

# Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Weisman Lakes

Site Code S.USCOHP\*10836

## IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 430 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>
2043	S.USCOHP*16597	San Luis Valley Playa Lake

## LOCATORS

Nation United States Latitude 375115N  
State Colorado Longitude 1054952W

<u>Quad Code</u>	<u>Quad Name</u>
37105-H7	Sheds Camp
37105-G7	Deadman Camp

### County

Saguache (CO)

<u>Watershed Code</u>	<u>Watershed Name</u>
13010003	San Luis

## SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	7,500.00 Feet	2,286.00 Meters
Maximum Elevation	7,515.00 Feet	2,291.00 Meters

### Site Description

The Weisman Lakes site occurs in the middle of the playa lake system of the central Closed Basin. The playa lakes system in the Closed Basin includes ephemeral wetlands that generally support salt meadow grass (*Distichlis spicata*), western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), and spikerush (*Eleocharis palustris*) in the lake basins, and are often surrounded by greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*) uplands. The Weisman Lakes area occurs at the confluence of most of the prominent drainages of the closed basin including San Luis, Saguache, Deadman, Cottonwood, and Russell Creeks. This location allows wetlands to hold open water longer than in other areas of the playa lake system. These permanent wetlands support, spikerush (*Eleocharis palustris*), the native Rio Grande chub (*Gila pandora*), the introduced fathead minnow (*Pimephales promelas*), the eared grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*), and many amphibians, including striped chorus frog (*Pseudacris triseriata*), plains spadefoot (*Spea bombifrons*), and Great Plains toad (*Bufo cognatus*). This diverse vertebrate biomass base no doubt provides forage for many of the state rare waterbirds that nest in the Closed Basin. Basin wetlands at the southern end of the site become increasingly ephemeral and support salt meadow grass and western wheatgrass communities which are common throughout the playa lake system. These ephemeral basins abut the greater sand dunes ecosystem to the southeast, which may help to support the richness of endemic small mammals that occur on this site. The site is approximately 7,800 acres in size and ranges in elevation from 7,500 to 7,515 feet (2,285-2,290 meters).

### Key Environmental Factors

No Data

### Climate Description

No Data

### Land Use History

No Data

### Cultural Features

No Data

## SITE DESIGN

Site Map P - Partial Mapped Date 02/16/1998  
Designer Wunder, M.B.

### Boundary Justification

The boundaries for this site were drawn using satellite imagery at a scale of approximately 1:100,000. They include the wetland complex that supports the elements of biodiversity found at the site. The design is intended to encompass enough of the wetland areas in the north to provide refugia for the chub in times of

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drought or other stresses on the quality of the hydrology of the area. The southern boundary was drawn to include the areas where elements occur. However, it is important to stress that any project that affects surface or groundwater hydrology in the Closed Basin has the potential to affect the hydrology maintaining this site.

Primary Area 9,364.91 Acres 3,789.86 Hectares

## SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

### Biodiversity Significance Comments

In times of drought, the perennial wetlands in the northern portion of the site provide refuge for the globally rare Rio Grande chub (*Gila pandora*). Additionally, they provide nesting habitat for the state rare eared grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*). The southern portion of the site is more arid and supports an excellent example of the globally rare saline bottomland shrubland (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus/Distichlis spicata*). This community in turn supports good populations of two globally rare and San Luis Valley endemic subspecies of small mammal, the silky pocket mouse (*Perognathus flavus sanluisi*), and the thirteen-lined ground squirrel (*Spermophilus tridecemlineatus blanca*).

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

Element State ID	State Scientific Name	State Common Name	Global Rank	State Rank	Driving Site Rank
17332	<i>Perognathus flavus sanluisi</i>	Silky Pocket Mouse Subsp	G5T3	S3	No
18783	<i>Eleocharis palustris</i> Herbaceous Vegetation	Emergent Wetland	G5	S4	No
19797	<i>Spermophilus tridecemlineatus blanca</i>	Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel Subsp	G5T3	S3	No
17332	<i>Perognathus flavus sanluisi</i>	Silky Pocket Mouse Subsp	G5T3	S3	No
19189	<i>Gila pandora</i>	Rio Grande Chub	G3	S1?	Yes

## REFERENCES

Reference ID	Full Citation
-	No Data

## ADDITIONAL TOPICS

### Additional Topics

No Data

## VERSION

Version Date 02/16/1998  
Version Author Wunder, M.B.

## Disclaimer

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