

September—2023



Newsletter

Volume No. 3

Volunteers Needed For This Saturday!

The Cathedral Pines Metro District owns a storage shed near the intersection of Vessey and Holmes. The area is adjacent to a County trails parking lot on Vessey and used to house our landscaping equipment until that responsibility was outsourced to A Cut Above Landscaping. Unfortunately, over the years the area has begun to accumulate tree stumps, branches, slash, and dead brush and has become a bit of a mess—not the kind of entry we would like to our community when entering on Vessey from Holmes. Do you have time this Saturday morning from 9 a.m. on to help us clean up the area?

We need volunteers who will bring their weed whippers, branch limbers, clippers, and other landscaping tools to help us clean up the area. We will be moving branches and other slash to the curb, where it will be picked up as part of our September chipping event. It is not difficult work, you can work as long as you would like, socialize with your neighbors (and maybe meet some new ones!), and help improve the aesthetics of our community. The Metro will provide gloves, water, and garbage bags, but we need your manpower! Please plan to join us on Saturday, September 9th at 9 a.m. at the yellow storage shed on Vessey to help improve the look of our neighborhood and assist with the required fire mitigation of vegetation there. Thanks in advance for your assistance!

Be Sure to Sign Up for Our Newsletter!

Since you are reading this you probably have already done so, but please encourage your friends and neighbors to sign up as well. As of September 1st, only 69 residents of over 300 in our community have signed up to receive Metro emails, which means many are not “in the know” of the latest developments in our community. It is easy to do and only takes a few minutes. Simply go the Cathedral Pines Metro Website, find the E-Mail Sign-Up form on the main page, and follow the instructions. Easy to do and it will answer a lot of your questions.

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Irrigation System Replacement Update

Work on the sprinkler system in the Milam median is proceeding, though not as quickly as we would like. The middle half, from the Lodge entrance to the south of Staffshire, has been leveled and cleared of the old Blue Grass sod to prepare it for landscaping in addition to the new sprinkler system. About half of the sod/dirt that was removed was used to help reclaim the area south of the Lodge by the pond that was damaged during the mitigation after the fire. The trail there is being relocated slightly and, when finished, will have gray gravel similar to the red gravel that the

County put on the trail along the southern edge of Cathedral Pines several years ago. Not having to haul any of the dirt away from the community has saved us both time and expense.

The trenching for the main and edge water lines is nearly done. The dirt piled up along the trench will be used to refill the trench after the plumbing is completed. Dirt from the main trench through sod that will remain was temporarily removed from the median to protect the sod from being

covered for too long. During one of our recent thunderstorms, one of the trees in the median near Staffshire was struck by lightning, which blasted a long section of bark and sapwood off the tree almost eight inches wide. The power of steam from the sap is amazing! We are fortunate that our wet spring has relieved most of the water stress on our trees, helping them to probably be their healthiest in a decade. The trenching tried to avoid the main root cores of the trees, which should allow them to regrow lateral roots where they were cut for the trench. The path will mostly follow the trench line, and even after removing some of the damaged

branches, some additional branches will still need to be removed to allow people to walk on the path.

The pace of work is picking up. The Working in the Right-of-Way permits were approved by the county, and cutting the pavement and trenching sleeves for the water lines should be completed in early

September. There may be some intraday detours during the trenching. We will try to minimize the inconvenience, but there may be times when it will be necessary to go on to the next break in the median and come back to get where you need to go. All the asphalt repairs will probably wait

until they can all be done at once. Early September should also see the completion of most of the plumbing line installation.



Irrigation Project Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the sprinkler system being replaced?

We have been having almost yearly issues with leaks in the water main down Milam due primarily to its age. The current water main is a six-inch iron pipe buried ten feet down that typically costs \$10,000 or more each time to repair when there is a leak, or a valve fails. Unfortunately, those valves are often placed right in our roadway, disrupting traffic as well. The new system will be 2-inch polyethylene pipe about three feet down in the median, which will make detection and repairs much easier.

In addition, the sprinkler units themselves are being replaced with much more water efficient and programmable controls, which are expected to significantly reduce our water consumption while maintaining a green, attractive entrance to our community. Since the system is drained each fall there will be no need for the deeper water main.

Will any of the existing Ponderosa pines be removed?

