

# Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Upper Fish Creek below Dunn Peak

Site Code S.USCOHP\*25388

## IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2215 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 374851N  
State Colorado Longitude 1080922W

Quad Code Quad Name  
37108-G2 Groundhog Mountain

County  
Dolores (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name  
14030002 Upper Dolores

## SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	9,600.00	Feet	2,926.08	Meters
Maximum Elevation	10,600.00	Feet	3,230.88	Meters

### Site Description

With Dolores Peak as its headwaters, Fish Creek descends through a forest of Engelmann spruce and aspen (*Picea engelmannii* and *Populus tremuloides*) to a riparian area dominated by a Drummond's willow and Rocky Mountain willow (*Salix drummondiana* and *Salix monticola*). The site is in a popular recreation area, and is grazed. A large population of a state rare plant, King's clover (*Trifolium kingii*) was found in wet areas beside Forest Road 611. Associated plants at the site of the King's clover occurrence include tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), elephant head (*Pedicularis groenlandica*), northern bog orchid (*Habenaria hyperborea*), water sedge (*Carex aquatilis*), cowbane (*Oxypolis fendleri*), bittercress (*Cardamine cordifolia*), arrowleaf groundsel (*Senecio triangularis*), and chiming bells (*Mertensia ciliata*). The Rocky Mountain willow occurrences located the lower portion of the site are wetlands enhanced by extensive beaver activity. Habitat structure is dynamic where beaver ponds, breached ponds, willow carrs and conifers are in mosaic. Rocky Mountain willow (*Salix monticola*) dominates the wetlands in a dense canopy associating with stands of mesic graminoids in the herbaceous understory. Sedges dominating the emergent herbaceous understory include beaked sedge (*Carex utriculata*), wooly sedge (*Carex pellita*), and water sedge (*Carex aquatilis*). In between beaver enhanced wetlands, clusters of Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) are situated within the riparian zone with a sparse herbaceous understory of mesic forbs. The hillsides adjacent to the wetlands seep in some locations. These seeps are dominated by beaked sedge (*Carex utriculata*), small winged sedge (*Carex microptera*) and western sedge (*Carex occidentalis*).

### 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 12/08/2004

Designer Lyon, M.J.

### Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to incorporate the King's clover occurrence, along with some additional area that is suitable for the plants, into which the population may expand. The boundary also encompasses areas buffering ecological and hydrologic processes e.g., flooding, necessary for the viability of the elements. The boundary provides a buffer from adjacent trail, campsites and closed roads, where surface runoff may

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contribute excess nutrients, sediment and weed invasion. Natural fluvial processes such as seasonal flooding and sediment deposition, as well as beaver activity, will help maintain viable populations of the elements along Fish Creek (Sanderson and Kettler 1996). It should be noted that all hydrologic processes necessary for wetland viability are not contained within the site boundaries.

Primary Area 630.07 Acres 254.98 Hectares

## SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

### Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site supports a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) *Salix monticola*/*Carex utriculata* natural community, a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) *Salix monticola*/mesic graminoid natural community and a fair (C-ranked) occurrence of the globally apparently secure (G4/S3) *Salix monticola*/mesic forb natural community. It also supports an excellent (A-ranked) occurrence of King's clover (*Trifolium kingii*), a state imperiled plant (S1). The plants were found in excellent condition growing along Fish Creek in shady wet areas. The population may extend beyond the surveyed site with subpopulations growing in similar habitat surrounding the creek.

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</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>
24809	<i>Salix monticola</i> / Mesic Forbs Shrubland	Montane Riparian Willow Carr	G4	S3	No
23550	<i>Trifolium kingii</i>	King's clover	G5	S1	No
24585	<i>Salix monticola</i> / Mesic Graminoids Shrubland	Montane Riparian Willow Carr	G3	S3	Yes
24882	<i>Salix monticola</i> / <i>Carex utriculata</i> Shrubland	Montane Riparian Willow Carr	G3	S3	Yes

## REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
192772	Lyon, M.J. 2005. Final Report: Survey of Rare Plants. San Juan Public Lands in Dolores and Montezuma counties, Colorado. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
192742	March, M.A. 2005. Final Report: Natural Heritage Wetland Inventory of Dolores County. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
158563	Sanderson, J. and S. Kettler. 1996. A preliminary wetland vegetation classification for a portion of Colorado's West Slope. Unpublished final report submitted to the Colorado Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins.

## ADDITIONAL TOPICS

### Additional Topics

No Data

## VERSION

Version Date 12/08/2004

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Version Author Lyon, M.J.

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