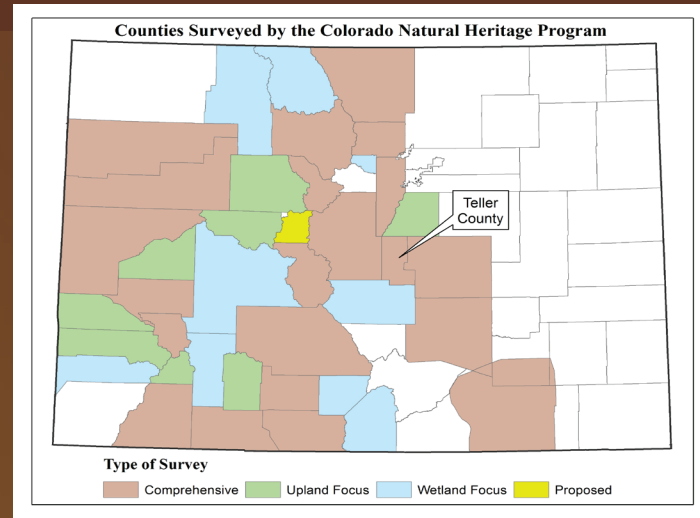


The Survey of Critical Biological Resources in Teller County is part of the ongoing biological surveys of Colorado counties conducted by CNHP since 1992. To date, similar surveys have been conducted in all or parts of 37 Colorado counties.



“The natural heritage inventories that CNHP has completed on counties in our watershed have provided critical information that helps the Coalition for the Upper South Platte to identify and prioritize restoration projects.”

Carol Ekarius
Executive Director, Coalition for the Upper South Platte



Kevin League
Land Program Manager, Palmer Land Trust

“CNHP PCA data is key to project fundraising. Funders often require copious amounts of justification for the protection of a particular parcel. CNHP data is a land trust’s favorite ‘ammunition’ for highlighting the conservation values and worthiness of protection for a project.”

About the Colorado Natural Heritage Program:

CNHP is a research unit within the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University, and is the state’s primary, comprehensive, biological diversity data center, gathering information and field observations to help develop statewide conservation priorities. CNHP is a multi-disciplinary team of scientists, information managers, and conservation planners gathers comprehensive information on rare, threatened, and endangered species and significant habitats of Colorado.

For a copy of the full report and more information about CNHP, visit our website and blog:
www.cnhp.colostate.edu cnhpblog.blogspot.com

Front cover photos by Michael Menefee. Other photos and images provided by Al Schneider, Steve Olson, Dee Malone, Denise Culver, Michael Menefee, Amy Lavender, Karin Decker, and Allison Shaw.

Natural Treasures of Teller County



Fall colors in Cathedral Park



Mueller State Park



Dome Rock State Wildlife Area



Western slope of Pikes Peak



Background

In 2010 the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP), in cooperation with Teller County, completed a survey of critical biological resources. The results confirm that Teller County is truly unique, with an amazing richness of rare animals and plants well worth preserving for future generations. The diversity of species and plant communities that range from alpine tundra to ancient bristlecone pine forests to badlands and rock spires to the montane grasslands underscores the important contribution of the County to the biodiversity of both Colorado and the world.

