

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Mount Sanitas Hogbacks

Site Code S.USCOHP*572

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2006 Site Class PCA
Site Alias Sunshine Canyon

Network of Conservation Areas (NCA)

<u>NCA Site ID</u>	<u>NCA Site Code</u>	<u>NCA Site Name</u>
2528	S.USCOHP*27454	Front Range Foothills-Carter Lake to Boulder

LOCATORS

Nation United States Latitude 400231N
State Colorado Longitude 1051800W

Quad Code Quad Name

40105-A3 Boulder

County

Boulder (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name

10190005 St. Vrain

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	5,575.00 Feet	1,699.26 Meters
Maximum Elevation	6,840.00 Feet	2,084.83 Meters

Site Description

This site contains a series of hogbacks immediately west of Boulder between Sunshine Canyon and Lee Hill Road. It is bounded to the east by city neighborhoods and to the west by subdivisions and lower intensity residential development. The hogbacks are very compressed with steep faces on both east and west aspects, montane and foothill elements are both prevalent; this area likely has the most mixed montane-foothills expression within the county. Bedrock geology of the hogbacks is comprised of sandstones. Bedrock layers from bottom to top include Fountain Formation (conglomerate sandstone), Ingelside, Lyons, Lykins, Sundance-Jelm, Morrison, and Dakota Groups. Cliffs formed by the hogbacks harbor Prairie Falcons (*Falco mexicanus*). Vegetation of the hogbacks is ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) woodland and savanna. Woodlands have montane species like spike fescue (*Leucopoa kingii*), and Colorado wildrye (*Leymus ambiguus*). Canopy cover is relatively dense on ridgelines, but becomes sparse at lower elevations along the east-facing slopes, especially at the north end of the site. Shrub copses are common although widely-spaced. Skunkbush (*Rhus trilobata*) is the most common shrub with American plum (*Prunus americana*) forming thickets along drainages. Hackberry (*Celtis reticulata*) occurs in small copses at the south end of the site. At the north end, grassland openings rapidly increase in size downslope. Needle-and-thread (*Hesperostipa comata*) and western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) are the most common and abundant grasses although there are large swards of big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) and small patches of native bluegrass (*Poa agassizensis*) throughout. Forb diversity is moderate with hairy goldenaster (*Heterotheca villosa*), scurfpea (*Psoralidium tenuifolium*), white sagebrush (*Artemisia ludoviciana*), and fringed sage (*Artemisia frigida*) common. Other species include prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia* species), branched noseburn (*Tragia ramosa*), soapweed (*Yucca glauca*), bigflower cinquefoil (*Drymocallis fissa*), blazing star (*Liatris punctata*), and snakeweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*). At the south end of the site, grasslands are narrower and more linear forming in the valley bottom between hogbacks or on toeslopes. Alyssum (*Alyssum parviflorum*) and cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) are common and abundant. Roadsides bounding the site have wavy-leaf stickleaf (*Nuttallia sinuata*) occurrences.

Key Environmental Factors

Lower montane-foothills elevation zone.

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

Historically, the grassland portions of this site were grazed by various livestock, likely intensively. No grazing has occurred over the last two decades or more. In 2002, a wildfire burned about 200 acres of grassland on the slopes to the west of Wonderland Lake.

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Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map P - Partial

Mapped Date 10/23/2008

Designer Neid, S.L.

Boundary Justification

This site includes the narrow Dakota sandstone hogback just west of Boulder. It encompasses the ponderosa pine savanna and grassland occurrences with a small buffer.

Primary Area 918.21 Acres 371.59 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site supports a good to fair (BC-ranked) and a fair (C-ranked) occurrence of the globally imperiled (G2?/S2) *Pinus ponderosa* / *Cercocarpus montanus* / *Andropogon gerardii* foothills ponderosa pine scrub woodland, as well as a good to fair (BC-ranked) occurrence of the globally critically imperiled (G1G2/S1S2) *Hesperostipa comata* Great Plains mixed grass prairie

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

Exotics include Dalmation toadflax (*Linaria dalmatica*), chicory (*Cichorium intybus*), diffuse knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*), jointed goatgrass (*Aegilops cylindrica*), leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*), myrtle spurge (*Euphorbia myrsinites*), tall oatgrass (*Arrhenatherum elatius* var. *bulbosum*), Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvensis*), scotch thistle (*Onopordium acanthium*), and bladder senna (*Coletea arborescens*).

Offsite

No Data

Information Needs

No Data

ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY

<u>Element</u>			<u>Global Rank</u>	<u>State Rank</u>	<u>Driving Site Rank</u>
<u>State ID</u>	<u>State Scientific Name</u>	<u>State Common Name</u>			
24587	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i> / <i>Cercocarpus montanus</i> / <i>Andropogon gerardii</i> Wooded Herbaceous Vegetation	Foothills Ponderosa Pine Scrub Woodlands	G2	S2?	No
24703	<i>Hesperostipa comata</i> Colorado Front Range Herbaceous Vegetation	Great Plains Mixed Grass Prairie	G1G2	S1S2	Yes
24587	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i> / <i>Cercocarpus montanus</i> / <i>Andropogon gerardii</i> Wooded Herbaceous Vegetation	Foothills Ponderosa Pine Scrub Woodlands	G2	S2?	No

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
195190	Neid, S., J. Lemly, K. Decker and D. Culver. 2009. Final Report: Survey of Critical Biological Resources in Boulder County 2007-2008. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

Original site design by Pague, C.A. 1994-09-12.

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VERSION

Version Date 10/23/2008

Version Author Neid, S.L.

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