

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Main Elk Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP*4020

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 202 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 394527N
State Colorado Longitude 1073126W

Quad Code Quad Name

39107-G4 Blair Mountain
39107-G5 Meadow Creek Lake
39107-F5 Deep Creek Point

County

Garfield (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name

14010005 Colorado headwaters-Plateau

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation 6,400.00 Feet 1,951.00 Meters
Maximum Elevation 10,800.00 Feet 3,292.00 Meters

Site Description

The lower portion of this site occurs in a beautiful steep-sided limestone canyon with a narrow riparian area along the canyon bottom. The surrounding canyon walls are dominated by periodic Utah serviceberry (*Amelanchier utahensis*) and spruce-fir forest, while other upland areas have a prevalence of Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), and Gambel's oak (*Quercus gambellii*). The steep limestone walls create a cool, moist, and lush riparian area dominated by narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*), chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), river birch (*Betula occidentalis*), blue spruce (*Picea pungens*), red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*), thinleaf alder (*Alnus incana*), mountain willow (*Salix monticola*), sandbar willow (*S. exigua*), and Drummond's willow (*S. drummondiana*). The understory is composed of a diversity of herbaceous species. Further upstream, various willow species dominate the riparian areas while Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*), subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*), and aspen dominate the upland slopes. Main Elk Creek also supports a population of the Colorado River cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki pleuriticus*). Soils at this site are not mapped by the county soil survey. The U.S. Forest Service in Glenwood Springs may have soil maps for this area. Heavy grazing may be altering normal nutrient cycles along the creek by contributing excess carbon/nutrients to the system and by disrupting the soil surface via hoof action, which might increase erosion and the rate of nutrient transformations in the soil. This site contains a long riparian area with a fairly high cover of woody vegetation, thus the capacity of this wetland to perform flood attenuation and bank stabilization may be good. The presence of permanent water within such an arid landscape provides important habitat for numerous birds, mammals, and insects.

Key Environmental Factors

No Data

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map P - Partial Mapped Date 01/22/2001
Designer Rocchio, F.J.

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Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses Main Elk Creek and its tributaries in their entirety. Thus, the floodplain and immediate watershed, which are necessary to support natural hydrological processes are included to ensure the long-term maintenance of the riparian ecosystems, including the fish populations.

Primary Area 11,632.99 Acres 4,707.72 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site supports an unranked occurrence of the globally vulnerable river birch/mesic forb foothills riparian shrubland, an excellent occurrence of the state imperiled blue spruce/red-osier dogwood montane riparian forest, and a good occurrence of the globally common Drummond's willow/mesic forb riparian shrubland. The site also contains two occurrences of a state vulnerable subspecies (*Oncorhynchus clarki pleuriticus* - G4T3/S3). Cutthroat trout are a sensitive species that are native to the Colorado River Basin, and have recently been in decline. Remnant populations still remain in Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah. The genetic purity of the cutthroat here is rated B-.

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

Hydrological processes originating outside of the planning boundary, including water quality, quantity, and timing, must be managed to maintain the population viability.

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>
24961	<i>Salix drummondiana</i> / Mesic Forbs Shrubland	Drummonds Willow/Mesic Forb	G4	S4	No
21796	<i>Oncorhynchus clarkii pleuriticus</i>	Colorado River Cutthroat Trout	G4T3	S3	No
24686	<i>Betula occidentalis</i> / <i>Maianthemum stellatum</i> Shrubland	Foothills Riparian Shrubland	G4?	S2	No
24867	<i>Picea pungens</i> / <i>Cornus sericea</i> Woodland	Montane Riparian Forest	G4	S2	No
21796	<i>Oncorhynchus clarkii pleuriticus</i>	Colorado River Cutthroat Trout	G4T3	S3	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
-	No Data

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 01/22/2001
Version Author Rocchio, F.J.

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