

Appendix H Examples of Scenic Integrity Levels

This chapter contains photographs and narrative descriptions of the six scenic integrity levels. As explained in Chapter 2, scenic integrity is a continuum that is subdivided into six levels, from very high to very low. By no means does a single photograph of a landscape provide a complete picture of the scenic effects of a management activity. Therefore, each discussion of the scenic integrity level achieved in the photograph refers only to perceptions gained in the context of that view.

Note to reader: The terms that are used to describe the following examples are from the original Visual Management System. The cross-walk below will assist in making the transition from the old terms to the new terms.

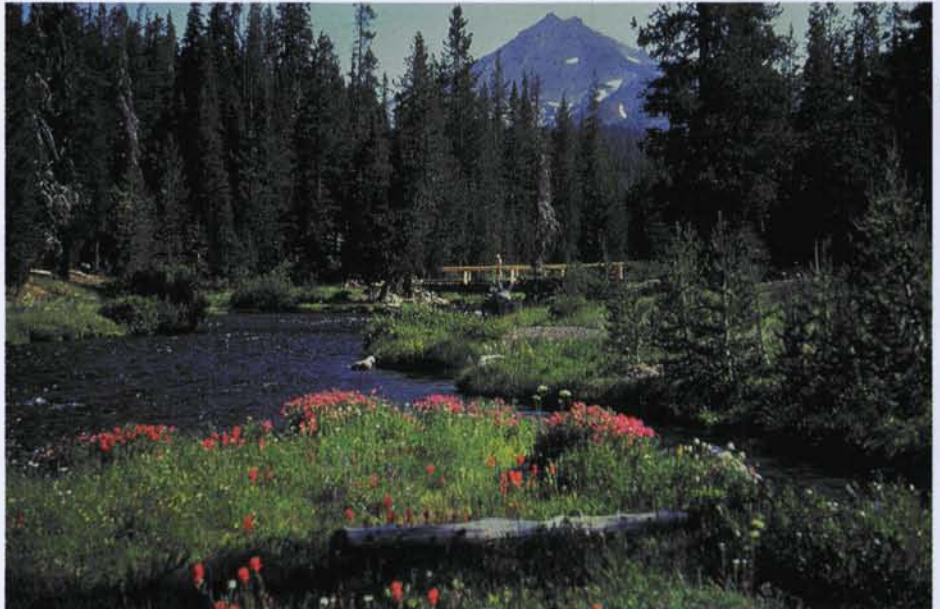
<u>SMS</u>	<u>VMS</u>
Very High	Preservation
High	Retention
Moderate	Partial Retention
Low	Modification
Very Low	Maximum Modification

Preservation



Wilderness

This heavily traveled trail in the Daniel Boone National Forest creates enough contrast to be noticed, but, when viewed from beyond immediate foreground distances, would not be evident in this natural-appearing landscape. This is an excellent example of the **preservation** scenic condition level.



Wilderness

This bridge of native materials and simple design, located in the Three Sisters Wilderness in Oregon, is an appropriate example of low impact recreation development for **preservation**. When the new pole railings weather to a natural grey color, the structure will blend in better than it does in this scene.

Preservation



Wilderness

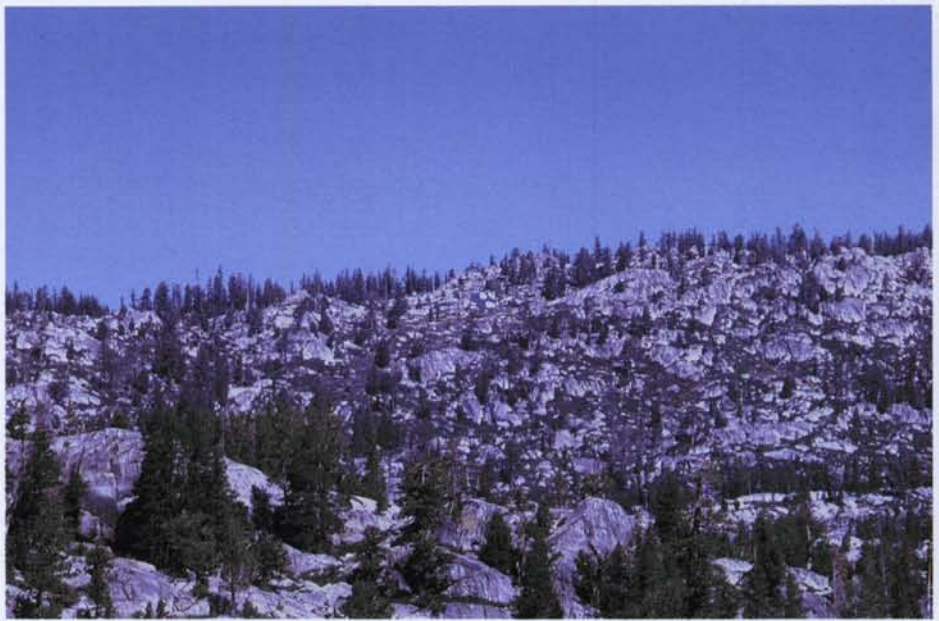
This camping area meets the **preservation** scenic condition level. The evaluation of this site is based upon the path clearing and sign only. There are no controls over the colors of backpacks and tents, although they blend with fall colors at this time of year. It is necessary that a camping area be visible in immediate foreground, but at middleground and background distances, any sign of human occupancy must fade out of view in the natural landscape character.



Special Interest Area

Brice Creek, a coastal stream in the "black water area" of the Croatan National Forest in North Carolina, is an excellent example of management for **preservation** scenic condition level in an area of special interest.

Retention



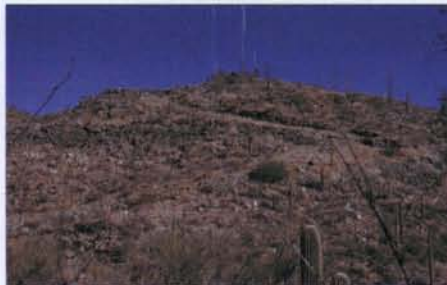
Passive Relay Electronic Site

This is an outstanding example of siting and camouflage painting of a huge rectangular structure. The paint colors and pattern mimic those of the natural landscape character. The location takes advantage of visual absorption capability and avoids any potential for skyline silhouetting of the structure. The passive relay is on Carson Pass Highway, a State scenic highway in California, passing through the Eldorado National Forest. This structure retains the natural character and condition of the landscape. It is not evident unless attention is directed to it. Even though this is a telephoto view, the scene meets **retention**.



Electronic Site

This series of four photographs, taken in the Coronado National Forest in Arizona, illustrates details of reducing visual impact of large structures through techniques of paint color and pattern. The slim-line tower design keeps it imperceptible at distance zones from far-middleground to background views. As is true for many structures that must be located on ridgetops and are subsequently silhouetted, the site does not achieve **retention** in the foreground, but, from distant-middleground and background, where it is primarily viewed, it remains virtually unnoticed.



Retention



Boat-in Campground

This boat-in campground in the Ottawa National Forest meets **retention**. The evaluation of the scenic condition level of this site is based solely on the path clearing and sign. There are no regulations governing the colors of boats or canoes. It is necessary that the sign be visible in foreground views, but at middleground and background distances the trailhead and sign fade out of view in the existing landscape character. Given the colors of the simple vertical lines of tree trunks, the sign color might have been selected to blend more with the backdrop, yet be clearly visible.



Avalanche Control "Jet Roofs"

Because of their function, "jet roofs" utilized for highway avalanche control must often be seen as silhouetted structures against the skyline. At Carson Pass in the Eldorado National Forest, they are viewed in middleground near the focal point of the scene. The "filtered screen" of structures repeats the line of the mountain ridgeline. From this distance, the "jet roofs" are on the low end of **retention**. Selection of colors from gray-tan to gray instead of the rust color may have reduced the contrast and raised the "jet roofs" to a solid **retention**.

Retention



Stream Improvement

This log across a stream in the Green Mountain National Forest helps create improved conditions for watershed and fisheries. The log has been sensitively placed and appears to be natural. Although it may have caused a tiny waterfall to form, thus deviating from the natural landscape character, a fallen log in a forest stream is a common occurrence. This scene meets **retention**.



Fish Structures

The boulders placed in this stream in the Huron-Manistee National Forest are of such natural sizes and shapes that it is difficult to know for certain if they were placed there by humans. The boulders provide both cover and stream flow rate diversity for aquatic life while maintaining or enhancing the natural scenic beauty of the stream. The uneven distribution, uneven depths, and variable sizes of boulders create an outstanding example of **retention** with structural elements added to the landscape.

Retention



Fish Structures

Placement of fish structures in the Huron-Manistee National Forest may achieve the objectives of fisheries management, but the structures barely meet a high scenic integrity level. If there were some larger boulders in this natural-appearing landscape character, their use as "anchors" for the "islands and peninsulas" of small rock piles would have improved the naturalness.



Wildlife Pond

This pond in the Mark Twain National Forest appears to be natural. Close inspection reveals its human-caused origins. The site has outstanding vegetative recovery. The duration of visual impact is expected to be a few months because of the abundance of water and fertile soil. Although this wildlife pond may not have been common to the natural-appearing landscape character, the subtle departure to meet other resource objectives is probably not evident, nor disagreeable, to most people.

