



OCTOBER

2025

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METRO DISTRICT

# NEWSLETTER



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## The Fall Chipping Event is scheduled for the week of September 29<sup>th</sup> - Register Now!

Each year the Metro Board hosts a chipping event whereby branches, slash, debris, etc. can be removed from your yard and picked up by our tree contractors. This is the time of year to remove dead limbs from trees in your yard as well as Ponderosa seedlings that have sprouted.

**Participants must register by 5 p.m. Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup> to be eligible for this service.**

If you have not participated before, the Metro Board arranges for Tall Timbers to collect the slash and remove any debris, including your seedlings, beginning the Monday of that week. Therefore, all slash must be placed near the street no later than 8 a.m. Monday

If you would like to participate and have your yard debris removed, simply notify **Rebecca Harris at WSDM (call 719-447-1777 or email her at [Rebecca.H@wsdistricts.co](mailto:Rebecca.H@wsdistricts.co))** of your wish to participate.





## **The Fall Chipping Event (continued)**

**morning 9/29, and participants must register by 5 p.m. Wednesday, September 24th.**

Please note that there has been a change in our procedure in that no slash should be placed curbside more than two weeks prior to the event but must be curbside the first day of the event. This keeps our yards looking attractive while allowing 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 as that would delay their work in other communities.

## **Now is the Time to Thin Those Seedlings**



Now is the PERFECT time to thin those pesky Ponderosa seedlings that are starting to choke off their nearby counterparts. The best way to thin Ponderosas is to leave approx. 3-5 ft. between each tree the first year, and as the remaining trees grow, you will want to separate them further in the coming years. The process to remove them is very simple: if in sandy or wet soil, many seedlings can simply be pulled out of the ground, roots and all. If the soil is dry, simply cut the base of the tree at ground level and toss - it won't resprout. See—easy! One other tip though: if your tree seedlings are growing on a hillside, you may want to keep them a little tighter together to avoid soil erosion.



# Landscape Upgrades Continue...

Your Metro District Board believes that Cathedral Pines is the premiere luxury community in northern El Paso county. As such, the landscaping throughout the community needs to reflect such a designation. We have been hard at work this year to add numerous improvements to get closer to this goal. The following summarizes what has been done so far this year. We believe that things are looking great and hope you agree.

· We've completely reworked the landscaping on all of the cul-de-sacs in the community by adding mulch and removing any dead shrubbery. Now they all look consistent and much better than they did before.



- We re-landscaped all four islands at the intersection of Milam and Saxton Hollow. Here, again, we were going for a consistent look with the cul-de-sacs and the Milam medium work completed last year.
- The area around the mail kiosk was in need of some major landscape improvements. As such, we removed the old rocks, replaced them with rocks consistent with those used in the Milam medium, planted a number of annuals, and installed miniature lilac bushes that, once fully grown, will soften the look of the kiosk. We also added rocks to improve the drainage of the runoff from the Lodge parking lot.
- The electrical boxes and well equipment in the island in front of the Lodge was a bit of an eye sore. To resolve that, we encircled them with mulch areas and planted numerous Burning Bushes which, when fully grown, will completely hide those utility boxes.
- Speaking of mulch, all of the mulch areas around the benches at the ponds, the islands along Saxton Hollow, Millhaven, and Milam were updated this past week and look much improved!
- Finally, the sod areas in the Milam medium which were damaged by the installation of the new irrigation system were filled with top soil and the entire area was over-seeded with fescue grass seed. We needed to let the seedlings grow before we could mow them the first time, so the area looked pretty shaggy for several weeks. Now that the area has been mowed several times it's looking great. We will add additional over-seeding next year to fill in any holes that remain.

## Landscape Upgrades Continue... (continued)



During the holidays last year your Metro Board received lots of positive comments about how festive the Lodge looked with all of the aspens wrapped in lights. While we could not leave the Christmas lights on the trees – the extension cords made it difficult to mow the grass and simply was not safe – we wanted to do something to highlight the trees year around. Therefore, we installed permanent uplighting to all of the aspens at the Lodge as well as a couple of the other trees. We also added walk-way lighting pedestals along the front walk and along the rock path at the back of the Lodge. All of these low voltage lights will be on from dusk to dawn. These additions will add night-time elegance to the Lodge. As if that was not enough, we have several projects in the wings pending availability of funding:

- The planters in front of the Lodge need to be water-proofed as water is damaging the rock fascia on them. When this work is completed, we will also install large, custom metal trellises and new vines to improve the look of the front entrance.
- The “islands” of sod currently in the Milam medium help to soften the look of the area, and we will be adding several additional sod “islands” to expand that look.
- There is a large area around the mail kiosk that is devoid of natural grass/plants. We will install irrigation in those areas and seed them with natural grasses to match the other natural areas around the Lodge. This will complete the landscape upgrades for the kiosk area.

