

Colorado Natural Areas Program

2018- 2020 Review



Triennial Report to
Governor Polis





Colorado Natural Areas Program

Showcasing & protecting our state's natural treasures since 1977

The Colorado Natural Areas Program (CNAP) is a statewide conservation program created in 1977 by the Colorado Natural Areas Act (C.R.S. 33-33). The Program is housed within Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and is advised by the Colorado Natural Areas Council (CNAC), a seven member Governor appointed board. Program staff includes one full-time coordinator and one to two seasonal technicians. CNAP's small base is supported by a contract botanist and over 50 dedicated volunteer stewards.

Mission:
To identify, evaluate, and protect specific examples of natural features and phenomena as enduring resources for present and future generations, through a statewide system of Designated Natural Areas. [C.R.S 33-33-102]

Table of Contents

CNAP Background.....	2
Natural Features	3
Natural Areas Council	4
Volunteer Steward Program.....	5
Rare Plant Conservation.....	6
3 Year Program Highlights.....	7
Natural Area Status Reports.....	8-11

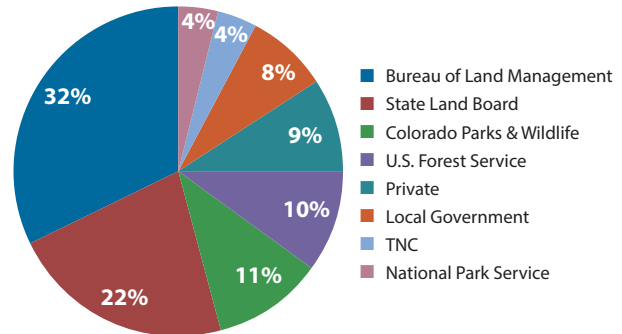


Geneva Basin Iron Fen Natural Area

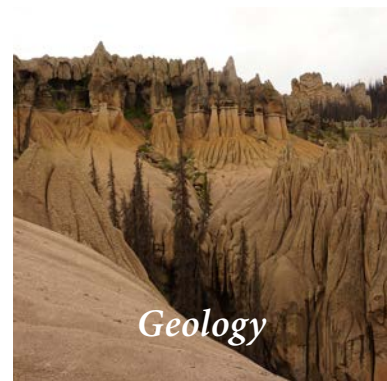
Highlighting the Best of Colorado

CNAP's statewide system of natural areas highlights and supports the protection of Colorado's most rare and unique natural features. State natural area designations are accomplished through voluntary conservation agreements with landowners. In addition, CNAP serves as Colorado state government's lead in rare plant conservation.

Who We Work With: Owners of Designated State Natural Areas



95 designated state natural areas



180,024 acres designated, from 3,670 to 14,034 ft



Over 50 partners working together to protect state natural areas



126 species of greatest conservation need represented



Colorado Natural Areas Council

CNAP is fortunate to be guided by a seven-member advisory council, the Colorado Natural Areas Council (CNAC). The Council is made up of five Governor appointees and a representative from both the Colorado Parks & Wildlife Commission and the Colorado State Board of Land Commissioners. The Council meets quarterly and provides guidance to CNAP on natural area identification, registration, and designation, as well as program strategic planning and implementation. From 2018-2020 the Council helped CNAP staff to carry out the goals and objectives of the program's strategic plan, including prioritizing potential new natural areas on the eastern plains, and most recently helping to update a new five-year strategic plan. Learn more about CNAC here: bit.ly/CNAP_CNAC.



CNAC & volunteers at Trinidad K-T Boundary Natural Area



CNAC at White Rocks Natural Area

Colorado Natural Areas Council: Current Members

Governor Appointed



Ken Strom, Chair
Appointed 2018 (2nd term)



Dina Clark, Vice Chair
Appointed 2017



Denise Culver
Appointed 2019 (2nd term)



Lynn Riedel
Appointed 2019



Phyllis Pineda Bovin
Appointed 2020

Board & Commission Representatives



Taishya Adams
Parks & Wildlife
Commission



John Shaw
Board of Land
Commissioners

Previous Council Members

Tom Nesler
Julia Kintsch
Charles Garcia

Stewards of Colorado's Natural Areas

CNAP Volunteer Steward Program

Dedicated CNAP volunteer stewards help to monitor Colorado's state natural areas every year. CNAP volunteers include both natural resource professionals and community scientists. Volunteers "adopt" a natural area and monitor it over the course of many years, observing changes in the landscape, documenting rare species, and reporting on its annual condition.

