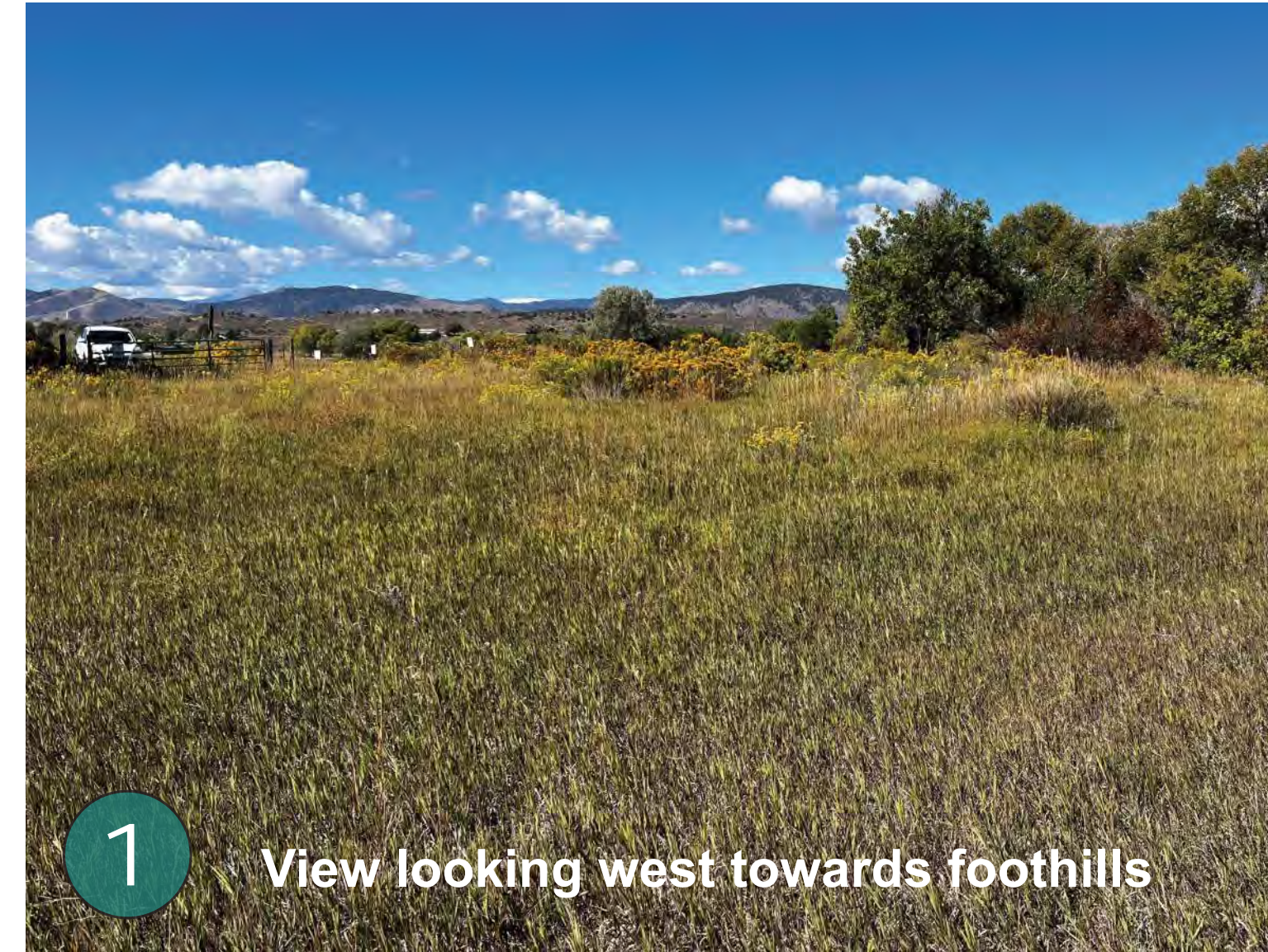


Firefly Meadow Natural Area Concept Plan





Existing Vegetation

A mix of native and introduced vegetation types including irrigated pasture, wetlands, cottonwood stands, and disturbed grasslands



