

# the Village Reporter

A bi-monthly publication by and for Village residents.



## In this Issue

- Village News 2
- Committee News 3
- Metro District 4-5
- Association News 6
- Emergency Services 7
- Wildlife 8

[www.thevillagecastlepines.com](http://www.thevillagecastlepines.com)

## Area News

### 12th Annual Castle Rock Bull Riding Matinee

On February 17, 2024, Colorado Saddlery and Pro Rodeo Outfitters will present the Annual Castle Rock Bull riding show at the Douglas County Fairgrounds indoor arena. They will feature two shows of more than 100 bulls bucking at 2 pm and 7 pm. Visitors will also have an opportunity to gain educational information regarding bucking bulls, how they are cared for, the equipment used, and training. Patrons may purchase tickets at the Douglas County Fairgrounds for \$22 each for ages 13 and older.

### Chipotle at Promenade

Located north of the Sam's Club fueling station at 5954 Promenade Parkway, Chipotle Mexican Grill restaurant and drive-thru is now open.

*Continued on page 2*



## Castle Pines Homes Association 2024 Annual Meeting of the Members

The Homes Association Annual Meeting of the Members is scheduled for March 4, 2024, at 6 pm at Cielo at Castle Pines located at 485 West Happy Canyon Road, Castle Rock, CO 80108. If you are not able to attend the meeting in person, watch for more information on a video conference option in future Village Weekly emails. The Board of Directors highly encourages members to attend the meeting in person. In person attendance at the Annual Meeting is a great way to meet other Association members and hear information on issues affecting the Village.

From 6 pm to 7 pm, there will be a social hour where you can enjoy meeting and talking with your fellow homeowners, have some great food, and get information about issues in and around the Village. The Board of Directors, Committee and staff members will be available to discuss issues with you and answer questions you may have. Representatives from the Metropolitan District, Emergency Services, Douglas County, the Sheriff's Office, and South Metro Fire Rescue are scheduled to be available with important information on issues in the Village and Douglas County. There will also be information on Homes Association events planned for 2024 and resident volunteer opportunities.

The business portion of the meeting will begin at 7 pm. Recently you should have received your Annual Meeting package in the mail. There are two open seats on the Board of Directors up for election this year. The candidates for these positions are on the proxy/ballot, and in addition, the Homes Association governing documents allow for nominations from the floor during the Annual Meeting. If you are not able to attend the Annual Meeting, it is important that you return your proxy. The returned proxy allows your vote to be cast for the election and it helps us establish a quorum so the Annual Meeting can be held. If you have any questions concerning this process, please call our General Manager, Mark Larson at 303-814-1345.

### 2024 Annual Meeting of the Members

March 4, 2024  
at 6 pm

Cielo at Castle Pines

*See you there!*



## 2024 Events at a Glance

- Annual Meeting, Cielo at Castle Pines Monday, March 4, 6 pm
- Easter Egg Hunt at Canyon Club Field Saturday, March 23, 4 pm
- "Bears in Colorado" at Wildcat Corner Thursday, April 4, time TBD

*Find out more about these events in upcoming Village Weekly emails.*



## Meet the CPHA Candidates

At this year's Annual Meeting, two director positions will be filled for a three year term. Wendy Ingraham and Chuck Skinner are running for the two open seats, and the Village Reporter interviewed them recently.

### Wendy Ingraham

64 Indigo Way

Years in the Village: 14

Number of CPHA Board Meetings Attended in 2023: 11

Occupation:

- Self-employed
- Founder of Robins Nest Foundation
- Owner/Operator of Sky View Farm
- Sports Agent through December of 2023



### What do you see as the most important issue (s) facing the Village?

- Communication between the Board and residents, along with keeping the Village current with competing neighborhoods in amenities and fees. Additionally, it is very important to keep our budgets in check.

### What professional and Village experience do you bring to the Board of Directors?

- Constantly thinking outside the box, along with listening to resident suggestions. I love meeting people and learning about their needs in a community. I also enjoy events and gatherings keeping a community active. I started the Kids Triathlon, Winterfest, and Frisbee Golf events. I am a Committee Member of Parks and Recreation. In hindsight, you could say I am a professional listener and advocate for the residents of the Village.