"We volunteer because we are passionate about and see value in contributing to CNAP's ongoing conservation efforts that will protect these areas long into the future."

– Patty Corbetta & Viki Lawrence, CNAP volunteers

"I spent my entire professional career in conservation policy; after retiring, I wanted to see how policy translates on the ground."

– Larry Morandi, CNAP volunteer

"I volunteer because Colorado has so many special areas with rare plants, important geology, and important prehistoric resources, that wouldn't be protected without volunteer help."

– Lee Cassin, CNAP volunteer

Over half

of CNAP volunteers have dedicated 10+ years to helping protect Colorado's Natural Areas

4,600

Volunteer hours in the last 3 years



Volunteers at Gateway Palisade Natural Area



Volunteers & staff at Hoosier Ridge Natural Area



Volunteers at Mexican Cut Natural Area



Volunteers & staff at Irish Canyon Natural Area

Protecting Colorado's Rare Plants



Monitoring budding monkeyflower at Staunton Natural Area



Parachute penstemon and buck moth caterpillar



Dudley Bluffs bladderpod

CNAP is a key partner in rare plant conservation in Colorado and continues to be a leader in the protection, research, and monitoring efforts of these often lesser-known species. With 117 plant species of greatest conservation need in Colorado, CNAP remains the only program within state government with a focus on rare plants and is vital to implementing the conservation actions called out in the State Wildlife Action Plan.

- Over 80% of state natural areas include rare plants and the designations highlight their intrinsic value to Colorado's natural heritage, support the protection of their habitat, ensure long-term monitoring, and provide opportunities for research.
- CNAP works closely with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Colorado Natural Heritage Program, Bureau of Land Management, and other partners to help recover plant species listed under the Endangered Species Act, and preclude the need to list additional species.
- CNAP conducts or supports long-term monitoring on numerous federally listed or petitioned species including Pagosa skyrocket, Parachute penstemon, Rocky Mountain monkeyflower, Brandegee's wild buckwheat, and Dudley Bluffs bladderpod.



Monitoring Pagosa skyrocket at Pagosa Skyrocket Natural Area

55 Plants of Greatest Conservation Need (PGCN) occur on State Natural Areas

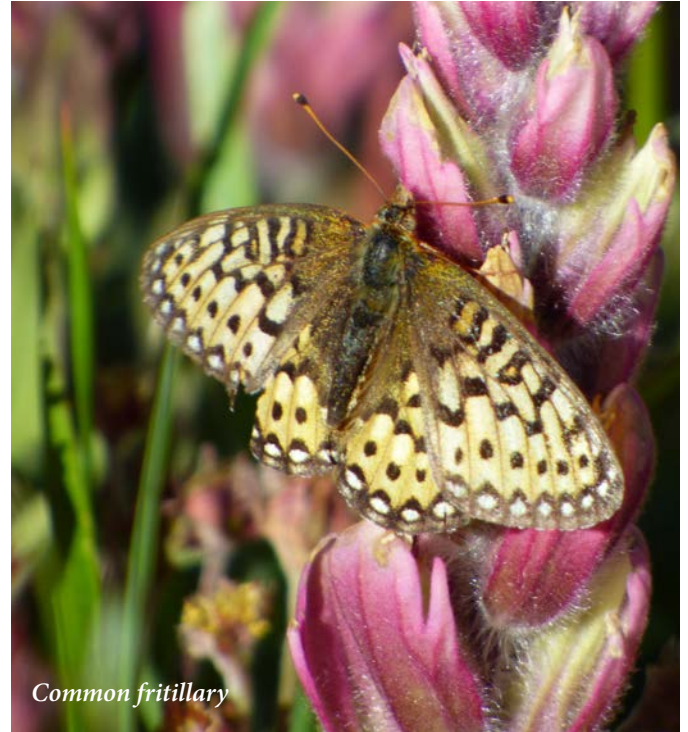
See rare plant addendum in Colorado's State Wildlife Action Plan: bit.ly/CPW_SWAP

15
federally threatened or endangered plant species
in Colorado

2018–2020 in Review

Under the guidance of the Colorado Natural Areas Council (CNAC), a 5-year strategic plan was created for the program in 2015. CNAP staff and CNAC members have worked diligently to complete the goals laid out in the plan. Below is a brief summary of accomplishments in the last three years, in addition to the program's ongoing natural areas monitoring and rare plant work.

