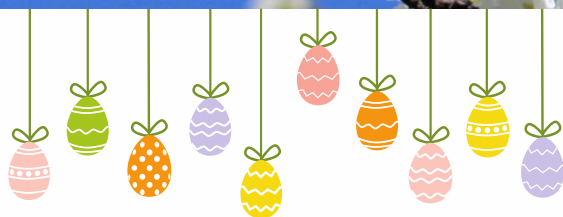




APRIL 2025

Welcome April



Open Board Positions Filled; Spring 2025 Elections Canceled

Three of the five Metro District Board positions were open for election this year, a product of a change in State Metro District election term requirements. Under the new law, elections for Metro District Board members will be held biannually in odd-numbered years, with 3 directors' terms for up for election in 2025, then 2 in 2027, then 3 in 2029, 2 in 2031, following the same pattern going forward. Board members will serve four-year terms with vacancies in the interim filled at the discretion of the Board.

With three Board positions open this year, our District Managers hired a Designated Election Official (DEO) per State law and advertised the openings on our website, via e-mail to residents who have signed up for Metro District e-mails, at our mail kiosk bulletin board, and in our newsletter. Three current Board members, Rick Stauch, Scott Gassen and Ecton Espenlaub, filed their intention to run for re-election in accordance with election requirements. No other candidates applied to fill the open spots, so according to State law those three applicants were deemed elected by the community and will begin to serve their new terms when the elections are formally certified in May by the DEO. (continued on page 2)

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If you or someone you know considered running for the open positions but opted not to, there are many other ways to contribute to the community by volunteering for a variety of projects. Both the HOA and Metro Boards often sponsor events that need volunteers but are often forced to operate short-handed due to the lack of volunteers. If you see a volunteer event advertised in our newsletters or via e-mail, **please apply!** It is a great way to contribute to our community, learn more about your neighbors, and facilitate better-run events.

Community Landscape Improvements Continue as Top Board Priority for 2025

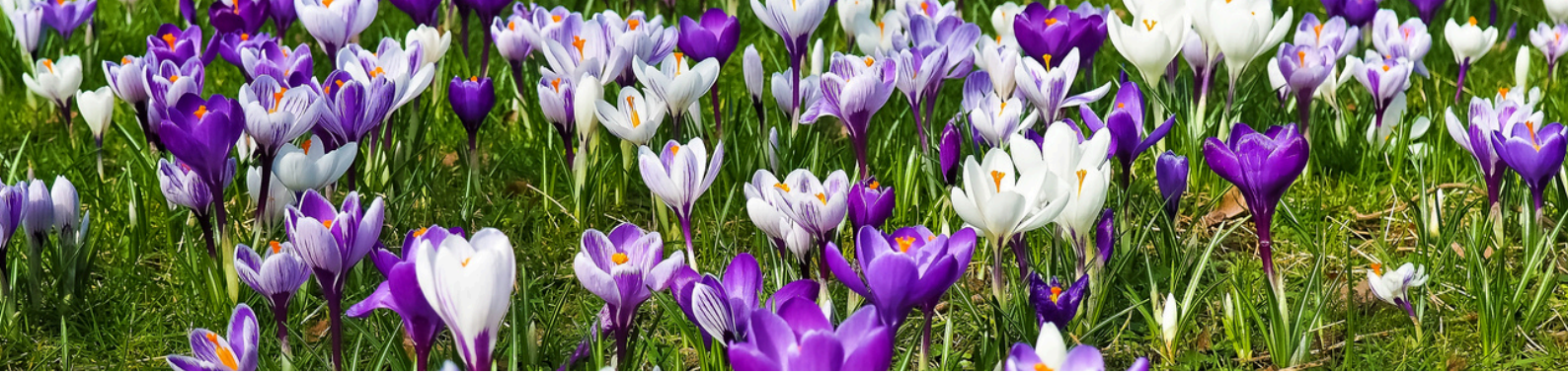
Your Metro Board has numerous projects on the books for continued improvement of the landscaping in the community. In keeping with the phasing in of plans originally approved by the community in 2022, this work will further enhance Cathedral Pines' standing as the premiere luxury community in Black Forest.

