

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Brannigan Springs

Site Code S.USCOHP*6523

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 507 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 405920N
State Colorado Longitude 1050155W

Quad Code Quad Name
40105-H1 Round Butte

County

Larimer (CO)
Laramie (WY)

Watershed Code Watershed Name
10190007 Cache La Poudre
10190008 Lone Tree-Owl

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation 6,300.00 Feet 1,920.24 Meters
Maximum Elevation 6,530.00 Feet 1,990.34 Meters

Site Description

The Brannigan Springs site contains several natural springs dominated by native wetland plant communities. One of these communities represents one of the lowest elevation known occurrences of what is typically a montane and subalpine plant community, which is probably present because of cold air drainage through the area. The springs are relatively alkaline. In several small areas a layer of water issuing forth at the spring supports an unstable mat of vegetation one-half meter thick. Sedimentary bedrock capped by a thin layer of Pleistocene alluvium underlies and surrounds the site. The type of bedrock has resulted in a variegated landscape that is dominated by short and mid grass prairie. The hydrologic regime supporting the seeps and springs appears to be generally unaltered by human modifications.

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 01/26/2005
Designer Doyle, G.A.

Boundary Justification

The site contains all the contiguous wetlands and springs as well as a 1,000-foot buffer to protect from direct impacts. Keate (2004), Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, indicates a 1,000 to 2,000-foot buffer as the distance where impacts to associated wildlife may be minimal. Incorporating all the wetlands into one site is useful to protect the values of the wetlands and for more flexible management of the area.

Primary Area 1,547.98 Acres 626.45 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site supports an excellent (A-ranked) occurrence of the globally imperiled (G3T2/S2) and federally

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Threatened Colorado butterfly plant (*Oenothera coloradensis* ssp. *coloradensis*), a fair (C-ranked) occurrence of a state rare (GU/S3) *Catabrosa aquatica* - *Mimulus* ssp. spring wetland and a good (B-ranked) occurrence of a common (G5/S4) beaked sedge (*Carex utriculata*) wet meadow. The wetlands are types that were probably once quite common across the Great Plains portion of Larimer County but uncommon now due to human alteration. It is reasonable to assume that many of our current reservoirs were built upon natural marshes and wet meadows, many of which probably contained springs. The Brannigan Springs site contains not only the western most Great Plains spring-fed wet meadows (*Catabrosa aquatica* - *Mimulus* spp.), but also contains a surprisingly low elevation occurrence of a beaked sedge community (*Carex utriculata*), which typically grows in the montane and subalpine zones. Most prairie wetland complexes have been altered by heavy cattle grazing, spring development, reservoir construction, or invasion by non-native species.

Other Values Rank No Data

Other Values Comments

No Data

LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Land Use Comments

The Soapstone Ranch is used for moderate to heavy grazing; as elsewhere, the cattle are especially fond of the wetland and riparian areas.

Natural Hazard Comments

No Data

Exotics Comments

No Data

Offsite

No Data

Information Needs

No Data

ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY

<u>Element State ID</u>	<u>State Scientific Name</u>	<u>State Common Name</u>	<u>Global Rank</u>	<u>State Rank</u>	<u>Driving Site Rank</u>
24862	<i>Catabrosa aquatica</i> - <i>Mimulus</i> ssp. Spring Wetland	Spring Wetland	GU	S3	No
18795	<i>Carex utriculata</i> Herbaceous Vegetation	Beaked Sedge Montane Wet Meadows	G5	S4	No
20240	<i>Oenothera coloradensis</i> ssp. <i>coloradensis</i>	Colorado butterfly plant	G3T2	S1	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
192827	Colorado Department of Natural Resources. 1998. Planning trails with wildlife in mind. Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Trails Program. Denver, CO.
192692	Doyle, G.A., S.L. Neid and R.J. Rondeau. 2005. Final Report: Survey of Critical Biological Resources, Larimer County, Colorado. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
192813	Keate, Nancy S. 2004. Bibliography of Impacts to Wetlands II - Draft - revised - Jan 2004. Utah Wetland Outreach, Wildlife Resources, Utah Department of Natural Resources.
166568	Kettler, S., J. Sanderson, S. Spackman, K. Fayette, C. Pague, D. Clark, and A. Hicks. 1996. Final Report: Significant plant, animal, and wetland resources of Larimer County and their conservation. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

Original site design by Sanderson, J.S. 1996-12-01.

VERSION

Version Date 01/26/2005

Version Author Doyle, G.A.

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