# Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

**Name** West Dolores Campground **Site Code** S.USCOHP*1538

## IDENTIFIERS

**Site ID** 1663 **Site Class** PCA

**Site Alias** None

**Network of Conservation Areas (NCA)**

| NCA Site ID | NCA Site Code | NCA Site Name |
|---|---|---|
| - | | No Data |

## LOCATORS

**Nation** United States **Latitude** 374021N

**State** Colorado **Longitude** 1081550W

| Quad Code | Quad Name |
|---|---|
| 37108-F3 | Nipple Mountain |

**County**

Dolores (CO)

| Watershed Code | Watershed Name |
|---|---|
| 14030002 | Upper Dolores |

## SITE DESCRIPTION

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Minimum Elevation** | 7,725.00 | **Feet** | 2,355.00 | **Meters** |
| **Maximum Elevation** | 8,800.00 | **Feet** | 2,682.00 | **Meters** |

**Site Description**

West Dolores Campground site surrounds the West Dolores River from its confluence with Goble Creek downstream to its confluence with Cottonwood Creek. This montane reach of the West Dolores River is within a wide red canyon, comprised of the Dolores Formation (red siltstone, sandstone, shale and limestone-pellet conglomerate) (Tweto 1979). The site contains contiguous vegetation dominated by mixed deciduous-coniferous riparian forests in a riparian shrubland mosaic. The dynamic fluvial processes in the stream channel facilitate lush, vigorous woody vegetation representing all age classes. Colorado blue spruce (Picea pungens) dominates the tree layer, often associated with narrowleaf cottonwood (Populus angustifolia). Thinleaf alder (Alnus incana) dominates the shrub layer, associated with twinberry honeysuckle (Lonicera involucrata), serviceberry (Amelanchier alnifolia), chokecherry (Prunus virginiana) and others. A diverse assemblage of willows associate with narrowleaf cottonwoods or occur in dense carrs. Mountain willow (Salix monticola) dominates the shrub layer with coyote willow (Salix exigua), shining willow (Salix lasiandra), and strap leaf willow (Salix ligulifolia). The herbaceous understory is dominated by mesic forbs in sparse to moderate canopy cover. Herbaceous species include goldenglow (Rudbeckia ampla), cow parsnip (Heracleum sphondylium subsp. montanum), false Solomon's seal (Maianthemum stellatum), smooth horsetail (Hippochaete laevigata), and field horsetail (Equisetum arvense). Upland or weedy species encroach from disturbed areas and include common dandelion (Taraxacum officinale), black medic (Medicago lupulina), red clover (Trifolium pratense) and orchard grass (Dactylis glomerata). Scattered individuals of oxeye daisy (Leucanthemum vulgare) were noted within the sites well as occurring in dense patches upstream of the site. Property ownership is a patchwork of private parcels and National Forest land. Land uses include recreation, hay fields, horse pasture and cattle grazing. Two campgrounds are included within the site. Soils are derived from alluvium and vary with geomorphic position throughout. Soils sampled have a shallow mineral horizon of sandy loam or loam over alluvium.

**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** 11/17/2004

**Designer** March, M.A.

# Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

**Name** West Dolores Campground **Site Code** S.USCOHP*1538

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries incorporate an area, that encompasses the element occurrences and the immediate upstream watershed, that buffers hydrologic processes necessary for the viability of the element occurrences. Natural fluvial disturbances such as seasonal flooding are important to the maintenance of a dynamic, multi-aged cottonwood riparian system (TNC 1996; Hansen et al. 1995). The boundaries also provide a small buffer from nearby social trails, the highway, and hay fields 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** 1,289.45 **Acres** 521.83 **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/S3) riparian forest, Colorado blue spruce/thinleaf alder (Picea pungens/Alnus incana), a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the apparently globally secure (G4/S4) riparian forest, narrowleaf cottonwood-Colorado blue spruce/ thinleaf alder (Populus angustifolia-Picea pungens/Alnus incana), and a fair (C-ranked) example of the globally vulnerable (G3/S3) riparian woodland, narrowleaf cottonwood (Populus angustifolia)/mixed willow (Salix spp.).

**Other Values Rank** No Data

**Other Values Comments**

No Data

## LAND MANAGMENT ISSUES

**Land Use Comments**

No Data

**Natural Hazard Comments**

No Data

**Exotics Comments**

No Data

**Offsite**

Hydrologic processes originating outside of the planning boundary, including water quality, quantity, timing and flow must be managed to maintain site viability.

**Information Needs**

No Data

## ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY

| Element State ID | State Scientific Name | State Common Name | Global Rank | State Rank | Driving Site Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 24823 | *Populus angustifolia - Picea pungens / Alnus incana* Woodland | Montane Riparian Forests | G3 | S3 | No |
| 24518 | *Picea pungens / Alnus incana* Woodland | Montane Riparian Forests | G3 | S3 | Yes |
| 24808 | *Populus angustifolia / Salix (monticola, drummondiana, lucida)* Woodland | Narrowleaf Cottonwood/Mixed Willows Montane Riparian Forest | G3 | S3 | No |

## REFERENCES

# Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

**Name** West Dolores Campground **Site Code** S.USCOHP*1538


| Reference ID | Full Citation |
|---|---|
| 191166 | Hansen, P. L., R. D. Pfister, K. Boggs, B. J. Cook, J. Joy, and D. K. Hinckley. 1995. Classification and management of Montana's riparian and wetland sites. Montana Forest and Conservation Experiment Station, School of Forestry, University of Montana, Miscellaneous Publication No. 54. 646 pp. + posters. |
| 169844 | Kittel, G., N. Lederer, M. Condron, and S. Hamer. 1991. Riparian field survey of San Miguel and Dolores River Basins. |
| 192742 | March, M.A. 2005. Final Report: Natural Heritage Wetland Inventory of Dolores County. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO. |
| 171753 | The Nature Conservancy of Colorado. 1996. Yampa River Site Conservation Plan. The Nature Conservancy, Boulder, 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**

Site originally designed by Kettler, S.M., 1997-06-10.

## VERSION

**Version Date** 11/17/2004

**Version Author** March, M.A.

## Disclaimer