Retention



Wildlife Pond

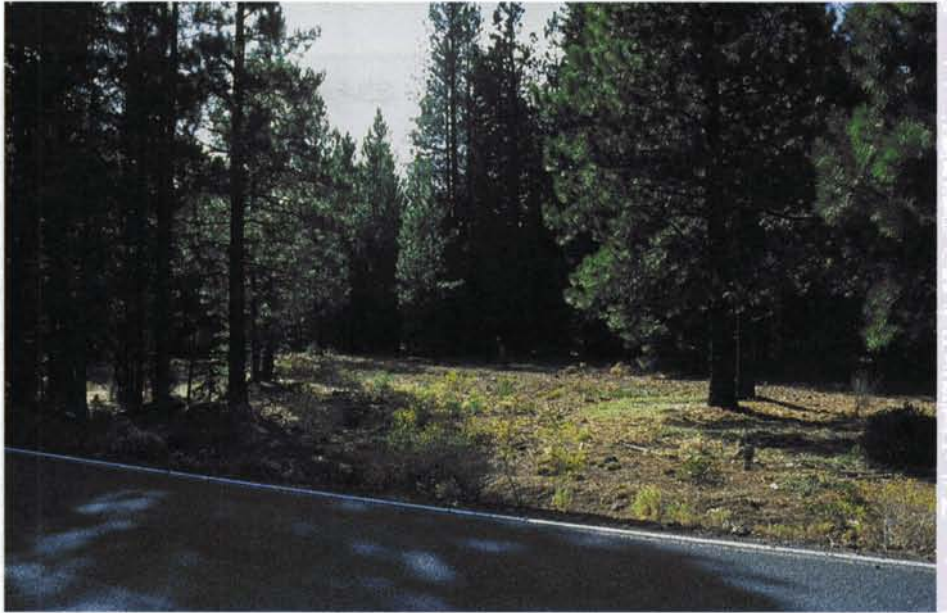
A reclaimed clay pit in the Thunder Basin National Grassland near Upton, Wyoming, is now a bass fishery. The landform shaping and revegetation blend beautifully with the landscape. This pond in the Western plains may not repeat characteristic waterforms, but it probably enhances landscape attractiveness. Such departures from the natural landscape character would not normally be viewed as negative by the public. This wildlife pond meets **retention**.



Range Management

Grazing land in the Mark Twain National Forest is managed in a manner that is natural appearing. The patterns of grasses, wild flowers, shrubs, and trees make this scene difficult to distinguish from a natural landscape. It meets **retention**.

Retention



Fuelbreak/Timber Harvest

This foreground view shows a forest fuelbreak in the Klamath National Forest. The vegetative recovery by grasses, combined with the presence of low stump heights and the absence of debris, makes it difficult to discern whether this is a human-altered roadside. Maintenance of individual trees, together with variations in lower-limb pruning, improves the natural appearance. The project achieves **retention**.



Fuelbreak

This fuelbreak in a forested site is located in the Wenatchee National Forest. It meets the low end of **retention**. It could have been raised to a solid **retention** if the stumps had been somewhat lower (flush-cut), better screened by grasses and groundcovers, or manually covered with duff and needles. The diversity of groundcover, most importantly the inclusion of leave-trees of varying sizes in the opening, improved the natural appearance of the project.

Retention



Timber Harvest

This timber harvest, combining overstory removal/shelterwood/group selection, on a foreground ridge in the Klamath National Forest, was helicopter logged. The only possible evidence of any activity on this ridge—the uneven tree height on the middle section—would probably not be noticed by anyone but forest managers and woodworkers. The mixed species and patterns of this forest landscape do not draw attention to such subtle differences. It meets **retention**.



Timber Management

This roadside scene of a managed timber stand in the Chequamegon National Forest would be considered a natural landscape by most people driving along the highway. However, closer inspection reveals some remaining brush piles and piled cordwood further back in the newly opened stand. When the brush is removed or scattered, and the cordwood is hauled off, this site will meet the upper end of **retention**. This opening in an otherwise dense forest may vary from the natural-appearing landscape character, but it would likely be a positive change associated with a selected landscape character goal.

Retention



Reforestation

This area in the Wayne-Hoosier National Forest has been planted with yellow poplars in the immediate foreground and with white pine behind. It has the appearance of an abandoned field that will one day be a forest again. The plantings are not evident in the scene. It barely meets **retention** and could be considered to fall between **retention** and **partial retention**. However, it is probably looked upon as a positive deviation from the natural-appearing landscape character.



Cable Logging

A view from U.S. Highway 219 of a uniform textured ridge of timber on the Monongahela National Forest reveals no tell-tale linear vertical pattern of the cable logging that has taken place. This is an excellent example of **retention**, because cable logging in a continuous, even-textured forest ordinarily makes it difficult to achieve **retention**.

Retention



Timber Management

This roadside view into a timber stand in the White Mountain National Forest provides a natural-appearing scene to most people. Forest managers and woodworkers would be able to distinguish this as a managed forest with trees removed. The dense vegetation in the immediate foreground helps to screen off views into the forest that might reveal stumps. It easily meets **retention**.



Timber Harvest

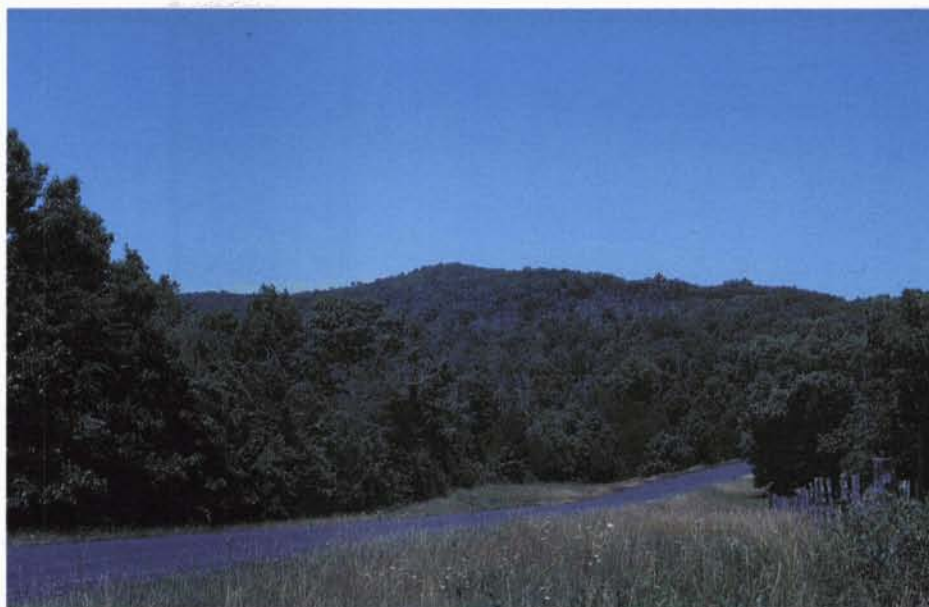
A timber harvest, located in the middleground in the Sequoia National Forest, repeats some of the lighter patterns created by rock outcrops. Since this timber harvest lies on a ridge top and has excellently feathered edges, the open forest appears natural. It is an outstanding example of **retention**, because it borrows so heavily from form, line, color, and texture of the natural landscape character that it appears to be a natural occurrence.

Retention



Timber Harvest

This timber harvest in the Lolo National Forest in Montana is evidenced only by a slight discoloration in some areas. Most people would interpret the timber harvest as an area of subtle soil color changes. As seen from above, the site benefits from considerable vegetative pattern and several natural, barren soil patterns on the left. The major concern of scenery and recreation managers was to meet **retention** from a trail below. **Retention** is met because the harvest is not evident from the trail.



Seed Tree Cut

This seed tree cut was carried out in the Mark Twain National Forest. There is subtle evidence of a reduction in tree crown density on the left near the ridgetop. The photograph was taken from off the roadway so that the reduction in tree crown density is distinguishable. In some sidelighting conditions, the break in the tree-canopy texture may be more pronounced. From this viewpoint, the cut meets the lower end of **retention**.

Retention



Road

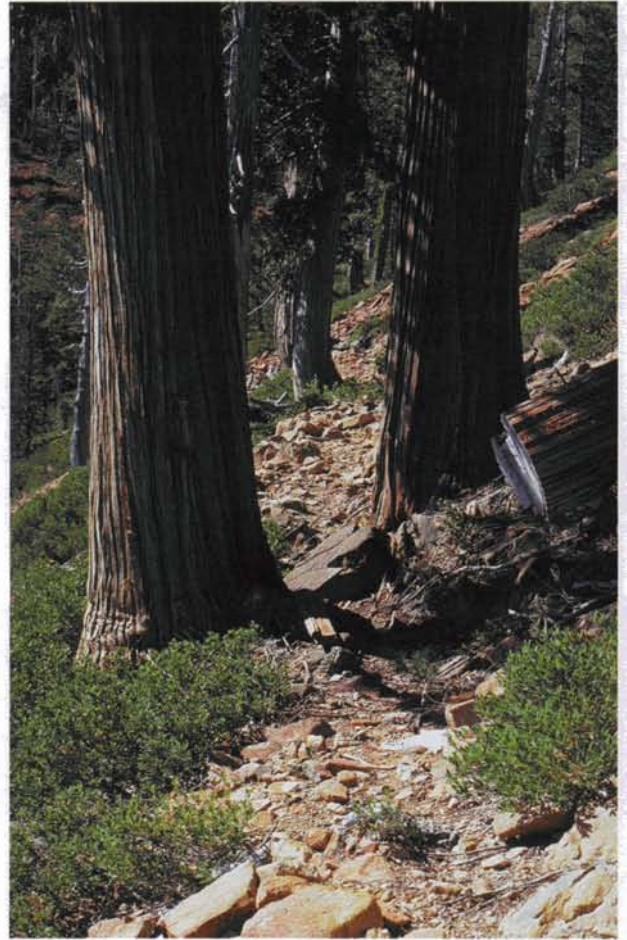
The North River Road in the Cherokee National Forest lies lightly on the land. Even when viewed as foreground, the natural-appearing edge effect, reduced cut and fill slopes, and fall colors tend to soften the visual impact of the road. Ordinarily, a long road tangent has a strong negative visual effect. This road blends with the landscape and meets **retention**.



Trail

This trail in the Huron-Manistee National Forest in Michigan lies lightly on the land and creates minimal visual impact. Although there is no functional reason to align the trail in a more curvilinear nature, to do so could further improve the scenic condition by making the trail invisible in middleground. The trail meets **retention**.

