

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Middle Thompson Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP*15853

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 1949 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 391841N
State Colorado Longitude 1072132W

| <u>Quad Code</u> | <u>Quad Name</u> |
|------------------|------------------|
| 39107-C3 | Stony Ridge |
| 39107-C4 | Quaker Mesa |

County

Pitkin (CO)
Mesa (CO)

| <u>Watershed Code</u> | <u>Watershed Name</u> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 14010004 | Roaring Fork |
| 14010005 | Colorado headwaters-Plateau |

SITE DESCRIPTION

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

Site Description

The headwaters of Middle and North Thompson creeks reach about 10,000 feet along the border of Pitkin and Mesa counties. The creeks flow east into Pitkin County from these headwaters for about 10 miles down to about 7,000 feet at their confluence with Thompson Creek, about 3 miles upstream of where this full drainage meets the Crystal River. This area is characterized by rolling hills with open parks, ridges and summits, and mature riparian forests. The riparian vegetation includes a community of narrowleaf cottonwood with blue spruce and alder (*Populus angustifolia* - *Picea pungens* / *Alnus incana*) and supports a high diversity of other species including Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), mountain maple (*Acer glabrum*), thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorum*), dogwood (*Cornus sericea*), mixed mesic forbs. The adjacent upland areas rise 200 feet above the floodplain and support Douglas-fir on north-facing slopes, and pinon - juniper (*Pinus edulis* - *Juniperus osteosperma*) woodlands and mixed shrublands containing bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos rotundifolius*), oak (*Quercus gambelii*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier* sp.), and mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus montanus*) on the south-facing slopes. Additionally, this site supports a few scattered, very large ponderosa pines, and small patches of sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) shrublands. The site contains rock outcrops of dark grey Mancos Shale and red sandstone of the Maroon Formation. A total of 17,413 acres are included. The area immediately south of the eastern end of the site, including Assignment Creek and Assignment Ridge, has been evaluated as a potential Research Natural Area for the White River National Forest (Lyon 1995).

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 05/05/1999
Designer Spackman, S.C.

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Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn to include the occurrences and adjacent potential habitat up and down stream to allow the rare animals and communities to move into suitable habitat over time. This area is intended to act as a buffer for the occurrences and protect them from direct disturbances. Although the headwaters of Middle and North Thompson Creeks are included, all of the side drainages are not included. Management goals should include consideration of the full watershed. Narrowleaf cottonwoods require periodic, above average, floods usually in June for seed germination and survival. Therefore, it is important to maintain a natural flooding regime.

Primary Area 17,420.94 Acres 7,050.03 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site includes one of the largest good condition riparian areas observed in the lower Crystal River/Roaring Fork Watershed. It supports an excellent (A-ranked) occurrence of a globally vulnerable (G3/S3) riparian plant community (*Populus angustifolia* - *Picea pungens* / *Alnus incana*). Only 15 documented locations in Colorado are considered to be in excellent condition. The Colorado River cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii pleuriticus*) has been documented. This subspecies is considered Sensitive by the U.S. Forest Service and is on the State Special Concern list. The greatest threat to the continued viability of Colorado River cutthroat trout is the introduction and migration of non-native fish species. Competition with brook trout and hybridization with rainbow trout are threats to this subspecies (Behnke 1992). This site also includes a probable breeding location of a Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funereus*), a state rare (G5/S2) bird species. Boreal Owl nests are extremely difficult to find because they are located in tree cavities in dense forests. Furthermore, this resident species (living year-round in this area) is fairly local so it is very likely to be a breeding occurrence. A non-breeding observation of a boreal toad (*Bufo boreas* pop. 1) was noted. Breeding was not documented at this location, but is likely occurring in the area. Further inventory is needed to locate breeding sites.

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> |
| 24823 | <i>Populus angustifolia</i> - <i>Picea pungens</i> / <i>Alnus incana</i> Woodland | Montane Riparian Forests | G3 | S3 | Yes |
| 21796 | <i>Oncorhynchus clarkii pleuriticus</i> | Colorado River Cutthroat Trout | G4T3 | S3 | Yes |
| 24327 | <i>Aegolius funereus</i> | Boreal Owl | G5 | S2 | No |
| 21796 | <i>Oncorhynchus clarkii pleuriticus</i> | Colorado River Cutthroat Trout | G4T3 | S3 | No |
| 24836 | <i>Salix planifolia</i> / <i>Caltha leptosepala</i> Shrubland | Subalpine Riparian Willow Carr | G4 | S4 | No |
| 24327 | <i>Aegolius funereus</i> | Boreal Owl | G5 | S2 | No |

REFERENCES

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Reference ID

Full Citation

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No Data

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 05/05/1999

Version Author Spackman, S.C.

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