- Defined the criteria to create a more comprehensive Natural Areas System and prioritized sites for future designation
- Identified new potential state natural areas on the Eastern Plains
- Enhanced our communication and support to volunteer stewards
- Promoted CNAP's values and accomplishments through varied media
- Increased and diversified our partnership network
- Led collaborative efforts in the implementation of rare plant conservation actions detailed in the State Wildlife Action plan.



Common fritillary



CNAP staff training local students on plant identification

Looking ahead: In 2020, CNAC and CNAP worked together to update the program's strategic plan. A summary of highlights includes:

- Integration of climate change and climate resiliency considerations in our planning
- Expanding our monitoring to include increased effort on insects, pollinators, and soil health
- Utilization of our new selection criteria and ranking for natural areas
- Greater integration of diversity, equity, and inclusion principles into our program
- Creating increased awareness of our program's unique focus and leadership on rare plant conservation
- Elevating our program's role in statewide conservation efforts through partnerships and outreach.

2020 Vision:

Protecting Colorado's most significant natural features through a robust Natural Areas System that integrates with partner conservation efforts.

Natural Areas Status Reports

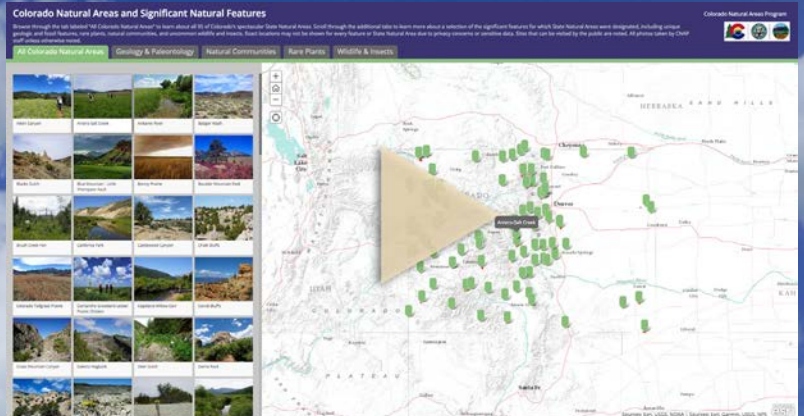
Table One:

*Features and Status of
Designated Natural Areas*

Table Two:

*Features and Status of
Registered Natural Areas*

To learn more about Colorado's designated natural areas and their natural features check out our story map: arcg.is/1ymCnL0