Wild Plum



Wetlands



Tree Stands at Former Homesite

Management Practices

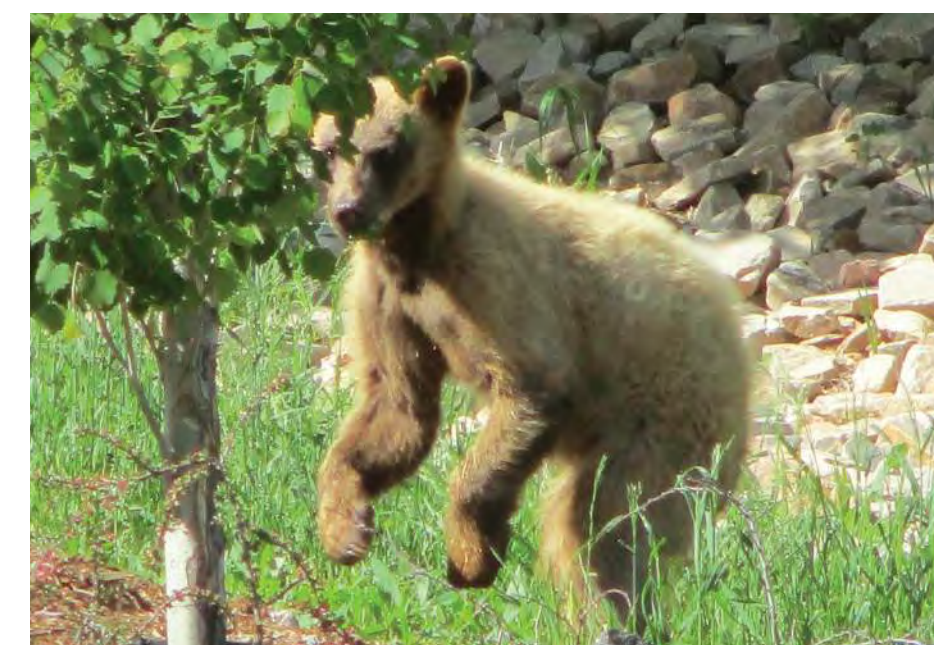
- Support wildlife and land health by using conservation practices like rotational grazing and wetland buffers on agricultural lands
- Manage noxious weeds
- Use existing trails and two-tracks where feasible to reduce overall trail impacts

Wildlife

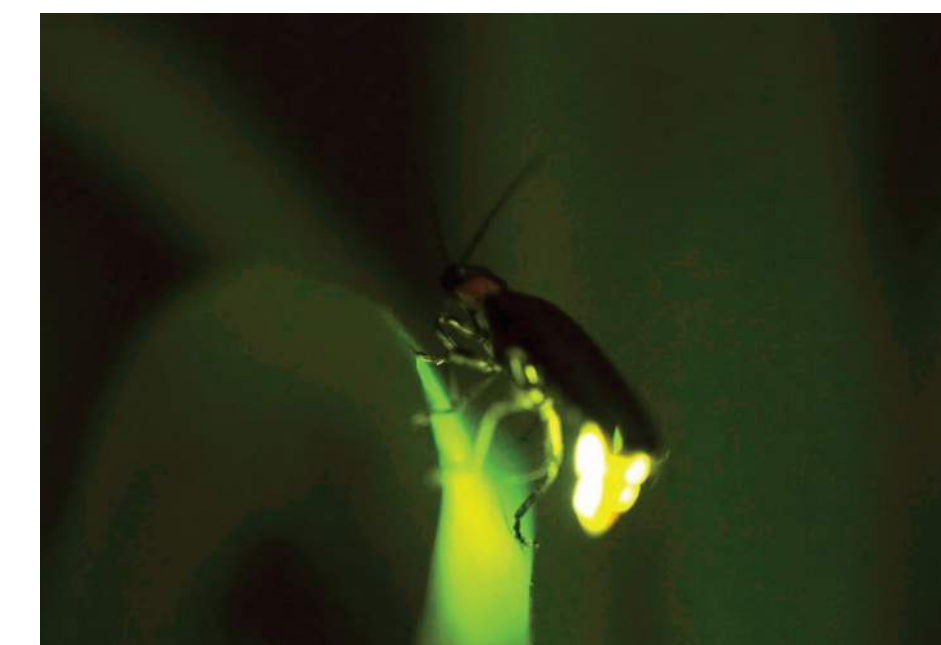
Property supports a wide variety of wildlife including elk, deer, bear and other mammals, waterfowl, raptors, and songbirds



Elk



Young Bear



Firefly

Management Practices

- Preserve 84 acres of habitat to prevent development and support passive recreation
- Protect key wildlife areas, like deer and elk winter ranges, by minimizing disturbance and maintaining undisturbed landscapes
- Support wildlife movement and resilience through adaptive recreation management (e.g., seasonal trail closures) and removal of wildlife-unfriendly fencing where feasible

Agricultural Resources

Having been historically farmed by the Ward Family, the agricultural heritage of the property will be maintained



