

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Bighorn Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP*063

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 1286 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 370042N
State Colorado Longitude 1061138W

<u>Quad Code</u>	<u>Quad Name</u>
37106-A2	Fox Creek
36106-H2	Bighorn Peak

County

Conejos (CO)
Rio Arriba (NM)

<u>Watershed Code</u>	<u>Watershed Name</u>
13010005	Conejos

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	7,580.00 Feet	2,310.00 Meters
Maximum Elevation	9,160.00 Feet	2,792.00 Meters

Site Description

The site is characterized by open montane meadows with scattered ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) and Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), especially along several mesas in the surrounding area. The area generally slopes from the south to the north and northeast and is traversed by numerous small drainages. Pinon (*Pinus edulis*) and juniper (*Juniperus* spp.) are scattered in pockets throughout the site. Cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*) trees and willows (*Salix* spp.) are present along some of the drainages. The open grasslands appear to have been heavily grazed in the past and some have been reseeded with the non-native crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*). Numerous weedy forbs are also present and native grasses have been reduced in abundance. A heavily used road goes through the site.

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 01/24/2000
Designer Pague, C.A. and S.M. Kettler

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the Ripley milkvetch location and enough adjacent habitat to include open grasslands or savanna-like vegetation and the numerous small drainages downstream from known Ripley milkvetch locations. This boundary is intended to allow some seed dispersal into currently unoccupied but apparently suitable habitat and provide habitat for plant pollinators. Seed dispersal mechanisms considered important for this species are small mammals (presumably kangaroo rats) caching the seed pods and precipitation events washing the seeds downhill (Julie Burt - pers. comm.). A suspected pollinator of this plant is a common bee that could nectar on species other than Ripley milkvetch in the same habitat.

Primary Area	2,507.52 Acres	1,014.76 Hectares
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SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B4: Moderate Biodiversity Significance

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Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site contains a fair (C-ranked) and historical occurrences of a plant species which is vulnerable on a global scale (G3/S2), Ripley milkvetch (*Astragalus ripleyi*), and an historic occurrence of a state rare (G4?/S1) plant species, many-flowered gilia (*Ipomopsis multiflora*).

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

Need to verify site boundaries with on-site investigation and update historical occurrences of Ripley milkvetch.

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>
18485	<i>Astragalus ripleyi</i>	Ripley milkvetch	G3	S2	No
21381	<i>Ipomopsis multiflora</i>	many-flowered gilia	G4?	S1	No
18485	<i>Astragalus ripleyi</i>	Ripley milkvetch	G3	S2	No
18485	<i>Astragalus ripleyi</i>	Ripley milkvetch	G3	S2	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
165924	Kettler, S., J. Rocchio, R. Schorr, J. Burt. 2000. Biological Inventory of Rio Grande and Conejos Counties, Colorado. Unpublished report prepared for The Nature Conservancy. 234 pp.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date	01/24/2000
Version Author	Pague, C.A. and S.M. Kettler

Disclaimer

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