

File: 16250-01

August 25, 1997

To: All Regional Managers
All District Managers

From: Henry Benskin, R.P.F.
Director
Forest Practices Branch

**Re: Visual Landscape Inventory Standards and Procedures and interim direction
respecting analysis**



Enclosed is a copy of the *Visual Landscape Inventory: Procedures and Standards Manual* for your information and use.

These procedures and standards have been developed in consultation with your staff (see attached memo from Tom Hall) and have been approved by me, Director Forest Practices Branch and Data Custodian for this business area. They have been submitted to the Resources Inventory Steering Committee and have been accepted as Ministry of Forests standards.

These procedures and standards will evolve over time. The need for change and improvement will be identified through continued training, testing and field application. To maintain version control, any needed changes will be reviewed and incorporated into this document annually after each field season.

During the development of these procedures and standards, Recommended Visual Quality Objectives (RVQOs) were removed from the inventory in order to keep the visual landscape inventory and analysis functions separate. This clarification of the inventory function , however, did not address the need to clarify how to carry out a visual landscape analysis, how to manage visually sensitive or scenic areas in absence of VQOs, or how to establish VQOs.

Interim Analysis Direction

Your staff have requested that we provide some interim direction on carrying out visual landscape analyses, and developing recommendations for the planning and management of areas in the absence of VQOs.

Consequently, the following interim direction for visual landscape analyses is provided for your consideration and use:

1. The current term Recommended Visual Quality Objective (RVQO) should be dropped and replaced with the term Recommended Visual Quality Class (RVQC). This name change will clarify the distinction between an objective established under the Forest Practices Code and staff advice recommended as a result of a visual landscape analysis.
2. A Recommended Visual Quality Class (RVQC) should be understood to be a specialists recommendation that describes the level of alteration that would be appropriate for a visual sensitivity unit considering visual and other resource values.

The RVQC does not comprehensively consider all socio-economic factors, is not determined through a planning or decision making process and is not necessarily endorsed by government or other stakeholders. RVQCs are not established VQOs under the Forest Practices Code.

3. RVQC's should be determined and recorded as follows:

- determine a default RVQC based on the VSC by using the following table:

Visual Sensitivity Class (VSC)					
	1	2	3	4	5
RVQC	P-R	R-PR	PR-M	PR-M-MM	M-MM

- determine a final RVQC, based on professional judgement and guided by long-standing but largely undocumented experiences and methods.
 - record the default and final RVQC and where the default and final RVQCs are different the record the rationale for this difference on the attached form.
4. Uses of RVQC's include:
 - input to planning processes;
 - input to TSR II (where the RVQC reflects current management practice); and
 - operational guidance for managing visual resources in lieu of established VQOs.
 5. RVQC's may be derived at the time an inventory is completed if requested by a district manager or planning process but must be kept separate from inventory data.
 6. RVQC's will be stored digitally as an administrative attribute within the corporate recreation inventory data base.

7. As visual landscape inventories and analyses are updated RVQO's on existing visual landscape inventories should be deleted, and interim RVQC's should be entered as an administrative attribute.

To ensure visual quality classes are recommended more consistently across the province in the future, Forest Practices Branch staff will work with your regional visual landscape specialists to develop visual landscape analysis procedures and standards for your review. This work will be done in conjunction with the development of a new visual resource policy. Ultimately, old RVQO's and interim RVQC's should be reviewed in light of the new policy that will be developed.

In you have any questions or would like additional information please call Jacques Marc, Senior Visual Resource Specialist at (250) 387-8481.

Henry Benskin, R.P.F.
Director
Forest Practices Branch

Attachments

cc: Tom Hall, Manager, Information, Evaluation and Audit Section
Jacques Marc, Senior Visual Resource Specialist, Forest Development Section