

Scenery Management in Land Management Plan Revision



Figure 1. Cliff Lake, Superior Ranger District. USDA Forest Service photo by Callie Hunt.

Land management plans provide direction for the management of scenery. The 1986 Lolo National Forest Plan used the Visual Management System approach. The agency now uses the Scenery Management System.

What are the 2012 Planning Rule requirements for managing scenery?

The 2012 Planning Rule requires that a plan include plan components, including standards or guidelines, to provide for scenic character. When developing plan components, the responsible official shall consider scenic character and its aesthetic values, geologic features, scenery, and viewsheds.

What is the Scenery Management System?

The Scenery Management System National Inventory Mapping Protocol (2020) represents the agency's latest science in fulfilling its legal requirements for managing scenic resources. The protocol ensures that the same considerations are folded into each plan revision. The Scenery Management System integrates many concepts from the Visual Management System, but clarifies

terminology and establishes a more systematic approach to understanding scenery resources. The Scenery Management System emphasizes public input to inform inventories that support transparent consideration of scenery resources. There are multiple elements included:

1. Scenic Character Descriptions summarize the topography, water features, vegetation, cultural uses/influences, and recreation opportunities on the landscape.
2. Scenic Attractiveness identifies the degree of scenic diversity.
3. Concern Levels identify the importance of scenery to those viewing it.
4. Landscape visibility describes landscape sensitivity (how and where people view scenery).
5. Scenic classes are assigned based on the combination of concern levels and visibility, and indicate the importance of scenery for comparison with other resources.
6. Existing scenic integrity indicates the intactness of scenic character attributes.

How can the public be involved?

The public will have the opportunity to review Scenery Management System inventories during the development and review of the draft assessment. Then, the interdisciplinary team and public will work together to identify desired scenic integrity objectives during the development of the draft revised plan. Scenic integrity objectives guide implementation of the forest plan with respect to keeping desired scenic character attributes intact.