May 2025

A Split Story

Economic Trends in Public Lands Counties

Mission

Strengthen America's Counties

Vision

Healthy, safe and vibrant counties across America

About

The National Association of Counties (NACo) strengthens America's counties, serving nearly 38,000 county elected officials and 3.6 million county employees. Founded in 1935, NACo unites county officials to:

- **Advocate** county priorities in federal policymaking
- **Promote** exemplary county policies and practices
- **Nurture** leadership skills and expand knowledge networks
- **Optimize** county and taxpayer resources and cost savings, and
- **Enrich** the public understanding of county government.

National Center for Public Lands Counties

As a signature program of the NACo Research Foundation, **the National Center for Public Lands Counties (NCPLC) advances the policy and practice study for America's public lands counties** by educating intergovernmental policymakers about the unique opportunities and challenges faced by county officials in areas with significant federal public lands, conducting research and facilitating public forums to inform policies and practices and fostering dialogue between federal, state, tribal and local governments on key issues.

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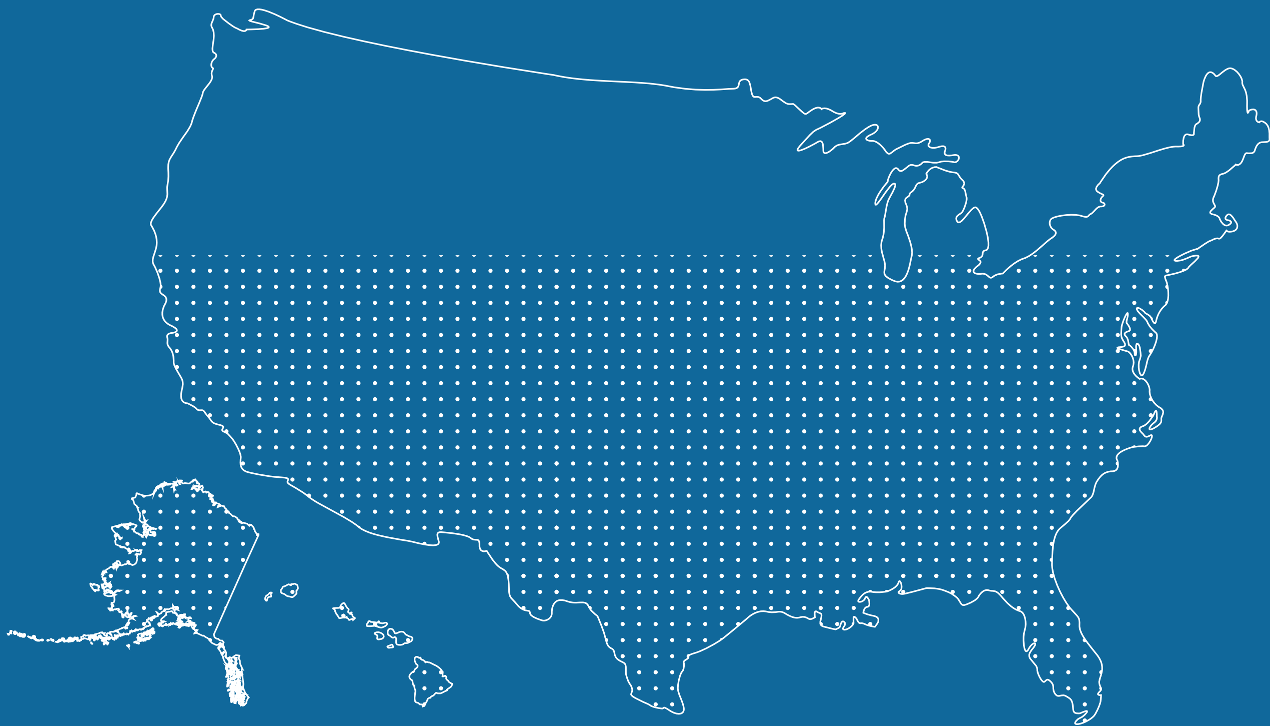

62%

Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of counties have federally owned lands within the county boundaries

These counties cannot collect property taxes on federal land, yet must still provide essential services for residents and visitors each year.[i]

Such services include fire protection, wildfire mitigation, waste removal, road and bridge maintenance, environmental management, public health services, search and rescue, law enforcement and emergency medical services.

