

**The Reserve at Pagosa Peak  
Community Assessment  
November, 2023**



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**Location:**

The Reserve is a rural residential gated subdivision located in Archuleta County, Colorado approximately 9 miles northwest of Pagosa Springs. It is bounded on the southeast by a private ranch and on the southwest by County Road 600 which separates it from the Pagosa Lakes POA. The USFS San Juan National Forest borders the subdivision on the east, north and west. The approximate center of the subdivision is at 37° 19' 54" N and 107° 7' 12" W. The Reserve encompasses 237 acres.

**Environment and Vegetation:**

Elevations in the subdivision range from 7800 to 7950 feet. The climate is semi-arid, typically with seasonal monsoons in mid-summer. The nearby Continental Divide and San Juan Mountain range encourage above average precipitation compared to the rest of the Four Corners area. The past twenty-year cycle has trended considerably hotter and drier than previously recorded in this area.

Much of the subdivision consists of grassy mountain meadows, old pasture and some wetlands. The area around the subdivision was clearcut between 1880 and about 1910. The current forested areas consist of predominantly single age, second growth ponderosa pine. In most cases, the trees are overcrowded and stunted. Gambel oak is prolific on some hillsides, under ponderosa and near structures. Rocky Mountain Juniper is scattered throughout the area. Much of the surrounding USFS land is open meadows.

## Fire History and Risk

The ponderosa/Gambel oak forested areas around Pagosa Springs are considered a frequent fire forest system. Prior to European intervention, the forests saw wildfires on five to fifteen year intervals. These were usually low intensity fires that burned back ladder fuels and thinned ponderosa stands.

The subdivision area has not seen a significant fire in over 130 years leading to excessive tree density and ladder fuels.

<b>Significant Archuleta County Wildfires Over Twenty Two-Year Period (2002-2023)</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Fire Name</b>	<b>Size (acres)</b>
2002	Missionary Ridge	73,000
2003	Bolt Fire	2,160
2003	Devil Creek Fire	234
2012	Little Sand Fire	24,500
2013	West Fork Fire (cross-county fire)	58,600
2017	Eight Four Two Fire	1,000
2018	Spruce Fire (close vicinity to ECR)	10
2018	Horse Fire	700
2022	Plumtaw Fire	735
2023	Chris Mountain Fire	511
2023	Coal Mine Fire	286
2023	Quartz Ridge Fire	2,850
2023	Bear Creek Fire	1,093

Maps showing Fire Intensity, Vegetation and Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Risk are included in the Appendix.

## **The Community:**

The 237 acre subdivision consists of 140 lots and about 100 acres of common space. Lot sizes range from 0.4 acre to 17.5 acres, with the majority being 0.4 acre.

The 32 developed lots have homes of diverse construction. Wood siding, stucco, log and Diamond Coat siding can be found. All roofs are Class A fire rated, predominantly composite shingle with some metal. A few of the homes have had Defensible Space work done. Some have not and combustible landscaping within 5 feet of structures has been observed. Some of the homes have reflective house numbers at the driveway where they are clearly visible for first responders.

The Reserve is home to about 45 residents. There are two short term rental units and about 10 part time residents.

There are two entrances on the west side of the subdivision which access County Road 600 (Piedra Road). All subdivision roads are private roads which are paved. Roads are 24 feet wide with 45-foot turn arounds on all cul-de-sacs.

La Plata Electric Association supplies electricity to all lots through buried lines. Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District supplies municipal water and sewer to all lots. There are 20 fire hydrants interspersed throughout the subdivision.

## **Values at risk:**

- Lives, both human and animal (cats, dogs, horses, etc.)
- Residential structures
- Infrastructure (electricity, water, phone, roads, etc.)
- Views
- Lifestyle

## **Resources:**

The Reserve is within the Pagosa Fire Protection District (PFPD). The District has 18 paid staff and approximately 40 volunteers. District-wide, the firefighting equipment includes seven engines, five tenders (water trucks), one aerial truck with a 75-foot ladder, five brush trucks, a mobile command vehicle, a maintenance truck and other smaller vehicles. A 1,000-gallon Type 1 engine, an 1,800-gallon Type 3 support tender, and a Type 6 brush truck are housed at Station 3 which is 1 ½ miles from the entrance to Loma Linda. Station 3 does not have staff on site.