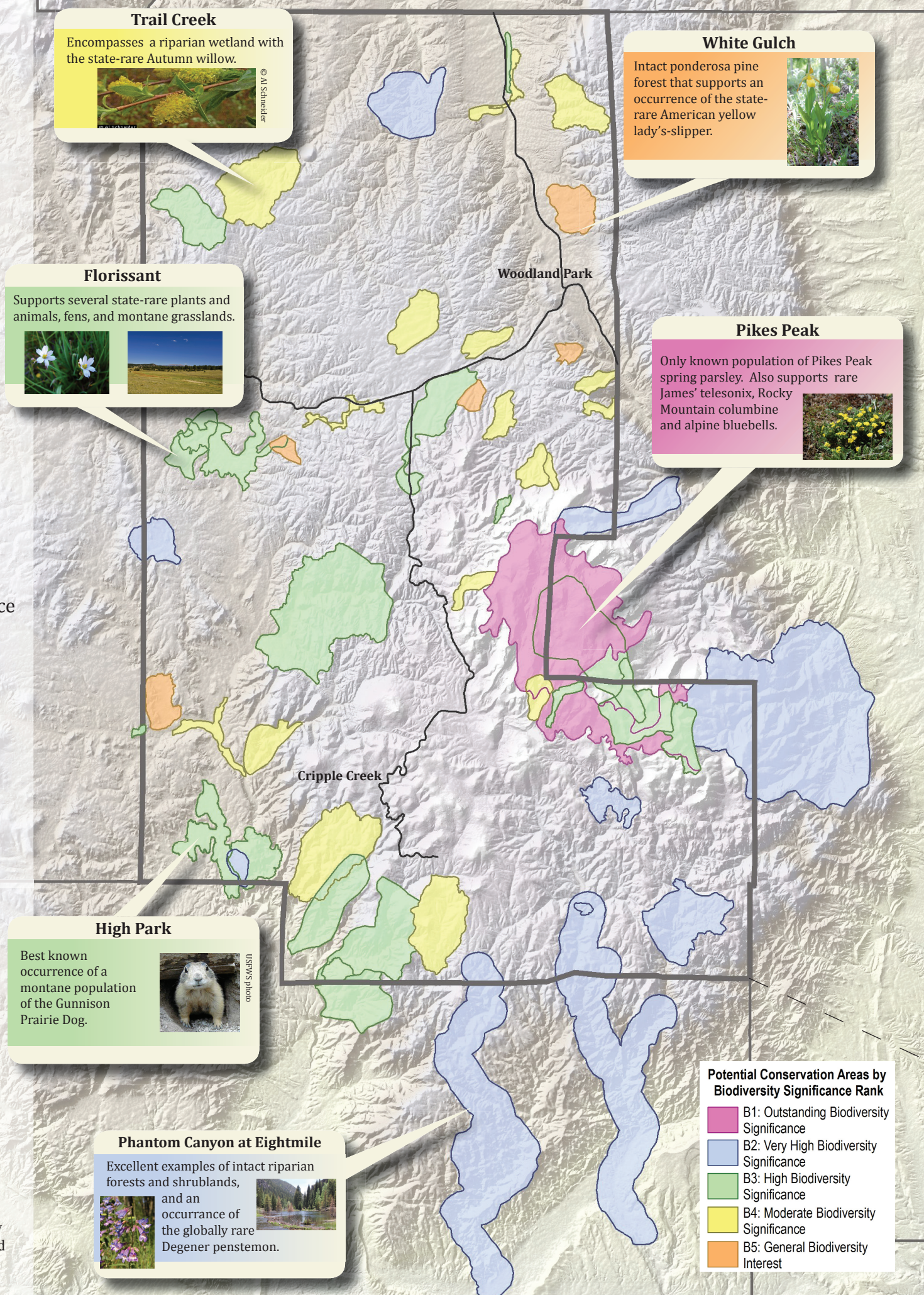
Survey Results

CNHP identified 49 Potential Conservation Areas (PCAs) in Teller County. PCAs represent the best examples of targeted species and plant communities and their ecological processes observed on the private and public lands that were visited.* Of the 49 PCAs presented in the final report, one is of outstanding biodiversity significance (B1), 9 are of very high significance (B2), 16 are of high significance (B3), 18 are of moderate biodiversity (B4), and five are of general biodiversity significance (B5).

Highlights

- New locations for one of the world's rarest plants, Pikes Peak spring parsley (*Oreoxis humilus*).
- One of the best known occurrence of the montane population of the Gunnison Prairie Dog (*Cynomys gunnisoni*).
- Re-discovery of a historical (1902) occurrence of the spiny-spored quillwort (*Isoetes setacea* ssp. *muricata*).
- Several new locations of fens, a type of peatland that is groundwater fed and has accumulated at least 40 cm (16 inches) of organic soil or peat.
- Several county records for state rare plants were also documented: autumn willow (*Salix serissima*), longstem water-wort (*Elatine triandra*), and birdbill day-flower (*Commelina dianthifolia*).

* The boundaries do not confer any regulatory protection of the site, nor do they automatically recommend exclusion of all activity. Private lands were accessed only with written permission.



Teller County's biodiversity is a key component for its high quality of life. Ready access to open space and recreation showcases this biodiversity and attracts residents and visitors alike.

Next Steps

- Increase efforts to protect biodiversity by promoting cooperation and incentives among landowners, pertinent government agencies, and non-profit conservation organizations. **Because the worldwide distribution of several plants is restricted to south central Colorado, land management in this region will determine the fate of these species.**
- Recognize the importance of larger, continuous natural habitats to ensure corridors for wildlife and stream connectivity for fish.
- Encourage public education outreach, functions and publications highlighting the local biodiversity.
- Continue to take a proactive approach to manage exotic species, especially aggressive plants such as tamarisk, black henbane, and leafy spurge.
- Encourage protection and restoration of wetlands, with an emphasis on fens.

