

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name San Miguel River/Clay Creek to Horsefly Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP*6795

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 27 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>
1598	S.USWRO1*418	San Miguel River

LOCATORS

Nation United States Latitude 381137N
State Colorado Longitude 1081731W

Quad Code Quad Name

38108-B3 Norwood

County

Montrose (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name

14030003 San Miguel

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	6,200.00	Feet	1,890.00	Meters
Maximum Elevation	7,200.00	Feet	2,195.00	Meters

Site Description

Horsefly Creek joins the San Miguel in the roadless section of the canyon between the Norwood Bridge and Pinyon. It drains a large part of the Uncompahgre Plateau. This site extends along the San Miguel from about a half mile downstream to three miles upstream from the confluence of Horsefly Creek. Riparian vegetation in this site was surveyed in 1991 and 1997 by CNHP (Kittel 1991, Stevens 1997). The site was again visited in 1999. This section of the river is used in summer by rafters and kayakers. It receives little use during the winter. In general, the narrow riparian area has a mature overstory of blue spruce and narrowleaf cottonwood, with river birch, thinleaf alder and red-osier dogwood in the understory. In places where the tree canopy is missing, birch and alder dominate. Various combinations of these dominant plants account for the six different plant associations documented. The plant communities were judged to be of very high quality with few exotic species. Other plants in the site are ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, Gambel's oak, wild rose, Kentucky bluegrass, silver buffaloberry, coyote willow, Fendler's barberry, false Solomonseal, actinea, Rocky Mountain juniper, and thistles. It was noted in 1991 that cattle grazing was reducing the native herbaceous flora. Although not documented previously, oxeye daisy was observed along the river banks in 1999. Upland vegetation in the area is pinyon-juniper and Gambel's oak woodland. Associated species include wild rose, nodding onion, actinea, pussytoes, prickly-pear cactus, Oregon grape, aspen daisy, buckwheat and skunkbrush. In openings on a south-facing slope, there was a good-sized population of the Abajo penstemon. The plants were growing on naturally eroded, barren, sandy soils. Much potential habitat for this species remains unsurveyed in this area.

Key Environmental Factors

No Data

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 03/13/2000
Designer Lyon, M.J. and J.R. Sovell

Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn to include the high quality riparian vegetation in the San Miguel Canyon from just downstream of the confluence of Horsefly Creek to about 3 miles upstream.

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Primary Area 2,276.41 Acres

921.23 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site contains excellent (A-ranked) occurrences of plant communities that are globally vulnerable. Six excellent occurrences of riparian plant communities form a mosaic in the site. They are: the lower montane riparian shrublands dominated by river birch, considered to be vulnerable throughout its range, and rare in Colorado; the globally vulnerable blue spruce/thinleaf alder montane riparian forest, and narrowleaf cottonwood/thinleaf alder riparian forests; blue spruce/red osier dogwood, rare in Colorado; thinleaf alder riparian shrublands, vulnerable in Colorado; and narrowleaf cottonwood-blue spruce/thinleaf alder, considered to be globally common. A small patch of silver buffaloberry riparian shrubland was observed at the confluence of Horsefly Creek. This community may extend farther up the creek, and warrant a higher occurrence rank with further survey. A communal roost of Bald Eagles was documented in this site in 1998. This is the only such roost known between Telluride and Uravan.

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 State ID</u>	<u>State Scientific Name</u>	<u>State Common Name</u>	<u>Global Rank</u>	<u>State Rank</u>	<u>Driving Site Rank</u>
17439	<i>Shepherdia argentea</i> Shrubland	Foothills Riparian Shrubland	G3G4	S1	No
24823	<i>Populus angustifolia</i> - <i>Picea pungens</i> / <i>Alnus incana</i> Woodland	Montane Riparian Forests	G3	S3	Yes
24518	<i>Picea pungens</i> / <i>Alnus incana</i> Woodland	Montane Riparian Forests	G3	S3	Yes
24541	<i>Populus angustifolia</i> / <i>Alnus incana</i> Woodland	Montane Riparian Forest	G3	S3	Yes
24637	<i>Betula occidentalis</i> / Mesic Graminoids Shrubland	Lower Montane Riparian Shrublands	G3	S2	Yes
24976	<i>Alnus incana</i> / Mesic Graminoids Shrubland	Montane Riparian Shrubland	G3	S3	Yes
21249	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald Eagle	G5	S1B,S3N	No
24867	<i>Picea pungens</i> / <i>Cornus sericea</i> Woodland	Montane Riparian Forest	G4	S2	No

REFERENCES

Reference ID **Full Citation**

- No Data

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 03/13/2000

Version Author Lyon, M.J. and J.R. Sovell

Disclaimer

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