

LARKSPUR SENTINEL

APRIL 2025



Serving the 80118 community



ELIZABETH OWENS

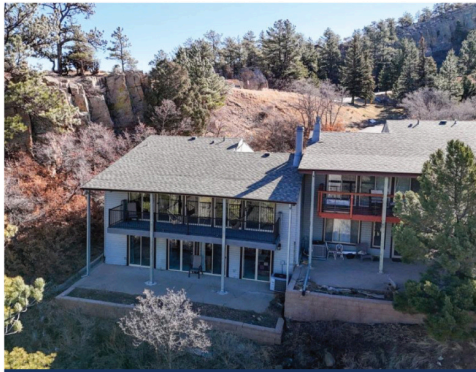


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8045 EAGLE ROAD | PERRY PARK EAST | OFFERED AT \$1,425,000



6301 PERRY PARK BLVD, #22 | ECHO HILLS | OFFERED AT \$575,000



6301 PERRY PARK BLVD, #13 | ECHO HILLS | OFFERED AT \$599,900



2924 VALLEY PARK DRIVE | VALLEY PARK | UNDER CONTRACT | OFFERED AT \$1,395,000

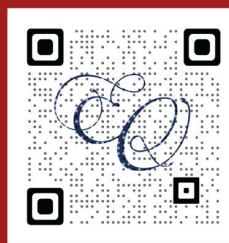


4502 ECHO CLIFF LANE | THE RETREAT | UNDER CONTRACT | OFFERED AT \$879,900



6305 APACHE DRIVE | PERRY PARK | JUST SOLD! | \$710,000

ELIZABETH OWENS has a reputation centered on residential, high-end and acreage properties in Larkspur, Castle Rock and throughout Douglas County. For the past 21+ years, Elizabeth and her team, the Elite Group, have been providing **Top-of-the-Line Service with Bottom-Line Results** to both Buyers and Sellers. Elizabeth Owens is a Master Certified Negotiation Expert, Certified Residential Specialist, Certified Luxury Home Marketing Specialist and is a graduate of the Realtor Institute. Elizabeth is a Larkspur resident and is Broker/Owner at RE/MAX Alliance in Castle Pines. View the virtual tours for these homes and all Elizabeth's listings at ElizabethOwens.net.



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A note from the Editors

Larkspur Sentinel

How is it already April? Well, at least we can officially say that it's spring in Colorado! But, don't let that fool you into planting your garden too soon. It's still advised to wait until after Mother's Day to avoid one of our sneaky, late-season snowstorms.

We are excited to bring you another great issue this month with lots of informative updates on topics like the Crystal Valley interchange project, fire permitting and wildfire prevention, Denver's office market, information on World Water Day, and many other helpful updates from our trusted contributors.

Our wonderful co-editor, Kim Carlsen, brings you her first article featuring "a day in the life" of two wildlife rehabbers, giving us a glimpse into what it takes to keep our furry friends healthy. Intern, Ryley Lee, brings us her first piece on the "Senior Assassin" tradition at the local high schools. Check out her special action-packed local sports photos too!

We are exploring some new ideas to share with you including more human-interest pieces, golf and sports news and other critical updates for our 80118

neighbors, while continuing to bring you the familiar and engaging content that keeps you reading.

We wish you a relaxing April, as we move slowly into summer and prepare for outdoor festivities, concerts, farmer's markets and warm, sunny days!

**Larkspur Sentinel Team
and Contributors**

Co-editors-in-chief

Kim Carlsen and Nicole Wegg

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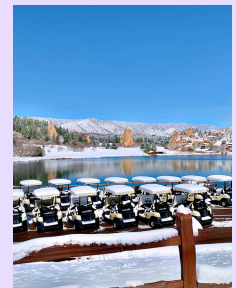
Ryley Lee

Nicole Wegg, Co-Editor

Kim Carlsen, Co-Editor

Share your best Larkspur photos!

April 2025 Cover



Cover Picture By:
LARKSPUR SENTINEL

Submit your photo to
larkspursentinel@gmail.com for a
chance to see it on the front cover.

Rules/info on our website.

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What's going on?

APRIL 2025

April 1: Larkspur Parks and Recreation Board Meeting [INFO](#) 5-6 p.m. at Town Hall

April 1: Larkspur Chamber of Commerce Monthly Mixer [INFO](#) 5-7 p.m. at Spur of the Moment Bar & Grill

April 3: Larkspur Town Council Meeting [INFO](#) 6-8 p.m. at Town Hall

April 8: Larkspur Planning Commission Meeting [INFO](#) 5-6:30 p.m. at Town Hall

April 10: Perry Park Metro District Meeting [INFO](#) 6 p.m. at Perry Park Country Club

April 10: Larkspur Fire Protection District Board Meeting [INFO](#) 6 p.m. at LFPD Station 161

April 15: Larkspur Water and Sewer Board Meeting [INFO](#) 5:30-6:30 p.m. at Town Hall

April 16: Perry Park Water and Sanitation District Meeting [INFO](#) 2 p.m. at 5676 Red Rock Drive

April 17: Larkspur Town Council Meeting [INFO](#) 6-8 p.m. at Town Hall

April 26: **AD** Grand Opening for Front Range Apothecary Refill Shop & Candle Co. 12-4 p.m



YOU ARE INVITED

GRAND Opening

SATURDAY, APRIL 26TH, 12:00 PM -4PM
FRONT RANGE APOTHECARY
REFILL SHOP AND CANDLE CO.
8720 Spruce Mountain Rd Cabin #5, Larkspur, CO 80118

GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION!
Join us for a fun- filled afternoon as we open our doors with
Refreshments, Games & Giveaways.
Preview Sales and More.

All dates are 2025 unless otherwise noted

Interested in adding your upcoming Larkspur event?

Email larkspursentinel@gmail.com with the subject "LARKSPUR EVENT" All events must be open to the public and community-focused.

Town of Larkspur update

Sherilyn West, Mayor

Town of Larkspur



Larkspur Town Council passed a resolution to oppose primitive/minimalist camping on all open space properties within Douglas County. The resolution can be viewed at townoflarkspur.org/town-council/page/resolutions. Items of concern include:

- the threat of wildfire due to the potential for illegal campfires at the proposed site.
- an increased burden to first responders, including Larkspur Fire and EMT, particularly during Renaissance Festival.
- the potential for increased human/wildlife contacts.
- the potential for damage to the natural areas of Douglas County Open Spaces.

On the development front, the Council held a public hearing February 26 during which it found that the property at 341/441 Fox Farm Road is eligible to annex. The Town will now go through the annexation, zoning and subdivision requirements to annex the property. The concept proposed for this property includes eight single family lots and open space trails.

In other news, BNSF Railroad has partnered with the Town of Larkspur and Douglas County to repair the railroad crossing at Perry Park Avenue near the Larkspur Post Office. The planned start date for this project is April 14.

The advertisement has a dark blue background. On the left, white text reads "Altitude Futures provides daily system-generated trading signals for Futures Market investors!". Below this is a list of three bullet points: "▶ Altitude Futures offers hands-free futures investment strategies for the worldwide futures markets.", "▶ Looking for a great way to diversify your portfolio and participate in the largest financial markets in the world?", and "▶ Interested in the potential to make money when prices go up or down?". A large blue arrow points to the right, containing the text "We're Local! Find out how easy it is to GET STARTED TODAY! Visit us at altitudefutures.com or call 720.969.7687". On the right side, there is a logo for "ALTITUDE FUTURES" consisting of a stylized bar chart above the text. Below the logo is a photograph of a mountain range with snow-capped peaks and a lake in the foreground reflecting the mountains.

Altitude Futures provides daily system-generated trading signals for Futures Market investors!

- ▶ Altitude Futures offers hands-free futures investment strategies for the worldwide futures markets.
- ▶ Looking for a great way to diversify your portfolio and participate in the largest financial markets in the world?
- ▶ Interested in the potential to make money when prices go up or down?

We're Local!
Find out how easy it is to
GET STARTED TODAY!
Visit us at altitudefutures.com
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There is significant risk involved in trading futures. Past performance is not indicative of future results

Sandstone Ranch camping debate continues with countywide survey

*Kate Wessels and Kim Carlsen, Editors
Larkspur Sentinel*

Larkspur residents are continuing to push back against the idea of camping at Sandstone Ranch Open Space.

On March 8, residents gathered in the Sandstone Ranch parking lot for a media awareness day to highlight their concerns about camping on Douglas County Open Space properties.

Nearly 100 people attended the hour long event, many with protest signs. First responders and community members spoke in opposition to the idea, which was first suggested last year. Former Douglas County Commissioner Lora Thomas also spoke to the crowd.

“It’s a fire hazard. It’s going to be expensive,” Thomas warned.

The event gained media attention from several local media outlets including the Denver Gazette, the Colorado Springs Gazette, CBS News, KDVR, and others.

The county has stated that the potential project would incur additional costs from staff time for development of the proposal and planning, and that the open space department has requested an additional ranger and camp host position to be funded for the project. An initial estimate for the pilot sites at Sandstone is \$379,400 for the first year.

While still in early development stages of a formal proposal, county officials have stated that campfires would be prohibited and that the rules would be enforced per Resolution No. R-013-153.

During a July 2, 2024 meeting, staff said that the county did not currently have POST-certified rangers on staff and noted that the county would likely need to have POST-certified rangers on staff if camping were to move forward. POST-certified rangers have completed Colorado Peace Officer Standards and Training Academy and are recognized as peace officers in the state of Colorado.

On March 13, the county distributed a countywide message announcing an upcoming Citizen Survey to explore the possibility of limited camping at Douglas County Open Space properties, including Sandstone Ranch. The county cited the importance of public comment and engagement in the planning and decision-making process, and reiterated that the county remains in the early planning stages of any camping proposal.

The county said it anticipates distributing the survey countywide in spring 2025.