Comanche Grassland Lesser Prairie Chicken Natural Area

TABLE ONE: FEATURES AND STATUS OF DESIGNATED NATURAL AREAS

NATURAL AREA NAME	OWNER	COUNTY	SIGNIFICANT FEATURES TYPE	TIER STATUS*
KEY: BLM= Bureau of Land Management CPW= Colorado Parks and Wildlife NPS= National Park Service TNC= The Nature Conservancy USFS= U.S. Forest Service SLB = State Land Board				
Aiken Canyon	SLB	El Paso	Plant Communities, Geology, Wildlife	Medium
Antero-Salt Creek	SLB	Park	Wildlife, Plants, Plant Communities	High
Arikaree River	SLB	Yuma	Plant Communities, Wildlife, Plants	High
Badger Wash	BLM	Mesa	Plants, Plant Communities	High
Blacks Gulch	BLM	Rio Blanco	Fossils	High
Blue Mountain- Little Thompson Fault	Private	Larimer	Geology, Plants	Medium
Bonny Prairie	CPW	Yuma	Plants, Plant Communities	Medium
Boulder Mountain Park	City of Boulder	Boulder	Plants, Plant Communities, Geology, Wildlife	High
Brush Creek Fen	Private	Custer	Plants, Plant Communities, Wildlife	Medium
California Park	SLB	Routt	Wildlife, Plant Communities	Medium
Castlewood Canyon	CPW/SLB	Douglas	Plants, Plant Communities, Wildlife	High
Chalk Bluffs	SLB	Weld	Wildlife, Plants, Plant Communities, Geology	Medium
Colorado Tallgrass Prairie	City of Boulder	Boulder	Plant Communities	High
Comanche Grassland Lesser Prairie Chicken	USFS	Baca	Wildlife	Medium
Copeland Willow Carr	City of Longmont	Boulder	Plant Communities	Medium
Corral Bluffs	City of Colorado Springs	El Paso	Fossils, Wildlife	High
Cross Mountain Canyon	BLM	Moffat	Wildlife, Geology, Plants	High
Dakota Hogback	Jefferson County	Jefferson	Geology, Fossils, Plants, Plant Communities, Wildlife	High
Deer Gulch	BLM	Rio Blanco	Plant Communities, Plants	Medium
Dome Rock	CPW	Teller	Wildlife, Geology, Plant Communities	Medium
Droney Gulch	BLM/SLB	Chaffee	Plants	High
Duck Creek	BLM	Rio Blanco	Plants	High
Dudley Bluffs	BLM	Rio Blanco	Plants, Plant Communities	High
East Lost Park	USFS	Park	Plants	High
East Sand Dunes	SLB	Jackson	Geology, Plants	High
Elephant Rocks	BLM	Rio Grande	Geology, Plants	Medium
Escalante Canyon	BLM	Delta/ Montrose	Wildlife, Plants, Plant Communities, Geology	High
Fairview	BLM	Montrose	Plants	High
Fourmile Creek	SLB	Park	Plant Communities, Plants	Medium
Fruita Paleontological Locality	BLM	Mesa	Fossils	High
Garden Park Fossil Locality	BLM	Fremont	Fossils, Plants	High
Gateway Palisade	BLM	Mesa	Geology, Plants	High
Geneva Basin Iron Fen	County	Clear Creek	Plants, Plant Communities, Geology	High
Gothic	USFS	Gunnison	Plant Communities	Medium
Gunnison Gravels	BLM	Mesa	Geology	High
Haviland Lake	CPW	La Plata	Plants, Plant Communities, Wildlife	Medium
High Creek Fen	TNC/SLB	Park	Plants, Plant Communities	High
High Mesa Grassland	BLM	Fremont	Plants, Plant Communities	High
Hoosier Ridge	USFS	Park	Plants	High
Hurricane Canyon	USFS	El Paso	Plant Communities, Plants	High
Indian Spring	NPS	Saguache	Insects, Geology, Plant Communities	High
Indian Springs Trace Fossil Locality	Private	Fremont	Fossils	High
Irish Canyon	BLM/SLB	Moffat	Geology, Plants, Plant Communities	High
Jimmy Creek	SLB	Larimer	Plants	Medium
Ken Caryl Ranch	Private	Jefferson	Plants, Plant Communities, Geology, Wildlife	Medium
Kremmling Cretaceous Ammonite Locality	BLM/SLB	Grand	Fossils	High

