

# Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Turkey Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP\*23944

## IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 559 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 382337N  
State Colorado Longitude 1045310W

### Quad Code Quad Name

38104-D7	Stone City
38104-D8	Pierce Gulch
38104-C7	Swallows
38104-C8	Hobson

### County

Pueblo (CO)

### Watershed Code Watershed Name

11020002 Upper Arkansas

## SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	5,120.00 Feet	1,561.00 Meters
Maximum Elevation	5,520.00 Feet	1,682.00 Meters

### Site Description

The Turkey Creek site is located in northwestern Pueblo County and includes parts of the Fort Carson Military Reservation and the Turkey Creek Ranch. The site was drawn to include a large, reproducing and healthy complex of the black-tailed prairie dog and nesting Mountain Plovers and includes lower lying prairie grassland the suitable habitat for these species. The site varies in elevation from around 5,200 feet at its south end, rising gradually to 5,500 feet at the northern boundary on Fort Carson. The terrain is level with an 80% cover of grasses and is dominated by a blue gramma (*Bouteloua gracilis*) with some purple three-awn (*Aristida purpurea*). Cholla (*Cylindropuntia imbricata*) and opuntia (*Opuntia* spp.) occur at a very small percentage throughout the site. The site is situated between two distinctly different landscapes. To the east the site is bordered by the Turkey Creek drainage where the riparian community associated with the creek is not suitable for prairie dogs or Mountain Plovers, and to the west and north the PCA is restricted by juniper woodlands that are also unsuitable to prairie dogs and Mountain Plovers. Grazing by cattle on Turkey Creek Ranch portion of the site has reduced the cover density and biomass of blue gramma. This modification of the rangeland appears not to have affected the prairie dogs, which generally occur in association with grazing cattle (Licht and Sanchez 1993) and may be beneficial to Mountain Plovers, which tend to be associated with bare ground and disturbance (Knopf and Miller 1994). The Mountain Plovers occur on the grassland disturbed by the large prairie dog colony on Fort Carson and the colonies of the prairie dog complex are dispersed throughout the blue gramma grassland.

### Key Environmental Factors

No Data

### Climate Description

The area is very dry and experiences annual rainfall of approximately 10 to 20 inches.

### Land Use History

Ranching has been the traditional use of the land on the site.

### Cultural Features

No Data

## SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 01/22/2003  
Designer Sovell, J.R. and S.C. Spackman

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## Boundary Justification

The site boundary includes all of the nesting Mountain Plover locations and the entire extent of the black-tailed prairie dog complex including the suitable grasslands interspersed among the five separate colonies that form the complex. The boundary is intended to represent the area needed to protect the prairie dog and Mountain Plover populations and includes additional areas suitable for population expansion. Included within the boundary are the grasslands of the Turkey Creek Ranch where grazing by cattle mimics the historic disturbance processes of fire and bison herbivory by that benefits nesting Mountain Plover.

Primary Area 14,161.26 Acres 5,730.88 Hectares

## SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

## Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site was drawn for a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally imperiled (G2) Mountain Plover and includes a large and excellent complex (A-ranked) of the globally apparently secure (G4/S3) black-tailed prairie dog. The black-tailed prairie dog complex at this site is the largest known from Pueblo County, Colorado, as of 2003.

Other Values Rank No Data

## Other Values Comments

No Data

## LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

## Land Use Comments

The area of this site occurring on the Turkey Creek Ranch is intensely grazed, however, this land use is probably benign to the the prairie dogs occupying the site and could facilitate the expansion of nesting Mountain Plover onto the ranchland within the site.

## Natural Hazard Comments

No Data

## Exotics Comments

No Data

## Offsite

No Data

## Information Needs

Further survey work on the private ranchland for nesting Mountain Plovers would assist in determining the extent of the distribution of the nesting Mountain Plover population in the site.

## ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY

<u>Element</u>	<u>State Scientific Name</u>	<u>State Common Name</u>	<u>Global Rank</u>	<u>State Rank</u>	<u>Driving Site Rank</u>
18609	<i>Charadrius montanus</i>	Mountain Plover	G2	S2B	Yes
17796	<i>Cynomys ludovicianus</i>	Black-tailed Prairie Dog	G4	S3	No

## REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
172462	Knopf, F. L., and B. J. Miller. 1994. CHARADRIUS MONTANUS--montane, grassland, or bare-ground bird? Auk 111:504-6.
171845	Knowles, C. J. and P. R. Knowles. 1984. Additional Records of Mountain Plovers Using Prairie Dog Towns in Montana. Prairie Nat. 16(4): 1984. pp 183-186.
160631	Knowles, C. J., C. J. Stoner and S. P. Geib. 1982. Selective use of black-tailed prairie dog towns by mountain plovers. Condor 84:71-4.
170688	Licht, D. S., and K. D. Sanchez. 1993. Association of black-tailed prairie dog colonies with cattle point attractants in the northern Great Plains. Great Basin Nat. 53:385-389.
164530	Shackford, J.S. 1991. Breeding ecology of the Mountain Plover in Oklahoma. Bull. Okla. Ornithol. Soc. 24:9-13.
164933	Tyler, J.D. 1968. Distribution and vertebrate associates of the black-tailed prairie dog in Oklahoma. Ph.D. dissertation. University of Oklahoma, Norman.

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## ADDITIONAL TOPICS

### Additional Topics

No Data

## VERSION

Version Date 01/22/2003

Version Author Sovell, J.R. and S.C. Spackman

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