### Chuck Skinner

438 Saxon Place

Years in the Village: 27

Number of CPHA Board Meetings Attended in 2023: 11

Occupation:

- Currently Principal in The Skinner Group, representatives for a



- select group of office and laboratory furniture manufacturers
- Vice President, Broad Street Software Group
- Director of Procurement for CH2M HILL – Jacobs Engineering
- Administrative Director, University of California at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory

### What do you see as the most important issue (s) facing the Village?

The Board's responsibility is to work diligently to:

- Enhance property values; we now market the Village, and the upcoming BMW tournament will enhance this.
- Be fiscally responsible.
- Protect our natural environment; we have taken steps to protect our forest and beautify the Village.
- Enhance our quality of life and sense of community; through amenities and community events.

Exceptional Living, Exclusively Colorado

### What professional and Village experience do you bring to the Board of Directors?

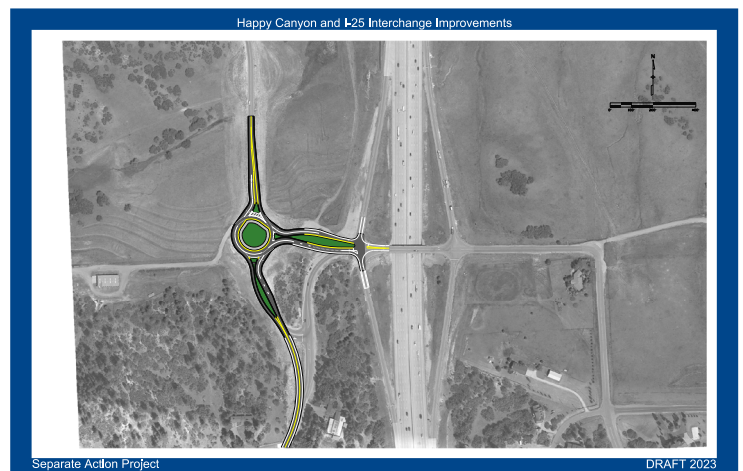
- I have both an engineering degree and management degree, working with both large and small organizations.
- I am currently a Board Member, having served as Director, Treasurer, and Vice President.
- I was Chair of the Parks and Recreation Committee.

## Area News (continued from page 1)

### Happy Canyon and Lagae Roundabout

The City of Castle Pines is designing and engineering a roundabout at the intersection of Happy Canyon Road and Lagae Road. The project is expected to be completed this summer.

The construction of the roundabout is part of a contract that was awarded for design services in January 2023, which also includes improvements to the I-25 and Happy Canyon Road bridge and interchange. If you have questions about this project, email [communications@castlepinesco.gov](mailto:communications@castlepinesco.gov) or call 303-705-0200.





## Parks and Recreation

### Upcoming Events 2024

The Parks and Recreation Committee is looking forward to a wonderful, fun filled 2024. We have lots of exciting things happening in the Village this year.

- Canyon Club Pool renovation – updates regarding timing will be available soon.
- Resurfacing of Tennis Court 3
- Pickleball Court repairs
- Trail maintenance
- Fourth of July events
- Music in the Park
- BMW Golf Tournament events

The Committee, consisting of seven Village residents, is constantly working on enhancing our community. Our goal is to ensure we stay up to date with amenities and host a well-rounded variety of events. We work together each year to develop new activities for the Village.

As we look ahead in 2024, we would welcome ideas and suggestions from the community. We encourage you to join in on our monthly meetings to share those ideas. The Parks and Recreation Committee meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 1 pm at the CPHA. We hope to see you there, or at one of the upcoming events in the Village.



Keeping Village amenities such as our trails and our pickleball courts in great condition is a priority for the Parks and Recreation Committee.

