

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Mineral Hot Springs

Site Code S.USCOHP*10834

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 570 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 381008N
State Colorado Longitude 1055620W

<u>Quad Code</u>	<u>Quad Name</u>
38106-B1	Graveyard Gulch
38105-B8	Villa Grove
38106-A1	Hickey Bridge
38105-A8	Moffat North

County

Saguache (CO)

<u>Watershed Code</u>	<u>Watershed Name</u>
13010003	San Luis
13010004	Saguache

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	7,700.00 Feet	2,347.00 Meters
Maximum Elevation	8,000.00 Feet	2,438.00 Meters

Site Description

The Mineral Hot Springs site encompasses most of the contiguous expanse of shortgrass prairie in Saguache County. This prairie is dominated by blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), fringed sage (*Artemisia frigida*), and *Hymenoxys richardsonii*. Soils are generally very loamy, and provide for easy digging by Gunnison's prairie dog (*Cynomys gunnisoni gunnisoni*), thirteen-lined ground squirrel (*Spermophilus tridecemlineatus blanca*), silky pocket mouse (*Perognathus flavus sanluisi*), least chipmunk (*Tamias minimus*) and Ord's kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys ordii montanus*). To the north, the habitat grades into sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *vaseyana*) rangeland, and to the south it tends toward greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*) and rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus* spp.) uplands. To the east is the Villa Grove fen site, and to the west, the prairie continues sporadically up Saguache Creek. This site covers approximately 13,000 acres, with minimal elevation relief, ranging from 7,700-8,000 feet (2,350 - 2,450 meters). Highways 285 and 17 bisect the site and the accompanying roadside ditches host exotic species such as yellow sweetclover (*Mellilotus officinale*), crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*), and kochia (*Kochia scoparia*). The primary uses at this site include cattle grazing and big game hunting.

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 02/15/1998

Designer Wunder, M.B.

Boundary Justification

The boundary for this site was drawn at a scale of approximately 1:100,000 using a satellite image to help identify the most contiguous patch of shortgrass prairie surrounding the element occurrences. It was designed to include the prairie habitat as well as the roadsides that provide an extra food source for the small

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mammals found at the site (although the road and ditch might be as much a sink as a source, due to highway mortality).

Primary Area 13,002.29 Acres 5,261.86 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site is primarily designated for the diversity of small mammals present on site, although a historical occurrence of the state rare hoary skimmer (*Libellula nodisticta*) also occurs here. Two excellent (A-ranked) and one good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G5T3/S3) thirteen-lined ground squirrel (*Spermophilus tridecemlineatus blanca*) and a fair (C-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G5T3/S3) silky pocket mouse (*Perognathus flavus sanluisi*) were documented. Of all sites sampled for small mammals in the Closed Basin, this site produced the highest diversity (not richness), not only of those species tracked by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program, but of all species of small mammals present in the San Luis Valley.

Other Values Rank No Data

Other Values Comments

No Data

LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Land Use Comments

The primary uses at this site include cattle grazing and big game hunting.

Natural Hazard Comments

No Data

Exotics Comments

No Data

Offsite

No Data

Information Needs

No Data

ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY

Element	State Scientific Name	State Common Name	Global Rank	State Rank	Driving Site Rank
19797	<i>Spermophilus tridecemlineatus blanca</i>	Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel	G5T3	S3	Yes
		Subsp			
19797	<i>Spermophilus tridecemlineatus blanca</i>	Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel	G5T3	S3	Yes
		Subsp			
18066	<i>Libellula nodisticta</i>	Hoary Skimmer	G4	S1	No
17332	<i>Perognathus flavus sanluisi</i>	Silky Pocket Mouse Subsp	G5T3	S3	No
19797	<i>Spermophilus tridecemlineatus blanca</i>	Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel	G5T3	S3	Yes
		Subsp			

REFERENCES

Reference ID	Full Citation
-	No Data

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 02/15/1998
Version Author Wunder, M.B.

Disclaimer

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