The Archuleta County Sheriff has authority over wildfires in the County. The Office of Emergency Management, a department of the Sheriff's Office has 3 full time staff and 3 seasonal firefighters. They have two engines.

All local fire-fighting agencies have Intergovernmental Agreements that allow them to assist each other when needed.

The Reserve has 20 fire hydrants on the PAWSD municipal water system. Nearby Lake Hatcher is an 86 acre lake that holds 880 acre/feet of water. It could be used for helicopter water drops in the event of wildfire.

## **Action Plan:**

### **Priorities:**

1. Educate property owners about the wildfire, the need for mitigation on their property and reimbursement opportunities.
2. Encourage creation of Defensible Space by individual owners.
3. Organize community chipping days.
4. Maintain visibility and access to fire hydrants.
5. Develop an evacuation plan for the community.
6. Establish safe areas within the community.
7. Assess driveways for accessibility by emergency vehicles.
8. Develop an enforcement policy for residents in violation of the CC&R's regarding defensible space.

## **Assessment Development Participants:**

Jackie Brittain, Wildfire Adapted Partnership Ambassador

Rick Holter, The Reserve Firewise Committee

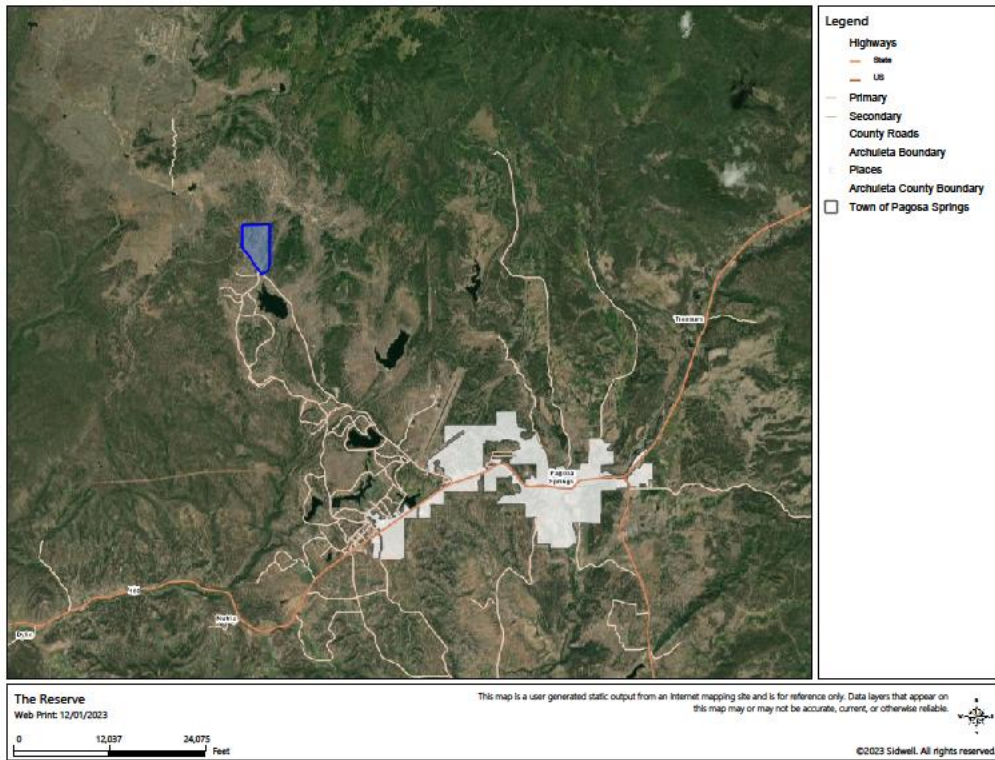
Fred Ellis, Assistant Fire Management Officer, Pagosa Ranger District, San Juan NF

