

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Behler Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP*25922

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2307 Site Class PCA
Site Alias None

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 400306N
State Colorado Longitude 1055020W

Quad Code Quad Name
40105-A7 Strawberry Lake

County
Grand (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name
14010001 Colorado headwaters

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	9,145.00 Feet	2,787.40 Meters
Maximum Elevation	9,200.00 Feet	2,804.16 Meters

Site Description

Community inhabits a series of drying, successional beaver ponds along Behler Creek, a second order tributary of the Fraser River. Hydrology above the stand is free-flowing and appears to be dependent on a small perennial creek, snow melt, and some groundwater. Community consists of variable willow (*Salix* sp.) cover of multiple species along a varied hydrologic gradient of ponds and drier dams with a consistent graminoid layer also varied along hydrologic gradients. *Salix* species are mixed throughout, with strappleaf willow (*Salix ligulifolia*), Booth's willow (*Salix boothii*), and mountain willow (*Salix monticola*) being dominant. Diamondleaf willow (*Salix planifolia*) is also present in high cover. The herbaceous layer is dominated by graminoid species with bluejoint reedgrass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*) occurring along drier areas and beaked sedge (*Carex utriculata*) dominating areas that are saturated year round. Disturbances include browsing, past beaver activity, and adjacent road. Surrounding uplands are dominated by lodegpole pine (*Pinus contorta*) forest ecosystems. Geology consists of igneous rocks of the Cambrian Age, specifically granite of 1,400 MYA. Soils consist of rich loams of silty clays.

Key Environmental Factors

Key environmental factors include soils, beaver activity, perennial hydrology, and spring flooding.

Climate Description

Climate likely follows patterns typical of this region of Colorado being generally xeric throughout the year with wet spring seasons and late summer "monsoons".

Land Use History

There is an old homestead in the Behler Creek drainage above the site. Area may have been farmed historically.

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 12/11/2005
Designer Jones, J.R.

Boundary Justification

Boundaries include portions of upper Behler Creek along a series of old beaver dams. Boundaries are drawn to encompass those ecological processes necessary to maintain site hydrology including perennial surface flow, groundwater discharge, and seasonal flooding as well as beaver dams which slow water and provide longer periods of soils saturation. Boundaries do not include all ecological processes influencing the site. Potential threats include activities upstream and along adjacent slopes such as improper grazing, water diversion, and development may negatively impact site hydrology and biota.

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Primary Area 124.95 Acres

50.56 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site is drawn for a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) mountain willow (*Salix monticola*) / bluejoint reedgrass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*) plant community.

Other Values Rank V2 - High values

Other Values Comments

The site provides moderate other values including aesthetics and open space. As well, the area is an important wildlife habitat providing a year round water source and lush vegetation.

LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Land Use Comments

Main use of the site and surrounding lands is general public land use including recreation such as camping, hiking, hunting, and OHV use. There is evidence of past logging.

Natural Hazard Comments

No Data

Exotics Comments

There are no exotics present in the drainage or along beaver ponds. Exotics such as smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*) and Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*) are likely present along the adjacent road.

Offsite

There is evidence of past logging of lodgepole pine forests within the drainage and in adjacent drainages.

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>
24514	<i>Salix monticola</i> / <i>Calamagrostis canadensis</i> Shrubland	Montane Willow Carr	G3	S3	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
160903	Carsey, K., D. Cooper, K. Decker, D. Culver, and G. Kittel. 2003. Statewide wetlands classification and characterization: Wetland plant associations of Colorado. Prepared for Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Denver, CO by Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
193632	Culver, D.R. and Jones, J.R. 2006. Final Report: Survey of Critical Biological Resources in Grand County. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
160140	Dorn, R. D. 1997. Rocky Mountain Region Willow Identification Field Guide. Renewable Resources R2-RR-97-01. Denver, CO: USDA, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region. 107p.
167224	Hurd, E.G., N.L. Shaw, J. Mastroguiseppe, L.C. Smithman, and S. Goodrich. 1998. Field Guide to Intermountain Sedges. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Ogden, UT.
192747	Tweto, O. 1979. Geologic Map of Colorado, 1:500,000. United States Geological Survey, Department of Interior, and Geologic Survey of Colorado, Denver, CO.
193553	USDA, NRCS. 2005. The PLANTS Database, Version 3.5 (http://plants.usda.gov). Data compiled from various sources by Mark W. Skinner. National Plant Data Center < http://npdc.usda.gov/ >, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA. Accessed 2005.
172684	Weber, W.A. and R.C. Wittmann. 2001. Colorado Flora: Western Slope, Third Edition. University Press of Colorado, Niwot, CO.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

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VERSION

Version Date 12/11/2005

Version Author Jones, J.R.

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