## 2023 Real Estate Review – The Village at Castle Pines

The Real Estate report for 2023 is very similar to the 2022 Real Estate Report. 101 homes sold in 2023 compared to 121 homes sold in 2022, 148 homes in 2021, and 158 homes in 2020. Inventory remains low. The homes that sold for under a million represent 12% of the sales while the homes that sold between \$1 – \$2 million represent 60% of sales and homes over \$2 million represent 28% of the sales. These percentages are the same as 2022.

We currently have 21 homes for sale in the Village and 15 homes pending. In comparison, at the end of 2022 we had 29 active properties and 17 pending and at the end of 2021 we had 11 homes actively on the market and 18 homes pending. The current active home prices range from \$1,025,000 to \$4,100,000. The average list price is \$2,222,000, the median list price is \$2,190,000, and the average cumulative number of days on market is 116.

Below is the breakdown of current homes for sale, pending, and homes sold in 2023 (as of 1/8/2024).

	Homes Sold 2023	Homes Pending	Homes For Sale
\$600,000 to \$799,999	1	0	0
\$800,000 to \$999,999	12	1	0
\$1,000,000 to \$1,199,999	13	0	1
\$1,200,000 to \$1,499,999	20	0	4
\$1,500,000 to \$1,999,999	26	2	5
\$2,000,000 to \$2,999,999	21	5	7
More than \$3,000,000	8	7	4

Sold prices for 2023 range from \$725,000 to \$5,300,000 with an average sold price of \$1,792,000. The median sold price was \$1,650,000, the average days on market was 55 days and the average sold price to list price was 93%.

The 2023 housing market was defined by two things: inflation and high interest rates which impacted Buyer activity, inventory and home prices. The 2024 housing market will be similar. Interest rates will continue to drive the market.



# Metro District

Castle Pines Metropolitan District

## Facts about the Metro District

Castle Pines Metropolitan District (Metro) is a quasi-municipal corporation whose organizational decree was approved by Douglas County in 1973. Metro is a special district form of government that must conform to the laws established under Article 32 of the Colorado Revised Statutes.



5880 Country Club Drive  
Office Hours: Monday – Friday 8 am – 4:30 pm  
Telephone – 303-688-8330  
After Hours/Emergencies – 303-688-6447

Metro provides the following services to the property owners within its service boundaries:

- Water production, treatment, and distribution
- Sanitary sewer collection. (Wastewater treatment services are provided by Plum Creek Water Reclamation Authority).
- Roadway operation, repair, and maintenance (on roads conveyed to Metro for operation).
- Roadway signage operation, repair, and maintenance
- Snow plowing on Metro roads
- Stormwater management and storm drainage operation, repair, and maintenance
- CPHA contracts with Metro to perform its landscape maintenance services. If you notice any concerns in any of these areas, contact the Metro District promptly, or the emergency number above.

The District is governed by an elected five-member Board of Directors. Day-to-day operations are managed by the District Manager.

## Metro Board Meetings

Castle Pines Metropolitan District Board of Directors' Meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month, at 9:30 a.m. (Please refer to the District's website for any date/time changes for the meetings.) The Board Meetings are held at the District office, 5880 Country Club Drive, in the Village. At this time, the community will be connected through a Zoom link, which can be found on the District's website at [castlepinesmetro.com/meetings-events/board-meetings/](http://castlepinesmetro.com/meetings-events/board-meetings/)

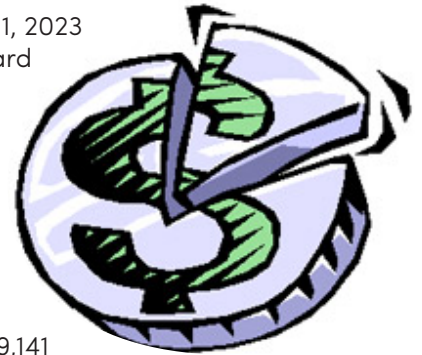
## 2024 Transparency Notice Posted

Each year between November 15 and January 15, all special districts in Colorado are statutorily required to provide a "Special District Transparency Notice" for their respective eligible electors / property owners. Metro's 2024 Notice is posted on the District's website at [castlepinesmetro.com/resources/board-information/transparency/](http://castlepinesmetro.com/resources/board-information/transparency/) It is also on file at the office, 5880 Country Club Drive. The Notice summarizes general information and contact names for the District for everyone's use. Let us know if you have any questions or would like more information about Metro.

