

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Cave Basin Trail

Site Code S.USCOHP*24734

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2099 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 373119N
State Colorado Longitude 1072931W

| <u>Quad Code</u> | <u>Quad Name</u> |
|------------------|------------------|
| 37107-E5 | Columbine Pass |
| 37107-E4 | Emerald Lake |

County

La Plata (CO)
Hinsdale (CO)

| <u>Watershed Code</u> | <u>Watershed Name</u> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 14080101 | Upper San Juan |

SITE DESCRIPTION

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

Site Description

The Cave Basin Trail is used by hikers and horseback riders. The trail begins in a clear-cut area that appears to be ideal habitat for grape ferns (*Botrychiums multifidum*), although a thorough search of the area was unproductive in 2003. The trail heads north and enters undisturbed spruce-fir forest at the boundary of the Weminuche Wilderness. An uncommon plant community with Carolina tasselrue (*Trautvetteria caroliniensis*) as the dominant understory species begins just inside the wilderness and continues for about a third of a mile. Other typical species in this community include showy alpine ragwort (*Ligularia amplexens*), large mountain fleabane (*Erigeron coulteri*), strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*), elk sedge (*Carex geyeri*), giant lousewort (*Pedicularis procera*), gooseberry currant (*Ribes montigenum*), osha (*Ligusticum porteri*), wild mountain parsley (*Pseudocymopterus montanus*), rattlesnake plantain (*Goodyera oblongifolia*), sweet cicely (*Ozmorhiza depauperata*), and smooth woodrush (*Luzula parvifolia*). The plant association reappears again in a larger patch about a third of mile farther along. There are both wet and dry open meadows interspersed throughout the forest. Wet meadows are home to showy whitlow-grass (*Draba spectabilis* var. *oxyloba*), along with other typical subalpine species such as Colorado false hellebore (*Veratrum tenuipetalum*), osha, large mountain fleabane, arrowleaf groundsel (*Senecio triangularis*), chiming bells (*Mertensia ciliata*), Rocky mountain fringed gentian (*Gentian thermalis*), elephant head (*Pedicularis groenlandica*), felwort (*Swertia perennis*), and bittercress (*Cardamine cordifolia*). Near the north end of the site are some interesting barren shale and rock areas with a different suite of species that grow in dry areas with shallow soils. These include alpine sandwort (*Lidia obtusiloba*), rosy pussytoes (*Antennaria rosea*), Gordon's ivesia (*Ivesia gordonii*), false strawberry (*Sibbaldia procumbens*), beautiful cinquefoil (*Potentilla pulcherrima*), rock jasmine (*Androsace septentrionalis*), stonecrop (*Sedum lanceolatum*), little club moss (*Selaginella* sp.), alpine fescue (*Festuca brachyphylla*) and Rand's goldenrod (*Solidago simplex*). On a nearby north-facing slope with patches of bare soil was a good population of kittentails (*Besseyia ritteriana*).

Key Environmental Factors

No Data

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

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SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes

Mapped Date 01/30/2004

Designer Lyon, M.J.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the Engelmann spruce/Carolina tasselrue subalpine forest. The community is found within the larger mosaic of subalpine forest and interspersed subalpine meadows. It is expected that this element is more widespread than is mapped here, and with additional survey effort this site could be expanded.

Primary Area 1,238.66 Acres

501.27 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The site supports a good (B-ranked) occurrence of Engelmann spruce/Carolina tasselrue subalpine forest, a globally vulnerable (G3/S2?) plant community.

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

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> |
| 24506 | <i>Abies lasiocarpa</i> / <i>Trautvetteria caroliniensis</i> Forest | Subalpine Fir/Carolina Tasselrue | G3 | S2? | Yes |

REFERENCES

| <u>Reference ID</u> | <u>Full Citation</u> |
|---------------------|---|
| 184581 | Lyon, P. 2003. Colorado Natural Heritage Program La Plata County Biological Assessment. |

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 01/30/2004

Version Author Lyon, M.J.

Disclaimer

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