

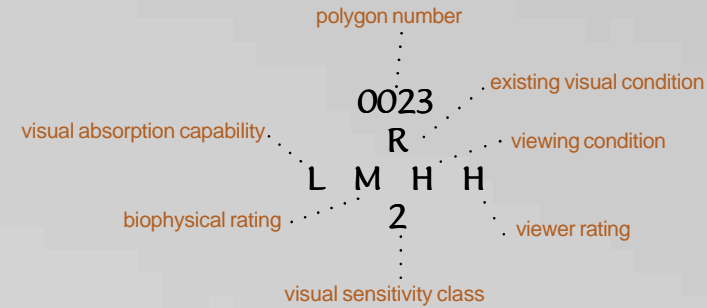
Landscape as seen in perspective view or in a photograph

A

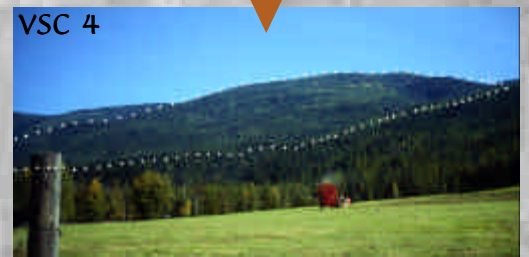
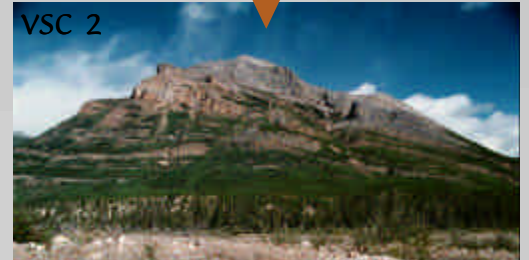


Interpreting Inventory Symbols

The notation or code on the map contains abbreviated information describing each unit. Units are delineated based on landforms and what is visible from different viewpoints. Each letter describes a characteristic of the unit and the final number ranks the sensitivity of the unit to alteration.

