

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Avalanche Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP*5212

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 579 Site Class PCA

Site Alias Avalanche Campground

Network of Conservation Areas (NCA)

<u>NCA Site ID</u>	<u>NCA Site Code</u>	<u>NCA Site Name</u>
-		No Data

LOCATORS

Nation United States Latitude 391358N

State Colorado Longitude 1071128W

Quad Code Quad Name

39107-B2 Redstone

39107-C2 Mount Sopris

County

Watershed Code Watershed Name

14010004 Roaring Fork

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation 6,800.00 Feet 2,072.64 Meters

Maximum Elevation 12,400.00 Feet 3,779.52 Meters

Site Description

Affording spectacular views of Mount Sopris to the north, this site includes one of the most intact stretches of riparian vegetation along the lower elevations of the Crystal River drainage. The site includes approximately a five mile stretch of Avalanche Creek and an approximately three and a half mile stretch of Bulldog Creek.

These creeks flow west from the Elk Mountains, and meet the Crystal River at about 6,800 feet. The southern flanks of Mount Sopris, up to about 12,400 feet, are also included in the boundary. The riparian vegetation includes a mosaic dominated by narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*), blue spruce (*Picea pungens*), and alder (*Alnus incana*). Within this high quality riparian vegetation, the canyon bog orchid (*Limnorchis ensifolia*) was found in a few small patches, as well as one location of a globe-mallow (*Iliamna grandiflora*).

Adding to the significance of the riparian areas, Colorado River cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii pleuriticus*) were documented in this drainage in 1993. The adjacent upland areas support mixed shrublands on the south-facing slopes and Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) forests on the north-facing slopes. The higher elevation areas support spruce - fir (*Picea engelmannii* - *Abies lasiocarpa*) forests, and a small area of alpine vegetation on the south slope of Mount Sopris. An east-facing slope in the westernmost portion of the site supports a globally significant shrubland dominated by oak (*Quercus gambelii*) and mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus montanus*). An intermittent drainage that flows south into Bulldog Creek supports a multiple tiered waterfall that exceeds 50 feet in height. These waterfalls provide nesting habitat for the Black Swift (*Cypseloides niger*). On the north bank of the river a two-track road and then a trail follows the river.

Avalanche and Janeway Campgrounds are located in the western portion of the site. A total of 4,672 acres are included within this site; the elevation range is approximately 6,800 to 12,400 feet.

Key Environmental Factors

No Data

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 05/05/1999

Designer Spackman, S.C.

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Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn to include the occurrences and adjacent potential habitat up and down stream to allow the rare plants, birds and communities to move into suitable habitat over time. This area is intended to protect the occurrences from direct disturbances. The full drainage above the waterfall where the swift nest is located is included. Hydrological processes originating outside the planning boundary, including water quality, quantity, and timing should be managed to maintain site viability. Narrowleaf cottonwoods require periodic, above average, floods usually in June for seed germination and survival. Therefore, it is important to maintain a natural flooding regime.

Primary Area 4,685.21 Acres 1,896.05 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site supports an excellent example of a globally-vulnerable riparian plant community. This site is one of two known locations of the globe-mallow for the watershed. A breeding colony of Black Swifts was also discovered here. There are approximately 20 Black Swift colonies known in Colorado. This site also includes a fair occurrence of a globally-vulnerable subspecies, the Colorado River cutthroat trout. This trout is a U.S. Forest Service Sensitive and State Special Concern species. The introduction of non-native trout species dating back to 1872 in Colorado is considered a primary cause for the decline in numbers and genetic purity of Colorado River cutthroat trout. The populations of Colorado River cutthroat trout that are still genetically intact are now priorities for conservation.

Other Values Rank No Data

Other Values Comments

No Data

LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Land Use Comments

No Data

Natural Hazard Comments

No Data

Exotics Comments

No Data

Offsite

Hydrological processes originating outside the planning boundary, including water quality, quantity, and timing, must be managed to maintain site viability.

Information Needs

No Data

ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY

<u>Element</u>			<u>Global</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Driving</u>
<u>State ID</u>	<u>State Scientific Name</u>	<u>State Common Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Site Rank</u>
19359	<i>Iliamna grandiflora</i>	large-flower globe-mallow	G3?Q	S1	No
24685	<i>Quercus gambelii</i> - <i>Cercocarpus montanus</i> / (<i>Carex geyeri</i>) Shrubland	Mixed Mountain Shrublands	G3	S3	Yes
23518	<i>Cypseloides niger</i>	Black Swift	G4	S3B	No
24713	<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i> / <i>Quercus gambelii</i> Forest	Western Slope Douglas Fir Forests	G5	S4	No
21796	<i>Oncorhynchus clarkii pleuriticus</i>	Colorado River Cutthroat Trout	G4T3	S3	No
24823	<i>Populus angustifolia</i> - <i>Picea pungens</i> / <i>Alnus incana</i> Woodland	Montane Riparian Forests	G3	S3	Yes

REFERENCES

Reference ID Full Citation

- No Data

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

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VERSION

Version Date 05/05/1999

Version Author Spackman, S.C.

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