

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name The Coal Creek Meadows

Site Code S.USCOHP*9399

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 164 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 374725N
State Colorado Longitude 1080159W

Quad Code Quad Name
37108-G1 Dolores Peak

County
Dolores (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name
14030002 Upper Dolores

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	10,040.00	Feet	3,060.00	Meters
Maximum Elevation	10,200.00	Feet	3,109.00	Meters

Site Description

The Coal Creek Meadows site is located in the San Juan National Forest surrounding The Meadows, a portion of Meadow Creek, and parts of the Coal Creek drainage. Several grassy mesic meadows are contained within the site. Water sedge (*Carex aquatilis*) dominates the large mesic areas, while tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia caespitosa*) dominates drier soils. Associated species include muttongrass (*Poa fendleriana*), slender wheatgrass (*Elymus trachycaulus*), small wing sedge (*Carex microptera*), ebony sedge (*Carex ebenea*), Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), and sweetgrass (*Hierochloa odorata*). Marsh marigold (*Caltha leptosepala*) dominates the herbaceous canopy in ephemeral streams and swales. Associated forbs in the area include elephant head louswort (*Pedicularis groenlandica*), Rocky Mountain fringed gentian (*Gentianopsis thermalis*), large leaf avens (*Geum macrophyllum*), beautiful potentilla (*Potentilla pulcherrima*), strawberry (*Fragaria* sp.), alpine goldenrod (*Solidago multiradiata*), Bigelow's groundsel (*Ligularia bigelovii*), and western yarrow (*Achillea lanulosa*). Soils within The Meadows are peaty to a depth of 26 cm with silty clay loam underneath. Willows dominate perennial drainages throughout the site. Mountain willow (*Salix monticola*) dominates the middle reaches of Meadow Creek and plane leaf willow (*Salix planifolia*) dominates Coal Creek as well as the mesic slopes adjacent to The Meadows. Uplands are dominated by spruce-fir (*Picea engelmannii*-*Abies lasiocarpa*) forests interspersed with open Thurber's fescue (*Festuca thurberi*) grasslands. A Boreal Owl occurrence has been documented (1995) in close proximity, not within the site. The Boreal Owl prefers multi-aged coniferous forests of Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) and subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*) above 9000 feet, most commonly in proximity to open grassy situations (AOU 1983). Forest Road 535 or Dunton road passes through the site and is utilized by residents of Dunton and National Forest visitors. The area is used for recreation including off road vehicles, hiking, hunting, and sight seeing.

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 11/11/2004
Designer March, M.A.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the element occurrences and adjacent areas to buffer hydrological processes

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necessary for the viability of the elements. The boundary also provides a small buffer from nearby trails and roads where surface runoff may contribute excess nutrients, sediment and weed invasion. It should be noted that all hydrological processes necessary to the elements are not fully contained by the site boundary.

Primary Area 1,286.31 Acres 520.56 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B5: General Biodiversity Interest

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The site supports the apparently globally secure (G4/S4) *Salix planifolia*/*Caltha leptosepala* plant community in good (B-ranked) condition; the demonstrably globally secure (G5) apparently secure in the state (S4) *Carex aquatilis* herbaceous vegetation in good condition (B-ranked); and the apparently globally secure (G4) vulnerable in the state (S3) *Salix monticola*/Mesic Forb plant community in fair (C-ranked) condition.

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

The Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife has purchased upstream land that is not within the site but affects the site condition, (e.g., sedimentation increased by heavy grazing).

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>
24836	<i>Salix planifolia</i> / <i>Caltha leptosepala</i> Shrubland	Subalpine Riparian Willow Carr	G4	S4	Yes
24809	<i>Salix monticola</i> / Mesic Forbs Shrubland	Montane Riparian Willow Carr	G4	S3	No
22745	<i>Carex aquatilis</i> Herbaceous Vegetation	Montane Wet Meadows	G5	S4	No

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
100569	American Ornithologists' Union (AOU). 1983. Check-list of North American Birds, 6th edition. Allen Press, Inc., Lawrence, Kansas. 877 p.
192742	March, M.A. 2005. Final Report: Natural Heritage Wetland Inventory of Dolores County. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

Original site design by Kettler, 1997.

VERSION

Version Date 11/11/2004
Version Author March, M.A.

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