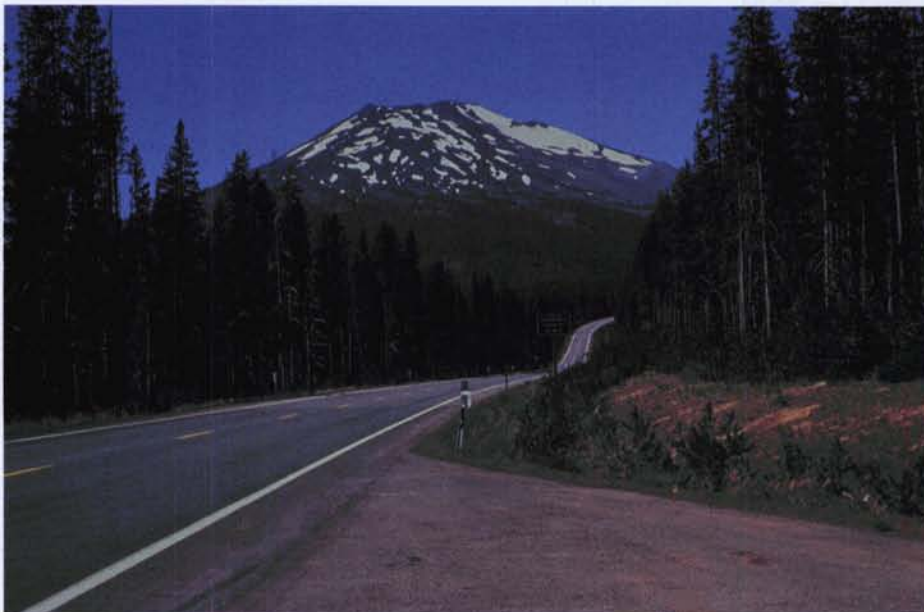
Retention



Trail

This trail in the Klamath National Forest creates only enough contrast to be noticed. Beyond immediate foreground distances, it would not be evident in this natural landscape character. The rocky trail repeats the appearance of the naturally occurring rocky slope with its scattered groundcover of low shrubs. The sawn log, however, detracts from the natural appearance. The trail itself represents an excellent example of achieving **retention**.

Retention



Winter Sports Site

These two early summer views of Mt. Bachelor Ski Area, located in the Deschutes National Forest in Oregon, exemplify excellent planning, design, and construction of a major ski facility in a landscape with good visual absorption capability. Summer offers the highest visual contrasts, yet the ski area easily meets **retention**. Above is a normal view from Century Drive, a National Forest Scenic Byway, and below left is a telephoto view from the same observer position. Numerous ski runs, chairlifts, maintenance roads, and a day lodge are visible from the highway, yet they remain virtually unnoticed unless pointed out. The computer graphic below, by revealing areas of low visual magnitude, enabled the planning team to decide where the new Pine Marten day lodge would be constructed. Existing ski area facilities are located in the red, orange, and yellow zones that indicate areas of highest visual magnitude.



Retention



Winter Sports Site

With the Three Sisters Wilderness in the background, the Pine Marten Lodge and top terminal of a detachable-quad chairlift at Mt. Bachelor Ski Area are very evident when seen from ski runs above timberline. The ski facilities are located on a barren, rocky topographic bench at timberline. Because of careful landscape architectural design and material selection, the form, line, color, and texture of the lodge borrow from the natural landscape. The lodge and chairlift terminal are quite evident to skiers and are their expected image, yet the structures blend very well and remain virtually unnoticed when seen from Century Drive National Scenic Byway. (See photo on opposite page.) This is an excellent example of recreation structures in the landscape meeting **retention**.



Underburn

This immediate foreground view in the Croatan National Forest in North Carolina shows an area of longleaf pine trees that has been recently underburned. The area has revegetated sufficiently to meet **retention**. Before revegetation, it probably met **partial retention** for one growing season.

Partial Retention



Powerline

It appears that an attempt was made to reduce contrasts of cross-arms for this powerline viewed as foreground in the White River National Forest. The contrast of poles with the lighter backdrop, however, causes the structure to be quite evident. The strong verticals of the conifers naturally dictated that horizontal forms should be minimized. This powerline barely achieves the **partial retention** scenic condition level from this distance, although it may achieve a higher level when viewed from middleground. Use of gray green poles in this particular section of powerline could have possibly moved this project to the high end of **partial retention** from foreground distances.



Powerline

Another section of this powerline achieves the high end of **partial retention** due to the dark-colored poles against a dark backdrop. If it would have been technically feasible to eliminate the short crossarms, the visual evidence of the powerline would have been further reduced. Flat, low reflectivity colors against dark forest vegetation greatly aid the achievement of **partial retention**.

Partial Retention



Created Openings

The created openings in this middleground landscape are evident but do not visually dominate. They are in scale and shaped like natural openings. This scene meets **partial retention**.



Microwave Repeater Station

A microwave installation in the Sequoia National Forest is located on 9,900-foot Sherman Peak. Fortunately, the natural landscape character has a dominant pattern of rock and vegetation. The structures, located on the silhouetted ridgeline in a rocky component of the landscape, have colors that emulate those of the rock. All structures are in scale with those of the natural landscape and generally repeat the horizontality of the rockforms. The station is evident—not enough to be a focal point—and it meets **partial retention**. Use of some camouflaging techniques, such as those illustrated in the passive relay in the **retention** series, could have further blended the structures on the left. Use of a light gray-blue paint on the elevated dish may have been another desirable alternative.

Partial Retention



Overstory Removal

This overstory removal is located along a major highway in the Bitterroot National Forest in Montana. The road and landing at the back of the unit are not evident; however, the activity slash and debris is evident but not visually dominant. This harvest activity meets **partial retention**.



Stream Improvement

A low log dam in the Green Mountain National Forest in Vermont was constructed to improve the stream for aquatic life and watershed purposes. At this distance it is quite visible. Once the decision is made to use log construction, there is little to borrow from the natural-appearing landscape character. The zig-zag form of the logs reduces the impact of a straight line, but in itself creates another unnatural form. The dam achieves a scenic condition level between low **partial retention** and high **modification**. It could have blended better if it were less symmetrical and if the logs had been overlapped rather than butted, thus more closely resembling natural windfall logs in a stream. If the dam had been built with rocks, the dam may have met **retention**.

Partial Retention



Stream Improvement

Log-cover structures, located on the shore of the Paint River in the Ottawa National Forest, provide cover and flow diversity. They borrow from naturally occurring characteristics of down trees in the stream. Although this scene is natural appearing, the uniformity of the nearest structure on the right strongly hints of human intervention. The scene meets **partial retention**. Introducing greater variation in log size, leaving branches on the logs, and creating less uniformity in spacing of the downstream “stringers” might have led to the achievement of **retention**.



Wildlife Habitat Improvement

A wildlife brush-crushing project in the Klamath National Forest helped create the conversion to a more usable vegetation condition. There are indications of color contrasts in the slope and some rather sharp contrasts of color on the upper edges of the project at mid-slope. This project meets the lower end of **partial retention**. Reduction in the sharper contrasts on the upper edge of the treated area through feathering of brush might have raised its rating to a solid **partial retention**. Because of these sharp upper edges, the project draws attention to artificial, rather than natural, focal points.

Partial Retention



Fuelbreak and Road

A fuelbreak was developed in the Los Padres National Forest. The fuelbreak borrowed from the tendency of the existing landscape character to be more barren on ridgetops having shallow soils. The islands and peninsulas of shrubs allowed to remain in the fuelbreak were key to the reduction of visual contrasts. The road lies lightly on the landscape and is only intermittently visible from this viewpoint. The scene is an outstanding example of **partial retention**, perhaps at the upper end. A bit more feathering of the near ridge could have further improved the quality of the scene.



Fuelbreak and Road

Another fuelbreak, also in the Los Padres National Forest, shows immediate foreground and middleground detail. Again, individual and groups of small trees and shrubs have been retained within the fuelbreak to create a more natural-appearing condition that detracts little or nothing from the effectiveness of the fuelbreak. From this viewpoint, the road is barely discernible in the middle of the photograph through the fuelbreak. The fuelbreak seems to “belong” and clearly meets **partial retention**.

Partial Retention



Created Opening

A created opening viewed as middleground in the White Mountain National Forest creates shadow patterns on the far edge of the opening. That line of shadow, however, emulates the undulating ridgelines above. The lighter color of the regenerating timber attracts considerable attention, but has textural contrast. This project now achieves the lower end of **partial retention**. If there were an opportunity to soften the shadow pattern by selective thinning at the far edge, it is likely that the resulting feathering would have raised this to a solid **partial retention**.



Created Openings and Structure

Another example in the White Mountain National Forest also creates heavy shadow patterns on the far edge. Only the middle of the three vegetative alterations allows a view of the lighter color and smoother texture of the regeneration unit. The patterns formed by these created openings borrow from the upper ridge line and intermediate low ridge. The structure in back of the beach is aided by its linear form and park walls. The reflectivity of the roof creates a color and texture contrast. The scene barely meets **partial retention**. If the lower created openings were separated into two or three units to break up the linearity, and if the roof of the structure were darker, it would have better met **partial retention**.

Partial Retention



Timber Harvest

This two-stage timber harvest in the Pisgah National Forest in North Carolina was carefully designed and implemented to borrow from all the elements found in the natural-appearing landscape. The irregular shape, heavily feathered edges, and carefully selected leave-trees of varying sizes create a natural appearance. Because the timber harvest is a noticeable human activity to forest visitors, it meets the definition of **partial retention**. However, in 1-to-2 growing seasons, the area will “green-up” and probably meet **retention**.



Roadside Opening

Situated in the Allegheny National Forest, a roadside opening, which probably provides some visual and spacial relief along a tunnel effect roadway, has been created. It has recovered with grasses and other low vegetation, but some lopped branches are indicative of a recent project. Possibly, the limbless tree trunk was retained to provide interest and character, but it stands out strongly from the multi-storied edge. This project barely meets **partial retention**.

Partial Retention



Created Opening

These two views of the same scene in the Allegheny National Forest demonstrate the effect of seasons upon achievement of scenic condition levels. The primary scenic factor is the heavy shadow created by the rear edge of the created openings in both summer and winter. As might be expected, the problem is greater in the summer "leaf-on" period when there is less light filtering through the forest. The front edge of the created openings borrows line from the natural-appearing landscape character and blends beautifully in both seasons. The rear shadowed edge borrows from the ridgeline above, but creates a rather heavy contrast. The winter scene is a good example of **partial retention**, but the summer scene barely achieves it. The best means of reducing the contrast of these created openings may have been to thin and feather the rear edge. Incidentally, these scenes also provide a vivid comparison of the effect of seasonal variations on the vegetative screening on the structure in the middle foreground. What meets **retention** in summer would barely meet **modification** in winter.

