

# Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name West Dolores River at Dunton

Site Code S.USCOHP\*1541

## IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 759 Site Class PCA  
Site Alias West Dolores River at Cold Creek

### 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 374635N  
State Colorado Longitude 1080510W

Quad Code Quad Name  
37108-G1 Dolores Peak

County  
Dolores (CO)

Watershed Code Watershed Name  
14030002 Upper Dolores

## SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	-	Feet	-	Meters
Maximum Elevation	-	Feet	-	Meters

### Site Description

The site surrounds the West Dolores River both upstream and downstream of the Town of Dunton. The site is in a moderately wide river valley with steep canyon side drainages. The riparian zone is occupied by a large willow shrubland dominated by Geyer's willow (*Salix geyeriana*) and mountain willow (*Salix monticola*), with other shrubs including shining willow (*Salix lasiandra*), coyote willow (*Salix exigua*), river hawthorn (*Crataegus rivularis*), and wolf willow (*Salix wolfii*). Plants in the herbaceous understory include small wing sedge (*Carex microptera*), wooly sedge (*Carex lanuginosa*), Merten's rush (*Juncus mertensianus*), Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), timothy (*Phleum pratense*), Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), and others. The floodplain is characterized with uneven micro-topography as well as beaver activity. The alluvial soils are sandy and silty clay loam. Several waterfalls located on the adjacent steep canyon slopes provide breeding habitat for the Black Swift (*Cypseloides niger*). Black Swifts are aerial feeders that forage in forested and open areas for insects. This site provides the Black Swift with the required unobstructed flight paths between their nesting colony and foraging habits (Knorr and Knorr 1990). The occurrence of Black Swift was last recorded in 2001. Uplands surrounding the site are spruce-fir (*Picea engelmannii*-*Abies lasiocarpa*) forests and open Thurber's fescue (*Festuca thurberi*) grasslands. Forest Road 535 is adjacent to the wetlands

### Key Environmental Factors

No Data

### Climate Description

No Data

### Land Use History

The Town of Dunton is primarily a privately owned resort with natural hot springs; ownership, and therefore management, has changed frequently in the past, but now appears stable (several years with same ownership). The town is gated and open for private guests and not open for public day use.

### Cultural Features

No Data

## SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 11/10/2004

Designer March, M.A.

### Boundary Justification

The boundaries incorporate an area that encompasses the element occurrences and immediate upstream watershed that buffer hydrologic processes necessary for the viability of the element occurrences. Natural fluvial processes such as seasonal flooding, sediment deposition and beaver activity will help maintain succession and viable populations of the elements along Dolores River (Sanderson and Kettler 1996.). The

Copyright © 2011. Colorado State University. Colorado Natural Heritage Program. All Rights Reserved.

# Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name West Dolores River at Dunton

Site Code S.USCOHP\*1541

boundary also provides a buffer from adjacent road and social trails that may contribute excess sediment, nutrients and weed invasion to the riparian system. The boundary is drawn to include foraging habits and unobstructed flight paths for the Black Swift colony. It should be noted that the area needed to ensure the viability of the elements are not fully contained by the site boundaries.

Primary Area 551.97 Acres 223.37 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) montane willow carr, *Salix geeyeriana*-*Salix monticola*/mesic forb; and a fair (C-ranked) breeding colony of the apparently globally secure (G4) vulnerable in the state (S3B) black swift (*Cypseloides niger*).

**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

Hydrological 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

<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>
24573	<i>Salix geeyeriana</i> - <i>Salix monticola</i> / Mesic Forbs Shrubland	Geyer's Willow-Rocky Mountain Willow/Mesic Forb	G3	S3	Yes
23518	<i>Cypseloides niger</i>	Black Swift	G4	S3B	No

## REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
159079	Knorr, O. A., and M. S. Knorr. 1990. The black swift in the Chiricahua Mountains of Arizona. Southwest Nat. 35:559-560.
192742	March, M.A. 2005. Final Report: Natural Heritage Wetland Inventory of Dolores County. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
192674	Neely, B. 1992. San Juan National Forest Biodiversity Assessment.
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

Site originally designed by Kettler, S.M. 1997.

## VERSION

**Version Date** 11/10/2004

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

## Disclaimer

# Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name West Dolores River at Dunton

Site Code S.USCOHP\*1541

These data are a product and property of Colorado State University, Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP). These data are strictly "on loan" and should be considered "works in progress". Data maintained in the Colorado Natural Heritage Program database are an integral part of ongoing research at CSU and reflect the observations of many scientists, institutions and our current state of knowledge. These data are acquired from various sources, with varying levels of accuracy, and are continually being updated and revised. Many areas have never been surveyed and the absence of data in any particular geographic area does not necessarily mean that species or ecological communities of concern are not present. These data should not be regarded as a substitute for on-site surveys required for environmental assessments. Absence of evidence is NOT evidence of absence. Absence of any data does not mean that other resources of special concern do not occur, but rather CNHP files do not currently contain information to document this presence. CNHP is not responsible for whether other, non-CNHP data providers have secured landowner permission for data collected.

**These data are provided for non-commercial purposes only.** Under no circumstances are data to be distributed in any fashion to outside parties. To ensure accurate application of data, tabular and narrative components must be evaluated in conjunction with spatial components. Failure to do so constitutes a misuse of the data. The Colorado Natural Heritage Program shall have no liability or responsibility to the data users, or any other person or entity with respect to liability, loss, or damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly by the data, including but not limited to any interruption of service, loss of business, anticipatory profits or indirect, special, or consequential damages resulting from the use of operation of the data. Data users hereby agree to hold CNHP, Colorado State University, and the State of Colorado harmless from any claim, demand, cause of action, loss, damage or expense from or related to data users use of or reliance on the data, regardless of the cause or nature thereof, and even in the event that such cause is attributable to the negligence or misconduct of CNHP.

These data are provided on an as-is basis, as-available basis without warranties of any kind, expressed or implied, INCLUDING (BUT NOT LIMITED TO) WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, AND NON-INFRINGEMENT. Although CNHP maintains high standards of data quality control, CNHP, Colorado State University, and the State of Colorado further expressly disclaim any warranty that the data are error-free or current as of the date supplied