

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Masonville Hogbacks

Site Code S.USCOHP*25357

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2190 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 402736N
State Colorado Longitude 1051258W

Quad Code Quad Name

40105-D2 Masonville
40105-E2 Horsetooth Reservoir

County

Larimer (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name

10190006 Big Thompson

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	5,400.00	Feet	1,645.92	Meters
Maximum Elevation	5,700.00	Feet	1,737.36	Meters

Site Description

The site is comprised of the western most north-south trending hogback within the foothills on the Front Range. The sandstone hogback is comprised of Fountain Formation, Ingleside Formation, Lyons Sandstone, and Lykins Formation, which are sandstones with calcareous elements. Mountain mahogany (Cercocarpus montanus) shrublands occupy shallow soils on the slopes of the hogback with sporadic small patches of grassland occupying deeper soils. The series of hogbacks in the area are surrounded by mountains (i.e. Milner Mountain, Horsetooth Mountain, and Green Ridge) that support ponderosa pine (Pinus ponderosa) ecological systems. Significant portions of the valleys below the hogbacks have been converted to hayfield or pasture with localized remnants of foothills grassland ecological system vegetation on knolls that were too rocky to plow. The hogback is incised by several perennial streams that have carved small canyons through the red sandstone.

Key Environmental Factors

Shallow soils over calcareous sandstone bedrock; conditions are too dry for extensive colonization by ponderosa pine.

Climate Description

The site exists within a rainshadow of the Rocky Mountains. As with much of the western Great Plains, rainfall is sparse and drought common. Winters are cold with sporadic precipitation. Fall and spring snows may be big with a resulting soaking of the ground at melt. Summer is generally warm and dry with the exception of significant thunderstorms. Hail is not infrequent. Summer nights are cool with a subsequent short growing season.

Land Use History

Portion of the site was formerly occupied by a private ranch. The ranch owner's have leased their land in recent years for cattle grazing, irrigated and non-irrigated crop (alfalfa and wheat), hunting, and salvage logging (since the fire in 2000). A previous landowner established a homestead site in Mahoney Park, a lower montane grassland. Much of the grassland was converted to hay crop production. There is a historic cabin (circa 1896) and outbuildings in the valleys to the west of the hogback suggesting the valley has been in agriculture of some form for a long time.

Cultural Features

There is a historic cabin (circa 1896) and outbuildings in the valley just below the hogback. There are teepee rings in the vicinity.

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 01/25/2005
Designer Neid, S.L.

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Boundary Justification

Site comprises the hogback ridge between major roads (Highway 34 and 27 Road), although it bisects 29 Road in its extension south to Glade Reservoir. The site was drawn to eliminate residential, agricultural, and industrial (quarries) development on the east side of the hogback.

Primary Area 1,392.34 Acres 563.46 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site is drawn for a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally imperiled (G2G3/S2S3) mountain mahogany/New Mexico feathergrass (*Cercocarpus montanus*/*Stipa neomexicana*) shrubland. The site also supports a good occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) mountain mahogany/Scribner's needlegrass (*Cercocarpus montanus*/*Stipa scribneri*) shrubland.

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

Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) is problematic in patches within this extensive stretch of habitat. It is expanding from the pasture and hayfields below as well as colonizing patches at higher elevations just below the cliffs, likely where the rocks have fallen from the eroding bluffs causing localized disturbance.

Offsite

There are several quarries on this hogback, largely restricted to the eastern side. Additionally, land has been cleared for an airstrip on top of the ridge and there is residential as well as agricultural development on both sides of the site.

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>
40630	<i>Cercocarpus montanus</i> / <i>Hesperostipa neomexicana</i> Shrubland	Foothills Shrubland	G2G3	S2S3	Yes
40631	<i>Cercocarpus montanus</i> / <i>Achnatherum scribneri</i> Shrubland	Foothills Shrubland	G3	S3	No

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
192692	Doyle, G.A., S.L. Neid and R.J. Rondeau. 2005. Final Report: Survey of Critical Biological Resources, Larimer County, Colorado. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 01/25/2005

Version Author Neid, S.L.

Disclaimer

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