*Residents protest at Sandstone Ranch.
Photo credit: Kim Carlsen*



*Carsten and Kona Baumann.
Photo credit: Kim Carlsen*

News from the Perry Park Water and Sanitation District

Brian Arthurs, Director

Perry Park Water and Sanitation District



“A finer body of men has never been gathered by any nation than the men who have done the work of building the Panama Canal; the conditions under which they have lived and have done their work have been better than in any similar work ever undertaken in the tropics; they have all felt an eager pride in their work; and they have made not only America but the whole world their debtors by what they have accomplished.” – Theodore Roosevelt

These words ring true today as we reflect on the Panama Canal, an enduring engineering marvel. Beyond its historical significance and the well-known challenges of its construction, the canal’s intimate relationship with water is a story worth telling, especially after my recent passage through its locks.

While the canal connects the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, it operates entirely on freshwater. Gatun Lake, a massive artificial lake fed by rainforest rainfall, provides the lifeblood for the canal’s locks. This freshwater system is crucial for several reasons:

- **Preventing corrosion:** Freshwater avoids the corrosive effects of saltwater on the canal’s infrastructure.
- **Ecological balance:** It prevents the mixing of marine life from the two oceans and protects the freshwater ecosystem of Gatun Lake, a vital drinking water source.
- **Operational necessity:** The locks rely on gravity-fed freshwater to raise and lower ships.

Each ship passage consumes an astounding average of 52 million gallons of freshwater – that’s three times the monthly usage of the Perry Park Water & Sanitation District! This massive consumption underscores the delicate balance between shipping needs and local freshwater availability.

Like our own Front Range, the Panama Canal is vulnerable to drought. In 2023, low water levels in Gatun Lake forced authorities to significantly reduce ship transits, highlighting the impact of water scarcity on this global trade artery. To mitigate these challenges, the Panama Canal Authority has implemented water-saving measures, including:

- **Cross-filling:** Reusing water by transferring it between lock chambers.
- **Tandem lockages:** Allowing two smaller ships to share a single lock chamber.



The Panama Canal.
Photo credit: Brian Arthurs

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The Panama Canal.
Photo credit: Brian Arthurs

The water used in the canal also serves as a vital drinking water source for nearby communities, emphasizing the constitutional mandate to prioritize human consumption.

Ongoing efforts to protect and restore the surrounding rainforests, along with proposals for new reservoirs, aim to ensure the canal's long-term water security. As one frequent visitor to the canal remarked, "It is much more than an engineering marvel. The history and present-day intricacies never get old. The Canal has never disappointed."

Local radium levels

In local news, recent tests for radium in the PPWSD's drinking water have shown levels well within EPA standards. We remain committed to ensuring the safety and quality of your water.



Larkspur Historical Society

...has moved from daytime to nighttime monthly meetings ...3rd Thursday each month at 6:30PM at the back room of the *Spur of the Moment*. Each meeting begins with a **History Lesson** as well! **Come see what we are all about and enjoy the history lesson!**



Spur of the Moment
BAR AND GRILL

April 17
History Lesson
NAVAJO CODE TALKERS
By Sydney Tahmindjis

The Navajo code talkers took part in every assault the US Marines conducted in the Pacific from 1942 to 1945.

May 15
History Lesson
Camp Amache
By Nicole Tahmindjis

At its peak population in 1943, Amache housed 7,310 Japanese people, making it the tenth largest population center in Colorado at the time.

Programs & Walks begin in May

May 8 @ 7:00PM
Spur of the Moment
"Earth, Wind, and Fire II"

Aug 28 @ 7:00PM
A FATEFUL DAY
Perry Park County Club

Oct 23 @ 7:00PM
SANDSTONE RANCH THROUGH TIME
Perry Park County Club

September 25, 2025
DIVIDE COUNTRY
Perry Park County Club

Larkspur Spruce Mountain Road Walk
May 31 & Sep 13 at 10AM

Old Town Larkspur Walk
Aug 16 at 10AM

All walks at the Larkspur History Information Cabin (Cabin 2)

RSVP to any program or walk: Nancy, 720.849.0718

Keep reading about us in each month's *Larkspur Sentinel* for more information about us.

The voice of history of southern Douglas County & Divide Country






5TH



ANNUAL

Ruck March

FOR

PTSD AWARENESS & VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION

SPONSORED BY:



VETERAN MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUES TO REMAIN AMONGST OUR NATION'S BIGGEST CRISES WITH SUICIDE RATES REACHING NUMBERS HIGHER THAN EVER BEFORE IDENTIFIED. IN MANY CASES, THE VETERAN HAS LEFT THE BATTLE, BUT REMAINS IN THE WAR.

AS THE SUICIDE RATE CONTINUES TO GROW, THE NEED TO SERVE THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED US GROWS AS WELL. IN 2025, SSG MICHAEL CONNORS RET. & THE PAWS TEAM, WILL BE DOING JUST THAT BY ENDURING A 4-DAY RUCK MARCH, ACROSS FROM DENVER TO COLORADO SPRINGS, AND BACK TO CASTLE ROCK, TOTALING 105 MILES.

SUPPORT THE TEAM WITH DONATIONS TO CONNORS9-PAWS AND MAKE SURE YOU JOIN THEM ON THE JOURNEY AT THE CHECKPOINT PARTIES & FINALE AT 105 WEST BREWING COMPANY IN CASTLE ROCK, COLORADO.



Check Point Locations

5/21/25 SUNRISE - RED ROCKS AMPHITHEATER

5/21/25 5PM - BUCKET LIST TAVERN CASTLE ROCK

5/22/25 5PM - WEIDNER FIELD, THE BRIT PUB COLORADO SPRINGS

5/24/25 12PM - FINALE 105W BREWING COMPANY CASTLE ROCK

MAY 21 - 24, 2025

WWW.CONNORSK9PAWS.ORG



Donate Here

Fire permit types and how to obtain them

Wayne Moore, Secretary–Board of Directors
Larkspur Fire Protection District



Times have changed! With recent wildfires impacting the Wildland Urban Interface, LFPD has updated how it issues burn permits. Conducting burns without complying with permit requirements could come with severe consequences. The LFPD issues two fire permit types, the Slash Pile Burn Permit and the more common Recreational Burn Permit.

Slash Pile Burn Permits allow for organized burning of natural vegetation.

- typically associated with mitigation practices, including tree and scrub oak trimmings.
- typically used for larger-sized properties where large distance can be maintained between slash pile and other combustibles, like structures or vegetation.
- require inspection every time prior to burning.

Slash Pile Burn Permit inspection requirements:

- cannot exceed 10 ft. x10 ft. area/4 ft. height, with larger piles allowed case-by-case.
- must have minimum of 10 ft. bare earth cleared to mineral soil around perimeter of pile, with proper clearance from other combustibles.
- must have access to appropriate water supply/source onsite for final extinguishment (a piped water source, or a minimum of 55 gallons of tanked water that must be able to reach the area around the pile).
- must comply with applicable fire codes.

To obtain this permit, contact the Fire Marshal to schedule a slash pile “pit inspection.” We’ll help you determine a safe location for your pit, and once approved, you can pile slash material. After that, a final inspection is conducted, and a \$10 permit fee is collected. Upon passing final inspection, you may burn at the agreed-upon date/time.

Recreational Burn Permits have similar requirements to Slash Pile Burn Permits. These permits are valid for five years and are free of charge. This permit expires annually on February 28 and must be renewed yearly. The Fire Marshal must inspect the burn pit location to ensure it complies with applicable fire codes; any change in the pit location requires a new inspection. Once approved, you may apply for the Recreational Burn Permit.

Household trash and hazardous waste materials may not be burned under any permit type. All burns must follow the burning restriction levels imposed by the Douglas County Sheriff.

To apply for burn permits, visit larkspurfire.org. For more information, contact Fire Marshal Jeff Hahn at 303-681-3284 or jhahn@larkspurfire.org.

Upcoming Board of Directors election information

Wayne Moore,
Secretary–Board of Directors
Larkspur Fire Protection District

Larkspur Fire Protection District Board of Directors Election Polling Place Election

May 6, 2025
7 am to 7 pm
9414 S. Spruce Mountain Road, Larkspur,
CO 80118

Request an absentee ballot from the Designated Election Official, Patti Nygaard at panygaard@larkspurfire.org. The deadline for the absentee ballot application is Tuesday, April 29.

Order on Election Ballot:

1. Aaron Mathewson
2. Ken Walker
3. Wayne Moore
4. Charles O'Reilly
5. James Godley

Douglas County Wildfire Mitigation Cost-Share Program

Maisie Wingerter,
Senior Communication Manager
Douglas County Government

[Wildfire Mitigation Cost-Sharing applications](#) from Douglas County will be open until Thursday, April 3.

These funds are intended for homeowners, HOAs, and communities seeking to reduce their exposure to hazardous conditions in the event of a wildland fire.

This year residents are eligible for \$10,000.00 for individual mitigation projects and \$50,000.00 for projects when they partner with their neighbors.



Need a Little Help This Month?
Food Bank & Care Center - Free

By Appointment
Contact us at - gethelp@larkspur.church
77 Perry Park Avenue, Larkspur

LARKSPUR
CHURCH

PIANO LESSONS WITH LOVIE

CALL TODAY,
PLAY TOMORROW!

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719 661 0603
LESSONSWITHLOVIE@GMAIL.COM



April is volunteer appreciation month

*Chip Hunnings, Communications and Outreach Manager
Aging Resources of Douglas County*



How Volunteering Transforms the Community — and You!

At Aging Resources of Douglas County (ARDC), we're on a mission to empower older adults to age with dignity and independence. And we couldn't do it without the heart and dedication of our incredible volunteers! These amazing individuals come from all walks of life, driven by the desire to give back to their communities and make a real difference.

Through their selfless efforts, volunteers provide essential transportation, helping older adults get to doctor's appointments, grocery stores, pharmacies, and other vital errands. But that's just the beginning! Volunteers also make it possible for seniors to enjoy piano lessons, explore new opportunities to volunteer themselves, attend shows and concerts — giving them the freedom to stay connected and engaged with the world around them!

One of the most significant ways our volunteers impact the lives of older adults is through our Companion Program, which fights one of the most damaging side effects of aging: isolation. In fact, isolation can be as harmful to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day! But a simple visit from a volunteer, offering a kind conversation or just a listening ear, can combat that loneliness and help foster meaningful, lasting connections.



