

# Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Los Pinos River

Site Code S.USCOHP\*26697

## IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2408 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 373215N  
 State Colorado Longitude 1072346W

<u>Quad Code</u>	<u>Quad Name</u>
37107-E3	Granite Lake
37107-D4	Granite Peak
37107-E4	Emerald Lake

## County

Hinsdale (CO)

<u>Watershed Code</u>	<u>Watershed Name</u>
14080101	Upper San Juan

## SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	7,950.00 Feet	2,423.16 Meters
Maximum Elevation	10,400.00 Feet	3,169.92 Meters

## Site Description

The site is situated along extensive reaches of the Pine River and Flint Creek, second and third order tributaries of the San Juan River. Both drainages are moderately sinuous with low to moderate gradient, and narrow, well-developed floodplains. Banks are stable and well-vegetated throughout. Surrounding uplands and mesic forests are dominated by variable cover of quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*), Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), and blue spruce (*Picea pungens*). Understory is mostly dominated by whortleberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), tall fringed bluebells (*Mertensia ciliata*), and Carolina bugbane (*Trautvetteria carolinensis*). Surrounding land use is predominantly for recreation including hunting, camping, hiking and horseback riding. There is no evidence of recent or past extensive, anthropogenic disturbance. Natural disturbances include spring flooding, upstream beaver and avalanche activity, and wildlife use. Site encompasses multiple vegetation types including riparian woodlands, mesic forests, tall shrub wetlands, and small patches of herbaceous vegetation. Riparian areas consist of narrow floodplains dominated by tall shrubs with variable canopy and ground cover throughout. Tall shrub layers are dominated by thinleaf alder (*Alnus incana*) and Drummond's willow (*Salix drummondiana*). Other tall shrubs present include park willow (*Salix monticola*), strapleaf willow (*Salix ligulifolia*), Bebb's willow (*Salix bebbiana*), and greenleaf willow (*Salix lucida* ssp. *caudata*) which are more common along the Pine River reach. Variable canopy cover consists of blue spruce, quaking aspen, and a low cover of Engelmann spruce. Canopy cover is more dense and consistent along the Pine River reach. Short shrubs found along the drainage include twinberry honeysuckle (*Lonicera involucrata*) and American red raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*). Herbaceous species common along the riparian areas include tall fringed bluebells (*Mertensia ciliata*), Fendler's meadowrue (*Thalictrum fendleri*), common cowparsnip (*Heracleum maximum*), subalpine larkspur (*Delphinium barbeyi*), and bluejoint (*Calamagrostis canadensis*). Mesic forested elements cover extensive areas along the middle reaches of the Flint River with closed to moderately open canopy cover and a consistent forb layer. Canopy is dominated by Engelmann spruce with some subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*). In most areas the canopy layer is consistent creating a shaded, mesic forest floor. The herbaceous layer is dominated by Carolina Tassel-rue (*Trautvetteria carolinensis*) which forms extensive carpets in many areas. There are few exotic species including common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), and timothy (*Phleum pratense*) which are also more common along the Pine River reach.

## Key Environmental Factors

Key environmental factors influencing species composition of the wetland are gentle to moderate gradients, perennial surface hydrology, seasonal flooding, and groundwater discharge and recharge.

## Climate Description

Climate and weather tend to follow typical patterns of the San Juan mountains of Colorado being generally

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eric throughout the year with warm spring weather causing snowmelt flooding, wet summers, and a late summer "monsoon" season.

## Land Use History

No Data

## Cultural Features

No Data

### SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes

Mapped Date 10/15/2006

Designer Jones, J.R.

## Boundary Justification

Site includes approximately 9 miles along the middle reaches of Pine River and Flint Creek, as well as surrounding areas important to the maintenance of site hydrology and 1,000 ft buffer (Keate 2004). This should account for natural hydrologic processes important to the maintenance of the elements such as seasonal flooding, groundwater recharge and discharge, surface flows, topography, and sediment deposition. However, activities such as deforestation, improper livestock grazing or recreational uses, development, or water diversion could be detrimental.

Primary Area 3,992.10 Acres

1,615.55 Hectares

### SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

## Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site is drawn for an excellent (A-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) thinleaf alder - Drummond's willow shrubland (*Alnus incana* - *Salix drummondiana* shrubland), an excellent (A-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3/S2?) subalpine fir / Carolina tasselrue forest (*Abies lasiocarpa* / *Trautvetteria caroliniensis* forest), and a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) narrowleaf cottonwood - blue spruce / thinleaf alder riparian woodland (*Populus angustifolia* - *Picea pungens* / *Alnus incana* woodland). Site also contains a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally apparently secure (G4/S4) community Drummond's willow / mesic forb tall shrubland (*Salix drummondiana* / mesic forb shrubland).

Other Values Rank V2 - High values

## Other Values Comments

This site provides extensive ecological values to the area in terms of aesthetics and recreation along with its functions in ecosystem health including game and wildlife habitat, aquifer recharge, erosion control, and flood attenuation.

### LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

## Land Use Comments

No Data

## Natural Hazard Comments

No Data

## Exotics Comments

Exotics include Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), timothy (*Phleum pratense*), and dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*). Exotics are more common along lower reaches of the Pine River, but do not cover extensive areas.

## 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	<i>Alnus incana</i> - <i>Salix drummondiana</i> Shrubland	Montane Riparian Shrubland	G3	S3	Yes
24961	<i>Salix drummondiana</i> / Mesic Forbs Shrubland	Drummonds Willow/Mesic Forb	G4	S4	No
24823	<i>Populus angustifolia</i> - <i>Picea pungens</i> / <i>Alnus incana</i> Woodland	Montane Riparian Forests	G3	S3	Yes

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24506 *Abies lasiocarpa* / *Trautvetteria carolinensis* Subalpine Fir/Carolina Tasselrue G3 S2? Yes  
Forest

## REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
192813	Keate, Nancy S. 2004. Bibliography of Impacts to Wetlands II - Draft - revised - Jan 2004. Utah Wetland Outreach, Wildlife Resources, Utah Department of Natural Resources.
194565	Neid, S.L. and J.R. Jones. 2008. Final Report: Survey of Critical Wetlands and Riparian Areas in Hinsdale County. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.

## ADDITIONAL TOPICS

### Additional Topics

No Data

## VERSION

Version Date 10/15/2006

Version Author Jones, J.R.

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