

Camping Within Public Stream/Public Stream Riparian Zone Prohibited

May 7, 2018

Tom Strand, Councilmember At-Large

**Richard Mulledy, P.E., Water Resources
Engineering Division and Stormwater
Enterprise Manager**



Summary



- The City of Colorado Springs has experienced an increase in camping upon property adjacent to waterways within the City limits.
- There exists a significant concern regarding the potential for sudden flooding that threatens the safety and wellbeing of individuals camping within these areas.

Summary



- Additionally, based on observation of City staff and information provided by the United States Geological Survey and the Colorado Department of Health and the Environment's Water Quality Control Commission, there are potential impacts to water quality within the City limits due to these unauthorized encampments.
- City staff wishes to address the situation with an ordinance making it unlawful for unauthorized persons to camp within a stream, streambank or a stream riparian zone that extends one hundred feet (100') away from the edge of the streambank.

Background



- Throughout 2017 and 2018, as in past years, the City has experienced a proliferation of unauthorized camping within riparian zones abutting and adjacent to public streams throughout the City.



Background



- As a result of the increase in camping activities within public streams and riparian zones, a threat and hazard to the public health and safety exists to the citizens for multiple reasons.
- First, persons camping within these areas are susceptible to sudden floodwaters and hazardous conditions inherent to the riparian environment which may result in significant injury or death through submersion or drowning.



Background



- Second, City staff and residents have many times observed persons camping within riparian areas of the City urinating, defecating, bathing in and otherwise contaminating stream waters. The result is an increase in unsanitary and unhealthy conditions at the point of the act and further downstream throughout the City, El Paso County and the surrounding communities



Background



- The United States Geological Survey (“USGS”) has conducted water quality sampling of the Fountain Creek watershed within the City.
- The USGS sampling demonstrates that the Fountain Creek watershed contains undesirable levels of E. coli and is correlative of recent sewage or human and/or animal waste contamination.
- Due to the results of the USGS water quality sampling, the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment’s Water Quality Control Commission has determined that the water travelling through the City is impaired based on their articulated standards.
- The unsanitary conditions resulting from camping within a public stream and/or public stream riparian zone contribute to the degradation of the water quality within the City’s streams and riparian areas.

Background



- To prevent further degradation of the water quality within the City's streams and riparian areas, and to alleviate the risk of death or serious injury to unauthorized campers, City staff recommends approval of an ordinance making it unlawful for anyone, without authorization, to camp within a stream, streambank or the stream riparian zone that extends one hundred feet (100') away from the edge of the streambank.

Proposed Motion



Move to adopt an ordinance creating section 111 (Camping Within Public Stream/Public Stream Riparian Zone Prohibited) of Part 1 (General Offenses) of Article 6 (Offenses Affecting Property) of Chapter 9 (Public Offenses) of the Code of the City of Colorado Springs 2001, as amended, pertaining to camping within public stream riparian zones, and providing penalties for the violation thereof.