

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Rainbow Lakes

Site Code S.USCOHP*27974

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2662 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 403853N
State Colorado Longitude 1063748W

Quad Code Quad Name

40106-F6 Mount Ethel
40106-F5 Pitchpine Mountain

County

Jackson (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name

10180001 North Platte Headwaters

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	9,750.00 Feet	2,971.80 Meters
Maximum Elevation	10,000.00 Feet	3,048.00 Meters

Site Description

The Rainbow Lakes site is located on the east side of the Park Range in Jackson County. The site encompasses three tarn lakes: Lower, Middle, and Rainbow lakes. Rainbow Lake is fed from snowmelt from Mount Ethel via Slide Lake and Norris Creek. The lakes are bordered by typical subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*) and Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) forest. The shrub layer is dominated by the state rare plant white-flowered azalea (*Rhododendron albiflorum*). It occurs at the shoreline of the three lakes and extends up into the drier hillsides where it is eventually replaced by common juniper (*Juniperus communis*) and grouse whortleberry (*Vaccinium scoparium*). Surrounding the lakes are steep hillsides; however at the western edge of Rainbow Lake where Norris Creek enters, a small peatland has formed. It is dominated by sedges (*Carex aquatilis*, *C. utriculata*) and the state rare slender cottongrass (*Eriophorum gracile*).

Key Environmental Factors

Acidic soils support the *Rhododendron albiflorum* and peaty soils support the *Eriophorum gracile*.

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 10/20/2009
Designer Culver, D.R.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries include the upper reach of Norris Creek as it enters the series of Rainbow lakes to the outlet at Lower Rainbow Lake. The boundaries include the immediate watershed of Rainbow Lakes and a buffer of 1/4 of mile for the cottongrass and the white-flowered azalea.

Primary Area 290.57 Acres 117.59 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B4: Moderate Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site supports an excellent (A-ranked) occurrence of the state rare (G4/S2) white-flowered azalea (*Azaleastrum albiflorum*) and an extant occurrence of the state rare (G5/S2) slender cottongrass

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(*Eriophorum gracile*).

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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>
20824	<i>Azaleastrum albiflorum</i>	white-flowered azalea	G4	S2	Yes
18619	<i>Eriophorum gracile</i>	slender cottongrass	G5	S2	No

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
198407	Culver, D.R., K. Decker, J. Parker, J. Bell, J. Sovell, and J. Huggins. 2010. CNHP Final Report: Identification and Assessment of Important Wetlands within the North Platte Watershed, CO. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 10/20/2009
Version Author Culver, D.R.

Disclaimer

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