

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Big Sandy Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP*25130

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2158 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 391025N
 State Colorado Longitude 1032931W

<u>Quad Code</u>	<u>Quad Name</u>
39103-A5	Lake SE
39103-B5	Barron Creek
39104-B1	Simla
39103-C6	Limon
38103-H4	Kinney Lake
39103-C7	River Bend
39103-B6	Lake
39103-B7	Matheson NE
39104-A1	Alta Vista
39103-A3	Clifford
38103-H3	Boyero
39103-B8	Matheson
39103-D7	Barking Dog Spring
39103-B4	Hugo
39103-A4	Hugo SW
39103-C4	Genoa East
39104-B2	Ramah North
39104-C1	Kuhns Crossing
39103-D8	Agate
39103-C5	Genoa West
39103-A8	Matheson SW
39103-C8	Beuck Draw
39103-B3	Sevenmile Ranch

County

Elbert (CO)
 El Paso (CO)
 Lincoln (CO)

<u>Watershed Code</u>	<u>Watershed Name</u>
11020011	Big Sandy
11020012	Rush
10250001	Arikaree
10250003	South Fork Republican
10190013	Beaver
10190011	Bijou

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation - Feet - Meters
 Maximum Elevation - Feet - Meters

Site Description

Big Sandy Creek is an ephemeral creek that runs in the spring and summer months, but rarely in the winter. The floodplain is wide and shallow and filled with a gallery forest of cottonwoods that runs for miles in a very

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conspicuous "green line" easily seen from Hwy 287. Very few shrubs occur along the creek. The herbaceous undergrowth is dominated by native mid and tall-grass species. Mostly ranchland and rolling hills surround the riparian corridor. The railroad and Colorado State Hwy 287 parallel the creek for three-quarters of the site. Occasional towns, roads, bridges, and gravel quarries also occur along the corridor. The site is a mostly (roughly 85%) grass dominated or mixed with grass, forbs and yucca. Roughly 8% is mixed shrubland while riparian areas and open water account for just over 2% of the site. The rest is interspersed with agriculture, commercial and residential development. There are numerous occurrences of imperiled and vulnerable plant communities within this site including multiple occurrences of Great Plains Mixed Grass Prairie (*Pascopyrum smithii* - *Stipa viridula*; *Schizachyrium scoparium* - *Bouteloua curtipendula*; *Andropogon hallii* - *Stipa comata*; *Andropogon hallii* - *Calamovilva longifolia*; and *Bouteloua gracilis* - *Buchloe dactyloides*), Plains Cottonwood and Sand Dropseed (*Populus deltoides*/*Sporobolus cryptandrus*), and Plains Cottonwood Riparian Forest (*Populus deltoides* subspecies *monilifera*/*Panicum virgatum*). There are also numerous occurrences of animals of conservation concern within the site including historical records of Mountain Plover (*Charadrius montanus*), Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*) Arkansas darter (*Etheostoma cragina*), eastern spotted skunk (*Spilogale putorius*), and Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*) and a more recent record of the massasauga (*Sistrurus catenatus*).

Key Environmental Factors

No Data

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map P - Partial

Mapped Date 10/14/2004

Designer Sovell, J.R.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses Big Sandy Creek and most of the relatively natural grasslands surrounding the creek. It was drawn primarily for McCown's Longspur. Major agricultural areas to the north and south were excluded. Boundary was drawn using Landsat ETM+ satellite imagery and 25m Colorado Vegetation Classification data (CDOW).

Primary Area 384,925.90 Acres 155,774.60 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B5: General Biodiversity Interest

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The site supports multiple occurrences of McCown's Longspur, a state rare (G4/S2B) bird species.

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

No Data

Information Needs

No Data

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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>
18461	<i>Calcarius mccownii</i>	McCown's Longspur	G4	S2B	Yes
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REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
192546	Central Shortgrass Prairie Bird Working Group. 2004. Meeting held on July 29, 2004 at CSU. Participants included personnel from CNHP, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Colorado Division of Wildlife and Playa Lakes Joint Venture.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date	10/14/2004
Version Author	Sovell, J.R.

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