*Ridgeline Church volunteers
Photo Credit: Conor McCarthy*



*Ridgeline Church volunteers
Photo Credit: Conor McCarthy*

So, what motivates our volunteers? Many say the most rewarding part of their experience is the direct impact they make on the well-being of their neighbors and community. Whether you're dedicating multiple hours or just one hour each month, every minute counts! The ripple effect of your time and effort leads to a wave of positive change, ensuring that those in need get the support and services they deserve. The benefits of even a small amount of volunteered time through Aging Resources of Douglas County makes a significant impact, and could make a positive difference in someone's life.

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But here's the kicker: volunteering isn't just about helping others — it's about enriching your own life, too. The bonds formed between volunteers and older adults are powerful, creating a sense of joy and fulfillment that benefits everyone involved. For some, volunteering is a fantastic way to improve social and relationship skills, especially for those who might be a bit shy or struggle to meet new people. Many volunteers find that one-on-one interactions are an ideal way to build confidence and develop meaningful connections.

And the benefits go beyond just personal growth. Studies show that volunteering can make you feel better both physically and mentally. A BioLife poll found that 45% of respondents felt a stronger sense of purpose, 36% reported feeling happier, and 26% experienced improved overall mental well-being after volunteering.

Worried about not having enough time to volunteer? You're not alone — it's a common concern. But here's the secret: there's magic in volunteering! A study published in Psychological Science found that people who give their time to causes or individuals they care about actually feel like they have more time!

Need even more motivation to get involved? Volunteering is one of the best ways to make a new friend! And with ARDC, that new friend will bring a wealth of life experience, fascinating stories, and often, a contagious zest for life and new experiences. It's the kind of connection that's truly special.

As we celebrate Volunteer Appreciation Month, we hope you'll consider sharing your time with Aging Resources of Douglas County. If not, we encourage you to find another cause that speaks to you. Start your own journey of volunteerism — and experience the rewards that come from giving back.

Let's make April a month of impact, connection, and joy — for both you and the community you're helping to build.

Larkspur Area
Chamber of Commerce

MONTHLY MIXERS

2nd Tuesday of the Month
5:30pm - 7:00pm MT

www.larkspurchamberofcommerce.com

HOSTED BY:
Local Larkspur Community & Business Members

Larkspur FREE Library
9524 Spruce Mountain Road

THOUSANDS OF TITLES
No Card
No Late Fees
FREE

**WEDNESDAYS & SATURDAYS
10AM TO 3PM**

LARKSPUR
Colorado

A look into the popular high school game, “Senior Assassin”

Ryley Lee, Intern
Larkspur Sentinel

Senior Assassin is a game played by high school seniors around the country every year using water guns, floaties and goggles. Schools vary in how they run the game, but the concept is always the same: Get your targets out every week and don't get out to win.

The rules of the game are fairly simple. Each team of two is assigned targets they have to get “out” every week by shooting them with their water guns, and they have to record it or it doesn't count. The players are allowed to wear goggles to keep them “safe”, but one day a week, on “purge day”, the goggles don't work as a safety net. If players don't get their targets out, they are put on the “bounty board” for the following week, meaning anyone can target them, and goggles will not keep them safe. However, players can pay \$10 to get off the bounty board. At the end of the game, the winners get the money in the “pot” which holds of all the funds contributed by players to get off the bounty board. Although senior assassin isn't regulated or affiliated with any specific schools, there is still some school intervention. For instance, at Castle View High School, the administration implemented a rule that prohibits water “shots” from being performed on campus.

Senior Assassin is a seemingly innocent game thought to be fun for seniors to celebrate the final year of high school. However, there is some potential danger the game creates not only for the students playing the game, but also for the surrounding community.

Castle View High School Resource Officer, Scott Gillespie, and his commander, Sam Varela, believe that although the game seems innocent, there is a serious side to it that needs to be considered. Varela said that although the people who are playing the game think it's harmless fun, an outside observer could see some of the behavior associated with the game and consider it suspicious.

For example, if someone sees people hanging around businesses or homes in the dark, they could become suspicious and nervous, and they might even call the police thinking there is a real threat to them or others. Officer Varela said, “It could be something as innocuous as somebody's hanging around, say a home or a business after hours in the dark, and a neighbor calls and says it doesn't look right. And a cop is going to come. But that cop that goes to the senior assassin call, now can't respond to other emergency calls.” It could also put an officer's life at unnecessary risk because, “Now that officer that goes to that call could be involved in an auto



Water guns are used to get targets “out” in Senior Assassin.
Photo credit: Ryley Lee

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crash or a fall accident or something like that, and now we have an officer who's seriously injured. That impacts their career, it impacts their personal lives, but for what?

Outside of these calls impacting the officers themselves, when a police officer has to go take care of a call caused by the senior assassin game, they are not taking care of real threats or problems throughout the community. It's good for the public and the high schools to know the risks and potential issues the game can cause in and around the community.

Varela said, "It seems like it's harmless. 'Oh a cop has to come, and I'm not doing anything wrong', yeah? But that cop is not on the other side of town, helping somebody who's dealing with a real criminal act. Because you're soaking up first responder resources that other people who really are in crisis, who really do need help, can't benefit from now."

In addition to the fact that Senior Assassin can utilize first responder resources, it can also pose a real threat to the students involved in the game because some people who aren't trained to stay calm in potentially dangerous situations, like police, could react rashly. "Officers are very well trained to slow things down in that moment. So when you have a bystander who isn't trained to deescalate situations, who thinks that they're doing the right thing by intervening, and may have a weapon, it then puts all these kids that are just having fun, at risk," Gillespie said. If someone bumps into people playing the game but doesn't know what is going on and decides not to call the police and instead tries to deal with the situation themselves, they can cause a potentially dangerous situation out of something that was never meant to get out of hand.

"My daughter was at a sports practice and two kids were hiding behind pillars outside the front doors waiting for somebody who was participating in Senior Assassin to come out so that they



*Seniors Chloe Rudiak (left) and Zoe Salazar (right) playing Senior Assassin.
Photo credit: Ryley Lee*

could 'get the shot', so to speak. And people sitting in the parking lot are wondering what is happening and why there are people hiding behind pillars," Varela said. "And then think about a situation where one of those people who are watching this are alarmed and assume that something bad is happening and think, 'I'm going to defend myself, or I'm going to defend somebody else if something happens.' It can get dangerous really fast."

When students are focused on getting their targets out, they don't think about the repercussions of their actions. They don't think about the potential danger that they are putting themselves and those around them in, they just think they're a part of a fun game with their peers. However, they should be thinking about these things; they should be thinking about what could happen.

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I think the people that play the game need to be conscientious about how they're doing it, where they're doing it, when they're doing it, and also consider the outside observers view of it. The 17-year-old kid is not thinking about those things, but I want them to think like that because I do think the risk is real," Varela said.

Senior Assassin is a fun game but it also poses a real threat to the kids playing and those in the community around them, and although nothing has happened yet, it is potentially just a matter of time. "I don't think we've had a huge tragedy in the game so far, but all of us are kind of holding our breath," Gillespie said.

It is important to realize the real danger that this seemingly innocent game brings to the community. It is imperative to educate those playing the game of the danger that they are creating and how they can stop it, but still have fun and enjoy their senior year.

Local sports in action

*Ryley Lee, Intern
Larkspur Sentinel*



March 2025 Castle View Girls Lacrosse Games, Colorado

From left to right:

- (1) Danika King*
- (2) Callie Lewis & Team*
- (3) Dillan Thomas*

Photo credit: Ryley Lee



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Perry Park Metro District Board update

*Steve Ostrowski, Director and Secretary
Perry Park Metropolitan District*



Perry Park Metropolitan District
The Special District For Perry Park Ranch

Hello Perry Park Metropolitan District residents,

We received three self-nominations for the three open seats in the 2025 election, so we will not be having an election this year. The three candidates are automatically appointed since there was no contest. Thank you and congratulations to the three new board members: Carsten Baumann, Kirk Mulbach, and Keith Worley! They will be seated at our May 2025 meeting as your new Directors for four years. And, thank you to three departing board members for serving - Jill Arthurs, Steve Ostrowski, and Chris Warren!

Thanks to the donation of Matt Flavin, representing Cisco Land Company, LLC, the PPMD is receiving "Tract K", a large parcel behind the Perry Park Ranch. This parcel has been accessible by residents but will now be PPMD owned. The plan is for maintenance and/or development of trail improvements on the tract of land for better accessibility by residents.

The entryway design update is in progress with a community meeting held March 26th. We will be communicating with the community on ideas and progress. The goal is to have a more attractive entry area, where everyone passes through into our neighborhood. Similarly, we have our Wauconda Park design ideas ready to adapt to a ~\$200,000 budget for updates in the park.

We are still attempting to secure fireworks for July 4th, 2025 celebrations, but there are challenges with costs and availability for this event. Although it has been a tradition in Perry Park, costs have spiked due to limited resources and supplier availability, creating a challenge.

Our April board meeting is scheduled for Thursday – April 10, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the Perry Park Country Club and on Zoom. You can see the meeting schedule and documents, as well as other neighborhood information and contact forms, at perryparkmd.colorado.gov/.

Thank you on behalf of the Board of Directors,

Steve Ostrowski - Director & Secretary, Perry Park Metropolitan District

Follow us on: facebook.com/perryparkmetro & nextdoor.com/g/6vaja7i6t/



News from Larkspur Elementary School

Larkspur Elementary School

As spring begins to bloom, it's hard to believe the school year is already winding down. It has been a year filled with growth, learning, and fun, and our students will continue to be busy throughout April. They will participate in Agriculture Day on April 24, where they will enjoy outdoor learning and gain hands-on experience in agriculture. We also invite students and families to join us for our Spring Green Apple Day, also held April 24. This community event allows everyone to work together and help clean up the campus. It's a great way to support our school grounds!

Our first graders eagerly anticipate starting their Embryology Project. Every year, the first grade students look forward to this fascinating unit where they witness the incredible process of life firsthand. We are excited that longer spring days have our school chickens laying more eggs! The eggs are often available to our Larkspur Community in the red egg box on the northeast side of the school driveway (before the bus loop). We ask for a donation in exchange for eggs. All donations help support our school's chickens. A flip sign on the front of the red egg box displays if eggs are available.

