

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Cucumber Gulch

Site Code S.USCOHP*3953

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 267 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 392919N
State Colorado Longitude 1060332W

Quad Code Quad Name
39106-D1 Breckenridge

County
Summit (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name
14010002 Blue

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	9,500.00	Feet	2,896.00	Meters
Maximum Elevation	9,900.00	Feet	3,018.00	Meters

Site Description

Cucumber Gulch is a north to northeast-facing drainage in the Blue River watershed. It is dominated by a montane willow carr (*Salix planifolia*/*Carex aquatilis*) and an alpine willow scrub (*Salix brachycarpa*-*mesic* forb) with bog birch (*Betula glanulosa*). There are numerous beaver ponds located throughout the willow carr. The open valley is about 0.3 miles wide at its widest point with Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) and lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) scattered throughout. Mudflats around the margins of the beaver ponds provide important habitat for the boreal toad. The upland areas in the site are dominated by Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*), subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*) and lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*). The site is approximately 500 acres with an elevation range from 2850 m (9,500 ft.) to 2950 m (9,900 ft.).

Key Environmental Factors

No Data

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

This area has been logged and/or burned; possibly salvage logging following a fire. A small log cabin, probably dating back to the turn of the century is within the site. There was historical mining as indicated on the 7.5 minute quad.

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map P - Partial Mapped Date 04/04/1996

Designer Ellingson, A.R.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the southern Rocky Mountain boreal toad occurrence and adjacent contiguous habitat. A buffer of 1,000 ft. is provided to prevent direct disturbance such as, trampling, mowing, trails, to the southern Rocky Mountain boreal toad and riparian habitats. A much larger area, including the full watershed, and post-breeding dispersal area for the toad should be considered in any conservation plan.

Primary Area	273.19	Acres	110.56	Hectares
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SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The Cucumber Gulch site contains one of three breeding populations of the southern Rocky Mountain boreal toad (*Bufo boreas boreas*) located on private lands in Summit County. This population of breeding toads was

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first documented in 1995. There was no breeding observed during the summer of 1996 (Horstman 1996). During the 1997 survey only two adults and 150-200 tadpoles were observed on June 18. There was no evidence of recruitment or survival of young in 1997 (Horstman 1997). The southern Rocky Mountain population of Boreal toads is likely distinct from other populations (A. Goebel unpubl. data as cited in Pague et al. 1997). There are approximately 206 historical localities for the southern Rocky Mountain boreal toad in Colorado. Presently, only three to four healthy populations remain, comprised of less than 20 high priority breeding sites (S. Corn and L. Livo, pers. comm. as cited in Pague et al. 1997). Populations have declined precipitously or disappeared over the past 20 years and continue to do so (Goettl 1997). The reasons for the decline are unknown and the factors important to the perseverance of this species are not well understood (Pague et al. 1997). The southern Rocky Mountain boreal toad is currently a candidate for federal listing, a state endangered and U.S. Forest Service sensitive species.

Other Values Rank No Data

Other Values Comments

No Data

LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Land Use Comments

Cross-country ski trails have been mowed within the wetland area. Mines are very near the site. The alpine ski area is at the top of the drainage and is probably affecting the water quality and hydrology.

Natural Hazard Comments

There are old mines in the area.

Exotics Comments

Dandelion and thistle occur outside of the wetland complex and should be kept out of this area.

Offsite

Hydrological processes originating outside of the planning boundary, including water quality, quantity, and timing, must be managed to maintain population and community viability. These processes may be affected by the Breckenridge Ski Area Peak 8 which is located at the top of the Cucumber Gulch site. There are numerous houses and new developments surrounding the entire site.

Information Needs

Specific development plans and threats to the wetland site.

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>
20351	<i>Bufo boreas</i> pop. 1	Boreal Toad (Southern Rocky Mountain Population)	G4T1Q	S1	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
165258	Culver, D.R. 1997. Colorado Natural Heritage Program Wetland Assessments for the 1997 Summit County Wetlands Inventory.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 04/04/1996
Version Author Ellingson, A.R.

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