

# Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Spitzie Draw

Site Code S.USCOHP\*811

## IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 821 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 405035N  
State Colorado Longitude 1085946W

| <u>Quad Code</u> | <u>Quad Name</u> |
|------------------|------------------|
| 40108-G8         | Lodore School    |
| 40109-G1         | Swallow Canyon   |

County  
Moffat (CO)

| <u>Watershed Code</u> | <u>Watershed Name</u>               |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 14040106              | Upper Green-Flaming Gorge Reservoir |

## SITE DESCRIPTION

|                   |          |      |          |        |
|-------------------|----------|------|----------|--------|
| Minimum Elevation | 5,360.00 | Feet | 1,634.00 | Meters |
| Maximum Elevation | 6,200.00 | Feet | 1,890.00 | Meters |

### Site Description

The site consists of 10% shale and tuffaceous slopes on the Brown's Park formation with grey-white fine sandy loam soils. This site includes barren outcrops of white shale within rolling hills of sagebrush shrublands and pinon juniper woodlands. Small drainages cut down through the shale exposing dramatic cliffs. Greasewood flats are found at the base of the cliffs, and are degraded from grazing pressures and the spread of cheat grass (*Anisantha tectorum*). The shale barrens are fairly pristine, with large areas of rock gardens with mat-forming species and other native flowering plants. Cryptogamic soil crusts are found throughout the area, particularly in the Spitzie Draw drainage. The pinon juniper woodlands appear to be in good condition with mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus montanus*), sagebrush (*Seriphidium* sp.), native grasses and soil crusts in the understory. This site includes four suboccurrences of *Penstemon gibbensii*. Two of the suboccurrences are located on the shale cliffs north of Hog Lake and are contained within the Brown's Park National Wildlife Refuge. The other two suboccurrences are located on BLM property along Spitzie Draw and a tributary to the east. Vegetative and flowering stems had been grazed on some individuals, but in most cases no hoofprints of cattle were found in the immediate vicinity. Rabbits were seen on two occasions and may be grazing opportunistically on *Penstemon gibbensii*.

### 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 05/16/2000  
Designer Spackman, S.C. and D.G. Anderson

### Boundary Justification

This site includes all of the known populations of *Penstemon gibbensii* in the immediate area. Also included within the area is potential habitat for *Penstemon gibbensii* as determined in the present study and by Dorn (1990). Some of the potential habitat was searched for the species in this and in previous studies with negative results. Much potential habitat for *Penstemon gibbensii* within the site remains to be searched and should be visited during future investigations and monitoring programs. The site also includes an occurrence

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of a *Rhus trilobata* (skunkbrush) riparian shrubland and a historic occurrence of *Ptychocheilus lucius* (Colorado pikeminnow).

Primary Area 8,172.26 Acres

3,307.21 Hectares

## SITE SIGNIFICANCE

**Biodiversity Significance Rank** B1: Outstanding Biodiversity Significance

### Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site contains an excellent (A-ranked) occurrence of a plant species which is critically imperiled on a global scale (G1/S1), Gibben's beardtongue (*Penstemon gibbensii*). This site also contains a good (B-ranked) occurrence of a plant community which is imperiled on a global scale (G2/S2), *Rhus trilobata*, and a historical occurrence of a fish species, Colorado pikeminnow, which is critically imperiled (G1/S1) on a global scale.

**Other Values Rank** No Data

### Other Values Comments

*Bolophyta ligulata* (ligulate feverfew) (G3/S2) also present in the area (minutes record from 1980).

## LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

### Land Use Comments

No Data

### Natural Hazard Comments

No Data

### Exotics Comments

Weeds are uncommon within the shale barrens where *Penstemon gibbensii* is found, but are abundant in the adjacent sagebrush and greasewood communities. Cheat grass (*Anisantha tectorum*), wienerleaf (*Halogeton glomeratus*), and Russian thistle (*Salsola australis*) were also found on the shale barrens in limited numbers. However, cheat grass is abundant in the area and presents a serious concern. Every effort should be made to avoid the spread of this species into habitat for *Penstemon gibbensii*.

### Offsite

No Data

### Information Needs

Further surveys are needed to search for new occurrences of this species. A rangewide survey of all potential habitat for this species is needed to identify all extant occurrences, and to establish baseline data on the population size, range, and degree of rarity of this species. Areas of apparently suitable habitat delineated in Spackman and Anderson (1999) should be visited. This will facilitate the development of effective protective measures for this species. A detailed autecological study of *Penstemon gibbensii* is needed to address more completely the conservation needs of this species. Such a study would include an investigation into all of the ecological parameters of *Penstemon gibbensii*, including pollination, seed dispersal, competition with other species, and nutrient relations. The preliminary investigations on the relationships between *Penstemon gibbensii* and other closely related taxa such as *Penstemon fremontii* and *Penstemon penlandii* need to be followed up with more detailed genetic analyses.

## ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY

| <u>Element</u> |                                 |                               | <u>Global Rank</u> | <u>State Rank</u> | <u>Driving Site Rank</u> |
|----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 16839          | <i>Rhus trilobata</i> Shrubland | Skunkbrush Riparian Shrubland | G2                 | S2                | No                       |
| 20983          | <i>Ptychocheilus lucius</i>     | Colorado Pikeminnow           | G1                 | S1                | No                       |
| 20176          | <i>Penstemon gibbensii</i>      | Gibben's beardtongue          | G1G2               | S1                | Yes                      |

## REFERENCES

| <u>Reference ID</u> | <u>Full Citation</u>   |
|---------------------|--|
| 164144              | Dorn, R.D. 1990. Report on the status of <i>Penstemon gibbensii</i> , a candidate threatened species. Unpublished.   |
| 173217              | Spackman, S. and D. Anderson. 1999. Field Survey and Protection Recommendations for the Globally Imperiled Gibben's Beardtongue, <i>Penstemon gibbensii</i> Dorn in Colorado. Unpublished report for the Colorado Natural Areas Program. 36pp. |

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## ADDITIONAL TOPICS

### Additional Topics

No Data

## VERSION

Version Date 05/16/2000

Version Author Spackman, S.C. and D.G. Anderson

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