

# Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Cow Creek at Soap Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP\*23868

## IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 423 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 383348N  
State Colorado Longitude 1071825W

Quad Code Quad Name  
38107-E3 Little Soap Park

County  
Gunnison (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name  
14020002 Upper Gunnison

## SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	7,800.00 Feet	2,377.00 Meters
Maximum Elevation	8,800.00 Feet	2,682.00 Meters

### Site Description

Cow Creek is a small tributary to Soap Creek. Upland slopes are dominated by an open coniferous forest consisting of ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) and Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*). The riparian area is narrow and mainly consists of thinleaf alder (*Alnus incana* ssp. *tenuifolia*) and Drummond (blue) willow (*Salix drummondiana*) with a diverse understory. Narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*), aspen (*P. tremuloides*), Balsam poplar (*P. balsamifera*), Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*), and blue spruce (*P. pungens*) are patchy along the creek. Some grazing is occurring along the adjacent slopes and a recreation trail occurs along the creek. The hydrology of the site appears intact.

### Key Environmental Factors

No Data

### Climate Description

No Data

### Land Use History

No Data

### Cultural Features

No Data

## SITE DESIGN

Site Map P - Partial Mapped Date 12/30/2002  
Designer Rocchio, F.J.

### Boundary Justification

The boundaries incorporate an area that will allow natural hydrological processes such as seasonal flooding, sediment deposition, and new channel formation to maintain viable populations of the elements along Cow Creek. It should be noted that the hydrological processes necessary to the elements are not fully contained by the site boundaries. Given that the elements are dependent on natural hydrological processes associated with Cow Creek and its tributaries, upstream activities such as water diversions, impoundments, and improper livestock grazing are detrimental to the hydrology of the riparian area. This boundary indicates the minimum area that should be considered for any conservation management plan.

Primary Area 620.84 Acres 251.25 Hectares

## SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

### Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site is drawn for a good (B-ranked) example of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) thinleaf alder/Drummond (blue) willow (*Alnus incana* ssp. *tenuifolia*/*Salix drummondiana*) shrubland. This plant association has only

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been documented from Colorado and is small but widespread. It is highly threatened by improper livestock grazing and stream impoundments. This association is generally found along steep-gradient streams with stable, shaded stream banks. The site also supports a good (B-ranked) example of the Balsam poplar (*Populus balsamifera*) woodland. This plant association is a minor type in Colorado, has a limited distribution, and rarely forms stands larger than a few hundred yards long. Balsam poplar is distinguished from narrowleaf cottonwood by its broad leaves and large, sticky-resinous buds. There is not enough information to rank this plant association (GU/SU).

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>
24743	<i>Alnus incana</i> - <i>Salix drummondiana</i> Shrubland	Montane Riparian Shrubland	G3	S3	Yes
21578	<i>Populus balsamifera</i> Woodland	Montane Riparian Woodland	GU	S2	No

## REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
173839	Rocchio J., G Doyle, and R. Rondeau. 2003. Final Report: Survey of Critical Wetlands and Riparian Areas in Gunnison County, Colorado. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.

## ADDITIONAL TOPICS

## Additional Topics

No Data

## VERSION

Version Date 12/30/2002  
Version Author Rocchio, F.J.

## Disclaimer

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