

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Gordon Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP*27220

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2494 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 400005N
State Colorado Longitude 1052729W

<u>Quad Code</u>	<u>Quad Name</u>
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39105-H5	Nederland
40105-A4	Gold Hill
39105-H4	Tungsten
40105-A5	Ward

County

<u>Watershed Code</u>	<u>Watershed Name</u>
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10190005	St. Vrain
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SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	7,600.00	Feet	2,316.48	Meters
Maximum Elevation	9,080.00	Feet	2,767.58	Meters

Site Description

The Gordon Creek site is located in southwestern Boulder County, about 8 miles due west of Boulder. It encompasses a group of small, shaded canyons separated by forested low ridges. Included are the headwaters of Gordon Gulch and Gordon Creek, as well portions of North Boulder Creek directly to the south and stretching to Boulder Falls. Together, these drainages form the lower portion of the North Boulder Creek catchment above Boulder Canyon. North-facing slopes are dominated by dense mixed forest of Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*), and Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*). South-facing slopes are more open with ponderosa pine over common juniper (*Juniperus communis*) and needle-and-thread grass (*Hesperostipa comata*). The watercourses support a set of characteristic montane riparian vegetation. Along North Boulder Creek, a deeply shaded riparian corridor is dominated by blue spruce (*Picea pungens*) over a dense tall shrub layer and thick herbaceous understory. The conifers are rooted in the low gradient stream bank and overhang the creek. Water birch (*Betula occidentalis*) dominates the tall shrub layer and is accompanied by alder (*Alnus incana*), Bebb willow (*Salix bebbiana*), and Drummond's willow (*Salix drummondiana*). The herbaceous understory is thick, diverse, and primarily dominated by native species, such as bluejoint reedgrass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*), cutleaf coneflower (*Rudbeckia laciniata* var. *ampla*), and horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*). Gordon Gulch supports a scattered tree overstory dominated by aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) at approximately 20% cover, with occasional Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine and blue spruce. In some areas, mixed conifers from the surrounding slope overhang the riparian corridor. The tall shrub (6.4 ft-16.4 ft/2-5 m tall) layer is well represented and dominated by water birch (40% cover) and alder (10% cover). The understory contains high cover of short shrubs e.g., common juniper, Woods' rose (*Rosa woodsii*), honeysuckle (*Lonicera involucrata*), alder, and numerous herbs. Gordon Creek supports a montane riparian shrubland characterized by park willow (*Salix monticola*) as the constant dominant along the stream, though its cover is variable. The understory is a lush carpet of grasses with mixed mesic forbs. Bluejoint reedgrass is the most dominant understory species in the riparian area, and beaked sedge (*Carex utriculata*) is found in wet swales. This site is within winter elk range.

Key Environmental Factors

Water flows vary seasonally in Gordon Gulch and Gordon Creek.

Climate Description

No Data

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Land Use History

The area shows evidence of historic mining and grazing. There are also numerous roads, utility corridors, and a diversion pipeline within the site.

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes

Mapped Date 06/17/2008

Designer Decker, K.L. and J.M. Lemly

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the immediate watershed supporting the riparian vegetation, allowing for the operation of normal hydrological and ecological processes that support the riparian communities, and providing a buffer against direct disturbance. These natural processes are not completely contained within the boundary, and offsite activities within the watershed have the potential to impact the elements of biodiversity present in the area.

Primary Area 5,881.99 Acres

2,380.37 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site supports a good (B-ranked) occurrence of a globally imperiled (G2/S2) *Picea pungens* / *Betula occidentalis* montane riparian woodland, a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) *Picea pungens* / *Alnus incana* montane riparian forest, a good (B-ranked) occurrence of a globally vulnerable (G3/S3) *Salix monticola* / *Calamagrostis canadensis* montane willow carr and a good (B-ranked) occurrence of a globally vulnerable (G3/S2) quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) / water birch (*Betula occidentalis*) forest.

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

In addition to non-native hay grasses (*Phleum pratense*, *Poa pratensis*, and *Dactylis glomerata*), the site contains other weed species including Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) and musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*), primarily in areas that have been grazed.

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>
24654	<i>Picea pungens</i> / <i>Betula occidentalis</i> Woodland	Montane Riparian Woodland	G2	S2	Yes
24514	<i>Salix monticola</i> / <i>Calamagrostis canadensis</i> Shrubland	Montane Willow Carr	G3	S3	No
24611	<i>Populus tremuloides</i> / <i>Betula occidentalis</i> Forest		G3	S2	No
24518	<i>Picea pungens</i> / <i>Alnus incana</i> Woodland	Montane Riparian Forests	G3	S3	No

REFERENCES

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Reference ID

Full Citation

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.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 06/17/2008

Version Author Decker, K.L. and J.M. Lemly

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