

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Navajo Peak Trail

Site Code S.USCOHP*23167

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 915 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 370533N
 State Colorado Longitude 1064453W

<u>Quad Code</u>	<u>Quad Name</u>
37106-A7	Chromo
37106-A6	Chama Peak

County

Archuleta (CO)

<u>Watershed Code</u>	<u>Watershed Name</u>
14080101	Upper San Juan

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	9,500.00 Feet	2,895.60 Meters
Maximum Elevation	9,800.00 Feet	2,987.04 Meters

Site Description

In the southeast part of Archuleta County, the Navajo Peak Trail site occurs approximately one mile due west of Navajo Peak, along the Navajo Peak Trail in the Price Lakes area. The topography generally slopes to the west or southwest, and drains towards the Little Navajo River, a tributary to the Navajo River and eventually the San Juan River. Dense stands of mature white fir (*Abies concolor*) and Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) with an understory of roundleaf snowberry (*Symphoricarpos rotundifolius*) dominate these slopes, with large stands of mature quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) occurring within the forests. Open meadows, small streams, wetlands and small beaver-influenced ponds occur on the slumpy landforms within the forest. The wetland site is an old beaver-influenced depression with an ill-defined channel, within an opening in the surrounding spruce-fir-aspen forest. The wetland appears to be fed by an ephemeral drainage to the east which is identified by a small stand of mature thinleaf alder (*Alnus incana*), and has no apparent outlet. Most of the pond consists of emergent vegetation including common spikerush (*Eleocharis palustris*) and narrowleaf bur-reed (*Sparganium angustifolium*). A moderate-sized population of retrorse sedge (*Carex retrorsa*) is scattered on the north, east, and west edges of the pond within common spikerush-dominated stands, in clumps within stands of Northwest Territory sedge (*Carex utriculata*), or in small, self-dominating stands at the drying edges of the depressional wetland. Other common wetland plants in the area are field horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*), paniced bulrush (*Scirpus microcarpus*), seep monkeyflower (*Mimulus guttatus*), and American speedwell (*Veronica americana*). Exotic species at the site include Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), nodding plumeless thistle (*Carduus nutans* ssp. *macrolepis*), common plantain (*Plantago major*), mountain tarweed (*Madia glomerata*), red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), nodding beggartick (*Bidens cernua*), and common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*). Non-native pasture grasses such as smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), orchardgrass (*Dactylis glomerata*), Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), and timothy (*Phleum pratense*) are common along roads and trails. Northern leopard frogs (*Rana pipiens*), a species formerly tracked by CNHP but now watchlisted, have been found in abundance in small ponds near the site.

Key Environmental Factors

The northeast corner of the pond appears to have a small incoming drainage (seasonal) which supports a small, healthy stand of thinleaf alder. No outlet is apparent. There is possibly some very old beaver activity in the pond as evidenced by large woody debris (piled), at the low end of pond, and at least one very old, beaver-gnawed stump near the pond on the uplands. At the time of the visit, the pond had no standing water, but soils were moist throughout. Soils were sampled in a drying sub-depression within the wetland dominated by common spikerush and needle spikerush (*Eleocharis acicularis*) with scattered clumps of knotsheath sedge. No detritus was noted on the surface, and soils were not saturated to the surface at the time of the visit. The uppermost horizon was very rooty and impossible to texture. Next, a moist, thin silty clay loam

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horizon overlaid a thicker, rust-mottled, silty clay layer which indicated that the wetland has had periods of saturation and drying. Soils in this area are mapped as Castelleia loams, with small inclusions of poorly drained Animas loam and Hunchback clay loam in depressions and swales (USDA 1981), both of which occur commonly in the landslide deposit (colluvial deposition) geology of the area (Tweto 1979).

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes

Mapped Date 11/16/2005

Designer Freeman, K.M.

Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to include the occurrence of knotshead sedge with a buffer of approximately 1,000 feet, and the immediate watershed. There are hundreds of other small lakes, streams and wetlands in the area with potential habitat for retrorse sedge that are not included within this boundary. Further survey could result in enlargement of this site.

Primary Area 136.31 Acres

55.16 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B4: Moderate Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site contains a good (B-ranked) occurrence of retrorse sedge (*Carex retrorsa*), a plant that is very rare (S1) in Colorado, but globally secure (G5). Retrorse sedge has a broad distribution throughout the north half of North America, but, as of 2005, is known only in Colorado from several locations in Archuleta County.

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

Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) is quite abundant, especially in upland areas near the wetland and on the fringes of the wetland itself. Other exotics include nodding plumeless thistle (*Carduus nutans* ssp. *macrolepis*), common plantain (*Plantago major*), mountain tarweed (*Madia glomerata*), red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), nodding beggartick (*Bidens cernua*), and dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*). Non-native pasture grasses such as smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), orchardgrass (*Dactylis glomerata*), Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), and timothy (*Phleum pratense*) are common along roads and trails.

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>			
20504	<i>Carex retrorsa</i>	retrorse sedge	G5	S1	Yes

REFERENCES

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Reference ID

Full Citation

160903	Carsey, K., D. Cooper, K. Decker, D. Culver, and G. Kittel. 2003. Statewide wetlands classification and characterization: Wetland plant associations of Colorado. Prepared for Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Denver, CO by Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
166839	Lyon, P. 2001. Colorado Natural Heritage Program Field Surveys.
193472	Sovell, J., P. Lyon, and L. Grunau. 2003. Final Report: Upper San Juan Biological Assessment. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
192747	Tweto, O. 1979. Geologic Map of Colorado, 1:500,000. United States Geological Survey, Department of Interior, and Geologic Survey of Colorado, Denver, CO.
193423	USDA, SCS. 1981. Soil Survey of Piedra Area, Colorado; Parts of Archuleta, Hinsdale, La Plata, Mineral, and Rio Grande Counties. In cooperation with the United States Forest Service and the Colorado Agricultural Experiment Station.
172684	Weber, W.A. and R.C. Wittmann. 2001. Colorado Flora: Western Slope, Third Edition. University Press of Colorado, Niwot, CO.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

Original site design by Lyon, M.J. 2002-02-15.

VERSION

Version Date 11/16/2005
Version Author Freeman, K.M.

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