

## GLOSSARY of TERMS

**Active crown fire** – Crown fire in which the entire fuel complex becomes involved, but the crowning phase remains dependent on heat released from the surface fuels for continued spread.

**Angle of observation** - The angle, both vertical and horizontal, between a viewer's line of sight and the landscape being viewed.

**Background distance zone** - The visible area of a landscape which lies beyond the foreground-middle-ground. Usually from a minimum of 3 to 5 miles to a maximum of about 15 miles from a travel route, use area, or other observer point. Atmospheric conditions in some areas may limit the maximum to about 8 miles or less.

**Basic elements** -The four design elements (form, line, color, and texture), which determine how the character of a landscape is perceived.

**Canopy** - The more or less continuous cover of branches and foliage formed collectively by adjacent trees and other woody species in a forest stand. Where significant height differences occur between trees within a stand, formation of a multiple canopy (multi-layered) condition can result.

**Canopy base height** - The distance between the surface fuels and the average bottom level of the tree crowns and is usually expressed in feet. The greater the canopy base height, the longer the flame length needed to ignite the crowns.

**Canopy bulk density** - The amount of crown fuels within a given area and is usually expressed as pounds of foliage per cubic foot. The greater the canopy bulk density, the easier for crown fires to initiate and propagate.

**Characteristic landscape** - The established landscape within an area being viewed. This does not necessarily mean a naturalistic character. It could refer to an agricultural setting, an urban landscape, a primarily natural environment, or a combination of these types.

**Community at risk** – Wildland interface communities in the vicinity of Federal lands that are at high risk from wildfire. In Oregon, communities identified in the Federal Register were selected by the Oregon Department of Forestry.

**Contrast** - Opposition or unlikeness of different forms, lines, colors, or textures in a landscape.

**Contrast rating** - A method of analyzing the potential visual impacts of proposed management activities.

**Distance zones** - A subdivision of the landscape as viewed from an observer position. The subdivision (zones) includes foreground - middle-ground, background, and seldom seen.

**Ecosystem resilience** - The ability of a system to respond to disturbances. Resiliency is one of the properties that enable the system to persist in many different states or successional stages.

**Fire condition class** - Fire Condition Classes categorize and describe vegetation composition and structure conditions that currently exist within the Fire Regime Groups, compared to natural potential vegetation types. These three classes serve as generalized wildfire risk rankings—based on the coarse-scale data. The risk components from unwanted wildland fire increases from Fire Condition Class 1 (lowest risk) to Fire Condition Class 3 (highest risk).

**Condition class 1** - Fire regimes are within or near an historical range. The risk of losing key ecosystem components is low. Fire frequencies have departed from historical frequencies (either increased or decreased) by no more than one return interval. Vegetation attributes (species composition and structure) are intact and functioning within an historical range.

**Condition class 2** - Fire regimes have been moderately altered from their historical range. The risk of losing key ecosystem components has increased to moderate. Fire frequencies have departed (either increased or decreased) from historical frequencies by more than one return interval. This change results in moderate changes to one or more of the following: fire size, frequency, intensity, severity, or landscape patterns. Vegetation attributes have been moderately altered from their historic ranges.

**Condition class 3** - Fire regimes have been significantly altered from their historical range. The risk of losing key ecosystem components is high. Fire frequencies have departed (either increased or decreased) by multiple return intervals. This change results in dramatic changes to one or more of the following: fire size, frequency, intensity, severity, or landscape patterns. Vegetation attributes have been significantly altered from their historic ranges.

**Fire frequency (fire return interval)** - How often fire burns a given area; often expressed in terms of fire return intervals (e.g., fire returns to a site every 5-15 years).

**Fire hazard** - Hazard is based on the fire's ability spread and thus the easy to suppress once a wildland fire has ignited

**Fire intensity** - Expression commonly used to describe the power of wildland fires; the rate of energy release per unit length of the fire-front.

**Fire regime** - A generalized description of the role fire plays in an ecosystem. It is characterized by fire frequency, predictability, seasonality, intensity, duration and scale (patch size), as well as regularity or variability.