No, the goal is to maintain every single one of the existing trees in the median. Although the root system to a number of trees has been exposed, those roots were already severed and no longer feed the tree, which will grow a new root system. The Ponderosas this year are as healthy as they have been in years due to the decline of the bark beetle and heavy precipitation this year. In addition, Ponderosas are one of the most resilient pines and the remaining root system should be enough to maintain the trees' health going forward.

I see there are broken branches on some of the trees. Will that affect their health?

One of the main benefits of the “new” median will be a walking trail that will tie into the existing County trail system near Staffshire and run to the Millhaven roundabout. The branches in this area will need to be trimmed to a height that allows easy passage along the trail, likely to be 6-7 ft., and consistent with other trees in the median. Finally, a number of the trees in the median need to be trimmed higher for proper fire mitigation. Therefore, virtually all of the broken branches will be removed once the installation process is near completion.

What will the plantings be?

Most of the planting areas will be plants such as penstemon, Salvia Sylvestris (meadow sage), Coreopsis verticillate (daisy-like), and Yarrow, in either mixtures or single species. There will also be some groundcover, such as Woolly Speedwell, that has some depth and attractive flowers. Accents in the non-planting areas will be small bushes, plants such as daylilies, ornamental grasses, and boulders with plantings at their base. The goal is to select plants that will thrive in our environment here in Cathedral Pines, add color and interest, be low maintenance, and only require light watering once they are established. Kinnikinnick or Bearberry was suggested, but it is very difficult to transplant.



Will the new system be more water efficient?

The design will reduce water consumption by reducing or eliminating the need for watering where there will not be plantings and using native/low-water, low-maintenance perennials that will add color and interest instead of Kentucky Blue Grass sod which requires a lot of water. The new sprinkler system will have a central control, which will make automatic adjustments and monitoring much easier than working on each of the 24 zone controller nodes. The heads will target the areas to be watered

better, which should reduce overspray, and are expected to only run at night. It is anticipated that the new watering system, with changes in grass species and including more native plantings, may reduce our water consumption by up to 60%.

Did we get a grant to offset some of the costs?

Yes, we applied for and have been awarded a \$40,000 grant from the State to assist us with this irrigation replacement project! (Special thanks to Rebecca Harris at WSDM - District Managers for writing our proposal and guiding it through the State's decision-making process.) The district was notified in May that we were awarded the grant; we will need to submit proof of work to the State to be reimbursed. In addition, there will be a second round of applications offered by the State later this summer. Due to the financial impact of this project, the Metro Board plans to submit a second request seeking additional funding if it is not allocated by the state to other projects.

What input did the community have into this project?

All residents were asked to complete a Landscaping Survey in Spring 2022. Those results were published last fall and discussed at the Annual Metro Board meeting this past February. If you would like to review last year's Landscaping Survey results, they are available in the July 2022 Metro District newsletter, which is available online at the Cathedral Pines Metro Board website: Newsletters. Also, the current landscaping status is discussed at every CP Metro Board meeting and updated in the community newsletter.

How is the project doing so far in relation to its budget?

As of now, the project is running slightly under budget, helped in part by the reduction in trucking costs by redistributing the soil in the community; a reduction in plantings in favor of the newly-created trail; and the State grant discussed above. As stated previously, this is a multi-year project that will be funded through the current mill levy. This year will see the highest investment as the new system is installed.

(The community overwhelmingly endorsed the budgeted amount of \$250,000 in 2023 for this project.)

Once Milam is completed later this fall, the focus will shift in 2024 and 2025 to include upgrading the Lodge grounds, extending the irrigation system to other parts of the community, and eventually including the Homes/Vessey open area.

When will this year's work be completed?

Mid and late September should see the sprinkler system operational and then the trenches filled and landscaping and sod replacement taking place.

Big Changes Coming to Cathedral Pines Roads in 2023-UPDATED!

Latest Update: Our contractors are scheduled to start chip sealing our roads on Wednesday, September 13. The project should take approx. 2-1/2 weeks. Please consider using the Holmes/Vessey entrance during this time to alleviate delays. Thanks for your patience and cooperation!

Due to the heavy rainfall in June and July and the loss of 39 roads in eastern El Paso County, the County's Department of Public Works (DPW) has been delayed. Because of these delays, the County's Chip Sealing season did not begin until July 31, and the County has had to hire contractors to complete the planned work.

