

109 County Road 405, Cuchara, Colorado 81055



Centuries before cabins appeared in the Cuchara Valley, this mountain corridor was an untamed expanse of pine forest and open meadow. Over time, indigenous peoples, explorers, settlers, and governments each claimed and redefined the land, leaving layers of cultural and political history that still shape the region today.

Five Flags Over Cuchara

Long before cabins and roads dotted the Cuchara Valley, this land lay within the seasonal hunting and sacred grounds of the Ute, Apache, Comanche, and Puebloan peoples. The Mouache and Capote band of the Ute considered the Spanish Peaks sacred, and even today arrowheads surface in the soil after rains, whispering of their long presence. In the late 1500s, Spain claimed the region as part of New Spain, governed from Santa Fe, leaving a cultural imprint in language, faith, and architecture that still endures in southern Colorado. When Mexico gained independence in 1821, the land shifted again, though Mexican influence in the remote frontier was limited. Lawlessness and conflict marked the era.

From 1836 to 1845, the Republic of Texas asserted a claim to a broad expanse of territory extending northward to the Rio Grande, a boundary that on paper included the Cuchara Valley. In practice, however, Texas exercised no effective governance or administrative control over this remote mountain region. Still, the ties with Texas remain—many Texans still own cabins in the valley, escaping summer heat for mountain air. Finally, after the Mexican-American War, the United States claimed Colorado in 1848. By 1876, Colorado became the 38th state. The Cuchara Valley, with its Spanish Peaks rising above, had already passed under five different flags, each leaving fingerprints on its evolving identity.

Homesteading the Future

One of the earliest written chapters of Pinehaven’s story began with Union Civil War veteran John L. Powell. Born in Pennsylvania in 1834, Powell marched with the 8th Kansas Infantry through the hardships of the war. Afterward, like many veterans seeking renewal, he moved west. In 1896 he and his family arrived in the Cuchara Valley by covered wagon. In 1905, under the Homestead Act of 1862, Powell secured 160 acres just north of Cuchara. The Act required settlers to live on the land, cultivate it, and build a home; in return, they received ownership. Powell’s homestead fulfilled these requirements, and his perseverance planted the seed of what would one day become Pinehaven. He lived out his years in La Veta until his death in 1920, leaving the land to his children.

The Birth of Pinehaven

In 1943, Powell’s son Charles sold the family land to John C. Vories, who dreamed of transforming the rugged property into a mountain resort. With vision but limited resources, Vories named the land “Pinehaven” and began designing cabin lots along what would become Road 402. He saw the forest as “heaven among the pines,” and his plans laid the foundation for the community’s identity as a retreat in the high country. Health challenges eventually forced Vories to leave Colorado, but before he did, he passed his dream into capable hands.

That man was Steve Pierotti, a native of Huerfano County and close friend of Vories. Pierotti had grown up tough—an orphan by nine, managing service stations as a teenager, and later working in the coal mines. His tireless work ethic made him one of the largest coal dealers in the county. When Vories offered him Pinehaven for \$3,700, Pierotti borrowed from a friend and seized the opportunity. Through sheer determination and charisma, he sold lots, encouraged building, and helped bring Vories’ dream to life. Under Pierotti’s influence, Pinehaven became a thriving cabin community. Steve lived there until his death in 2017 at the age of 99, and his family remains part of Pinehaven today.

Building a Community

From Powell's homestead to Vories' vision and Pierotti's energy, Pinehaven grew from wilderness into a neighborhood. Steve Pierotti's son, Bob, carried his father's vision forward by leading Pinehaven's expansion up the mountain and ensuring its growth was both thoughtful and sustainable. With steady leadership, he guided the development of new roads, utilities, and infrastructure, while championing compliance with modern standards. His pivotal role in integrating Pinehaven into the Cucharas Sanitation and Water District secured reliable water and sanitation for generations to come. From community planning to the creation of the Pierotti Pavilion, Bob's quiet dedication laid the foundation for a resilient mountain community whose strength endures to this day.

Cabins rose among the trees, families returned each summer, and traditions took root. Eventually, homeowners organized formally, creating the Pinehaven Homeowners' Association to care for roads, shared spaces, and community life. The Pierotti Pavilion, named in honor of Bob's contributions, became a gathering place where neighbors celebrated the very community he helped establish.

Today, Pinehaven stands as more than a scattering of mountain cabins. It is a close-knit community, bound together by its layered history, its natural beauty, and its people's love for the land. The Spanish Peaks still tower over the valley, silent witnesses to centuries of change—from the passage of flags and empires to the persistence of families who found here not just land, but home.

History of Ownership

The recorded history of the cabin at 109 County Road 405, Lot 15 in Pinehaven #2, begins on April 15, 1974, when Anna Mae Pierotti and Steve Pierotti conveyed the property to Cleon Parkin and Myrlee A. Parkin, placing the lot into private hands during Pinehaven's early development years. On September 15, 1975, title was consolidated in the name of Cleon Parkin following a transfer of interest, marking the first adjustment in ownership.

A new chapter opened on October 15, 1982, when Cleon Parkin conveyed the property to Lance C. Rommerdahl and Robin J. Rommerdahl. That same day, an installment land contract was recorded, reflecting a structured purchase arrangement that was common for recreational mountain properties at the time.

On October 26, 1990, Lance C. Rommerdahl and Robin J. Rommerdahl conveyed the property to John E. McGuire and Sherryl M. McGuire. This transfer began a long period of McGuire stewardship, spanning more than three decades and representing one of the most stable eras in the property's history.

