

# Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Pineries at Black Forest

Site Code S.USCOHP\*22439

## IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 1193 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 390242N  
State Colorado Longitude 1043759W

## Quad Code Quad Name

39104-A6 Black Forest  
39104-A5 Eastonville

## County

El Paso (CO)

## Watershed Code Watershed Name

10190010 Kiowa  
10190003 Middle South Platte-Cherry Creek  
11020004 Chico

## SITE DESCRIPTION

<b>Minimum Elevation</b>	7,400.00	<b>Feet</b>	2,256.00	<b>Meters</b>
<b>Maximum Elevation</b>	7,700.00	<b>Feet</b>	2,347.00	<b>Meters</b>

## Site Description

The Pineries at Black Forest PCA occupies an area of the Black Forest from just east of Vollmer Hill and extending east and northeast over the headwater reaches of West Kiowa Creek, Black Squirrel Creek, and Snipe Creek. The Black Forest consists of a mosaic of woodlands and forest dominated almost exclusively by ponderosa pine, and occasionally including individual trees of Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*) and less frequently small patches of aspen (*Populus tremuloides*). The forested areas are frequently broken by meadows of shortgrass, midgrass, and tallgrass species including little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), prairie sandreed (*Calamovilfa longifolia*), poverty oatgrass (*Danthonia spicata*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and buffalograss (*Buchloe dactyloides*). The Black Forest area is unique in that it is the only place in Colorado where montane ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) forest grows east of the Front Range foothills. Although previous land uses have modified the composition and structure of the Black Forest, the Pineries at Black Forest Site supports fair examples of two ponderosa pine woodland communities: ponderosa pine with sunsedge and ponderosa pine with little bluestem. The ponderosa pine with sunsedge community is characterized by a tree canopy exclusively dominated by ponderosa pine and an open understory relatively void of shrubs. In areas with a more closed canopy, the herbaceous layer is dominated by sun sedge (*Carex inops* ssp. *heliophila*). In smaller meadows and areas with a somewhat more open canopy, the herbaceous layer is dominated by little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) within a matrix of blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*) and bare ground. Other graminoid species commonly present include big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), prairie sandreed (*Calamovilfa longifolia*), poverty oatgrass (*Danthonia spicata*), and buffalograss (*Buchloe dactyloides*). The ponderosa pine with little bluestem woodland type is very similar in structure to the ponderosa pine with sun sedge woodland community type in that the tree overstory is exclusively dominated by ponderosa pine and the open understory is nearly void of shrubs. Unlike the ponderosa pine with sun sedge woodland community type, the herbaceous understory of this community type is dominated by little bluestem. This type is considered a dry woodland type more common to the Great Plains of the United States. Occurrences of this type in the more eastern portions of its range are believed to develop as pines become established in little bluestem prairie areas lacking recent disturbance (NatureServe 2001). Although prairies dominated by little bluestem prairie do not currently occur around or within the Black Forest, extensive areas of mixed grass prairie containing little bluestem in sub-dominant quantities do occur throughout the area. The Pineries at Black Forest Site also supports a good occurrence of Richardson's alumroot (*Heuchera richardsonii*). Since it is common throughout the rest of its range and since the Colorado portion of the range is isolated to the west of the rest of the range, Richardson's alumroot is considered disjunct in Colorado. The Black Forest Site is approximately 2 miles west-southwest of

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this site, and many of the plant species supported in the Black Forest Site could very likely also occur here as well. In addition to Richardson's alumroot (*Heuchera richardsonii*), other disjunct species that may be present in the Pineries at Black Forest Site include, prairie goldenrod (*Unamia alba*), birdfoot violet (*Viola pedatifida*), Selkirk's violet (*V. selkirkii*), and gay feather (*Liatris ligulistylis*). These species are all common elsewhere but are rare in Colorado.

**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 07/02/2001

Designer Stevens, J.E.

**Boundary Justification**

The site boundary encompasses the locations for the Richardson's alumroot and a relatively intact portion of the ponderosa pine communities. The boundary provides a buffer around the elements without encompassing an excessive amount of the adjacent developed lands. Additional areas of the ponderosa pine woodlands contiguous to the occurrences and PCA likely contain these same elements, but were excluded based on the presence of semi-developed land-use and division of land ownership in those areas. The majority of this PCA is centered on a large tract of land owned by a few conservation-minded owners.

Primary Area 6,958.57 Acres

2,816.04 Hectares

**SITE SIGNIFICANCE**

Biodiversity Significance Rank B4: Moderate Biodiversity Significance

**Biodiversity Significance Comments**

The site supports a fair (C-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable/apparently secure (G3G4) ponderosa pine and sun sedge woodland (*Pinus ponderosa*/*Carex inops* ssp. *heliophila*) which is imperiled (S2) in Colorado, a fair (C-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable/apparently secure (G3G4) ponderosa pine and little bluestem woodland (*Pinus ponderosa*/*Schizachyrium scoparium*) which is critically imperiled (S1) in Colorado, and a good (B-ranked) occurrence of Richardson's alumroot (*Heuchera richardsonii*) a globally secure (G5) species that is critically imperiled (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**

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>			
24892	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i> / <i>Carex inops</i> ssp. <i>heliophila</i> Woodland	Foothills Ponderosa Pine Savannas	G3G4	S2	Yes

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24954	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i> / <i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i> Woodland	Foothills Ponderosa Pine Savannas	G3G4	S1	Yes	
20486	<i>Heuchera richardsonii</i>	Richardson alum-root	G5	S1	Yes	
24892	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i> / <i>Carex inops</i> ssp. <i>heliophila</i> Woodland	Foothills Ponderosa Pine Savannas	G3G4	S2	No	
24892	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i> / <i>Carex inops</i> ssp. <i>heliophila</i> Woodland	Foothills Ponderosa Pine Savannas	G3G4	S2	No	

## REFERENCES

Reference ID	Full Citation
162855	Doyle, G.A., J. Gionfriddo, D. Anderson, and D. Culver. 2000. Final Report: Survey of Critical Wetlands and Riparian Areas in El Paso and Pueblo Counties, Colorado. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
167490	Stevens, J.E. 2000. Colorado Natural Heritage Program Field Inventory of El Paso County.

## ADDITIONAL TOPICS

### Additional Topics

No Data

## VERSION

Version Date	07/02/2001
Version Author	Stevens, J.E.

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