

# Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Guanella Pass

Site Code S.USCOHP\*1205

## IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 1078 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 393502N  
State Colorado Longitude 1054120W

Quad Code Quad Name  
39105-E6 Mount Evans

### County

Clear Creek (CO)

Park (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name  
10190002 Upper South Platte  
10190004 Clear

## SITE DESCRIPTION

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

### Site Description

Bench and swale just below the road and pass. Small area to west of road with slightly larger pond. Dense *Salix brachycarpa* (in drier sites) and *Salix planifolia* (in wetter sites) stands with lush understory dominated by *Caltha leptosepala*, *Carices*, *Delphinium*, *Senecio triangularis* and *Artemisia*. Small springs and ponds ringed by *Carex aquatilis* and *C. rostrata*. Includes area 250 m NW of road with larger pond and marshy area of about 35 acres. Additionally in area that is headwaters of Duck Creek, draining to S of pass. This area has many wet meadows dominated by carices. The entire basin around the pass is a matrix of *Salix* thickets; marshy areas around small to medium sized ponds; seeps and springs; drier meadows dominated by grasses (especially *Deschampsia*); mesic to wet meadows dominated by carices. Snow melt is the primary water source. There are some localized impacts around the parking lot, along the road edges and from the trails through the thickets, both to the east and the west. Dave Cooper and William Weber have botanized the area some but a more thorough survey of headwaters and the valley of Scott Gomer Creek is needed.

### Key Environmental Factors

No Data

### Climate Description

No Data

### Land Use History

No Data

### Cultural Features

No Data

## SITE DESIGN

Site Map P - Partial Mapped Date 09/12/1994

Designer Pague, C.A.

### Boundary Justification

The boundaries include occurrences of rare plants and also other wet/marshy areas that may have populations of these elements. The extent of the *Salix* occurrence is included as well. A minimum buffer is considered within the boundary since all of the upstream watersheds for the east side of the road is within a Wilderness Area. The landscape in which the conservation site occurs varies from Wilderness Area (the vast majority) to public road access at Guanella Pass. Of course the ecological boundaries of this site extend to the watershed limits. Since Wilderness designation provides the strongest protection for an area needing limited active management, the conservation planning boundary should be considered the minimum area

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required for protection of the rare and significant features. A designation, as an RNA, should consider boundaries extending to watershed limits.

Primary Area 7,650.96 Acres 3,096.25 Hectares

## SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B4: Moderate Biodiversity Significance

### Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site supports an excellent (A-ranked) occurrence of a globally apparently secure (G4/S4) plant community, *Salix brachycarpa* / mesic forb.

Other Values Rank V4 - No known values

### Other Values Comments

High quality bird habitat including neotropical migratory bird habitat.

## LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

### Land Use Comments

Trailhead area for hikers, skiers and sightseers. Some hunting activity likely in fall. Area is very popular, as it is an easily accessed high elevation pass with spectacular scenery. Increased activity will probably occur if CDT trailhead is located here. Realignment of road/parking area could impact hydrology and springs.

### Natural Hazard Comments

Extremes of weather; careless hunters. (A woman mountain biker was killed by lightning on the pass in 1992).

### Exotics Comments

None obvious.

### Offsite

Road runs through the overall site - any changes in road alignment and/or new parking lot could impact the hydrology and therefore the springs and seeps below the road.

### Information Needs

More botanical inventory in marshy areas; excellent site for lower alpine *Salix* communities and marshes. Historic Boreal toad sightings. CDOW reported a possible wolverine sighting in 1995.

## 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>
24806	<i>Salix brachycarpa</i> / Mesic Forbs Shrubland	Alpine Willow Scrub	G4	S4	Yes
22774	<i>Parnassia kotzebuei</i>	Kotzebue's grass-of-parnassus	G5	S2	No

## REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
161898	Reid, Marion and C.A. Pague. 1992. Field Survey of West Vasquez Pass.

## ADDITIONAL TOPICS

### Additional Topics

Site is owned by USFS - Arapaho National Forest on N side of pass and Pike National Forest on S side of pass. Area east of road is part of Mt Evans Wilderness Area.

## VERSION

Version Date 09/05/1997  
Version Author Fleming, C.C.

## Disclaimer

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