

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Rio Grande at Pole Creek Mountain

Site Code S.USCOHP*26735

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2417 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 374503N
State Colorado Longitude 1072523W

Quad Code Quad Name

37107-G4 Pole Creek Mountain
37107-F4 Rio Grande Pyramid

County

Hinsdale (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name

13010001 Rio Grande headwaters

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	9,900.00 Feet	3,017.52 Meters
Maximum Elevation	10,000.00 Feet	3,048.00 Meters

Site Description

The site is drawn along the upper reaches of the Rio Grande River, a third order drainage. This section of the river flows through a wide, open glaciated valley bottom with several beaver ponds. The shrub dominated wetland is concentrated along floodplains and beaver ponds. Bedrock geology consists of patches of glacial deposits of the Quaternary Age surrounded by various igneous rocks of the Tertiary Age (Steven 1974, Tweto 1979). Soils vary from inundated to dry with varying amounts of organic material. Upper reaches of the site are characterized by a willow carr are dominated by a consistent, dense tall shrub layer of Geyer's willow (*Salix geyeriana*) and park willow (*Salix monticola*) concentrated around large, open deep-water beaver ponds. The understory is dominated by a dense layer of mesic graminoids in inundated to saturated areas. Middle to lower reaches of site with more openings and drier patches are dominated by mesic forbs in the understory. Species composition varies along the moisture gradient with saturated areas being healthier, dominated by native graminoids. Drier areas exhibit impacts from present and past grazing supporting many increaser species and exotics. Predominant uses of surrounding uplands include livestock grazing and recreation. A single cow moose was observed in the wetland. The site appears to be recovering from past grazing with more native species cover and less trampling and livestock use than the last survey in 1995.

Key Environmental Factors

Key environmental factors influencing species composition of the wetland are montane elevation, low gradient, 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 summer monsoon season.

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

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seasonal flooding, groundwater recharge, surface flows, and sediment deposition. However, the boundary does not include all hydrological processes necessary to the maintenance of site hydrology and upstream activities such as deforestation, improper livestock grazing, development, or water diversion could be detrimental to the site.

Primary Area 622.87 Acres 252.07 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site is drawn for a good (B-ranked) occurrence of state vulnerable (G3S3) park willow / mesic graminoids montane riparian willow carr (*Salix monticola* / mesic graminoids shrubland).

Other Values Rank V2 - High values

Other Values Comments

The site provides aesthetic quality and multiple recreational uses. In addition, the site provides ecological values including erosion control, aquifer recharge, flood attenuation storage, and wildlife habitat.

LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Land Use Comments

Predominant land uses include recreation and livestock grazing.

Natural Hazard Comments

No Data

Exotics Comments

Common exotics include Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), and white clover (*Trifolium repens*). These species are concentrated in drying areas and are absent within the active floodplain.

Offsite

Off-site considerations include an adjacent road, recreation, and livestock grazing.

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>
24585	<i>Salix monticola</i> / Mesic Graminoids Shrubland	Montane Riparian Willow Carr	G3	S3	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
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.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 10/15/2006

Version Author Jones, J.R.

Disclaimer

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