



AUGUST 2024

Metro Board Opening

*Now is Your Chance to Contribute to
Our Community!*

Due to a recent resignation, there is now a vacant position on the 5-member Board of Directors for Cathedral Pines Metropolitan District. The Board is eager to fill this position to complete the term through May 2025! If you or someone you know is interested in serving on the Board, please contact Rebecca Harris, District Manager at WSDM (rebecca.h@wsdistricts.co), with a Letter of Interest by **August 31, 2024**.

The Cathedral Pines Metro's Interview Committee will meet with each eligible applicant prior to the September 17, 2024 Board meeting, at which time the new member will be appointed to the vacant position. For more information about the position click here: [Cathedral Pines Metro District](#).



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Fall Chipping Event - September 30

All participants must register by Friday, September 27

Register now to have your yard debris removed! The Metro Board arranged for Tall Timbers to collect slash and remove any debris, including your seedlings, during the week of September 30.



CLICK TO REGISTER

Please note that there is a change in our policy - slash may not be placed curbside more than two weeks prior to the event, but must be curbside the first day of the event. This allows Tall Timbers to plan their route in advance and minimize any missed homes. Because the chippers are booked throughout the fall, we cannot make last-minute additions to homes requesting the service that would delay their work in other communities.

Huzzah! Things are Looking UP (and Down)!

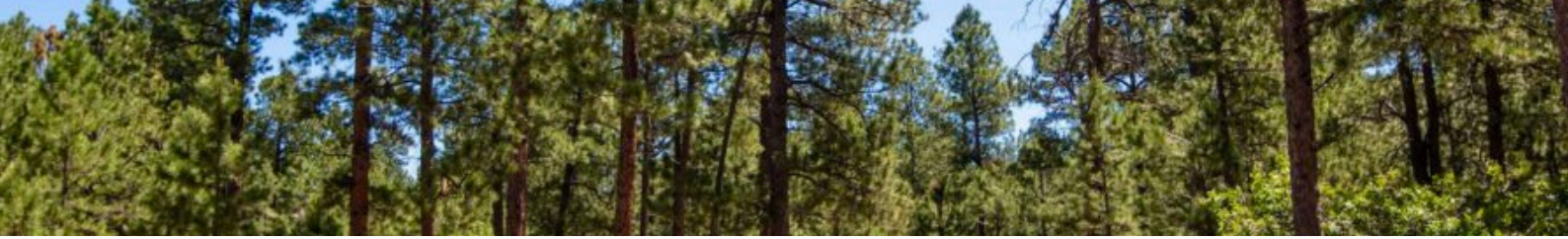
Yes, significant progress has been made on the Milam median and is nearing completion. Two additional projects are still in progress: additional mulch will be deposited to increase its density in certain spots; and the new fescue sod and reseeding of areas will be completed within days. The goal of overseeding the existing grass is to eventually replace much of the Kentucky bluegrass, a "water-drinker" currently growing there, with fescue, which grows more slowly but requires much less water.

Many thanks to our residents for their patience during this lengthy renovation process. The Board acknowledges it took much longer than anticipated, but hopefully between the new plantings, the stone trail, new grass, completely new irrigation system, and resurfaced roads, we can once again be proud of our entrance into Cathedral Pines.

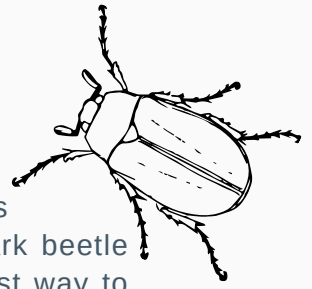


Before & After





Thin Those Seedlings...PLEASE!



Past land management practices have resulted in nearby Ponderosa pine stands that were overly dense and prone to catastrophic wildfires and subsequent bark beetle outbreaks like those experienced in Black Forest in 2013 and beyond. The best way to reduce the wildfire threat, drought damage, and attacks by bark beetles in our neighborhood is to lower stand density through seedling thinning. An additional benefit from reducing seedling density is that remaining trees will grow more rapidly than when in an over-grown condition.

