

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Betasso

Site Code S.USCOHP*27379

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2520 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 400123N
State Colorado Longitude 1052104W

Quad Code Quad Name

40105-A4 Gold Hill
40105-A3 Boulder

County

Watershed Code Watershed Name

10190005 St. Vrain

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	5,755.00 Feet	1,754.12 Meters
Maximum Elevation	7,710.00 Feet	2,350.01 Meters

Site Description

This site is in the lower montane zone immediately above the foothills west of Boulder and just north of Boulder Mountain Park. The granitic hills are dissected by west-east flowing creeks forming very deep, narrow, steep-sided drainages including Fourmile Creek to the north. The area is embedded within a large ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) ecological system with erodible, gravelly, loamy sand and sandy loam soils in mosaic with rock outcrops. Due to their proximity to Boulder Mountain Park, this area is occasionally blanketed in clouds that linger in the hills and create a relatively moist climate. North-facing hillslopes are generally comprised of dense mixed conifer forest with Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and some ponderosa pine and lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*). There are seeps along the north-facing slopes above Fourmile Creek that have unique assemblages of species including hazelnut (*Corylus cornuta*), wild sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*), and black snakeroot (*Sanicula marilandica*). These species are very uncommon in Colorado. South-facing slopes are predominantly characterized by ponderosa pine savanna where large grassland meadows are interspersed with variable patches of trees. Grasslands have a general lower montane character with needle-and-thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and sun-loving sedge (*Carex heliophila*) with minor quantities of foothills species like big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) and little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*). Much of the grassland character is obscured by non-native species, especially cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), which is abundant and prolific, and Jim Hill mustard (*Sisymbrium altissimum*) among others. This area historically had Townsend's big-eared bat (*Plecotus townsendii*). There are several areas of low intensity residential development and roads through the canyons on either side of the site.

Key Environmental Factors

Lower montane elevation; granitic bedrock.

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 10/21/2008

Designer Neid, S.L.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses a landscape mosaic of ponderosa pine savanna and woodland, mixed conifer

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forest, and grassland meadows that contain the element occurrences and adjacent suitable habitat.

Primary Area 1,749.35 Acres

707.94 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The site supports a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3G4/S3) *Pseudotsuga menziesii* / *Jamesia americana* lower montane forest and a good to fair (BC-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) *Pinus ponderosa* / *Leucopoa kingii* foothills ponderosa pine savanna.

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

Much of the grassland character is obscured by non-native species, especially cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) and Jim Hill mustard (*Sisymbrium altissimum*).

Offsite

No Data

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>
24756	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i> / <i>Leucopoa kingii</i> Woodland	Foothills Ponderosa Pine Savannas	G3	S3	No
24751	<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i> / <i>Jamesia americana</i> Forest	Lower Montane Forests	G3G4	S3	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
195190	Neid, S., J. Lemly, K. Decker and D. Culver. 2009. Final Report: Survey of Critical Biological Resources in Boulder County 2007-2008. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 10/21/2008

Version Author Neid, S.L.

Disclaimer

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