Partial Retention



Shelterwood Timber Harvest

This foreground view in the Sequoia National Forest resulted from a shelterwood cut. The only evidence of the activity are some stumps and the heavier tree density in the rear. The road near the back is barely distinguishable. Retaining several small fir trees amongst the large red-barked character trees undoubtedly improved the scenic attractiveness of the site. The sensitive cutting and cleanup of this project cause it to meet the high end of **partial retention**.

Partial Retention



Shelterwood Timber Harvest

This middleground view of a project in the Klamath National Forest reveals an area harvested by the shelterwood method. It borrowed from the natural opening on the ridgetop. Its design might have borrowed from the natural light-green opening on the right, but it would have been difficult to emulate the greens of wetter sites. Slight evidence on the left and top of the shelterwood of a skid trail or some other linear disturbance is not sufficient to cause the activity to dominate the scene, but without the surrounding natural openings, it could have become dominant. It barely meets **partial retention**. More feathering of the edges on the two sides and retaining clumps of trees would have created an even higher level of scenic condition.



Shelterwood Timber Harvest

This shelterwood harvest in the Klamath National Forest was carried out by helicopter; thus, roads would not have a potential impact. There were few shapes and patterns from which to borrow in the natural landscape character. However, the excellent transition of the edges into the surrounding forest makes this a good example of **partial retention**.

Partial Retention



Timber Harvest

This is another Sequoia National Forest foreground view where the timber harvest activity appears to have removed all of the larger trees. A linear pattern at mid-slope and at the bottom of the scene would seem to indicate the existence of roadways. Logging debris and fresh stump faces are fairly evident. This project falls into the lower end of **partial retention**. Cleanup of logging debris and a growing season to heal the groundcover could raise it to the upper end of **partial retention**.



Partial Removal Timber Harvest

In this foreground view in the Willamette National Forest, a partial removal cut was made to harvest timber. It is virtually impossible to distinguish a landscape alteration, except for some exposure of the ridgetop landform. This scene meets the high end of **partial retention**. Lighter cutting on the ridgetop could have raised the achieved scenic condition level to **retention**.

Partial Retention



Partial Removal Timber Harvest

This foreground view in the same forest illustrates a “clump and randomly spaced” timber removal project. The primary evidence of the activity is the high limbless condition of the larger trees. To most people, it would appear that this forest differs only slightly from the adjacent forest. Conversely, forest managers would immediately see the area as a heavy partial removal cut. Cleanup has been thorough, and the majority of the scene has a natural ground appearance of outstanding quality. Slight evidence of logging debris appears in the upper right.

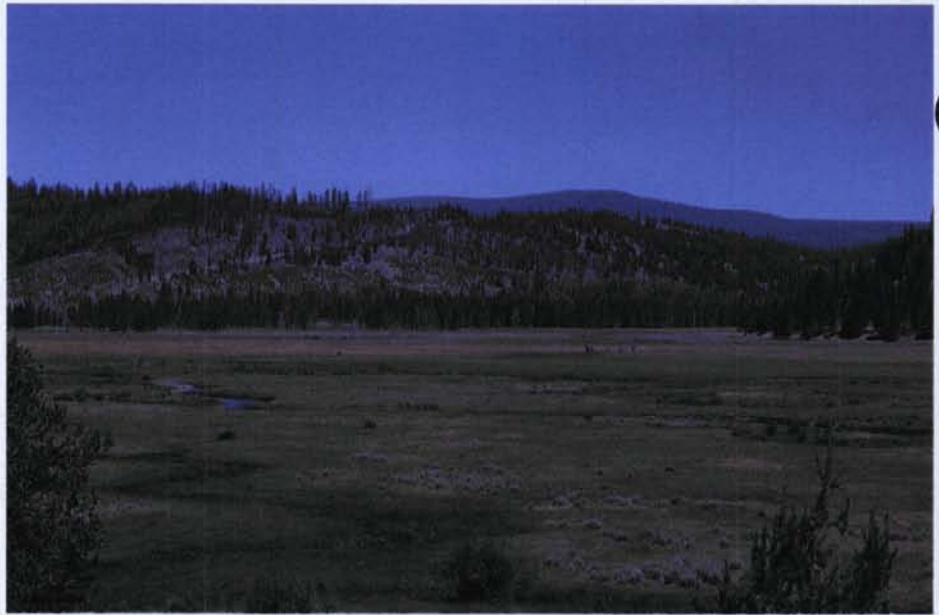
Partial retention has been solidly met.



Underburn

The immediate foreground in this photograph, taken in the Deschutes National Forest, shows a forest area that was lightly underburned to improve its visibility and to reduce fuel loading. The color contrast created by the leaf and needle die-off clearly makes it evident that something has happened here. Given some time, the scorched leaves and needles will fall off and significantly reduce color contrasts. At the time of the photograph, the low end of **partial retention** was met.

Partial Retention



Road

This is a middleground view of a road in the Fremont National Forest. The road, rather than the fire scar, is being evaluated in this scene, although both appear to barely meet **partial retention**. The road may have been a solid **partial retention** prior to the fire, which removed some of the vegetative screening. The soil color contrast of the road is a key factor in increasing its visibility. It also appears evident that the lower part of the hill has either burned or has been vegetatively altered in the past, as it lacks the characteristics of the natural cover.



Road

This foreground/middleground summer scene in the Allegheny National Forest is bisected by a road. Summer is probably a more critical season than winter for color and texture contrasts. The slight notch in the treeline silhouetted against the sky, together with the shadow pattern in the right one-third of the scene, creates the only visual evidence of the road. Therefore, it meets **partial retention**.

Partial Retention



Road

This foreground/middleground scene in the Crooked River Valley of the Ochoco National Forest is traversed by a highway. The alignment of the highway and the relationship of its structure to the clearing width mimic the river and its adjacent meadows. The color contrast of the highway is moderate. The highway is evident, but does not form a focal point in this powerful landscape, which has its own strong focal points of the river amidst the meadows, the distinctive silhouetted rockforms on the left, and the convergence of lines in front of the more distant mountain ridge. The dark soil colors in the cut banks on the left greatly enhance the scene. This is an outstanding example of **partial retention**.



Trail and Road

A trail is shown crossing a slope in this national forest in Montana. The trail has little opportunity to borrow from the natural landscape character from this vantage point, but it undulates similarly to the ridgetops, and its dominance is broken up by its intermittent visibility. The road at the bottom of the hill is also intermittently visible. Once again, a powerful landscape draws focus to other points, such as the knob-ridge in the center right, the distant mountain ranges, and the distinctive spire-like trees on the open ridge. The trail and road meet **partial retention**.

Partial Retention

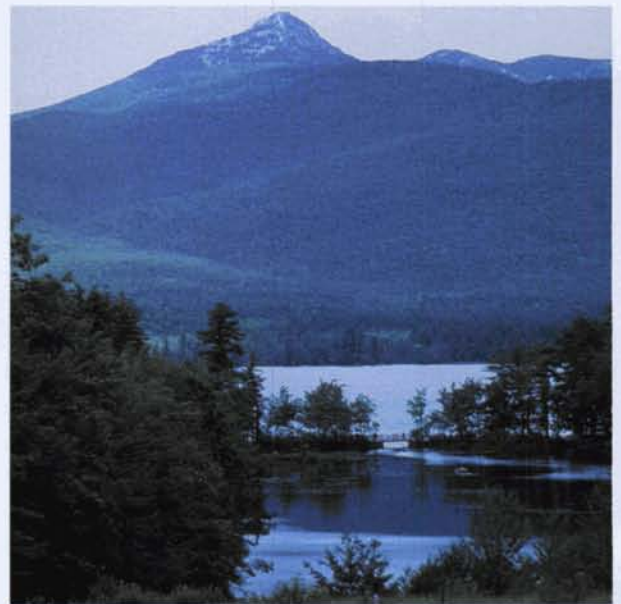


Trail

A middleground view in the Russian Wilderness of the Klamath National Forest reveals a section of the Pacific Crest Trail on the upper slopes of steep mountains. The trail crosses through drifts of conifers, rocky areas, and brushfields. The greatest visual problems are the soil color contrasts that create an unnatural line in the evenly textured, dark-green brushfields. On the right half of the photograph, the trail is undetectable except for two or three short segments. Where it passes through the rocky areas on the left, it is barely distinguishable. The trail forms a linear pattern that is too smooth to borrow from any part of the natural landscape character other than possibly the background mountain silhouette. Achieving **retention** would have required a longer trail that switched back up the rocky areas, entered conifer stands, then followed more of the rocky areas. The only other way to reduce contrasts in the brushfields would have been to clear brush in patterns, borrowing from the shapes and textures of the rocky areas. This is **not** permissible in wilderness. The trail meets **partial retention** from this viewpoint.

Trail Bridge

A trail bridge connects two promontories on a lake in the White Mountain National Forest. The powerful landscape draws some attention away from the light bridge structure. The structure carries out the horizontal line of the two peninsulas jutting into the lake. It is evident, but does not detract from the scene. It meets **partial retention**.



