



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council

STAFF

Katie Donahue, Natural Areas Director
Jesse Green, Natural Areas and Trails Ranger
Ingrid Decker, Legal

SUBJECT

First Reading of Ordinance No. 110, 2022, Amending Article IX of Chapter 23 of the Code of the City of Fort Collins Regarding Natural Areas.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to amend various provisions in Article IX of Chapter 23 of the City Code regarding natural areas to close loopholes, add new definitions, and add new regulations that better protect the natural environment and promote visitor safety. Natural Areas Department rangers researched existing Code and worked with Natural Areas Department staff and the City Attorney's Office before the proposed changes were brought to the Land Conservation and Stewardship Board in July 2022.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of the Ordinance on First Reading.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

The Natural Areas Team works diligently to protect the ecological value of natural resources owned and managed by the City. Currently, there is a disparity between violations and enforcement that has been recognized by both Natural Areas rangers and the City Attorney's Office. By revising and improving the current City Code we are striving to better educate, enforce, and track violations within the City's Natural Areas as well as improve safety for all visitors. The recommended changes include the following:

- New Definitions are proposed for the following terms:
 - Hunt
 - Natural Area
 - Public Safety Agency
 - Vessel

- Adjustments are proposed to the following regulations in Section 23-193 (prohibited acts and permits):
 - (a)(8) regarding skating
 - (a)(14) regarding boats/vessels
 - (b)(1) regarding walking or skating on ice
 - (d)(1) regarding access hours
 - (d)(2) regarding motorized boats/vessels
 - (e) regarding public safety training activities
 - (f) regarding penalties, designating two new violations [Sections 23-193(c)(1) and (c)(2)] as civil infractions

- Several new regulations would be created in Section 23-193:
 - (c)(1) regarding posted closed natural areas due to wet or muddy conditions
 - (c)(2) regarding posting areas where animals are not allowed
 - (c)(3) regarding disregarding signs designating trail-only access areas
 - (c)(4) regarding entering closed areas
 - (d)(21) regarding hunting
 - (d)(22) regarding use of inflated devices in the water

CITY FINANCIAL IMPACTS

No financial impact is expected with the recommended code changes.

BOARD / COMMISSION / COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The changes to Chapter 23, Article IX of the City Code were brought to the Land Conservation and Stewardship Board (LCSB) for discussion at the July 13, 2022 meeting. At the August 10, 2022, meeting, the LCSB voted unanimously to recommend approval of the changes to Chapter 23, Article IX of the City Code as proposed.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Public outreach was not conducted as the recommended code changes largely reflect administrative changes and updates.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Ordinance for Consideration
2. Natural Areas City Code Amendments (draft)
3. Land Conservation and Stewardship Board Minutes, July 13, 2022 (excerpt)
4. Land Conservation and Stewardship Board Minutes, August 10, 2022 (excerpt)
5. Presentation