

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council



STAFF

Bernadette Kuhn, Senior Environmental Planner
Carisa Clinton, Senior Grants Analyst

SUBJECT

First Reading of Ordinance No. 199, 2025, Authorizing a Transfer of Appropriated Matching Grant Funds for the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Grant Related to the Soapstone Prairie Headwaters Restoration Project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The original appropriation ordinance omitted the need for authorization to move in kind personnel costs from a lapsing budget within the Natural Areas Fund into a non-lapsing budget within the same fund. The original explanation is as follows:

The purpose of this item is to support the Natural Areas Department (NAD) in stream and wetland protection and restoration work at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area. The Soapstone Prairie Headwaters Stream Restoration Project (Project) aims to improve ecological function and habitat in a one-mile reach of stream and wetland complex at Soapstone Prairie Natural Area. Specifically, the project will:

- Improve hydrological function and biodiversity for a one-mile reach of stream/wetland complex;
- Create seven pools using beaver dam analog wood structures to support amphibian habitat;
- Incorporate a rest cycle from livestock grazing through wildlife-friendly fencing; and
- Include Native and Indigenous community members in restoration planting activities.

NAD was awarded \$25,500 through the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) Wetlands for Wildlife grant (**Attachment 1**). This grant funds the final phase of the project – adaptive management and monitoring activities – and follows completion of prior work including design, construction, and community engagement.

This Ordinance will enable the NAD to complete the Project and fulfill final monitoring and reporting obligations under the CPW grant.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of the Ordinance on First Reading.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

CPW provides annual funding through the Wetlands for Wildlife Grant to restore, enhance, and create wetland and riparian habitat in Colorado. NAD staff partnered with CPW biologists for three years to design and implement this project as a major priority in restoring habitat for the Northern Leopard Frog (NLF), a rare amphibian listed as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need. NAD completed construction in November 2024, including installation of seven beaver dam analogs – wood structures built with cottonwood logs and willows – to form amphibian breeding, foraging, and overwintering pools. NAD also installed a grazing enclosure fence to allow vegetation and soil recovery, and 1,000 native willow stakes with the Native and Indigenous community to improve wildlife habitat.

The \$25,500 CPW grant, awarded in June 2025, will fund post-construction adaptive management activities such as wetland delineation, pool depth monitoring, and the preparation of as-built drawings by an external consultant.

CITY FINANCIAL IMPACTS

This item appropriates the matching grant amount of \$47,253 required per the terms of the grant awarded by CPW of \$25,500 to fund the final phase of restoration work. The match comes from in-kind personnel costs incurred in a lapsing budget within the Natural Areas Fund into a non-lapsing matching grant budget within the same fund. The City will not incur additional costs through this action.

BOARD / COMMISSION / COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

None.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Outreach has included a restoration planting event in collaboration with Native and Indigenous community members, educational programming for Wellington students, and site visits with county, state, and federal partners.

The project is also featured in a national restoration database: <https://pbr.riverscapes.net/projects>

In 2025, NAD staff are teaching Wellington students about stream restoration and Northern Leopard Frogs, bringing county, state, and federal partners on site visits, and presenting the project at local and regional conferences.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Ordinance No. 131, 2025 (copy)
2. Ordinance No. 199, 2025