TABLE ONE: FEATURES AND STATUS OF DESIGNATED NATURAL AREAS

NATURAL AREA NAME	OWNER	COUNTY	SIGNIFICANT FEATURES TYPE	TIER STATUS*
Limestone Ridge	BLM	Moffat	Geology, Plants, Plant Communities	High
Lookout Mountain	BLM	Moffat	Geology, Plants, Plant Communities	Medium
Lower Greasewood Creek	BLM	Rio Blanco	Plants, Plant Communities	Medium
McElmo	BLM	Montezuma	Wildlife	Medium
Mexican Cut	TNC	Gunnison	Wildlife, Plant Communities	High
Mini-Wheeler	SLB	Fremont	Geology, Plants	High
Miramonte Reservoir	CPW	San Miguel	Wildlife, Plants	High
Mishak Lakes	TNC	Saguache	Wildlife, Plant Communities	Medium
Mount Callahan, Mount Callahan Saddle & Logan Wash Mine	Private	Garfield	Plants, Plant Communities	High
Mount Emmons Iron Fen	USFS	Gunnison	Plants, Plant Communities, Geology	High
Mount Goliath	USFS	Clear Creek	Plant Communities	High
Narraguinnep	USFS	Dolores	Plant Communities	Medium
Needle Rock	BLM	Delta	Geology	Medium
North Park	BLM	Jackson	Plants	High
Orient Mine	Private	Saguache	Wildlife, Plant Communities	High
Owl Canyon Pinyon Grove	SLB/Private/ CPW	Larimer	Plant Communities	High
Pagosa Skyrocket	CPW	Archuleta	Plants, Wildlife	High
Paradise Park	NPS	Boulder	Wildlife, Plant Communities	Medium
Park Creek Hogback	SLB	Larimer	Plants, Plant Communities	Medium
Pyramid Rock	BLM	Mesa	Geology, Plants	High
Rabbit Valley	BLM	Mesa	Fossils	High
Rajadero Canyon	BLM/SLB	Conejos	Plants, Plant Communities	Medium
Raven Ridge	BLM	Rio Blanco	Geology, Plants	High
Redcloud Peak	BLM	Hinsdale	Insects, Plants	High
Rough Canyon	BLM	Mesa	Geology, Wildlife, Plants	High
Roxborough	CPW/SLB	Douglas	Geology, Plant Communities, Plants, Wildlife	Medium
Ryan Gulch	BLM	Rio Blanco	Plants	High
Saddle Mountain	USFS/SLB	Park	Plant Communities	Medium
San Miguel at Tabeguache Creek	TNC	Montrose	Plant Communities	High
Sand Creek	SLB	Larimer	Plant Communities, Plants	Medium
Shell Duck Creek	Private	Rio Blanco	Plants	High
Shell Rock	SLB	Baca	Plants	Medium
Slumguillion Earthflow	USFS/BLM	Hinsdale	Geology	High
South Beaver Creek	BLM	Gunnison	Plants	High
South Boulder Creek	City of Boulder	Boulder	Wildlife, Plants, Plant Communities	High
South Cathedral Bluffs	BLM	Rio Blanco	Plants, Plant Communities	High
Specimen Mountain	NPS	Larimer/ Grand	Wildlife, Plant Communities	High
Staunton	CPW/SLB	Jefferson/ Park	Plants, Plant Communities, Wildlife	High
Tamarack Ranch	CPW	Logan	Wildlife, Plant Communities	High
Treasurevault Mountain	SLB	Park/Lake	Plants, Plant Communities, Wildlife	High
Trinidad K-T Boundary	CPW	Las Animas	Geology	High
Two Buttes	Private	Prowers/ Baca	Geology, Wildlife, Plants	High
Unawep Seep	BLM	Mesa	Insects, Plants, Plant Communities	Medium
Wacker Ranch	CPW	Montrose	Plants	High
West Creek	NPS	Larimer	Wildlife, Plant Communities	High
Wheeler Geologic	USFS	Mineral	Geology	High
White Rocks	City of Boulder	Boulder	Geology, Wildlife, Plants	High
Yanks Gulch/Upper Greasewood Creek	BLM	Rio Blanco	Plants, Plant Communities	High
Zapata Falls	SLB	Alamosa	Geology, Wildlife, Plant Communities	High

