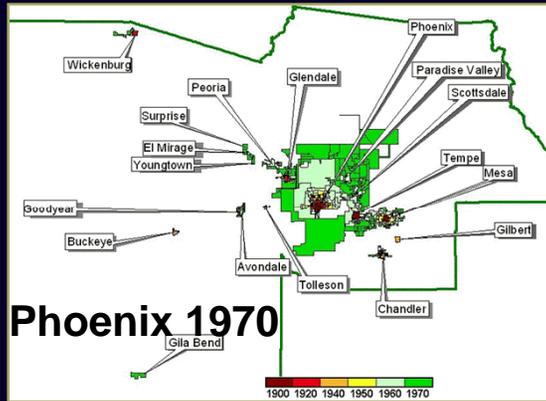
**UNIT 1**

BLM lands are the backyard of many western communities.



UNIT 1

# Trends and challenges



*“Skyrocketing population growth was identified as the single biggest challenge facing the West. In the last 30 years, the Rocky Mountain region has seen a 119 percent growth rate, compared to a national rate of 39 percent.”*

State of the Rockies Conference,  
May, 2004  
Dave Kelly, LA Times

Lands are also valued for many other activities and uses.



**Increasing Demand for:**

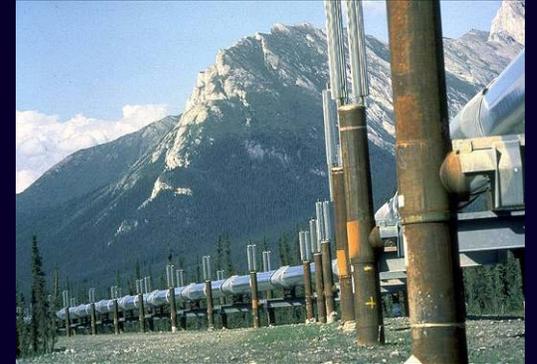
**-Communication Sites**

**-R-O-Ws**

**-Recreation**

**-Mineral Development**

**-Wind Energy**



**UNIT 1**

# Trends and challenges

## Perception:

One or the other, but not both

### The Salt Lake Tribune

<http://www.sltrib.com>

#### Marketing Western beauty

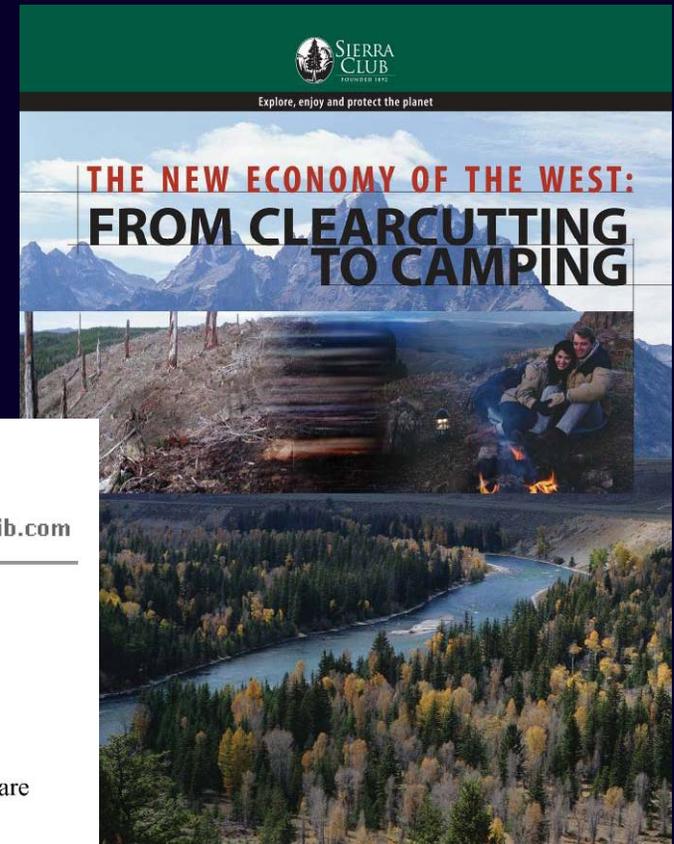
Study touts outdoor recreation as key to economic longevity

By **Patty Henetz**  
The Salt Lake Tribune  
Salt Lake Tribune

Article Last Updated:

Western counties that rely on timber, coal mining and oil and gas drilling at the expense of natural beauty are trading short-term gain for an economy that could rely on hunting, fishing, tourism and attracting affluent residents from other parts of the country.

That's according to a report, "The New Economy of the West: From Clearcutting to Camping," from the Sierra Club. Using federal and state data gathered over the past three decades, the report concludes that outdoor recreation is key to the vitality of Western communities, rather than extractive industries that have supported the region in the past.



## UNIT 1

# VRM – evolving philosophies



- **Scenic aesthetic** – management based on VRM principles – concealment / reduction of visual impacts
- **Ecological aesthetic** – balance between the ecological values and landscape modifications
- **Visible Stewardship** – Use and landscape modifications that clearly show care for and attachment to a particular landscape, and respect for nature.

## UNIT 1

*Stephen Sheppard – “Beyond Visual Resource Management: Emerging Theories of an Ecological Aesthetic and Visible Stewardship”*

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

**UNIT 1**

Benefits if carefully designed...



**UNIT 1**

# Benefits



UNIT 1

# Benefits



UNIT 1

# Benefits



UNIT 1

# Fundamental Principles

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



- Principle philosophy~ Reducing Contrast in the Landscape



# 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



# Unit 1 Recap

What is VRM?

Why do we manage scenery?

How do we manage for scenery?