One idiosyncrasy of Ponderosa pines is that they are spread by wind and animals but their seeds flourish in areas that have been burned or thinned by fire. As a consequence of the Black Forest fire in 2013, many seeds were spread throughout Cathedral Pines resulting in “mini-forests” of dense seedlings on many property hillsides. Those seedlings are now reaching a stage whereby they pose a new fire hazard and are starting to affect the growth of nearby trees. In addition, weakened trees are more susceptible to Mistletoe and other invasive growths.



Bark Beetle tunnel

Seedling

Dense seedlings



So How Do I Thin My Seedlings?



It is actually very easy! Many under 12" in height can simply be pulled from the ground, especially when growing in sandy conditions. The best approach is to seek the largest/healthiest tree in the immediate area and give the selected tree at least 6 ft. of open space in all directions (the optimal spacing between mature trees is 15 ft., but this method allows for future thinning and a "safety net" in case of unexpected die-off of the remaining trees.)

If your seedlings are taller, they can be cut at the ground with a pruning shears or branch limbers; the root system will typically die rather than resprout. If you have a particularly sandy hillside you may want to remove the seedlings over several seasons to prevent erosion of the soil as roots are removed. Of course, the largest trees can either be downed using a chain saw cutting just above ground level, or via delimiting and cutting into sections.

Thinning of your seedlings is not only the right thing to do for the trees and your property, but it is your obligation as a responsible community member. Seedlings can act as "ladder fuel" thus spreading fires, as can mature trees that have not been mitigated. Please do your part to assure that Cathedral Pines remains a "Smoke Free Zone."



The Cathedral Pines Metro District needs volunteers to help clean up the area near the storage shed at Vessey and Holmes. Over time, the area has become cluttered with tree stumps, branches, and dead brush.

Help us improve the look of our neighborhood and assist with fire mitigation. Join us for a few hours, meet your neighbors, and make a difference!

VOLUNTEER CLEANUP EVENT

When: Saturday, September 21st @ 9 a.m.

Meet: Yellow storage shed off Vessey Rd. near Holmes

Bring: Weed whippers, branch limbers, clippers, & other landscaping tools

Provided: Gloves, water, & garbage bags

Rain Date: Saturday, September 28th

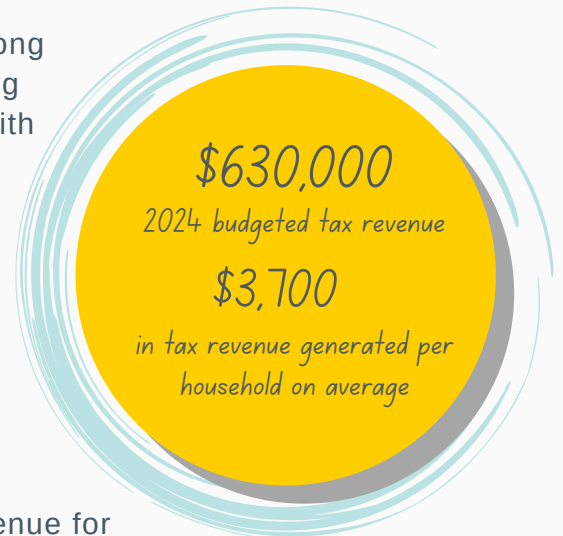
[CLICK TO REGISTER](#)



Metro District Mid-Year Financial Review

The financial position of the Metro District (MD) remains strong through June 30, 2024. Income and expenses are in keeping with the budget established last year for Fiscal Year 2024 with only a few minor exceptions.

You may recall that during the fourth quarter of 2023, Colorado state legislators were torn on how to proceed with the property taxation for 2024. The MD Board is required to certify the mill levy by December 15 of each year and because of the uncertainty of how the election was going to turn out the Board decided to LOWER the mill levy rate for 2024 to 17.000 mills for debt obligation and 19.000 mills for operations. As a result, the MD's property tax budgeted revenue for 2024 totals \$630,000. On average this represents \$3,700 per lot for residents of Cathedral Pines and appears as a separate line item on each individual property tax bill. Nearly half of this amount is used to pay the principal and interest (currently 4%) on the original 40 year, \$5.6 million bond issue that the developers of Cathedral Pines floated to provide the infrastructure (e.g., roads, water, irrigation, ponds) for our district. The remainder is used for the annual operations of the District (e.g., snow plowing, landscape maintenance, Lodge maintenance, repairs of community fixed assets).