As the school year draws to a close, we are also excited to share some fantastic summer programs available for all neighborhood families and children. Larkspur Elementary will be hosting Camp Invention during the week of June 2-6. There is still limited space available, so be sure to sign up soon! This fun, full-day, week-long camp gives students the chance to dive into open-ended STEM challenges and hands-on activities. It's available for all children entering kindergarten for the 2025-2026 school year, as well as all students through sixth grade. It's a perfect way for students to explore their creativity and problem-solving skills. For more information on Camp Invention, please contact Ali Swier at ali.swier@dcsdk12.org.

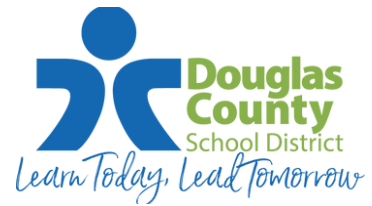


*Embryology Project egg box, Larkspur Elementary.
Photo credit: Kaylin Sanford*

We are also excited to announce that Champ Camp will be hosted at LES from May 28 to August 8. This camp runs daily from 6:30 AM to 5:30 PM and is available for all elementary-age children — from those entering kindergarten for the 2025-2026 school year to students who have just graduated sixth grade, and all grades in between. Each week, Champ Camp offers new themes and a variety of activities, ensuring that no two weeks are ever the same! For more details about Champ Camp, you can reach out via email to Mrs. Carrie at CH002038@discoverchampions.com or call 720-297-5037.

School consolidation recommendations in Highlands Ranch

Paula Hans, Public Information Officer
Douglas County School District



After nearly two years of careful planning and evaluation, the Douglas County School District (DCSD) will recommend to the DCSD Board of Education that the following schools in Highlands Ranch be consolidated beginning with the 2026-2027 school year. The Board is scheduled to vote on these recommendations at its April 22 meeting.

- Saddle Ranch Elementary will consolidate into Eldorado Elementary
- Heritage Elementary will consolidate into Summit View Elementary
- Acres Green Elementary will consolidate into Fox Creek Elementary

These recommendations are the result of extensive analysis to address declining enrollment in parts of Highlands Ranch and to ensure that all students have access to a comprehensive, well-rounded education with full staffing and resources. This decision was made based on the criteria outlined in the [DCSD School Closure, Consolidation, and/or Relocation Processes and Procedures policy](#), with a focus on opportunities for students and long-term financial sustainability. More information can be found on the [Growth and Decline website](#).

Additionally, DCSD will recommend the following changes that will affect schools located in the Highlands Ranch region only:

- Sixth grade moves to middle school beginning in the 2026-2027 school year (for Highlands Ranch elementary schools that feed into Cresthill, Mountain Ridge and Ranch View middle schools).
- Some [minor elementary school boundary adjustments](#) will be made beginning in the 2026-2027 school year.

Again, these two changes are specific to schools in the Highlands Ranch region. All of these adjustments will help DCSD ensure that the newly consolidated schools remain efficient and sustainable for years to come.

Additionally, part of DCSD’s next strategic plan will include a timeline for moving sixth graders to middle school throughout the district.

While change is never easy, DCSD’s priority remains the same: ensuring that every child has access to an exceptional education and a very bright future.

35+ homes & sales around Larkspur, CO

COMMUNITY Garage Sale & Flea Market

June 6, Fri. 8 am - 2pm 8850 Spruce Mountain Rd, Larkspur, CO 80118	June 7, Sat. 8 am - 2pm Individual driveways - see map for participating addresses	June 8, Sun. 8 am - 2pm Individual driveways - see map for participating addresses
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Lots of unique items and fantastic bargains at the annual community garage sale & flea market weekend in Larkspur, Colorado!

clothes | books | accessories | electronic | crafts | toys | furniture | games | outdoor gear | tools & more!

SCAN FOR INFO.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

exp, arc, ELIZABETH OWENS 720.988.4058, DAVE GARDNER'S REALTY, Larkspur Sentinel, CONFIRMING, ORGANIZED FLAMINGO, LARKSPUR Colorado, Native Hawk Services, exp

For information and sponsorship opportunities, please email: larkspur.co.events@gmail.com

Denver's office market shakeup

*Cameron McClellan, Contributor
Owner of Colorado Team Real Estate*

Denver's office market is in a tough spot. With a vacancy rate of 17.4% as of early 2025, it's one of the highest in the country. While office utilization is down nationwide, Denver has been hit especially hard due to its strong ties to the tech industry, where remote and hybrid work have become the norm. Companies are rethinking office footprints, and leases signed in late 2024 averaged just 3,300 square feet, a 40% drop since the market peaked in 2015. With fewer tenants looking for space and many opting for higher-quality, newer buildings, older office towers in downtown Denver are struggling to stay profitable, leading to a wave of distressed properties.

It's a tenant's market right now. Asking rents have held steady, but landlords are offering major concessions to attract tenants, including high tenant improvement allowances and deep discounts on sublease space. Sublease rates are running about 30% below direct leases, making them an attractive option for companies looking to cut costs. The weak office market has also put a damper on investor activity. Sales volume in the past year was down 60% from the five-year average, and recent deals suggest office values have dropped by at least 20%. With an unclear outlook, many investors are sitting on the sidelines, waiting to see where things land.



*Aerial view of office space, Castle Rock.
Photo credit: Colorado Team Real Estate*

On the leasing side, demand remains below pre-pandemic levels, and companies are generally taking smaller footprints when they do sign new leases. Newer buildings are performing better, but older offices are facing the steepest declines in occupancy. Even once popular areas like LoDo and Platte River are seeing higher vacancies. Cherry Creek is bucking the trend, with a much lower vacancy rate thanks to strong demand from law firms and energy companies looking for top-tier office space.

Despite a slowdown in new construction, Denver still has 1.7 million square feet of office space in the pipeline, with much of it concentrated in RiNo and Cherry Creek. The challenge is that much of the new space isn't preleased, which could push vacancy rates even higher in 2024. Meanwhile, distressed properties are piling up, particularly downtown, where multiple office buildings have defaulted on loans or gone into foreclosure. With over \$664 million in commercial mortgage-backed securities loans coming due through 2026, more financial strain is coming. In short, Denver's office market is going through a major reset.

Douglas Land Conservancy helps celebrate World Water Day

*Leslie Lee, DLC Volunteer
Douglas Land Conservancy*



Douglas Land Conservancy joined with the United Nations to celebrate World Water Day on March 22. This year's theme revolved around glacier preservation.

The primary objective of World Water Day is to raise awareness about the adverse effects of accelerated glacier melting on communities and ecosystems, while promoting effective strategies to mitigate this loss.

Glaciers are experiencing unprecedented melting because of climate change. Since 2023, glaciers have recorded a staggering loss of over 600 gigatons of water, marking the largest mass loss in the past five decades. Escalating temperatures and prolonged heat waves are the primary drivers of this rapid melting, resulting in longer summers and shorter winters. This leads to significant changes in water flows that contribute to an increase in floods, droughts, landslides, and sea level rise. In addition, the accelerated melting of glaciers plays a substantial role in global sea-level rise, with current sea levels approximately 20 centimeters higher than in 1900.

Glaciers serve as crucial water resources, significantly contributing to oceanic circulation. They regulate heat, carbon dioxide, and nutrients that sustain diverse food webs across the globe. Glaciers, through mountain runoff and snowmelt, provide drinking water to half a billion people, as well as water for agriculture, industry, clean energy production, and the maintenance of healthy ecosystems.

Typically, glaciers are replenished with snowfall during the winter and undergo ice loss during the summer. However, the impacts of climate change, including longer summers, shorter winters, heat waves during the summer, reduced snowfall, and decreased rainfall, are leading to profound changes in glaciers. This can have severe consequences for communities and ecosystems by increasing the risk of geohazards, altering water availability, and contributing to global sea level rise.

When water becomes scarce, polluted, or when access is unequal or non-existent, tensions can arise between communities and countries. Prosperity and peace are also intrinsically linked to access to water.

Glacier preservation is crucial for sustaining life and the water cycle. A staggering 70 percent of Earth's freshwater exists as snow and ice. Despite being the most abundant resource, water remains a scarce commodity. Approximately 115 million people are forced to drink contaminated water, while over 2.2 billion individuals (one in four) lack access to safe water (WHO/UNICEF, 2023).

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Moreover, about 3.5 billion people (four in ten) lack safely managed sanitation, and 2 billion people lack basic hygiene services, including 65.3 individuals with no facilities at all. About 1,000 children under five per day succumb to unsafe water and inadequate sanitation. Additionally, 2 billion people reside in countries under water stress, and 3.6 billion face inadequate water access at least once a month annually (WMO, 2021). Water-related diseases account for a staggering 70 percent of all disaster-related deaths. Since 2000, flood-related disasters have seen a 134 percent increase (WMO, 2021). Only 0.5 percent of the water on Earth is usable and available as freshwater.

To mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change on glaciers, several strategies are recommended:

- Continued reduction of global emissions
- Strengthen water resource management
- Improve water infrastructure to store seasonal glacier meltwater and enhance water efficiency and reuse systems
- Develop adaptation plans for vulnerable communities heavily reliant on glaciers for water
- Enhance disaster response capabilities
- Promote ecosystem restoration

Individuals can also take action to help mitigate glacier melt:

- Save water by turning off the faucet while brushing teeth, doing dishes, and cooking.
- Opt for a dishwasher instead of hand washing. Consider taking baths instead of showers or reducing shower time.



- Keep pollutants out of water sources
- Support local agriculture
- Protect nature by cleaning up rivers, lakes, and wetlands
- Choose sustainable fashion
- Reduce food waste
- Incorporate plant-based meals into your diet frequently.

Douglas Land Conservancy is a non-profit land trust based in Castle Rock. For more information on DLC, go to douglaslandconservancy.org.



