

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Upper Coyote Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP*25697

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2247 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 370701N
State Colorado Longitude 1064847W

Quad Code Quad Name

37106-A7 Chromo

County

Archuleta (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name

14080101 Upper San Juan

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	8,560.00 Feet	2,609.09 Meters
Maximum Elevation	9,800.00 Feet	2,987.04 Meters

Site Description

Coyote Creek site is located in the southeast portion of Archuleta County, in the San Juan National Forest, draining west-southwest from below V-Rock until it joins with Spence Creek and turns south, joining the Navajo River many miles downstream. Coyote Creek flows through a narrow, montane channel with a moderate gradient, little sinuosity, and many pools caused by downed wood, rocks and gradient changes. The rough land surface is caused in part by the surface geology in the area, which is dominated by landslide deposits (Tweto 1979) visible in the slumping hillsides. The creek passes through a culvert where it crosses FR 663. Grazing is heavy in the area, and impacts noted include cow trails, hoof shearing and bank erosion in areas where cattle water or cross the creek. Tall thinleaf alder (*Alnus incana*) dominates the stream channel, with a lush diversity of mesic forbs in the understory. Examples of the native composition within the herbaceous component include beaked sedge (*Carex utriculata*), tall mannagrass (*Glyceria elata*), smallwing sedge (*Carex microptera*), largeleaf avens (*Geum macrophyllum*), Fendler's cowbane (*Oxypolis fendleri*), common cowparsnip (*Heracleum maximum*), Fendler's waterleaf (*Hydrophyllum fendleri*) and several others. Weedy species include common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) within the riparian area and pasture grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*) on adjacent uplands. Surrounding uplands consist of spruce - fir (*Picea* spp. - *Abies* spp.) forests on north-facing slopes and quaking aspen / snowberry (*Populus tremuloides* / *Symphoricarpos rotundifolius*) forests on the south-facing slopes. In open meadows there are stands of Colorado false hellebore (*Veratrum tenuipetalum*).

Key Environmental Factors

Soils in the riparian area are alluvial with angular cobble and silty clay, silty loam, and sandy deposits. Soils are mapped as Hunchback clay loams, which occur on fans and toe slopes and are derived from fine textured alluvium and colluvium from mixed rock sources (USDA 1981).

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 10/05/2005

Designer March, M.A.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn to encompass the element occurrence and areas that are identified as a buffer that

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reflect the ecological processes supporting the wetland, including the immediate watershed, surface runoff, and groundwater discharge. The boundary also identifies an area that can provide a buffer from nearby trails, roads and open range where surface runoff may contribute excess nutrients, sediment and weed invasion. It should be noted that the hydrologic processes necessary to the element are not fully contained by the site boundaries.

Primary Area 183.03 Acres 74.07 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B4: Moderate Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The site supports the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) thinleaf alder (*Alnus incana*) / mesic forbs riparian shrubland plant association in fair (C-ranked) condition. This plant association is characterized by a tall riparian shrub component with fewer shorter shrubs and a lush diversity of mesic forbs and wetland graminoids (Carsey et al. 2003). Upper Coyote Creek site displays a classic example of the association. Alder is typically considered an early-seral species where it is one of the first to establish on fluvial or glacial deposits (Carsey et al. 2003).

Other Values Rank No Data

Other Values Comments

No Data

LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Land Use Comments

Grazing is currently the dominant land use in the site. Recreation occurs in the general vicinity and includes hiking, camping, OHV use, hunting, and horse use. Other impacts include erosion and sediment loading from the road crossing and the culvert.

Natural Hazard Comments

California nettle (*Urtica dioica* ssp. *gracilis*), a stinging nettle, is common along the stream. Uplands surrounding the site have patches of bare soil with anthills and hornet nests.

Exotics Comments

Currently the community is vigorous with a few weeds noted in the herbaceous understory, including Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*) and common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*). Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) was noted on adjacent hill slopes in past surveys (Randolph et al. 1994).

Offsite

A private 160-acre parcel, entirely surrounded by USFS lands, is located just north of the west edge of the site. A dirt road leading to the private parcel crosses Coyote Creek and the site at its lower end, and several buildings are clustered in the corner of the parcel closest to the boundary (USDA 2002).

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>
24645	<i>Alnus incana</i> / Mesic Forbs Shrubland	Thinleaf Alder/Mesic Forb Riparian Shrubland	G3	S3	Yes

REFERENCES

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<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
160903	Carsey, K., D. Cooper, K. Decker, D. Culver, and G. Kittel. 2003. Statewide wetlands classification and characterization: Wetland plant associations of Colorado. Prepared for Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Denver, CO by Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
193633	Freeman, K.M., March, M.A. and D.R. Culver. 2006. Final Report: Survey of Critical Wetlands and Riparian Areas in Archuleta County. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
193582	Leonard, S., G. Kinch, V. Elsbernd, M. Borman, S. Swanson. 1997. Riparian Area Management: Grazing Management for Riparian-Wetland Areas. Technical Reference 1737-14. U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, National Applied Resource Sciences Center, Denver, CO.
170844	Randolph, D., Smith, Kettler, Redders, Roy, and Aitken. 1994. San Juan National Forest Riparian Site Survey.
192747	Tweto, O. 1979. Geologic Map of Colorado, 1:500,000. United States Geological Survey, Department of Interior, and Geologic Survey of Colorado, Denver, CO.
193554	USDA, NRCS. 2002. Orthophoto Mosaic for Archuleta County, CO. USDA-NRCS, National Cartography and Geospatial Center, Geospatial Data Branch, Fort Worth, TX.
193423	USDA, SCS. 1981. Soil Survey of Piedra Area, Colorado; Parts of Archuleta, Hinsdale, La Plata, Mineral, and Rio Grande Counties. In cooperation with the United States Forest Service and the Colorado Agricultural Experiment Station.
193558	USDI, Bureau of Reclamation. No date. Dams, Projects and Powerplants: San Juan-Chama Project, Colorado and New Mexico. << http://www.usbr.gov/dataweb/html/sjuanchama.html#general >>. Accessed 18 Nov 2005.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 10/05/2005
Version Author March, M.A.

Disclaimer

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