This year we will continue improvements to the Milam median by filling in low spots and (continued on page 3)

Annual Meeting Recap

The Metro District Board held its annual resident meeting on Tuesday, February 22 at the CP Lodge. The session was attended by approx. 50 residents, slightly lower than in the previous few years, but their feedback was constructive and appreciated by the Board. The agenda consisted of a financial recap of 2024; the proposed operating budget for 2025; an update on last year's Lodge rentals and performance; Board objectives for 2025, including landscaping plans for our medians and cul de sacs; the status of Board member elections for the three open positions; and a proposal for security at our mail kiosk. The presentation was followed by resident feedback on the kiosk proposal (see related article) and an open Q&A session. A copy of the entire presentation is available on the Cathedral Pines website.

[CLICK HERE](#)



smoothing out the turf areas damaged by the installation of the new irrigation system. We will also over-seed the existing blue grass areas with fescue grass – fescue is the sod used in the new areas of the median as it requires significantly less water than bluegrass. Once the fescue overtakes the blue grass it will dramatically reduce our water usage there too. After a few more years of maturity, the Milam median should be healthy, green, bursting with colorful plant life, lined with a mixture of mature and growing Ponderosas and Aspen trees, and become a point of pride for Cathedral Pines.

We are going to continue to improve the appearance of the community entrance by enhancing the medians on all 4 sides of the Milam and Saxton Hollow intersection. These areas were not recipients of the new irrigation system, so the resulting landscape will be a combination of rock, mulch, and boulders and possibly shrubs or trees with low water requirements arranged in a manner consistent with the work done last year on the Milam median.

In a similar manner, we will scrape/resurface/refresh/re-mulch ALL of the community cul-de-sacs, removing any dead or dying trees and shrubs. Also, the areas surrounding the benches near the Lodge ponds will be refreshed with new mulch.

We are going to continue enhancing the Lodge entrance by adding flower beds on both sides of the walk at the entrance. We will replace the existing trellises with ones that are taller and made of more durable material. In addition, the Board has just approved adding accent lighting on the trees on the property on a year-round basis as well as adding accent lighting to help highlight the facility. We will also be extending the groomed grass area behind the Lodge to extend the turf out to the tree line. (continue on page 4)





Finally, we are undertaking a major effort to improve the landscaping around the mail kiosk. With an investment of approx. \$20,000 earmarked for this area, we will start by replacing all the existing rock with the same rock used in the Milam median and adding some shrubs and numerous annuals, also consistent with the median. Additionally, we will till the native area around the kiosk to remove noxious weeds, add soil to create a more natural grade, and seed it with native low-growth grasses. New irrigation will also be added for the new plantings, which should provide some extra security for the area as well. This work will vastly improve the aesthetic appeal of our mail kiosk.

The Board wishes to thank Rick Stauch for overseeing this work, managing our landscaping budget, and writing this article!



We Know What Fires Can Do to a Community. What are YOU doing to prevent one?

As a new resident of Cathedral Pines, I am still in awe of the beauty of the neighborhood, the trails and the amazing mountain vistas everywhere you turn. But that beauty holds risk for all of us. Wildfires put the entire community at risk, but we can reduce the risk by understanding all we can about the behavior of wildfires and mitigating the fuel sources. (For example: Did you know a typical wildfire travels at about 15 miles an hour?) The original developer of the community cleared many of the trees and underbrush (ladder fuels) before the Black Forest Fire and along with the architectural covenants that required fire-resistant construction (continued on page 5)





materials and homeowner cooperation (complying with grass height restrictions and mowing guidelines), almost all of the homes in Cathedral Pines escaped unscathed while hundreds of acres in Black Forest burned nearby. These efforts helped to protect Cathedral Pines from the Black Forest fire that was so devastating to our neighbors to the south and east.

