

FSM 2300 - RECREATION, WILDERNESS,
AND RELATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
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CHAPTER 2380 - LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

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National Forest landscape management is the art and science of planning, designing, and administering the use of forest lands within the context of multiple-use land management in such ways that the visual effects maintain or enhance human psychological welfare.

2380.1 - Authority. The authority for management of the National Forest System visual resource lies in the following acts: National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321), the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1601), and the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 1600).

2380.2 - Objective. To manage all National Forest System lands to attain the highest possible visual quality commensurate with other appropriate public uses, costs, and benefits.

2380.3 - Policy

1. Inventory, evaluate, and manage the visual resource as a fully integrated part of the National Forest System land management process.

2. Employ a systematic, interdisciplinary approach in this effort to ensure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences and the environmental design arts.

3. Ensure the visual resource is treated equally with other resources.

4. Apply landscape management principles routinely in all National Forest System activities.

2380.4 - Responsibility

2380.41 - Regional Forester. Each Regional Forester shall:

1. Ensure systematic consideration of the visual resource in planning and managing National Forest System resources.

2. Establish and maintain a management system for the visual resource that produces visual quality objectives.

3. Establish a Region-wide training program to be delivered on a regular basis by a multidisciplinary team to provide operational personnel with a working knowledge of the visual resource management program including methods for implementing and updating the program.

4. Recognize and commend outstanding examples of landscape management as a means of encouraging appropriate and innovative accomplishments on lands within and adjacent to the National Forests.

2380.42 - Forest Supervisor. Each Forest Supervisor shall

1. Determine and map visual quality objectives (Agriculture Handbook 462) for definitive land areas that consider the physical characteristics and scenic quality of the land and the desires and preferences of the public.

2. Ensure that Forest and District personnel including wildlife biologists, silviculturists, timber sale administrators, engineers, land management planners, and range specialists understand and apply the basic landscape management concepts and principles.

3. Establish and implement a method for monitoring, recording, and documenting changes in the condition of the visual resource.

4. Implement a method of organizing, filing, and documenting recommended and final visual quality objectives.

2380.6 - References. Use the following publications in the National Forest Landscape Management Series to manage visual resources:

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. National Forest Landscape Management: Volume 1. Agriculture Handbook 434. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture; 1973. 76 pages.

2. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. National Forest Landscape Management: Volume 2, Chapter 1: The visual management system. Agriculture Handbook 462. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture; 1974. 47 pages.

3. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. National Forest Landscape Management: Volume 2, Chapter 2: Utilities. Agriculture Handbook 478. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture; 1975. 147 pages.

4. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. National Forest Landscape Management: Volume 2, Chapter 3: Range. Agriculture Handbook 484. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture; 1977. 44 pages.

5. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. National Forest Landscape Management: Volume 2, Chapter 4: Roads. Agriculture Handbook 484. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture; 1977. 62 pages.

6. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. National Forest Landscape Management: Volume 2, Chapter 5: Timber. Agriculture Handbook 559. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture; 1980. 223 pages.

7. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. National Forest Landscape Management: Volume 2, Chapter 6: Fire. Agriculture Handbook 608. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture; 1985. 89 pages.

2382 - VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT. Managing the visual resource entails:

1. Setting measurable objectives for the management of the visual resource for all land areas within the National Forest System.

2. Estimating the magnitude of the effort required to attain those objectives.

3. Measuring accomplishments during implementation of the forest land management plan.

4. Monitoring and documenting changes in the visual resource.

2382.1 - Landscape Management Fundamentals. Use the basic concepts, elements, principles, and variables in the management

of the visual resource on the National Forest System lands defined in National Forest Landscape Management: Volume 1, Agriculture Handbook 434.

2382.2 - The Visual Resource Management System. The visual resource management system consists of the following:

1. Visual quality objectives, inventories, and direction.
2. Existing visual conditions inventory.
3. Visual absorption capability.
4. Future visual condition assessment.

2382.21 - Visual Quality Objectives. Formulate Visual Quality Objectives (VQO's) using the method described in chapter 1, volume 2, The Visual Management System, Agriculture Handbook 462. Use VQO's when developing or modifying forest plans, environmental assessments, environmental impact statements, and project level decisions. The five visual quality objectives, each representing a different degree of acceptable alteration of the natural appearing landscape are:

1. Preservation. This visual quality objective allows ecological changes only. Management activities, except for very low visual-impact recreation facilities, are prohibited.

2. Retention. This visual quality objective provides for management activities that are not visually evident.

Under Retention, activities may only repeat form, line, color, and texture that are frequently found in the characteristic landscape. Changes in their size, amount, intensity, direction, pattern, and so forth, should not be evident.

3. Partial Retention. Management activities are visually evident but subordinate to the characteristic landscape when managed according to the partial retention visual quality objective.

Activities may repeat form, line, color, or texture common to the characteristic landscape but changes in their size, amount, intensity, direction, pattern, and so forth, remain visually subordinate to the characteristic landscape.

4. Modification. Under this objective, management activities may visually dominate the original characteristic landscape. However, alterations of vegetation and land form must borrow from naturally established form, line, color, or texture so completely and at such a scale that visual characteristics of natural occurrences within the surrounding area or character type are retained.

5. Maximum Modification. Management activities that alter vegetation and landform may dominate the characteristic landscape. However, when viewed as background, the visual

characteristics must be those of natural occurrences within the surrounding area or character type. When viewed as foreground or middle ground, they do not have to completely borrow from naturally established form, line, color, or texture. Alterations may also be out of scale or contain detail that is incongruent with natural occurrences as seen in foreground or middle ground.

2382.3 - Forest Plans and the Visual Management System. Inventoried visual quality objectives (VQO's) are the landscape management inputs to the forest land management planning process. Inventory and evaluate the visual resource as an integrated part of evaluating alternatives in the forest planning process, addressing both the landscape's visual attractiveness and the public's visual expectation. Include VQO's in management prescriptions for definitive land areas (36 CFR 219.21 (f)).

2382.31 - Interim Direction and Visual Quality Objectives. The use of recommended visual quality objectives as interim direction while forest planning is underway is delegated to the Regions.

2382.32 - Documentation of Visual Quality Objectives. Organize and file maps and all documentation of recommended and final visual quality objectives to provide background for future planning updates and modifications.

2383 - APPLICATIONS IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT. Each chapter of The Visual Management System, volume 2, discusses principles and concepts established in volume 1 for a specific function or area of concern. Use the chapters and the visual resource management system as guidance in both forest planning and project level work (sec. 2380.6).

2383.1 - Utilities. Use "Utilities," Agriculture Handbook 478, to plan, design, and construct utilities so that they are subordinate to the landscape.

2383.2 - Range. Use "Range," Agriculture Handbook 484, to analyze the impact of range management activities and to determine methods to reduce negative visual impacts associated with them.

2383.3 - Roads. Use "Roads," Agriculture Handbook 483, to meet visual quality objectives by providing direction on integrating roads into the forest landscape with minimum adverse visual impact.

2383.4 - Timber. Use "Timber," Agriculture Handbook 559, to determine how various silvicultural and landscape design treatments can be used to meet visual quality objectives.

2383.5 - Fire. Use "Fire," Agriculture Handbook 608, to understand how fire can be used as a useful tool to achieve desired visual objectives.

2383.6 - Ski Areas. Use "Ski Areas," Agriculture Handbook 617, to see how landscape management techniques and principles can be used in the planning, designing, and building processes to

achieve and maintain desired visual conditions during the construction of winter sports developments.