Come join us. All are welcome!
St. Philip in the Field Episcopal Church
397 N. Perry Park Rd. Sedalia, CO 80135
(Hwy. 105 near Wolfensberger Rd.)
Sundays – 8:00 and 10:00 services

Holy Week and Easter Schedule
Palm Sunday (4/13) - 8:00 & 10:00
Maundy Thursday (4/17) - 6:00 pm
Good Friday (4/18) – Stations of the Cross
Community event in the cemetery at noon
Good Friday service (4/18) - 6:00 pm
Easter Vigil (4/19) - 6:00 pm
Easter Sunday (4/20) - 8:00 & 10:00
followed by a festive coffee hour and Easter Egg Hunt.

Crystal Valley interchange project update

Town of Castle Rock

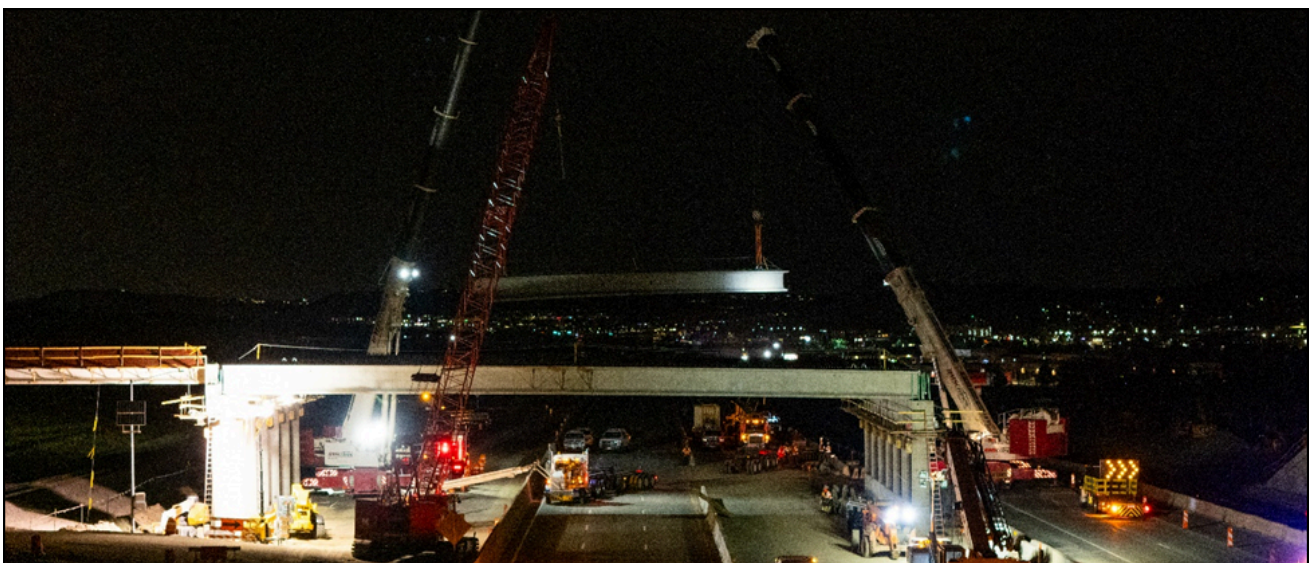
The Crystal Valley interchange project, the Town of Castle Rock's top transportation priority, achieved a significant milestone this month with the placement of 52 bridge girders over Interstate 25, West Frontage Road and the BNSF Railway tracks.

The bridge girders over I-25, West Frontage Road and the BNSF Railway tracks provide the foundation for the new Crystal Valley Parkway bridge and the accompanying I-25 ramps that will be built, creating the new I-25 interchange. Most of the remaining bridge construction will take place off the roadway or use single-lane closures, minimizing impacts to the traveling public. Travelers should expect intermittent nighttime lane closures on I-25 through the summer to support overhead bridge work.

Earthwork operations continue west of I-25 to support the installation of a new drainage system and grading for the accompanying new pond structures. Roadway construction is progressing on the new Dawson Trails Boulevard west of I-25 and other neighboring roads that will connect to the future interchange.

To build a retaining wall between I-25 and East Frontage Road to support the future northbound I-25 on-ramp, flagging operations will be used to create a single-lane road configuration between the new roundabout at Crystal Valley Parkway and East Frontage Road, north to the car dealerships. Construction east of I-25 is anticipated to be completed by 2026.

Once completed, the new I-25 Exit 179 and Crystal Valley Parkway interchange will improve safety and mobility in the surrounding community and provide a key regional transportation link from I-25.



*The Crystal Valley interchange team works overnight to place a bridge girder over I-25 during scheduled closures in March.
Photo credit: Town of Castle Rock*

Saving the wild ones: a critical conversation with Sarah Heckathorn and Kathy Meyer, licensed wildlife rehabilitators

Kim Carlsen, Editor
Larkspur Sentinel

Don't let the cute photos fool you – wildlife rehabilitation is serious business. And in this game there's no playbook for rescuing the hurt and the helpless.



*A fox in rehabilitation.
Photo credit: Sarah Heckathorn*

"There's a lot of heartbreak," says Sarah Heckathorn, a 25-year veteran Douglas County wildlife rehabilitator. Heckathorn provides her services to imperiled wild mammals, without compensation, to any and all that arrive at her facility – from every part of the state.

Frightened creatures, stark realities

I met with Heckathorn and her fellow rehabilitator, Kathy Meyer, who works with wild rabbits, to discuss a "day in the life" of their mostly difficult and often thankless task. The two engaged me in a wide-ranging and candid conversation. Both would like to stress to everyone that the "cuteness factor" plays a very small role in what they do. Wildlife rehabilitation requires consistent and frequently tedious care of injured and frightened creatures that have likely never encountered much human contact before. Abandoned babies, sometimes brought to rehabbers in litters, are less likely to protest than their grown counterparts, at least at first. But they don't come with instructions either.

"Be prepared for a lot of poopy, scratchy, dirt-under-the-fingernails type stories," Heckathorn warned.

Animal caretakers, now and then

Difficult vocations require brave people with unique mindsets and backgrounds. Heckathorn and Meyer fit the bill. Both started their careers as veterinary technicians and gravitated from that realm into the larger domain of wildlife rehab. Both have also worked as professional pet sitters.

Heckathorn grew up in a home with a menagerie that included raccoons, a monkey, and a descented skunk (before laws dictated which types of wild animals couldn't be kept as pets). Her present-day wildlife rehabilitation facility caters to small and medium-sized wild things, including mice, squirrels, raccoons, foxes, coyotes, and bobcats. When asked what advice she would offer someone interested in pursuing wildlife rehab, Heckathorn said, "It's a lot of blood, guts, late nights, and tears."

Meyer, who's been rehabbing since 2004, began caring for rabbits when her daughter was young and they worked together with the House Rabbit Society. The jump to caring for wild rabbits seemed like an appropriate next step. Meyer's rehabilitation center rescues wild cottontails and jackrabbits.

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Teamwork makes the dream work

Heckathorn and Meyer poignantly exemplify the deep friendship that can grow between two wildlife rehabbers. In a role dedicated to saving creatures that can't help themselves, they've developed the camaraderie of soldiers. Piecing together the events that preceded an animal's rescue situation is a particularly tricky part of the job, but it's also an opportune time for clever friends to put their heads together.

"We're like detectives," says Meyer.

"The story takes a while to unfold," Heckathorn adds.

Things get especially tricky when you zoom out to farther reaches of the state. Teammates in wildlife rehabilitation are in dramatically short supply. Currently, there are less than 100 Colorado rehabilitators managing the rehabilitation of all wildlife species statewide, up to and including large animals like bears and mountain lions.



*Jackrabbit vs. cottontail appearance.
Photo credit: Kathy Meyer*

Regardless of these small numbers, the teamwork that happens in the wildlife rehab community should not be underestimated. Last July, for example, Heckathorn took in a litter of five bobcats from the Parker area. She was already caring for two bobcat kittens from other disparate parts of the state, and the litter of five matched well age-wise with the kittens already in her care. However, since no rehab facility should tend to that many kittens at a time, Heckathorn, with the help of other rehabbers and volunteer transporters, got three of the kittens to other facilities where they could receive more individualized care. Later this spring, Heckathorn will release the kittens she's been caring for back into the wild.



*Baby squirrel in rehab.
Photo credit: Sarah Heckathorn*

One of the most difficult truths regarding wildlife rehab is the fact that animals often must be euthanized due to state laws and regulations. If a cottontail comes to Meyer, for example, with certain types of injuries, she will immediately know if it has a chance to survive. If the animal has no chance of survival, there are prescribed ways to euthanize it, some more humane than others. Cervical dislocation is one method, but not one Meyer utilizes. She is sponsored by a Castle Rock veterinary practice, and in certain circumstances, takes rabbits in need of euthanization to the clinic where she and staff end the creature's life as humanely as possible.

Happy beginnings

Though much of their work is frustrating, exhausting, and tragic, there's one aspect that brings joy to Heckathorn and Meyer and makes the entire process worth it: releasing an animal back into the wild. And though both rehabbers report feeling a little lost after the process of freeing their patients, there's no doubt that the satisfaction of liberating these healed creatures brings them back to caring for more animals, time and again.

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“It’s bittersweet, but what you worked for for months,” Heckathorn says, as Meyer chimes in: “It’s magical!”

Every little bit helps

Both Heckathorn and Meyer depend on community donations to help them serve their calling. An Amazon wishlist can be found pinned in the featured section of Heckathorn’s popular Facebook group, *Larkspur Wildlife*. Members of the community, online and off, can donate items such as food, bedsheets, blankets, towels, and bales of straw. Monetary donations are also extremely useful, going toward projects like construction of habitats for recovering animals.

Heckathorn also uses her Facebook group of over 2500 members to showcase her work and to educate locals on the perils of interacting with wildlife. She doesn’t take any guff or sass on her page, because her mission is important and not often well understood.

Animals’ lives are at stake.

“Put. The bunny. Back!”

Or the baby squirrel. Or the fox kits. Or the fledgling.