## Budget Approved for 2024

At the December 11, 2023 meeting, the Board of Castle Pines

Metropolitan District (District) held a public hearing to receive comments on the proposed 2024 budget. The budget anticipates \$18,402,971 in revenues and \$20,819,141 in expenditures during the January 1 – December 31 fiscal year.



The District has two operating funds in its budget:

**The general fund (52% of the budget)** – receives the majority its revenues from the District's property taxes (33.834 mills) and funds the District's street repair and maintenance services, snow removal, right-of-way landscape maintenance services (including the contract landscape maintenance services provided to the Homes Association), right-of-way storm drainage maintenance services, and any related capital expenses. This year's budget also includes \$4.9 million for roadway replacement and rehabilitation.

**The enterprise fund (48% of the budget)** – derives its revenues from monthly water, sewer, storm water, and capital improvement fees, as well as a contribution from the general fund. The enterprise fund pays for the District's water production, treatment and distribution services, water facility repair and maintenance, sanitary sewer collection and maintenance services, stormwater maintenance, and any related capital expenses.

Property taxes are assessed, collected and distributed by the Douglas County Assessor. If you have any questions or would like a copy of the budget, please contact Sue Mantz at 303-688-8330. The budget is also available on the District's website at [castlepinesmetro.com/resources/board-information/financial-information-budget/annual-budgets/](http://castlepinesmetro.com/resources/board-information/financial-information-budget/annual-budgets/)

# Water Rates for 2024

In our ongoing commitment to providing you with transparent and timely information, we want to share some updates on upcoming changes to our water rates. These adjustments are vital for the sustained quality and reliability of our water services and align with the commitments we made during our community Water Forum held in February 2022.

## Base Rates

Base rates are increasing slightly to address inflationary pressures. The new base rates are presented in the table below. Please note that these charges are for a 1" meter, which is the meter size used by most residences within the Village. Rates for other meter sizes can be found on the District's website at [castlepinesmetro.com](http://castlepinesmetro.com)

Base Rates	2024 Rate
Water Base Rate	\$42.60
Sewer Base Rate	\$47.00
Storm Base Rate	\$7.85
Capital Improvement Fee	\$69.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$166.45</b>

## Usage Rates

Usage rates will remain the same in 2024 as they were in 2023. The usage rates are shown in the table below. Please remember that the tiered usage rates are only applicable during the summer irrigation months (April through October). All usage during all other months is billed at the Tier 1 (lowest) rate.

Tier	Rate (per Thousand Gallons)
Tier 1 (Within Budgeted Gallons)	\$6.75
Tier 2 (100% to 120% of Budgeted Gallons)	\$10.50
Tier 3 (120% to 140% of Budgeted Gallons)	\$15.50
Tier 4 (Greater than 140% of Budgeted Gallons)	\$21.50

## What's Next?

We are committed to keeping you informed as we implement these adjustments to ensure the sustained quality and reliability of our water services. If you have any questions or seek further clarification about the changes, please don't hesitate to reach out. We can be reached via phone at 303-688-8330. We value your understanding and cooperation as we work together to build a sustainable and resilient future for our community. Thank you for your ongoing support.



The Castle Pines Metro District is generally responsible for plowing and clearing snow from approximately 90 lane miles of roads throughout the Village. During a snowstorm, our crews work 24 hours a day to plow snow throughout the Village. The first priority in any snowstorm is to maintain emergency access to the District. Our crews work to ensure that emergency vehicles (fire trucks, ambulances, etc.) can always access the Village.

