

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Florida River at Burnt Timber Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP*24671

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2079 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 372843N
State Colorado Longitude 1074030W

Quad Code Quad Name
37107-D6 Lemon Reservoir

County
La Plata (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name
14080104 Animas

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation - Feet - Meters
Maximum Elevation - Feet - Meters

Site Description

This site encompasses the Florida River in a steep, narrow canyon and the east mountain bench above that canyon. The area above the Florida River is at the southern reach of the rising Mountain View Crest. The area is sloping to flat with limestone, sandstone and granite outcrops, of Leadville Limestone and the Hermosa Formation. The area harbors many seeps, springs, ephemeral and low order streams. Conifer forests on upland slopes consist of a diverse tree canopy including blue spruce (*Picea pungens*), white fir (*Abies concolor*), and Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) in the montane region. Mountain shrub diversity is high in the narrow riparian zones, where more willow species occur in the open, flat meadows, and wetlands. Small depressions in this area often have standing water with mature aspen growing within. Larger swales and meadows support wetlands encouraged by beaver dams. Willows wind around the margins of wet meadows and standing water in a linear, dense to open canopy. Mesic graminoids and forbs occupy the wet meadows and hummocky areas adjacent the willows. Willow species include mountain willow (*Salix monticola*), shining willow (*Salix lasiandra*), Drummond's willow (*Salix drummondiana*), planeleaf willow (*Salix planifolia*) and strapleaf willow (*Salix eriocephala* var. *ligulifolia*). Graminoids commonly found are beaked sedge (*Carex utriculata*), northern mannagrass (*Glyceria borealis*), smallwing sedge (*Carex microptera*), reed canary grass (*Phalaroides arundinacea*), field horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*) and mountain brome (*Bromus ciliatus*). The area drains into the Florida River. Weeds (Canada thistle) become very dense, especially on the beaver dams. A popular horse pack trail parallels the wetlands. The upper Florida River Canyon was surveyed in 1995 by CNHP riparian ecologists. The canyon is occupied by mixed conifer - deciduous forests. Soils are mineral and in steep areas, poorly developed. The canyon is narrow and rocky with large sandstone and limestone boulders where non-obligate riparian conifers such as Douglas-fir are situated in the riparian zone. At least one area where the canyon opens, a pure deciduous forest occupies the reach. It consists of narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*) and a variety of deciduous shrubs with red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) dominating. This community type is not common for the Florida River in this region. Farther upstream and into the Burnt Timber drainage is a thinleaf alder shrubland (*Alnus incana*/ mesic forbs). The accessibility of this area is difficult, limiting human visitation. There is sign of wildlife use but no domestic grazers.

Key Environmental Factors

No Data

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

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Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes

Mapped Date 12/10/2003

Designer March, M.A.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries incorporate an area that will allow for the natural hydrological processes from surrounding drainages. Seasonal flooding and sediment deposition will help maintain the viability of the elements in the Florida River drainage. The boundaries also provide a small buffer from nearby trails where surface runoff may contribute excess nutrients, sediment and weed invasion. It should be noted that the hydrological processes necessary to the elements are not fully contained by the site boundaries.

Primary Area 519.32 Acres 210.16 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The drainage supports the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) thinleaf alder / mesic forbs (*Alnus incana* / Mesic Forbs) plant association in good (B-ranked) condition. The site also contains the globally secure but vulnerable in the state (G4/S3) narrowleaf cottonwood / red -osier dogwood (*Populus angustifolia* / *Cornus sericea*) plant community in good condition. The higher bench supports the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) mountain willow shrublands (*Salix monticola* / Mesic Graminoids) in fair (C-ranked) condition and the globally vulnerable (G3Q/S2S3) shining willow shrubland (*Salix lasiandra* or *Salix caudata* ssp. *lucida*) in fair condition.

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

Dense stands of Canada thistle occur on old beaver dams and are scattered to dense on drier, upland meadows in the South Burnt Timber Creek area above the Florida River Canyon. The canyon is mostly free of noxious weeds, but domestic grazing does occur in the tributaries above, and weed encroachment is visible. Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*) and dandelions (*Taraxacum officinale*) occupy the Florida River canyon area, however, they are not dense.

Offsite

Domestic grazing does occur in the tributaries above, and weed encroachment is visible. Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*) and dandelions (*Taraxacum officinale*) occupy the canyon area, however they are not dense.

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>
24860	<i>Populus angustifolia</i> / <i>Cornus sericea</i> Woodland	Cottonwood Riparian Forest	G4	S3	No
24645	<i>Alnus incana</i> / Mesic Forbs Shrubland	Thinleaf Alder/Mesic Forb Riparian Shrubland	G3	S3	Yes
16815	<i>Salix lucida</i> ssp. <i>caudata</i> Shrubland [Provisional]	Montane Riparian Shrubland	G3Q	S2S3	No
24585	<i>Salix monticola</i> / Mesic Graminoids Shrubland	Montane Riparian Willow Carr	G3	S3	No

REFERENCES

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Reference ID

Full Citation

184533

March, M. and D. Culver. 2003. Colorado Natural Heritage Program Field Survey for La Plata County Wetlands.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 01/14/2004

Version Author March, M.A.

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