

APPENDIX E

Visual Quality Objectives Descriptions

VISUAL QUALITY OBJECTIVES DESCRIPTIONS

The Visual Quality Objectives (VQOs) convey a desired level of excellence based on physical and sociological characteristics of an area. The objectives refer to the degree of acceptable alteration of the characteristic landscape, based upon the importance of aesthetics. The degree of alteration is measured in terms of visual contrast with the surrounding landscape. There are five VQOs; provided below are summaries of the VQO descriptions:

- **Preservation (P):** This VQO allows ecological changes only. Management activities, except for very low visual impact recreation facilities, are prohibited. This VQO applies to Wilderness areas, primitive areas, other special classified areas, areas awaiting classification, and some unique management units that do not justify special classification.
- **Retention (R):** This VQO 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 qualities of size, amount, intensity, direction, pattern, etc., should not be evident.
- **Partial Retention (PR):** This VQO provides that management activities remain visually subordinate to the characteristic landscape. Activities may repeat form, line, color, or texture common to the characteristic landscape, but changes in their qualities of size, amount, intensity, direction, pattern, etc., remain visually subordinate to the characteristic landscape. Activities may also introduce form, line, color, or texture that are found infrequently or not at all in the characteristic landscape, but they should remain subordinate to the visual strength of the characteristic landscape.
- **Modification (M):** This VQO provides that management activities may visually dominate the original characteristic landscape. However, activities of vegetative and land form alteration must borrow from naturally established form, line, color, or texture so completely and at such a scale that their visual characteristics are those of natural occurrences within the surrounding area or character type. Additional parts of these activities such as structures, roads, slash, root wads, etc., must remain visually subordinate to the proposed composition. Activities that are predominantly introduction of facilities such as buildings, signs, roads, etc., should borrow naturally established form, line, color, and texture so completely and at such scale that their visual characteristics are compatible with the natural surroundings.
- **Maximum Modification (MM):** This VQO provides that management activities of vegetative and landform alterations 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 may not appear 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 (Forest Service 1974).