

# Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Soap Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP\*23695

## IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 256 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 384022N  
State Colorado Longitude 1071724W

<u>Quad Code</u>	<u>Quad Name</u>
38107-F3	Big Soap Park
38107-F2	West Elk Peak

### County

Gunnison (CO)

<u>Watershed Code</u>	<u>Watershed Name</u>
14020002	Upper Gunnison

## SITE DESCRIPTION

<b>Minimum Elevation</b>	8,400.00 Feet	2,560.00 Meters
<b>Maximum Elevation</b>	9,800.00 Feet	2,987.00 Meters

### Site Description

Soap Creek is within a Wilderness Area and is in good condition. The valley is wide with a flat, well-worked floodplain. The riparian vegetation is mostly early seral species (e.g. willows and young narrowleaf cottonwoods). Plant associations documented include mountain willow/mesic forb (*Salix monticola*/mesic forb) and subalpine fir-Engelmann spruce/alder (*Abies lasiocarpa*-*Picea engelmannii*/*Alnus incana*). Within the mountain willow community, associated species include twinberry honeysuckle (*Lonicera involucrata*), currant (*Ribes* spp.), strawberry (*Fragaria* sp.), orange sneezeweed (*Dugaldia hoopesii*), false Solomon's seal (*Maianthemum stellata*), red raspberry (*Rubus ideaus*), and cow parsnip (*Heracleum sphondylium* ssp. *montanum*). Within the subalpine fir-Engelmann spruce/alder community associated species include Drummond willow (*Salix drummondiana*), twinberry honeysuckle (*Lonicera involucrata*), red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*), bluebells (*Mertensia ciliata*), and cow parsnip (*Heracleum sphondylium* ssp. *montanum*). The broad flat valley floor is a mosaic of cobble bars, beaver ponds, and overflow channels. Side slopes are gently to mostly steep grasslands with pocket of aspen and conifer groves.

### Key Environmental Factors

No Data

### Climate Description

No Data

### Land Use History

No Data

### Cultural Features

No Data

## SITE DESIGN

Site Map P - Partial Mapped Date 01/06/2003  
Designer Doyle, G.A.

### Boundary Justification

The boundary includes a portion of Soap Creek and East Soap Creek and the surrounding watershed. The boundary represents a preliminary estimate of the area needed to maintain local hydrological conditions. However, it should be noted that the hydrological processes necessary to the riparian area are not fully contained by the site boundaries. Any upstream activities along Soap Creek and its tributaries could potentially be detrimental to the hydrology of the riparian area. This boundary indicates the minimum area that should be considered for any conservation management plan.

Primary Area 1,412.70 Acres 571.70 Hectares

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## SITE SIGNIFICANCE

**Biodiversity Significance Rank** B4: Moderate Biodiversity Significance

### Biodiversity Significance Comments

The site supports a good (B-ranked) example of the state vulnerable (G4/S3) Rocky mountain willow/Mesic forb (*Salix monticola*/Mesic forb) shrubland. This association is only known from Colorado, where over thirty stands have been documented. Many stands of this association may represent grazing induced shifts from other *Salix monticola* dominated plant associations. Stands with a complete native herbaceous understory intact are threatened by improper livestock grazing, inappropriate stream flow alterations, and heavy recreational use. Rocky Mountain willow appears to be the center of its distribution in Colorado, where it frequently forms large thickets with few other willow species present. Literature from Utah, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Nevada and Oregon indicate that Rocky Mountain willow loses importance north and west of Colorado, where Rocky Mountain willow mixes with other *Salix* species. For example, in central and eastern Utah, Rocky Mountain willow dominated stands are infrequent and due to structural and ecological similarities are included in Booth willow (*Salix boothii*) associations (Padgett et al. 1989), and in Idaho, Rocky Mountain willow also has a limited distribution and largely associates with other willow species (Brunsfeld and Johnson 1985). This site also supports an excellent (A-ranked) example of a globally secure (G5/S5) riparian plant community: subalpine fir-Engelmann spruce/alder (*Abies lasiocarpa*-*Picea engelmannii*/*Alnus incana*).

**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</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>
24809	<i>Salix monticola</i> / Mesic Forbs Shrubland	Montane Riparian Willow Carr	G4	S3	Yes
24684	<i>Abies lasiocarpa</i> / <i>Alnus incana</i> Forest	Montane Riparian Forests	G5	S5	Yes

## REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
164036	Doyle, G.A. 2002. Colorado Natural Heritage Program Field Survey of Critical Wetlands in Gunnison County.
173839	Rocchio J., G Doyle, and R. Rondeau. 2003. Final Report: Survey of Critical Wetlands and Riparian Areas in Gunnison County, Colorado. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.

## ADDITIONAL TOPICS

### Additional Topics

No Data

## VERSION

**Version Date** 01/06/2003  
**Version Author** Doyle, G.A.

## Disclaimer

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