Tax revenue is used to pay back the bond for District roads, water, irrigation, ponds & annual District operations - snow plowing, landscape maintenance and The Lodge maintenance.

As of June 30, property tax revenues are slightly less than budgeted likely because more residents elected to pay their tax liability in two installments (second installment due in June) rather than one installment due in April of each year. The Board anticipates receiving additional funds from the county in July that will approximate the total amount budgeted for 2024. In addition to the property tax revenue, The Lodge rentals have exceeded expectations and are more in line with pre-COVID revenues. This is in a large part due to a dedicated Lodge manager who has been diligent in showing The Lodge to prospective renters, managing the Lodge events well, coupled with the Board's decision to hire an outside marketing company to promote the rental of the Lodge. The marketing company comes as an additional expense in this year, but the additional revenues recognized thus far exceed this additional cost. (continued page 6)



The most notable expense fluctuations to date include our scheduled annual audit, landscape maintenance, landscape upgrade and The Lodge repairs. The independent audit was just completed in July with a clean opinion and no exceptions, so the budgeted amount of \$9,600 for the audit will be paid this month. Our newly contracted landscape maintenance company, LandTech, is a bit behind on issuing bills and will likely catch up in July. This will result in Landscape Maintenance expense to be about the same level as the amount budgeted to date. The Landscape Upgrade was largely completed in July and the MD will be paying these bills shortly, again in keeping with budgeted amounts. Lastly, The Lodge repairs have exceeded budgeted amounts largely because of the repairs directly being paid from the set aside Reserve Money (ie; asphalt, The Lodge re-varnishing) also to include the timing of expenditures for mailbox repairs versus the reimbursement from an insurance company for the cost of said repairs. Also note that an individual was apprehended this past May in connection with several mailbox thefts throughout El Paso County in which Cathedral Pines likely fell victim to as well. We hope this will curtail further expense to replace and repair our mailboxes because of criminal activities.

If you recall, this Board engaged a firm to perform a Reserve Audit that would establish an annual amount set aside for repairs and required significant maintenance of the MD fixed assets. The study suggested that the MD reserve funds of \$25,000 per year for such anticipated costs. The amount of this reserve as of the year ending 2023 was \$50,000, this does not include the additional \$25,000 contributed during the 2024 fiscal year. During the first half of this year Cathedral Pines has required the use of these funds. Fortunately, there was enough funds to cover roughly \$6,000 in irrigation pump repairs, \$6,000 to replace a failed air conditioner compressor for The Lodge, \$26,000 for asphalt repairs and expansion of The Lodge parking lot, and \$6,000 to strip and revarnish two sides of The Lodge.



There are no other significant future cash requirements known to the Board other than ongoing maintenance costs. The MD financial health remains strong, and the Board continues to maintain and preserve the community's assets as well as upgrade landscaping to further enhance the beauty of our community. If you have any concerns or questions regarding the MD financials or how our funds are being spent, you can always reach out to a Board member, attend a regular monthly meeting, or ask the Management Team.



...to the El Paso County Department of Public Works and Engineering Departments for resurfacing Milam Road and resealing other roads in our neighborhood. Last fall's efforts did little to mitigate the road problems, but EPC moved up our timetable to get the roads redone and fill in the significant ditches alongside them. Along with the Milam median work, the entrance to our community now looks the best it has looked in years.

Caution: Invasion of the Lawn Snatchers is Again Under Way!



As you may have noticed, with the nice rains we've had recently one of the unwanted side effects is a bumper crop of invasive weeds. There are a number of them in particular that are crowding our native grasses and damaging our trees: Yellow Toadflax, Mullein, Canadian Thistle, Knapweed, Bindweed and Mistletoe (unfortunately not the kissing kind)! All five plants are invasive species and unless controlled

can crowd out desired grasses and groundcover and rob trees of critical nutrients. And unfortunately, they are not easily eliminated, especially if they get well established. Below are some recommendations on controlling our unwanted invaders.

