

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Hovenweep

Site Code S.USCOHP*21414

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 626 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 372455N
 State Colorado Longitude 1090134W

Quad Code Quad Name
 37109-D1 Ruin Point

County

Montezuma (CO)
 San Juan (UT)

<u>Watershed Code</u>	<u>Watershed Name</u>
14080203	Montezuma
14080202	Mcelmo

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	5,200.00	Feet	1,584.96	Meters
Maximum Elevation	5,640.00	Feet	1,719.07	Meters

Site Description

The Hovenweep site includes some of the best preserved and most interesting ancestral Puebloan sites in the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument/Hovenweep National Monument. The rugged sandstone canyons of Hackberry, Keely, and Bridge Creeks dominate this area, running roughly northeast to southwest, and contiguous, sparsely forested uplands of Utah juniper occur to the north. Included within the site boundary is an access road to two units of the NPS-Hovenweep National Monument, which are surrounded by the BLM-managed Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. The Hackberry, Keely, and Bridge Creek drainages and their tributaries support three known occurrences of rare or vulnerable natural plant communities. All three of these natural community occurrences are in good condition, diminished only by their small size and the presence of cheat grass (*Bromus tectorum*) in their understories. A tributary to Hackberry Creek supports an occurrence of the rare Fremont's cottonwood / Gooddings black willow (*Populus fremontii* / *Salix gooddingii*) plant community. Associated species observed at this occurrence include Utah juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*), Sandburg bluegrass (*Poa secunda*), tamarisk (*Tamarix ramosissima*), muttongrass (*Poa fendleriana*), Stansbury cliffrose (*Purshia stansburiana*), mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus* sp.), skunkbush sumac (*Rhus trilobata*), Mormon tea (*Ephedra* sp.), and singleleaf ash (*Fraxinus anomala*). Springs at the headwaters of Keely Creek and Hackberry Creek support a rare community classified as hackberry / bluebunch wheatgrass (*Celtis laevigata* var. *reticulata* / *Pseudoroegneria spicata*), although the presence of bluebunch wheatgrass needs confirmation. Large hackberries dominate the overstory, with saplings and seedlings evidencing regeneration of the species. The adjacent landscape has a high amount of cryptobiotic soils preserved by the lack of grazing; however, cheat grass is very abundant. The drainages both appear to be ephemeral but influenced by periodic seasonal high flows, and the hydrologic regimes appear unaltered, with no documented upstream diversions. Puebloan ruins and rubble adorn the canyon rim and slopes above the channels, and a moderately used trail follows the rim along one canyon. Other plants at these sites include narrowleaf cattail (*Typha angustifolia*), and musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*), which occur around pools and within the channels. Utah juniper and spearleaf rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus linifolius*) occur on canyon slopes, and singleleaf ash and Rio Grande cottonwood (*Populus deltoides* ssp. *wislizenii*) are documented further down each canyon from the element occurrences. Level, bare areas in openings of pinon - juniper (*Pinus edulis* - *Juniperus osteosperma*) woodland support Utah beardtongue (*Penstemon utahensis*), along with galletagrass (*Hilaria jamesii*), four-wing saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*), and globemallow (*Sphaeralcea* sp.). The element occurrence for Utah beardtongue was documented in 1998, but was not revisited in 2000. It is near a road and thus potentially threatened by weeds, but no imminent threats were documented in the original 1998 report. Scattered occurrences of Westwater buckwheat (*Eriogonum scabrellum*) are found on open or partially shaded slopes facing south and southwest, dominated by good

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stands of Utah juniper and Stansbury cliffrose. Soils are fine, sandy loams from parent sandstone with periodic shallow rock outcrops. Associated species include snakeweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*), cheat grass, and six-week fescue (*Festuca octoflora*). Two avian species, the Gray Vireo (*Vireo vicinior*) and the Sage Sparrow (*Amphispiza belli*), have also been historically documented. Although the boundary was not drawn in consideration of these species, the site does contain significant areas of suitable habitat. Additionally, a historical documentation for desert spiny lizard (*Sceloporus magister*) is worth noting, since it is tracked by CNHP and listed by the state as a species of special concern, and suitable habitat for this species also remains within the site boundary.

Key Environmental Factors

No Data

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

This site contains an extremely high concentration of well preserved Ancestral Puebloan sites.

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes

Mapped Date 10/27/2000

Designer Anderson, D.G.

Boundary Justification

This site includes the headwaters of Hackberry Creek and Bridge Creek, which support the hackberry (*Celtis laevigata* var. *reticulata* / *Pseudoroegneria spicata*) and the Fremont's cottonwood - Goodding's black willow (*Populus fremontii* / *Salix gooddingii*) community occurrences. It also includes an occurrence of Utah Penstemon (*Penstemon utahensis*) and significant areas of potential habitat for the species. Occurrences of three uncommon animals, the Gray Vireo, Sage Sparrow, and desert spiny lizard, have also been documented in the site though the boundary has not been drawn in consideration of these species. Nonetheless, appropriate habitat for these species is present.

Primary Area 3,094.49 Acres

1,252.30 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The Hovenweep site is drawn for a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally imperiled (G2/S1) Fremont's cottonwood - Goodding's black willow community (*Populus fremontii* / *Salix gooddingii*), and excellent (A-ranked) and good (B-ranked) occurrences of the globally imperiled (G2G3/S1S2) hackberry community (*Celtis laevigata* var. *reticulata* / *Pseudoroegneria spicata*). The site also contains occurrences of two state rare plant species, Utah penstemon (*Penstemon utahensis*) (G4/S2) and westwater buckwheat (*Eriogonum scabrellum*) (G3/S1).

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

Musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*), tamarisk (*Tamarix ramosissima*), and cheat grass (*Anisantha tectorum*) are present and are impacting the element occurrences.

Offsite

No Data

Information Needs

No Data

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ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY

<u>Element</u>			<u>Global Rank</u>	<u>State Rank</u>	<u>Driving Site Rank</u>
<u>State ID</u>	<u>State Scientific Name</u>	<u>State Common Name</u>			
19001	<i>Penstemon utahensis</i>	Utah penstemon	G4	S2	No
17413	<i>Celtis laevigata</i> var. <i>reticulata</i> / <i>Pseudoroegneria spicata</i> Woodland	Hackberry	G2G3	S1S2	Yes
17413	<i>Celtis laevigata</i> var. <i>reticulata</i> / <i>Pseudoroegneria spicata</i> Woodland	Hackberry	G2G3	S1S2	Yes
24841	<i>Populus fremontii</i> - <i>Salix gooddingii</i> Woodland	Fremont's Cottonwood-Gooddings Black Willow	G2	S1	Yes
19729	<i>Eriogonum scabrellum</i>	Westwater buckwheat	G3	S1	No

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
192772	Lyon, M.J. 2005. Final Report: Survey of Rare Plants. San Juan Public Lands in Dolores and Montezuma counties, Colorado. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date	12/08/2004
Version Author	Lyon, M.J.

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