

# VISUAL QUALITY

## A VISION

The forest is visually attractive, and while providing for the various demands and needs, it appears natural.

This looks into the future, although some may be happening now. It is stated in the "present tense" as if it is already that way. This gives a feel of where we are heading. It paints a general picture with a broad brush.

## MANAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Manage the visual resources on the Forest according to the Visual Quality Objectives listed on the inventory maps.
- Utilize forest management activities to increase visual variety. Summarize what is in the standards and guidelines.
- Instill an awareness of, and an appreciation for the visual resource at all employee levels.

This snaps a more detailed picture. It gives a feel of the intent, purpose and goals. It is the framework for the standards and guidelines.

## Setting The Stage

"The American people are concerned about the quality of their visual environment. Because of this concern, it has become appropriate to establish the 'visual landscape' as a basic resource, to be 'treated as an essential part of and receive equal consideration with the other basic resources of the land' (FSM 2380). At the same time, public demand has increased for goods and services produced on much of the same land. It has thus become necessary to both inventory the visual resource and provide management of it." [from The Visual Management System, Chapter 1. USDA-Forest Service: Agricultural Handbook No. 462.]

"The majority of the recreation-oriented people who visit the National Forests have an image of what they expect to see. Such an image or mental picture is generated by available information concerning a particular area and the person's experience with that or similar areas. The image produced represents the knowledgability, expectedness, romanticism and emotionalism associated with features within the area. Obviously, several images may exist simultaneously, even within a single geographic region, and yet a particular geographic region tends to have an indentifiable image." [from Newby, Floyd. Environmental Impact Appraisal of proposed developments in the Hareny Peak Area of the Black Hills, Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experiment Station, USDA - Forest Service.]

## Standards And Guidelines

**VISUAL QUALITY OBJECTIVES...** Manage the visual resources on the Forest according to the Visual Quality Objectives listed on the inventory maps. Utilize forest management activities to increase visual variety. The overall goal is to meet the planned objective, however, this objective may be reduced by one

### C. Forest-wide Prescriptions

level to meet other resource goals on a case-by-case basis. Landscape rehabilitation will be used to restore landscapes to a desired visual quality. Enhancement may be used to increase visual variety when other management activities provide opportunities. [Visual Quality Objectives are based on the public's concern for scenic quality (sensitivity levels) as well as diversity of natural features (variety class). How the objectives are developed is discussed in The Visual Management System, Volume 1 & Volume 2, Chapter 1. USDA-Forest Service. Agricultural Handbook Nos. 434, 462.]

**WHEN THE FOREGROUND OBJECTIVE IS RETENTION OR PARTIAL RETENTION...** On most sensitive areas where the visual quality objective is foreground retention or partial retention:

- Dispose of all activity slash occurring within the immediate foreground (100 to 300 feet) of all sensitive travel routes, water bodies, and use areas. Visual impact should be reduced to meet partial retention either during operation or immediately after. Retention objectives should be met within one year of project completion.
- On less sensitive areas, dispose of all slash within 100 feet on either side of all sensitive travel routes, water bodies and use areas in retention and partial retention visual quality objectives.
- Revegetation will include 15% wildflower seed within 100 feet of any sensitive road or trail.

**VIEWSHED CORRIDOR PLANS...** The Forest will develop viewshed corridor plans for all sensitivity level 1 roads and all acres with a foreground retention visual quality objective that are scheduled for timber harvest.