The decision to proceed with the above projects will be determined by how our landscape spending compares to our budget. If necessary, some of those projects can be postponed to 2026 when new funds are available.

In addition to ongoing maintenance, next year the Metro Board will be focusing on improving the landscaping on the east side of the community (near the Vessey/Holmes entrance) and working to address the cattails that have overtaken the ponds in our community. All of these efforts are focused on supporting our position as one of the premiere luxury communities in northern El Paso County.



## ...and so do the Improvements to the Lodge



While the majority of improvements to the Lodge have now been completed, including the refurbishing of the suites and exterior entrance, there are still a few projects that are necessary.

First among them was to replace the hot water heater, which essentially expired after 20 years of service. That project was recently completed, came in significantly under budget and was paid for through our Reserve fund.

Second, to support Lodge rentals in the fall and spring there are several new additions to the patio: namely 4 new patio heaters. This will help expand the capacity of the facility especially in the fall, as well as respond to the requests of a number of renters.

Third, as indicated in the previous article, accent lighting was added to many of the trees outside the Lodge which enhances the ambiance of the entire area.

Last, once the holiday season is upon us, holiday lighting will again be added to the roofline of the Lodge and a new holiday wreath will be hanging above the entrance to greet all visitors.

Most of the improvements to the Lodge will be completed by the end of the year and those financial resources will be redeployed to other projects in the community next year. We will continue to fund our Reserve Fund in the advent of any major mechanical issues—for example, two of the three air conditioners at the Lodge are now approaching 20 years of service and will likely need to be replaced in the near future—but no other significant expenditures are anticipated.

In the meantime, the Lodge continues to generate significant revenue for the community. It is currently on track to achieve \$150,000 in revenue for 2025 and already has numerous bookings for 2026 and beyond. There will likely be an increase in 2026 rental rates for outside renters, to reflect increased costs and the competitive environment, but residents will continue to be able to rent the Lodge for a nominal charge of \$300. And of course, any events open to the entire community are not charged any rental fee.

# A New Metro Board Member's First Observations

Hi Neighbors,

I wanted to take a moment to recognize the volunteers on the Cathedral Pines Metro Board. In our busy lives we tend to take for granted or are maybe not aware of how much work is done in our community by volunteers. As a relatively new member of the Metro Board, I am overwhelmed by the level of effort my fellow board members put in to make sure our Metro tax dollars are efficiently spent. But please don't take my word for it, if you have the opportunity, please attend a meeting either in person or online.

I was impressed by the very first meeting I attended as an observer. Each Board member takes on their responsibilities with the same seriousness as they did in their successful professional careers. On top of their time spent on governance, they spend an untold number of hours on maintenance tasks. This includes keeping the Lodge in great shape to be a popular venue for weddings, celebrations and community events. The landscaping alongside the medians is all maintained by contractors at the guidance of Board Members. Additionally, most of our trails fall under the Metro Board responsibility and somehow, magically, when a tree falls someone clears it from the trail (Thank you, Ecton). Here are my candid (and unedited) observations about the team that serves YOU!

## **Ecton Espenlaub - Secretary**

Thankfully Ecton Espenlaub has a passion for all things handyman with an Engineer's eye for detail. Ecton has personally saved the community thousands of dollars by being essentially an "on-call" handyman for issues ranging from fixing a sprinkler head to clearing the drains in the Lodge kitchen to clearing ice near the Lodge entrance resulting from a water supply pipe that leaked for weeks until a contractor could be available to fix it. He has taken on the trails, cleared fallen trees and limbs, and taken down dying trees. If you walk the trails, you have seen the "Ecton Incline". After multiple iterations there is a safe way to traverse that hill. I can't imagine what a landscape contractor would have charged the community for that endeavor.