After living in California for part of my career, witnessing the recent fires there and listening to the stories of friends and work colleagues that have lost their homes or are damaged to the point where they are not livable without major remediation, we feel an urgency to reinvigorate the early efforts here that have gone into protecting our homes. In fact—and I know several other new newcomers to our community who are experiencing the same thing--we were barely able to secure homeowners insurance last March when we moved here and I am sure everyone has or will experience increases to their premiums. As a recent volunteer to the Metro Board, and discussing the California fires with other neighbors, I now realize the importance of earning the designation as a Firewise Community as well as attending meetings with the Board of Directors for the Black Forest Fire Department.

Stepping Up Our Firewise Designation Efforts

Aside from ongoing fire mitigation, the single most important action we can take is to become a Firewise Community. Firewise is a national program to raise awareness and educate homeowners regarding how to mitigate the fire risk around their homes and property. A single homeowner can protect their home, an active neighborhood can protect many homes, including their neighbors' homes, and an active community can save the forest we cherish. It could not be clearer than the results of the Black Forest Fire how successful we can be by taking active measures to protect our community. You can see the contrast every time you drive into the neighborhood. The Metro board champions the Firewise initiative, but since it is a community volunteer activity, it will be sponsored and overseen through a committee of volunteers from both the Cathedral Pines HOA, the Cathedral Pines Metro Board, and volunteer citizens of our community.





We are asking for volunteers to participate in discussions to advance the Firewise initiative in Cathedral Pines!

If you are interested in contributing to these efforts, please contact Scott Gassen at scott.g@cathedralpinesmd.colorado.gov or Kevin Ehlers of the HOA Board at kevin.ehlers@cathedralpineshoa.org.

If you feel you cannot commit the time now, at a minimum we would ask; please, Please, PLEASE familiarize yourselves with excellent information available to protect your home and community on the Firewise website at:

CLICK HERE

2025 Spring Chipping Event Dates Announced



One of our annual Rites of Spring is the Cathedral Pines Chipping Event, where residents can place their slash to be removed along the curbside for pickup and disposal.

The first chipping event begins Tuesday, May 27, which is the day after Memorial Day (giving residents the holiday weekend for any last-minute clean-up) The second date is tentatively scheduled for the end of September, beginning the week of 9/29.

As a reminder, the first chipping date will be for residents to gather all of the deadfall that occurred over the winter, as well as disposing of any dead trees on your property. This is not a time for pruning or removal of live trees as that would attract pine beetles; fall is much better for that.

ALL SLASH MUST BE PLACED ROADSIDE NO LATER THAN END OF DAY MONDAY, MAY 26.

Chippers are booked though the summer, so we cannot make last-minute additions that cause delays for other communities!

SLASH PILES CAN BE NO LARGER THAT 5FT X 5FT X 5FT. PILES CAN BE PLACED CURBSIDE THE WEEK BEFORE PICKUP - NO SOONER!

Register by Friday, May 16

REGISTER HERE >



Turmoil in the Black Forest Fire Department



In case you are not aware, Cathedral Pines is served by two different stations of the Black Forest Fire Department—one located at the intersection of Burgess Road and Black Forest Road at 11445 Teachout Road, and the second is at 12540 Black Forest Road—depending upon which area of Cathedral Pines is affected.

Regarding the recent BFFD board meetings, it has been distressing to learn that there are 3 vacancies in key leadership positions. We have an Interim Fire Chief (currently vacant), as well as vacancies for Deputy Chief and Training Captain. The BFFD board hired an industry consultant to help them determine the best path forward due to these vacancies and what options might be available for the area.

In the statement below, Terry Stokka from the neighboring Black Forest community and the organizer of FriendsOfBlackForest.org, summarized it best in the following column distributed via e-mail in March. You can look up the full report on the BFFD website by clicking [here](#). Republished with his permission the following is Terry's report to the community.

Dear Friends,

I attended the second Black Forest fire department meeting last week and want to give you a report.

The consultant hired to evaluate our situation and options is Dan Peterson, a 40-year career veteran of the fire department business. He was the Fire Chief in a consolidated fire authority that encompassed a half million people and had many independent fire districts. He comes to this issue with a deep level of experience and knowledge.