**0-35 years, Low severity** - Typical climax plant communities include ponderosa pine, eastside/dry Douglas-fir, pine-oak woodlands, Jeffrey pine on serpentine soils, oak woodlands, and very dry white fir. Large stand-destroying fire can occur under certain weather conditions, but are rare events (i.e., every 200+ years).

**0-35 years, Stand-destroying, non-forest** - Includes true grasslands (Columbia basin, Palouse, etc.) and savannahs with typical return intervals of less than 10 years and mountain shrub communities (bitterbrush, snowberry, ninebark, ceanothus, Oregon chaparral, etc.) with typical return intervals of 10-25 years. Fire severity is generally high to moderate. Grasslands and mountain shrub communities are not completely killed, but usually only top-killed and resprout.

**35-100+ years, Mixed severity** - This regime usually results in heterogeneous landscapes. Large, stand-destroying fires may occur but are usually rare events. Such stand-destroying fires may “reset” large areas (10,000-100,000 acres) but subsequent mixed intensity fires are important for creating the landscape heterogeneity. Within these landscapes a mix of stand ages and size classes are important characteristics; generally the landscape is not dominated by one or two age classes.

**<50 years, Mixed severity** - Typical potential plant communities include mixed conifer, very dry westside Douglas-fir, and dry grand fir. Lower severity fire tends to predominate in many events.

**Fire risk** - The opportunity for and ignition source to start a wildland fire.

**Fire severity** - A qualitative measure of the fire’s immediate effects on the ecosystem. Relates to the extent of mortality and survival of plant and animal life (both above and below ground) and to loss of organic matter.

**Forest health** - The ability of forest ecosystems to remain productive, resilient, and stable over time and to withstand the effects of periodic natural or human-caused stresses such as drought, insect attack, disease, climatic changes, flood, resource management practices and resource demands.

**Form** - The mass or shape of an object or objects which appear unified, such as a vegetative opening in a forest, a cliff formation, or a water tank.

**Ground fuel** - All combustible materials below the surface litter, including duff, tree or shrub roots, punchy wood, peat, and sawdust, which normally support a glowing combustion without flame.

**Hazardous fuel** - Live or dead wildland fuel accumulations that increase the potential for uncharacteristically intense wildland fire and decrease the capability to protect life, property, and natural resources.

**Hazard reduction** - The planned treatment or manipulation of naturally growing vegetation or any other flammable material for the purpose of reducing rate of spread and output of heat energy from any wildfire occurring in the area treated.

**Key observation point** - One or a series of points on a travel route or at use area or a potential use area, where the view of a management activity would be most revealing.

**Ladder fuels** - Fuels that provide vertical continuity between the ground and the tree crowns, creating a pathway for surface fire to move into the overstory and initiate crown fire.

**Landscape character** - The arrangement of a particular landscape as formed by the variety and intensity of the landscape features and the four basic elements of form, line, color, and texture. These factors give the area a distinctive quality, which distinguishes it from its immediate surroundings.

**Landscape diversity** - The size, shape and connectivity of different ecosystems across a large area.

**Landscape features** - The land and water form, vegetation, and structures which compose the characteristic landscape.

**Line** - The path, real or imagined, that the eye follows when perceiving abrupt differences in form, color, or texture. Within landscapes, lines may be found as ridges, skylines, structures, changes in vegetative types, or individual trees and branches.

**Multi-layered canopy** - Forest stands with two or more distinct tree layers in the canopy; also called multi-storied stands.

**National fire plan** - A culmination of various reports, (i.e., Managing the Impacts of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment, Integrating Fire and Natural Resource Management – A Cohesive Strategy for Protecting People by Restoring Land Health, A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment: 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy), accompanying budget requests, Congressional direction, and resulting strategies, plans, projects, and other activities.

**Natural scenic qualities (ORV)** - Recognized for its diversity of scenery due its geology, topography, and relatively undeveloped visual appearance.

**Naturalistic character** - A landscape setting where the basic elements are displayed in a composition that appears unaltered by man.

