

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Conejos River at Platoro

Site Code S.USCOHP*20144

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 1680 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 372039N
State Colorado Longitude 1062942W

<u>Quad Code</u>	<u>Quad Name</u>
37106-C4	Red Mountain
37106-C5	Platoro

County

Conejos (CO)

<u>Watershed Code</u>	<u>Watershed Name</u>
13010005	Conejos

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	9,800.00 Feet	2,987.00 Meters
Maximum Elevation	9,800.00 Feet	2,987.00 Meters

Site Description

The site is in a glaciated valley along the Conejos River and contains scrub/shrub riparian habitat and slope wetlands. The river meanders across a wide valley floor leaving many wetlands associated with numerous oxbows. Natural hydrological processes have been altered due to the presence of Platoro Reservoir. Seasonal flooding has likely been minimized relative to historical flows. However, many small drainages and seeps on adjacent slopes appear to maintain saturated conditions in much of the site. The seeps support willow carrs dominated by a complex of willows (*Salix* spp.), sedges (*Carex* spp.), and mixed forbs. Drier areas of adjacent slopes are dominated by aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) and sub-alpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*). Mountain willow (*Salix monticola*), Booth willow (*Salix boothii*), water sedge (*Carex aquatilis*), tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), beaked sedge (*Carex utriculata*), and elephantella (*Pedicularis groenlandica*) occur in the floodplain around old oxbows and in low-lying areas. Shrubby cinquefoil (*Pentaphylloides floribunda*) occupies slightly drier areas in the floodplain. [Aitken and Van Wie 1995:] The area has a history of cattle grazing and is now a popular recreation area for residents of the southwestern states.

Key Environmental Factors

Groundwater seeps have altered the hydrologic regime.

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

Grazing and recreation have contributed to the presence of exotic species. Platoro Reservoir upstream has altered the natural hydrologic regime.

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 12/16/1999
Designer Rocchio, F.J.

Boundary Justification

The floodplain of the Conejos River was included in the boundary to allow the river to meander, thereby creating potential habitat for the plant community to establish. The willow carrs observed on adjacent slopes were included as they provide important hydrological functions, such as maintenance of surface and groundwater flow. Although not included in the site, upstream activities along the Conejos River could potentially affect the elements.

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Primary Area 1,164.52 Acres

471.27 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B4: Moderate Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The site supports a good (B-ranked) example of globally apparently secure (G4) montane willow carr (*Salix monticola*/mesic forb).

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>
24809	<i>Salix monticola</i> / Mesic Forbs Shrubland	Montane Riparian Willow Carr	G4	S3	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
171160	Aitken, M. and E. VanWie. 1995. Colorado Natural Heritage Program Riparian Field Survey of the Upper Rio Grande.
165924	Kettler, S., J. Rocchio, R. Schorr, J. Burt. 2000. Biological Inventory of Rio Grande and Conejos Counties, Colorado. Unpublished report prepared for The Nature Conservancy. 234 pp.
171089	Rocchio, J. 1999. Colorado Natural Heritage Program Wetland and Riparian Inventory/Assessment for Rio Grande/Conejos Counties.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

Grazing, Willow Carrs

VERSION

Version Date 06/27/2003

Version Author Bell, J.B.

Disclaimer

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