Partial Retention

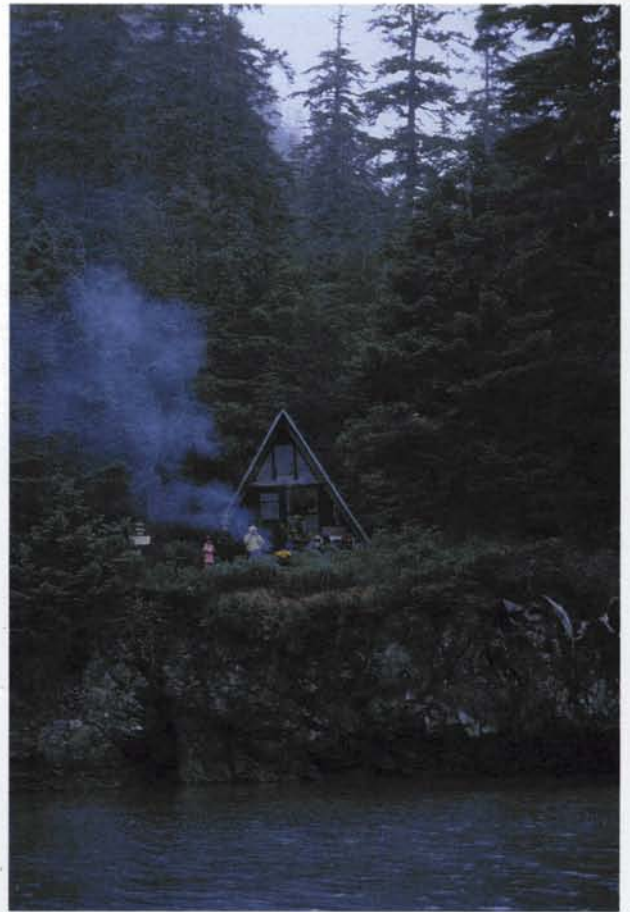
Structure

In this scene at Coghill Lake in the Chugach National Forest, a trailhead structure stands out in the immediate foreground. This "stairs trailhead," common in Alaska but not elsewhere in the Forest Service, gives access to people from the shore up a steep, rocky bank. The major visual contrasts are the vertical lines and uniformity of the steps. Time might possibly reduce the color contrast as the wood turns gray. At this distance, the trailhead structure meets **partial retention**. From middleground distances, it is likely to be undetectable and would meet **retention**.



Structure

Another immediate foreground view of a scene in Alaska's Prince William Sound reveals a cabin located just onshore. The shape of the A-frame cabin reflects the shape of the conifers, and its dark color borrows from the shadows. Only the yellow sign and the people in brightly colored clothing draw attention to the site. The cabin structure meets **partial retention**. It might have been simpler to tuck the cabin behind the trees, consequently raising the structure from **partial retention** to **retention**.



Partial Retention



Winter Sports Site

This middleground view in the Eldorado National Forest reveals a major ski area development. The cabin at the right meadow-treeline edge is on private land, while the ski area lies beyond on the right of the mountain backdrop. The primary evidence of the development from this view is the vegetative clearing for the chairlift in mid-photo and a ski run down the forested slope on the right. The ski run design borrows from natural openings in the existing landscape character. The line created by chairlift clearing was too narrow to emulate the existing landscape character. This is an example of **partial retention**. Additional clearing of trees to create a more natural opening for the chairlift could have further improved the scenic condition of the landscape, but could have created unfavorable conditions, such as excessive winds, for people riding the lift.

Winter Sports Site

This is the same ski area viewed with a telephoto lens in the summer a few years later. The resort configuration ties in with the tree patterns, but the roofs create less than desirable reflectivity. The new runs and slope stabilization material colors do not completely blend into the natural landscape character. The reflections off the chairlift are distracting. Yet without a telephoto, the site continues to meet **partial retention**—although at the lower end. Reduction in reflectivity of the structures and feathering the sharp even edge of the new ski run (as seen mid-photo) would help greatly.



Partial Retention



Ski Area Structure

This is an immediate foreground view of a ski patrol hut in the Eldorado National Forest. The hut was built of on-site stone, tied into a natural light to dark gray volcanic rock formation at the crest of the mountain. It successfully borrowed color, texture, and scale from the existing landscape character. The form suffers more than necessary from the human tendency to build with cubes and rectangles. The hut meets **partial retention** despite the small but sharp contrast of the light-gray square corner on the left backed by the dark rock backdrop. A more natural shaping on the left side and a more uneven roof line on top, together with the use of some dark rock in that corner of the structure, might have helped blend it into this unique site. Furthermore, it may have been possible to develop a more natural window shape that did not exhibit the use of traditional window hardware. This hut might have been an excellent example of **retention** if a bit more creativity had been applied in its design and construction.

Modification



Electronics Site

An electronics installation in the Los Padres National Forest is silhouetted against the sky. It is clearly dominant and forms a focal point in foreground views. These structures are of an appropriate scale to repeat the sizes of rock outcrops and are painted in flat tones common to this existing landscape character. Vegetative screening of the lower structures would have been desirable. The scene meets **modification**.

Gas Exploration

An immediate foreground scene in the Monongahela National Forest illustrates the results of gas exploration. The linear scar has been reshaped and seeded. Some rocks protrude to break up the contrast. Neither vegetative debris cleanup nor scattering is sufficient to move this foreground view beyond the **modification** scenic condition level.



Modification



Microwave Installation

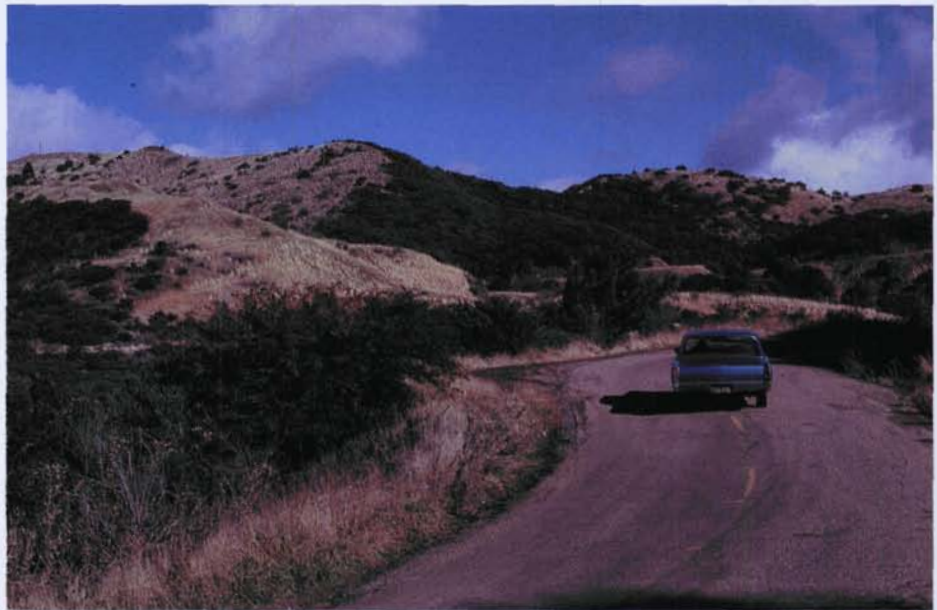
A middleground view in the Great Plains of the Nebraska National Grassland shows the difficulty of blending structures into a natural-appearing landscape character that lacks diversity. The steel lattice tower helps reduce visibility, but necessary bulky hardware on the tower top creates a definite focal point. Even the use of light gray-blue, flat paint may not be adequate to reduce the contrasts. The focalization on this tower is greatly increased due to its placement on the lonely knob of wooded landscape in a sea of flat land. The installation meets **modification**.



Stream Improvement

This pleasant setting—an immediate foreground view of a stream improvement structure—is located in the Monongahela National Forest. The evenness and uninterrupted exposure of the log dam is enough to lower this scene barely into the upper end of **modification**. Several large borders in front to break up the exposure of the waterfall over the log would have raised the scene to **partial retention**. Additional use of rocks might have moved it up to **retention**.

Modification



Fuelbreak and Road

This ridgetop fuelbreak in the Los Padres National Forest borrows forms that resemble natural patterns in this chaparral landscape. Only the sharp edges of grass and brush bring an unnatural element to this scene. The road in the middleground at the right is also dominant, primarily because of the horizontal line it introduces. Both the fuelbreak and road meet **modification**.



Created Opening

Continuous forest texture, seen in this middleground view in the Pisgah National Forest, makes it difficult to introduce any clearings that do not attract attention. The shape of the opening follows a slight side ridge and borrows diagonal lines from that form. The freshness of the broadcast burn and lack of any regrowth creates high contrast in color and texture. The shadow line stands out on the far edges. The road through the center of the clearing is evident but not a focal point. This project meets the low end of **modification** at the time of this photograph. It would be expected to move up to the high end of **modification** by the end of one growing season. Feathering of the sharp edges could have further reduced their visual contrasts.

Modification



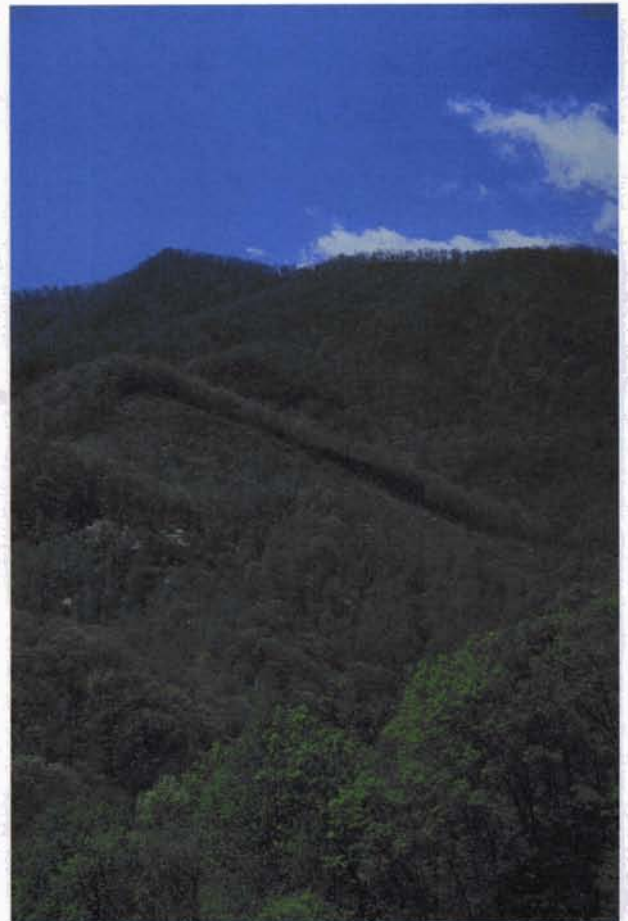
Final Harvest

A foreground view in the Allegheny National Forest reveals a timber harvest area following the last stage of tree removal. Edges are strong in contrast, but logging debris, although visible, is not dominant in this scene. This scene meets the low end of **modification**. Reduction in edge contrast is necessary to bring this landscape up to the middle or high end of **modification**.