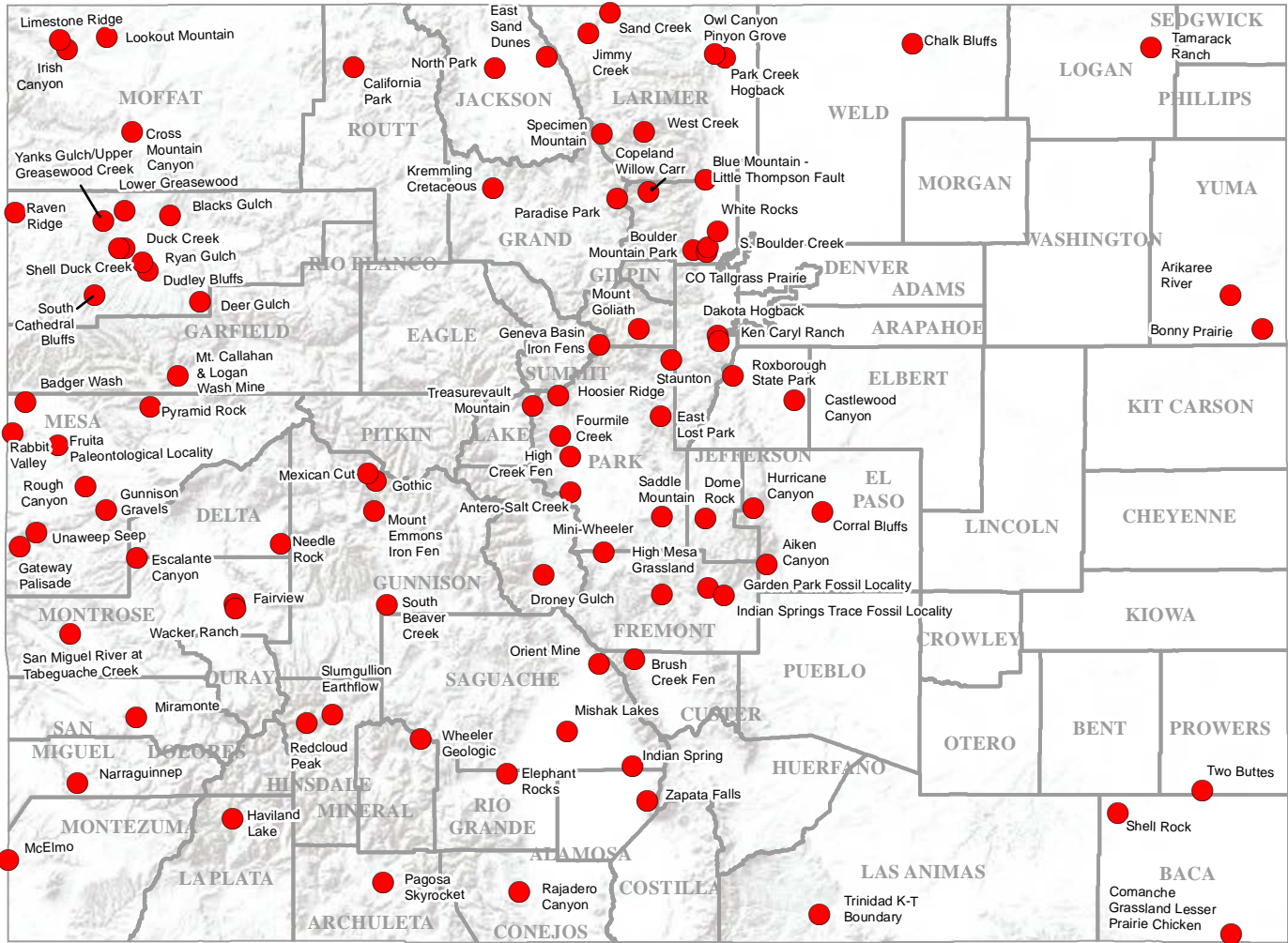
TABLE TWO: FEATURES AND STATUS OF REGISTERED NATURAL AREAS**

NATURAL AREA NAME	OWNER	COUNTY	SIGNIFICANT FEATURES TYPE	TIER STATUS*
Boston Peak Fen	USFS	Larimer	Plants, Plant Communities	Medium
Daves Draw	USFS	Weld	Plant Communities	Medium
Deep Creek	USFS	Garfield	Geology, Plants, Wildlife, Plant Communities	High
Fox Ranch	TNC	Yuma	Wildlife, Plant Communities	High
Hoosier Ridge (West)	USFS	Summit	Plants	High
Moosehead Mountain	BLM	Moffat	Plant Communities, Wildlife	High
Park Mesa	NPS	Montezuma	Plants, Plant Communities, Wildlife, Geology	High
Pawnee Woodlands	Private	Weld	Plants, Plant Communities, Wildlife, Geology	Medium
Tern Island	SLB	Bent	Wildlife	Medium
Uncompahgre Fritillary Site	USFS	Hinsdale	Insects	High
Williams Creek	USFS	Hinsdale	Plant Communities	Medium

* Tier Status is derived from CNAP’s ranking criteria which evaluates and scores several attributes of a state natural area, adding up to a numeric score which is categorized into a high, medium, or low ranking. Each natural area was scored on a multitude of factors including: rarity/uniqueness, representativeness, conservation effectiveness, availability of tenure, biological diversity, ecological integrity, size, consideration of buffers & adjacent land, educational value, scientific value, knowledge of area, and accessibility.

** Registered state natural areas are sites that meet the criteria to become a designated state natural but have not yet undergone the formal designation process.

DESIGNATED STATE NATURAL AREAS



State of Colorado

Governor:

JARED POLIS

Department of Natural Resources:

DAN GIBBS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Colorado Parks & Wildlife:

DAN PRENZLOW, DIRECTOR

Colorado Parks & Wildlife Commission

MARVIN MCDANIEL, CHAIR

CARRIE BESNETTE HAUSER, VICE CHAIR

MARIE HASKETT, SECRETARY

TAISHYA ADAMS

BETSY BLECHA

CHARLES GARCIA

DALLAS MAY

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JAMES JAY TUTCHTON

EDEN VARNEY



COLORADO NATURAL AREAS PROGRAM

cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/pages/CNAP.aspx