

# Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Hermit Park

Site Code S.USCOHP\*5983

## IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 598 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>
2526	S.USCOHP*27434	North Saint Vrain-Hermit Park

## LOCATORS

Nation United States Latitude 402101N  
State Colorado Longitude 1052830W

Quad Code Quad Name  
40105-C4 Panorama Peak

### County

Watershed Code Watershed Name  
10190006 Big Thompson

## SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	7,800.00 Feet	2,377.44 Meters
Maximum Elevation	9,935.00 Feet	3,028.19 Meters

### Site Description

This site contains rugged, granitic, forested hills above Hermit Park, a small, montane grassland. The forested slopes are punctuated with large rock outcrops and rocky tors. Canopy trees on the slopes are largely ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) at the lowest elevations up to ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and finally to lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) at the highest elevations. The most common and widespread plant association is ponderosa pine / bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*). Pockets of aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) occur within the forest as well as small grassy openings with Parry's oatgrass (*Danthonia parryii*) and mountain muhly (*Muhlenbergia montana*). Hermit Park intersects the headwater tributaries of Big Gulch, which drains to the east-southeast. Upper reaches of the tributaries have wet meadow and emergent marsh vegetation. At the highest reach is a series of two ponds with dense aquatic vegetation including northern water milfoil (*Myriophyllum sibiricum*), floating pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*), mareostail (*Hippuris vulgaris*), small burreed (*Sparganium minimum*), and common bladderwort (*Utricularia macrorhiza*), surrounded by emergent graminoid marsh-sedge meadow vegetation with northern mannagrass (*Glyceria borealis*), beaked sedge (*Carex utriculata*), and common spikerush (*Eleocharis palustris*). The narrower, more forested lower reaches have aspen and river birch (*Betula occidentalis*) in the canopy and shrub layers. The lower tributary to the south contains a large wet meadow with tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia caespitosa*) as the most common species forming a mosaic with patches of woolly sedge (*Carex pellita* = *C. lanuginosa*) and water sedge (*Carex aquatilis*). Additionally there is a seepage area with shrubby cinquefoil (*Dasiphora fruticosa* ssp. *floribunda*), diamondleaf willow (*Salix planifolia*), and bog birch (*Betula glandulosa*). Non-natives such as smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), Canada thistle (*Cirsium canadensis*), and timothy (*Phleum pratense*) occur frequently at the upper reaches of this wet meadow, and in the lower riparian forest, but are lacking from the ponds.

### Key Environmental Factors

montane elevation zone; granitic bedrock; lightning strike fires

### Climate Description

No Data

### Land Use History

Grazing occurred until the 1960's when Hewlett Packard bought the property for recreation. Signs of fire from lightning strikes were observed. However, fire has been suppressed because the area has been managed as a recreation area for Hewlett Packard employees since the late 1960's.

### Cultural Features

No Data

## SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 10/15/2007

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Designer Neid, S.L.

## Boundary Justification

The site includes the rare plant occurrence and suitable, but unsurveyed habitat between known occurrences. The site allows for the functioning of all ecological processes except for fire.

Primary Area 824.18 Acres 333.54 Hectares

## SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

## Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site contains a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally imperiled (G2/S2) Rocky Mountain cinquefoil (*Potentilla rupincola*). There are hybrid individuals (*P. rupincola* x *P. effusa*) at this location as well.

Other Values Rank No Data

## Other Values Comments

The area is scenic and valuable for recreation and wildlife. Elk signs such as beds, droppings, bark scarring were common place.

## LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

### Land Use Comments

This site was recently purchased by the county. Recreational use is the only potential threat to the rare plant occurrence. The former level of recreation was less likely to pose significant problems; monitoring rare plant locations for potential impact from projected future recreation use is advised.

### Natural Hazard Comments

Cliffs (slippery when wet)!

### Exotics Comments

There are invasive weeds on the adjacent Hermit Park property, including diffuse knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*), musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*), Canada thistle (*Cirsium canadensis*), smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), and cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*). The knapweed is at the open space entrance, the thistles and smooth brome are largely within mesic and wet areas, and cheatgrass is locally abundant in portions of the ponderosa pine woodland on the open space property.

### Offsite

Development pressures are high.

### Information Needs

HP was interested in discussing with Colorado State University for an agreement for CSU to use the Park as a "classroom." However, the property has been sold to Larimer County Parks and Open Lands.

## 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>
19580	<i>Potentilla rupincola</i>	Rocky Mountain cinquefoil	G2	S2	Yes

## REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
192692	Doyle, G.A., S.L. Neid and R.J. Rondeau. 2005. Final Report: Survey of Critical Biological Resources, Larimer County, Colorado. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
170644	Johnston, B.C. 1980. Studies of population variability leading to a new classification of <i>Potentilla</i> sect. <i>Multijugae</i> (Rosaceae). MS Thesis, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO.
166568	Kettler, S., J. Sanderson, S. Spackman, K. Fayette, C. Pague, D. Clark, and A. Hicks. 1996. Final Report: Significant plant, animal, and wetland resources of Larimer County and their conservation. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
194839	Neid, S.L. 2007. Colorado Natural Heritage Program Field Surveys.

## ADDITIONAL TOPICS

### Additional Topics

Original site design by Spackman, S.C. and K.K. Fayette, 1996-10-28. It was revised by Doyle, G.A. in 2005.

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## VERSION

Version Date 10/16/2007

Version Author Neid, S.L.

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