

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Imogene Pass

Site Code S.USCOHP*6257

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 161 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 375560N
State Colorado Longitude 1074424W

Quad Code Quad Name

37107-H6 Ironton

County

San Miguel (CO)

Ouray (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name

14030003 San Miguel

14020006 Uncompahange

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	12,000.00	Feet	3,657.60	Meters
Maximum Elevation	13,200.00	Feet	4,023.36	Meters

Site Description

At 13,200 ft., Imogene Pass is the highest point in the study area that is accessible by motorized vehicles. The four wheel drive road, connecting Telluride and Ouray, is a popular drive, with fairly heavy traffic during the summer. Vegetation ranges from subalpine meadows filled with wildflowers, to alpine tundra, barren rock and scree slopes. Snowbanks often last throughout the summer. Typical alpine plants here are New Mexican groundsel, McCauley's buttercup, wallflower, sky pilot, alpine fescue, golden saxifrage, alpine bluegrass, alpine avens, moss campion, cutleaf daisy, Glaber daisy, alpine parsley, Colorado ragwort, alpine smelowskia, and thickroot claytonia. No exotic plants were observed. At Imogene Pass researchers found four rare plant species, including 3 diminutive drabas (whitlow-grasses) and the Altai chickweed. The most rare of these, the San Juan whitlow-grass, was abundant along the ridge that extends north from the top of the pass, and between Savage Creek and the road on the Telluride side, below the switchbacks. This occurrence now constitutes the largest one known in Colorado. Of the 25 previously documented occurrences in the state, the largest was estimated at 200 plants, and most comprised less than 50 individuals or had not been evaluated. At Imogene Pass, the estimated the number of individuals was in the thousands. The plants were usually found about 20 to 50 feet from late-melting snowbanks, occurring with another snow-loving plant, McCauley's snow buttercup, in otherwise barren, gravelly soil. Three sub-populations of the Arctic draba were found, along a small road extending southeast from the summit, and on the Telluride side of the pass below the San Juan whitlow-grass site, extending as far downhill as Savage Basin. The plants were growing in both disturbed and undisturbed sites, and in well vegetated as well as barren areas. Typical locations were along roads, at the edges of small knolls and islands of vegetation within loose scree areas, and at the base of large boulders. The thick-leaf whitlow-grass occupied similar and overlapping habitats. Altai chickweed occupied sites in the loose scree on steep slopes where there was some packed soil resulting from natural slides or animal trails. There was little other vegetation in these sites. The elastic roots of the chickweed enable it to survive by moving downhill along with the creeping rocks. The tiny plants numbered in the thousands, and in some places made up nearly 50% ground cover.

Key Environmental Factors

No Data

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

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Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map P - Partial

Mapped Date 02/07/2000

Designer Lyon, M.J.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn to encompass the occurrences of four rare plant species, from Imogene Pass west to Savage Basin. Intervening potential habitat is included to allow these species to move over time and colonize new sites.

Primary Area 308.93 Acres

125.02 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The biodiversity rank is based on the excellent (A-ranked) occurrence of the San Juan whitlow-grass (*Draba graminea*), a plant that is imperiled on a global scale and in Colorado (G2/S2). In addition, there is a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) thick-leaf whitlow-grass (*Draba crassa*) and an excellent (A-ranked) occurrence of Altai chickweed (*Stellaria irrigua*), rare in Colorado (G4?/S2). The Arctic draba (*Draba fladnizensis*) occurrence, rare to vulnerable in Colorado (G4/S2S3), is in good condition (B-ranked).

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</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>
19017	<i>Draba fladnizensis</i>	arctic draba	G4	S2S3	No
21274	<i>Draba crassa</i>	thick-leaf whitlow-grass	G3G4	S3	No
17247	<i>Draba graminea</i>	San Juan whitlow-grass	G2	S2	Yes
17150	<i>Stellaria irrigua</i>	Altai chickweed	G4?	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 Loar, A.M. 1996-11-06

VERSION

Version Date 02/07/2000

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Version Author Lyon, M.J.

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