What is chip sealing? Chip sealing is often used on lower-traffic asphalt roads and highways that have started to deteriorate but do not currently warrant full repaving. The process of chip sealing involves grinding down and leveling the paved surface, applying a layer of asphalt emulsion to the surface of the road, then spreading a layer of aggregate stone over the top of the emulsion. A roller is then used to press the aggregate into the emulsion. The benefits of chip sealing include extended pavement life, improved traction, better appearance, and reduced noise. Chip sealing is a cost-effective alternative to repaving, is less disruptive to traffic and can be completed in a shorter time frame.

According to the County, the following community roads are scheduled to be chip-sealed this summer:

- Milam Road from Shoup to the Millhaven traffic circle
- Vessey from Holmes Road to the Millhaven traffic circle
- Saxton Hollow from end to end
- Lauriston Place from Saxton Hollow to end
- Hildenshire Place from Saxton Hollow to end
- Tewkesbury Ct. from Saxton Hollow to end
- Winslow Road from Darr to Saxton Hollow
- Fox Chase Way from Millhaven to Milam Road and the Fox Chase Way cul-de-sacs
- Farnham Royal Court from Fox Chase Way to end
- Marble Arch Court from Fox Chase Way to end
- Staffshire Lane from Milam to end



Thin Those Seedlings...PLEASE!

Past land management practices 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 wildfire threat, drought damage, and attacks by bark beetles is to lower stand density through seedling thinning. An additional benefit from reducing stand 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, many seeds were spread throughout Cathedral Pines resulting in “mini-forests” of dense seedlings on our hillsides. Those seedlings are now reaching a stage whereby they pose a 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.

So how do I thin my seedlings? It is actually very easy! Depending upon the size of the seedling, many under 12” in height can 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 scissors; 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.

To facilitate the seedling thinning effort in our community, this fall the Metro Board will be collecting all removed seedlings trees as part of the chipping event beginning the week of September 25. Simply notify WSDM - of your wish to participate in the chipping event this month and place your seedlings on the curb along with any slash. Tall Timbers will be collecting the slash and removing any debris, including your seedlings, beginning on Monday of that week.

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.”



Our New Lodge Website is Now Online! Check it Out!

Earlier this year, the Metro Board evaluated the performance of the Lodge rentals and attempted to identify why sales had not rebounded from the COVID-related decline. Several factors were identified, including the frequent changeover in Lodge management, a move toward more online rather than in-person venue searches and tours, the time lag between reserving the facility and the actual rental, which can often be up to a year; the lack of community awareness of our facility and its advantages; and a website and online marketing effort which was dated and targeted primarily wedding-related rentals.



In an effort to improve its performance, the Board reorganized the responsibilities of the Lodge Manager (Shalece Buchholz) to focus her efforts on tours and day-of-rental supervision and made the decision to hire an online marketing firm to redesign our website and monitor and report website activity.

The result is an entirely new Cathedral Pines Lodge website which we are proud to introduce. Check it out at the following link: <https://cathedralpineslodge.com>

One objective of the website is to broaden our positioning to emphasize how our Lodge is a great venue for a variety of occasions, including family get-togethers, wedding-related ceremonies, corporate events, holiday celebrations, and other special occasions. Three other important goals of the new website are to increase awareness in the community of the Cathedral Pines Lodge; to target businesses for daytime and off-season rentals, and to be able to measure website activity and conversion rate from “interested” to actual bookings. One of the related objectives is to significantly improve our awareness of Search Engines, so our Lodge appears more frequently in Google, Yelp, Facebook, Twitter, and other searches.

Part of this new online marketing program includes frequent updates to our website to keep it more relevant and interesting. Included on our website are 360-degree videos of the venue aimed at two target audiences: bridal/wedding parties, and offsite business meetings. The last element of the marketing program is a series of printed brochures that again highlight the benefits of renting our Lodge. We will be conducting a mailing of these professionally designed fliers aimed at these same target groups.

One positive about our Lodge rentals is the fact that our residents are using the facility more and more for a variety of family activities and community get-togethers. In 2022, the resident rentals virtually doubled over the prior year, and so far in 2023, we are on track to exceed the 2022 resident usage. Considering the rental rate to residents represents over a 90% discount vs. non-resident rentals, you can understand why!