Karn Macht, Pagosa Fire Protection District Deputy Chief

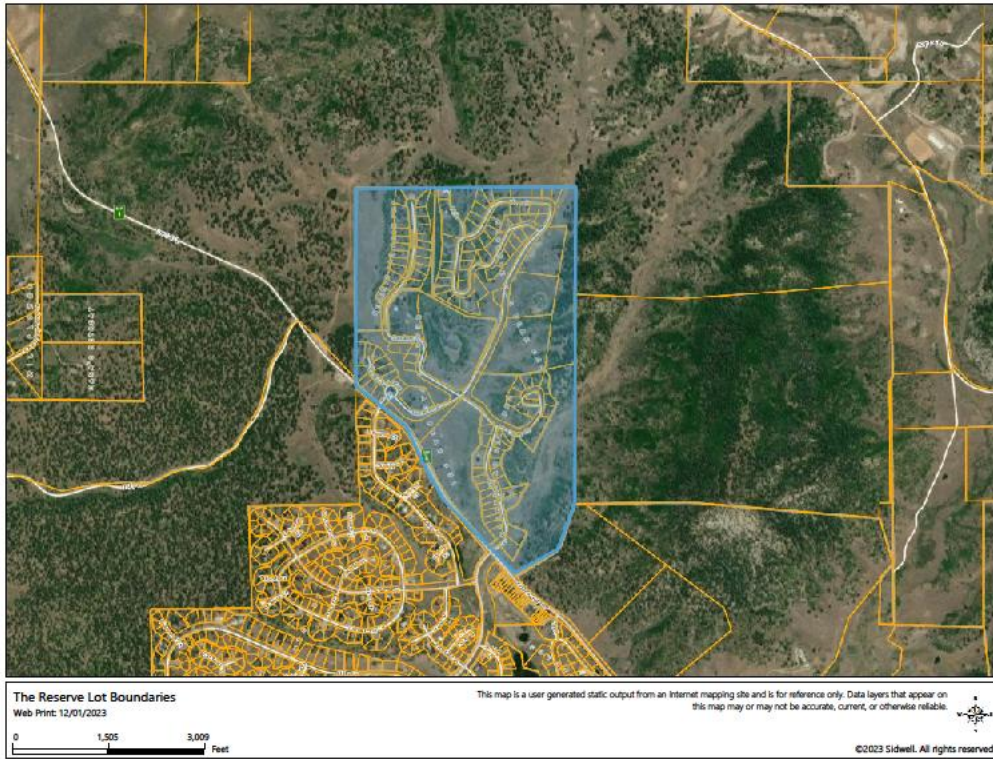
Bill Trimarco, Wildfire Adapted Partnership Archuleta County Coordinator

