

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Stormy Point

Site Code S.USCOHP*3890

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 1630 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 374717N
State Colorado Longitude 1034507W

Quad Code Quad Name

37103-G7 Timpas
37103-G6 La Junta SW

County

Otero (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name

11020005 Upper Arkansas-Lake Meredith

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	4,210.00 Feet	1,283.21 Meters
Maximum Elevation	4,810.00 Feet	1,466.09 Meters

Site Description

The Stormy Point site contains an open, mesic draw dominated by needle and thread grass (*Hesperostipa comata*), three-awn (*Aristida purpurea*), tansy mustard (*Descurainia pinnata*), western wheatgrass (*Agropyron smithii*) and blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*). Two unnamed drainages, one of which contains Browning and Reese Reservoir No. 1, support populations of green toads (*Bufo debilis*) and Couch's spadefoot (*Scaphiopus couchii*). At the bottom of the drainage there is an area of a few acres that floods and holds water after seasonal summer rain storms. Additional populations of green toads and Couch's spadefoot were recorded from this ephemeral wetland.

Key Environmental Factors

Couch's spadefoot and green toad depend on the seasonally flooded wetlands found within the drainage of the site for successful reproduction. Any changes to the hydrology causing a decline in surface waters, like water diversions or pumping of surface and groundwater, would be detrimental to the continued viability of the amphibian population.

Climate Description

The climate is semi-arid with precipitation averaging about 14 inches per year. About half of the yearly precipitation is received during the months of May through August. Winter average minimum temperatures are in the range of 16-20 °F, and summer average maximum temperatures in July and August are near or above 90 °F (HPRCC 2008).

Land Use History

The area has been inhabited by people for as long as 5,000 years, particularly areas further east within the Purgatoire Canyon. Apparently many native tribes lived in or visited the area. The site is within the vicinity of the Santa Fe Trail and by the early 1840s traders and Spanish emigres colonized the canyons and brought ranching to the area. Ranching was the dominant force until 1909 when dry-land-farming homesteaders fenced the land. The 1920s and 1930s brought the "Dust Bowl" and many abandoned their homes, leaving the area to sheep and cattle ranchers. While sheep grazing was discontinued in the 1950s, livestock continued to dominate. The creation of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site in the 1980s meant the end of grazing over a large portion of the area, while private lands continue to be grazed (Friedman 1985).

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 03/25/2008
Designer Sovell, J.R.

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Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to include two populations of green toads and one Couch's spadefoot population. It contains the two drainages, in their entirety, within which three populations of amphibians reside. It also includes some of the uplands that are necessary to maintain hydrological functions, which are responsible for the viability of the resident amphibian populations.

Primary Area 3,223.68 Acres 1,304.58 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B5: General Biodiversity Interest

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The site supports an extant occurrence of the state rare (G5/S2) green toad (*Bufo debilis*) and the state imperiled (G5/S1) Couch's spadefoot (*Scaphiopus couchii*). Both species are known from very few locations in Colorado, however they are two of the most poorly understood amphibians in the state. Populations of both species are difficult to find except for after major rainfall events when individuals become active and mate, so timing and luck are important to successfully record these amphibians during field surveys. It is likely that more populations exist than are currently known.

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>
18880	<i>Bufo debilis</i>	Green Toad	G5	S2	Yes
22335	<i>Scaphiopus couchii</i>	Couch's Spadefoot	G5	S1	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
172109	Culver, D., M. A. March, S. Kettler and C. Pague. 1996. Natural Heritage Inventory of Significant Animals and Plants and Classification of Riparian Plant Associations: Timpas Grazing District and Kim Grazing Association. unpub CNHP report for U.S. Forest Service. 215+ p.
195120	Friedman, Paul D. 1985. Final Report of History and Oral History Studies of the Fort Carson Pinon Canyon Maneuver Area, Las Animas, Colorado. USDI. National Park Service, Interagency Archaeological Services Branch, Rocky Mountain Regional Office, Denver, CO.
195121	HPRCC. 2008. High Plains Regional Climate Center Web Page. Based on data from automated weather stations operated by Colorado for southeastern Colorado area. High Plains Regional Climate Center Web Page: < http://www.hprcc.unl.edu >
195097	Stevens, J., J. Sovell, D. Culver, K. Decker, L. Grunau, A. Lavender, and C. Gaughan. 2008. Final Report: Southeastern Colorado Survey of Critical Biological Resources 2007. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.

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ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

Original site design by Culver, D.R. 1996-03-15.

VERSION

Version Date 03/25/2008

Version Author Sovell, J.R.

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