**For complete information regarding Metro's Snow removal process, please visit our website: [castlepinesmetro.com/roads/snow-removal/](http://castlepinesmetro.com/roads/snow-removal/)**

## Upcoming Important Dates

- **Board Meeting**, February 20, 9:30 am, Metro
- **Board Meeting**, March 26, 9:30 am, Metro
- **Brush Clean Up** (More Info to Come):
  - Week of May 6 – South Side of Village
  - Week of May 13 – North Side of Village
  - Week of May 20– Center Section of Village

## Castle Pines Metropolitan District

5880 Country Club Drive, Castle Rock, CO 80108  
303-688-8330  
email: [Info@castlepinesmetro.com](mailto:Info@castlepinesmetro.com)

[www.castlepinesmetro.com](http://www.castlepinesmetro.com)

Hours: Monday - Friday, 8 am to 4:30 pm

Josh Shackelford – *District Manager*  
Sue Mantz – *Asst. District Manager*  
Jason LeTellier – *Operations Superintendent*  
Evan Person – *Capital Program Manager*  
LeAnna Gonzales – *Staff Accountant*

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rick Huser, *Chairman*  
Mike Lanam, *Treasurer*  
David King, *Co-Treasurer*  
Tad Walden, *Secretary*  
Cassie Vetter, *Director*

The Metro Board of Directors meets on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 9:30 am at the Metro District office. Meetings are open to the public. Please call to confirm date and time.

At this time, the community will be connected through a Zoom link, which can be found on the District website, <https://www.castlepinesmetro.com/meetings-events/board-meetings/>



## Manager's Report



### "Just Another Day in Paradise"

Again in 2023 I hosted an evening program called "Coffee with the Manager", where valuable information is provided about what is happening in the Village and you can ask any questions you may have. This event is normally held the third month of each quarter. Watch the Village Weekly email for the date and

time for these informational meetings. I really hope to see you there.

The Annual Meeting of the Members is a great avenue to receive information on issues that affect the Village. The Homes Association Annual Meeting of the Members is scheduled for March 4, 2024, and will be held at Cielo at Castle Pines, located at 485 West Happy Canyon Road, Castle Rock, CO 80108. The meeting begins with a social hour from 6 pm to 7 pm. The business portion of the meeting begins at 7 pm. If you are unable to attend the meeting in person, the meeting will be held via video conference as well. Registration for this option will be available in the Village Weekly email.

During the social hour you can enjoy some great food, conversing with your fellow homeowners and obtaining information about issues in and around the Village. The Board of Directors, Committee and staff members will be available to discuss issues with you and answer questions you may have. Representatives from the Metropolitan District, Emergency Services, Douglas County, the Sheriff's Office, and South Metro Fire Rescue will be available with important information on issues in the Village and in Douglas County. You should have already or will soon receive your Annual Meeting package in the mail. The package provides information on the candidates running for the two positions up for election on the Board of Directors. You will also find your voting proxy to use if you cannot attend the meeting, and information on the various Homes Association Volunteer Committees.

I join my entire staff in wishing you a safe and enjoyable winter and remember spring is just around the corner. As always, if we can be of any assistance to you or if you would like information on any Village issue, please give my staff or me a call at 303-814-1345.

Sincerely,

Mark G. Larson - General Manager  
mark@thevillagecastlepines.com | 303-814-1345

## Winter Driving – Be Prepared

Driving in winter can be dangerous, especially in Colorado where blizzard and icy conditions can crop up without much warning. According to the National Safety Council, you can greatly reduce your chances of being stranded on the road by being prepared.

First and most importantly, check the weather before you go. But if you find yourself in dangerous conditions, follow these simple rules:

- Do not use cruise control in wintery conditions.
- If you start to slide, steer and look in the direction you want to go.
- Accelerate and decelerate slowly.
- Increase your following distance to give you 8 to 10 seconds to come to a stop.
- Be aware if you have antilock brakes (which will pump the brakes for you in a skid).
- If possible, never stop when going uphill.
- Keep your gas tank at least half full.