Dan presented a 39-page report to the Board on what he has seen in the month he has been examining the department and interviewing people. I have asked for an electronic copy of the report and will send it to any of you who want it. Please reply to me if you want a copy.

Most of the report detailed the financial status of the department, volume of calls, the equipment the BFFD owns, and the personnel involved. He made suggestions in many areas, including three basic options for managing the department going forward. He went into detail as to what would be involved and what the pros and cons of each option would be. The Board and audience had questions, but no decision or conclusions were reached (nor were any expected at this early stage of the discussion).



By way of review here are the options:

Option 1. Stay as an independent fire district. This would require that we hire a fire chief who would then hire a deputy and training caption to round out the executive staff. The budget for 2025 calls for 40 full-time, 6 wild land full-time, and 5 volunteers with 10 vacancies currently. The equipment is generally in good shape, and they have two new fire stations. The district always has a minimum of 6 personnel on duty. Recruiting new staff is challenging because other districts can pay more. This also means that personnel turn-over is faster with an average stay of 3.5 years. As a comparison, Monument's average stay is 9.3 years.

Option 2. Contract out some of the pieces to other fire departments. Monument is the most likely because Falcon is not interested in absorbing other areas. Colorado Springs says the differences between our rural, timbered area and their urban area make it difficult to consider contracts or mergers.

We could contract Executive functions and have the fire chief from Monument be the fire chief for both districts. We could contract administrative functions such as hiring and firing, payroll, etc. We could contract training, vehicle maintenance and other things. Our fire Board would remain to take care of budget, policy and other related items. This option would allow flexibility to change things more easily as we see how the arrangement would work.

Option 3. Merging is combining two districts into one. Monument would be the only likely possibility, and they are open to talking about it. In the last few years, Tri-Lakes and Wescott merged into the Monument fire district. That process takes several years to complete and would require a vote of the Black Forest citizens to approve it. Our Board would then cease to exist and all functions would be taken over by the merged district.

Merging would mean more taxes for us since Monument pays more to their personnel. One interesting tidbit is that even in a merger, we could still maintain our Black Forest name on the equipment, uniforms and station. At this point the fire board will decide which option to pursue. I will try to keep you updated as I hear information.

Terry Stokka
FriendsofBlackForest.org

With the California fires in mind and the BFFD situation we feel a real sense of urgency to get these efforts underway as soon as possible. We are asking everyone in the community to support the Firewise efforts in any way you can. The chipping program is a great way to participate and mowing your grass more often than the HOA requirements helps as well. Volunteering as a group will push this forward faster. (continued on page 9)



My wife Karen and I would like to put together a list of arborists, landscapers and contractors that can help with this work as well as put together an event hopefully with BFFD, a local arborist, and possibly a Firewise representative from a nearby community. Unfortunately, this takes time, we are small business owners, and both working beyond full time. We have a lot of great volunteers on the Metro Board and the HOA, but we really need more help if you can spare a few hours a week to help get this going please get in touch.

The Board wishes to thank Scott Gassen for heading up this initiative and writing this article.

Mail Kiosk Security Update

After a year of extensive study, conversations with nearby communities, consultation with the El Paso County Sheriff's Department, and soliciting proposals from multiple resources, the Cathedral Pines Board presented a plan at its annual meeting to install decorative security fencing around our mail kiosk. The fencing, which would have cost approx. \$30,000, was in response to the mail and package theft some of our residents experienced during the 2023 holiday season into Spring 2024. The Board explored other options, including adding security cameras and other surveillance, but ultimately recommended this solution as the best option to prevent unauthorized access to this area.



Fortunately, last Spring the Sheriff's Department arrested the criminal responsible for gaining access to mail kiosks (also known as cluster boxes) in Peyton, Parker and Colorado Springs by fabricating master keys from dinner knives. At that time, investigators needed a moving truck, two vans and four tow trucks to transport all the evidence gathered at the thief's residence and storage unit. After his arrest the number of mail thefts materially declined with few reported since. The felon, who had a previous criminal record, was charged with possession of stolen mail, aggravated identity theft, methamphetamine distribution, and felony possession of a firearm, was sentenced to five years in federal prison earlier this month.