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Economic Trends in Public Lands Counties

"There's no county land there, but people use county roads to get there and they stay in our hotels and restaurants and they park along our roads and make it hard to get in for search and rescue and there aren't really any toilets. We realized early on without having land there or really any authority, the best thing we could do is to be a convener and to try to help secure funds for things." [ii]

— Nevada County, Calif.

Introduction

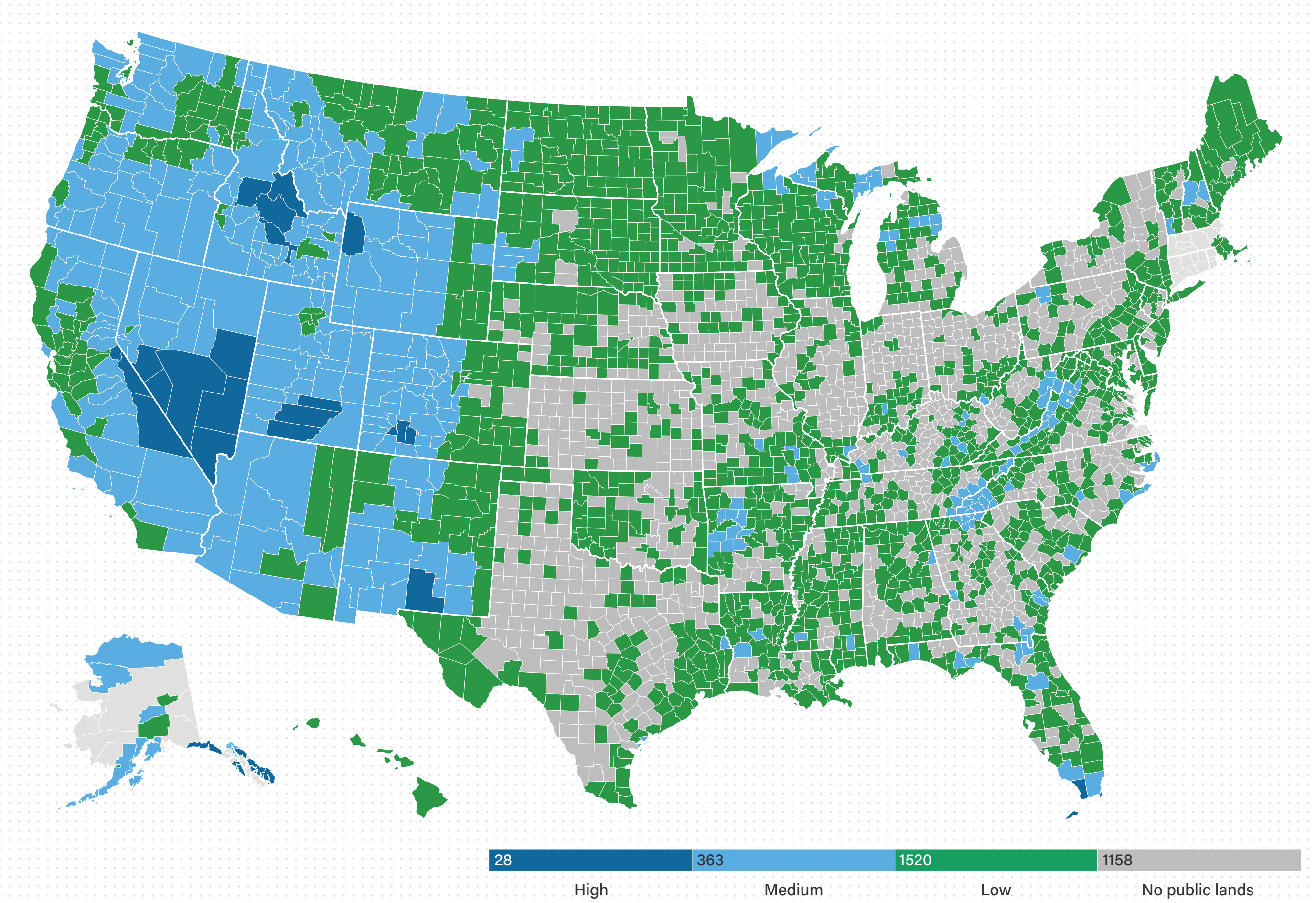
Counties with federal public lands are complex and varied in structure, economic composition and challenges.[iii] Federal public lands counties experience high growth on average[iv]; however, when analyzing by county size and share of public lands, the story becomes more complex and the economic trends of these counties demonstrate both growth and decline.

