

NOTE: This is only a partial report. Further sections are being developed.

## Introduction

The scenery of the Forest is among the amenities contributing to lifestyles and tourism in southwestern Wyoming and Northeastern Utah. Ashley National Forest lands provide a scenic backdrop for the travel, work, and play of daily life for area residents. The Forest scenery contributes to casual and inexpensive recreation experiences near home, and contributes to a general sense of well-being, security, and constancy. Many people point to their tie to the landscape, regardless of administration or ownership, as a positive part of living in the area. Beyond the local level, the scenery has been a deciding factor in creating several of the Forest's national designations, and is a draw for tourists. Moreover, the general scenic condition influences many people's opinions about ecosystem health and Forest management.

People view the Ashley National Forest from places within the Forest, and from roads, homes, and other areas off of the Forest. The assessment area includes all lands of the Forest and as well as places with views to the Forest (for analysis, views are limited to those within 15 miles of the area viewed).

Ag HB 701, Landscape Aesthetics, a Handbook for Scenery Management, provides the process used by the Forest Service to plan for and manage scenic resources. The components and an overview of the process are shown in the graphic below. Scenery management terms are defined in each section below and in the glossary. *(Need to add graphic)*

## Scenic Resource Management Direction

### National Direction

Forest Service Manual 2380.3 requires the agency to “inventory, evaluate, manage, and, where necessary, restore scenery as a fully integrated part of the ecosystems of National Forest System lands through the land and resource management and planning process. Scenery must be treated equally with other resources.” FSM 2380.31 specifies the use of the basic concepts, elements, principles, and variables defined in Ag HB 701, Landscape Aesthetics, A Handbook for Scenery Management.

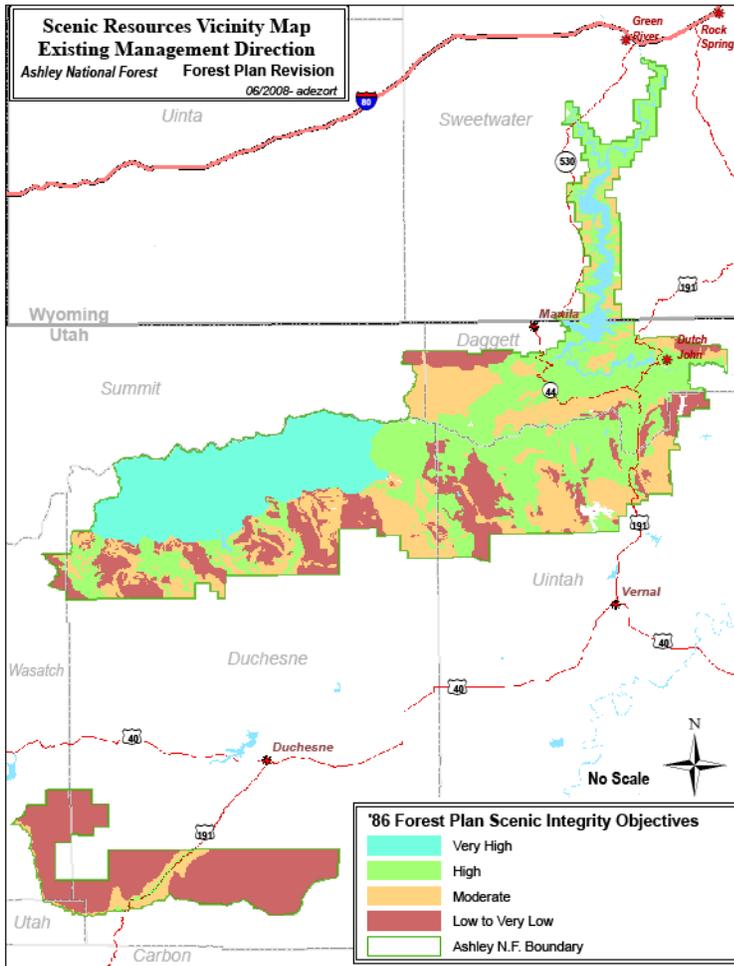
### Forest Direction

*The handbook used to manage scenic resources has changed since 1986. For consistency in this document the terminology of the Visual Management System used for the 1986 forest plan has been replaced with Scenery Management System terminology. Following a crosswalk in Ag HB 701, the objectives were converted so that they could be compared to existing condition maps and any forest plan revision proposal. Conversions are as follows:*

| Visual Quality Objective (VQO) |   | Scenic Integrity Objective (SIO) |
|--------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Preservation                   | ⇒ | Very High                        |
| Retention                      | ⇒ | High                             |
| Partial Retention              | ⇒ | Moderate                         |
| Modification                   | ⇒ | Low                              |

Maximum Modification ⇨ Very Low

The 1986 Forest Plan standards specify scenic integrity objectives (SIOs) by management area. In many management areas the objectives refer to inventory and other resource priorities. The direction is flexible, yet clearly discusses the need to consider effects to the scenery in project design. The existing inventoried objectives shown on the map below generally reflect direction from the plan.



