

Natural Area Department Internal & Public Drone Use Policies:

After careful review of existing open space agency UAS policies in Colorado, The City of Fort Collins Natural Area Department will use the following criteria as a basis for **internal and public** use of UAS:

1. Recreational use is strictly prohibited under City of Fort Collins Municipal Code Section 23-193(a)(6).
2. Activity must comply with all FAA, state or local regulations. This includes an operator who is certified by the FAA (Part 107) to operate the drone and ensure all protocols and regulations are followed.
3. Internal UAS operation must be consistent with the implementation of the department's conservation, education, and recreation mission. Internal uses must reasonably demonstrate that the probability of wildlife disturbance or other resource impact is negligible or easily mitigated. Similarly, UAS operation should not significantly impact the health, safety, welfare, or experience of natural area visitors.
4. UAS missions shall have a well-defined conservation purpose that may not otherwise be achieved by conventional methods. Typical internal UAS missions may be used for resource inventory, wildlife surveys, vegetation monitoring, cultural assessments, wildland fire assessments, baseline surveys or inventories, original research, conservation easement (CE) monitoring and other purposes. For (internal) baseline surveys or conservation easement monitoring activities, the department must acquire landowner permission prior to the utilization of drones for these purposes.
5. Use of UAS on City lands will only be allowed for activities that contribute to the understanding or management of these properties or resources and in situations in which UAS provide improved or more cost-effective alternatives for gathering remotely sensed data, or to provide for greater public safety.
6. UAS may be used for creating educational films, nature photography, or other purpose as part of carrying out the department's education mission.
7. The Natural Areas Department acknowledges the use of UAS for emergency operations and public safety is exempt from local regulation. Law enforcement, fire protection and similar emergency service agencies may utilize drones without restriction for the purposes including but not limited to search and rescue, law enforcement, fire management, natural disaster assessment, or similar emergency incidents.
8. Local emergency service agencies are permitted with a Natural Areas special use permit to practice or simulate emergency missions on natural areas for the purpose of improving familiarity with the natural area system.

A complete listing of the City of Fort Collins' Municipal Code may be found at:

https://www.municode.com/library/co/fort_collins/codes/municipal_code