One consistent similarity among public lands counties, growth or decline, remains the limitation on revenue generation through taxation, property or otherwise, which can cause revenue shortages that strain service delivery expenditures. While the federal program Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) aims to offset revenue shortages, the PILT program has not kept pace with local expenditure demands.

To understand the county landscape and the impact of public lands on counties, we examine the local economic trends by share of federally owned public lands across the nation, breaking the analysis into **high share (85% or more), medium share (25-84%) and low share (24% or less).**

Depending on the share of public land in a county's boundary, challenges such as remote area access, infrastructure development, substantial visitor traffic, difficulty rebounding the economy amidst natural disasters and coordination with the federal government persist at multiple levels. While share of land is an important distinction, all public lands counties face the challenge of county needs outstripping resources.

COUNTY CATEGORIZATION BY FEDERALLY OWNED PUBLIC LAND



Key Takeaways

1. Public lands counties facing record growth of population see challenges in affordability and service delivery.

- Population has grown more frequently in counties with medium shares of federal public lands compared to non-public lands counties. Sixty-nine percent of medium share counties saw population growth in 2023 versus 58% of non-public lands counties.[v]
- Average home values in counties with more than a 25% share of public lands have grown exponentially since the end of 2020.
- The population growth and overall visitor increase are straining the fiscal positions of several counties.[vi]
- The fastest growth in economic output is seen in counties with medium shares of federal public land, increasing 23% between 2013 and 2023, yet the needs in the county are still growing despite limited resources..[vii]

2. Public lands counties facing decline in population are challenged by public land constraints when trying to rebound the local economy.

- The slowest growth in economic output is seen in counties with high shares of public lands, only increasing 16% between 2013 and 2023.[viii]
- Counties with high shares of public lands see the most frequent population decline when compared to counties with less or no public lands. In 2023, 50% of high share counties experienced a decline in population.[ix]
- For counties with high shares of public lands, the average home value is 40% higher than national figures.[x]

3. Structural challenges restrict all public lands counties from making up for lost revenue.

- In the 12 states where 25% or more of the land is federally owned, nearly all counties face two or more property tax caps imposed by the state.[xi]
- Local expenditures for community service delivery in counties that received PILT increased 25% while PILT payments overall increased 18%, a 7% offset over a five year period.[xii][xiii]

The Public Lands County Perspective

"We started overlapping with the Bureau of Land Management, we started overlapping with the city, with the counties, and with the state lands. And so, we started to have to go, 'Hey neighbors, how can we work together to not have these lines on the map and all of a sudden our [forest] treatments stop.'" [xiv]