If there’s any parting message or advice for well-meaning citizens who stumble upon injured or “abandoned” animals, it would be this: leave wildlife alone until you’ve spoken with a licensed rehabilitator. Or as Meyer likes to phrase it, “Put. The bunny. Back!” Meyer elaborates that mother rabbits aren’t the most attentive parents, but they typically return to their little ones twice a day. When humans with little knowledge of wildlife remove animal babies from nature, without immediate proper care, the animals can quickly die. It can also be incredibly dangerous for a well-intentioned but unaware citizen to try to help an injured animal. Leave it to the professionals like Heckathorn and Meyer and the organizations that support them, like Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW).



*A bobcat kitten in Heckathorn’s care.
Photo credit: Jim Snitker*

Heckathorn explains that people are often interested in seeing the animals she’s caring for up close and personal, but that’s not an option. Wildlife that has been imprinted by humans must, unfortunately, be euthanized. Because of this, Heckathorn keeps her charges under tight wraps, allowing them to live as close to wild as possible while they mature or heal.

“My wild ones only see me,” she said.

For more information on this topic, including a public list of Colorado wildlife rehabilitators and guidelines for licensing, go to [CPW’s Wildlife Rehabilitation page](#).

Preventative care: how communities can work side by side with firefighters to protect themselves against the threat of wildfire

*Michele Steinberg, Director, Wildfire Division,
National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)*

This year, Wildfire Community Preparedness Day will be held May 3, followed the next day by International Firefighters Day. While I'm in awe of firefighters' bravery, I know they don't succeed by quick response alone. When it comes to safe and effective wildfire response, firefighters count on others to prepare and protect homes and communities.

Many stories about firefighters focus on quick action; how they save the day at the last perilous moment, just as emergency surgeons perform near-miracles to save patients. Fewer stories mention that it's easier for a doctor to save patients who take good care of their health, or that firefighters succeed more often when communities prepare homes and property for wildfire. Firefighters often testify that community wildfire preparedness is key to their ability to respond at all.

Take the case of the 2011 Wallow Fire, Arizona's largest-ever wildfire at 538,049 acres. A post-fire report noted, "When the fire came over the ridge toward [the community of] Alpine it sounded like a freight train. The smoke column was bent over making it difficult to see. Without the fuel treatment effects of reducing flame lengths and defensible space around most houses, we would have had to pull back our firefighters. Many of the houses would have caught fire and burned to the ground."

A combination of years of land management work and what firefighters called "Firewise construction and landscaping" of homes allowed them to safely and aggressively fight the Wallow Fire and save all but one structure in Alpine.

In 2018, Falls Creek Ranch near Durango, Colorado, was threatened by the massive 416 Fire. Local fire chief Hal Doughty convinced the incident commander that the community was not a liability but an asset. "I said to him, 'Falls Creek is an area [where] we can stop the fire. They've spent hundreds of thousands of dollars, and it's well-mitigated, and it's a Firewise community. I believe that we can save that neighborhood.'"

The chief was right. More than a decade of work on its wildfire risk reduction paid off for the small community, and firefighters prevented the 416 Fire from entering the larger town of Durango.

Another small community completed just a few years' worth of risk reduction before being put to the test in 2022. Lostine Canyon in Wallowa County, Oregon, was threatened by three wildfires burning close together. Lance Lighty, a member of the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office, served as incident commander. Fifty-mile-per-hour winds blew the fires up, and an incoming cold front prompted crews to deploy for structure protection.

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“I brought in another division supervisor to go up and scout the area,” Lighty recounted. “After [he] came back, he said, ‘This is going to be easy. It’s a Firewise community, things are looking great up there, the houses are well prepped.’” The Sturgill Fire came within less than two miles of the neighborhood. Firefighters were able to focus their efforts on other areas because the community was defensible. No homes were damaged. Lostine Canyon’s example inspired neighboring communities to participate in Firewise USA.

“The work they’ve done is just a beautiful sight, to see how they engaged in Firewise,” Lighty said, noting that many communities are initially enthusiastic but are unable to sustain the effort. “This is an area that they maintained,” he said of Lostine Canyon. “That’s the biggest message—getting the resources and understanding Firewise, then maintaining it. That’s probably the hardest part.”

As we get ready for [Wildfire Community Preparedness Day](#), let’s help more communities take the first step on a path to risk reduction that pays dividends when the next wildfire occurs. Firefighters are counting on us.

This article previously appeared in the spring 2025 issue of NFPA Journal and is reprinted here with permission of the National Fire Protection Association, ©2025.

DOUGLAS COUNTY
VETERANS
GOLF TOURNAMENT

2025
DOVGT

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14
8AM SHOTGUN START

RED HAWK RIDGE GOLF COURSE
CASTLE ROCK, COLORADO

DOUGLAS COUNTY
VETERANS
MONUMENT FOUNDATION

LOWRY
SINCE 1971
INSURANCE

Native, drought tolerant, invasive, and more: making sense of ambiguous plant terms

*John Murgel, Extension County Specialist, Horticulture and Natural Resources
CSU Extension Office*

Like colors or garden styles, plant terminology changes with the times. While some terms originated with particular scientific meanings, others are marketing terms. Confused by plant terms? Here's a helpful primer.

What are native plants?

Saying a plant is native to an area typically means that it grows there without any direct modern or historic human intervention. In North America, this usually means without European intervention. "Native plants" are mostly thought of as belonging to a region, whether it be natural (an EPA eco-region) or geopolitical (a state or county). Plants that have grown in one place for a long time are likely to be well-integrated into the local ecology, but it's important to define time scales as well. For example, many species of trees that would now be considered "exotic" in Colorado are well represented in the fossil record here. Are these species "native plants?" It depends on your perspective.

What are adapted plants?

An "adapted plant" is one that grows well in the local soil and climatic conditions with minimal assistance from a gardener. Adapted plants can be from anywhere and include both "native" and "non-native" species. Adaptation typically refers to whether or not a plant will thrive in a specific site. For example, aspens may be regarded as native on the Front Range, but they are not adapted to most residential landscapes. Blue grama grass, on the other hand, is both native and (usually) adapted.

What are drought-tolerant plants and what does drought-tolerant mean?

Drought-tolerant is a quality that refers to a plant's ability to survive and grow with limited natural water availability. Drought-tolerant plants are varieties that grow well in the absence of rain. However, this definition ought to include supplemental water from gardeners, too because anything can tolerate an absence of rain if you water it! Because rainfall patterns vary across the world, so do the plants that could be considered drought-tolerant. A plant that could grow well in the eastern United States with only natural precipitation could struggle in dry, western states without regular doses of irrigation. Some plants tolerate drought by going dormant. Don't take "drought-tolerant" at face value, instead ask specific questions about how much water a plant really needs to stay healthy.

What are xeriscape plants or xeric plants?

"Xeric" comes from the Greek word for dry. When used to describe plants, it usually means they originated in relatively dry parts of the world. Xeric plants could be native or non-native, and may or may not require at least some supplemental irrigation. The goal of using xeric plants is to use less water. However, defining what "less" means is important here if saving water is one of your landscape goals!

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What are water-wise plants?

Many people equate water-wise with “xeric” but the term has yet to officially make it into the dictionary, making it the slipperiest of all. The term is perhaps most appropriately applied to whole gardens rather than individual plants. A water-wise garden is one that uses no more water than absolutely necessary for plant health. Regardless of how much that actually is, it’s not “too much.” Note again the need to define a scale and the subjective nature of the term.

What are invasive weeds?

A weed is any plant that grows where you don’t want it, especially if it spreads and becomes hard to control. The term “invasive weeds” usually refers to weeds that are from far outside your local area and that spread rapidly. Note that both of these terms (invasive and weed) are subjective in this context, and require someone’s judgement. There are not strict rules about these labels, and different people use them in different ways.

The term “Noxious” as it relates to weeds is regulated by both state and federal agencies. The Colorado Noxious Weed Act (Title 35, Article 5.5) defines a “Noxious weed” as: An alien plant or parts of an alien plant that have been designated by rule as being noxious or has been declared a noxious weed by a local advisory board, and meets one or more of the following criteria:

- (a) Aggressively invades or is detrimental to economic crops or native plant communities;
- (b) Is poisonous to livestock;
- (c) Is a carrier of detrimental insects, diseases, or parasites;
- (d) The direct or indirect effect of the presence of this plant is detrimental to the environmentally sound management of natural or agricultural ecosystems.

It’s illegal to sell noxious weeds, but they may end up in natural areas and gardens by accident and through natural spread.



*Native and adapted plants growing together.
Photo credit: John Murgel*



*Native plants.
Photo credit: John Murgel*

Key takeaways

Whether a plant is labeled native, adapted, xeric, drought-tolerant, invasive, or even a weed often depends on context, perspective, and interpretation. These terms evolve over time and vary depending on who’s using them—scientists, gardeners, marketers, or policymakers. Rather than getting caught up in rigid definitions, it’s helpful to think critically about what each term means in your specific gardening situation. What matters most is understanding how a plant will behave in your landscape, how much care it will require, and whether it aligns with your gardening goals. With that knowledge, you can make informed decisions that benefit both your garden and the surrounding environment.

Check out [Low-water native plants for Colorado gardens: Front Range & Foothills](#) published by the Colorado Native Plant Society for additional information on this topic.

CLASSIFIED ADS

HANDYMAN

in Perry Park

Gary Dunning @ 720.785.3465
edgardunning@gmail.com

MITIGATION OF GAMBEL OAKS:

mastication, lot clearing,
excavation, material hauling.

ASL Construction 303-638-1249

NOTARY SERVICES available in the

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@Larkspur Sentinel. Email
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LARKSPUR RV STORAGE: Outdoor, RV,

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www.larkspurrvstorage.com

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Ben Wolfe
 Managing Broker & Owner
 Larkspur Resident & Larkspur Real Estate Expert



For Sale!

**5090 S Perry Park Road
 Dawson Butte, Sedalia
 \$1,895,000**

**4 Bedroom/5 Bathrooms
 36 Private Wooded Acres**

Stunning 360 degree views of Dawson's Butte and the Front Range

36 Wooded Acres!

This 4 bed/5 bath home is situated on 36 acres with breathtaking 360 degree views. The great room features views from the picture windows along with access to the spacious deck. Enjoy the main floor master suite with a 5-piece master bath including new quartz counters. The walk out lower level features a family room & full bath. Store your toys in the 1,300 sq ft RV garage. Enjoy the detached kids playhouse building & the large greenhouse.



