



# Pagosa Lakes POA Greenbelts

9/21/2022

The largest subdivision in Archuleta County is the Pagosa Lakes Property Owners' Association (PLPOA). They have 6 Wildfire Adapted Partnership (WAP) Neighborhood Ambassadors.

PLPOA is a Master Association for 27 subdivisions within the community. Housing consists of single-family, townhomes, condos, timeshares, multi-family and commercial properties. Approximately 6,475 lots are within this 14,000 acre subdivision. Lot sizes vary from an  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre to 10 acres. PLPOA borders 7 miles of National Forest land on its western and northern borders. The population of PLPOA makes up close to 65% of Archuleta County's total population (approx. 13,500 in 2020). PLPOA is currently around 70% built out, with about 80 new homes constructed every year. The terrain in PLPOA ranges from 7,000 – 8,000 feet in elevation. Its vegetation types are mostly ponderosa pine with Gambel oak understory, but there are also areas of mixed conifer, aspen, spruce-fir, and piñon-juniper. The economy of the County is primarily tourism based. It has seen many large fires in the last 20 years including the Little Sand and West Fork fires, but none have made it into the populated areas, yet.



After a six year effort, in March 2022, PLPOA signed a purchase agreement with Wyndham Resorts for the community's greenbelts to be transferred to PLPOA. This consists of 620 acres of greenspace designated for the owners within PLPOA that constitute community common interest elements promised to owners for recreation purposes only. Wyndham Resorts had owned these greenbelts since 1992 and during



that time the greenbelts have not been maintained nor had any fire mitigation work completed. The absence of forest management has caused dangerous accumulations of various types of fuels that threaten neighboring homes and has the potential for crown fires to spread across the community. These greenbelts weave their way throughout the community creating connected conduits of fuel that could carry wildfire throughout the entire subdivision.



The USFS has been conducting mechanical mitigation and using prescribed fire on their adjacent parcels for close to two decades. WAP has received two previous SFA/WUI grants to help private homeowners complete defensible space work around their homes within the community, so the greenbelts are the last piece needed to complete true landscape scale change in their community. Many of these greenbelts could act as shaded fuel breaks for homes, and some even fall within 100 feet or less of structures and are therefore part of the home ignition zone.

Allen Roth, PLPOA General Manager, and Larry Lynch, Department of Property and Environment Manager, went right to work upon acquisition of the greenbelts. They developed a 5 Year Plan (2023-2027) to perform the wildfire mitigation work needed and pulled together the experts from the Pagosa Fire Protection District, US Forest Service and WAP to get input and refinement. WAP put together a proposal to secure funding for the Plan through an SFA/WUI grant to help with the costs of the mitigation and it has been submitted for review.

The cost share program currently in use for property owners in the PLPOA still had funding for 2022 so WAP and PLPOA decided to jump start the 5 Year Plan and do a pilot project this year. We picked two sections of greenbelt in critical areas, 12 acres in Twin Creek Village and 5 acres in Pagosa Highlands Estates. Both sections were





completed this month. After many years of neglect, the PLPOA greenbelts are finally getting the treatment that they need and deserve. Congratulations PLPOA!

