

Visual Impact Assessment References

REFERENCE 1 – Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) - Classes for New England (Excerpts)

Source: USDA; Forest Service; General Technical Report NE-309; Appendix II

Class	Setting, Experience and Remoteness Criteria
<p>Primitive (P)</p> <p>Level of Remoteness/ User Sensitivity: HIGH</p>	<p>Area appears to be essentially unmodified natural environment of relatively large size. It may contain evidence of past human activities and historical-cultural sites, but these are subordinate to its natural state. Interaction between users is low, and evidence of other users is minimal. The area is essentially free from evidence of management restrictions and controls. Motorized or mechanized use is not permitted.</p> <p>Dispersed (low density) pedestrian recreation is the primary management goal. Timber harvesting and vegetation management are not compatible with this class. Other management techniques such as proscribed burns should be evaluated relative to the class.</p> <p>Extremely high probability of experiencing isolation from human development, use and impact. Extremely high probability of experiencing independence, closeness to nature, tranquility, and self-reliance by applying outdoor skills in an environment that offers a high degree of challenge and risk. This class does not change seasonally.</p> <p>Area is at least 3 miles from all maintained roads, railroads, or trails with designated motorized or mechanized use. In New England, a 2-mile distance may be appropriate due to the nature of topography and other features.</p>
<p>Semiprimitive Nonmotorized (SPNM)</p> <p>Level of Remoteness/ User Sensitivity: MODERATE</p>	<p>Area appears to be predominately natural or natural appearing environment of relatively medium-to-large size. Interactions between users is low, but there is often evidence of other users. The area is managed so that minimum on-site controls and restrictions, if needed, are subtle. Nonmechanized use predominate. Mechanized uses may be permitted. Motorized use is not permitted.</p> <p>The area is managed for dispersed (low-density), pedestrian recreation. Timber harvesting and vegetation management may occur on a short-term basis if effects are minimalized or mitigated to maintain class consistency.</p> <p>Moderately high probability of experiencing isolation from human development, use, and impact. High probability of experiencing independence, closeness to nature, tranquility, and self-reliance by applying outdoor skills in an environment that offers challenge and risk. ROS class may change seasonally, but the character of the area must remain unchanged.</p> <p>Area is at least 0.5 miles (but not farther than 3 miles or perhaps 2 miles in New England) from all maintained roads, railroads, or trails with designated motorized or mechanized use; can include unimproved roads and trails if usually closed to motorized use.</p>
<p>Semiprimitive Motorized (SPM)</p> <p>Level of Remoteness/ User Sensitivity: MODERATE</p>	<p>Area appears to be predominately medium-to-large or natural appearing environment. Interaction between users is low, but there is often evidence of other users. The area is managed so that minimum on-site controls and restrictions, if needed, are subtle. Mechanized uses may be permitted.</p> <p>All mechanized and motorized uses are restricted to designated corridors. Primary motorized travel corridors are not permitted. Designated secondary,</p>