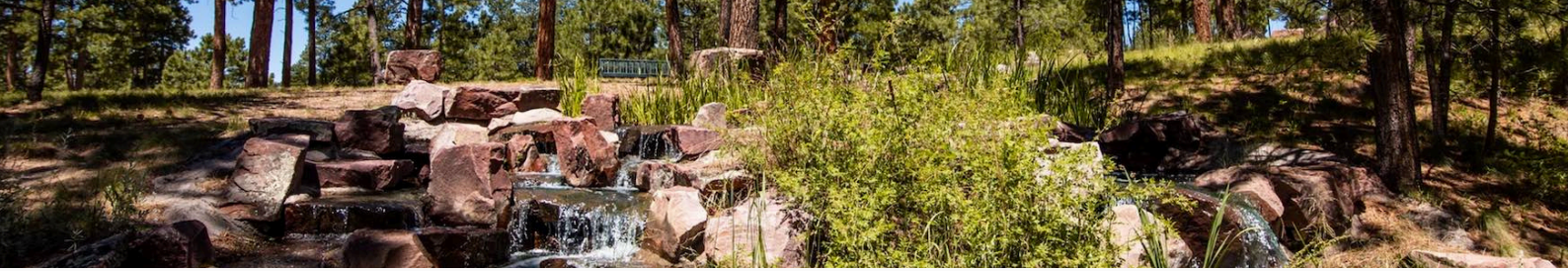


Vinegar Herbicide Guidelines



1. Target young weeds. Don't let the weeds get away from you and expect to have good results.
2. Spray the weeds thoroughly. It is not good enough to get a little on each weed.
3. Make applications on warm, dry days. when rain is not forecast.
4. Be very careful not to ham valuable plants with drift. Vinegar herbicides don't discriminate between good and bad plants.
5. Read label carefully for safety requirements for goggles, gloves. etc.

By the way, Roundup-like products can kill most weeds, but if you prefer a more natural approach try using vinegar herbicides (see recipe on p. 8). If you decide to make a vinegar herbicide on your own, follow the Vinegar Herbicide Guidelines. In addition, concentrated vinegar solutions for weed killing are available at Home Depot and online on Amazon.



So Here are the Culprits...

Yellow Toadflax

Use a weed killer with glyphosate (like RoundUp) in the late summer and fall when the plants are blooming. They are most susceptible to pesticides when the root system is trying to support both growth and blossoming. Simply pulling yellow toadflax is not effective as its root systems can extend over a long area and any part left in the ground will just regenerate itself.



Yellow Toadflax



Mullein

DIY Weed Killer Recipe

The general ratio is as follows:

- 1 gallon 5% (or stronger) vinegar
- 1 cup Castile Soap (like Dr. Bronner's or Brittanie's Thyme liquid soaps)
- 1 garden sprayer

Mullein

Mullein can be eliminated in two ways. Because it blossoms biannually, the best way is to kill it in year one when the plants are small and simply have leaves and rosettes near the ground. Most common weed killers will do the job, or they can be pulled as long as the roots system comes along with the leaves. (Trick: pinch the plant right below its base to remove both the leaves and roots.)

In year two the plants will sprout and can grow to a height of 3-4 ft. with large pods that can carry as many as 10,000 seeds. However, because they have a small tap root system, the larger plants can be easily pulled from the ground.

Unfortunately, simply cutting mullein stalks does not work; it is one pesky plant and will just regrow unless its roots are completely removed or destroyed by a pesticide.



Thistle

Like mullein, the best time to eliminate thistle is before it blossoms. Each thistle plant blossom can have thousands of seeds, so you want to eliminate it before they spread. However, unlike mullein, you do not want to try to pull the plant as it can break off the root system (which can often extend 4-6 ft.) and regrow. However, frequent mowing stresses its root system, reducing its growth and eventually allowing other grasses to assume its place. Also, common weed killers that can be used safely in grassy areas are also effective in controlling thistle.