# A New Metro Board Member's First Observations

## (continued)

### **Kevin Combs – Treasurer**

Kevin and his wife Donna graciously took on the remodel of the Lodge Bridal Suite. It is such a tremendous improvement. They expedited the process to fit a narrow schedule and made sure there were no disruptions from scheduled events, and brought the project in under budget. Kevin is also an amazing handyman with a passion for woodworking. The outdoor redwood benches by the Lodge were planned and executed perfectly with assistance from Ecton. (I supplied a day's worth of grunt labor and Thank You to James O'Neal for your contribution). It's a bit of overkill, but Kevin applies his CFO brain to his Treasurer duties as well. He keeps a close eye on the management company accountants to make sure every dollar is clearly accounted for, he scrutinizes every expenditure, and makes sure our Reserve fund is funded appropriately. I think he uses the pencil from his golf scorecard – since it doesn't have an eraser – no mistakes!

### **Rick Stauch – Vice President**

Rick has that same executive approach to the Board as he did in his career. Most of his responsibilities since I have been involved are related to landscape improvements. As everyone is aware, the Milam median improvement was a huge challenge due to non-performance by the first landscape contractor. This took a lot of time and was disappointing to ALL the board members, but Rick is guiding us out of the darkness. Rick has managed the landscapers and the landscape budget and made improvements at the Lodge, the mail kiosk, the medians, and cul-de-sacs. Landscape contractors can be difficult to manage, and thankfully, Rick has the patience to work through the details with them to improve and beautify the neighborhood. I hope everyone will enjoy the new Landscape lighting improvements going on now at the Lodge. Rick took the Board's request for installing a landscape pathway and up-lighting, and he nailed it!

### **Bill Heeter – President** (and resident comedian)

Bill was the second person we met when we moved here which was just before "Recycling Day" in 2024. The first person we met was his wife Kristi (too many accolades to mention here...). Kristi was greeting people and facilitating the recycling event along with Kevin Ehlers and his wife, Gwail (HOA president and both also mega-volunteers). When Kristi introduced Bill he was in the Lodge on the floor with his Craftsman toolbox fixing tables and chairs. With his signature wit, Bill introduced himself and briefed us on how the Metro and HOA work. Seeing the level of engagement of these volunteers and their enthusiasm my wife Karen and I said "sign us up". Little did we know there was a little bit of the Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn setup going. Next thing I know we are literally painting fence panels behind the lodge!

# A New Metro Board Member's First Observations (continued)

Bill has an undying enthusiasm for everything Cathedral Pines. He has a CEOs mindset and has managed every aspect of what has essentially been a reorganization of the Cathedral Pines Metro District. He has improved the operations and financial position of the District. He works tirelessly with the management company, has oversight of the Lodge events coordinator, and contacts El Paso county on the behalf of the community. Bill also works with numerous contractors getting multiple proposals, typically 3, for everything from electrical and plumbing issues, to water heaters, paving fixes(ugh), flooring, fire place maintenance, snow removal, and the list goes on. He just saved the community thousands of dollars on a recent water heater replacement by working with a community resident (thank you Michael Pappas) and buying the water heater on Amazon. And, oh yeah, Bill puts together the newsletter too.

For the community, besides his leadership, one of the most beneficial tasks Bill has taken on is management of the Lodge. The Board is really under no obligation to run the Lodge as revenue/expense neutral. Due to Bills' commitment to running the Lodge it basically pays for itself and related improvements. Since the Metro District is a governmental entity, the Lodge cannot produce a profit, but it can cover its own expenses and bear in mind the Lodge is nearly 20 years old. So, all the expenses such as replacing the A/C and heating, soon, would have been straight out of our tax dollars.

## **Scott Gassen - Director**

I have only been involved for about six months. So, at this point my contributions are minimal. **What I would like to see in the future is a continuation of the work the Board has done but we can only accomplish that with more volunteers from the community.** These Board members have no doubt set a high bar, but without a continued effort by volunteers from the community in the future this is not sustainable. The future Board will need to supplement their contributions with more contractors supplying these services at an increased cost to the community. Volunteering is not hard, but yes it takes time. And yes, all of us have family and work obligations too. For my wife and I, getting involved with the community, whether it's been Men's Night, Book Club, Bunco, or volunteering for the Metro Board our lives have been enriched, and we have new friends and acquaintances, that we hope become future friends. It really is worth the time and effort! Again, a THANK YOU to the Metro Board members, as well as the HOA board. I hope our Cathedral Pines neighbors will join in expressing their gratitude when the opportunity arises.



