

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Hwy 141 and 145 Junction

Site Code S.USCOHP*5837

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 1940 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 381329N
State Colorado Longitude 1083047W

Quad Code Quad Name

38108-B5 Naturita
38108-B4 Redvale

County

Montrose (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name

14030003 San Miguel

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	5,500.00 Feet	1,676.40 Meters
Maximum Elevation	6,000.00 Feet	1,828.80 Meters

Site Description

This site is located near the intersections of Colorado State Highway 141 with SH 145, and SH 97, south of the town of Nucla and above Naturita Canyon and Maverick Draw. The area has gentle south and east-facing slopes with sandy soils and rock outcrops of Dakota sandstone. Vegetation is a mosaic of pinon - juniper woodland with openings of sagebrush and grasslands dominated by needle-and-threadgrass and blue grama. Common plant species in the area include Utah juniper, big sagebrush, black sage, needle-and-threadgrass, blue grama, galleta, prickly pear cactus, cats-eye, and many-lobed groundsel. Other associated species are Indian ricegrass, sand aster, Easter daisy, scarlet globemallow, four o'clocks, and Wingate milkvetch. Some patches of these plant communities are in excellent condition, in spite of part of the area having been used as a local unofficial dump. Other patches have been invaded by cheatgrass and Russian knapweed. Three rare plant species were found in the area: Payson lupine, little penstemon, and Naturita milkvetch. Payson lupine was common in draws and on barren soils between draws, both north of Highway 141 and on both sides of Highway 145. Due to its rhizomatous character, the lupines are difficult to count, but there is abundant potential habitat in the area. Little penstemon occupied slopes above the rimrock, while the Naturita milkvetch was found in pockets of Dakota sandstone pavement on the canyon rims. Associated plant species were mountain big sagebrush, blue grama, Indian ricegrass, prickly pear cactus, hedgehog cactus, actinea, sand aster, fineleaf hymenopappus, Townsend's Easter daisy, scarlet globemallow, four o'clock, Wingate milkvetch, Eastwood-plant, vernal daisy, and rough-seed cat's-eye. The striped whiptail was seen scurrying away in rocky outcrops in the pinon - juniper.

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 02/07/2000

Designer Lyon, M.J.

Boundary Justification

The boundary circumscribes occurrences of three rare plants and a grassland community in excellent

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condition. It also includes some adjacent potential habitat that is important to allow the species to move over time and colonize new sites.

Primary Area 1,467.78 Acres

593.99 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site has good (B-ranked) populations of Payson lupine (*Lupinus crassus*), a plant that is imperiled globally (G2/S2). There is also an excellent (A-ranked) example of needle-and-thread (*Hesperostipa comata*) Great Basin herbaceous vegetation that is globally rare to common (G2G4/S2), a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3/S2) little penstemon (*Penstemon breviculus*), and a fair (C-ranked) occurrence of the globally imperiled (G2G3/S2S3) Naturita milkvetch (*Astragalus naturitensis*). The concentration of rare plant species and high quality grassland on the northern BLM portion of the site make this an important location for further research on the ecology of the rare plants and communities. The Plateau striped whiptail was documented here, and is secure globally and in Colorado. It was found to be more common than had been previously thought.

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

No Data

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>			
18466	<i>Lupinus crassus</i>	Payson lupine	G2	S2	Yes
18584	<i>Aspidoscelis velox</i>	Plateau Striped Whiptail	G5	S4	No
24857	<i>Hesperostipa comata</i> Great Basin Herbaceous Vegetation	Western Slope Grasslands	G2G4	S2	No
18466	<i>Lupinus crassus</i>	Payson lupine	G2	S2	Yes
21647	<i>Astragalus naturitensis</i>	Naturita milkvetch	G2G3	S2S3	No
23967	<i>Penstemon breviculus</i>	little penstemon	G3	S2	No
23967	<i>Penstemon breviculus</i>	little penstemon	G3	S2	No
23967	<i>Penstemon breviculus</i>	little penstemon	G3	S2	No

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
192792	Lyon, P. and J. Sovell. 2000. Final Report: A Natural Heritage Assessment, San Miguel and Western Montrose Counties, Colorado. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

Original site design by Fayette, K.K. 1996-09-22.

VERSION

Version Date 02/07/2000

Version Author Lyon, M.J.

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