

# Scenic Beauty

## Scenic Beauty

Scenic beauty can be defined as the viewer's positive perceived value of special, unique and memorable physical elements of a landscape.

### What is it?

The landscape has a consistently definable appearance that can be described by the measurable visual elements of landform, water, vegetation, structures and sky. These visual elements provide a ready basis for describing the changing landscape as altered by human decisions. Management of the visual landscape is the process of manipulating the physical elements and functions of the landscape to achieve specific resource objectives. When all the elements are combined, patterns or images are formed that uniquely identify a landscape. Even though there are many different kinds of landscapes across the country, each landscape can portray a unique sense of place identifiable to everyone who lives there or passes through.

### Why is it important?

A beautiful landscape scene has definable visual elements that combine to provide a high quality visual resource. A landscape with a high visual quality generates emotional impacts within the viewer's mind and links to sense of place and quality of life. Retaining a connection to a beautiful natural environment affects their well-being.

### What is required?

The analysis, conservation and enhancement of scenic beauty is an important part of providing planning assistance. Emphasis should be given to conservation practices that protect and enhance the attractiveness of the landscape while increasing agricultural efficiency and productivity. Through proper planning, the visual characteristics of a scenic landscape can be protected, maintained and improved.

Landform refers to the shape of the land (topography, slope, and aspect) and seems to be the most noticeable element, particularly as it relates to the horizon. For example, the horizontal nature of crop landscapes makes them especially sensitive to the presence of vertical elements, such as streamside vegetation, shelterbelt trees, farmstead structures and utility poles. When agricultural activities, such as tree rows and fences are aligned with the topography, they emphasize and enhance landform. In flat or rolling areas, the horizon line is the most conspicuous landscape element.

Water can add to aesthetic quality, modify temperatures, serve as a buffer between use areas, and direct attention from undesirable views. Its characteristics are gurgling, rushing, spurting, falling, calm or placid. Its shape also adds value to the landscape.

Vegetation includes agricultural crops, which can vary widely in size, form, color, texture, and planting pattern. Shelterbelt and riparian trees are visually significant in landscapes where low crops or pastures are present. Row crops create visually strong lines to the viewer on the ground or from the air, so any curved pattern that is located among the straight lines will be prominent.

Structures evoke the most obvious and descriptive mental images of "countryside". Farmhouses, barns, silos, wooden fences, stone walls, windmills and two-lane roads are some of the agriculturally related structures that fulfill our romantic notion of countryside.

## Scenic Beauty at a Glance

### Problems/Indicators – Proposed Action is Inconsistent with NRCS Policy

Potential Causes	Potential Solutions
• Installation of Waste Storage Structure	• Plant trees to screen structure