## How to Volunteer

Volunteers  
needed



Despite the perception that volunteering is a life-long commitment to slave labor, it is really quite simple and not particularly time-intensive. Both the HOA and Metro Board post volunteer events on their respective websites, in newsletters, via e-mails to our residents, and on the bulletin board by the mail kiosk. Most volunteer events require little time—perhaps an hour or two—but the more volunteers we get for a project, the faster it goes. Volunteers are needed occasionally for everything from roadside clean-up to social events to minor painting and other misc. projects. And they are always FUN—a chance to meet your neighbors and chat a bit all while contributing to your neighborhood. So if you see a request to sign up, PLEASE DO! **“If you have no will to change it, you have no right to criticize it.” –Mark Twain**



FLYING HORSE®

### Flying Horse North Change of Plans

It isn't often that a developer spends a lot of money designing a residential development that is approved and then completely changes their mind and spends a lot more money designing a totally different development that is also approved and then changes its mind once again, going back to the original plan. The whole process and all it entails is expensive and almost mind boggling. The owner of this complicated story is Classic Homes and the development is Flying Horse North. The original plan was for 283 homes, each 2.5-acres or larger. The lots only covered half of the parcel so the remaining acreage was dedicated to an 18-hole golf course and open park space. The total area was 1410 acres with a density of 5 acres per lot. The Black Forest Land Use Committee accepted the plan despite a preference for open space with undeveloped trees and wildlife habitat, but the developer desired the “open space” to be the golf course. Despite our objections, the County Commissioners approved their plan. Filing 1 for the development was for 81 lots and the golf course. Those lots are almost completely built out now with large, beautiful homes. Filing 2 was for just one lot under a special circumstance. For many months, no further filings were submitted. Then a totally new development plan was submitted to the County that changed the remaining 201 lots into 846, city-sized lots plus a luxury 275-room hotel.

## Flying Horse North Change of Plans (continued)

The Black Forest Land Use Committee was shocked at this change. The new plan would build a small town in the middle of Black Forest. The negative consequences would be a five-fold increase in traffic through filing 1 with the attendant congestion, light pollution, drainage problems, and a number of other issues. In addition, the new plan would require a central water and wastewater system encompassing several deep wells, piping, water treatment and massive expenditures for the infrastructure. As expected (but not supported by the Land Use Committee), the County Commissioners approved the new sketch plan with the startling statement that they believed the new plan “generally conformed to the old plan.”

The new plan required many additional months of development, addressing the water and wastewater issues and fleshing out the details. The developers then submitted Filing 3 under the old approved plan since the new plan had not yet been fully approved. Filing 3 consisted of 50 lots at 2.5-acres per lot surrounding the golf course.

Several months later filing 4 was submitted consisting of 48 lots, each 2.5-acres or larger. Soon after that filing 5 was submitted with 21 lots, once again 2.5-acres or larger. This was all in the area where the second plan had envisioned approximately 400 city-sized lots. With the area in filings 4 and 5 now having private wells and septic systems, that left less space for city-sized lots to share the cost of the central water and wastewater system.

We just received notice from the county that Classic Homes submitted filings 6 and 7 to complete the filings for the remaining parcels. Both filings have lots of 2.5-acres or larger. There is no mention of the hotel and this last plan brings the total number of lots to 306 because they added about 83 acres to the total parcel.

It looks like we can breathe a collective sigh of relief to not have the town of Flying Horse North in the middle of Black Forest. We will be able to be proud of our neighbor Flying Horse North and its beautiful homes on larger lots. We thank Classic Homes for going back to the original plan and appreciate its impact (or lack thereof) on Cathedral Pines.





