

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Upper Plateau Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP*9391

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 1589 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 373950N
State Colorado Longitude 1082816W

Quad Code Quad Name
37108-F4 Willow Spring

County
Dolores (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name
14030002 Upper Dolores

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	7,300.00 Feet	2,225.00 Meters
Maximum Elevation	7,700.00 Feet	2,347.00 Meters

Site Description

The Upper Plateau Creek site is located along the middle reach of Plateau Creek surrounding the northern part of Plateau Canyon. Plateau Creek flows across a high mountain plateau that is geologically comprised of Mancos Shale, Dakota Sandstone and Burrow Canyon Formation (sandstone shale and conglomerate) (Tweto 1979). This area has been heavily used for cattle grazing. As the stream enters the site boundary, it drops into a narrow sandstone canyon comprised of Jurassic period aged Morrison Formation (soft brightly colored shale), Wanakah and Endrada Sandstones (Tweto 1979). The stream channel is moderately sinuous to straight. There are many springs discharging along the canyon walls supporting pockets of mesic vegetation and moss. Water in the stream was turbid at the time of the survey (June, 2004), evidenced by the deposition of sediments onto the floodplain. Shrublands dominate the riparian area in a mosaic of dense thickets and open canopies. Bebb's willow (*Salix bebbiana*) and thinleaf alder (*Alnus incana*) dominate the shrub layer with associated species including shining willow (*Salix lasiandra*), strap leaf willow (*Salix ligulifolia*), twinberry honeysuckle (*Lonicera involucrata*), and chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*). Early successional cottonwood (saplings) stands are scattered throughout the site. Narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*) saplings and coyote willow (*Salix exigua*) dominate point bars. Colorado blue spruce (*Picea pungens*) occurs on higher benches adjacent to the stream channel on both sides of the canyon. Fringes of graminoids such as beaked sedge (*Carex utriculata*), wooly sedge (*Carex lanuginosa*), common spikerush (*Eleocharis palustris*), Baltic rush (*Juncus balticus*) and other sedge species (*Carex* sp.) occupy the shoreline and seeps. Associated forbs in the herbaceous understory include goldenglow (*Rudbeckia ampla*), false Solomon's seal (*Maianthemum stellatum*), geranium (*Geranium* sp.), common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) and others. Hay grasses occur in the herbaceous understory throughout the site, including Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*) and smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*). Uplands surrounding the site are dominated by ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) and pinyon pine-juniper (*Pinus edulis-Juniperus scopulorum*) forests and open rangelands. There is an irrigation diversion directly upstream of the site. Soils within the riparian area have a shallow mineral horizon and finer sediments over alluvium. Bedrock is also exposed from scouring.

Key Environmental Factors

No Data

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

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SITE DESIGN

Site Map P - Partial

Mapped Date 06/09/1997

Designer Kettler, S.M.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries incorporate an area, that encompasses the element occurrence, and the immediate upstream watershed that buffer hydrologic processes necessary for the viability of the element. The boundary provides a small buffer from direct disturbance by cattle grazing that may cause excessive nutrients and sedimentation. It should be noted that all hydrologic processes necessary for wetland viability are not contained within the site boundaries.

Primary Area 159.61 Acres 64.59 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The site supports a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable (G3?), imperiled in Colorado (S2), riparian willow carr, Bebb's willow (*Salix bebbiana*) shrubland.

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

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>
20994	<i>Salix bebbiana</i> Shrubland	Montane Willow Carrs	G3?	S2	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
192742	March, M.A. 2005. Final Report: Natural Heritage Wetland Inventory of Dolores County. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
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.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

March, M.A. updated the transcripion for the site on 2004-11-17, but did not change the mapped site boundaires.

VERSION

Version Date 11/17/2004

Version Author March, M.A.

Disclaimer

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