In light of the arrest, the decline in recent theft or vandalism, and steps taken to better secure the outgoing mail chutes (which also contain the lever for accessing individual mailboxes), feedback from those residents in attendance at our annual meeting recommended not to proceed with the new security fencing project. In light of this feedback the Board has postponed any further action unless additional criminal activity occurs. However, it will proceed with the landscaping upgrade in the kiosk area planned for later this year.

So Long, Farewell, Auf Wiedersehen, Adieu...



On March 28th we bid adieu to Jeff Hanson, who has been the primary mail carrier for Cathedral Pines for a number of years. Jeff has retired after a career as a rural carrier for the Colorado Springs USPS Briargate location. Jeff was cited at our annual meeting in February and given a plaque acknowledging his great service to Cathedral Pines residents along with gift cards from both the HOA and Metro boards. Jeff went out of his way to give us excellent service—while carriers are only required to deliver packages to either our mail kiosk or within 6 blocks of the kiosk, Jeff would deliver many packages to our front door no matter where we lived in CP. The USPS has not yet appointed a replacement to Jeff so we will have temporary carriers during the interim period.

A Poetic Thought.....

While we normally do not post “non-CP news” items, our editor recently received the following poem that was authored by one of our residents, Bruce Bruinsma. It seemed appropriate to share it with our community, albeit a month or two late, and Bruce has graciously allowed us to do so. Thanks Bruce!

Breakfast View

At the table, we sit, the day unfolds,
A quiet peace, a story untold.
The sky, so blue, an endless expanse,
Pulls our hearts in a tranquil dance.

Tall pines stand proud, their needles bright,
Green against the sky's soft light.
A steadfast frame to winter's glow,
Their majesty crowned by lingering snow.

The brightness spills across the ground,
A quiet shimmer, a silence profound.
Each snowflake sparkles, a fleeting gem,
A fleeting whisper, nature's hymn.

How soothing it is, this morning scene,
A gentle balance of blue and green.
The world feels still, yet alive and whole,
A calming balm for a restless soul.

With every breath, a moment to savor,
The gift of beauty, the morning's favor.
Together we sit, no words need say,
What a wonderful start to this winter's day.

Cathedral Pines Metropolitan District Information

2025 MEETING SCHEDULE

Board meetings are every third Tuesday of the month in **The Lodge at Cathedral Pines at 9 a.m.**, unless noted otherwise below.

<p>January 21</p> <p>February 18 (at 6pm)</p> <p>March 18</p> <p>April 15</p> <p>May 20</p> <p>June 17</p>	<p>July 15</p> <p>August 19</p> <p>September 16</p> <p>October 21</p> <p>November 18 (at 6pm)</p> <p>December 16</p>
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All dates subject to change. Any changes will be announced on the community bulletin board and via email to those who have signed up for the Metro District email list.