# Water water everywhere...except in our Cistern!



If you lived in Cathedral Pines in 2013 the impact of the Black Forest forest fire is something one will never forget. Fortunately, due to the mitigation plan that was implemented when the community was formed, the impact on our homes themselves was minimal. That plan included trimming pine trees to a minimum of 6 ft. above the ground to prevent fire from “climbing” them; having four ponds (two on lower Vessey Road and two others behind our Lodge) available for water; and two cisterns (one on Millhaven and the other on Saxton Hollow) each holding between 15,000-30,000 gallons of water. These provided the Black Forest Fire Department access to enough water to prevent the fire from spreading. However, one thing neither the BFFD nor our community leadership was aware of was the existence of a third cistern on Foxchase Road. That cistern was installed in 2007 but was never marked properly by our developers, filled to its proper capacity, nor reported to the Black Forest Fire Department.

After some investigation, the initial installation records were discovered, and the Metro Board has been working in conjunction with the fire department to determine its exact location, functionality, and capacity. That particular cistern holds 30,000 gallons of water, but for some reason, it was only filled to several hundred gallons. After inspection by a cistern specialist, the tank appears to be intact with no leakage, so the first 6,000 gallons of water were delivered last week. Once the tank is completely filled, it will be signed appropriately and available for use—which hopefully never happens! But it is reassuring to know that this hidden cistern has been rediscovered and refilled in the event of an emergency arises in the Foxchase area.

# Prepare to be GRINCH'ED!



Usually, the Metro Board and HOA try not to cover each other's subjects and activities as it can be confusing regarding who does what, but in this case it deserves a special exception!

**On Saturday, December 13th, the HOA is hosting a special social activity for parents and children alike—a breakfast screening of the 1966 cartoon “Dr. Seuss’s How the Grinch Stole Christmas” and “A Charlie Brown Christmas” at our community Lodge starting at 10:00 a.m.**

The Grinchfest will begin at 9:30 a.m., with a FREE Grinch-like breakfast of green pancakes, beast bacon, chocolate-dipped strawberries, and other breakfast delicacies for both children and adults alike. After the Grinch, a second Christmas classic, “A Charlie Brown Christmas,” will be shown—one of the most popular Christmas animated specials ever produced!

Everyone is encouraged to enjoy the film festival in their pajamas or Grinch-like costumes, and be sure to bring your sleeping bag, Aero mattress or other comfortable bedding as children will be encouraged to watch from the floor (we'll have tables and chairs for the Scrooge-like parents).

A special award will be given to the child with the best holiday costume (sorry adults—you won't qualify unless your name is Jim Carrey). In addition, artwork that was actually used in the production of the 1966 Grinch cartoon will be on display to add to the spirit of the season.

In order to plan our breakfast food, we ask that all attendees RSVP with the number of Whos who will be attending to Kristi Correa at [KristiKCorrea@icloud.com](mailto:KristiKCorrea@icloud.com) no later than Wednesday, December 10, 2025.

Last, here are two peices of trivia for you.


1. Animation cels from the first Grinch cartoon have become extremely collectible.
2. How much do you think the most valuable one has sold for? Answer to be announced between the cartoons.

*Come help us celebrate the holiday season and pancake breakfast with your neighbors and friends.*





# Cathedral Pines Metropolitan District Information

 [click HERE](#)  
CPMD Website

## METROPOLITAN DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS

General Board Contact: [board@cathedralpinesmd.com](mailto:board@cathedralpinesmd.com)

Office	Name	Term Expiration	Phone	Email
<b>President</b>	Bill Heeter	May 2027	902-205-5605	<a href="mailto:bil.h@cathedralpinesmd.org">bil.h@cathedralpinesmd.org</a>
<b>Vice President</b>	Rick Stauch	May 2029	719-260-9236	<a href="mailto:rick.s@cathedralpinesmd.org">rick.s@cathedralpinesmd.org</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Kevin Combs	May 2027		<a href="mailto:kevin.c@cathedralpinesmd.org">kevin.c@cathedralpinesmd.org</a>
<b>Secretary</b>	Ecton Espenlaub	May 2029	719-822-0410	<a href="mailto:ecton.e@cathedralpinesmd.org">ecton.e@cathedralpinesmd.org</a>
<b>Director</b>	Scott Gassen	May 2029		<a href="mailto:scott.g@cathedralpinesmd.org">scott.g@cathedralpinesmd.org</a>

## METROPOLITAN DISTRICT MANAGEMENT TEAM



Rebecca Harris District Manager Office: 719-447-1777 Cell: 719-266-3189

[rebecca.h@wsdistricts.co](mailto:rebecca.h@wsdistricts.co)

