

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Cottonwood Pass

Site Code S.USCOHP*27576

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2569 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 385006N
State Colorado Longitude 1062429W

Quad Code Quad Name

38106-G4 Tincup

County

Chaffee (CO)

Gunnison (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name

11020001 Arkansas Headwaters

14020001 East-Taylor

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation 11,000.00 Feet 3,352.80 Meters
Maximum Elevation 12,126.00 Feet 3,696.00 Meters

Site Description

Cottonwood Pass site straddles the Continental Divide and the county line between Gunnison and Chaffee counties. The road has been used since the 1800s for access between the mining camps of Buena Vista and northern Gunnison Counties. The site crosses the central portion of the Sawatch Range, which is composed primarily of coarse schists and gneisses intruded by Precambrian granites and of metamorphosed limestone and quartzite (Chronic and Williams 2002). The headwaters of the North Fork of Cottonwood Creek are located within the site. The site consists of typical alpine vegetation that has adapted to intense solar radiation, extreme cold and dry, desiccating winds. The vegetation is dominated by Ross' avens (*Geum rossii*), boreal sagebrush (*Artemisia arctica*), dry sedges (*Carex elynoides*, *C. foena*, *C. rupestris*), alpine clovers (*Trifolium dasyphyllum*, *T. nanum*), and several alpine grasses (*Deschampsia cespitosa*, *Trisetum spicatum*, *Festuca brachyphyllum*). Animals that are known to utilize this site and other alpine areas include: American Pipit (*Anthus rubescens*), Brown-capped Rosy Finch (*Leucosticte australis*), and White-tailed Ptarmigan (*Lagopus muta*).

Key Environmental Factors

No Data

Climate Description

The area averages 300 days of sunshine each year. A typical summer day is sunny, in the high 70's to low 80's with evening temperatures in the high 40's and low 50's. Annual rainfall is 10.15" and annual snowfall is 30.4" with most snow occurring from the end of October through April.

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 01/20/2009

Designer Culver, D.R.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the occurrences and a buffer against direct disturbance. The natural processes are not completely contained within the boundary.

Primary Area 1,304.39 Acres 527.87 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

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Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The Cottonwood Pass site supports a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) reflected moonwort (*Botrychium echo*). An extant and a historical occurrence of the state rare (G5/S2) woods draba (*Draba oligosperma*), known in Colorado only from limestone scree slopes, also occur within the site. Additionally, there are imprecise and historical records of the state rare (G5T3T4/S2S3) dark blue butterfly (*Lycæides idas sublivens*), last observed in 1961, and the state rare (G5/S3) white-veined Arctic (*Oeneis bore*), last observed in 1972. Both the butterfly and moth occur only in the alpine zone.

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

Current field surveys are needed to locate the rare butterfly and moth and to document the quality of the woods draba populations.

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>
23377	<i>Draba oligosperma</i>	woods draba	G5	S2	No
23377	<i>Draba oligosperma</i>	woods draba	G5	S2	No
20475	<i>Botrychium echo</i>	reflected moonwort	G3	S3	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
198295	Chronic, H. and F. Williams. 2002. Roadside Geology of Colorado. Second Edition. Mountain Press Publishing Company. Missoula, MT.
198290	Culver, D.R., D. Malone, S.L. Neid, and J. Handwerk. 2009. Final Report: Survey of Critical Biological Resources in Chaffee County. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 01/20/2009
Version Author Culver, D.R.

Disclaimer

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