

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Garfield Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP*21711

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 1467 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 393042N
State Colorado Longitude 1073126W

Quad Code Quad Name
39107-E5 New Castle

County
Garfield (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name
14010005 Colorado headwaters-Plateau

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	6,100.00 Feet	1,859.00 Meters
Maximum Elevation	6,500.00 Feet	1,981.00 Meters

Site Description

The reach of Garfield Creek contained in this site is best described as a medium sized stream meandering through a long wide valley. Surrounding slopes are dominated by piñon-juniper (*Pinus edulis*-*Juniperus osteosperma*) and sage (*Artemisia* sp.). Upstream, on adjacent upland areas, there are numerous hay meadows, pasture, new housing developments, and County Road 312. The riparian area along the downstream portion of this site is dominated by a sparse overstory of narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*), river birch (*Betula occidentalis*), and hawthorn (*Crataegus rivularis*) with Canada goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*) and Indian hemp (*Apocynum cannabinum*) being fairly common in the understory. Further downstream, there are a series of old beaver dams with high species diversity. Cattail (*Typha latifolia*), beaked sedge (*Carex utriculata*), water speedwell (*Veronica catenata*), spikerush (*Eleocharis palustris*), and hardstem bulrush (*Scirpus acutus*) dominate the wettest areas. Sandbar willow (*Salix exigua*), pale bulrush (*Scirpus pallidus*), wild mint (*Mentha arvensis*), showy milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*), shortawn foxtail (*Alopecurus aequalis*), tall mannagrass (*Glyceria elata*), foxtail barley (*Hordeum jubatum*), tuberous rush (*Juncus nodosus*), wild licorice (*Glycyrrhiza lepidota*), and dock (*Rumex crispus*) occupy saturated areas surrounding the beaver ponds. A small meadow, which appears to have formed behind an old beaver dam and is now elevated above the current stream level, is dominated by woolly sedge (*Carex lanuginosa*), sloughgrass (*Beckmannia syzigachne*), and redtop (*Agrostis gigantea*). There are numerous non-native species that occupy the riparian area, especially the wetlands near the beaver ponds. Non-natives such as redtop, barnyard grass (*Echinochloa crus-galli*), Canada goldenrod, Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), white sweetclover (*Melilotus albus*), smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), orchard grass (*Dactylis glomerata*), and timothy (*Phleum pratense*) are common in the area. Numerous northern leopard frogs (*Rana pipiens*) were observed in this area as well as signs of recent bear activity. The soils along the creek are mapped as Torrifluvents. These soils formed in alluvium and are highly stratified and vary widely in texture and depth (Soil Conservation Service 1985). Organic matter is accumulating in the soils near the beaver ponds and in wet meadows on the floodplain. A functional assessment was also conducted for this site, please see report (Survey of Critical Wetlands and Riparian Areas of Garfield County, Rocchio, J. 2000).

Key Environmental Factors

No Data

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

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SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 01/15/2001

Designer Rocchio, F.J.

Boundary Justification

The site boundaries protect the plant community from direct disturbances associated with development and improper grazing. The boundaries also provide a buffer from nearby populations of non-native species growing on disturbed sites such as housing developments, roads, hay meadows, and pasture. While the boundaries would allow Garfield Creek to maintain natural fluvial processes along this stretch of the creek they do not protect upstream hydrological sources. Thus, any management/conservation plan should address upstream water use and quality.

Primary Area 463.16 Acres 187.44 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site supports a fair (C-ranked) occurrence of the globally imperiled (G2?/S2?) narrowleaf cottonwood/hawthorn (*Populus angustifolia*/*Crataegus rivularis*) riparian forest. This community type was previously only known from six stands located on the lower slopes of the San Juan Mountains and along tributaries of the San Miguel River, Colorado. Also numerous northern leopard frogs were observed in the area.

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>
24727	<i>Populus angustifolia</i> / <i>Crataegus rivularis</i> Woodland	Narrowleaf Cottonwood Riparian Forests	G2?	S2	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
160919	Lyon, P. 2000. Colorado Natural Heritage Program Biological Assessment of Garfield County.
160810	Rocchio, J. 2000. Colorado Natural Heritage Program Wetland Inventory/Assessment of Garfield County.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 01/15/2001

Version Author Rocchio, F.J.

Disclaimer

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