Created Opening

This foreground view of another created opening in the Pisgah National Forest demonstrates high degrees of varying contrasts between the near and far edges of the opening. The near edge blends exceedingly well and appears to be feathered. Typically, the far edges are more critical because of their sharp edges, color and texture contrasts, and prominent shadows. This forest opening repeats the line of the ridge upon which it lies, but is so close that it introduces a heavy linear component. The opening forms a focal point that dominates the scene.

It meets **modification**.

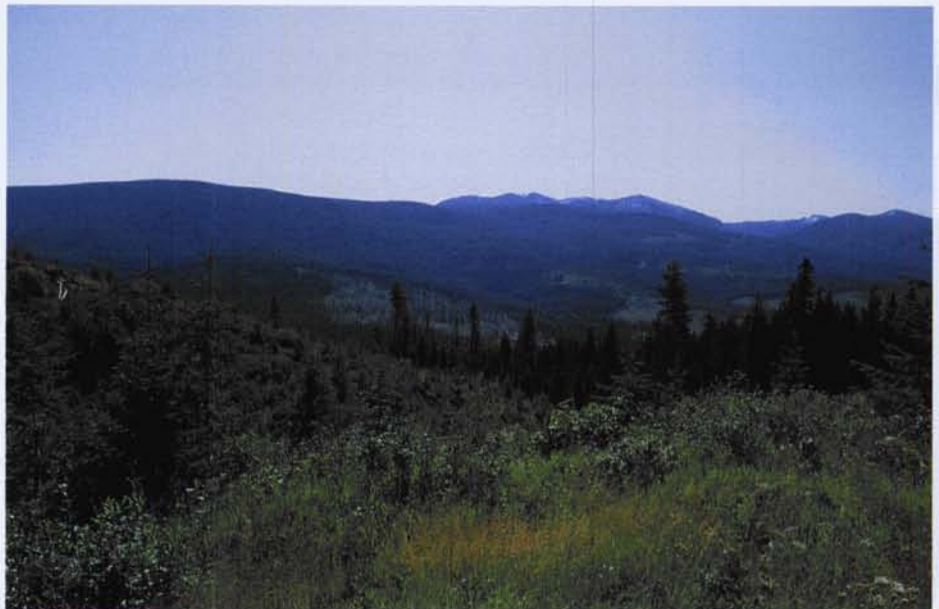


Modification



Roadside Timber Harvest

This immediate foreground view in the Allegheny National Forest in Pennsylvania illustrates an opening created by a timber harvest at the roadside. The maintenance of a screen of young trees helps to mute the contrasts. No sharp edges are visible, except for the logging residue at the extreme left. From this viewpoint, the project meets the upper end of **modification**.



Created Openings and Shelterwood Harvests

This scene in the Northern Region illustrates the effects of several timber harvest openings. The shapes of the openings resemble natural forms in this existing landscape character. One exception is the lowest opening at the middle right, which has far too straight an upper edge. The patterns of the openings relate well to each other, yet they dominate the landscape. With the one exception stated, this is an excellent example of **modification** for multiple timber harvests.

Modification



Created Openings

This middleground view in the Jefferson National Forest in Virginia illustrates the effects of well-designed and skillfully implemented created openings in an extremely sensitive scenic area. The shapes of these openings borrow from the natural ridgelines. Feathering the far edges could have reduced the linear effect of the shadows. This is an excellent example of the high end of **modification**.



Green-Tree Retention

A middleground view in the Mt. Hood National Forest includes this “green-tree retention” timber harvest on the left side of the photograph. The landscape character has some subtle vegetative patterns, including the natural opening on the right. The shape of the introduced opening borrows somewhat from those patterns. The size and color contrast are strong enough to cause the opening to be dominant, drawing attention. This scene meets the high end of **modification**. If a few more full-crowned trees had remained in the harvest area, it would have met **partial retention**.

Modification



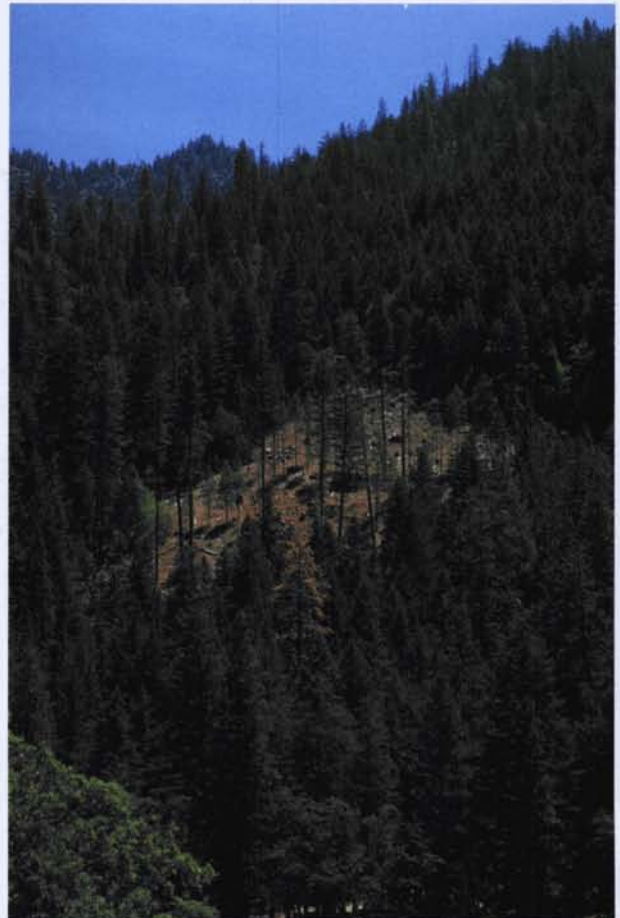
Created Opening

This detailed immediate foreground view in the Willamette National Forest exposes a recently broadcast burned regeneration harvest unit. Color contrasts of the burn are strong. The opening meets foreground **modification**. Upon greening-up of the burn, it may stand out even more until the regeneration reaches a sufficient height for effective screening.

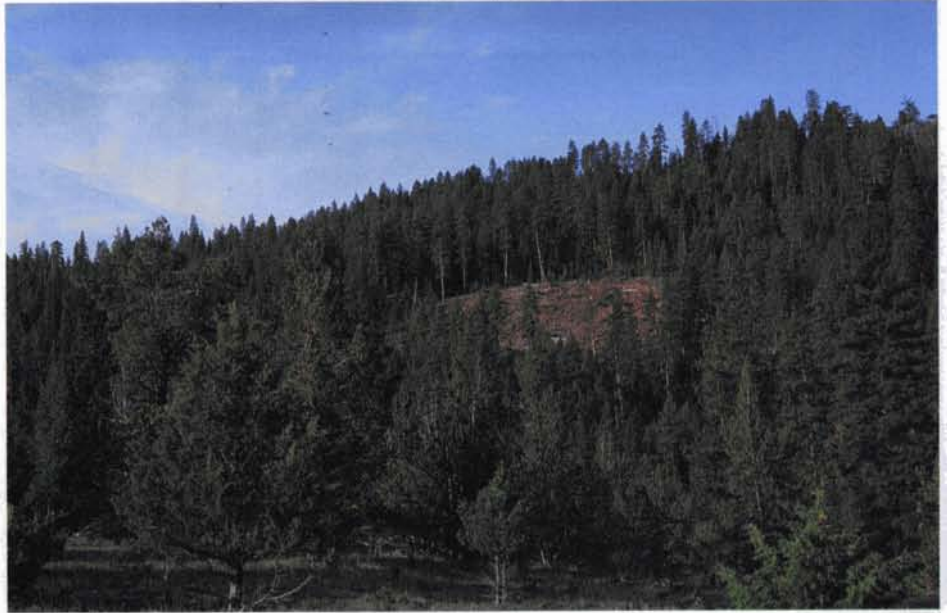
Seed Tree Cut

This Klamath National Forest scene provides a detailed foreground look into a seed tree timber harvest unit.

Soil color contrast is high on this recently logged site. Saving seed trees and scattered young trees in the opening helps greatly to soften the visual impact. Logging residue is subordinate to the remainder of the activity, as specified for foreground **modification**.



Modification



Small Created Opening

A small created opening is located mid-slope on a small ridge in the Fremont National Forest. This foreground view indicates that the logging residue is subordinate to the remainder of the activity as it should be. The soil color contrast is quite high at completion of logging. This created opening meets **modification**.



Created Opening

This created opening, seen in the foreground near the skyline in the Fremont National Forest, shows some soil color contrast. It is located at a point that creates focal attention near a small rounded ridgetop. The road on the upper side of the created opening and the logging residue are subordinate to the remainder of the activity. Cable-line scars remain but are not dominant. Islands of small trees are retained in the opening between cable-line corridors. It meets **modification**.

Modification



Timber Thinning

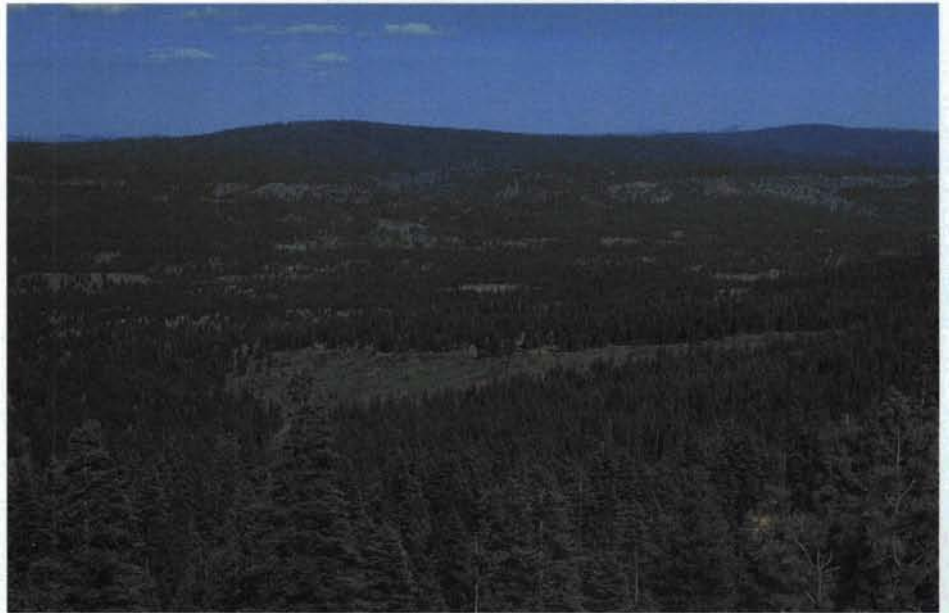
In the Malheur National Forest, a thinning project in the foreground has altered the landscape. Logging residue is heavy and the reflectivity of the slash remains dominant. Once the slash is removed, the project should easily meet **modification**. Retaining a few untreated islands of various sized tree clumps may have allowed it to move up into **partial retention**, following cleanup activities.



