

Appendix D  
Viewer Platform Design





## Viewer Platform Design

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### Purpose

Structures in **immediate foregrounds** of important national forest travelways and recreation areas often require special consideration in meeting scenic condition objectives.

### Discussion

- When travelers move through a landscape, while in a somewhat modified setting, they should obtain impressions that they are viewing a natural-appearing landscape outside the immediate foreground. The somewhat modified immediate foreground setting of their own viewer platform (a road, for instance) is accepted as a necessary component allowing them to experience the greater landscape. Thus, expected images of naturalness exist for the foreground, middleground, and background that do not exist for the immediate foreground.
- Scenery management strives for excellence in design of all structures to be viewed. Not only should they blend sufficiently with the backdrop at greater distances to meet strict definitions of scenic condition objectives, but they should be positive additions to landscapes when viewed in immediate foreground.
- Those structures serving purposes other than scenic viewing and recreation should ordinarily be located at sufficient distances from such routes and use areas that they can meet the definitions of the scenic condition objectives. Obviously, an alternative is to completely screen them from view from such routes and areas. Another alternative is to design them to effectively mimic positive cultural elements identified for landscape character goals. A further alternative is to incorporate and conceal them in a structure that serves scenic and recreation purposes.

- Where structures must also meet ROS setting needs, it is necessary to identify the recreation opportunity class of an area and determine if uses and structures are consistent with settings. If not, structures should be designed and located in an appropriate ROS setting or denied as an inconsistency.
- Structures required for serving public use of scenic and recreation resources include viewing platforms, such as roads, parking areas, trails, trail heads, buildings, decks, observation points, ski lifts, and so on. To be functional, these facilities are normally visible in immediate foregrounds and often create more contrast than will be acceptable in areas designated for retention and partial retention scenic condition objectives.
- They are actually a part of the expected image of the public being served. However, allowable limits of contrasts only go to the extent that functions of structures are served. They should also reflect design excellence. Such structures should be a positive element of the built environment that does not detract from scenic experiences. Structures should blend into the landscape while still retaining their function. They should be an indicator of sensitive land stewardship.
- Travel route structures need to be clearly distinguishable for a distance commensurate with normal speeds or intended use of such routes. For functional and safety purposes, a road and its safety markers and signs need not be distinguishable in middleground distances. Therefore, more distant portions of a road and its appurtenant structures should meet scenic condition objectives and be judged on that basis. Appurtenant structures exempted from meeting scenic condition objectives in immediate foregrounds may include those associated with roadways as well as other structures, such as an interpretive sign or kiosk, visitor center, observation point, resort or winter sports complex, or similar recreation and tourist facilities.
- However, utility structures along travelways and in recreation sites, such as storage tanks, communication structures, or electrical transmission facilities, that are not directly used by the public and do not need to be distinguished by them should be judged as structures serving purposes other than scenery and recreation. They should meet scenic condition objectives, even when viewed in foreground.