In an emergency situation, in addition to a full tank of gas and fresh antifreeze, the National Safety Council, the AAA, and the Red Cross recommend keeping a Survival Preparedness Kit in your car during the winter. The kit should include:

- Properly inflated spare tire, wheel wrench and jack
- Shovel
- Water
- Jumper cables
- Bag of salt (or cat litter) for traction or to melt snow
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Nonperishable, high-energy foods like unsalted nuts or dried fruit
- Blankets, mittens, socks and hats

Taking the time to be prepared for any adverse weather conditions will ensure that you and your family arrive safely.

## Please Stay Off The Ice

A recent study from Canada's York University warns that more children in North America are dying from falling through unstable ice on lakes and ponds as a result of warmer winter temperatures. Nearly 50% of the drowning victims in the study were children younger than nine who were playing on ice. The rest were young adults (younger than 24) who fell through the ice while driving vehicles such as snowmobiles. During Thanksgiving break in 2022, four Douglas County teens fell through frozen ice on Crystal Lake in Roxborough Park. One of the teens tragically died several days later.

The Canadian study also reported that an average of 20 pets (almost all of them dogs) drown each year after falling through thin ice. Here in the Village, we have a number of water features that decorate both golf courses. Although

*Continued on page 7*



## A Message from the Chief

Engaging in outdoor activities during the winter in Colorado can be a rewarding experience, but it's crucial to prioritize safety. Here are some tips to ensure a safe and enjoyable winter outdoor experience in Colorado:



### Check Weather Conditions

Stay informed about the weather forecast, including temperature, wind, and snow conditions. Be aware of any storm warnings or advisories.

### Dress Appropriately

Wear layers to stay warm and dry. Choose moisture-wicking base layers, insulated mid-layers, and a waterproof outer layer.

Protect extremities with insulated gloves, a hat, and waterproof boots. Consider wearing gaiters to keep snow out of your boots.

### Stay Hydrated

Dehydration can occur even in cold weather. Drink plenty of water before, during, and after outdoor activities.

### Protect Against Sun Exposure

Apply sunscreen to exposed skin, as the sun's rays can be intense at higher altitudes. Wear sunglasses or goggles to protect your eyes from snow glare.

### Know Your Limits

Be aware of your physical fitness and skill level. Avoid taking on activities that exceed your abilities, especially in challenging conditions.

### Avalanche Safety

If engaging in backcountry skiing, snowboarding, or snowmobiling, take an avalanche safety course. Carry appropriate safety gear, including a beacon, probe, and shovel.

Check the Colorado Avalanche Information Center (CAIC) for current avalanche conditions and forecasts.

### Tell Someone Your Plans

Inform a friend or family member about your outdoor plans, including your destination, expected return time, and the route you plan to take.

### Carry Emergency Supplies

Pack a winter survival kit that includes essentials such as extra clothing, high-energy snacks, a first aid kit, a flashlight, a multi-tool, and a space blanket.

### Use Proper Equipment

Make sure your equipment, whether it's skis, snowshoes, or snowmobiles, is in good condition and suitable for the specific activity.

### Follow Trail Etiquette

Stay on designated trails to avoid getting lost or damaging the environment. Respect closures and guidelines set by park authorities.

### Watch for Wildlife

Wildlife may be more active during the winter. Keep a safe distance, especially if you encounter larger animals such as elk or moose.

### Stay Informed about Regulations

Be aware of any rules or regulations specific to the area where you plan to engage in winter activities. This includes camping regulations, fire restrictions, and park hours.

Remember that conditions can change rapidly in the winter, so it's important to stay flexible and adapt your plans accordingly. Always prioritize safety and be prepared for unexpected challenges.

Sincerely,

Matt Wortsman – Chief of Emergency Services

## Stay Off The Ice (continued from page 6)

the ice on them may look fully frozen, it can actually be too thin to support your pet's weight. Never let your pet play on the ice, even if it looks completely frozen. Please keep your dog on a leash to prevent them from running onto frozen ponds. If your pet falls through the ice, don't jump in after them, regardless of how tempted you may be. Call Emergency Services immediately. CPES and South Metro Fire Rescue have specialized equipment and training for use in ice rescues.

