

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Elk Falls

Site Code S.USCOHP*19450

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 191 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

County

Park (CO)

SITE DESCRIPTION

Site Description

The Elk Falls site contains a topographically diverse part of Staunton State Park, ranging in elevation from 8,360 feet on lower Elk Creek to 9,463 feet at the top of Lions Head. North Elk creek plummets over 100 feet in less than 1/4 of a mile in a series of spectacular waterfalls. Large granite slabs and cliffs surround the drainage. The rock faces near Elk Falls are sparsely vegetated with mosses, alumroot (*Heuchera bracteata*), and James' telesonix (*Telesonix jamesii*). North-facing slopes support a mixed coniferous forest (Douglas-fir, ponderosa, Engelmann spruce) and south-facing slopes are more sparsely vegetated and rocky. Boulder fields at the base of the cliffs support waxflower (*Jamesia americana*) shrublands. The riparian area along North Elk Creek is very narrow and rocky with the upland trees coming down to the water's edge. Chiming bells (*Mertensia ciliata*), cow parsnip (*Heracleum sphondylium*), shooting star (*Dodecatheon pulchellum*), and sedges (*Carex* spp.) are found in the understory. Below Elk Falls, the creek flows into a narrow canyon with vertical walls festooned by a luxuriant carpet of ferns and mosses. Lions Head and Chimney Rock tower above as prominent features. The site is approximately 350 acres.

Key Environmental Factors

No Data

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

Minimum Elevation	8,360.00 Feet	2,548.00 Meters
Maximum Elevation	9,463.00 Feet	2,884.00 Meters

SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes Mapped Date 07/14/1999
Designer Spackman, S.C. and D.G. Anderson

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the known extent of the *Telesonix jamesii* and *Mimulus gemmiparus* found in the vicinity. Many other subpopulations of *Telesonix jamesii* that were not found in this inventory are likely to occur on the numerous rock outcrops and cliffs in the area. This site also includes a known nesting site for the Peregrine Falcon, but it was not drawn for this species.

Primary Area	351.29 Acres	142.16 Hectares
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SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B1: Outstanding Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

This site contains an excellent (A-ranked) occurrence of budding monkeyflower (*Mimulus gemmiparus*) a globally critically imperiled plant (G1/S1). There is also an excellent (A-ranked) occurrence of the globally imperiled (G2/S2) James' telesonix (*Telesonix jamesii*). The population of James' telesonix appears to be in excellent condition with no evidence of human impact. The population is sufficiently large to have an excellent chance of long-term viability. The condition of the habitat for *Telesonix jamesii* is pristine, particularly on rock faces that are relatively inaccessible to humans. Although not drawn for this species, the

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high, exposed, and inaccessible cliff faces are also ideal nesting habitat for the Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) and are known to have supported nesting falcons. A breeding pair was last observed at an eyrie in 1996, but they did not successfully breed.

Other Values Rank No Data

Other Values Comments

No Data

ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY

<u>Element</u>			<u>Global Rank</u>	<u>State Rank</u>	<u>Driving Site Rank</u>
<u>State ID</u>	<u>State Scientific Name</u>	<u>State Common Name</u>			
19611	<i>Telesonix jamesii</i>	James' Telesonix	G3G4	S3	N
18872	<i>Erythranthe gemmipara</i>	Rocky Mountain Monkeyflower	G1	S1	Y

LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Land Use Comments

No Data

Natural Hazard Comments

No Data

Exotics Comments

Exotic species were found along most of Elk Creek's riparian zone, both above and below the falls. These include bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*), salsify (*Tragopogon dubius*), and mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*).

Offsite

No Data

Information Needs

No Data

REFERENCES

<u>Reference ID</u>	<u>Full Citation</u>
172133	Craig, Gerald R. 1997. Recommended buffer zones and seasonal restrictions for Colorado raptor nests. Unpublished report for Colorado Division of Wildlife. Updated January 6, 1997.
160766	Spackman, S., D. Anderson, J. Siemers, P. Pineda, and J. Handwerk. 1999. Staunton State Park Biological Inventory.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

LOCATORS

Nation	United States	Latitude	393024N
State	Colorado	Longitude	1052454W
Quad Code	Quad Name		
39105-E4	Meridian Hill		
Watershed Code	Watershed Name		
10190002	Upper South Platte		

VERSION

Version Date	07/14/1999
Version Author	Spackman, S.C. and D.G. Anderson

DISCLAIMER

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