

# Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Pinon Mesa

Site Code S.USCOHP3\*3656

## IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 65 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>
883	S.USWRO1*1045	Colorado National Monument

## LOCATORS

Nation United States Latitude 385220N  
State Colorado Longitude 1085512W

## Quad Code Quad Name

38108-G8	Two V Basin
38108-H8	Bieser Creek
38108-H7	Payne Wash
38108-G7	Fish Creek
38109-H1	Marble Canyon
38109-G1	Steamboat Mesa

## County

Mesa (CO)

<u>Watershed Code</u>	<u>Watershed Name</u>
14030001	Westwater Canyon
14030004	Lower Dolores

## SITE DESCRIPTION

<b>Minimum Elevation</b>	7,600.00	<b>Feet</b>	2,316.00	<b>Meters</b>
<b>Maximum Elevation</b>	9,500.00	<b>Feet</b>	2,896.00	<b>Meters</b>

## Site Description

"The Piñon Mesa GUSG population is located in Mesa County, about 22 miles southwest of Grand Junction, Colorado. The estimated range currently occupied by GUSG at Piñon Mesa is approximately 38,900 acres. The area makes up the northwest end of the Uncompahgre Plateau and elevation ranges from 4,600 - 9,800 feet. The topography varies greatly and the area is noted for its canyon country, especially on the borders. Considerable moisture falls throughout the year in the higher elevations in the center of the area. The interior portions of Piñon Mesa are composed of mesas and canyons but the general terrain is less fragmented and more open. At lower elevations, saltbush, sagebrush, and greasewood are common. Piñon - juniper dominates on the lower and intermediate slopes. Oakbrush is found at higher elevations with patches of sagebrush and snowberry occurring in oakbrush openings. Sagebrush habitat is interspersed with patches of piñon - juniper and oakbrush" (GSGRSC 2005). The area is a mosaic of sagebrush (*Artemisia* sp.), Gambel's oak (*Quercus gambelii*), aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), greenleaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos patula*), and piñon - juniper associations. In addition to these dominant species, the area has a diverse mixture of shrub species, including mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus* sp.), serviceberry (*Amelanchier* sp.), squaw-apple (*Peraphyllum ramosissimum*), bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*) and snowberry (*Symphoricarpos* sp.). Understory grasses and forbs, which are important to Sage Grouse, tend to be sparse, as the area has been heavily grazed for many years. There has been a loss of good habitat for the Sage Grouse as a result of invasion of sagebrush areas by piñon - juniper, as well as the removal of the grass/forb component (Woods and Braun 1995). Many primitive roads and trails and a county road are present. Several springs and numerous natural and stock ponds exist. The wetlands associated with these springs and ponds are critical habitat for the Sage Grouse as they use wet meadows and riparian areas for brood-rearing. Ensuring springs and natural ponds remain hydrologically intact will help maintain wet meadow habitat vital for the Sage Grouse. Non-native species in the area include Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), salsify (*Tragopogon dubius*) and dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*). Soils types are variable given the large area and the diverse geomorphic features of this site.

## Key Environmental Factors

No Data

## Climate Description

arid semi-desert

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## Land Use History

No Data

## Cultural Features

No Data

### SITE DESIGN

Site Map P - Partial

Mapped Date 04/20/2006

Designer Gaughan, C.R.

## Boundary Justification

The boundary was provided by CDOW (NDIS overall range) drawn to encompass the entire nesting area, including known leks, of the Gunnison Sage Grouse and surrounding habitat containing potential or known roost and nesting locations (CDOW 2005).

Primary Area 34,488.67 Acres

13,957.13 Hectares

### SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

## Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site contains a fair (C-ranked) occurrence of the Gunnison Sage Grouse (*Centrocercus minimus*), which is critically imperiled on a global scale (G1/S1). It also supports the following natural communities: a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally imperiled to vulnerable (G2G3/S2S3) western slope sagebrush shrublands (*Artemisia cana* spp. *viscidula* / *Festuca thurberi*), a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally imperiled to globally secure (G2G4/S2) western slope grasslands (*Hesperostipa comata* Great Basin herbaceous vegetation), and a good to poor (BD-ranked) occurrence of the globally secure (G5/S3S4) mixed mountain shrublands (*Quercus gambelii* / *Symphoricarpos oreophilus*).

Other Values Rank No Data

## Other Values Comments

No Data

### LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

## Land Use Comments

"Landownership is 70% private, 28% BLM and 2% USFS. Land-use in the area is primarily livestock grazing, hay production and recreation, and development is occurring in some areas" (GSGRSC 2005).

## Natural Hazard Comments

No Data

## Exotics Comments

No Data

## Offsite

No Data

## Information Needs

No Data

### ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY

<u>Element</u>	<u>State Scientific Name</u>	<u>State Common Name</u>	<u>Global Rank</u>	<u>State Rank</u>	<u>Driving Site Rank</u>
24930	<i>Artemisia cana</i> ssp. <i>viscidula</i> / <i>Festuca thurberi</i> Shrubland	Western Slope Sagebrush Shrublands	G2G3	S2S3	Yes
24791	<i>Quercus gambelii</i> / <i>Symphoricarpos oreophilus</i> Shrubland	Mixed Mountain Shrublands	G5	S3S4	No
17758	<i>Centrocercus minimus</i>	Gunnison Sage Grouse	G1	S1	Yes
24857	<i>Hesperostipa comata</i> Great Basin Herbaceous Vegetation	Western Slope Grasslands	G2G4	S2	No

### REFERENCES

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## Reference ID

## Full Citation

194308	Colorado Division of Wildlife. 2005. Gunnison Sage Grouse Overall Range. Fort Collins, CO. GIS data online at <a href="http://ndis.nrel.colostate.edu/ftp/index.html">http://ndis.nrel.colostate.edu/ftp/index.html</a>
194272	Gunnison Sage-grouse Rangewide Steering Committee (GSGRSC). 2005. Gunnison sage -grouse rangewide conservation plan. Colorado Division of Wildlife, Denver, Colorado, USA.
173289	Lyon, P., C. Pague, R. Rondeau, L. Renner, C. Slater, and C. Richard. 1996. Final Report: Natural Heritage Inventory of Mesa County, Colorado. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
168236	Woods, C. P., and C. E. Braun. 1995. Sage Grouse Invenstigations. Glade Park and Pinon Mesa, Mesa County, Colorado. April-September 1995.

## ADDITIONAL TOPICS

### Additional Topics

Original site design by Kettler, S.M. 1996-03-15.

## VERSION

**Version Date** 04/20/2006  
**Version Author** Gaughan, C.R.

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