

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Deep Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP3*2382

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 1370 **Site Class** PCA
Site Alias Ballixburg Spring
Site Alias Deep Creek I
Site Alias Groaning Cave
Site Alias Lower Short Creek

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** 394257N
State Colorado **Longitude** 1071218W

Quad Code Quad Name

39107-F1 Dotsero
 39107-F2 Broken Rib Creek
 39107-G2 Sweetwater Lake
 39107-F3 Carbonate
 39107-G3 Deep Lake

County

Garfield (CO)
 Eagle (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name

14010001 Colorado headwaters
 14010005 Colorado headwaters-Plateau

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation 6,200.00 **Feet** 1,890.00 **Meters**
Maximum Elevation 10,460.00 **Feet** 3,188.00 **Meters**

Site Description

Beginning at Deep Lake (10,460 feet) on the White River Plateau, Deep Creek plunges more than 4,500 feet in 15 miles to join the Colorado River near Dotsero (6,200 feet). Approximately 1 mile from Deep Lake, Deep Creek carves a rugged and remote limestone gorge, forming a dramatic pristine canyon over 2,500 feet deep and 13 miles long. The headwaters of Deep Creek are subalpine forests of aspen, spruce - fir, interspersed with meadows and many small lakes. The high elevation riparian areas consist of Drummond's willow (*Salix drummondiana*) and mesic forbs in the wide areas, changing to spruce and mesic forbs as the canyon narrows. As the creek drops closer to its confluence with the Colorado River, the landscape becomes more arid and vegetation turns toward pinon - juniper and sagebrush on the slopes and cottonwood forests in the canyon bottom. The limestone strata have created ideal conditions for the formation of caves. Over forty known caves are within the canyon walls. These include many of the state's most outstanding caves, including Groaning Cave, Colorado's longest at seven miles; Big A, Disappointment Cave, with the largest opening of any in the state; 20 Pound Tick Cave, still being explored and accessible only with scuba gear; and Fixin' to Die Cave, Colorado's second longest at 3 miles (Parris 1973). Deep Creek stands out from neighboring canyons in its ruggedness, remoteness, and pristine condition. Very little human disturbance is within the canyon. Trails are nonexistent and it is only accessible by traversing the creek itself, during low water. Coffee Pot Road, an unpaved forest service road, is atop the plateau and parallels Deep Creek. The road is the major access for Deep, Heart, and Bison lakes in the headwaters of Deep Creek. Recreational use, cattle grazing, and logging are all popular activities on the plateau. All these activities may or may not have an effect on the canyon itself. To our knowledge there is no grazing or logging within the canyon, and very little recreation. Although several nearby drainages, e.g. Grizzly and No Name creeks, have a similar appearance with similar landscape composition, none is as pristine as Deep Creek. The canyon proper has one of the most intact canyon landscapes found in Colorado. Although rare elements can be found in the canyon, Deep Creek is most impressive because of the integrity of the landscape.

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Key Environmental Factors

Seasonal flooding

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes

Mapped Date 02/28/2000

Designer Rondeau, R.J., K.K. Fayette

Boundary Justification

The site boundaries for Deep Creek include the entire watershed of Deep Creek. Although the flat and gentle slope areas are not pristine, they form the necessary buffer to protect the roadless, pristine slopes and valley bottom of Deep Creek. The boundary includes the canyon cliffsides that provide important nesting habitat for Peregrine Falcons. The boundary does not contain the entire feeding area of the pale lump-nosed bat, the extent of which is difficult to define.

Primary Area 37,270.47 Acres

15,082.88 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The Deep Creek site has one of the most intact, pristine canyon landscapes found in Colorado. Although rare elements can be found in the canyon, Deep Creek is most impressive because of the integrity of the landscape. Along with a pristine landscape, several state and globally rare elements are found in Deep Creek. Most significantly, the site contains a good (B-ranked) occurrence of a globally imperiled (G2/S2) *Sullivantia hapemanii* - (*Aquilegia barnebyi*) plant community and a good (B-ranked) occurrence of a globally imperiled (G2G3/S2S3) *Pseudotsuga menziesii* / *Paxistima myrsinites* plant community. Many other natural communities and globally rare plants have been identified within the site. It also contains rare bat and rare bird occurrences.

Other Values Rank No Data

Other Values Comments

No Data

LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Land Use Comments

No Data

Natural Hazard Comments

Steep slopes, cliffs, and caves

Exotics Comments

No Data

Offsite

Hydrological processes origination outside of the planning boundary, including water quality, quantity, and timing, must be managed to maintain population and community viability.