Danielle Daigle-Chavez Assistant District Manager

Office: 719-447-1777 x 111 [danielle.d@wsdistricts.co](mailto:danielle.d@wsdistricts.co)

## 2025 Meeting Schedule

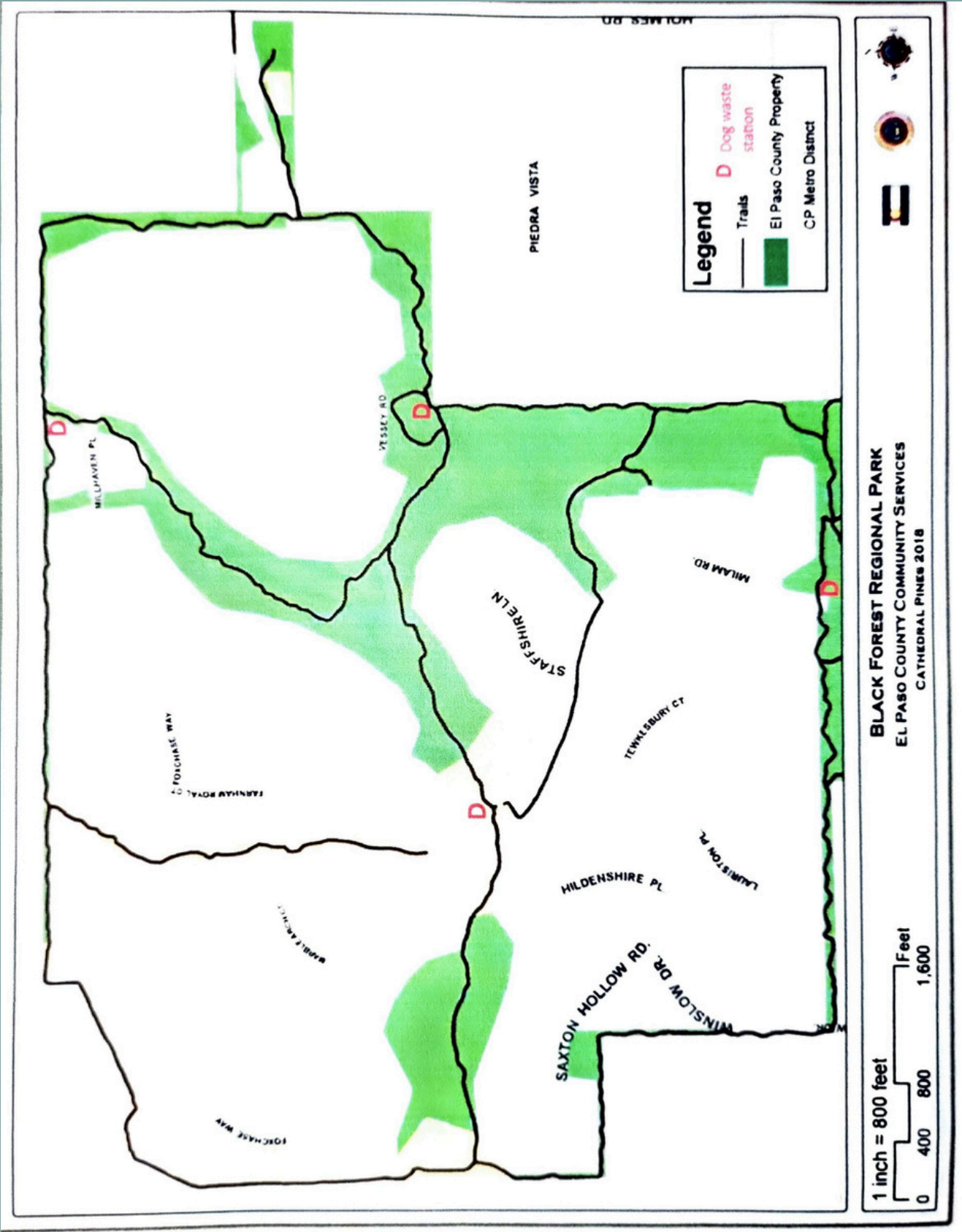
October 21

November 18 (at 6pm)

December 16

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.

# Cathedral Pines Metropolitan District Map





# CATHEDRAL PINES METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