If you are interested in booking the Lodge, please contact Shalece Buchholz at theplodge@gmail.com

The Fall Chipping Event is scheduled for the week of September 23—Register Now!

Please note that there will be a change in our policy in that all slash must be curbside the first day of the event. This allows our chipper 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. Be sure to register for this service with Rebecca Harris at WSDM - District Management [Rebecca.H@wsdistricts.co].

In addition, we will be adding a third event in early September aimed at thinning the number of seedlings in the community.

In the next newsletter issue, we will offer tips on how to thin the pine seedlings on your property. If the seedlings are allowed to get too thick, none of them will thrive, and damaged/dead seedlings can represent a fire hazard to the community.

The date for the seedling thinning is Saturday September 16.

Did you know...that if you are looking to dispose of old/expired medicines, you can drop them off at Kaiser-Permanente’s Pharmacy on Briargate? They have a drop box there to offer secure and safe disposal of old medicines. You do not want to dispose of them by simply placing them in the trash—in that situation, chemicals can leach into the environment. In addition, if you have children in the home, you will want to

What Is Going On on Interquest??

When it is eventually completed, the new link joining Interstate 25 and Powers Boulevard on Colorado Springs’ far north side will create an essential loop of major roadways around the city. The new roadway will facilitate the area’s growing number of residents who travel across the region and will reduce pressure on crossroad and city traffic, county leaders said. “We really don’t have a well-developed loop to aid people in getting around town,” El Paso County Commission Chairman Stan VanderWerf said. Powers Boulevard is the county’s “best opportunity” to build a circular network of local roads thanks to explosive growth in eastern El Paso County, he said.

The link is expected to change the dynamics in northern Colorado Springs as the roadway is transformed into a high-speed thoroughfare appropriate for the area. “Will the road get used more? Yes. But it’ll be able to handle more,” he said.

Construction began in December 2019 on the initial \$65 million project that included the construction of a four-lane divided highway between I-25 and Voyager Parkway, south of North Gate Boulevard. This portion of the project, financed with bonds to be repaid by revenues from retail complex Polaris Pointe, is slated to be complete late this summer. But the vision for the circular link may not be realized anytime soon. It will not be complete until another project — which will extend Powers Boulevard from Colorado 83, where it now ends, to Voyager Parkway — is finished.

Contact Information



Cathedral Pines Key Info

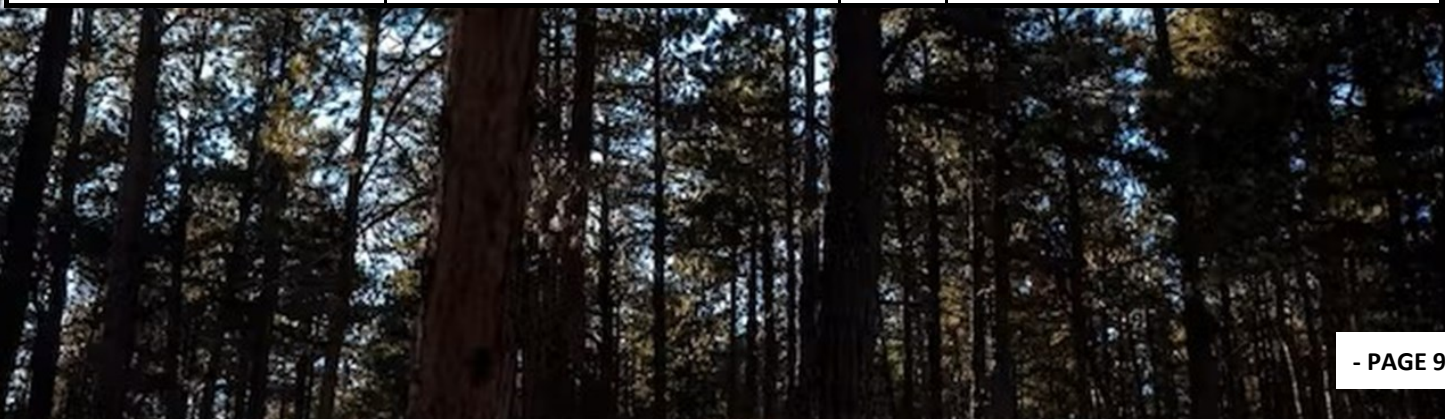
Metro District website: <https://cathedralpinesmd.colorado.gov/>