In May 2014, a recorded transfer reflects a change in title within the McGuire family, a common step in long-term estate and ownership planning.

Most recently, on December 17, 2025, John E. McGuire and Sherryl M. McGuire conveyed the property to Tony Bagwell, closing a significant chapter of ownership and beginning the newest phase in the life of Lot 15.

Through each transition, the property has remained in private hands, reflecting the steady pattern of family stewardship that has long characterized Pinehaven.

Ownership Timeline

- **Cleon Parkin & Myrlee A. Parkin** → Acquired April 15, 1974 (from Anna Mae Pierotti & Steve Pierotti)
- **Cleon Parkin** → Title consolidated September 15, 1975
- **Lance C. Rommerdahl & Robin J. Rommerdahl** → Acquired October 15, 1982 (from Cleon Parkin)
- **John E. McGuire & Sherryl M. McGuire** → Acquired October 26, 1990 (from Lance C. Rommerdahl & Robin J. Rommerdahl)
- **McGuire family title adjustment** → May 9, 2014
- **Tony Bagwell** → Acquired December 17, 2025 (from John E. McGuire & Sherryl M. McGuire)

Our Cabin

Constructed in 1993 by John and Sheryl McGuire, the cabin at 109 County Road 405 represents a later phase in Pinehaven’s residential development, when infrastructure, access roads, and community organization were already well established. Unlike the earliest structures built during the subdivision’s formative decades, this cabin emerged during a period of stability and refinement within the neighborhood. Its construction reflects both continuity with local building traditions and the evolving expectations of late twentieth-century mountain retreats.

The McGuires selected the building site for its clear and unobstructed views of the White Peaks, often referred to locally as the “Three Sisters,” as well as West Spanish Peak. These landmarks have long shaped settlement patterns in the Cuchara Valley. From early homesteads to modern cabin placement, orientation toward the Spanish Peaks has served both aesthetic and geographic purposes. By positioning the cabin to capture these views, the original owners aligned their structure with a long-standing regional preference for view-oriented design that connects interior living space with the surrounding alpine landscape.

Local Cuchara pine was used in the construction of the cabin, reinforcing a building tradition rooted in regional materials. Pine harvested or milled within the broader area has historically provided durability, insulation, and visual harmony with the forested terrain. The use of local

timber situates the cabin within Pinehaven’s architectural character, where natural materials and subdued tones are favored over highly contrasting or urban-inspired design elements. As a result, the structure blends visually with its wooded setting rather than dominating it.

From the time of its completion, the cabin functioned exclusively as a family retreat. It was not established as a full-time residence but as a seasonal refuge intended for recreation, rest, and connection with the outdoors. This pattern of use mirrors much of Pinehaven’s post-World War II identity, in which families returned year after year to the same mountain property, gradually building traditions associated with place. The cabin’s consistent role as a retreat reinforces that broader community pattern.

In December 2025, ownership transferred from the original builders to Tony Bagwell. The cabin’s name, “Altitude Adjustment,” was carried on by the new owners signaling a new phase of stewardship. While the structure itself has remained largely unchanged since its construction, this transition marks the beginning of a new chapter in its documented history. The property had only one prior ownership, providing continuity from its 1993 construction through more than three decades of consistent care before its acquisition at the end of 2025.

Early experiences under new ownership included the first physical arrival at the property after previously seeing it only through photographs. The experience of entering the cabin and observing its layout and surroundings firsthand marked a significant milestone in the property’s evolving narrative. On New Year’s Eve of 2025, the Bagwell’s spent the evening on the deck beneath a cloudless sky overlooking the surrounding peaks, marking the transition into 2026 from within the Pinehaven setting. While recent in chronology, this event represents the establishment of new traditions tied directly to the property’s mountain environment.

The cabin contains a distinctive architectural feature in the form of a tub and sauna combination located within the primary bedroom adjacent to the sleeping area. This element sets the structure apart from more conventional residential layouts. Sauna installations are historically associated with restorative practices in alpine and cold-weather regions. Within the context of Pinehaven, the feature underscores the property’s identity as a place of retreat rather than purely utilitarian habitation.

To date, the cabin has not experienced significant events such as fire, flood, or major structural disruption. Planned renovations are anticipated as part of preparations for more consistent or possibly full-time occupancy. Such modifications reflect a broader trend within Pinehaven, where cabins originally built for seasonal use are gradually adapted to accommodate longer stays while maintaining architectural continuity with the surrounding neighborhood.

The property integrates seamlessly into its natural surroundings, reflecting Pinehaven’s longstanding expectation that development remain visually compatible with the forest and terrain. This blending of structure and environment reinforces the subdivision’s collective identity and

helps preserve the visual character that has defined the community for decades. As of its most recent transfer, the history of “Altitude Adjustment” is still unfolding. Constructed in 1993 and stewarded by only two ownership periods, the cabin represents both continuity and renewal within Pinehaven. Its physical orientation toward the Spanish Peaks, its use of local materials, and its consistent role as a family retreat situate it firmly within the broader interpretive framework of Cuchara’s mountain heritage. While relatively recent in comparison to homestead-era origins, the cabin now contributes its own chapter to the ongoing story of settlement, recreation, and community life in the Cuchara Valley.

* This summary condenses five centuries of history; full research notes, sources, and citations can be found at at www.CabinInThePines.org.