**Observer position** - The placement and relationship of a viewer to the landscape which is being viewed.

**Outstandingly remarkable values (ORV)** - Section 10(a) of the WSRA states that: "Each component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System shall be administered in such a manner as to protect and enhance the values which caused it to be included in said system without, insofar as is consistent therewith, limiting other uses that do not substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of these values. In such administration, primary emphasis shall be given to protecting its aesthetic, scenic, historic, archaeological, and scientific features. Management plans for any such component may establish varying degrees of intensity for its protection and development, based on the special attributes of the area."

**Prescribed fire plan (burn plan)** - A written plan which includes burn area description, resource and prescribed fire objectives, fuels description, weather and fuel parameters, acceptable fire behavior, smoke management and other considerations, ignition schedule, ignition and holding plan, safety considerations, workforce and equipment needs, unit maps, escape contingency plan, crew briefing and go/no go checklist, and the complexity rating of the burn project.

**Scenery** - The aggregate of features that give character to a landscape.

**Scenic area** - An area whose landscape character exhibits a high degree of variety and harmony among the basic elements which results in a pleasant landscape to view.

**Scenic easement** - The right to control the use of land (including the air space above such land) within the authorized boundaries of a component of the wild and scenic rivers system, for the purpose of protecting the natural qualities of a designated wild, scenic or recreational river area, but such control shall not affect, without the owner's consent, any regular use exercised prior to the acquisition of the easement. For any designated wild and scenic river, the appropriate Secretary shall treat the acquisition of fee title with the reservation of regular existing uses to the owner as a scenic easement for purposes of this chapter. Such an acquisition shall not constitute fee title ownership for purposes of section 1277 (b) of this title.

**Scenic quality**- the relative worth of a landscape from a visual perception point of view.

**Scenic quality rating unit.** - A portion of the landscape which displays primarily homogeneous visual characteristics of the basic landscape features (land and water form, vegetation, and structures).

**Seen areas** - That portion of the landscape which is visible from roads, trails, rivers, campgrounds, communities, or other key observation positions.

**Seldom seen areas** - Portions of the landscape which are generally not visible from key observation points, or portions which are visible but more than 15 miles distance.

**Stand density** - An expression of the number and size of trees on a forest site. May be expressed in terms of numbers of trees per acre, basal area, stand density index, or relative density index.

**Structural diversity** - Variety in a forest stand that results from layering or tiering of the canopy and the die-back, death and ultimate decay of trees. In aquatic habitats, the presence of a variety of structural features such as logs and boulders that create a variety of habitat.

**Surface fuels** - Loose surface litter on the soil surface, normally consisting of fallen leaves or needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches that have not yet decayed enough to lose their identity; also grasses, forbs, low and medium shrubs, tree seedlings, heavier branch wood, downed logs, and stumps interspersed with or partially replacing the litter.

**Texture** - The visual manifestations of the interplay of light and shadow created by the variations in the surface of an object or landscape.

**Values at risk** - The resource and human values for components of the watershed.

**Viewshed** - The landscape that can be directly seen under favorable atmospheric conditions, from a viewpoint or along a transportation corridor.

**Visual resources** - The visible physical features on a landscape (e.g., land, water, vegetation, animals, structures, and other features) that constitute the scenery of an area.

**Visual resource management (VRM)** - The inventory and planning actions taken to identify visual values and to establish objectives for managing those values and the management actions taken to achieve the visual management objectives.

**Visual resource management classes** – BLM categories assigned to public lands based on scenic quality, sensitivity level, and

distance zones. There are four classes. Each class has an objective which prescribes the amount of change allowed in the characteristic landscape.

**VRM class I** - The objective of this class is to preserve the existing character of the landscape. This class provides for natural ecological changes; however, it does not preclude very limited management activity. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention. The existing character to be preserved may be rural, agricultural, recreational, or even urban. It does not necessarily mean preservation of a naturalistic character.

**Wildland-urban interface (WUI)** - The line, area, or zone, where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuel.