

## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council



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### STAFF

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### SUBJECT

**First Reading Ordinance No. 131, 2025, Making Supplemental Appropriations of Grant Funds From Colorado Parks and Wildlife for the Soapstone Prairie Headwaters Restoration Project.**

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 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.
- 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 Natural Areas Department to complete the Soapstone Prairie Headwaters Restoration Project and fulfill final monitoring and reporting obligations under the CPW grant.

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### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of the Ordinance on First Reading.

## **BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION**

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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. Construction was completed 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 1000 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**

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This Ordinance appropriates \$25,500 in unanticipated revenue from CPW to fund the final phase of restoration work. The grant is reimbursement-based, meaning the City will incur eligible expenses and submit for reimbursement up to the grant amount. The Natural Areas Department will contribute a \$47,253 in-kind match through staff time, funded from the existing Natural Areas Fund (Fund 272); no additional appropriation is required for the match (Attachment 2).

## **BOARD / COMMISSION / COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

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None.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

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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**

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1. CPW Wetlands for Wildlife Grant Application
2. CPW Grant Award Purchase Order
3. Ordinance No. 131, 2025