

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Lower Hermosa Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP*8455

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 438 Site Class PCA
Site Alias Swampy Creek

Network of Conservation Areas (NCA)

<u>NCA Site ID</u>	<u>NCA Site Code</u>	<u>NCA Site Name</u>
2148	S.USCOHP*24990	Hermosa Creek

LOCATORS

Nation United States Latitude 372814N
State Colorado Longitude 1075205W

Quad Code Quad Name

37107-D7 Hermosa
37107-D8 Monument Hill

County

La Plata (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name

14080104 Animas

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	7,600.00 Feet	2,316.00 Meters
Maximum Elevation	8,400.00 Feet	2,560.00 Meters

Site Description

The Lower Hermosa Creek site is located northwest of the Town of Hermosa. This lower reach of Hermosa Creek flows through a steep, cool, shady canyon. There is little floodplain due to the narrow topography of the riparian canyon. Tall limestone cliffs border both sides of Hermosa Creek. The site is fed by many rivulets, Dutch Creek, Stony Gulch, Swampy Creek, Jones Creek, and Silver Creek, as well as many unnamed drainages. The montane riparian forest is dominated by white bark fir (*Abies concolor*) with Colorado blue spruce (*Picea pungens*). Narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*) appears in the lower reaches of the site. The shrub layer (65% cover) is composed of Rocky Mountain maple (*Acer glabrum*), redosier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*), alder (*Alnus incana*), and Drummond's willow (*Salix drummondiana*). The forb layer (~10% cover) consists of lupine (*Lupine* spp.), meadow-rue (*Thalictrum sparsiflorum*), strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*), arnica (*Arnica mollis*) and cowparsnip (*Heracleum sphondylium* subsp. *montanum*). The graminoids cover is sparse and along the floodplain was dominated by hay grasses (*Phleum pratense*, *Poa pratensis*). The uplands are typical for this part of La Plata County, dominated by ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) with Gambel's oak (*Quercus gambelii*). The soils are composed of gravel and large cobbles at the creek and loamy soils in the uplands. Weeds noted within the site include mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*), Canada thistle (*Breea arvensis*), and houndstongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*).

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 12/13/2003
Designer Culver, D.R. and M.A. March

Boundary Justification

The boundaries incorporate an area that will allow for the natural hydrological processes from surrounding drainages. The boundaries encompass the occurrences with a 500 - 1,000 foot buffer that follows the stream channel. The northern boundary begins at the confluence with Hermosa Creek and Dutch Creek. The southern boundary ends at Spring Creek. It should be noted that the hydrological processes necessary to the

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element are not fully contained by the site boundaries.

Primary Area 741.38 Acres 300.03 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site drawn for a good (B-ranked) occurrence of a globally imperiled (G2/S2) white bark fir - Colorado blue spruce - narrowleaf cottonwood / Rocky Mountain maple community (*Abies concolor* - *Picea pungens* - *Populus angustifolia* / *Acer glabrum*). This evergreen forest association is a rich, mixed conifer-deciduous forest occurring on active floodplains and streambanks of montane valley floors. The presence of *Abies concolor* distinguishes this community from the more common *Populus angustifolia* - *Picea pungens* / *Alnus incana* woodland and is indicative of the southern-most mountains in Colorado (Carsey et al. 2003). This plant community is documented for only Colorado (Nature Serve 2003).

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

Element			Global	State	Driving
State ID	State Scientific Name	State Common Name	Rank	Rank	Site Rank
20940	<i>Cypripedium calceolus</i> ssp. <i>parviflorum</i>	American yellow lady's-slipper	G5	S2	No
24810	<i>Abies concolor</i> - <i>Picea pungens</i> - <i>Populus angustifolia</i> / <i>Acer glabrum</i> Forest	Montane Riparian Forests	G2	S2	Yes

REFERENCES

Reference ID	Full Citation
160903	Carsey, K., D. Cooper, K. Decker, D. Culver, and G. Kittel. 2003. Statewide wetlands classification and characterization: Wetland plant associations of Colorado. Prepared for Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Denver, CO by Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
184533	March, M. and D. Culver. 2003. Colorado Natural Heritage Program Field Survey for La Plata County Wetlands.
184579	NatureServe. 2003. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 1.8. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available http://www.natureserve.org/explorer .

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 12/13/2003

Version Author Culver, D.R. and M.A. March

Disclaimer

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