

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Black Mountain Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP*19444

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 796 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 393055N
State Colorado Longitude 1052335W

Quad Code Quad Name

39105-E4 Meridian Hill
39105-E3 Conifer

County

Park (CO)
Jefferson (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name

10190002 Upper South Platte

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	8,420.00	Feet	2,566.00	Meters
Maximum Elevation	10,052.00	Feet	3,064.00	Meters

Site Description

This site includes an extensive riparian system within the park that remains in good condition overall. It ranges in elevation from 10,000 feet near the headwaters of Black Mountain Creek and its northeast tributary to 8,400 feet near the southern border of the original Staunton property. It is contiguous with the Black Mountain site to the north, which includes the headwaters of Black Mountain Creek. Much of the existing network of roads in the park are also included, as these follow the creeks and their tributaries in most cases. The main thoroughfare through the park runs along the north bank of the west fork of Black Mountain Creek. A rough two-track road also runs north-south along Black Mountain Creek's west bank to an old timber mill near the north park boundary. The riparian zone is somewhat narrow and is dominated by blue spruce (*Picea pungens*) and other conifers in most places. Along Black Mountain Creek, between the confluence with the west fork of Black Mountain Creek to the south and the timber mill to the north, the riparian area is dominated by blue spruce and river birch (*Betula occidentalis*). This globally rare association is found only in deep, moist canyons of the Colorado Front Range. Outside the park this association is greatly imperiled by the rapid development of the Front Range. As such, this community represents one of the Park's most valuable natural heritage resources. The understory of the blue spruce / river birch community has a rich flora of mesic forbs and graminoids. Some of the species found were elephantella (*Pedicularis groenlandica*), twisted stalk (*Streptopus fassettii*), chiming bells (*Mertensia ciliata*), shooting star (*Dodecatheon pulchellum*), cow parsnip (*Heracleum sphondylium*), scouring rush (*Equisetum* sp.), strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*), senecio (*Senecio triangularis*), woodrush (*Luzula parviflora*), and Canada reedgrass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*). In addition to blue spruce and river birch, the overstory contains Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*), quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), Drummond's willow (*Salix drummondiana*), alder (*Alnus incana*), and wild rose (*Rosa woodsii*). The adjacent upland areas support mixed coniferous forests of lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*), Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), and limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*), with a sparsely vegetated understory of wintergreen (*Pyrola asarifolia*), golden banner (*Thermopsis divaricarpa*), harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*), scorpionweed (*Phacelia heterophylla*), groundsel (*Packera* sp.), and penstemon (*Penstemon virens*).

Key Environmental Factors

No Data

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

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Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes

Mapped Date 07/15/1999

Designer Spackman, S.C. and D.G. Anderson

Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn to include the riparian areas associated with the Black Mountain Creek watershed with the exception of Upper Black Mountain Creek near Black Mountain, which is included within the Black Mountain site. A narrow band of upland forest and rock outcrops adjacent to the creek channel are included because any activities or management changes near the creek will have impacts on the community that must be considered. The roads are included because of their particularly high potential for altering ecological processes within the riparian area. Pollution from surface runoff, increased erosion, narrowing of the riparian zone, trampling of vegetation, and weed dispersal are all exacerbated by the presence of roads. Hydrological processes originating outside the planning boundary, including water quality, quantity, and timing should be managed to maintain site viability.

Primary Area 263.70 Acres

106.71 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site contains a good (B-ranked) example of a globally imperiled (G2/S2) blue spruce / river birch riparian community (*Picea pungens* / *Betula occidentalis*). This plant association has only been documented in seven sites in foothill canyons of the Colorado Front Range in the South Platte River Basin.

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

Throughout most of the site few weeds were observed. However, along the southern part of the Black Mountain Creek site weeds were particularly prevalent in disturbed areas. Exotic species observed include musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*), Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*), cheatgrass (*Anisantha tectorum*), salsify (*Tragopogon dubius*), smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), and orchard grass (*Dactylis glomerata*). Weeds in this area pose a risk to the rest of the park, as they could readily spread to uninfested areas with increased visitation.

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>
24654	<i>Picea pungens</i> / <i>Betula occidentalis</i> Woodland	Montane Riparian Woodland	G2	S2	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
160766	Spackman, S., D. Anderson, J. Siemers, P. Pineda, and J. Handwerk. 1999. Staunton State Park Biological Inventory.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

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VERSION

Version Date 07/15/1999

Version Author Spackman, S.C. and D.G. Anderson

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