## Castle Pines Homes Association & Emergency Services

688 W. Happy Canyon Road, Castle Rock, CO 80108  
Office hours: Monday - Friday, 8 am to 5 pm  
[www.thevillagecastlepines.com](http://www.thevillagecastlepines.com)

**CASTLE PINES HOMES ASSOCIATION (CPHA)**  
303-814-1345

Mark Larson, *General Manager*  
April Clendenin, *Chief Financial Officer*  
Linda Matthews, *Executive Assistant/DRC Administrator*  
Kevin Olsen, *Compliance Coordinator*  
Bianna Richmeier, *Administrative Assistant*

**EMERGENCY SERVICES (ES)**  
303-688-6446

Matt Wortsman, *Chief of ES*  
Steve Camino, *ES Administrator*

### CPHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Frank Jacobsen, *President*  
Doug Cooper, *Vice President*  
Chuck Skinner, *Treasurer*  
Wendy Ingraham, *Secretary*  
Al Notary, *Assistant Treasurer*



Presorted  
Standard  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
Parker, CO  
Permit No. 56

### THE VILLAGE REPORTER

The Village at Castle Pines community newsletter  
published bi-monthly with funding from Castle Pines  
Homes Association and Castle Pines Metropolitan District  
© All Rights Reserved

### Reporter Staff

Area News - Linda Battin, Maureen Kowalsky  
Ask the DRC - Linda Matthews  
Events & Activities - Joyce Paloma  
Parks & Recreation - Wendy Ingraham  
Wildlife - Cynthia Kristensen  
Metro District - Sue Mantz  
CPHA - Mark Larson, Linda Matthews  
Emergency Services - Matt Wortsman, Steve Camino  
Real Estate - Rosemary Nigh  
Proofing & Editing - Linda Matthews  
Copy Editor - Beth Westberg  
[villagereporter@thevillagecastlepines.com](mailto:villagereporter@thevillagecastlepines.com)

If you are new to the Village, call or email  
Susan Clifford for the Welcome Packet:  
303-660-6323 or [sclifford@estreet.com](mailto:sclifford@estreet.com)

Please note: CPHA permission is required by the General Manager of the Homes Association for any professional/commercial filming or photography on CPHA-owned property or at CPHA-funded events/activities.

For more Village news, sign up for weekly emails: [Admin@thevillagecastlepines.com](mailto:Admin@thevillagecastlepines.com)



## Gamble Oak, Scrub Oak, Oak Brush – What is it and why keep it?

These are the same tree. Whatever you call it, it is Colorado's only native oak. We're familiar with the groves of trees and the brilliant reds and yellows of fall leaves. It is important to our state's biodiversity and provides food and shelter for wildlife. Its acorns feed deer, elk, squirrels, turkeys, and bears; birds forage on its acorns and insects. Its association with ponderosa pines provides nesting habitat for a wide variety of birds. The larvae of our state butterfly, the Colorado Hairstreak, only eat its leaves. Gambel oak is more drought tolerant than ponderosa pines and tolerates extremes of heat and cold. It rarely reproduces from acorns but with sprouts from its deep extensive root system. The root system provides soil stability and reduces erosion.

Gambel oak can present a fire risk during drought and in the fall when its leaves are dry, especially in dense stands of trees with copious leaf litter. Stands of large old oak



Colorado's only native oak is essential for wildlife and the environment.  
Photo by Christine Horowitz.

trees that are thinned and spaced from each other reduce wildfire spread, but the denser stands of smaller young trees are important habitats for much wildlife. The goal is to maintain a balance. Particularly near homes, trees should be thinned and pruned. Remove oak under pine trees so fire does not climb from the oak into the pines. Prune or mow new sprouts, cut back dead or damaged branches, prune low branches to a height of three feet. Thin small trees, one inch or smaller, to decrease tree density. Thinning the oak allows the remaining trees to become healthier and more disease resistant. Contact the DRC for advice and approval prior to thinning.

We want to enjoy the beauty of our ponderosa pine/Gambel oak habitat and the wildlife it supports. To enjoy the benefits of our environment, we must also engage in efforts to keep it healthy and reduce wildfire risk.