Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name James Creek **Site Code** S.USCOHP*27219

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2493 **Site Class** PCA

Site Alias None

Network of Conservation Areas (NCA)

NCA Site ID	NCA Site Code	NCA Site Name
-		No Data

LOCATORS

Nation United States **Latitude** 400620N

State Colorado **Longitude** 1052512W

Quad Code	Quad Name
40105-A4	Gold Hill

County

Boulder (CO)

Watershed Code	Watershed Name
10190005	St. Vrain

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	7,060.00	**Feet**	2,151.89	**Meters**
Maximum Elevation	8,800.00	**Feet**	2,682.24	**Meters**

Site Description

The James Creek site is located in west-central Boulder County, just west of Jamestown. The site is overlooked by the summits of Overland and Bueno Mountains to the north, and Walker Mountain to the south. James Creek originates in a small gulch west of Highway 72, about 1.5 miles north of the town of Ward. Before reaching the site, James Creek is subject to diversion by the Gold Lake Fill Ditch, which pulls water to the lake, south of the creek. The creek is joined by Little James Creek at Jamestown, and eventually flows into Left Hand Creek. Within the site, just upstream from Jamestown, James Creek flows through a steep, narrow canyon where the creek is 13-23 ft (4-7 m) wide and very fast moving. Here the riparian vegetation is 66-98 ft (20-30 m) across and is composed of dense shrubs and trees overhanging the creek. The stand contains high diversity of woody species, both shrubs and trees, but the most consistent dominants are narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*) and water birch (*Betula occidentalis*). Several other tree species from the surrounding slopes, Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), and Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*), extend into the riparian zone and are more important in the steep upstream end of the site. The shrub layer is mixed and contains high cover of tall shrubs Rocky Mountain maple (*Acer glabrum*), Bebb willow (*Salix bebbiana*), and beaked hazel (*Corylus cornuta*), and short shrub red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*). The mixed mesic understory is well developed and contains a diverse array of species such as bluejoint reedgrass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*), cowparsnip (*Heracleum sphondylium* ssp. *montanum*), horsetail (*Equisetum arvensis*), and wild sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*). Upstream, past the point where a side tributary enters the drainage, the narrowleaf cottonwood community gives way to a mixed tall (7-16 ft/2-5 m) shrubland. Thinleaf alder (*Alnus incana*) is the dominant shrub with 30% cover, accompanied by 20% cover of Drummond's willow (*Salix drummondiana*) and numerous other tall and short shrub species. James Creek is 16-33 ft (5-10 m) wide through this reach and the riparian vegetation stretches 30-40 m across the floodplain. In many places, tall shrubs and occasional trees overhang the banks and shade the creek. Both Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) and quaking aspen add 10% cover to the stand, often extending down to the riparian area from slopes above the creek. The mixed mesic understory is well developed and contains a diverse array of species such as bluejoint reedgrass, cutleaf coneflower (*Rudbeckia ampla*), horsetail, and cowparsnip. Northwest-facing slopes above the creek are dominated by dense Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine and quaking aspen. Exposed southeast-facing slopes are open and rocky with low cover of ponderosa pine, Rocky Mountain juniper, and xeric shrubs.

Key Environmental Factors

Water flows are seasonally variable.

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

This reach of James Creek contains evidence of historical mining activity at several locations, which is

common in this part of Boulder County. Most significantly, restoration of a historic mine site is currently underway on a tributary at the downstream end of the occurrence. Several other artifacts of mining, including old cement walls, small buildings, machinery, and waste rock piles are located along the creek.

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes **Mapped Date** 06/11/2008

Designer Decker, K.L. and J.M. Lemly

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the occurrences and the immediate watershed, allowing for the operation of normal hydrological and ecological processes that support the riparian communities, and providing a buffer against direct disturbance. These natural processes are not completely contained within the boundary, and off-site activities within the watershed have the potential to impact the elements of biodiversity present in the area.

Primary Area 2,525.35 **Acres** 1,021.98 **Hectares**

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site supports a good (B-ranked) occurrence of a globally vulnerable (G3/S3) *Populus angustifolia / Betula occidentalis* montane riparian forest and a fair (C-ranked) occurrence of a globally vulnerable (G3/S3) *Alnus incana - Salix drummondiana* montane riparian shrubland. There is also a healthy population of the globally rare (G2G/S2S3) Larimer aletes (*Aletes humilis*), in good (B-ranked) condition.

Other Values Rank No Data

Other Values Comments

No Data

LAND MANAGMENT ISSUES

Land Use Comments

No Data

Natural Hazard Comments

No Data

Exotics Comments

Non-natives are present along the road, but the steep, rocky nature of the canyon and the creek has kept cover low. Non-native plants include redtop (*Agrostis gigantea*), smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*), yellow toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*), timothy (*Phleum pratense*), Canada bluegrass (*Poa compressa*), Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), alsike clover (*Trifolium hybridum*), and mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*).

Offsite

No Data

Information Needs

No Data

ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY

Element State ID	State Scientific Name	State Common Name	Global Rank	State Rank	Driving Site Rank
24743	*Alnus incana - Salix drummondiana* Shrubland	Montane Riparian Shrubland	G3	S3	No
24884	*Populus angustifolia / Betula occidentalis* Woodland	Montane Riparian Forest	G3	S3	No
17408	*Aletes humilis*	Larimer aletes	G2G3	S2S3	Yes

REFERENCES

Reference ID	Full Citation
195190	Neid, S., J. Lemly, K. Decker and D. Culver. 2009. Final Report: Survey of Critical Biological Resources in Boulder County 2007-2008. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name James Creek **Site Code** S.USCOHP*27219

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 06/11/2008

Version Author Decker, K.L. and J.M. Lemly

Disclaimer

These data are a product and property of Colorado State University, Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP). These data are strictly "on loan" and should be considered "works in progress". Data maintained in the Colorado Natural Heritage Program database are an integral part of ongoing research at CSU and reflect the observations of many scientists, institutions and our current state of knowledge. These data are acquired from various sources, with varying levels of accuracy, and are continually being updated and revised. Many areas have never been surveyed and the absence of data in any particular geographic area does not necessarily mean that species or ecological communities of concern are not present. These data should not be regarded as a substitute for on-site surveys required for environmental assessments. Absence of evidence is NOT evidence of absence. Absence of any data does not mean that other resources of special concern do not occur, but rather CNHP files do not currently contain information to document this presence. CNHP is not responsible for whether other, non-CNHP data providers have secured landowner permission for data collected.

These data are provided for non-commercial purposes only. Under no circumstances are data to be distributed in any fashion to outside parties. To ensure accurate application of data, tabular and narrative components must be evaluated in conjunction with spatial components. Failure to do so constitutes a misuse of the data. The Colorado Natural Heritage Program shall have no liability or responsibility to the data users, or any other person or entity with respect to liability, loss, or damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly by the data, including but not limited to any interruption of service, loss of business, anticipatory profits or indirect, special, or consequential damages resulting from the use of operation of the data. Data users hereby agree to hold CNHP, Colorado State University, and the State of Colorado harmless from any claim, demand, cause of action, loss, damage or expense from or related to data users use of or reliance on the data, regardless of the cause or nature thereof, and even in the event that such cause is attributable to the negligence or misconduct of CNHP.

These data are provided on an as-is basis, as-available basis without warranties of any kind, expressed or implied, INCLUDING (BUT NOT LIMITED TO) WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, AND NON-INFRINGEMENT. Although CNHP maintains high standards of data quality control, CNHP, Colorado State University, and the State of Colorado further expressly disclaim any warranty that the data are error-free or current as of the date supplied