

Course Wrap Up



Overall Course Objective

Having participated in the course, you should be able to:

- Describe the basic principles and concepts of VRM
- Communicate the role of VRM in land use planning and activity planning within the Bureau.
- Demonstrate knowledge/skills to: inventory visual resources, analyze landscape, develop mitigations for minimizing contrast.

Unit Highlights



1

- Scenic resources are a public resource
- BLM has legal obligation
 - IBLA Decisions
 - 144IBLA070 - Utah Decision
 - 173IBLA313 - Beaver Rim_Lander FO
 - 174 IBLA 078 -Tom Van Sant - California
- VRM system

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- Inventory scenic values
- Establish Mgt. Classes
- Evaluate/design activities to meet classes
- VRM is like “Language for Landscapes”
 - Types of Landscapes
 - Elements of Landscape Character
 - FORM, LINE, COLOR, TEXTURE
 - Analysis Factors

Unit Highlights



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• Land Use Planning and VRM

- VRM Inventory Classes
 - Scenic Quality
 - Sensitivity Levels
 - Distance Zones

4

- VRM Management Classes I-IV
- GIS, RMP, other Allocations

5

• Project Level Planning and VRM

- Site Planning Considerations
- Observation
- Project Design
- Design Strategies
- Environmental Factors

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7

Unit Highlights



8

- **Project Analysis and Evaluation**
 - Visual Contrast Rating System
 - Project Description
 - Identify VRM Objectives
 - Key Observation Points (KOP)
 - Visual Simulations
 - Contrast Rating Form
 - Design modification
 - Reevaluation



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT		Date
VISUAL CONTRAST RATING WORKSHEET		Revised 10/14
SECTION A. PROJECT INFORMATION		Activity (optional)
1. Project Name	4. Location	5. Location Sketch
2. Key Observation Point	3. Priority	
3. VRM Class	Range	Section
SECTION B. CHARACTERISTIC LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION		6. Photo Date
7. Landscape	8. Vegetation	
9. Sky	10. Other	

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- **VRM, NEPA & Monitoring and compliance**
 - Proposed Action
 - Alternative
 - Affected Environment
 - Environmental Consequences
 - Mitigation



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- **Visualization/ Simulation**

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- **Design and Mitigation Experiences**

Test Questions

- Are Visual Inventory Classes & VRM Management Classes the same thing?
- Is VRM
 - discretionary, a “soft” decision?
 - manage the aesthetics of projects and the landscape? “
 - allows visually unmitigated activity within VRM Class IV?
 - a way to preclude or exclude projects from happening?
- Does VRM applies to existing valid mineral rights?
- VRM Management Class IV means the area has low visual value?
- Are Contrast Rating Evaluations required for all projects?
- Who is responsible for VRM?

VRM Activities

1. Visual Risk Assessment mapping – DOE grant application
2. VRM Manuals and Handbooks
3. Research on affect of distance on wind turbine visibility
4. FAA/ BLM Research on visibility mitigation – OCAS / AVWS – Night Skies
5. Turbine color treatment research
6. Camouflage technology
7. GIS Data Standards and Geodatabase for VRM
8. National Scenic & Historic Trails Settings Management Handbook
9. Guidelines for the BLM's Built Environment

Final Comments

1. VRM is a Collaborative Process – internally and externally.
2. Is your Visual Resource Inventory up to date?
3. Take the time to do comprehensive planning – carefully study VRM/VRI/Allocations compatibility – knowing the industry’s challenges.
4. VRM Class IV should be given as much consideration as VRM II.
5. Plan amendment should be the exception to the rule and not viewed as the easy out.

Final Comments

- Members of the VRM Elite - please be assertive stewards of our BLM settings in protecting BLM's VRM values
- Share your challenges and successes with us and your fellow students
- Encourage customers to use qualified contractors the conduct VRM analysis.
- Call upon the instructors if you need assistance
- Brad Cownover at the National Operations Center

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.calp.forestry.ubc.ca/
- Syracuse University of New York - www.esf.edu/es/via/
- BC Ministry of Forest and Range - www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/values/visual/index.htm#staff



Others to inform:

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Visual Resource Management

*...maintaining the scenic beauty of public lands
for the use and enjoyment of today's and tomorrow's generations.*

- What is VRM?
- BLM's Responsibilities
- VRM System
- Design Techniques
- VRM Field Coordinators

*"If you foolishly ignore beauty, you'll soon find yourself
without it...but if you wisely invest in beauty, it will remain
with you all the days of your life..."*
Frank Lloyd Wright

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is entrusted with the care of 264 million acres of public lands containing many outstanding scenic landscapes. By law, BLM is responsible for managing these public lands for multiple uses. But BLM is also responsible for ensuring that the scenic values of these public