

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Yellow Creek

Site Code S.USCOHP*26915

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 2443 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 400630N
State Colorado Longitude 1082129W

<u>Quad Code</u>	<u>Quad Name</u>
40108-A3	Barcus Creek SE
40108-B4	Rough Gulch
40108-A4	Barcus Creek

County

Rio Blanco (CO)

<u>Watershed Code</u>	<u>Watershed Name</u>
14050006	Piceance-Yellow

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	5,700.00	Feet	1,737.36	Meters
Maximum Elevation	5,960.00	Feet	1,816.61	Meters

Site Description

Yellow Creek is a perennial stream, located in the Piceance Creek Basin (Basin). Yellow Creek and Piceance Creek are the two major drainages in the Basin. This portion typifies the Basin features with depositional valleys at the base of uplifted hills that dip towards the creeks. Yellow Creek is fed by numerous springs and alluvial fan and gulches throughout its length within the site. Two prominent springs, Lambert and Stinking, are located within this portion of the Yellow Creek watershed. Lambert Spring is adjacent to CR 89 and is utilized extensively for cattle. Stinking Springs, located 1 mile south of Lambert Spring, is an undeveloped, groundwater-fed spring with a large shallow pool, surrounded by an alkaline wetland. The spring, located on a terrace above Yellow Creek, emerges at the base of a small cliff derived from Uinta sandstone. Saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), goosefoot (*Chenopodium glaucum*), arrowgrass (*Triglochin maritima*), and alkali grass (*Puccinellia airoides*) form rings outward according to alkalinity to the greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*) shrubland. The riparian vegetation adjacent to Yellow Creek forms a band according to the soil alkalinity. Common threesquare (*Scirpus pungens*) and spikerush (*Eleocharis palustris*) are located in or adjacent to Yellow Creek. The floodplain is dominated by saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*) community with alkali grass and goosefoot. Uplands support greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*) with big basin sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *tridentata*) and Western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) that grade into pinon pine (*Pinus edulis*), Utah juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*) shrublands with blue bunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*).

Key Environmental Factors

The main geologic feature within the river basin is modern alluvium from the Quaternary Age. Soils are fine sandy loam comprised of Glendive and Havre series typical in drainages of alluvial valley floors.

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

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

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SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 01/21/2008

Designer Culver, D.R.

Boundary Justification

Boundary was delineated to encompass the known occurrences of the saltgrass and bulrush plant communities and potential habitat along the floodplain. This boundary only includes the immediate ecological processes. Only public lands were surveyed.

Primary Area 1,201.73 Acres 486.33 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B3: High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site encompasses good (B-ranked) occurrences of herbaceous wetland plant communities, the state rare (G5/S3) saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*) and the globally rare (G3G4/S3) bulrush (*Schoenoplectus pungens*). Both of these occurrences were one of the best observed examples in Rio Blanco in 2007. There is also a good (B-ranked) occurrence of a globally secure (G5/S4) emergent wetland community (*Eleocharis palustris*).

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

Non-native plants include tamarisk (*Tamarix ramosissima*), wierner leaf (*Halogeton glomeratus*), and mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*). These are especially prevalent in areas of disturbance.

Offsite

No Data

Information Needs

No Data

ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY

Element			Global	State	Driving
State ID	State Scientific Name	State Common Name	Rank	Rank	Site Rank
18654	<i>Schoenoplectus pungens</i> Herbaceous Vegetation	Bulrush	G3G4	S3	Yes
18783	<i>Eleocharis palustris</i> Herbaceous Vegetation	Emergent Wetland	G5	S4	No
17188	<i>Distichlis spicata</i> Herbaceous Vegetation	Salt Meadows	G5	S3	No

REFERENCES

Reference ID	Full Citation
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 >.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date 01/21/2008

Version Author Culver, D.R.

Disclaimer

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