

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Toms Canyon Mesa

Site Code S.USCOHP8*3846

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 1877 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>
883	S.USWRO1*1045	Colorado National Monument

LOCATORS

Nation United States Latitude 385732N
State Colorado Longitude 1085729W

Quad Code Quad Name
38108-H8 Bieser Creek

County
Mesa (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name
14030001 Westwater Canyon

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	7,000.00	Feet	2,134.00	Meters
Maximum Elevation	7,240.00	Feet	2,207.00	Meters

Site Description

The Tom's Canyon mesa site encompasses an isolated mesa overlooking the Coates Creek valley. The vegetation is dominated by pinyon-juniper woodlands on the slopes and mesa top, surrounded by sagebrush communities on the flats below. The large trees on the mesa top provide an excellent example of old growth pinon - juniper woodland. The uncommon plant association pinon pine / curl leaf mountain mahogany is found along the south rim of the mesa. Elevations of the site range from approximately 6,800 feet to over 7,200 feet on the mesa top. The mesa is somewhat isolated, but evidence of very light cattle use is present. Several roads exist adjacent to the site and a county road passes nearby. The Coates Creek floodplain has been heavily altered by agricultural practices and grazing.

Key Environmental Factors

No Data

Climate Description

arid semi-desert

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 03/15/1996

Designer Kettler, S.M.

Boundary Justification

The current boundary protects the occurrences from direct impact, and encompasses the mesa top and slopes. Other than direct impacts, such as chaining and fire, these communities are most influenced by climate (West and Van Pelt 1987). Small, isolated mesas have been shown to have less diverse small mammal populations than large mesas and may not be representative of some animal communities (Van Pelt 1993). Small mesas may protect representative communities of other groups such as invertebrates.

Primary Area 404.31 Acres 163.62 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The site encompasses an excellent (A-ranked - possibly one of the best known) of a (G5/S4) globally secure plant community and a fair (C-ranked) occurrence of a (G3/S3) globally vulnerable plant community. The rank has been upgraded from B4 to B3 is because of the presence of an old-growth pinon - juniper

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community, *Pinus edulis* / *Cercocarpus montanus*. Although the adjacent lands have been altered by human activities, the occurrence of this plant association exhibits old growth characteristics as defined by the U.S. Forest Service (Mehl 1993) and not seen by CNHP staff on several other mesas in the area. Although old trees in the pinon - juniper ecosystem are not uncommon (Joel Tuhy - personal communication), the structure of this stand seems unusual and of interest in a regional perspective (Nick Van Pelt - personal communication). *Pinus edulis* / *Cercocarpus ledifolius* (G3/S3) is in fair condition. This plant association is only documented from northwestern Colorado and from Wayne County, Utah. The occurrence at this site is small and the overstory is relatively sparse compared with stands reported in northwestern Colorado (Community Characterization Abstract on file at CNHP).

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 Rank</u>	<u>State Rank</u>	<u>Driving Site Rank</u>
24829	<i>Pinus edulis</i> - <i>Juniperus osteosperma</i> / <i>Cercocarpus intricatus</i> Woodland	Mesic Western Slope Pinyon-Juniper Woodlands	G3	S3	No
24830	<i>Pinus edulis</i> - <i>Juniperus</i> spp. / <i>Cercocarpus montanus</i> Woodland	Mesic Western Slope Pinyon-Juniper Woodlands	G5	S4	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
-	No Data

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date	03/15/1996
Version Author	Kettler, S.M.

Disclaimer

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