	<p>local, or loop motorized use is permitted within designated corridors. Timber harvesting and vegetation management are compatible.</p> <p>Moderate probability of experiencing isolation from human development, use and impact. Opportunity for high degree of interaction with natural environment. Moderate probability of experiencing independence, closeness to nature, tranquility and self-reliance by applying outdoor skills in an environment that offers challenge and risk. Opportunity to use motorized equipment. ROS class may change seasonally, but the character of the area must remain unchanged.</p> <p>Area may contain unimproved roads or secondary trails but is at least 0.5 miles from any improved, maintained roads, railroads, or primary motorized or mechanized trails.</p>
<p>Semideveloped Natural (SDN)</p> <p>Level of Remoteness/ User Sensitivity: MODERATE</p>	<p>Area is a natural appearing environment. Evidences of the sights and sounds of people are moderate. Such evidences usually harmonize with the natural environment. Interactions between users may be low to moderate, but evidence of other users is prevalent. Resource modification and utilization practices are evident but harmonize with the natural environment. Construction standards and facility design accommodate conventional motorized and mechanized uses.</p> <p>Motorized and mechanized uses are permitted. Trail uses are managed in designated, maintained corridors. Many timber harvesting and vegetation management practices are compatible.</p> <p>About equal probability of encountering other user groups and isolation from sights and sounds of people. Opportunity for a high degree of interaction with the natural environment. Challenge and risk opportunities generally are not important. Practicing and testing outdoor skills might be important. Opportunities for both motorized and nonmotorized forms of recreation are possible.</p> <p>Area is within 0.5 mile from improved, maintained roads, railroads, or trails.</p>
<p>Developed Natural (DN)</p> <p>Level of Remoteness/ User Sensitivity: LOW</p>	<p>Area is a substantially modified natural environment. Resource modification and utilization practices enhance specific recreation activities and maintain vegetative cover and soil. Sights and sounds of people are readily evident. Interactions between users is moderate to high. Many facilities are designed for use by a large number of people. Density levels decline with increasing distance from developed sites. Facilities often are provided for special activities. Facilities for intensified motorized and mechanized uses and parking are available.</p> <p>All trail uses may be permitted. Recreationists may pass through various landscapes types, including developed and natural appearing. Many timber harvesting and vegetation management practices are compatible.</p> <p>Encounters with other individuals and groups are common. Site/activity access is convenient. The physical setting is not as important as the activity opportunity. Wildland challenges, risk taking and testing of outdoor skills generally are unimportant except for specific activities in which challenge and risk-taking are important elements, e.g., mountain skiing.</p> <p>No distance criteria from improved, maintained roads, railroads, or trails.</p>

<p>Highly Developed – Large Natural (HDLN)</p> <p>Level of Remoteness/ User Sensitivity: LOW</p>	<p>The setting contrasts with the surrounding cityscape, but urban elements are common and readily apparent. Vegetation often is exotic and manicured. The design enables users to choose amongst solitude and social experiences in a naturalistic setting (e.g., there may be footpaths, benches, and social focal points). Large number of users can be expected, both onsite and in nearby areas. Facilities are designed to serve individuals or small groups but can accommodate high use. Facilities accommodate access by a variety of means, including pedestrian, motorized, mechanized and mass transit.</p> <p>Organized/structured uses are not necessarily incompatible with individual/small group uses, depending on design. Most types of recreational experience are consistent with this class, but emphasis is on generally unstructured activities (e.g., gardens, open trails, beaches, picnic areas).</p> <p>Design generally offers users a choice between social encounters and solitude in an urban setting. Observing natural appearing elements is important. Nature-related challenge and risk opportunities generally are not important. Opportunities for unstructured uses of highly human influenced parks and open spaces are common.</p> <p>No distance criteria from improved, maintained roads, railroads, or trails.</p>
<p>Highly Developed – Small Natural (HDSN)</p> <p>Level of Remoteness/ User Sensitivity: LOW</p>	<p>The setting contrast with the surrounding cityscape, but urban elements are common and readily apparent. Sights and sounds of people are expected and desired. The design facilities social encounters in a naturalistic setting.</p> <p>“Naturalistic” may include highly designed environments that incorporate noninvasive, exotic species.</p> <p>The presence of other people often is expected and desired. Observing natural appearing elements is important. Nature-related challenge and risk opportunities generally are not important. Opportunities for unstructured uses of highly human influenced parks and open spaces are common.</p> <p>No distance criteria from improved, maintained roads, railroads, or trails.</p>
<p>Highly Developed – Facilities (HDF)</p> <p>Level of Remoteness/ User Sensitivity: LOW</p>	<p>Area is characterized by a substantially developed environment. The setting is highly structured to fit the activity being provided. Social encounters are expected and often programmed. Design is dictated by the requirements of the particular activities involved. Facilities are designed for large groups typical of sports and special events.</p> <p>Most types of recreational experience are consistent with this class, but facilities tend to be designed and managed for specific activities (e.g., skate parks, tennis courts, ball fields).</p> <p>Social encounters are expected. Site activity access is convenient. The physical setting is not as important as the activity opportunity. Challenge and risk opportunities are not important, except for specific activities in which challenge and risk taking are important elements, e.g., sports completion. Opportunities for competitive and spectator sports and organized events in highly human-influenced parks and open spaces are common.</p> <p>No distance criteria from improved, maintained roads, railroads, or trails.</p>