Knapweed

Knapweed is a deep-rooted creeping perennial that reproduces both through buds on its roots and also from seed. It is particularly problematic because it releases a toxic substance that inhibits the growth of surrounding plants. Knapweed can be controlled by mowing it several times before it bolts. A fall herbicide treatment is also helpful; be sure your product contains chlorsulfuron or aminopyralid.

Bindweed

Bindweed is a deeply rooted perennial that reproduces through seeds and rhizomes. Taproots can extend up to 20 ft. deep and seeds can remain viable for up to 40 years. **(Ed. Note: Yikes!)** Its flowers are white to light pink, are trumpet or bell shaped; and its leaves are arrowhead shaped. Like some of the other villainous weeds, simply mowing over bindweed does not kill it because of its deep root system. The best way to control it is to spray it during the blooming season or during the fall with glyphosate, the same chemical that kills many other weeds and is the principal ingredient in Roundup.





Mistletoe (*Phoradendron spp.*)

At least the kind we are talking about - is a parasitic evergreen shrub that sends its rootlike structures into tree branches, where they absorb water and minerals. In severe infestations, mistletoe can kill a tree by robbing it of nutrients.

If your tree has mistletoe growing on it, it is important that you address it immediately as birds can spread mistletoe seeds to other local trees and thus infect them. Unfortunately, the only way to really control it is to remove it. However, its growth can be slowed (but not completely eliminated) by pruning at least 14 inches toward the tree away from where the mistletoe attaches to the outside. This will not prevent more mistletoe shrubs growing from seeds that germinate nearby, but it will stop your tree from losing water and nutrients to existing mistletoe parasites.



If removing trees or pruning branches is impractical because of aesthetics, tree height or because the number of removed limbs would leave the tree bare, you can remove each mistletoe shrub. Typically, 80 percent of all pruned shrubs regenerate after one to three years, but this procedure reduces the water loss from your tree, which may slow or halt its decline.

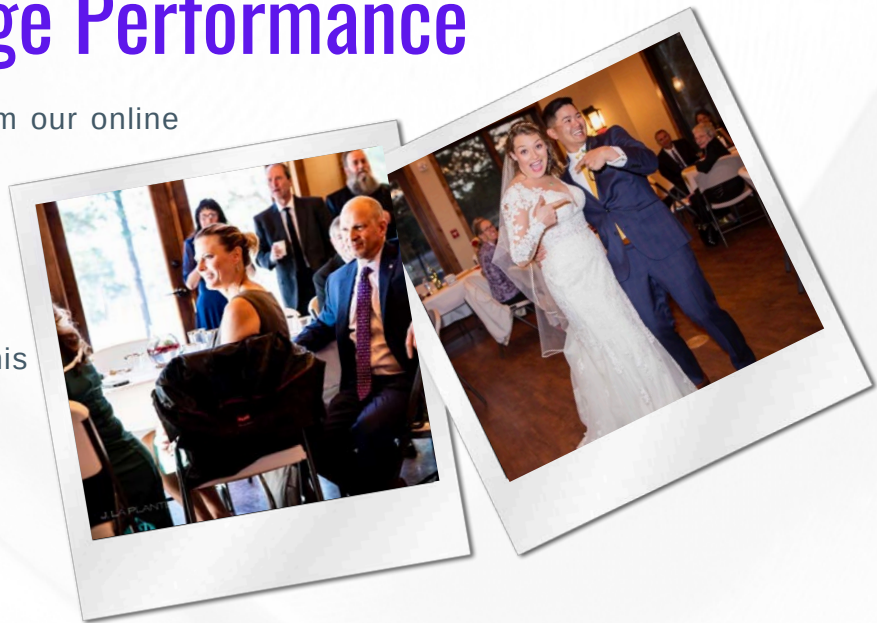
The El Paso County Environmental Services, Forest Management and Noxious Weeds Specialist will be touring the neighborhood in August looking for properties that have invasive weed issues, and letters will be sent to those residents requesting them to take appropriate action to prevent the spread of “the invaders.”





Update on The Lodge Performance

We continue to see positive results from our online marketing efforts, with Lodge revenues already substantially exceeding our budgeted amounts and additional business to be booked yet this year. Through August MTD we have booked over \$130,000 in business for this year with an additional \$20,000 or so anticipated by year-end, and a number of commitments already made for 2025. Our expenses are also up due to higher Lodge management fees (the Lodge Manager was recently put on an incentive program for her performance) as well as the online marketing consultant hired approx. one year ago.