Just Sold!
 24289 Brandt Avenue
 Sorrel Ranch, Aurora
 \$600,000

Consistent Winner Of



5280

For Outstanding Customer Service!



Under Contract!

731 Weston Road

Sage Port, Larkspur, \$1,295,000

This gorgeous 4,940 square foot ranch home is perfectly situated on a 1 acre wooded lot in desirable Sage Port. The open floor plan includes 5 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms with top of the line finishes and an abundance of outdoor living space. The finished walkout lower level features a family room with a gas fireplace and a beautiful wet bar which is perfect for entertaining. Enjoy the oversized and heated 4 car attached garage and the 1 car detached garage which is perfect for a workshop or storage for your boat or small recreational vehicle.



Under Contract!

6948 Fox Circle ~ Perry Park ~ Larkspur ~ \$1,900,000

Views of the Red Rocks, Perry Park & Pike National Forest from almost every window. This home features artistic details including copper clad fireplaces, beautiful wall sconces, travertine floors, glass accents and tons of picture windows to take in the stunning views. The deck is ideal for entertaining and enjoying amazing sunsets. The finished walk out lower level includes 2 guest ensuites, family room and theater room.

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A walk on the wild side

Susan Peters, Contributor



Hummingbird season is upon us!

You know it's April when the hummingbirds return with high-flying antics and their ability to drain your hummingbird feeders! They usually start arriving in mid-April; I recommend first placing one feeder out prominently for them, so they can easily discover it, with a solution of one part granulated sugar to four parts water. Granulated sugar is the closest to the molecular formula of nectar. Do not use raw sugar, brown sugar, or honey.

These tiny guys can cross 500 miles of the Gulf and fly 20 hours without stopping. That requires storing up nectar for lots of energy. They also eat small insects like fruit flies for protein. And did you know that they can fly backwards? Impressive! No other bird can do that.



Hummingbird feeds on Mexican Sunflower. Photo credit: Dulcey Lima

The past few years we have only seen [broadtails](#), [calliopes](#), and in July and August, [Rufouses](#), those tyrants of the hummer world. Over the past 30 years, except for one, hummers have arrived within a few days of the [yellow toadflax](#) blooming. Be on the lookout! A "guide" hummingbird, almost always a male, looks down from above to see if an area looks hospitable and has flowers for food.

Since you'll probably be preparing to sow seeds or plant flowers, how about planting some options that hummers like best? The selection is impressive: [zinnias](#), [salvia](#), [cosmos](#), [black-eyed Susans](#), [sweet William](#), [bee balm](#), [Cardinal flower](#), [hummingbird bush](#), [columbine](#), [lupine](#), and [petunia](#), among others. It's not just red that hummingbirds are attracted to – also, bright oranges, yellows, and purples. And, as an added benefit, butterflies like the same flowers as hummers. Seed mixtures perfect for hummingbirds can be purchased online.

Big Bear Lake Eagle update

[Shadow and Jackie](#), the bald eagle pair at Big Bear Lake, became parents of three eggs that have hatched, the latest on March 8. Three eggs are extremely rare, and only 50% of eggs hatch. Seventy percent of eaglets survive the first year. These eaglets are expected to fledge in about a month.

In mid-March, the San Bernadino mountains had two feet of snow. The parents, the best ever, cooperated to shelter and feed their young'uns. After the storm started clearing, only two eaglets could be seen, one of them the youngest and most vulnerable. If a chick has perished, it is likely to have been from hypothermia, as chicks only have non-waterproof down that can easily get wet and leave the baby bird cold. A new down grows in at about three weeks of age.

continued from previous page

Shadow and Jackie have been together for five years; they are at over 8000 feet above Big Bear Lake. Actually, Shadow stole Jackie from another male – he was so handsome and daring! They were able to raise one eaglet the first year and a second the second year. But then tragedy struck. In 2023, a raven ate their eggs. The next year, the three eggs did not hatch, most likely due to a harsh winter. So, it looked like finally they were having great success this time around...

Late-breaking news: There were three and now there are two. The vulnerable eaglet died sometime after a feeding on March 13, when it was last seen before the snow.

Special memories of moments at Big Bear Lake

It has been so much fun watching [Jackie and Shadow](#), though it's pretty boring when they are just taking turns sitting on the nest. Interestingly, Shadow has a weird way of showing his love for Jackie. He loves to drop a fish or a stick on her head! She usually just shrugs it off, but one day she got even. She dropped a stick on his back, which he could not remove himself. And it was Jackie to the rescue!



*Big Bear Lake, United States.
Photo credit: Jeremy Bishop*

Both adults contribute to the dinner plate, which can have fish, mainly lake trout, or birds. I have seen a coot and two ravens in the nest. (Hopefully, one of the ravens was the bird that ate their eggs years ago.) Once, Jackie was feeding the chicks and had a large chunk of meat in her mouth, which Shadow stole. She stole it right back, and he dropped himself on top of the chicks with a harumph. Then, having none of it, she pushed him off the nest!

They also have a downstairs neighbor, Fiona, a flying squirrel, with a nest of her own. Occasionally, she visits the eagle nest, but gets leveled by Jackie with a wing slap or two. Well, no squirrel will tolerate such bad behavior. Fiona just chitters back at Jackie.

Short takes: Larkspur birds; a giant shark

Birdie check-in and check-out here has been going quite smoothly. Robins, goldfinches, and cedar waxwings have arrived. We're certainly ready for the large flock of blue jays to high-tail it out of here. They dominate the bird feeders and aggressively demand peanuts.

And just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water: in January, the largest shark ever witnessed, nicknamed Contender, was swimming off Georgia and Florida's east coast when OCEARCH managed to tag it. At 1,653 pounds and 13 feet 9 inches, the male shark is the largest ever recorded by OCEARCH in the Atlantic. I think that I will head to Alaska instead.

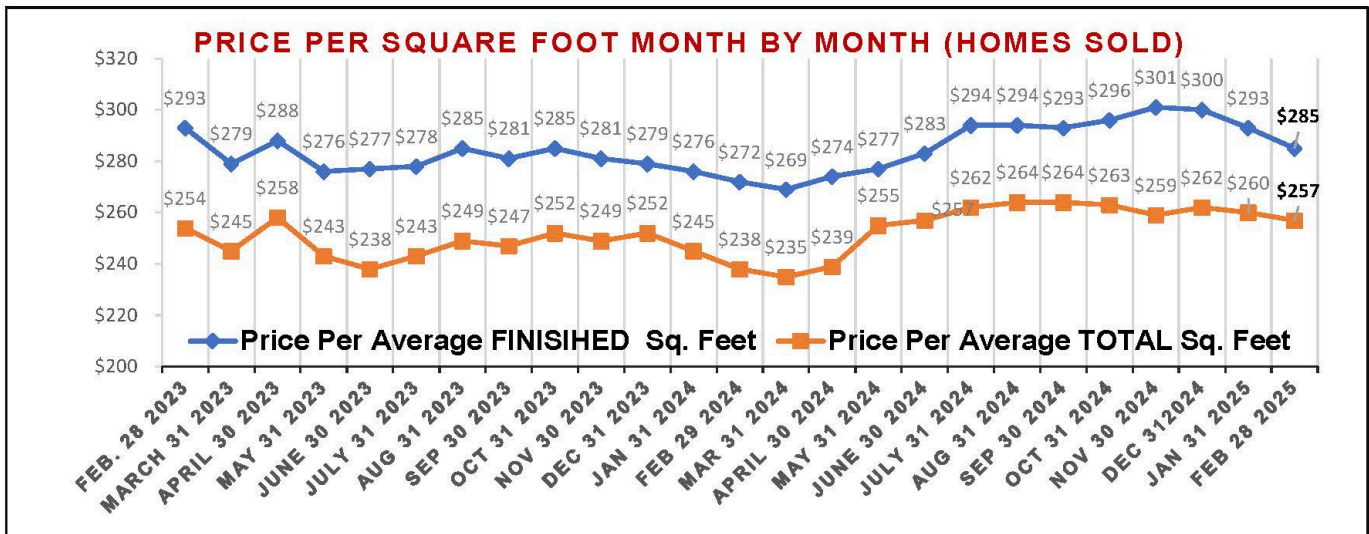
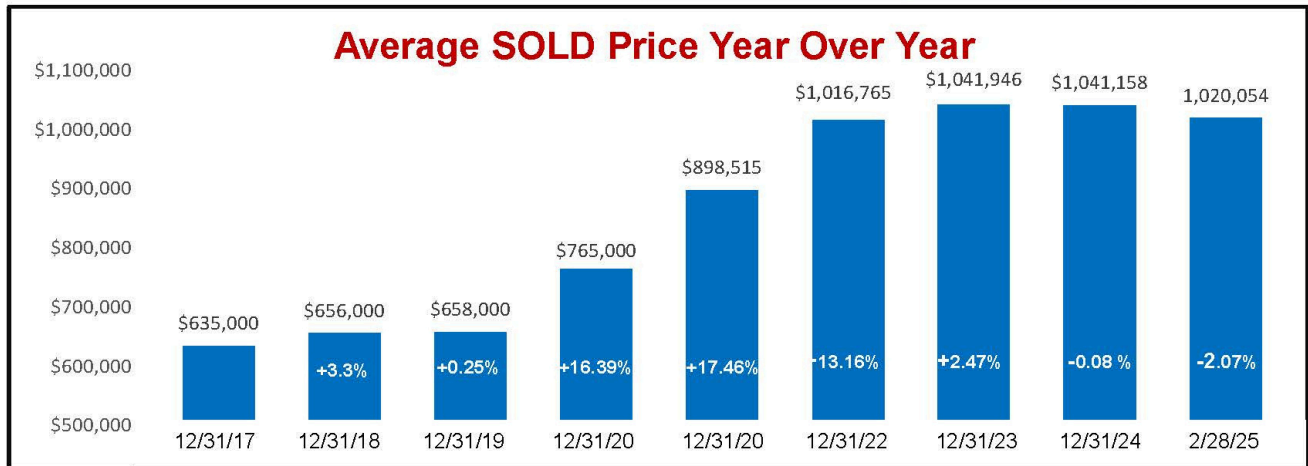
Contact Susan at susan@larskpurconsulting.com or (303) 725-6868. Snail mail can be sent to 2255 Quartz Mountain Drive.