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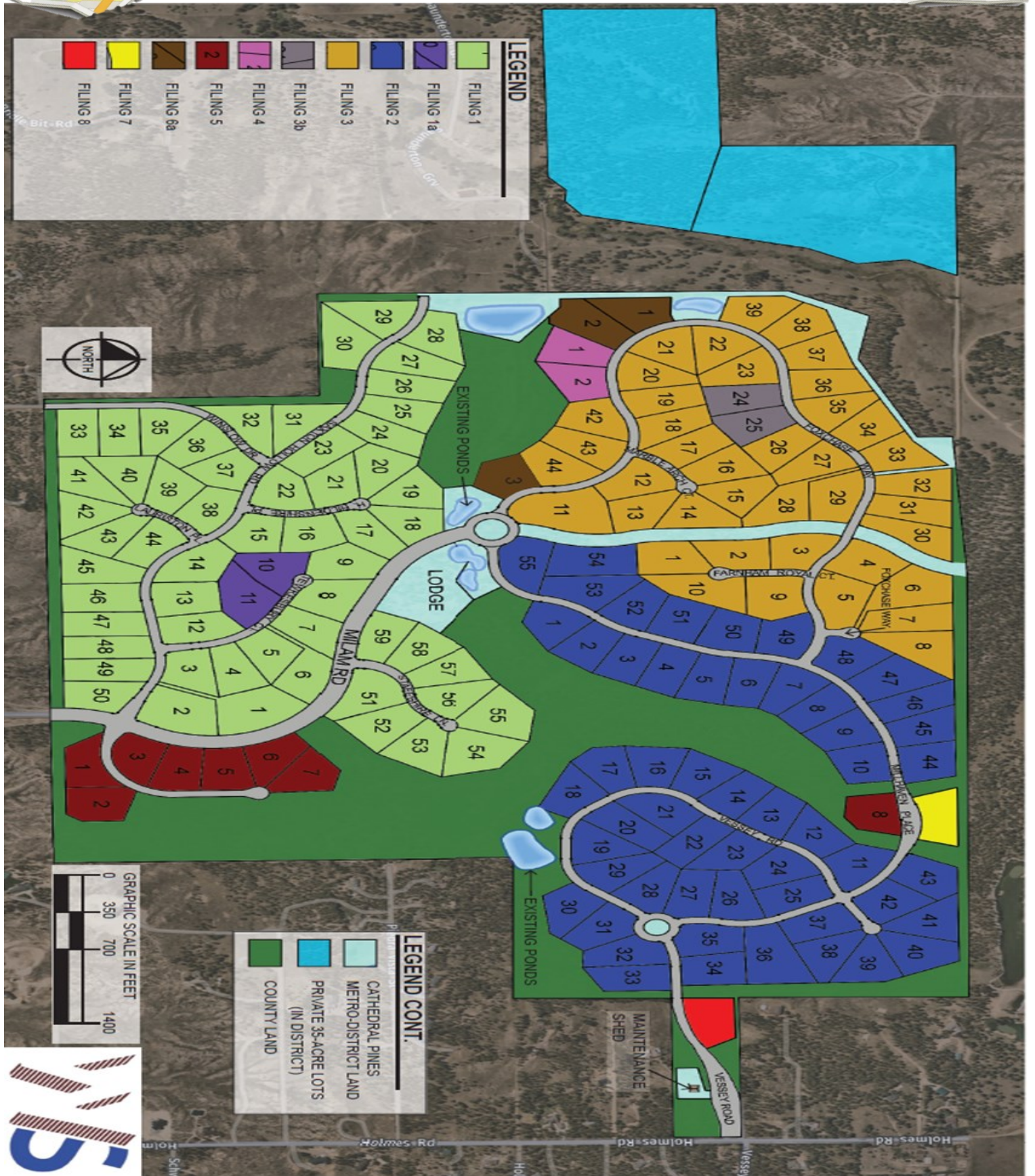
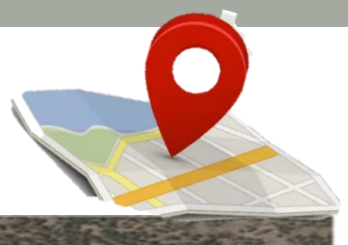


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Community Map



Trail Map

