

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Smelter Mountain

Site Code S.USCOHP*24732

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2097 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 371549N
State Colorado Longitude 1075429W

Quad Code Quad Name
37107-C8 Durango West

County
La Plata (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name
14080104 Animas

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation - Feet - Meters
Maximum Elevation - Feet - Meters

Site Description

The Smelter Mountain site occupies a steep north-facing slope in the Bodo State Wildlife Area (SWA). The radio towers that top the ridge are a visible and familiar landmark to Durango residents. It can be seen from Highway 160 west of Durango, or can be accessed from the south through the SWA. The site provides a good example of a mixed mountain shrubland community. Although Gambel oak (*Quercus gambelii*) and mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus montanus*) are two of the most abundant shrubs, they share dominance with Utah serviceberry (*Amelanchier utahensis*), squaw apple (*Peraphyllum ramosissimum*), big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos oreophilus*), and cliff fendlerbush (*Fendlera rupicola*). A very diverse understory of grasses and forbs includes elk sedge (*Carex geyeri*), Indian rice grass (*Oryzopsis hymenoides*), needle and thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), bottlebrush squirreltail (*Elymus elymoides*), western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), prairie junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*), muttongrass (*Poa fendleriana*), actinea (*Tetranneuris ivesiana*), toad flax penstemon (*Penstemon linarioides*), banana yucca (*Yucca baccata*), pingue rubberweed (*Picradenia richardsonii*), sand lupine (*Lupinus ammophilus*), Oregon grape (*Mahonia repens*) and many other species. The area along the ridge where the radio towers are located is excluded from the site as it is disturbed and harbors many exotic species. However, most of these have not invaded the steep slopes below.

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 01/30/2004
Designer Lyon, M.J.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn to include the steep north facing slope that supports the mixed mountain shrub community. It excludes disturbed areas at the top of the ridge that have been invaded by exotic plant species.

Primary Area 141.55 Acres 57.28 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

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Biodiversity Significance Comments

The Smelter Mountain site supports a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) *Quercus gambelii* - *Cercocarpus montanus* / (*Carex geyeri*) shrubland. This site is meant to represent the community in La Plata County, and is valuable not only for its high diversity of species, but also as a coarse filter for the animals and lesser-known organisms that may depend on this habitat. There is also a record, based on an herbarium specimen, of showy collomia (*Collomia grandiflora*), a plant that is very rare in Colorado (S1). This occurrence is unranked, and could not be found in 2003, although it may still be extant and relocated later.

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 Rank</u>	<u>State Rank</u>	<u>Driving Site Rank</u>
<u>State ID</u>	<u>State Scientific Name</u>	<u>State Common Name</u>			
24685	<i>Quercus gambelii</i> - <i>Cercocarpus montanus</i> / (<i>Carex geyeri</i>) Shrubland	Mixed Mountain Shrublands	G3	S3	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
184581	Lyon, P. 2003. Colorado Natural Heritage Program La Plata County Biological Assessment.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

Other Heritage elements within the site: *Collomia grandiflora* (showy collomia), G5/S1, E-ranked.

VERSION

Version Date 01/30/2004
Version Author Lyon, M.J.

Disclaimer

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