Irrigated Fields



Horse Grazing



Haying Practices

Management Practices

- Operates under an agricultural lease with an adjacent landowner
- Management techniques include rotational grazing, haying and irrigation of the property via water shares in the George Rist Ditch
- Irrigation of the property is believed to support the native firefly population

Site Restoration



Removal of existing barbed wire



Debris removal



Removal of invasive weed species



Drainage improvements

Ditch Improvements



New bridge - constructed 2025



Bank stabilization - proposed
2026/2027

Site Amenities



Trailhead kiosk, bench, bear
proof trash can, dog station



Soft surface trail system



Vault restroom - required by
Larimer County



Bike rack



"Wildlife friendly" fencing
materials



Monitored security cameras

Operations

- Open daily from sunrise to sunset
- Trailhead amenities: gated paved parking, ADA-accessible vault restroom, bike rack, two-rail fencing around parking area for safety, site protection
- Signs will mark site boundaries, trail rules, including sharing the trail and staying on designated paths
- Off-trail use is not allowed; trails may close when muddy or for wildlife protection

Maintenance

Routine and seasonal maintenance will include, but not limited to:

- Noxious weed control
- Removal of trash and debris
- Site and habitat restoration
- Trail construction and maintenance

Prohibited Activities



Security

The purpose of security and visitor management is to emphasize the safety, health, and enjoyment of Firefly Meadow Natural Area's visitors and adjacent neighbors while conserving the site's biological, physical and ecological features.

- Trailhead closed after hours with an automatic gate
- NO ACCESS to/from CR 23H - this is a private road
- Enforcement carried out through agency partnerships by the Larimer County Sheriff's Office and Larimer County Rangers, Loveland Police Department, Loveland Fire Rescue Authority and trained volunteers
- Entering the site from unapproved access points and adjacent private property is prohibited
- The trailhead will be monitored with a security camera and overnight security service
- Emergency and maintenance access only via gate on Cedar Valley Drive

Wildfire Preparedness is a Community Effort!

Natural Area Management

City of Loveland Open Lands staff participated in the development of the 2023 Loveland Fire Rescue Authority Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The property will be managed and maintained to adhere to the guidelines set forth in this plan.



- Haying, mowing, trimming to reduce **fuel loads**
- Control Noxious Weeds to **reduce flammable biomass**
- Meet all standards for emergency vehicle turnaround
- Soft Surface Trail and Cedar Valley Drive provide fire break
- Avoid red flag days when mowing
- Field staff equipped with a **fire extinguisher** when performing maintenance
- **Brush clearance** adjacent to trails
- **Prohibit** smoking, campfires and other **open flame** activities
- **Fire hydrant** at Cedar Valley Dr and Owl Grove Pl
- Use of **reflective address signs**