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS

General Board Contact: board@cathedralpinesmd.com

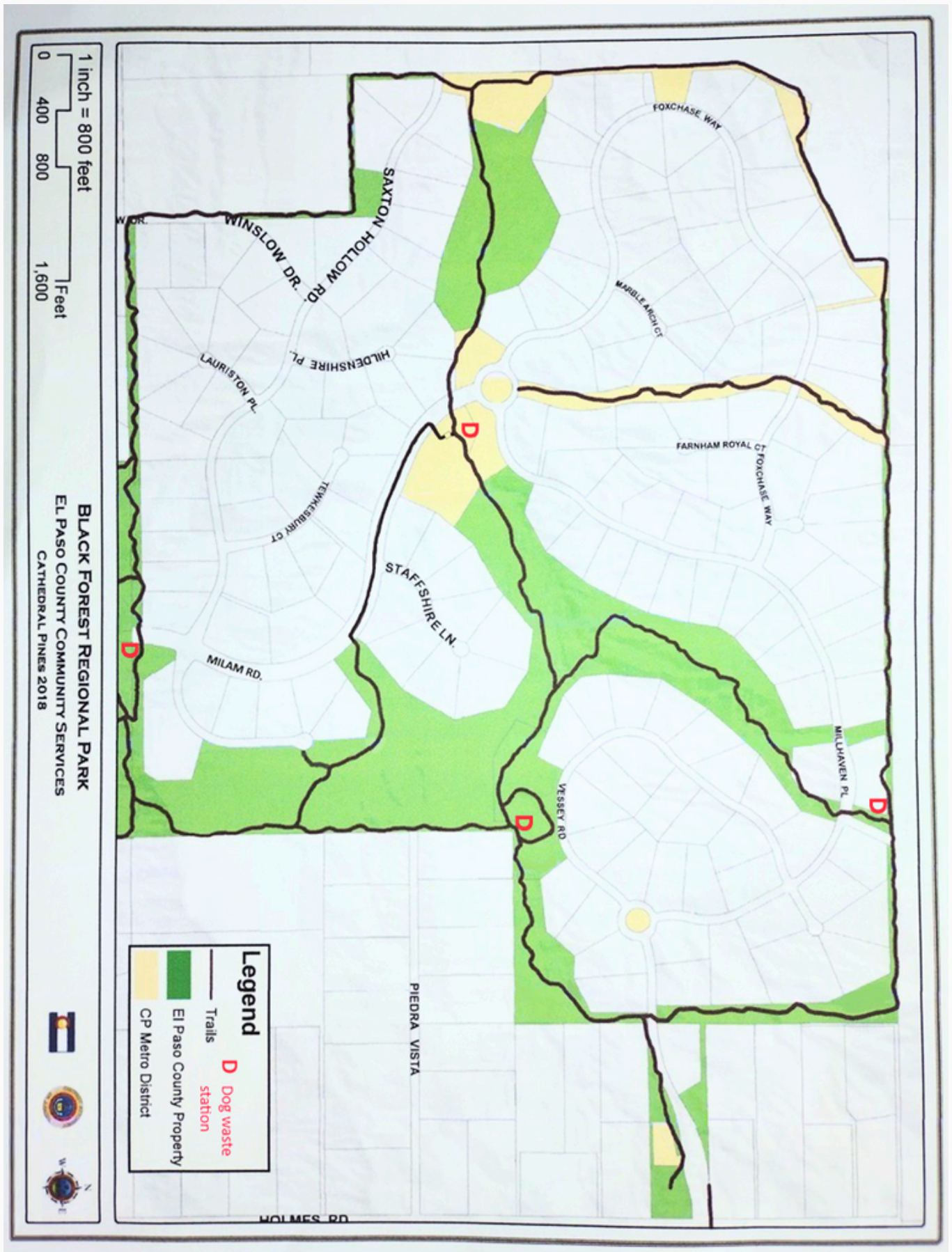
Office	Name	Term Expiration	Phone	Email
President	Bill Heeter	May 2027	920-205-5605	bill.h@cathedralpinesmd.org
Vice President	Rick Stauch	May 2029	719-260-9236	rick.s@cathedralpinesmd.org
Treasurer	Kevin Combs	May 2027		kevin.c@cathedralpinesmd.org
Secretary	Ecton Espenlaub	May 2029	719-822-0410	ecton.e@cathedralpinesmd.org
Director	Scott Glassen	May 2029		scott.g@cathedralpinesmd.org

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Rebecca Harris District Manager	Office: 719-447-1777 Cell: 719-266-3189	rebecca.h@wsdistricts.co
Danielle Daigle-Chavez Assistant District Manager	Office: 719-447-1777 x 111	danielle.d@wsdistricts.co

 <https://cathedralpinesmd.colorado.gov/>

Cathedral Pines Metropolitan District Trail Map



Cathedral Pines Metropolitan District District Map

CATHEDRAL PINES METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

