

# Course Wrap Up

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# Overall Course Objective

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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



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- 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



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- **VRM system**
  - 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



3

## • Land Use Planning and VRM

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

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

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## • Project Level Planning and VRM

- Site Planning Considerations
- Observation
- Project Design
- Design Strategies
- Environmental Factors
- Early VRM involvement
- Making projects better

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# Unit Highlights



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- **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



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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT		Date:
VISUAL CONTRAST RATING WORKSHEET		Project:
		Project No.:
		Activity (optional):
SECTION A. PROJECT INFORMATION		
1. Project Name:	4. Location:	5. Location Sketch:
2. Key Observation Point:	Range:	
3. VRM Class:	Section:	
SECTION B. CHARACTERISTIC LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION		
1. LANDSCAPE:	2. VISIBILITY:	3. VISIBILITY:



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- **VRM and NEPA**
  - Proposed Action
  - Alternative
  - Affected Environment
  - Environmental Consequences
  - Mitigation



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- **Monitoring and compliance**
- **Design and Mitigation Experiences**

# VRM Activities

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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. Software development for contrast rating
8. Wyoming Reclamation Policy
9. GIS Data Standards and Geodatabase for VRM
10. **Guidelines for the BLM's Built Environment**

# Final Comments

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1. VRM is not a discretionary program.
2. VRM Class objectives are planning decisions and must be met.
3. Consider visual issues early in project planning and design
4. VRM is a Collaborative Process – internally and externally.
5. Is your Visual Resource Inventory up to date?

# Final Comments

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6. Take the time to do comprehensive planning – carefully study VRM/VRI/Allocations compatibility – knowing the industry’s challenges.
7. VRM Class IV should be given as much consideration as VRM II.
8. Plan amendment should be the exception to the rule and not viewed as the easy out.
9. Energy Programmatic EISs VRM Guidance

# Final Comments

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- 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/](http://www.blm.gov/nstc/VRM/)
- BLM Fluid Minerals - [www.blm.gov/](http://www.blm.gov/)
- Scenic America – [www.scenic.org](http://www.scenic.org)
- CALP – Univ. of British Columbia - [www.calp.forestry.ubc.ca/](http://www.calp.forestry.ubc.ca/)
- Syracuse University of New York - [www.esf.edu/es/via/](http://www.esf.edu/es/via/)
- BC Ministry of Forest and Range -  
[www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/values/visual/index.htm#staff](http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/values/visual/index.htm#staff)

