

# Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Lake Fork Gunnison River at Blue Mesa Reservoir

Site Code S.USCOHP\*23624

## IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 763 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 382120N  
State Colorado Longitude 1071406W

### Quad Code Quad Name

38107-C2 Gateview  
38107-D2 Carpenter Ridge

### County

Gunnison (CO)

### Watershed Code Watershed Name

14020002 Upper Gunnison

## SITE DESCRIPTION

<b>Minimum Elevation</b>	7,500.00	<b>Feet</b>	2,286.00	<b>Meters</b>
<b>Maximum Elevation</b>	8,700.00	<b>Feet</b>	2,652.00	<b>Meters</b>

### Site Description

The Lake Fork Gunnison River has cut a steep canyon through igneous bedrock just before it flows into the Blue Mesa Reservoir. A road skirts down the canyon, running immediately adjacent to the river. Recreation (primarily fishing, camping, and ATV) appears to be the primary use of the river canyon. Hydrology appears intact, as there are no dams or reservoirs upstream, although diversions for irrigation are present. The surrounding slopes are very steep and covered with juniper (*Juniperus* sp.), Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), sagebrush (*Artemisia* sp.), and oak (*Quercus gambelii*). The oak is often adjacent to the riparian area. The river is mostly dominated by patchy stands of blue spruce (*Picea pungens*) and alder (*Alnus incana* ssp. *tenuifolia*). Narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*), Douglas-fir, red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*), sandbar willow (*Salix exigua*), Woods' rose (*Rosa woodsii*), and chokecherry (*Padus virginiana*) are also present. The riparian area is very narrow and the plant community is patchy through the canyon.

### Key Environmental Factors

No Data

### Climate Description

No Data

### Land Use History

No Data

### Cultural Features

No Data

## SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 12/19/2002

Designer Rocchio, F.J.

### 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 elements along the Lake Fork Gunnison River. The boundaries also provide a small buffer from nearby trails and roads where surface runoff may contribute excess nutrients and sediment. It should be noted that the hydrological processes necessary to the elements are not fully contained by the site boundaries. Given that the elements are dependent on natural hydrological processes associated with the Lake Fork Gunnison River and its tributaries, 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.

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Primary Area 1,392.98 Acres

563.72 Hectares

## SITE SIGNIFICANCE

**Biodiversity Significance Rank** B3: High Biodiversity Significance

### Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site supports a good (B-ranked) example of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) blue spruce/thinleaf alder (*Picea pungens*/*Alnus incana*) woodland. This woodland occurs in deep, shaded canyons and narrow valleys along relatively straight stream reaches. It generally forms small patches, but can be continuous for several river miles. This association is known from Wyoming to New Mexico. Fewer than 100 stands exist in Colorado, and very few of these are in pristine condition. This association is threatened by development, road building and maintenance, heavy recreational use, improper livestock grazing, and stream flow alterations.

**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>			
24518	<i>Picea pungens</i> / <i>Alnus incana</i> Woodland	Montane Riparian Forests	G3	S3	Yes

## REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
173839	Rocchio J., G Doyle, and R. Rondeau. 2003. Final Report: Survey of Critical Wetlands and Riparian Areas in Gunnison County, Colorado. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
173182	Rocchio, J. 2002. Colorado Natural Heritage Program Field Survey of Critical Wetlands in Gunnison County.

## ADDITIONAL TOPICS

### Additional Topics

No Data

## VERSION

**Version Date** 12/19/2002

**Version Author** Rocchio, F.J.

## Disclaimer

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