The vicinity map shows Scenic Integrity Objectives consistent with the 1986 Forest Plan.

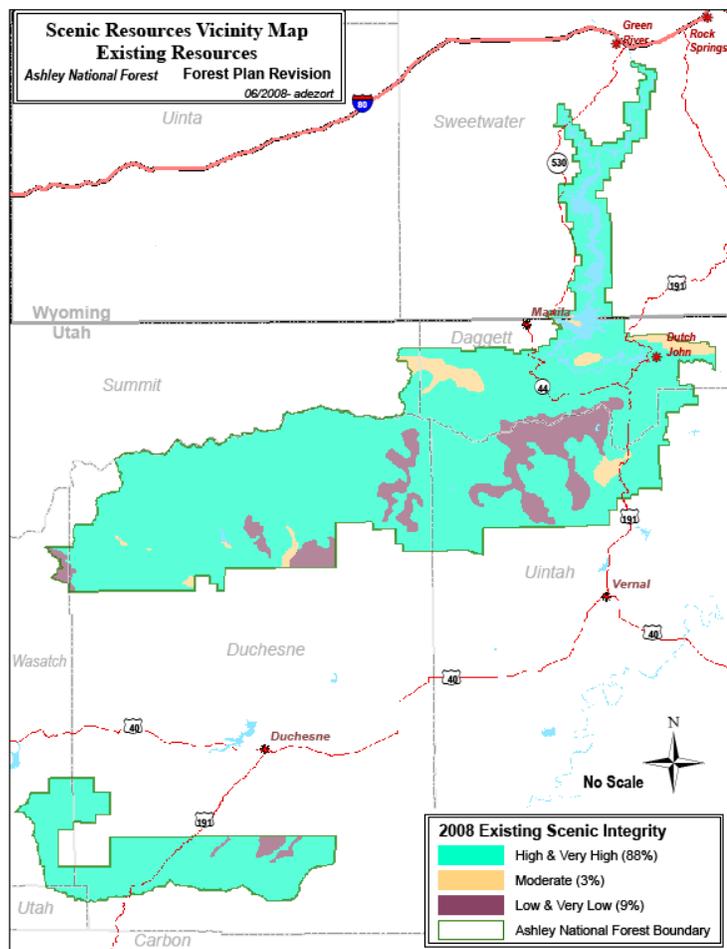
In some management areas the direction to meet Scenic Integrity Objectives is included as standards. In other areas it is stated as a value to be considered but should be reduced as needed to meet wildlife or other management area priorities and emphases. Areas with an objective of visual rehabilitation were not mapped and are not shown.

## Resource Condition - Existing Scenic Integrity Levels

Scenic Integrity is a measure of the degree to which the landscape is perceived as whole, complete, or intact. The levels of scenic integrity provide a relative measure of deviation from the characteristic landscape within an area. Existing Scenic Integrity maps show a benchmark condition from which to plan for future scenic resource management.

The results of the mapping show about percent of Forest land with low scenic integrity, most of which is the result of timber production (clear-cuts) and other traditional uses. Scenic integrity is high and very high on 88 percent of the Forest, moderate on 3 percent, and low to very low on the remaining 9 percent of the Forest. Detailed map layers and tabular data are stored in the project file.

*Existing Scenic Integrity Levels of High, Moderate, and Low were mapped in 2008. They show a condition of the land regardless of where the area is viewed from. This inventory is accurate only for large scale planning, and was not developed to reflect every visually evident deviation on the Forest.*



**Scenic Integrity Definitions:**

*Very High: The characteristic landscape is intact, with only minute deviations.*

*High: The characteristic landscape appears intact. Deviations may be present, but must repeat form, line, color, texture, and pattern common to the landscape character so completely and at such a scale that they are not evident.*

*Moderate: The landscape appears slightly altered. Noticeable deviations are visually subordinate to the character.*

*Low: The landscape appears moderately altered. Deviations may be dominant, but are shaped to borrow from the natural landform and other visual dominance elements (line, form, texture, color), and are subordinate to the characteristic landscape when viewed as background.*

*Very Low: Deviations are dominant, but borrow from the natural terrain, and other elements common to the characteristic landscape.*