

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name White River at Rio Blanco Lake

Site Code S.USCOHP*26900

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2441 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 400249N
State Colorado Longitude 1080856W

<u>Quad Code</u>	<u>Quad Name</u>
40108-A2	White River City
40108-A1	Buckskin Point

County

Rio Blanco (CO)

<u>Watershed Code</u>	<u>Watershed Name</u>
14050005	Upper White

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	5,760.00 Feet	1,755.65 Meters
Maximum Elevation	5,900.00 Feet	1,798.32 Meters

Site Description

The White River at Rio Blanco Lake site contains portions of the White River and its floodplain between Rio Blanco Lake (State Wildlife Area) and Powell Park. The White River dissects this part of the county, cutting across the sandstone and siltstone of the Uinta Formation. Several gulches flow into the White River within the site: Rattlesnake Gulch, Tom Stith Gulch, Beavers Gulch, Smith Gulch and Kissinger Gulch. The riparian shrubland is dominated by a multi-layered, deciduous riparian forest. Boxelder - narrowleaf cottonwood / red-osier dogwood (*Acer negundo* - *Populus angustifolia* / *Cornus sericea*) with willow hawthorn (*Crataegus saligna*) also dominate in the shrub layer. Point bars are well established throughout, dominated by sandbar willow (*Salix exigua*). Abandoned oxbows and sloughs are found adjacent or within the occurrence and are typically dominated by beaked sedge (*Carex utriculata*), cattails (*Typha angustifolia*) or bulrush (*Scirpus acutus*). Along the sandstone cliff on the southern edge of the White River, red-osier dogwood forms a very dense, narrow band between the cliff and the river.

Key Environmental Factors

Gravels and alluviums from the Quaternary Age dominate the riparian area. Uplands consist of sandstone, siltstone, and marlstones of the Green River and Uinta Formations. Soils range from Redrob loam, Patent loam, and Shawa loams.

Climate Description

In the County, summers are warm or hot in most valleys but are much cooler in the mountains. Winters are cold in the mountains. Summer thunderstorms are prevalent; of the total precipitation, 55% usually falls between April and September. Average seasonal snowfall is 74.4 inches, average day time temperature is 45 degrees and average precipitation is 16.5 inches for Meeker between 1948 -2007 (Western Regional Climate Center 2008).

Land Use History

In 1868, Major John Wesley Powell, his wife, and about twenty others came to the valley and established winter quarters in Powell Park.

Cultural Features

No Data

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 01/14/2008
Designer Culver, D.R.

Boundary Justification

Boundary is delineated to encompass the known occurrences of the riparian plant communities and potential

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habitat along the floodplain, as well as the lower portions of the White River's tributaries. The boundary encompasses both public and private property, however, only private lands with written permission and public lands were surveyed.

Primary Area 2,231.42 Acres

903.03 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The site supports a good (B-ranked) example of a globally imperiled (G2/S2) *Acer negundo* - *Populus angustifolia* / *Cornus sericea* riparian forest. This plant association is a narrow regional endemic which is undergoing continued fragmentation and degradation throughout its range due to agricultural impacts and fluvial instability. It is presently recorded only from northwestern Colorado in broad alluvial valleys and has significantly declined from historical distributions. Additionally, a good to poor (BD-ranked) occurrence of a common (G4Q/S3) riparian shrubland, *Cornus sericea*, is documented. Several other common communities were documented in 1992 in good (B-ranked) to fair (C-ranked) condition.

Other Values Rank V1 - Outstanding values

Other Values Comments

Excellent wildlife and bird habitat exist.

LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Land Use Comments

No Data

Natural Hazard Comments

No Data

Exotics Comments

Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) is found throughout. Tamarisk (*Tamarix ramosissima*) is currently only in a few areas. The site does contain agriculture fields with hay grasses. Noxious weeds such as hounds tongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*), Canada thistle (*Breca arvensis*) and mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) are found throughout the understory

Offsite

No Data

Information Needs

No Data

ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY

<u>Element State ID</u>	<u>State Scientific Name</u>	<u>State Common Name</u>	<u>Global Rank</u>	<u>State Rank</u>	<u>Driving Site Rank</u>
24686	<i>Betula occidentalis</i> / <i>Maianthemum stellatum</i> Shrubland	Foothills Riparian Shrubland	G4?	S2	No
24619	<i>Populus angustifolia</i> / <i>Rhus trilobata</i> Woodland	Narrowleaf Cottonwood/Skunkbrush	G3	S3	No
24659	<i>Salix exigua</i> / Barren Shrubland	Coyote Willow/Bare Ground	G5	S5	No
24687	<i>Typha (latifolia, angustifolia)</i> Western Herbaceous Vegetation	Narrow-leaf Cattail Marsh	G5	S4	No
24912	<i>Alnus incana</i> - <i>Salix (monticola, lucida, ligulifolia)</i> Shrubland	Thinleaf Alder-Mixed Willow Species	G3	S3	No
22992	<i>Cornus sericea</i> Shrubland	Foothills Riparian Shrubland	G4Q	S3	No
24479	<i>Acer negundo</i> - <i>Populus angustifolia</i> / <i>Cornus sericea</i> Forest	Narrowleaf Cottonwood Riparian Forests	G2	S2	Yes

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
195026	Culver, D., J. Huggins and P. Lyon. 2008. Final Report: Significant Biological Resources in Rio Blanco County, CO. Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Fort Collins, CO.
195034	WRCC. 2008. Western Regional Climate Center. Division of Atmospheric Sciences, Desert Research Institute. Reno, Nevada. < http://www.wrcc.dri.edu >.

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ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 01/14/2008

Version Author Culver, D.R.

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