# Appendix

## The Reserve Location Map

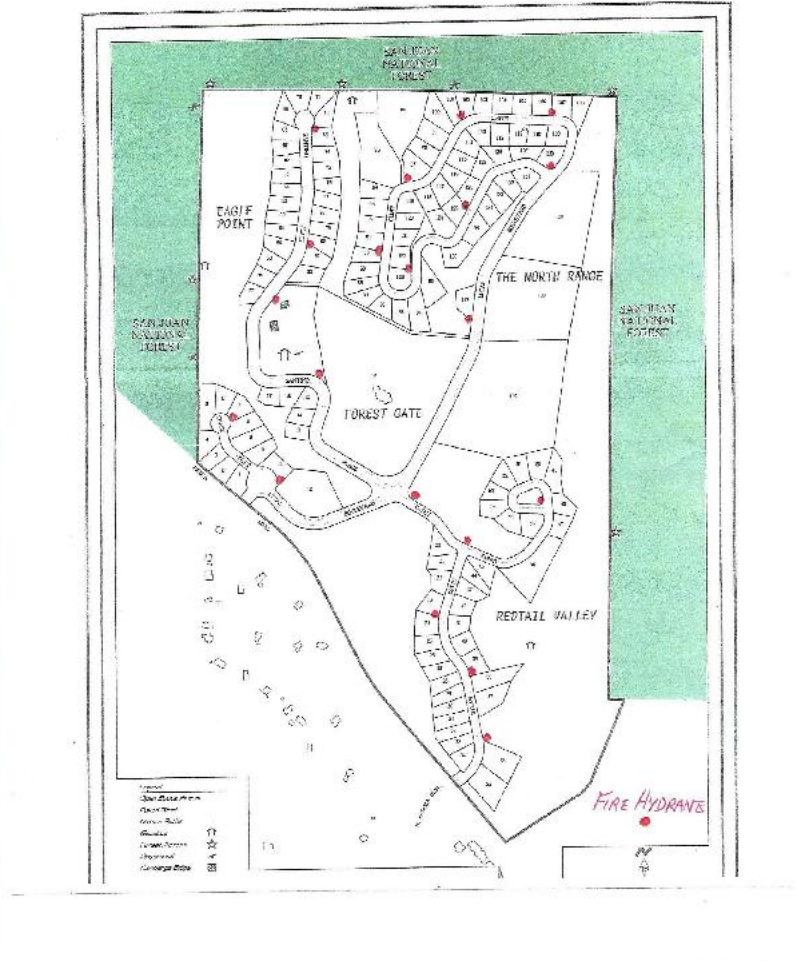


# Lot Boundaries





# Fire Hydrant Locations Map



# Fire Intensity Map



## Colorado Risk Reduction Planner

<https://co-pro.coloradoforestatlas.org>

### The Reserve Fire Intensity Scale

Quantifies the potential fire intensity by orders of magnitude.

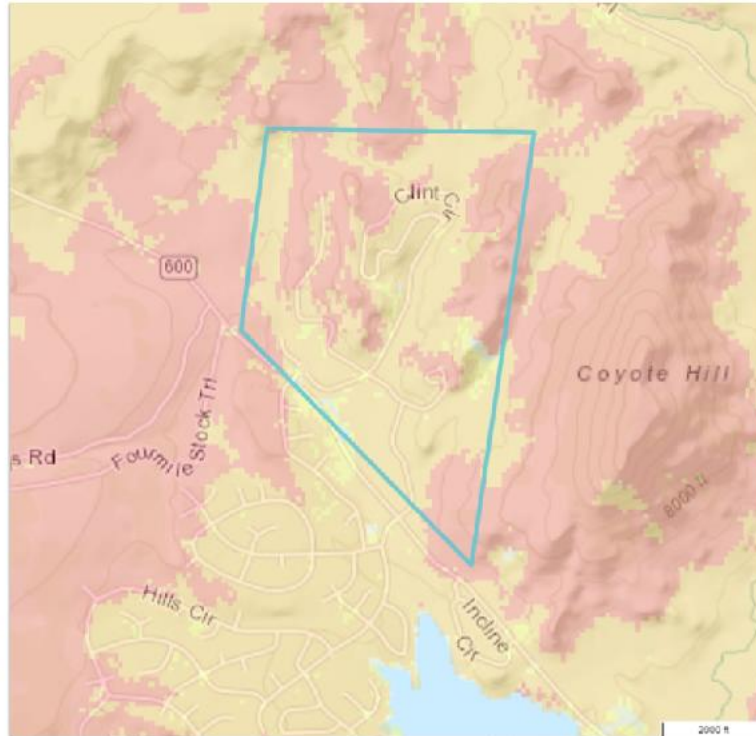
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### Fire Intensity Scale

-  Lowest Intensity
-  Low
-  Moderate
-  High
-  Highest Intensity

# WUI Risk Map



## Colorado Risk Reduction Planner

<https://co-pro.coloradoforestatlas.org>

### The Reserve Wildland Urban Interface

Housing density depicting where humans and their structures meet or intermix with wildland fuels.