— District Ranger

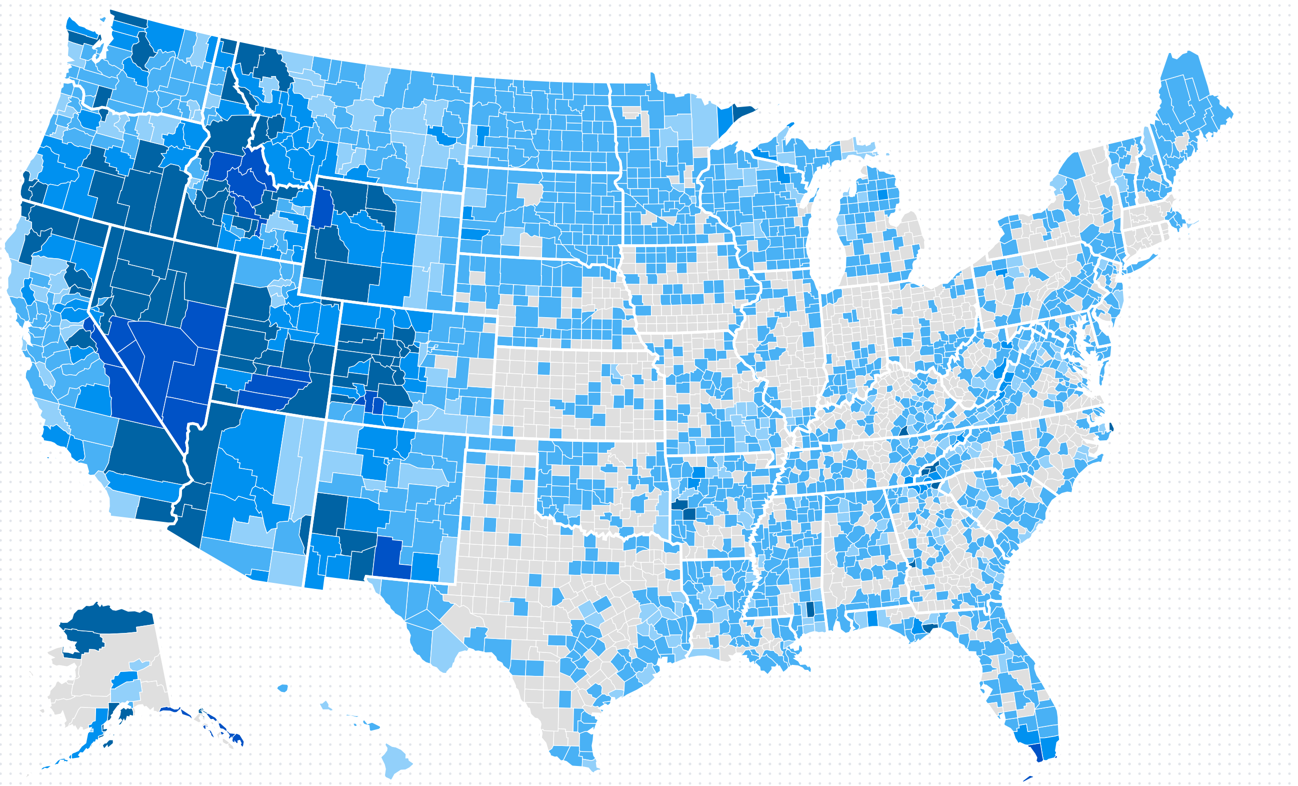
Shared Responsibilities of Federal Agencies and Counties

Over 600 million acres—or 28% of U.S. land, are federally owned—with five agencies—Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Forest Service (USFS), National Park Service (NPS), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the Department of Defense (DoD)—managing the majority.[xv, xvi] These lands are held in trust for the public, with management decisions authorized by Congress and management needs executed in collaboration with state, county and tribal governments.

Counties partner primarily with five federal agencies to execute the management of more than 600 million acres held by the federal government.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM)	Forest Service (USFS)	National Park Service (NPS)	Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)	Department of Defense (DoD)

PERCENT OF ACREAGE MANAGED BY THE FIVE MAJOR FEDERAL LAND-MANAGING AGENCIES



Source: *NACo Analysis of U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Protected Areas Database, 2023.*

Distinctive County Challenges

Along with having federal land in the county's jurisdiction, public lands counties face challenges such as geographical location, economic landscape or historical policies. These challenges, unique to public lands counties, compound to impact economic development.

Limited Property Tax Base

Industry Ebbs and Flows

Rising Housing and Home Insurance Costs

Buildable Land Constraints

Remote Area Access and Infrastructure

Coordination with Federal Agencies

Changing Federal Legislation and Guidance

Property Tax Caps Imposed by the State

Rental Homes and Second Home Hot Spots

Increasingly Popular Travel Destinations

Natural Disasters

Economic Analysis

"Everybody is struggling with housing, but our issue is really infrastructure, and not having water in the right places or wastewater in the right places… we find ourselves doing a lot of infill projects, getting smaller homes in tighter areas." [xvii]

