

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Lasauses

Site Code S.USCOHP*20690

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 476 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 371423N
State Colorado Longitude 1054453W

<u>Quad Code</u>	<u>Quad Name</u>
37105-B6	Mesito Reservoir
37105-B7	Manassa NE

County

Conejos (CO)
Costilla (CO)

<u>Watershed Code</u>	<u>Watershed Name</u>
1301002	Alamosa-Trinchera

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	7,500.00	Feet	2,286.00	Meters
Maximum Elevation	7,500.00	Feet	2,286.00	Meters

Site Description

The site occurs along the western side of the Rio Grande within a broad floodplain where numerous large oxbow lakes occur. The site occurs just upstream from where the Rio Grande begins to cut a narrow gorge into the volcanic bedrock. The hydrological source is the Rio Grande and associated local groundwater tables. The two southern-most oxbow lakes that occur within the floodplain of the Rio Grande in Colorado are the primary hydrological features. A series of oxbow lakes occur northward to the Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge. Water levels in these oxbows are likely associated with water levels in the Rio Grande via local groundwater tables in the floodplain. A headgate was observed near the eastern side of the large oxbow. The headgate does not feed into an irrigation ditch but rather appears to control the amount of water that flows from the oxbow into the Rio Grande. The drainage from this headgate does not appear to be natural and may have been constructed to attempt to drain the oxbow when high water levels threaten to flood nearby hay meadows and rangeland. Bands of cattail (*Typha latifolia*), hardstem bulrush (*Scirpus acutus*), and giant bur-reed (*Sparganium eurycarpum*) occur along the periphery of the oxbows. Saturated soils and the presence of duckweed (*Lemna* spp.) on the soil surface indicated that these areas are periodically inundated, but no standing water was observed during the site visit. Along the western edge of the site the typical sequence of vegetation types is drier upland areas dominated by rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus* spp.) grading into wet meadows dominated by foxtail barley (*Hordeum jubatum*), saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), and Baltic rush (*Juncus balticus*). Other species present in these meadows include common threesquare (*Scirpus pungens*), greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*), and broom seepweed (*Suaeda calceoliformis*). Slender spiderflower (*Cleome multicaulis*) was found growing along the fringe of the wet meadow and near the base of greasewood shrubs. The wet meadows grade into the band of cattail, bulrush, and giant bur-reed that line the oxbow lakes. A narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*) riparian forest lines the banks of the Rio Grande.

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 01/15/2000

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Designer Rocchio, F.J.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses enough of the Rio Grande floodplain to allow natural communities to shift in distribution as geomorphic settings change due to hydrological processes. Avoiding direct disturbances within the boundary (such as continuous trampling and overgrazing) will help ensure the continued existence of the elements. Upstream activities outside of these boundaries, such as water diversions and intensive grazing and agriculture, could affect the viability of the elements by altering hydrology and sedimentation processes.

Primary Area 450.01 Acres 182.11 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The Lasauses site supports a good (B-ranked) example of the globally imperiled (G2G3/S2S3) slender spiderflower (*Cleome multicaulis*) and a fair (C-ranked) example of a state rare (G4/S2) wetland plant community (*Sparganium eurycarpum*).

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

There are some hay meadows south of the large oxbow dominated by many non-native species: Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratense*), Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), yellow sweetclover (*Melilotus officinalis*), clover (*Trifolium* spp.), and redtop (*Agrostis gigantea*).

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>			
40636	<i>Sparganium eurycarpum</i> Herbaceous Vegetation	Foothills/Plains Floating/Submergent Palustrine Wetlands	G4	S2	No
18080	<i>Cleome multicaulis</i>	slender spiderflower	G2G3	S2S3	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
165924	Kettler, S., J. Rocchio, R. Schorr, J. Burt. 2000. Biological Inventory of Rio Grande and Conejos Counties, Colorado. Unpublished report prepared for The Nature Conservancy. 234 pp.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 01/15/2000
Version Author Rocchio, F.J.

Disclaimer

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