

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Lower Little Dolores River

Site Code S.USCOHP*23007

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 1893 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 390010N
State Colorado Longitude 1085555W

<u>Quad Code</u>	<u>Quad Name</u>
39108-A8	Sieber Canyon
38108-H7	Payne Wash
39109-A1	Westwater
38108-H8	Bieser Creek

County

Mesa (CO)
Grand (UT)

<u>Watershed Code</u>	<u>Watershed Name</u>
14030001	Westwater Canyon

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	5,400.00 Feet	1,646.00 Meters
Maximum Elevation	6,800.00 Feet	2,073.00 Meters

Site Description

The red sandstone canyon of the Little Dolores River is highly scenic. The valley floor is moderately wide and flat. The river, which has incised into the valley floor, is dominated by Rio Grande cottonwood (*Populus deltoides* ssp. *wislizeni*), tamarisk (*Tamarix ramosissima*), Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*), and coyote willow (*Salix exigua*). Narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*) saplings were also present. Diversity of herbaceous species is high, however the abundance of non-native species such as sweetclover (*Melilotus alba* and *M. officinalis*), alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*), horseweed (*Conyza canadensis*), Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), and reedtop (*Agrostis gigantea*) is also quite high. Common spikerush (*Eleocharis macrostachya*), threesquare bulrush (*Schoenoplectus pungens*), Baltic rush (*Juncus balticus*), Nebraska sedge (*Carex nebrascensis*), scouring rush (*Hippochaete* sp.), horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*), and barnyard grass (*Echinochloa crus-galli*) were dominant along the streambanks and in low lying areas. Upstream agricultural water diversions have altered the river's hydrology. Much of the floodplain is mapped as the Glenberg series, coarse-loamy, mixed (calcareous), mesic, Ustic Torrifluvents. These soils mainly occur on floodplain along the Little Dolores River and are typically sandy loams (Soil Conservation Service 1978).

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 02/19/2002

Designer Rocchio, F.J.

Boundary Justification

Boundaries are drawn to encompass the ecological processes believed necessary for long term viability of the riparian plant association. These boundaries will ensure continued natural surface flow and thus allow fluvial processes such as flood scouring, lateral flow, and channel meandering, to maintain a dynamic

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distribution of riparian and wetland plant associations along the drainage. Hydrological processes originating outside the planning boundary, including water quality, quantity, and timing, must be managed to maintain site viability.

Primary Area 4,648.06 Acres 1,881.01 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B4: Moderate Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site supports a fair (C-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3/S1S2) Rio Grande riparian forest (*Populus deltoides* ssp. *wislizeni* / *Salix exigua*). This is an early seral association with a mix of sapling and pole sized Rio Grande cottonwoods intermixed with coyote willow. It is recognized as the younger stage of older plains cottonwood associations that have more widely spaced trees. The presence of this early seral association may be an indication of some resemblance to natural stream flow, but stands must be monitored if all stages of cottonwood riparian associations are to be protected along river corridors.

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>
24634	<i>Populus deltoides</i> ssp. <i>wislizeni</i> / <i>Salix exigua</i> Woodland	Fremonts Cottonwood Riparian Forests	G3	S1S2	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
169188	Rocchio, Joe. 2001. Colorado Natural Heritage Program Survey of Critical Wetlands of Mesa County.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 02/19/2002
Version Author Rocchio, F.J.

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