

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Stillwater Creek Tributary

Site Code S.USCOHP*25917

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2302 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 401318N
State Colorado Longitude 1055501W

Quad Code Quad Name
40105-B8 Trail Mountain

County
Grand (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name
14010001 Colorado headwaters

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	8,565.00 Feet	2,610.61 Meters
Maximum Elevation	8,680.00 Feet	2,645.66 Meters

Site Description

The community inhabits portions of the first order, western tributary of Stillwater Creek. Stillwater is a tributary of Lake Granby, formerly the Upper Colorado River. The community occurs along the creek and its floodplain for more than 1.5 miles of river. Soils are silty to sandy clays with a consistent layer of organic matter. Geology consists of sedimentary rocks of the Tertiary Age, specifically of the Troublesome Formation. The drainage is dominated by a tall shrub layer of Geyer's willow (*Salix geyeriana*) with a mixture of Booth's willow (*Salix boothii*) and mountain willow (*Salix monticola*). The understory is dominated by a consistent layer of mesic graminoids, beaked sedge (*Carex utriculata*) in saturated areas and bluejoint reedgrass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*) under dense shrubs and in drying areas. There are very little weedy species in lower reaches, where the community is consistent and concentrated along the creek and floodplain. Upper reaches harbor more exotic species and show more impacts from livestock use where wetland forms a mosaic with upland big sagebrush (*Artemisia* sp.) community in many areas. Immediate uplands are dominated by xeric big sagebrush shrubland communities. Forested uplands are dominated by lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) with Geyer's sedge (*Carex geyeri*), russet buffaloberry (*Shepherdia canadensis*), and common juniper (*Juniperus communis*) in the understory. Beetle kill is abundant and may impact the community within the next decade. Small rivulets and ponds are present within the system and exhibit the negative effects of use by livestock. Lower reaches have revegetated, but rivulets are incised. Upper reaches show evidence of recent livestock use with trampled and grazed vegetation and absence of vegetation from many banks. Creek banks are eroded and incised and some areas harbor many non-native species. However, the area could be easily reclaimed with more intensive management of livestock. Forest Road 123 parallels community in many areas, but recreational use does not seem to impact the stand or its hydrology. Beaver activity is present only on Stillwater Creek above the occurrence.

Key Environmental Factors

Key environmental factors include spring flooding, beaver activity, valley shape, sediment deposition, and perennial surface flows.

Climate Description

Climate likely follows patterns typical of this region of Colorado being generally xeric throughout the year, with wet spring seasons and late summer "monsoons".

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 12/20/2005

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Designer Jones, J.R.

Boundary Justification

The site encompasses approximately 1.25 miles of a western tributary of Stillwater Creek, near its junction with Stillwater Pass. Boundaries include buffered upland areas and are drawn to encompass those ecological processes necessary to maintain site hydrology including perennial surface flows, valley shape, and slope degree. However, boundaries do not include all ecological processes influencing the site and activities upstream and along adjacent slopes such as improper grazing, water diversion, road maintenance, and development may negatively impact site hydrology and biota.

Primary Area 453.89 Acres 183.68 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site is drawn for a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3?/S3) plant community, Geyer's willow (*Salix geyeriana*) / mesic graminoid shrubland.

Other Values Rank V3 - Moderate values

Other Values Comments

The site provides moderate other values. The surrounding uplands are important for recreational activities for local residents including hiking, biking, camping, fishing, hunting, and OHV use. The wetland provides aesthetic values and is also important wildlife habitat.

LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Land Use Comments

Predominant uses include hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, biking, and OHV use. The area is also used to graze livestock.

Natural Hazard Comments

Flooding may be hazardous during spring run-off.

Exotics Comments

Common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinales*) is present throughout. Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*) is common along the edges of the wetland. Virginia strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*) is common throughout and may indicate heavy grazing.

Offsite

Off-site considerations include adjacent forest service road and recreational uses along the drainage, such as camping, and OHV use.

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>
24890	<i>Salix geyeriana</i> / Mesic Graminoids Shrubland	Geyer's Willow/Mesic Graminoid	G3?	S3	Yes

REFERENCES

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Reference ID

Full Citation

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.
193632	Culver, D.R. and Jones, J.R. 2006. Final Report: Survey of Critical Biological Resources in Grand County. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
160140	Dorn, R. D. 1997. Rocky Mountain Region Willow Identification Field Guide. Renewable Resources R2-RR-97-01. Denver, CO: USDA, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region. 107p.
167224	Hurd, E.G., N.L. Shaw, J. Mastroguiseppe, L.C. Smithman, and S. Goodrich. 1998. Field Guide to Intermountain Sedges. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Ogden, UT.
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.
193553	USDA, NRCS. 2005. The PLANTS Database, Version 3.5 (http://plants.usda.gov). Data compiled from various sources by Mark W. Skinner. National Plant Data Center < http://npdc.usda.gov/ >, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA. Accessed 2005.
172684	Weber, W.A. and R.C. Wittmann. 2001. Colorado Flora: Western Slope, Third Edition. University Press of Colorado, Niwot, CO.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 12/20/2005

Version Author Jones, J.R.

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