TSPAC Visual Resources Subcommittee

Meeting Report

Date: October 24, 2012
9:00am – 12:00pm

Location: Department of Agriculture,
3rd floor conference room
635 Capitol St NE, Salem, OR 97301

Participants:

TSPAC Members - Andy Lanier, Gus Gates, Laurel Hillmann, David Allen, David Yamamoto, Paul Manson, Jon Schaad, Peter Hutala, Susan Allen
Public: Dave Lacey

Presentation(s):

Paul Manson presented the results of the Scenic Quality Inventory Assessment work for the sites included along the coast, along with the results of modeling the class values from each site. He covered the cross walk table for converting scenic quality to class value, using the different distance zones, along with a presentation of the resulting map.

Andy Lanier provided an update on the generation of work products, as well as a recent presentation to the Lane County Commission.

Discussion: The group recognized that development of Marine Renewable Energy would have to occur within the Class II areas, as Class I standards would be prohibitive for commercial development. The standards for each class were reviewed by the group, and the differences between class level standards language was debated for the level of modification to the landscape. The group also asked for another map of class values associated with Special Areas designation which were generated for review by the full TSPAC. The group forwarded maps with Special Areas values at both 24, and 25 to the TSPAC.

Consensus Decisions:

- Draft Visual Resource Inventory Draft products completed and Subcommittee approved distribution for review and comment during the hearings and public comment period associated with the TSPAC public process.

- Subcommittee approved the draft standards language into Part 5 chapter for review and public comment.
- 1 more meeting necessary ☹
  - Special Areas Criteria needs consensus
  - Standards work (if required)

Discussed application of standards to the areas identified in the visual class summary map – Note: the committee is interested in feedback on the flexibility of the standards (particularly class II) for energy development at full commercial build out.

VRM CLASS	Visual Resource Objective	Change Allowed (Relative Level)	Relationship to the Casual Observer
Class I	**Preserve** the existing character of the landscape. Manage for natural ecological changes.	**Very Low**	Activities should not be visible and **must not attract attention**.
Class II	**Retain** the existing character of the landscape.	**Low**	Activities may be visible, but **should not attract attention.**
Class III	**Partially retain** the existing character of the landscape.	**Moderate**	Activities **may attract attention** but **should not dominate** the view.
Class IV	Provide for management activities which require **major modification** of the existing character of the landscape.	**High**	Activities **may attract attention, may dominate** the view, but are still mitigated.

Class II Relationship, add "subject to USCG regulations"

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5) Visual Resource Protection Standards

The state regulating agencies shall protect visual resources, i.e. viewsheds of the territorial sea, by applying the following visual resource protection standards to evaluate the impact of renewable energy project proposals on the effected viewsheds. The following standards rely on a map overlay that has been incorporated into the map (appendix C), which locates and classifies ocean viewsheds. The visual resource protection standards apply equally throughout the territorial sea, and are based on the visual subordination standards that apply to the classification of the specific viewsheds that a proposed renewable energy project may effect.

A) Classification of Viewsheds

The State has identified classes for delineating the view shed locations for visual resources. Each view shed that has been delineated and located in the map overlay has been assigned a classification. The specific visual subordination review standards, listed below, will be applied to determine the impact of a proposed renewable energy project on

each view shed based on its individual classification. A single project will impact multiple viewsheds, each with its own classification and visual subordination standard.

1. **Class I:** The objective of this class is to preserve the existing character of the seascape. This class provides for natural ecological changes; however, it does not preclude very limited management activity. The level of change to the characteristic seascape should be very low and must not attract attention.

2. **Class II:** The objective of this class is to retain the existing character of the seascape. The level of change to the characteristic seascape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic seascape.

3. **Class III:** The objective of this class is to partially retain the existing character of the seascape. The level of change to the characteristic seascape should be moderate. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic seascape.

4. **Class IV:** The objective of this class is to provide for management activities which require major modifications of the existing character of the seascape. The level of change to the characteristic seascape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repeating the basic elements.

B) Project Review Considerations

The following factors must be considered when applying the contrast criteria to the portion of the proposed marine renewable energy project that is visible.

1. Distance from viewpoint. The contrast created by a project usually is less as viewing distance increases.

2. Angle of Observation. The apparent size of a project is directly related to the angle between the viewer's line-of-sight and the slope upon which the project is to take place.

3. Length of Time the Project Is In View. If the viewer has only a brief glimpse of the project, the contrast may not be of great concern. If, however, the project is subject to view for a long period, as from an overlook, the contrast may be very significant.

4. Relative Size or Scale. The contrast created by the project is directly related to its size and scale as compared to the surroundings in which it is place. This should include consideration of size of the development (e.g., number of devices) along with size of the individual devices and associated structures along with layout and spacing. For example, minimizing horizontal spread of the layout may reduce contrast.

5. Season of Use. Contrast ratings should consider the physical conditions that exist during the heaviest or most critical visitor use season.

6. Light Conditions. The amount of contrast can be substantially affected by the light conditions. The direction and angle of lighting can affect color intensity, reflection, shadow, from, texture, and many other visual aspects of the seascape. Light conditions during heavy use periods must be a consideration in contrast ratings.

7. Spatial Relationships. The spatial relationship within a seascape is a major factor in determining the degree of contrast. For example, projects in areas that are the "focus of key views" like a headland or large offshore rocks could have a higher contrast.

8. Atmospheric Conditions. The visibility of projects due to atmospheric conditions such as fog or natural haze should be considered.

9. Motion, lights and color. Movement and lighting draw attention to a project and vary depending on conditions and time of day and night. Surface treatment (e.g., color) may increase or decrease visibility.

10. Shore-based facilities. Associated shore-based facilities (e.g., buildings, cables etc.) should also be considered in the visual impact analysis

View Shed Review Process Guidance

- Review of the proposed project in the context of the Visual Resource Inventory Assessment (VRIA) Locations
- JART selects Key Viewing Areas (KVAs) from these locations for the applicant to conduct visual simulation(s). These locations will be selected to represent the range of scenic quality class values and distances, if present.
- The applicant will conduct a Visual Impact Analysis (VIA) and draft a review of the impacts to the KVAs. This will include comparing visual contrast to the visual resource class objectives.

- Factors to consider will include (at a minimum): Distance from viewpoint(s), angle(s) of observation, time factor(s), relative size or number, seasonality, lighting, spatial relationships, atmospheric conditions, motion/lights/color, shore-based facilities.
- JART reviews the draft VIA for completeness and accuracy and provides a recommendation to DSL for the approval or denial of the application based upon an evaluation of the VIA.

Professional guidance should be provided to ensure thorough and accurate evaluations are done using photo evaluations, GIS simulations etc.

1) **Determine potential impact**
    - Combine visual resource inventory class with visual assessment of contrast to conduct an evaluation of the potential impact to the seascape.
    - Compare the contrast ratings with the objectives for the class.
    - Determine whether objectives are met, if not mitigating measures should be considered to minimize visual impacts (if allowed).
    - Consider cumulative effects
    - The impact analysis could be done by the Joint Agency Review Team (JART)
    - Adaptive management and monitoring of actual impacts will likely be necessary.