

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Rincon la Osa

Site Code S.USCOHP*26736

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2418 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 373811N
State Colorado Longitude 1072241W

Quad Code Quad Name

37107-F4 Rio Grande Pyramid
37107-F3 Weminuche Pass

County

Hinsdale (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name

14080101 Upper San Juan

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	11,120.00	Feet	3,389.38	Meters
Maximum Elevation	11,480.00	Feet	3,499.10	Meters

Site Description

This site is drawn for a small, lake-fill peatland along the Rincon la Osa drainage, a second order tributary of the Pine River. The site is a flat to gently sloping, open-basin fen with multiple small inlets and rivulets throughout. General geology consists of metamorphic and igneous rocks of the Precambrian Age, specifically, Eolus Granite (Steven 1974, Tweto 1979). The Rincon la Osa drainage opens into a wide glaciated valley above this point. The wetland may be a result of glacial activity during the Quaternary Age. Soils are inundated throughout consisting of well-developed fibric to hemic peat accumulations. The wetland is a fen type peatland due to soil development and hydrology. Peatlands are wetlands defined by having organic soils (histosols) with 40 cm peat accumulation in the upper 80 cm (USDA 2006). In this region, peatlands are fens and dependent groundwater with minimal secondary inputs from other hydrologic sources (Cooper and Arp 1998). Specifically, this wetland is a small, lake-fill peatland formed by the expansion of vegetation and peat accumulations over the surface of open water. The site has a large area of floating mat towards the center and grounded peat accumulations along edges. The floating mat is the quaking peat layer over water formed during the lake-fill process. Plant communities on floating mats are considered stable due to the ability to fluctuate with water levels (Chadde et al. 1998). The unique herbaceous community forms a consistent layer of floating peat with hummocked areas of dense vegetation interspersed with areas of open peat and shallow water. Floating mat is dominated by mud sedge (*Carex limosa*), fewflower spikerush (*Eleocharis quinqueflora*), and buckbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*). Northwest Territory sedge (*Carex utriculata*) and buckbean form a dense band around open water at the center of the wetland. Other species present include water sedge (*Carex aquatilis*), narrowleaf cotton-grass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), and sphagnum (*Sphagnum* sp.). A small band of grounded peat at the edge of the floating mat is dominated by a fewflower spikerush community. Surrounding uplands are dominated by Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) and subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*) forests with mixed meadow openings. Small fen wetlands, common throughout adjacent drainages, are dominated by fewflower spikerush and sedge (*Carex* sp.) communities. The number of quality wetlands interspersed with subalpine forest and meadows in the area create high quality wildlife habitat. There are very few anthropogenic disturbances in drainages or surrounding uplands. Travel is restricted to foot and horse travel along trails in adjacent Rincon la Osa and Rincon la Vaca drainages as part of the Weminuche Wilderness.

Key Environmental Factors

Key environmental factors influencing species composition of the wetland are topography, gentle gradient, prevailing winds, subalpine elevation, perennial hydrology, and seasonal flooding.

Climate Description

Climate and weather tend to follow typical patterns of the San Juan Mountains of Colorado being generally xeric throughout the year with warm spring weather causing snowmelt flooding, wet summers, and a late

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summer monsoon season.

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Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 10/15/2006
Designer Jones, J.R.

Boundary Justification

Boundaries include 1,000 ft of uplands to buffer from impacts to site condition (Keate 2004). This buffer accounts for natural ecological processes important for the maintenance of wetland elements such as seasonal flooding, groundwater recharge, surface flows, and sediment deposition. However, the boundary does not include all hydrologic processes necessary to the maintenance of site hydrology and activities such as deforestation, improper livestock grazing or recreational use, development, or water diversion could be detrimental to the site.

Primary Area 58.73 Acres 23.77 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site is drawn for an excellent (A-ranked) occurrence of the globally imperiled (G2/S1S2) mud sedge (*Carex limosa*) herbaceous vegetation community.

Other Values Rank V2 - High values

Other Values Comments

Site provides aesthetic value and acts as a source of system biodiversity in the area. It also provides ecosystem health values such as important wildlife habitat, aquifer recharge and discharge, and flood attenuation and storage.

LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Land Use Comments

Predominant land use in the area is for recreational purposes including hiking, horseback riding, camping, and hunting. There are multiple hunting outfitters based along the Pine River that likely use this area during the fall hunting seasons.

Natural Hazard Comments

Natural hazards include avalanche danger and spring flooding.

Exotics Comments

No exotics were observed at the site. Exotics observed on the main Rincon la Osa trail include Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*) and timothy (*Phleum pratense*).

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>
24366	<i>Carex limosa</i> Herbaceous Vegetation	Montane Wetland	G2	S1S2	Yes

REFERENCES

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Reference ID

Full Citation

194562	Chadde, S.W., J.S. Stephen, J.B. Bursick, R.K. Moseley, A.G. Evenden, M. Mantas, F. Rabe, and B. Heidel. 1998. Peatlands on National Forests of the Northern Rocky Mountains: Ecology and Conservation. Gen. Tech. Rep. RMRS-GTR-11. Ogden, UT: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station.
194563	Cooper, D.J. and C. D. Arp. 1998. "Colorado's Iron Fens: Geochemistry, Flora, and Vegetation". Unpublished Report submitted to the Colorado Natural Areas Program.
192813	Keate, Nancy S. 2004. Bibliography of Impacts to Wetlands II - Draft - revised - Jan 2004. Utah Wetland Outreach, Wildlife Resources, Utah Department of Natural Resources.
194565	Neid, S.L. and J.R. Jones. 2008. Final Report: Survey of Critical Wetlands and Riparian Areas in Hinsdale County. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
194566	Steven, T.A. 1974. Geologic Map of the Durango Quadrangle, Southwestern Colorado. United States Geological Survey, Department of Interior, Reston, VA.
192747	Tweto, O. 1979. Geologic Map of Colorado, 1:500,000. United States Geological Survey, Department of Interior, and Geologic Survey of Colorado, Denver, CO.
194564	USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service. 2006. Keys to Soil Taxonomy, 6th ed. Soil Survey Staff, Soil Conservation Services. Washington, DC. 12 p.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 10/15/2006

Version Author Jones, J.R.

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