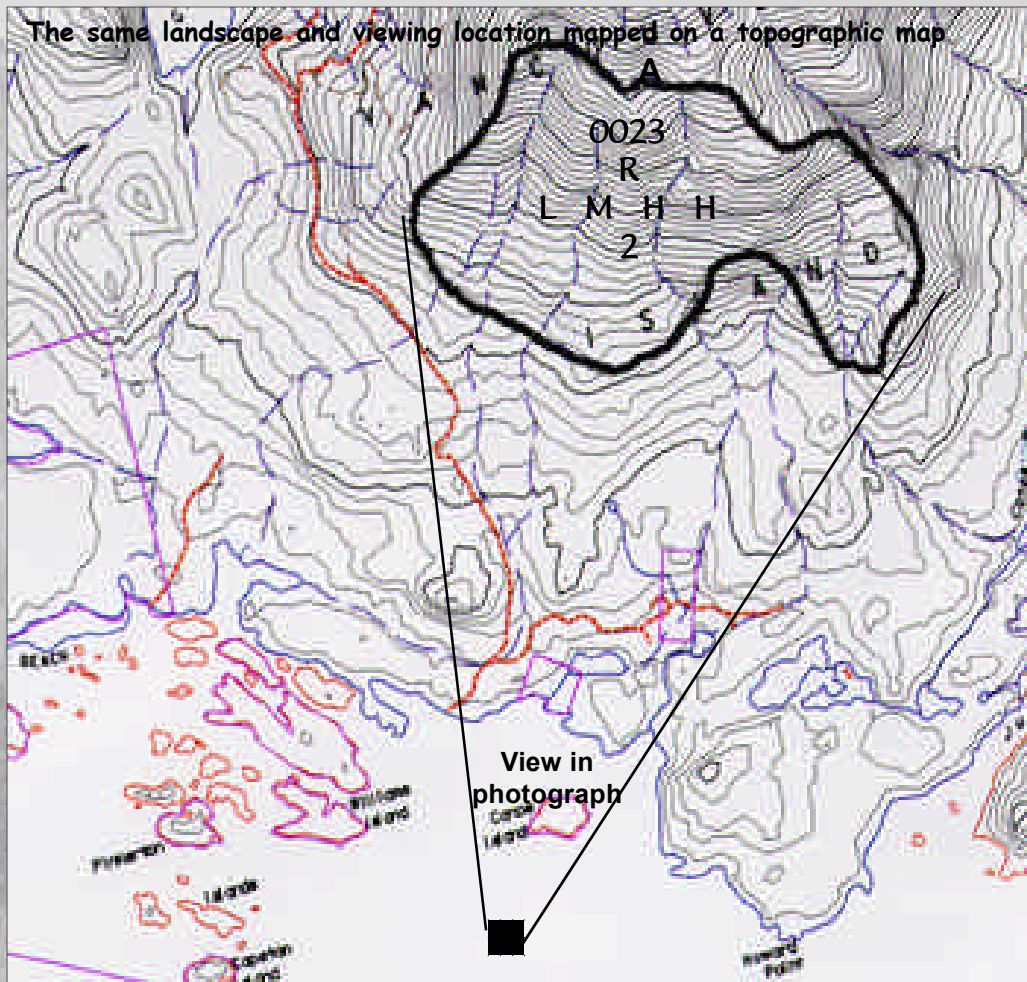


Extremely important to viewers
Very sensitive to alterations



Somewhat important to viewers
Low sensitivity to alterations

The same landscape and viewing location mapped on a topographic map



Existing visual condition (EVC):

identifies the existing level of human-made alteration on the landscapes at the time the inventory is conducted. The scale is preservation, retention, partial retention, modification, maximum modification and excessive modification. Unaltered landscapes are rated as preserved.

Visual absorption capability (VAC):

rates the relative capacity of a landscape to absorb human-made alterations and still maintain its visual integrity. The scale is high, medium and low. The higher the rating the greater the ability to absorb alteration.

Biophysical rating (BR):

identifies the degree of visual interest in the landscape and rates the level that it would attract viewer attention. The scale is high, medium and low. The higher the attraction, the more sensitive the landscape.

Viewing condition (VC):

records the conditions under which the landscape is viewed such as viewing duration and number of viewpoints. The scale is high, medium and low. The higher the rating the more you see the landscape and the more sensitive it is.

Viewer rating (VR):

measures the number of people and their expectations for visual quality. Ratings are high, medium and low. The higher the rating, the more people view the landscape and/or are more concerned.

Visual sensitivity class (VSC):

rates the sensitivity of the landscape to visual alteration based on biophysical and viewing characteristics listed above. The rating scale is 1 to 5. Class 1 is extremely sensitive to alteration and class 5 has low sensitivity to alteration.

The photographs to the right show representative landscapes and their corresponding VSC.

The Value of Scenery

BC residents have more leisure time than ever before and regularly visit the forests for relaxation and recreation. Social values of the forest have a high profile.

A burgeoning tourism industry requires a scenic backdrop to sell its products and continue to attract visitors.

History of Visual Resource Management

Historically, scenery was not managed or considered a resource in BC forests. The forests were managed for timber and were not open to the general public. That changed in 1962 when the public had access to forest roads. Many of the people who went into the forests to recreate were dismayed at the large, unattractive clearcuts. This led to a need to manage scenery as a forest resource similar to water quality and wildlife habitat. By 1981, visual resource management was integrated into forest management and is now required by law.

Purpose of the Visual Landscape Inventory

The visual landscape inventory provides information about the visual condition, characteristics and sensitivity to alteration of areas and travel corridors throughout the province. It flags areas of the province that warrant special attention in land use and forestry planning because of their sensitivity to visual alteration.

The first step towards managing the visual resource is to identify what is important and where it is located.

How is a Visual Landscape Inventory Used?

A Visual Landscape Inventory is part of forest planning and land management. The ratings on the units allow land managers and foresters to know where the most important views are. With this knowledge they can alter the shape and amount of trees left standing within a logging opening to minimise their visual impact. This way the visual impact of the logging will not have a detrimental effect on recreation and tourism values.

Reassessment

A visual landscape inventory is usually updated every five years. During this time frame new logging may have occurred and older logging will have more vegetation cover, changing the appearance of the vegetation on the unit. A new resort may mean an increase in the sensitivity of nearby landscapes. Conversely, closure of a resort may decrease the sensitivity.

New areas may be added to the visual landscape inventory and other areas may be deleted. If a new road has been built realigned, an area previously hidden from sight will be exposed to view.

You Can Get Involved

Public input into the visual landscape inventory is essential to ensure the inventory is complete. With a good inventory, foresters can make better decisions about managing land to provide for outdoor recreation.

Visual Landscape inventories are updated every five years. Stakeholders, recreation groups and knowledgeable individuals are asked for input through mail surveys, interviews, Open Houses, and notices in newspapers. Recreationists and stakeholders can provide information such as: the location of important scenery, viewpoints and recreation use areas.

You may view local visual landscape inventory maps at Ministry of Forests District offices. You can also visit the Provincial Visual Landscape Inventory at its website.

Keeping Track of Our Scenic Resources



The Ministry of Forests

Visual Landscape Inventory

For more information or to view the Provincial Recreation Inventory contact the BC Ministry of Forests at:
Ministry website: www.gov.bc.ca/for
Inventory website: <http://142.36.141.130/webrec/index.html> or <http://recreation.e-maps.ca/>