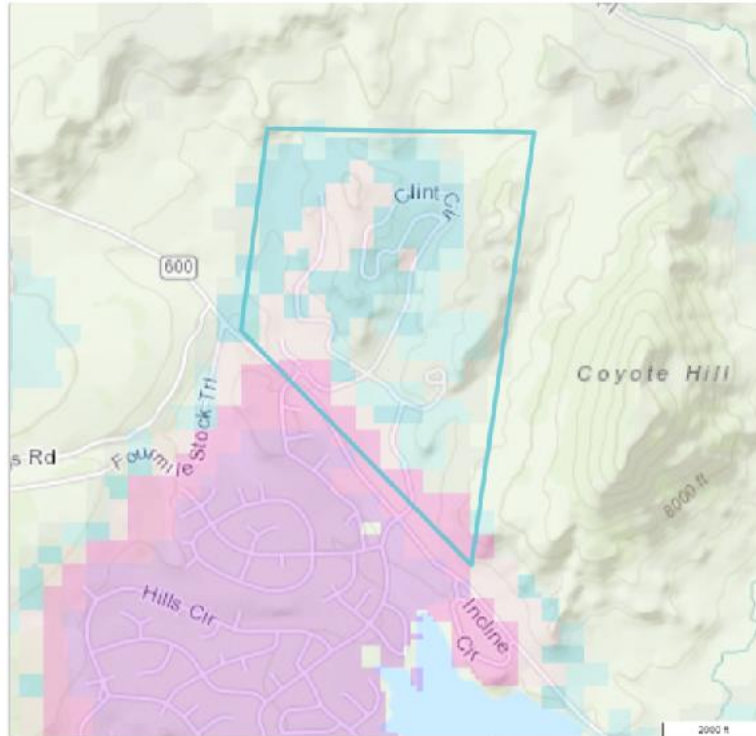
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### Wildland Urban Interface Risk

-  Lowest Risk
-  Low Risk
-  Moderate Risk
-  High Risk
-  Highest Risk

# Vegetation Map



## Colorado Risk Reduction Planner

<https://co-pro.coloradoforestatlas.org>

### The Reserve Vegetation

General vegetation and landcover types.

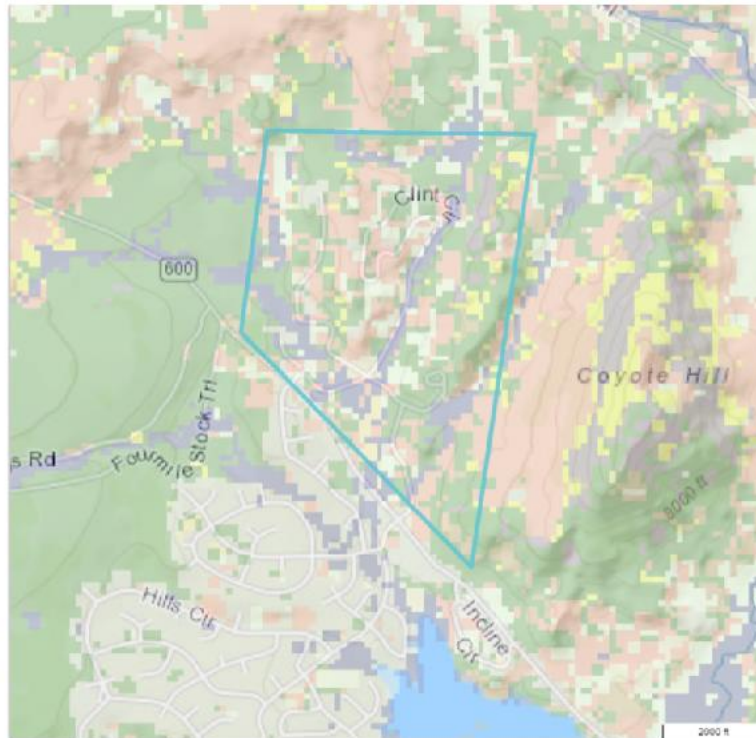
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#### Vegetation

- Agriculture
- Grassland
- Lodgepole Pine
- Mixed Conifer
- Oak Shrubland
- Open Water
- Pinyon-Juniper
- Ponderosa Pine
- Riparian
- Shrubland
- Spruce-Fir
- Developed
- Sparsely Vegetated
- Hardwood
- Conifer-Hardwood
- Conifer
- Barren