Information Needs

No Data

ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY

Element State ID	State Scientific Name	State Common Name	Global Rank	State Rank	Driving Site Rank
20765	<i>Gila robusta</i>	Roundtail Chub	G3	S2	No
19662	<i>Penstemon harringtonii</i>	Harrington beardtongue	G3	S3	No
40543	<i>Picea engelmannii</i> / <i>Cornus sericea</i>	Montane Riparian Forests	G3	SU	No
24961	<i>Salix drummondiana</i> / Mesic Forbs	Drummonds Willow/Mesic Forb	G4	S4	No

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Name	Deep Creek	Site Code	S.USCOHP3*2382		
24526	<i>Sullivantia hapemanii</i> - (<i>Aquilegia barnebyi</i>) Herbaceous Vegetation	Sullivantia Hanging Gardens	G2	S2	Yes
21249	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald Eagle	G5	S1B,S3N	No
24860	<i>Populus angustifolia</i> / <i>Cornus sericea</i> Woodland	Cottonwood Riparian Forest	G4	S3	No
21504	<i>Euderma maculatum</i>	Spotted Bat	G4	S2	No
22214	<i>Sullivantia hapemanii</i> var. <i>purpusii</i>	Hanging Garden sullivantia	G3T3	S3	No
24513	<i>Festuca idahoensis</i> - <i>Festuca thurberi</i> Herbaceous Vegetation	Montane Grasslands	G3G4	S3S4	No
19662	<i>Penstemon harringtonii</i>	Harrington beardtongue	G3	S3	No
19662	<i>Penstemon harringtonii</i>	Harrington beardtongue	G3	S3	No
24989	<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i> / <i>Cornus sericea</i> Woodland	Lower Montane Riparian Forests	G4	S2	No
21654	<i>Plecotus townsendii pallescens</i>	Townsend's Big-eared Bat Subsp	G4T4	S2	No
24867	<i>Picea pungens</i> / <i>Cornus sericea</i> Woodland	Montane Riparian Forest	G4	S2	No
21725	<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>	American Peregrine Falcon	G4T4	S2B	No
19662	<i>Penstemon harringtonii</i>	Harrington beardtongue	G3	S3	No
24791	<i>Quercus gambelii</i> / <i>Symphoricarpos oreophilus</i> Shrubland	Mixed Mountain Shrublands	G5	S3S4	No
22214	<i>Sullivantia hapemanii</i> var. <i>purpusii</i>	Hanging Garden sullivantia	G3T3	S3	No
22745	<i>Carex aquatilis</i> Herbaceous Vegetation	Montane Wet Meadows	G5	S4	No
24809	<i>Salix monticola</i> / Mesic Forbs Shrubland	Montane Riparian Willow Carr	G4	S3	No
24818	<i>Artemisia tridentata</i> ssp. <i>vaseyana</i> / <i>Festuca thurberi</i> Shrubland	Western Slope Sagebrush Shrublands	G3G4	S1S2	No
24942	<i>Salix drummondiana</i> / <i>Carex utriculata</i> Shrubland	Montane Willow Carr	G4	S3	No
22992	<i>Cornus sericea</i> Shrubland	Foothills Riparian Shrubland	G4Q	S3	No
24513	<i>Festuca idahoensis</i> - <i>Festuca thurberi</i> Herbaceous Vegetation	Montane Grasslands	G3G4	S3S4	No
19662	<i>Penstemon harringtonii</i>	Harrington beardtongue	G3	S3	No
24961	<i>Salix drummondiana</i> / Mesic Forbs Shrubland	Drummonds Willow/Mesic Forb	G4	S4	No
24778	<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i> / <i>Paxistima myrsinites</i> Forest	Lower Montane Forests	G2G3	S2S3	Yes
19662	<i>Penstemon harringtonii</i>	Harrington beardtongue	G3	S3	No
19162	<i>Phragmites australis</i> Western North America Temperate Semi-natural Herbaceous Vegetation	Western Slope Marsh	G5	S3	No
19662	<i>Penstemon harringtonii</i>	Harrington beardtongue	G3	S3	No
23569	<i>Nuttallia multicaulis</i>	many-stem stickleaf	G3	S3	No
19662	<i>Penstemon harringtonii</i>	Harrington beardtongue	G3	S3	No
24860	<i>Populus angustifolia</i> / <i>Cornus sericea</i> Woodland	Cottonwood Riparian Forest	G4	S3	No
24526	<i>Sullivantia hapemanii</i> - (<i>Aquilegia barnebyi</i>) Herbaceous Vegetation	Sullivantia Hanging Gardens	G2	S2	No

REFERENCES

Reference ID	Full Citation
-	No Data

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date	12/15/2000
Version Author	Lyon, M.J.

Disclaimer

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