As an example of the increased interest in the Lodge, the number of inquiries made in July 2024 alone was 3 times that made a year ago in July, when our website was relaunched and the consultant engaged. Our next objective is to increase holiday bookings, as we have yet to really exploit that opportunity. A plan is currently being developed to improve our holiday bookings by funneling holiday rental inquiries directly through a new “Holiday Rentals” website page.

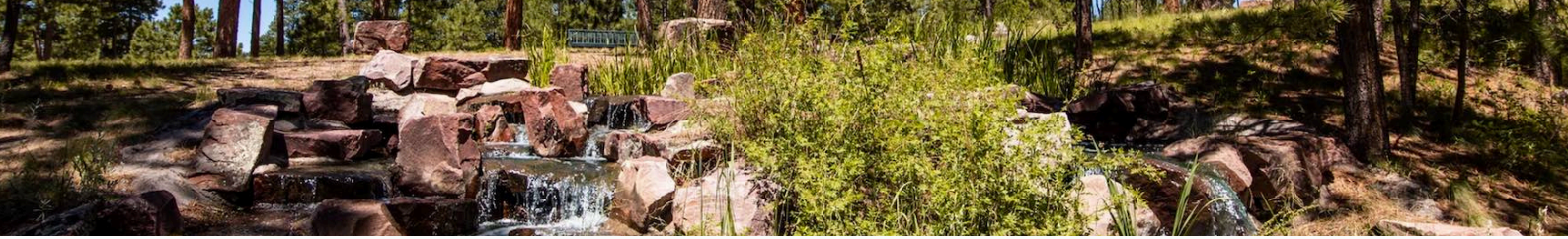
And yes, the plan is to continue our new tradition of lighting the Lodge and mail kiosk area for the holidays and installing the lighted reindeer and wreaths near our entry monuments!

Mailbox Security Update

As reported in previous newsletters, the Mailbox Security Committee the Metro Board formed earlier this year recommended installing decorative fencing around the mail kiosk area to provide additional security against parcel locker theft. There have been several developments that have impacted that plan, as follows.

First, the good news is that on May 21, 2024, the El Paso County Sheriff’s Office Investigations Division and CSPD Tactical Enforcement Unit arrested 40-year-old Adam Turner on multiple felony charges related to a year-long mail theft operation which impacted (continued page 12)





neighborhoods in El Paso County. The investigation developed from January 2023 through May 2024, during which time detectives linked the suspect to a multitude of victims involving thefts from community mailboxes in El Paso County and Parker, Colorado.

Although Turner’s arrest certainly comes as good news regarding the more recent theft of parcels from our lockers, it doesn’t prevent the break-ins similar to those sustained in 2023 where mail slots were simply pried open and parcels stolen. As a result, the Board is continuing to pursue the construction of the fencing. Unfortunately, the original contract was given to a vendor who has been unable to complete the work due to a commitment to Parade of Homes builders. Therefore, other contractors have now been identified and proposals sought to continue the work, with the goal of still having the work completed yet this year. Click here for more information about the suspect: [US Attorney’s Office](#) & [El Paso County Sheriff’s Office](#).

Give us Your (Dog’s) Poo!

Yes, our Dog Waste Stations are now installed and ready for your pet’s use. If your pet is not toilet trained or for some reason decides to leave an editorial comment for your neighbor, please pick it up and place it in one of four conveniently located Dog Waste Stations located along our trails (see attached map for locations). And as a reminder, please do NOT deposit dog waste in the Lodge dumpsters; it may leave an objectionable odor during events held there, which none of us would appreciate.



**DON'T FORGET TO
SUBSCRIBE**

[Subscribe Here](#)

Just because you are on the HOA email list, doesn't mean you are on the Metro District email list!

Thank you for reading!

Cathedral Pines Metropolitan District Information

2024 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.

