

# Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Gold Hill at Switzerland Trail

Site Code S.USWRO1\*1176

## IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 316 Site Class PCA  
Site Alias Gold Hill  
Site Alias Gold Hill at Left Hand Creek

## Network of Conservation Areas (NCA)

NCA Site ID NCA Site Code NCA Site Name  
- No Data

## LOCATORS

Nation United States Latitude 400257N  
State Colorado Longitude 1052740W  
Quad Code Quad Name  
40105-A4 Gold Hill  
County

Watershed Code Watershed Name  
10190005 St. Vrain

## SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation 8,940.29 Feet 2,725.00 Meters  
Maximum Elevation 9,055.12 Feet 2,760.00 Meters

### Site Description

This site is in the heart of one of the major historical mining districts in Boulder County, between Sunset and Gold Hill. It is a mosaic of forest interspersed with large expansive meadows that cover rugged, granitic hills that are dissected by deep, narrow stream valleys. The site is at the upper elevation of a large ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) ecological system that extends eastward to the foothills. Forest vegetation transitions to lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) higher in elevation to the west. North-facing slopes have dense-canopied mixed conifer forest with lodgepole pine, Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), and ponderosa pine. South-facing slopes tend to have more open canopies of ponderosa pine and pockets of aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) with more extensive meadows. The meadows have a diverse mix of montane grassland species including Parry's oatgrass (*Danthonia parryii*), mountain muhly (*Muhlenbergia montana*), and spike fescue (*Leucopoa kingii*) with lower montane-foothills species like needle-and-thread (*Hesperostipa comata*). There are small fen wetlands in the limited areas of relatively flat topography along headwater areas of streams. The landscape in this area experienced several catastrophic fires during historical mining activity (Veblen and Lorenz 1991, Smith 1981).

### Key Environmental Factors

Montane life zone; granitic bedrock

### Climate Description

No Data

### Land Use History

No Data

### Cultural Features

No Data

## SITE DESIGN

Site Map P - Partial Mapped Date 10/23/2008  
Designer Neid, S.L.

### Boundary Justification

The boundary contains a landscape mosaic of ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) woodland, mixed conifer forest, and grassland meadows that contain the element occurrences and adjacent suitable habitat.

Primary Area 2,038.88 Acres 825.11 Hectares

## SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

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## Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site contains both plant and natural community occurrences. It contains one good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) wavy-leaf stickleaf (*Nuttallia sinuata*), two excellent to good (AB-ranked) occurrences of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) Parry's oatgrass (*Danthonia parryi*) montane grassland, one good (B-ranked) and one fair (C-ranked) occurrence of a globally vulnerable (G3/S3) ponderosa pine / spike fescue (*Pinus ponderosa* / *Leucopoa kingii*) woodland, a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the state rare (G4G5/S2S3) ponderosa pine / mountain muhly (*Pinus ponderosa* / *Muhlenbergia montana*) woodland, and a good (B-ranked) occurrence of a globally unranked (GNR/SNR) ponderosa pine / mountain big sagebrush (*Pinus ponderosa* / *Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *vaseyana*) woodland.

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>
19228	<i>Danthonia parryi</i> Herbaceous Vegetation	Montane Grasslands	G3	S3	Yes
19228	<i>Danthonia parryi</i> Herbaceous Vegetation	Montane Grasslands	G3	S3	Yes
24740	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i> / <i>Muhlenbergia montana</i> Woodland	Foothills Ponderosa Pine Savannas	G4G5	S2S3	No
44124	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i> / <i>Artemisia tridentata</i> ssp. <i>vaseyana</i> Woodland		GNR	SNR	No
21778	<i>Nuttallia sinuata</i>	wavy-leaf stickleaf	G3	S3	Yes
24756	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i> / <i>Leucopoa kingii</i> Woodland	Foothills Ponderosa Pine Savannas	G3	S3	Yes
24756	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i> / <i>Leucopoa kingii</i> Woodland	Foothills Ponderosa Pine Savannas	G3	S3	No

## REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
195190	Neid, S., J. Lemly, K. Decker and D. Culver. 2009. Final Report: Survey of Critical Biological Resources in Boulder County 2007-2008. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
198278	Smith, P. 1981. A Look At Boulder: From Settlement to City. Pruett Publishing Company, Boulder, CO.
198277	Veblen, T.T. and Lorenz, D.C. 1991. The Colorado Front Range: A Century of Ecological Change. University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, UT.

## ADDITIONAL TOPICS

### Additional Topics

Original site design by Pague, C.A. 1994-09-12.

## VERSION

Version Date 10/23/2008

Version Author Neid, S.L.

## Disclaimer

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