

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Table Mountain

Site Code S.USCOHP*582

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 434 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 400805N
State Colorado Longitude 1051435W

Quad Code Quad Name

40105-A2	Niwot
40105-A3	Boulder
40105-B2	Hygiene
40105-B3	Lyons

County

Boulder (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name

10190005 St. Vrain

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	5,345.00	Feet	1,629.16	Meters
Maximum Elevation	5,545.00	Feet	1,690.12	Meters

Site Description

The site is a large mesa rising out of the broad, flat Denver Basin abutting the foothills of the Front Range. It is the largest of several landforms (hills and mesas) that punctuate the basin locally. The bedrock of Table Mountain is Pierre Shale capped with Quaternary alluvium (Verdos), which formed as a broad veneer over the flat shale pediments. The top of the mesa is covered by mid-height grassland. The sideslopes below the mesa top are generally steep and erodible with several areas of sparsely-vegetated shale barrens. The grassland is predominantly characterized by needle-and-thread (*Hesperostipa comata*) with areas codominated by big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) and western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*). Threadleaf sedge (*Carex filifolia*) and little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) occasionally occur. The grassland has a patchy expression with large areas obscured by abundant weeds like cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), Canada bluegrass (*Poa compressa*), tarragon (*Artemisia dracuncululus*), bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*), and other non-native species. Forb diversity is also patchy and diverse, with greater diversity where surface soils tend to have more gravel. Hopi tea greenthread (*Thelesperma megapotamica*), dotted blazing star (*Liatris punctata*), slimflower scurfpea (*Psoralidium tenuiflorum*), wavyleaf thistle (*Cirsium undulatum*), hedgehog cactus (*Echinocereus viridiflorus*), and blanket flower (*Gaillardia aristata*) are common, but infrequent. Additional forb diversity and prevalence of native grasses occurs on slopes below the mesa top although there are different weed issues on these landform positions. Wavy-leaf stickleaf (*Nuttallia sinuata*) occurs in these areas. The top of the mesa is used by the Department of Commerce for experiments with communication antennas and towers. Numerous towers, antennas, and wire arrays are located on the site as are several access roads and structures. Due to the nature of the work done on Table Mountain, the grassland has not been grazed or burned since the Department of Commerce established its experiments. There is a gravel mine at the north end.

Key Environmental Factors

Gravelly soils of Verdoso Alluvium (Quaternary)

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

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SITE DESIGN

Site Map P - Partial Mapped Date 10/21/2008

Designer Neid, S.L.

Boundary Justification

Includes the entire top of the mesa and its immediate slopes.

Primary Area 2,075.05 Acres 839.75 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The site supports a good to fair (BC-ranked) occurrence of a globally imperiled (G1G2/S1S2) *Hesperostipa comata* Great Plains mixed grass prairie. This natural community is the largest area of intact grassland in Boulder County. There is also a healthy population of wavy-leaf stickleaf (*Nuttallia sinuata*), which is globally vulnerable (G3/S2), but the occurrence is not restricted to the mesa.

Other Values Rank No Data

Other Values Comments

No Data

LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Land Use Comments

The nature of the experiments and work that occur on site preclude ease of regular management activities for grasslands in this area (grazing, fire).

Natural Hazard Comments

No Data

Exotics Comments

Numerous exotics occur on the site including cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), Japanese brome (*B. japonicus*), bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*), dalmation toadflax (*Linaria dalmatica*), and others.

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>			
24703	<i>Hesperostipa comata</i> Colorado Front Range Herbaceous Vegetation	Great Plains Mixed Grass Prairie	G1G2	S1S2	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
195190	Neid, S., J. Lemly, K. Decker and D. Culver. 2009. Final Report: Survey of Critical Biological Resources in Boulder County 2007-2008. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

Original site design by Pague, C.A. 1994-09-12. Updated by Kettler, S.M. 1996-11-08.

VERSION

Version Date 10/21/2008

Version Author Neid, S.L.

Disclaimer

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