Defensible Space

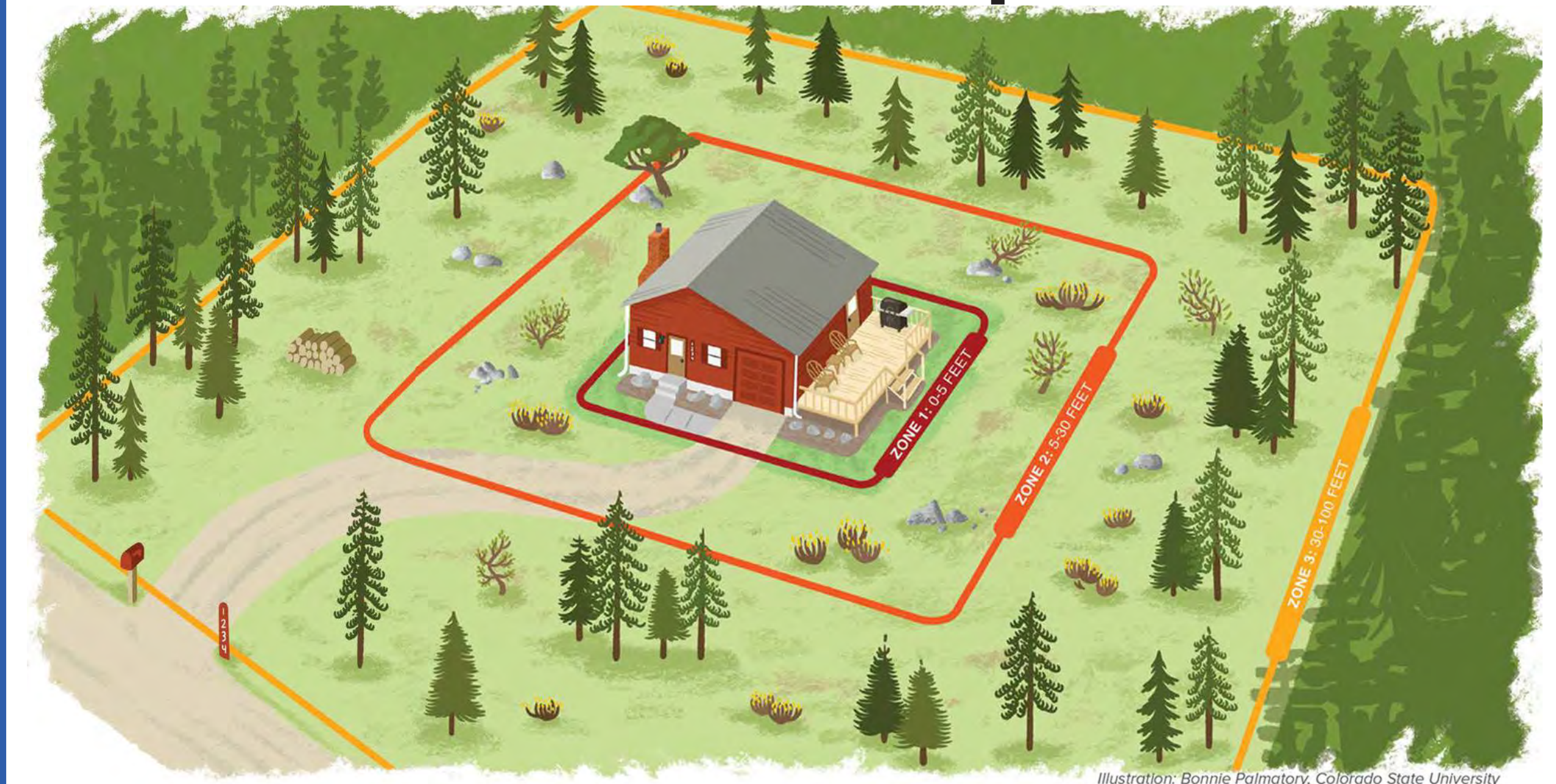


Illustration: Bonnie Palmatory, Colorado State University

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| ZONE 1 | 0-5 FEET: NONCOMBUSTIBLE ZONE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep area clear of all flammable materials • Use gravel, stone, dirt, flagstone, or concrete instead of flammable mulch or plants • Remove overhanging branches, clean roofs and gutters • Remove combustible materials from underneath, on top of, or within 5 feet of decks, overhangs, windows, and doors |
| ZONE 2 | 5-30 FEET: LEAN, CLEAN, AND GREEN ZONE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irrigate and mow grass short • Space trees and shrubs apart • Remove ladder fuels that can carry fire upward • Use fire-resistant plants • Keep wood piles and propane tanks out of this zone |
| ZONE 3 | 30-100 FEET: FOREST MANAGEMENT ZONE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Store firewood and large items far from your home (at least 30-50 feet) • Thin trees and trim low branches • Clear dead plants, leaves, branches • Keep the area open and clean - trim grasses to 6-inches height |

NOCOAlert is a county-wide emergency alert system that sends notifications, to residents and businesses, to get vital life-saving information to the public quickly and efficiently. Visit nocoalert.org for more information and to sign up.





Firefly Meadow Natural Area Frequently Asked Questions



CONSERVATION VALUES

How will Firefly Meadow Natural Area protect habitat?

- The property was purchased with the intention of providing habitat protection and conservation on the last large undeveloped parcel in the area. The property is protected in perpetuity by a conservation easement that only allows agricultural uses, passive recreation such as trails, and for minimal development (parking lot and trails) in a designated development envelope.

What has the City done to protect wildlife on the property?

- The City has extensively studied the habitat areas and wildlife on the Firefly Meadow property and has coordinated with wildlife experts to ensure best management practices are being followed for wildlife protection. Examples of such efforts include:
 - Conducting a Baseline Inventory Report with ERO Resources to document existing site conditions at the time of the Deed of Conservation Easement
 - Working with Colorado Parks and Wildlife to conduct elk counts and monitoring
 - Working with the National Audubon Society to conduct annual bird counts and surveys
 - Working with researchers from the Butterfly Pavilion to monitor and map firefly populations through seasonal invertebrate surveys
 - Monitoring of wildlife species, use, movement and habitat area utilizing game cameras installed on site
 - Active monitoring of raptor nests
 - Regular site monitoring by Open Lands and Trails staff including staff ecologist
 - Annual conservation easement monitoring by Larimer County Division of Natural Resources

Will this property be connected to other properties?

