

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Sambrito Creek Headwaters

Site Code S.USCOHP*25698

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2248 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 370708N
State Colorado Longitude 1072732W

<u>Quad Code</u>	<u>Quad Name</u>
37107-B4	Pargin Mountain
37107-A4	Allison

County

Archuleta (CO)

<u>Watershed Code</u>	<u>Watershed Name</u>
14080101	Upper San Juan

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	7,200.00 Feet	2,194.56 Meters
Maximum Elevation	8,600.00 Feet	2,621.28 Meters

Site Description

Sambrito Creek is located in the southwest corner of Archuleta County, northwest of Piedra Peak. It flows generally southward to its confluence with Navajo Reservoir just north of the Colorado/New Mexico state line. The upper portion of Sambrito Creek is within a montane setting with an unimproved dirt road adjacent to it. The channel is moderately steep, straight to moderately sinuous, and cuts a deep ravine where the gradient increases. From its headwaters Sambrito Creek passes through open meadows and quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) forests, and the local hydrology is slightly altered by small stock pond berms. Farther downstream the channel is dominated by narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*) and Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*). Stream flows appear to be low, and cottonwoods appear to be confined to the areas within the channel where water is available. The dry, lower reach of Sambrito Creek is dominated by ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), and Rocky Mountain juniper. Over the full reach of the creek within the site, the riparian shrub understory displays a sparse to moderate canopy and is dominated by Gambel oak (*Quercus gambelii*) and roundleaf snowberry (*Symphoricarpos rotundifolia*). The herbaceous understory displays a mixture of upland, native and non-native species including Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), alpine false springparsley (*Pseudocymopterus montanus*), sweet cicely (*Osmorhiza depauperata*), common yarrow (*Achillea millefolium* var. *occidentalis*), longstalk clover (*Trifolium longipes*), moss and others. Ponderosa pine forests and Gambel oak shrublands dominate the uplands. Higher elevation uplands are comprised of spruce - fir (*Picea pungens* - *Abies* spp.) and quaking aspen forests. The riparian area and adjacent meadows at the upper extent of Sambrito Creek provide a lush and vigorous habitat within an otherwise arid region.

Key Environmental Factors

The surface geology is dominated by the San Jose Formation, comprised of siltstone, shale and sandstone (Tweto 1979). Soils within the riparian area are alluvium with angular cobble and gravel with silt deposits.

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 10/05/2005
Designer March, M.A.

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Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn to include an area that encompasses supporting ecological processes necessary to the long-term viability of the element occurrence. The boundary also identifies a buffer including the road and rangelands where direct disturbance and impacts from road use and maintenance and grazing may contribute to excessive nutrients, sediment, and weed invasion. It should be noted that the boundary does not contain all hydrologic processes necessary to the element.

Primary Area 325.87 Acres 131.87 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The site supports a good (B-ranked) example of the globally imperiled to vulnerable (G2G3/S2S3) narrowleaf cottonwood - Rocky Mountain juniper (*Populus angustifolia* - *Juniperus scopulorum*) montane riparian forest plant association. This association typically occurs on drier sites of riparian systems, such as terraces, islands within wide rivers, and within rocky sandy bottoms of narrow straight channels (Carsey et al. 2003). The occurrence on Sambrito Creek is on the rocky bottom of a steep, ephemeral channel.

Other Values Rank No Data

Other Values Comments

No Data

LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Land Use Comments

A major landuse threat in this area of the HD Mountains and the San Juan Basin is gas-well drilling, and the road networks and well-pad construction that go along with it. Gas well development is occurring downstream of the site. This portion of Archuleta County and nearby La Plata County is under heavy pressure for gas well development in 2005.

Natural Hazard Comments

No Data

Exotics Comments

There are few weeds within the site. Weeds occurring in the area, such as common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) and Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), are localized at the side of the road.

Offsite

Gas well development is occurring downstream of the element occurrence, including multiple short roads and well pad sites.

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>
24963	<i>Populus angustifolia</i> - <i>Juniperus scopulorum</i> Woodland	Montane Riparian Forest	G2G3	S2S3	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
160903	Carsey, K., D. Cooper, K. Decker, D. Culver, and G. Kittel. 2003. Statewide wetlands classification and characterization: Wetland plant associations of Colorado. Prepared for Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Denver, CO by Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
193633	Freeman, K.M., March, M.A. and D.R. Culver. 2006. Final Report: Survey of Critical Wetlands and Riparian Areas in Archuleta County. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
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

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VERSION

Version Date 10/05/2005

Version Author March, M.A.

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