

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Orphan Butte

Site Code S.USCOHP*8458

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 1863 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 373358N
State Colorado Longitude 1080119W

Quad Code Quad Name
37108-E1 Orphan Butte

County

Montezuma (CO)
La Plata (CO)

<u>Watershed Code</u>	<u>Watershed Name</u>
14080104	Animas
14030002	Upper Dolores

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	9,600.00	Feet	2,926.00	Meters
Maximum Elevation	11,121.00	Feet	3,390.00	Meters

Site Description

The site occupies a dry, open clearcut on a glaciated mountain slope. Spruce and fir were cut in the 1960's, and there are now some young Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) accounting for about 1% tree cover. Shrubs cover about 5%, forbs 60% and graminoids 30%. Associated species include gooseberry currant (*Ribes montigenum*), elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*), Franciscan bluebells (*Mertensia franciscana*), sedges (*Carex* spp.), strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*), and false strawberry (*Sibbaldia procumbens*). The rare moonworts inhabited old skid roads that were created during the timber harvest. Reflected moonwort (*Botrychium echo*) occurred on the west side of the ridge, in Montezuma County, while northern moonwort (*Botrychium pinnatum*) was on the east side in La Plata County. However, it is common for several species of moonworts to grow together, and either one may also occur on the opposite side of the divide. In fact, two other species of moonwort, *B. lanceolatum* and *B. lunaria*, both on CNHP's watchlist, were found at the site. Boreal owls were observed at this location in 1997, but breeding has not been confirmed.

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 04/11/1997
Designer Fayette, K.K.

Boundary Justification

The site includes the occurrences of rare moonworts and adjacent similar habitat. Limiting direct disturbances to the plants, but allowing natural disturbance such as erosion, fire, and tree-fall in this area would help to maintain the habitat and allow for movement of the species over time.

Primary Area	1,657.92	Acres	670.94	Hectares
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SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B4: Moderate Biodiversity Significance

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Biodiversity Significance Comments

The Orphan Butte site supports a fair (C-ranked) occurrence of reflected moonwort (*Botrychium echo*), a globally vulnerable (G3/S3) fern, and an unranked occurrence of northern moonwort (*Botrychium pinnatum*), a species that is globally common but extremely rare (G4?/S1) in Colorado.

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

Need to resurvey for *Botrychium* populations.

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>			
20475	<i>Botrychium echo</i>	reflected moonwort	G3	S3	Yes
22682	<i>Botrychium pinnatum</i>	northern moonwort	G4?	S1	No

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
192772	Lyon, M.J. 2005. Final Report: Survey of Rare Plants. San Juan Public Lands in Dolores and Montezuma counties, Colorado. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
184581	Lyon, P. 2003. Colorado Natural Heritage Program La Plata County Biological Assessment.
170844	Randolph, D., Smith, Kettler, Redders, Roy, and Aitken. 1994. San Juan National Forest Riparian Site Survey.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 12/08/2004

Version Author Lyon, M.J.

Disclaimer

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