

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Coffintop Mountain

Site Code S.USCOHP2*2264

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 1820 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>
2526	S.USCOHP*27434	North Saint Vrain-Hermit Park

LOCATORS

Nation United States Latitude 401155N
State Colorado Longitude 1052056W

Quad Code Quad Name

40105-B3 Lyons

County

Watershed Code Watershed Name

10190005 St. Vrain

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	5,640.00 Feet	1,719.07 Meters
Maximum Elevation	8,050.00 Feet	2,453.64 Meters

Site Description

An extensive ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) woodland covers rugged, granitic hills in the North St. Vrain watershed adjacent to Highway 7 west of Lyons. The steep, rocky and bouldery slopes, tors, and ridgelines support ponderosa pine woodland with multiple age classes, but it is primarily a young forest with evidence of past logging. Associated canopy species, especially on north-facing slopes include Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*). A short shrub layer is a mosaic of species patches with bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*) being the most constant but also with wax currant (*Ribes cereum*), creeping juniper (*Juniperus communis*), and bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*). Herbaceous understory is variable and ranges from sparse where gravel and needle duff are common to more cover elsewhere. Species richness is high with both a variety of graminoids like Scribner's needlegrass (*Achnatherum scribneri*) and forbs like stemless Indian parsley (*Aletes acaulis*), littleleaf alumroot (*Heuchera parvifolia*), and spearleaf stonecrop (*Sedum lanceolatum*). There are several boulder-strewn ephemeral drainages that have pockets of seepage or where surface water collects. Drier drainages are often densely vegetated with willow (*Salix*), skunkbush (*Rhus trilobata*), and vines like virgin's bower (*Clematis ligusticifolia*) and poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*). Drainages with more seepage tend to have more shrubs like waxflower (*Jamesia americana*) and Rocky Mountain maple (*Acer glabrum*) and small areas of relatively high forb cover including bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*), smooth aster (*Aster laevis*), fringed brome (*Bromus ciliatus*), geranium (*Geranium richardsonii*), and willow herb (*Epilobium* species). Spring wetlands and associated wet meadows occur in the northeast portion of the site. The rocky tors and adjacent sparsely-vegetated gravelly flats are primary habitat for the globally rare Larimer aletes (*Aletes humilis*). There are portions of occurrences of additional rare plants in the site: forktip three-awn (*Aristida basiramea*) and Fendler's false cloak fern (*Argyrosma fendleri*).

Key Environmental Factors

Silver Plume granite; lower montane elevation zone.

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map P - Partial Mapped Date 10/21/2008
Designer Neid, S.L.

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Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the elements and the entire peak of the mountain to provide for protection of ecosystem processes.

Primary Area 2,012.68 Acres 814.51 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The site supports an excellent (A-ranked) occurrence of a globally rare (G2G3/S2S3) plant species, Larimer aletes (*Aletes humilis*) and an excellent (A-ranked) occurrence of a globally rare to common (G3G5/S3?) foothills ponderosa pine scrub woodlands, *Pinus ponderosa* / *Purshia tridentata*.

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

Very few exotics occur but there is some cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) and Jim Hill mustard (*Sisymbrium altissimum*) along the highway.

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>
17408	<i>Aletes humilis</i>	Larimer aletes	G2G3	S2S3	Yes
24669	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i> / <i>Purshia tridentata</i> Woodland	Foothills Ponderosa Pine Scrub Woodlands	G3G5	S3?	No

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
195190	Neid, S., J. Lemly, K. Decker and D. Culver. 2009. Final Report: Survey of Critical Biological Resources in Boulder County 2007-2008. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

Original site design by Pague, C.A. 1994-09-12.

VERSION

Version Date 10/21/2008

Version Author Neid, S.L.

Disclaimer

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