Tuesday, September 17	Tuesday, November 19 <i>(meeting starts at 6pm)</i>
Tuesday, October 15	Tuesday, December 17

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

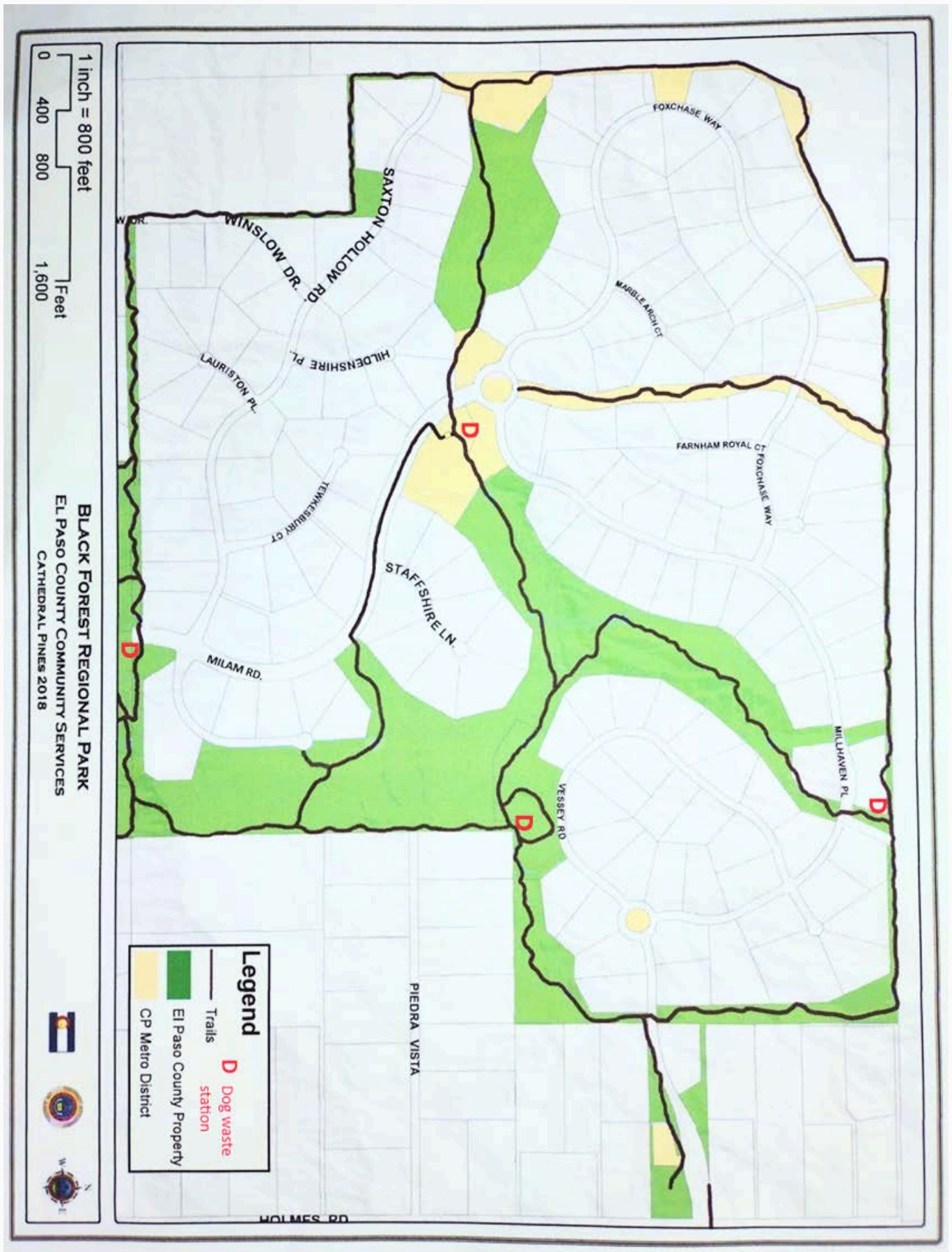
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Vacant		May 2025		

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT MANAGEMENT TEAM

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

Cathedral Pines Metropolitan District Trail Map



Cathedral Pines Metropolitan District District Map

CATHEDRAL PINES METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

