

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Vega Reservoir

Site Code S.USCOHP*22895

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 503 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 391217N
State Colorado Longitude 1074742W

Quad Code Quad Name
39107-B7 Vega Reservoir

County
Mesa (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name
14010005 Colorado headwaters-Plateau

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	8,000.00	Feet	2,438.00	Meters
Maximum Elevation	9,600.00	Feet	2,926.00	Meters

Site Description

This site consists of a north-facing hillside where groundwater seepage supports an extensive, unique, deciduous forest dominated by aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), Rocky Mountain maple (*Acer glabrum*), chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), and Utah serviceberry (*Amelanchier utahensis*). Understory species are typical of riparian and moist forests and include baneberry (*Actaea rubra* ssp. *arguta*), black twinberry (*Lonicera involucrata*), monkshood (*Aconitum columbianum*), roughfruit fairybells (*Prosartes trachycarpa*), black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia occidentalis*), geranium (*Geranium richardsonii*), false-Solomon's seal (*Maianthemum stellatum*), sweet cicely (*Osmorhiza depauperata*), cow parsnip (*Heracleum sphondylium* ssp. *montanum*), groundsel (*Senecio serra*), yarrow (*Achillea lanulosa*), fringed brome (*Bromus ciliatus*), blue wildrye (*Elymus glaucus*), and Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*). There is a low abundance of non-native species in the stand. This forest is very unique in that no conifers are growing throughout the stand and thus does not appear to be in a successional stage. Soils have a deep A-horizon and are very dark (7.5 YR 2.5/1) down to a depth of at least 19 inches. Thus, abundant litter and periodic soil saturation have allowed for organic matter accumulation. The underlying bedrock is thought to be the Green River Shale formation, which may explain the source of the groundwater discharge, as the Green River shale is known to harbor an aquifer in the Parachute Creek Member of this formation (mainly dolomitic marlstone) and is the principal aquifer associated with seeps and springs in western Garfield County (Martinson 1980). Vega Reservoir sits below the hillside and sporadic homes occur on the eastern edge of the hill. The following soil description was taken from the interior of the aspen / Rocky Mountain maple stand: A1 0-5 inches, 7.5 YR 2.5/1, coarse/medium crumb structure, diffuse boundary A2 5-19 inches, 7.5 YR 2.5/1, very coarse/coarse crumb structure. The soil pit was not dug below 19 inches, thus the entire soil profile is not represented. The soil was moist but not saturated.

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 12/03/2001
Designer Rocchio, F.J.

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Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the portion of the hillside believed to be associated with groundwater recharge in the area. However, a better understanding of hydrological processes is needed to ensure that recharge areas are protected and groundwater discharge, which is supporting this unique forest, is maintained.

Primary Area 1,743.21 Acres 705.45 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site supports an excellent (A-ranked) occurrence of the globally imperiled (G2/S2) aspen / Rocky Mountain maple montane riparian forest (*Populus tremuloides* / *Acer glabrum*). This forest association occurs along narrow streams and gulches and in broader valleys where shading, aspect, or hillslope springs create moist soil conditions away from the stream channel. This forest is not restricted to riparian habitats, and will occur on steep, moist hillsides. This association is only known from Colorado and occurs in scattered locations on the West Slope.

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>
24861	<i>Populus tremuloides</i> / <i>Acer glabrum</i> Forest	Montane Riparian Forests	G2	S2	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
169188	Rocchio, Joe. 2001. Colorado Natural Heritage Program Survey of Critical Wetlands of Mesa County.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 12/03/2001
Version Author Rocchio, F.J.

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