- It is Loveland's goal to interconnect contiguous habitat areas for resource protection and for wildlife. Additionally, Loveland aims to connect properties where possible for low impact recreational opportunities.
- Firefly Meadow Natural Area and the adjacent Morey Wildlife Preserve will combine to protect approximately 110-acres of critical winter range and riparian habitat.
- With future land acquisition, Firefly Meadow may one day connect to other open space properties such as the Wild Natural Area, but at this time such connections are not viable due to private land ownership or barriers such as significant river crossings.

Is Firefly Meadow's development a next step toward City annexation of the property or surrounding properties?

- No, the Firefly Meadow property is outside of the City's Growth Management Area and therefore is not eligible for annexation. Further, the property does not require any city utilities that would require annexation. Last, many of the City of Loveland's natural area properties are located outside city boundaries and are not annexed including Viestenz Smith Mountain Park, Prairie Ridge Natural Area, Willow Bend Natural Area and others.



Firefly Meadow Natural Area Frequently Asked Questions



PARKING AND ACCESS

Where will parking be located?

- A small parking lot is proposed to be built within the approved development envelope (per the conservation easement) on the east side of the property accessible from the west end of Cedar Valley Drive.

Will parking be allowed along CR 23E?

- The City intends to work with the County to limit/prohibit parking at the north end of CR 23E. Access to Firefly Meadow Natural Area at this location will be for pedestrians and bicycles only (city staff and emergency vehicles excepted).

Will Cedar Valley Drive continue through the property to CR 23H?

- Cedar Valley Drive will not be open for vehicular use but may be utilized within the Firefly Meadow property for City maintenance and emergency access

How big will the parking lot be?

- The parking lot will only include nine standard parking spaces and one ADA van parking space

Is a parking lot proposed on CR 23E?

- No, only one parking lot is proposed on the west side of Cedar Valley Drive within the approved development envelope for the property.

SITE SAFETY AND SECURITY

Who will be responsible for site security?

- General oversight, management and monitoring of the property is the responsibility of the City of Loveland Open Lands & Trails staff.
- The property parking lot will be closed at night, will be gated, and will be monitored remotely by Loveland's security contractor via live camera during closure hours.
- The City of Loveland is contracted with the Larimer County Rangers for site security and general law enforcement responsibilities.
- The Larimer County Sheriff's Department has jurisdiction over the property for additional or emergency law enforcement matters.

Will camping be allowed at Firefly Meadow Natural Area?

- No, camping is prohibited on all city owned properties.

Will hunting or shooting be allowed at Firefly Meadow Natural Area?

- No, hunting and/or discharge of weapons are prohibited on all city owned properties.



Firefly Meadow Natural Area Frequently Asked Questions



BACKGROUND

What is the City's motivation for the Firefly Meadow Natural Area project?

- Acquisition, protection and use of open space for recreational opportunities are values that consistently rank among Loveland residents' highest priorities per the 2023 Parks & Recreation Master Plan.
- Larimer County approved a .25% sales tax in 1995, and renewed this tax in 2014, to fund the acquisition and management of open space, natural areas and wildlife habitat.
- It is the mission of the Loveland Open Lands & Trails program to "identify, preserve, protect, connect and enhance open space, natural areas, trails and wildlife habitat to promote the enjoyment outdoor activities while advancing environmental stewardship, environmental education and outdoor experiences."
- Opening Firefly Meadow Natural Area for public use aligns our mission.

PROPOSED SITE AMENITIES

What will development of Firefly Meadow Natural Area include?

- Firefly Meadow Natural Area will be a conservation-based open space property protecting approximately 84-acres of land in perpetuity while offering opportunities for passive recreation. Site development is limited to:
- A small, ten space parking lot including one ADA van accessible space
- Trailhead amenities such as an information kiosk, benches, dog bag station, wildlife safe trash receptacle
- Single stall vault restroom
- Wildlife-safe fencing where appropriate to protect land and habitat areas
- 1.3-mile soft surface walking trail loop
- Leased agricultural land for continued hay production and agricultural heritage preservation

Does the City intend to build other infrastructure in the future on the Firefly Meadow property?

- No, the property is encumbered by a conservation easement that strictly limits development. The conservation easement is held by Larimer County and cannot be altered by the City without third party oversight and approval by the county.

Are there comparable City open land properties that are examples of what infrastructure at Firefly Meadow might look like?

- The closest and most similar property is the Wild Natural Area property located just north of Firefly Meadow Natural Area at 5608 W. Highway 34. This property features a similarly sized parking lot, trailhead amenities, fencing and trail surfacing to those proposed at Firefly.