Created Openings

A mountainside in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest was altered by a series of created openings after insect infestation. This is a difficult landscape; it is steep and has an even texture of tall conifers. The picturesque ranch competes for attention. There are a few natural rock outcrops at the top right that have color and texture characteristics similar to the exposed soils in the created openings. The created openings borrowed from the natural openings, but perhaps the larger one is out of scale. The harvest included some helicopter logging, which reduced the impact of linear road clearings in this sensitive landscape. This is an example of **modification**.

Modification



Created Opening

In the Malheur National Forest, a middleground created opening emulates natural patterns of the natural landscape character behind it. Its linear form resembles that of the partial opening at the upper right but its apparent size is dominant. Soil color differs little from exposed grasslands in the scene. It easily achieves **modification**. It could have easily met **partial retention** if a few islands and peninsulas of trees had been left in the created opening to resemble the middleground patterns.



Created Opening

In Alaska, a middleground created opening is partially screened by foreground vegetation along the shoreline. Its shape and color are similar to the natural opening on the mountaintop to the left. The shadow pattern on the far side of the created opening produces considerable contrast with the lighter green interior, but that linear pattern undulates with the natural ridgelines. The opening meets the upper end of **modification**.

Modification



Created Opening

Another created opening in Alaska is shaped to a form that could be taken as “natural” in this landscape. Its degree of contrast forms a focal point, but borrows somewhat from the smaller natural openings above. The edge treatment is very well handled and is aided by the presence of dark vegetation intrusions. This is a good example of **modification**.



Created Opening

A created opening in Alaska generally demonstrates an appropriate scale and mimics the shape of the landform upon which it sits. The site has revegetated sufficiently to reduce color contrasts to a minimum, although texture contrast remains. The far edge shadow pattern creates the most dominant contrast but fades out on the right, where a shelterwood harvest has occurred. This project now meets the upper end of **modification**.

Modification



Road

The Moffet Road in the Roosevelt National Forest gracefully winds up the valley. Its alignment borrows from the landforms. Its color contrast creates its dominance. Soil color contrasts at this season are minimal. The cutbank at the upper curve blends exceedingly well, as do the cut and fill slopes on the mountainside above. The strong patterns of the natural landscape character do much to help reduce the dominance of the road. The valley highway is an excellent example of **modification**. The railroad grade across the right middleground slope is at the upper end of **partial retention**.



Road

A scenic road in the Pisgah National Forest traverses a landform having smoothly textured vegetative cover. The light color of the roadway sharply contrasts with the existing landscape character. Shadow patterns of cut slopes create additional attention to the road, yet the scale of the road is such that it meets **modification**. A darkened road surface might move this roadway up to the low end of **partial retention**.

Modification



Road

A road passing through the Coronado National Forest follows rather than fights the contours of the landform. The light color of the road surface sharply conflicts with the grassland cover. Soil color contrast is moderately low. From this viewpoint, the road meets **modification**. A darker colored road surface might have allowed this scene to reach the low end of **partial retention**.



Roads and Recreation Development

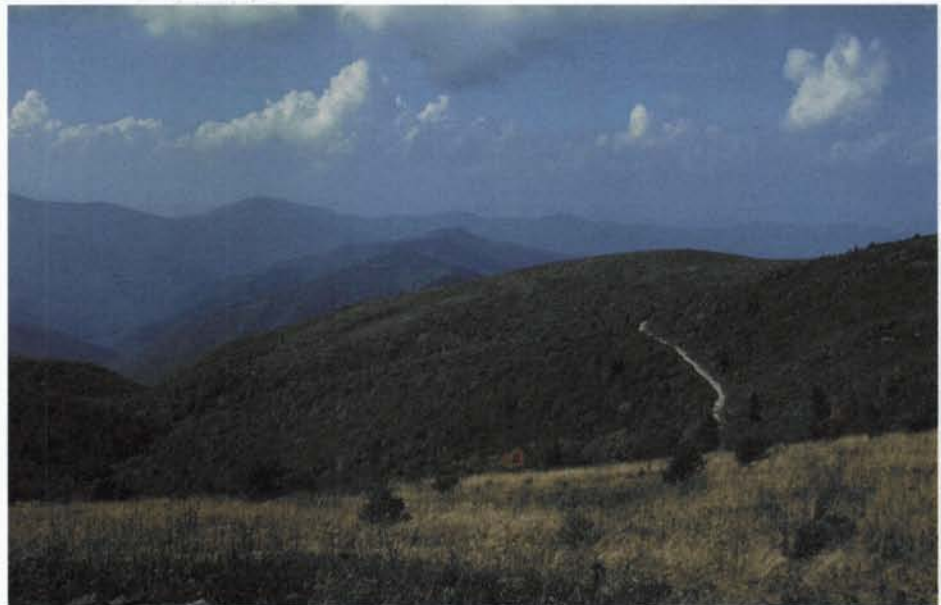
This foreground view looks down on a recreation site in the Coronado National Forest. The typical desert vegetation is not sufficient to screen the roads, trails, and structures. The light colors of the loop road and trails are dominant. The color of the structure is not of high contrast, but it could have blended in quite well through a better color choice. From this viewpoint, the entire development meets **modification**.

Modification



Road

Moffet Road at Devil Slide in Colorado cuts across a scenically sensitive landform that has only limited, low vegetation. The straight line of the road borrows little from the natural landscape character. Fortunately, soil color contrast is low; otherwise, the cuts, fills, and slides caused by the road would be overwhelming. The road meets **modification**. With higher soil color contrasts, the scene would probably drop to **unacceptable alteration** scenic condition level.



Trail

This trail in the Pisgah National Forest traverses an evenly textured landform. The surface color of the trail creates an extreme contrast with surrounding vegetation. It meets **modification**. A darker trail surface could possibly move this up to the high end of **partial retention**.

Modification



Winter Sports Site

Located in the lightly patterned portion of the natural landscape character, Beaver Creek Ski Area in Colorado is situated on the forested slopes above the valley floor. The barren ridge, on the left and upper right, offers only minimal opportunity to design clearings for chairlifts and ski runs that borrow from nature. The linear needs of ski facilities make it difficult to blend them into this natural landscape character. As the area revegetates, color contrasts of new construction activities will gradually decline but they will remain dominant. The ski area meets **modification**. Only massive feathering of vegetative clearings could raise this scene to **partial retention**.



Winter Sports Site

At the same ski area, winter heightens the color contrast between the snow and the dark conifers, reinforcing the conclusion that only massive feathering of the forested areas adjacent to chairlifts and ski runs could effectively improve the scenic condition. In winter, the ski hill development barely achieves **modification**.

Modification



Winter Sports Site

A summer view of Copper Mountain Ski Area reveals similar problems, although variation in run widths has been helpful in reducing their dominance. Joining the runs to the natural mountain ridgetop openings may be another effective mitigation measure. There is an indication that shapes from natural landscape patterns were borrowed to use in the design of this ski area. The project is an excellent example of **modification**.



Lodge Entry

The entry to Keystone Lodge in Colorado illustrates how a structure can be designed to borrow form from the existing natural landscape character. The roof projecting above the tree-tops repeats the form of the mountain peak behind it. Unfortunately, the color selected for the roof contrasts with the yellow aspens in this autumn scene. The entry probably would have barely met **partial retention** when the aspen backdrop was light green. With proper paint color selection, this landscape scene could easily be rehabilitated to move it from **modification** to **partial retention**.

Marginally Acceptable



Powerline

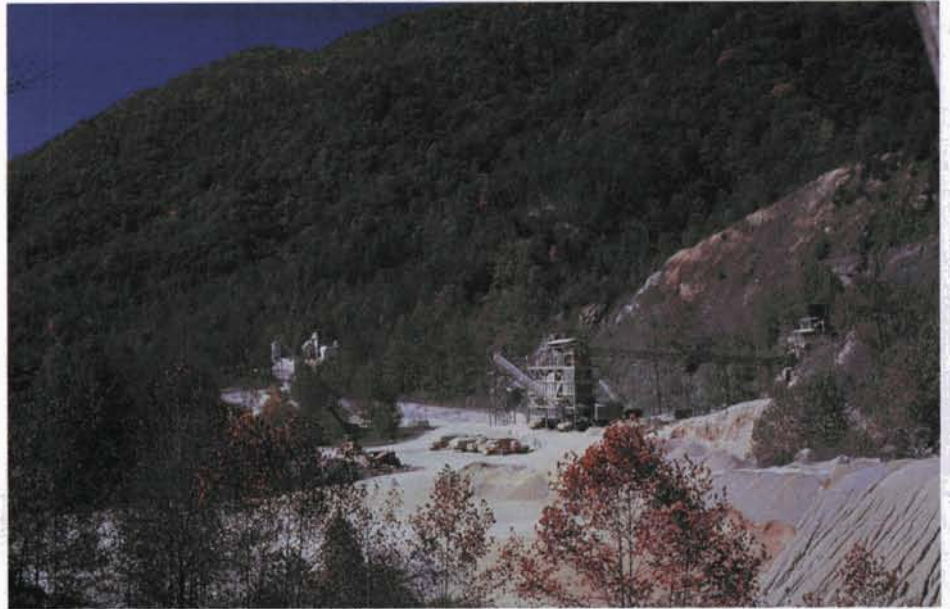
This coastline of the Tongass National Forest in Alaska is paralleled by a major electric transmission line. The clearing width appears to be excessive. Although the clearing repeats the distinctive shoreline, it remains dominant in this natural landscape character of timbered slopes. The high contrast of the towers further emphasizes the clearing. It is rated **marginally acceptable**. In this situation, it may have been possible to minimize clearing limits and paint the towers a drab olive-green to bring the landscape up to **modification**.