— Hawaii County, Hawaii

The 'Cost Creep' on Counties

Medium Share Public Lands Counties See Most Frequent Population Growth

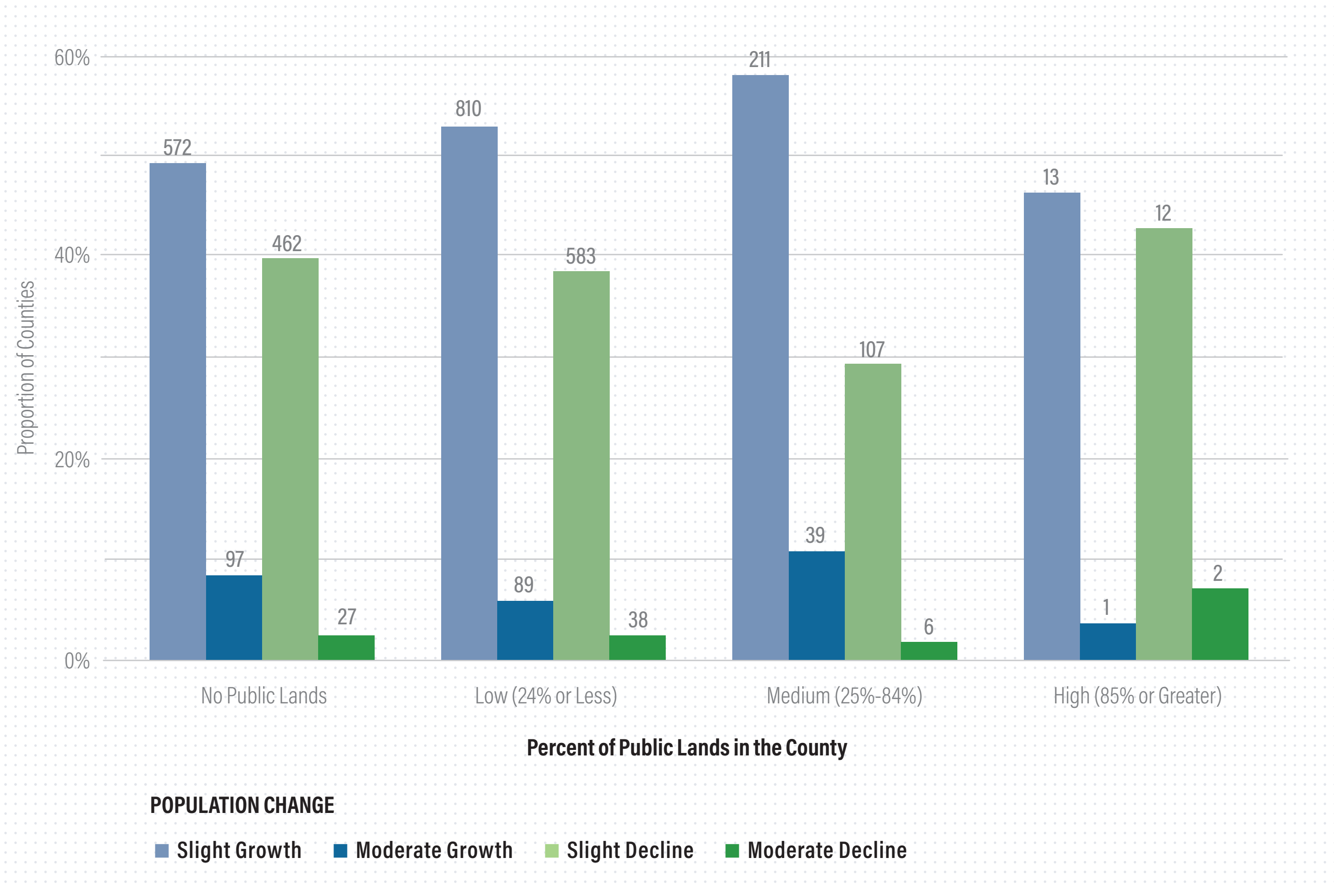
Public lands counties with the most frequent population growth face increased infrastructure and service needs challenges. When analyzing by the share of public land within a county, **population growth is most frequent among counties with medium public lands shares** (25-84% share of public lands) and population growth at large is the dominant trend among public lands counties.[xviii xix]

Counties with medium shares of public lands have been popular destinations for amenity migration – people moving to rural areas for better quality of life rather than higher wages or job opportunities – increasing the resident service demand in our counties.[xx]

This growth generates significant challenges. In counties with NPS land, search and rescue incidents have steadily increased every year since 2019.[xxi] For example, Coconino County, Ariz., home to a portion of the Grand Canyon, National Park, saw a 30% increase over the national average of park rescues in 2021.[xxii xxiii] These demands burden county budgets, local taxpayers and residents' quality of life.

