

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Hondo Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP*9491

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 347 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 371738N
State Colorado Longitude 1064514W

Quad Code Quad Name
37106-C7 Blackhead Peak

County
Archuleta (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name
14080101 Upper San Juan

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	9,600.00 Feet	2,926.00 Meters
Maximum Elevation	10,200.00 Feet	3,109.00 Meters

Site Description

The Hondo Creek site encompasses a narrow canyon high in the San Juan Mountains at an elevation of 9,500 feet. Hondo Creek, a tributary of the Rio Blanco, bisects the site and has created a narrow bottomed canyon with a rocky streamside, with many boulders and some small overflow channels. The creek, which drains a basin northeast of Blackhead Peak, has a bottom consisting of bedrock, cobble and gravel. The upper reaches of Hondo Creek and the basin above the creek are barren with steep slopes, dropping into large avalanche chutes that cut through an old growth Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) and fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) forest. There are a number of drainages on the steep north and south slopes of this east-west flowing creek that appear prone to flooding and have prominent washout areas. There is a lot of bear and elk sign in the valley and a trail crosses through the site, but this wilderness area is not easily accessed and the trail appears little used except by hunters. There is a Drummond's Willow (*Salix drummondiana*) Mesic Forb plant community along Hondo Creek. Approximately 90% of the streambank within this plant community is covered by shrubs including Drummond's willow and thinleaf alder (*Alnus incana*) and 80% of the understory consists of forbs including cow parsnip (*Heracleum lanatum*), fumewort (*Corydalis caseana*) and waterleaf (*Hydrophyllum fendleri*). The entire community is very large, pristine and highly productive.

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 06/10/1997
Designer Kettler, S.M.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries incorporate an area that will allow natural hydrological processes such as seasonal flooding, sediment deposition, and new channel formation to maintain viable populations of the plant community along Hondo Creek. It should be noted that the hydrological processes necessary to the willow-forb community are not fully contained by the site boundaries. Given that the community is dependent on natural hydrological processes associated with Hondo Creek upstream activities such as water diversions, impoundments, and improper livestock grazing are detrimental to the hydrology of the riparian area. This boundary indicates the minimum area that should be considered for any conservation management plan. The boundary also

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includes a buffer of approximately 1,000 feet that should protect the plant communities from direct disturbance, and is thought to protect the avian, macroinvertebrate and periphyton communities (Noel et al. 1986, Spackman and Hughes 1995) associated with the riparian areas. Maintenance of this 1,000 foot buffer should also protect against impacts from sedimentation (Karr and Schlosser 1978) resulting from increased erosion, which occurs in areas where vegetation is removed or degraded.

Primary Area 44.39 Acres 17.96 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B4: Moderate Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site contains an excellent (A-ranked) occurrence of a plant community that is apparently secure (G4/S4) on a global scale. As of 1997, the Drummond's Willow (*Salix drummondiana*) Mesic Forb community within this site represents the best known occurrence of this community type in Archuleta County.

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

Hydrological processes originating outside of the planning boundary, including water quality, quantity, timing and flow must be managed to maintain site viability.

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>
24961	<i>Salix drummondiana</i> / Mesic Forbs Shrubland	Drummonds Willow/Mesic Forb	G4	S4	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
172808	J. R. Karr and I. J. Schlosser. 1978. Water resources and the land-water interface. Science 201: 229-234.
165959	Noel, D.S., C.W. Martin and C.A. Federer. 1986. Effects of Forest Clearcutting in New England on Stream Macroinvertebrates and Periphyton. Environmental Management 10: 661-670.
170844	Randolph, D., Smith, Kettler, Redders, Roy, and Aitken. 1994. San Juan National Forest Riparian Site Survey.
193472	Sovell, J., P. Lyon, and L. Grunau. 2003. Final Report: Upper San Juan Biological Assessment. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
159511	Spackman, S. C. and J. W. Hughes. 1995. Assessment of Minimum Stream Corridor Width for Biological Conservation: Species Richness and Distribution Along Mid-Order Streams in Vermont, USA. Biological Conservation 71:325-332.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 06/10/1997

Version Author Kettler, S.M.

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