Electronic Site

This antenna on Mt. Pisgah in North Carolina is of such scale and color contrast that it forms an obvious focal point that is extremely evident at foreground and middleground distances. Federal Aviation Administration safety regulations provide no options to reduce color contrasts of such tall structures. When viewed as background, the colors become slightly muted and the scale of the antenna is not overwhelming in comparison to surrounding landforms and forest patterns. Although this tower is accepted as a necessary communications facility within this area, it barely achieves the **marginally acceptable** alteration scenic condition level. A less visually impacting structure may have been possible through the use of a slim-line central tower pole and multiple tension cable design or a shorter tower that did not require the alternating red-and-white paint pattern.



Marginally Acceptable



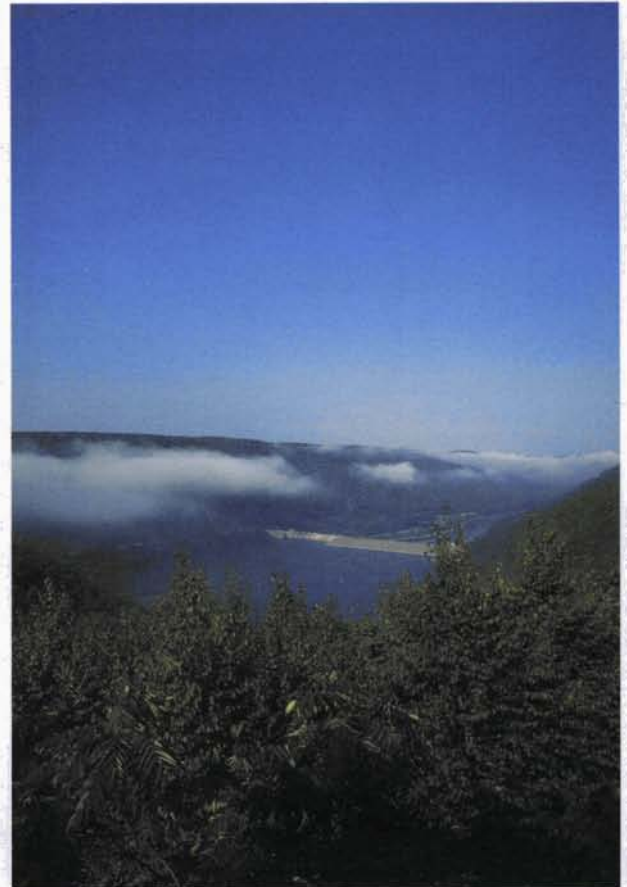
Mining Operation

This foreground view of a mining operation in North Carolina represents a very high degree of visual impact caused by color and texture contrasts. It would be visible as a strong focal point from background as well. This is not so much a matter of scale or form as it is contrast. This landscape scene is **marginally acceptable**.

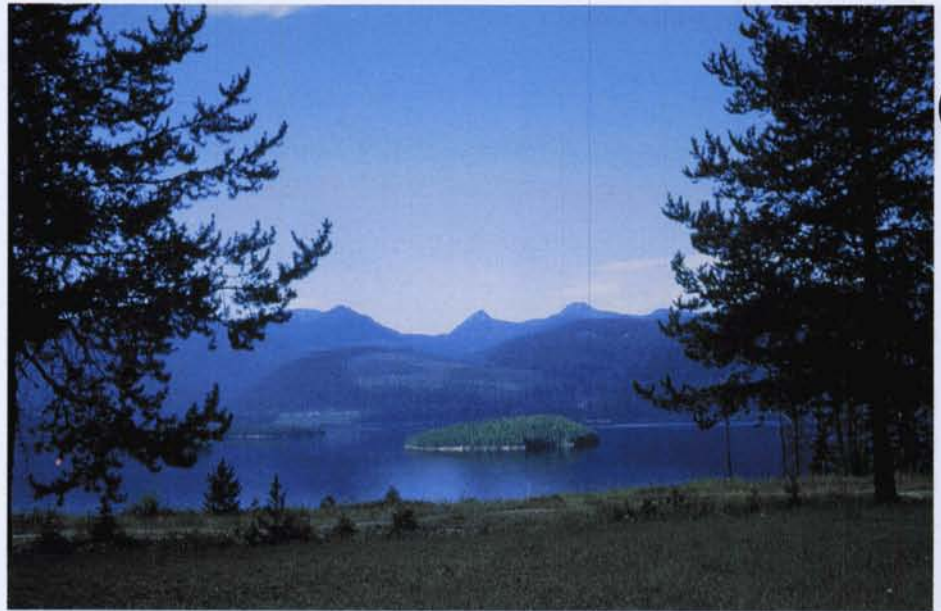
Dam

The Kinzua Dam in the Allegheny National Forest, viewed as middleground, forms a very definite dominance over the natural-appearing landscape character. It would be expected to do so in background as well. Although there are linear patterns on the far ridge and along the river, the sharp color contrast and straight edges of the dam stand out strongly. The linear pattern of the dam does not align with natural linear patterns, but forms a new diagonal line.

From this viewpoint, the dam is rated **marginally acceptable**. Staining the structure a mottled, flat olive-drab color would greatly reduce its dominance.



Marginally Acceptable

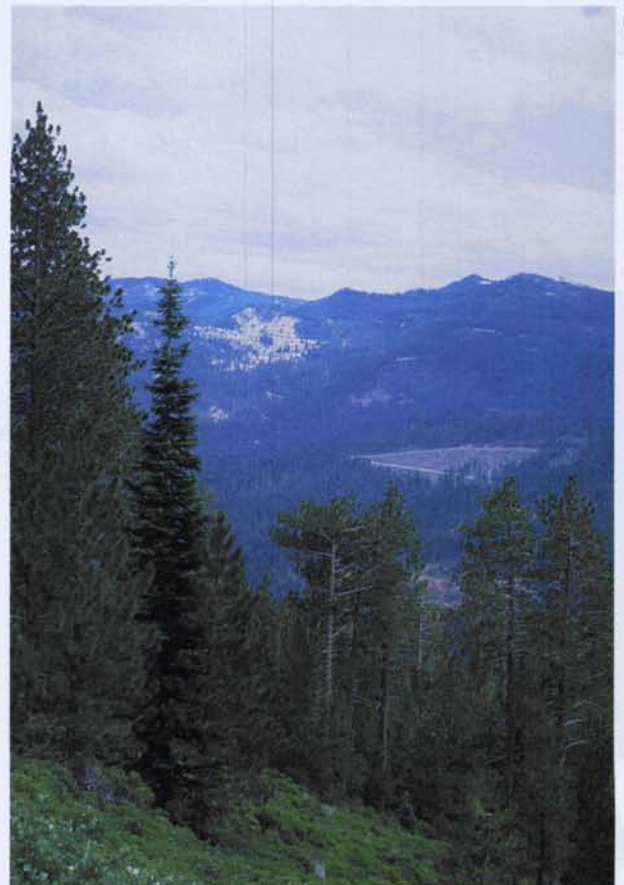


Created Openings

This scene in the Northern Region frames a view of created openings behind an island. The visual impact is heightened by the photo composition. The size of the multi-staged created openings would be dominant in the background. This scene is **marginally acceptable**. The road and rectangular created opening on the shoreline to the left is **unacceptable** because it borrows nothing from the existing landscape character.

Created Openings

A series of created openings in the Klamath National Forest is viewed in middleground. The upper opening takes on a form that seems to borrow from the existing landscape character but contains unnatural horizontal patterns. Scale and color of the openings cause them to strongly dominate the scene. They would continue to do so from background distances. Because of the scattered trees and clumps of trees left in the openings, the openings rate at the high end of **marginally acceptable**. The arrow-shaped created opening, fined further by outlining road scars, does not borrow from the natural landscape character and is **unacceptable**.



Marginally Acceptable



Regeneration Harvests

These created openings and shelterwood harvests, in the middleground in this Northern Region scene, borrow only slightly from the natural landscape character. The scale of the harvests and their proximity to one another create a major dominance. They are barely **marginally acceptable**.



Created Openings

This series of three created openings in the Klamath National Forest is located high on a mountain ridge viewed as middleground. The shapes of these created openings borrow somewhat from the natural landscape character; however, their linear arrangement on the mountainside, combined with the linear road pattern on the right, creates an unnatural appearance. They are **marginally acceptable**.

Marginally Acceptable



Created Openings

The size and shape of these created openings in the Northern Region clearly dominate the scene. Although the shapes of the created openings are not rectangular, their long straight edges and narrow strips of leaf-trees make them stand out as dominant features from background distances. These created openings are rated at the lower end of **marginally acceptable**.



Created Openings

A series of created openings in the Klamath National Forest borrow somewhat from the natural landscape character, but their similarity in size and shape causes them to dominate the natural landscape character. They would be dominant in background views as well. This set of created openings is at the upper end of **marginally acceptable**.

Marginally Acceptable



Created Opening

Although viewed in a foreground situation, this large created opening, located in the Eastern Region in an evenly textured landscape, causes it to be rated **marginally acceptable**. Saving the lone twin birch did not adequately improve the scenic condition above that level. Evidently there was an opportunity to save many more birch trees and to feature their positive scenic effects.



Created Opening

A created opening on South Mitkof Island in Alaska's Tongass National Forest has borrowed heavily from existing landform shapes, yet the extent of this alteration places it in the upper end of **marginally acceptable**. Color and texture contrasts would be dominant even at background distances.

Marginally Acceptable



Created Openings and Roads

These large created openings in the Tongass National Forest attempt to borrow from the natural landscape character. However, the uniformity of the cover on the upper slope creates strong contrasts. The created openings and roads will continue to dominate in background distances because of these contrasts. It is at the low end of **marginally acceptable**.



Winter Sport Site

Copper Mountain Ski Area, when viewed from this foreground view, creates strongly dominating alterations to this landscape. The sharply defined edges and the uniform widths of some of the ski runs reinforce this dominance. Only a massive edge-feathering project could move this up from **marginally acceptable** to **modification**. The ski runs at the far left and right meet **partial retention** in this scene.