Larkspur Area Real Estate Stats – HOMES SOLD

Homes Currently For-Sale (03/27/2025) ---34 (\$575,000 to \$3,400,000) --- Median \$984,500
Average Days on Market --- 82

Homes Currently "Under Contract" --- 18 (\$499,000 to \$1,900,000) --- Median \$1,142,000
Average Days on Market --- 86 **Homes U/C in the past 30-days = 12**

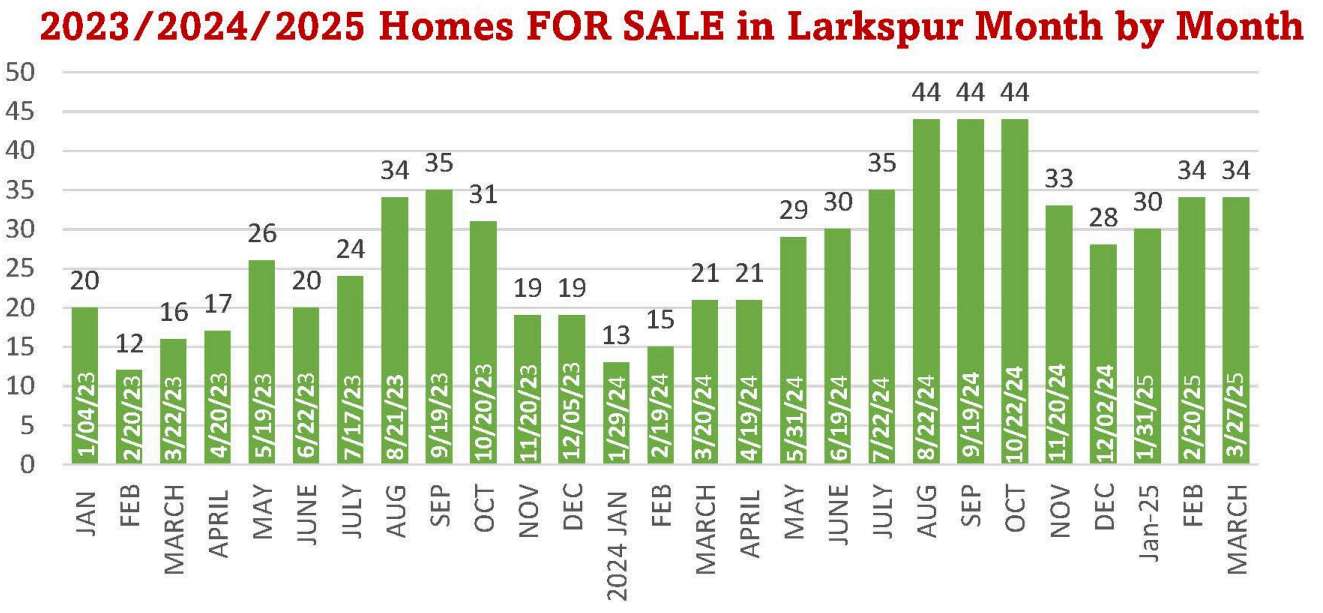
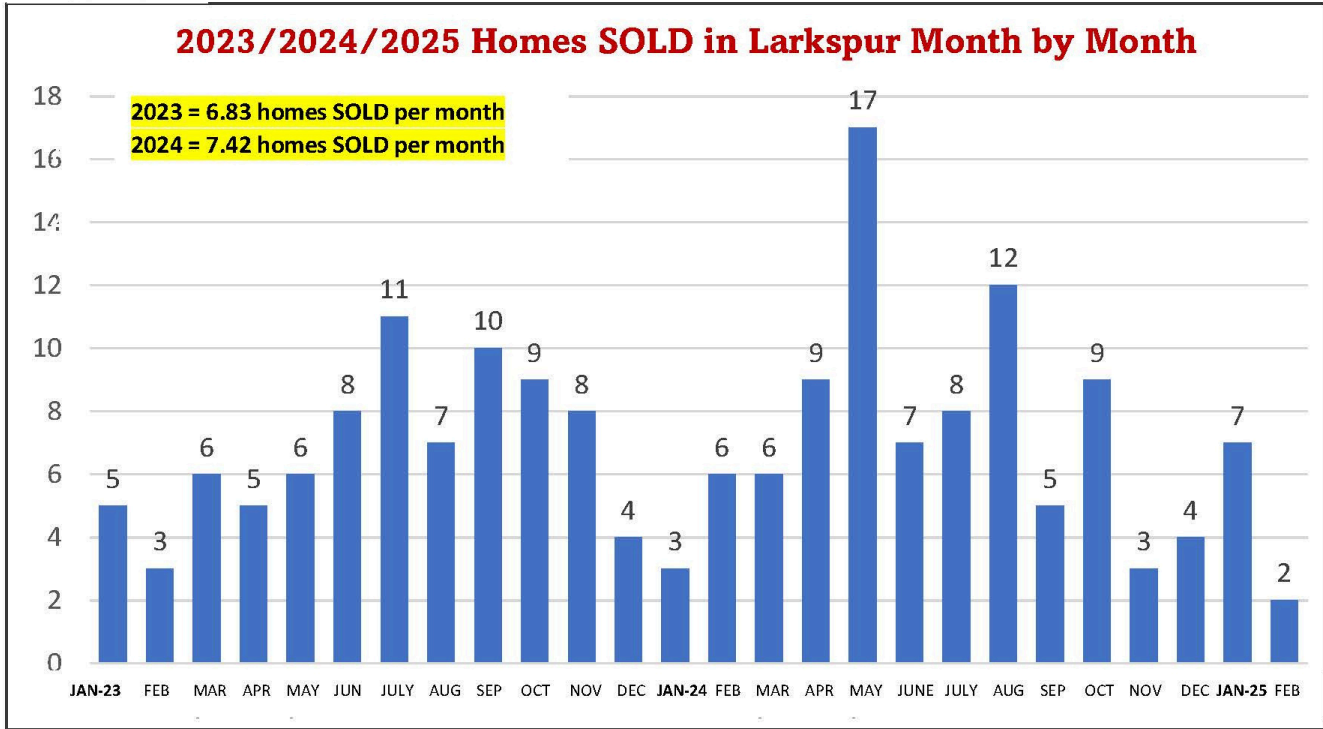


---The charts above represent a 6-month study of home sales ending on the last date of the month indicated. The top 2 and bottom 2 sales have been removed/deleted from each study. This is because very unusual properties can skew the factors that reflect actual market conditions. For example, a property with 100 acres but having a small 600 Sq. Foot house would be something that is simply not "typical". And because one property sells for over \$4 million does not mean that all other properties have gone up in value. Likewise, a property selling under \$250,000 does not mean that all others have gone down in value.

---The above information has been researched from the Metro Denver MLS System (www.REcolorado.com) by Dave Gardner of Results Realty of Colorado, located in the Town of Larkspur, CO. It is believed to be accurate but is NOT guaranteed. Every property will have unique factors affecting value such as location, condition, acreage, quality, size, age, upgrades and features. A thorough in-person assessment by an experienced real estate broker or licensed real estate appraiser is recommended to determine the actual current market value on an individual property.



Larkspur Real Estate Stats March 2025



Results Realty of Colorado is Located on the
Main Street of Larkspur
9164 Spruce Mountain Rd., Larkspur, CO 80118
303-681-1000
DavesResultsTeam@yahoo.com
www.DaveGardnerRealEstate.com



DAVE GARDNER'S Results Realty of Colorado

Office located on the Main Street of Larkspur



FOR SALE
\$950,000



View Property Website at
www.8174IncaRoad.com

8174 Inca Road - Perry Park

Welcome to the Foothills of the Colorado Rocky Mountains! BACKS TO OPEN SPACE - VERY PRIVATE! Main Floor Primary Suite and Partial Finished Walkout Basement. 4,763 Square ft. with 5 bedrooms and 3-1/2 baths. Spacious "Great-Room" concept.

FOR SALE
\$899,000



View Property Website at
www.6601PikeCircle.com

6601 Pike Circle - Perry Park

Custom Home with finished Walkout Basement with 4,233 Total Sq. Feet featuring 6 bedrooms, and 5 baths on a 1-acre lot. Excellent views of Red Rock formations, along with views of the mountains and Pike National Forest.

FOR SALE
\$1,650,000



View Property Website at
www.4586BestRoad.com

4586 Best Road - Greenland

Fully Custom 2-story home on 35-Acres with incredible Views of Pikes Peak, other Mountains and Buttes. It features a charming guest house (ADU) for potential income, plus 2 barns. The property is zoned for horses & livestock. Move-in-Ready!

FOR SALE
\$264,900



5845 S Pike Drive - Perry Park

Beautiful READY-TO-BUILD Southeast-Facing 1-Acre Lot with soaring Ponderosa Pines in Perry Park. FLAT topography making it MUCH easier to build upon. All utilities are available at the paved road in front of the lot. All corner pins are staked and flagged!

FOR SALE
\$350,000



7724 Corona Court - Sterling Pointe

READY-TO-BUILD 2.31-ACRE LOT with WONDERFUL MOUNTAIN VIEWS in the exclusive Sterling Pointe subdivision. Only 1-mile from Bera Dance Golf Course. Tranquil Cul-De-Sac location. PRE-PAID Water Tap. Septic system will need to be installed.

FOR SALE
\$295,000



7347 Fremont Place - Sage Port

1-Acre READY-TO-BUILD Lot. Located only 1-mile from the clubhouse of the Bear Dance Golf Course. BACKS to 30-Foot Wide Greenbelt. Water Tap and Sewer Tap Fees are PRE-PAID. Have NEW SURVEY in hand - All 6 property pins are staked and flagged!



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