

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Granite Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP8*3845

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 355 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>
883	S.USWRO1*1045	Colorado National Monument

LOCATORS

Nation United States Latitude 385034N
State Colorado Longitude 1090000W

<u>Quad Code</u>	<u>Quad Name</u>
38109-G1	Steamboat Mesa
38108-G8	Two V Basin

County

Mesa (CO)
Grand (UT)

<u>Watershed Code</u>	<u>Watershed Name</u>
14030004	Lower Dolores
14030001	Westwater Canyon

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	6,000.00	Feet	1,829.00	Meters
Maximum Elevation	8,800.00	Feet	2,682.00	Meters

Site Description

Granite Creek drains the higher elevations of Pinyon Mesa and is a very steep, V-shaped canyon with a narrow riparian zone. At the higher elevations, aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) and Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) grow on the steep slopes. Lower, pinyon-juniper stands dominate the slopes with some sagebrush (*Artemisia* sp.) terraces above the creek and Gambel's oak (*Quercus gambelii*) stands directly adjacent to the riparian area. There is a range of riparian associations. At the upper elevations, the riparian zone is densely covered with shrubs, including mountain willow (*Salix monticola*) and red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*). Farther downstream, cottonwood (*Populus* sp.), river birch (*Betula occidentalis*), and thinleaf alder (*Alnus incana*) dominate. The site has been used for livestock grazing and there is evidence of an old settlement in the upper canyon. In the lower canyon, a 4-wheel drive road parallels the creek. Soils Description: Soils along drainages are derived from alluvium. Restoration Potential: Monitor and eradicate any tamarisk (*Tamarix ramosissima*) that establishes.

Key Environmental Factors

No Data

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 03/15/1996
Designer Kettler, S.M.

Boundary Justification

The current boundary protects the occurrences from direct impact, and encompasses most of the slopes of the canyon and major tributaries. These boundaries will ensure continued natural surface flow and thus allow fluvial processes such as flood scouring, lateral flow, and channel meandering, to maintain a dynamic distribution of riparian and wetland plant associations along the drainage.

Primary Area	2,085.24	Acres	843.87	Hectares
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SITE SIGNIFICANCE

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Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The site contains six of plant associations vulnerable to apparently secure through their range (G3 and G4, respectively) in fair to good condition (C to B-ranked). The mountain willow/mesic forb riparian willow carr (*Salix monticola*/Mesic forb) is vulnerable through its range (G3). Mountain willow dominated stands are not common in Utah (Padgett et al. 1989) and are reported as limited in distribution in Idaho (Brunsfeld and Johnson 1985). However, this association is considered a major vegetation type in central Colorado (Kittel et al. 1995). The river birch/Red-osier dogwood riparian shrubland (*Betula occidentalis*-*Cornus sericea*), which is vulnerable through its range (G3), is considered a major type in Utah and occurs mostly in the central part of the state (Padgett et al. 1989) but is uncommon in Colorado. The narrowleaf cottonwood/river birch riparian forest (*Populus angustifolia*/*Betula occidentalis*), which is vulnerable through its range, has only recently been documented in Colorado but is considered a major type in the Wasatch Mountains of Utah (Padgett et al. 1989). The apparently globally secure (G4) narrowleaf cottonwood/red-osier dogwood (*Populus angustifolia*/*Cornus sericea*) is considered a major type in Utah (Padgett et al. 1989), and also occurs in Montana (Hansen et al. 1989) and Colorado. Most occurrences of this association in Colorado are degraded and high quality stands are rare (Kittel et al. 1995). The global distribution of the Gambel's oak/mountain lover shrubland (*Quercus gambelii*/*Paxistima myrsinites*) is currently unknown (GU), however it appears to occur only on the Colorado Plateau. The apparently globally secure (G4) pinyon pine/cliffrose shrubland (*Pinus edulis*/*Cowania mexicana*) is a widespread association that occurs in New Mexico, Utah, Arizona, and Colorado.

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

The composition and condition of the communities in the canyon further downstream into Utah needs to be evaluated. Riparian areas are highly threatened in Utah and Arizona and are high conservation priorities (Joel Tuhy, Peter Warren - personal communication).

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>
24809	<i>Salix monticola</i> / Mesic Forbs Shrubland	Montane Riparian Willow Carr	G4	S3	No
24923	<i>Quercus gambelii</i> / <i>Paxistima myrsinites</i> Shrubland	Mixed Mountain Shrublands	GU	SU	No
24876	<i>Betula occidentalis</i> / <i>Cornus sericea</i> Shrubland	Lower Montane Riparian Shrublands	G3	S1S2	No
24780	<i>Pinus edulis</i> - <i>Juniperus osteosperma</i> / <i>Purshia stansburiana</i> Woodland	Xeric Western Slope Pinyon-Juniper Woodlands	G4?	S3?	No
24884	<i>Populus angustifolia</i> / <i>Betula occidentalis</i> Woodland	Montane Riparian Forest	G3	S3	Yes
24860	<i>Populus angustifolia</i> / <i>Cornus sericea</i> Woodland	Cottonwood Riparian Forest	G4	S3	No

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
-	No Data

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ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 12/01/1997

Version Author Lyon, M.J.

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