

# Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Park Creek Hogback

Site Code S.USCOHP\*642

## IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 520 Site Class PCA  
Site Alias Park Creek

### Network of Conservation Areas (NCA)

<u>NCA Site ID</u>	<u>NCA Site Code</u>	<u>NCA Site Name</u>
456	S.USCOHP7*3230	Laramie Foothills

## LOCATORS

Nation United States Latitude 404728N  
State Colorado Longitude 1050744W

### Quad Code Quad Name

40105-G2	Livermore
40105-G1	Buckeye
40105-F2	Laporte

### County

Larimer (CO)

### Watershed Code Watershed Name

10190007	Cache La Poudre
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## SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	5,400.00	Feet	1,645.92	Meters
Maximum Elevation	5,700.00	Feet	1,737.36	Meters

### Site Description

The dominant feature of this site is a hogback composed of Niobrara shale. The calcareous shale is exposed for several miles and supports the largest documented occurrence of Bell's twinpod (*Physaria bellii*). Most of the outcrop is sparsely vegetated mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus montanus*) shrublands. In some areas, the mountain mahogany with New Mexico feathergrass (*Cercocarpus montanus/Stipa neomexicana*) community occurs. Park Creek flows south along the west side of the hogback and then cuts through the hogback at Road 70, one mile south of Owl Canyon Road. The hogback and Bell's twinpod continue 1/2 mile south of Road 70. The hogback continues another five miles south beyond the site boundary; however, that reach has been strip-mined and the surface remains highly altered. Many Bell's twinpod plants occur on the tailings but not in the natural setting of the plants within the site. North Poudre Reservoir No. 15 occurs immediately east. Access to North Poudre Reservoir No. 15 is through the site. An access road runs along the top of the hogback for over one mile but does not seem to impact the occurrences.

### Key Environmental Factors

No Data

### Climate Description

No Data

### Land Use History

Prior to the settlement era the Park Creek area was utilized by native ungulates and indigenous peoples. Bison frequented the area, but probably rarely travelled through the shrublands and twinpod habitats. On the other hand they most likely made heavy use of Park Creek for water. Native Americans used the area seasonally and hunted bison on adjacent grasslands. Europeans trapped the area for beaver in the late 18th century and early 19th century. Soon thereafter, the area was passed through by miners and settlers moving toward the mineral deposit areas. Finally, during the late 19th century, livestock ranching dominated the area, and ranching continues to dominate the landscape. Such ranches as the Roberts Ranch have been in operation for more than 100 years. Today there is a significant increase in the development of subdivisions for homesites and ranchettes.

### Cultural Features

No Data

## SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 02/08/2005  
Designer Doyle, G.A.

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## Boundary Justification

The site boundary includes all known occurrences and adjacent areas believed to be sufficient to provide the necessary ecological processes for continued survival of the elements. The site excludes the area to the south where the Niobrara has been mined and the surface is highly disturbed. This site is the northernmost known extent of Bell's twinpod.

Primary Area 2,010.21 Acres 813.50 Hectares

## SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

## Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site contains an excellent (A-ranked) and good (B-ranked) occurrence of the Bell's twinpod (*Physaria bellii*), a plant species which is globally imperiled (G2/S2). The excellent occurrence is exemplary for the species due to its large size and high quality condition. The extent, condition, and geographic position (the northernmost known extent of the species' range) of these occurrences indicate this site's biodiversity significance. This species is restricted to certain shale or sandstone hogbacks along the foothills of the Front Range from Jefferson County north to this site. The proximity of the Bell's twinpod range to the rapidly developing Front Range has threatened or degraded many occurrences. The site also supports a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally imperiled (G2G3) mountain mahogany-New Mexico feathergrass (*Cercocarpus montanus*/*Stipa neomexicana*) plant association.

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>
23937	<i>Physaria bellii</i>	Bell's twinpod	G2G3	S2S3	Yes
23937	<i>Physaria bellii</i>	Bell's twinpod	G2G3	S2S3	No
40630	<i>Cercocarpus montanus</i> / <i>Hesperostipa neomexicana</i> Shrubland	Foothills Shrubland	G2G3	S2S3	No
23937	<i>Physaria bellii</i>	Bell's twinpod	G2G3	S2S3	No
23937	<i>Physaria bellii</i>	Bell's twinpod	G2G3	S2S3	No
23937	<i>Physaria bellii</i>	Bell's twinpod	G2G3	S2S3	Yes

## REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
192692	Doyle, G.A., S.L. Neid and R.J. Rondeau. 2005. Final Report: Survey of Critical Biological Resources, Larimer County, Colorado. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
166568	Kettler, S., J. Sanderson, S. Spackman, K. Fayette, C. Pague, D. Clark, and A. Hicks. 1996. Final Report: Significant plant, animal, and wetland resources of Larimer County and their conservation. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.

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## ADDITIONAL TOPICS

### Additional Topics

Original site design by Kettler, S.M. 1996-11-20.

## VERSION

Version Date 02/08/2005

Version Author Doyle, G.A.

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