

# Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Columbine Pass/Chicago Basin

Site Code S.USCOHP\*24736

## IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2101 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 373622N  
State Colorado Longitude 1073549W

Quad Code Quad Name  
37107-E5 Columbine Pass

County  
La Plata (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name  
14080104 Animas  
14080101 Upper San Juan

## SITE DESCRIPTION

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

### Site Description

The steep alpine slopes of this site consist primarily of rock outcrops and loose talus and gravelly pink granite. There is little vegetation except for scattered Colorado columbine (*Aquilegia coerulea*), alpine groundsel (*Senecio holmii*), alpine mountain sorrel (*Oxyria digyna*), and the two rare plants, San Juan whitlow-grass (*Draba graminea*) and Altai chick weed (*Stellaria irrigua*). A popular hiking and horse trail climbs from Columbine Lake on the east, over the pass and down to Chicago Basin on the west. In September 2003, most of the San Juan whitlow-grass plants were vegetative, with only a few flowering. We counted over 200 individuals on the steep west side of Columbine Pass, and expect that there are more in areas that are difficult to access. Two patches of kittentails (*Besseyia ritteriana*) and one of showy whitlow-grass (*Draba spectabilis*) were found nearby in somewhat less steep areas with deeper soil and more vegetation. Surrounding alpine communities include alpine avens (*Geum rosii*), false strawberry (*Sibbaldia procumbens*), tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), and other typical alpine species.

### Key Environmental Factors

No Data

### Climate Description

No Data

### Land Use History

No Data

### Cultural Features

No Data

## SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 01/30/2004

Designer Lyon, M.J.

### Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn to encompass the population of San Juan whitlow-grass that was located in 2003. It includes additional similar habitat along the ridge north of Columbine Pass. Historic occurrences of San Juan whitlow-grass were reported in the Chicago Basin area, but precise locations were not documented. It is likely that the species is more widespread in the steep talus areas that were not surveyed.

Primary Area 993.02 Acres 401.86 Hectares

## SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

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## Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site contains a good (B-ranked) occurrence of a globally imperiled (G2/S2) plant, San Juan whitlow-grass and a good (B-ranked) occurrences of Altai chick weed, rare in Colorado (G4?/S2). There are several historic occurrences of plants in the Chicago Basin area that are not included in this site, including San Juan whitlow-grass, Altai chick weed, Colorado Divide whitlow-grass (*Draba streptobrachia*), and Kotzebui's grass of Parnassus (*Parnassia Kotzebui*). Precise locations were not documented, and the populations have not been located within the last 20 years. The site could be enlarged to include these if they are relocated in the future.

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>
17247	<i>Draba graminea</i>	San Juan whitlow-grass	G2	S2	Yes
17150	<i>Stellaria irrigua</i>	Altai chickweed	G4?	S2	No

## 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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