

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Middle Hermosa Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP*24677

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2085 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>
2148	S.USCOHP*24990	Hermosa Creek

LOCATORS

Nation United States Latitude 373558N
State Colorado Longitude 1075602W

<u>Quad Code</u>	<u>Quad Name</u>
37107-F8	Hermosa Peak
37107-E8	Elk Creek

County

La Plata (CO)

<u>Watershed Code</u>	<u>Watershed Name</u>
14080104	Animas

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	-	Feet	-	Meters
Maximum Elevation	-	Feet	-	Meters

Site Description

The Middle Hermosa Creek site is located south of Hermosa Park and north of the confluence between Hermosa Creek and Big Bend Creek. The site encompasses several drainages that feed Hermosa Creek (e.g., Lone Spruce Draw, Corral Draw, Blind Canyon, Hooch Creek, West Cross Creek, and East Cross Creek). This portion of Hermosa Creek is a steep, narrow canyon with few meanders and a limited floodplain. The dominant riparian plant association is Colorado blue spruce (*Picea pungens*) with alder (*Alnus incana*). This plant association is found throughout the Hermosa Creek drainage where there are steep canyons that are subject to cold air drainage and limited sunlight. The understory consists of bearberry (*Lonicera involucrata*), goldenglow (*Rudbeckia ampla*), yarrow (*Achillea lanulosa*), strawberry (*Fragaria sp.*), horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*), and Canada reedgrass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*). The site is also drawn for a subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*) with Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) montane riparian forest located along Lone Spruce Draw. Lone Spruce Draw is also a narrow canyon with a small meandering stream. The herbaceous layer is dominated by cowparsnip (*Heracleum sphondylium* subsp. *montanum*), geranium (*Geranium richardsonii*), false Solomons seal (*Maianthemum stellatum*), mannagrass (*Glyceria striata*), horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*), and Canada reedgrass. A montane riparian willow carr (*Salix monticola*/mesic forb) is documented for Corral Draw. The understory is sparse, dominated by geranium (*Geranium richardsonii*) and strawberry (*Fragaria sp.*). It is small and heavily impacted by livestock grazing. In general, the uplands are dominated by ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) and Gambel's oak (*Quercus gambelii*).

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 12/10/2003
Designer March, M.A.

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 100 foot buffer that follows the stream

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channel. It should be noted that the hydrological processes necessary to the element are not fully contained by the site boundaries.

Primary Area 710.27 Acres

287.44 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site is drawn for the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) blue spruce / thinleaf alder plant (*Picea pungens* / *Alnus incana*) association that is in good (B-ranked) condition. A good (B-ranked) example of the state vulnerable (G5/S3) subalpine fir - Engelmann spruce/ bluejoint reedgrass (*Abies lasiocarpa* - *Picea engelmannii* / *Calamagrostis canadensis*) plant association. The state vulnerable (G4/S3) willow shrubland, mountain willow / mesic forbs (*Salix monticola* / mesic forbs) in poor (D-ranked) condition, and the state vulnerable (G4/S3) willow shrubland, shortfruit willow / mesic forbs (*Salix brachycarpa* / mesic forbs) in good (B-ranked) condition are also all present.

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

Possible threats to the occurrence include expansion of non-natives (e.g., Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), hay grasses (*Poa pratensis* and *Phleum pratense*)) that are currently located mainly along the hiking trail.

Offsite

The extensive upland forest is currently unaltered by urban or agricultural use, however there is a ski area lease adjacent the site and the effects of the impacts are unknown (i.e. snowmaking).

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>
24809	<i>Salix monticola</i> / Mesic Forbs Shrubland	Montane Riparian Willow Carr	G4	S3	No
24662	<i>Abies lasiocarpa</i> - <i>Picea engelmannii</i> / <i>Calamagrostis canadensis</i> Forest	Montane Riparian Forests	G5	S3	No
24806	<i>Salix brachycarpa</i> / Mesic Forbs Shrubland	Alpine Willow Scrub	G4	S4	No
24518	<i>Picea pungens</i> / <i>Alnus incana</i> Woodland	Montane Riparian Forests	G3	S3	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
184533	March, M. and D. Culver. 2003. Colorado Natural Heritage Program Field Survey for La Plata County Wetlands.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 01/15/2004

Version Author March, M.A.

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