

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Little Ute Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP*24974

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2143 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 373258N
State Colorado Longitude 1052501W

Quad Code Quad Name
37105-E4 Blanca Peak

County
Costilla (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name
13010002 Alamosa-Trinchera

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	8,800.00 Feet	2,682.24 Meters
Maximum Elevation	11,600.00 Feet	3,535.68 Meters

Site Description

This site encompasses most of the Little Ute Creek drainage, a small tributary of Ute Creek. The site spans from the subalpine to montane zones, flowing through a diversity of riparian plant community types. Little Ute Creek supports a good, genetically pure, but transplanted population of the Rio Grande cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki virginalis*). The population occurs above a natural barrier (waterfall) and is free of competition from non-native fish (Alves 1998). Historically, Little Ute Creek is not thought to have supported Rio Grande cutthroat trout (Harig and Fausch 1996). The current population is a result of stocking from Placer Creek (1978) and West Indian Creek (1981 and 1987) (Harig and Fausch 1996). The population is stable and secure but has a low abundance of individuals (Alves 1998).

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 05/04/2004

Designer Rocchio, F.J.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries incorporate an area that will allow natural ecological processes such as large woody debris recruitment, adequate canopy cover (to regulate stream temperature), and new channel formation to maintain viable populations of the trout along Little Ute Creek. This boundary indicates the minimum area that should be considered for any conservation management plan. Some hillslope areas which may contribute runoff to Little Ute Creek are not encompassed in the boundary although any activity in these areas should be considered for any conservation management plan.

Primary Area 2,081.56 Acres 842.38 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site supports a good (B-ranked), genetically pure occurrence of a globally vulnerable (G4T3/S3) subspecies. The Rio Grande cutthroat trout's range once included the entire Rio Grande and Pecos River

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watersheds, and possibly the upper Canadian River as well (Trotter 1987). In Colorado, the species occupies less than 1% of its former range (Alves 1996), and wild, genetically pure stock populations are especially imperiled. Artificial habitat including wells, farm ponds, and extensive canal systems as well as human activities including dewatering, fishing and stocking, transbasin diversions, release of domestic sewage, stream channelization, and agricultural chemical applications have greatly modified the original aquatic ecosystem of the San Luis Valley (Zuckerman 1984). These modifications may have contributed directly to the decline in range of the native fishes of the Rio Grande drainage. Free-flowing streams with good quality water, healthy banks, and streamside vegetation within the upper Rio Grande watershed are vital habitat for this subspecies of trout.

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>
20205	<i>Oncorhynchus clarkii virginalis</i>	Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout	G4T3	S3	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
171045	Alves, J. 1998. Status of Rio Grande cutthroat trout in Colorado. Department of Natural Resources, Colorado Division of Wildlife. Denver, Colorado. March 30, 1998.
173155	Harig, A. L. and K. D. Fausch. 1996. Compilation of data on Colorado waters containing Rio Grande cutthroat trout. Report to Colorado Division of Wildlife. MOU Project No. 904-906.
184706	Rocchio, J. 2004. Final Report: Survey of Critical Wetlands and Riparian Areas in Southern Alamosa and Costilla Counties, San Luis Valley, Colorado. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
171604	Trotter, P. C. 1987. Cutthroat: native trout of the west. Colorado Associated Univ. Press, Boulder. 219 pp.
168150	Zuckerman, Larry. 1984. Rio Grande fishes management. Annual report. July 1983 to June 1984.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 05/04/2004
Version Author Rocchio, F.J.

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