POPULATION GROWTH IS A DOMINANT TREND AMONG PUBLIC LANDS COUNTIES

2023 County-by-County Population Change by Share of Federally Owned Land



The Landscape of Decline

39% of Public Lands Counties Saw a Decrease in Population in 2023

Many public lands counties are challenged with population and tax base decline – overall, 39% of public lands counties saw a decrease in population in 2023. **High share public lands counties (85% or more) are seeing more frequent population decline, often paired with an increased number of visitors.**[xxiv]

Housing affordability and cost of living are key drivers of population decline in counties with high shares of public lands, where amenity migration and visitors have driven up costs for locals. In counties where the large majority of land is managed by the federal government or the land is particularly remote and difficult to reach, it can be nearly impossible to build the amount of housing needed for a thriving economy.[xxv]

Falling populations make it difficult for counties to afford increased visitation or normal daily services as decreased populations mean reduced personnel and a decreased and inconsistent tax base, a revenue source that is already limited by having public land in the county's jurisdiction.

White Pine County, Nev. (94% federal public land) saw a 6.1% decrease in population from 2020 to 2023. With fewer people, the county's property tax base has declined: the 2025 budgeted property tax revenue is 12.7% less than the amount in 2021. [xxvi]

Dan Leeth / Alamy Stock Photo

Affordability Crisis

Public Lands Counties See the Steepest Increases in Home Values

Home values are rising in all counties, but public lands counties have seen the steepest increases. While counties without public lands have paced below national trends, average home value in **counties with more than a quarter of public lands have grown exponentially since the end of 2020.**[xxvii]

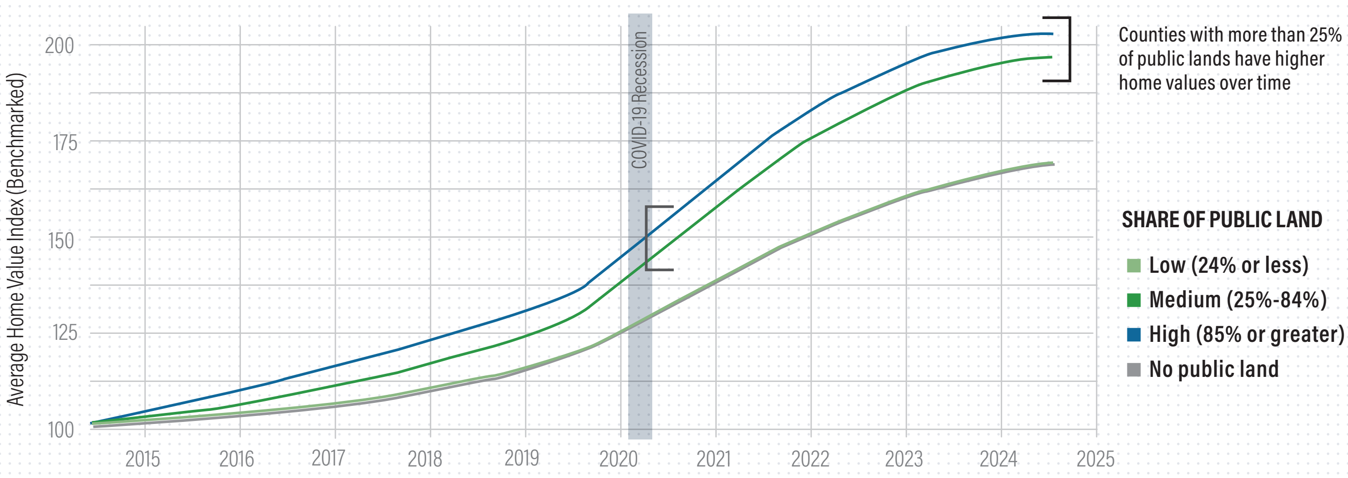
In growing counties, three key challenges of public lands impact local residents and housing. First, counties with increased visitation have experienced traditional housing turning into short-term rental locations for visitors. With a decrease in long-term housing supply, the cost of a home rises for county residents.

Second, public lands counties are often more rural or remote, making it difficult to build quality infrastructure or homes. This causes counties to work within existing infrastructure and limits the amount of land available for housing, again restricting the supply and driving up existing home values.

Third, homes in public lands counties are more at risk for natural disasters like wildfires.[xxviii xxix] Natural disasters can destroy existing homes but also make the market unattractive to insurance companies who will either drive up costs or refuse to insure the homes at all, making homes in public lands counties even further out of reach for local residents.[xxx] For example, Grant County, N.M. (48% federal public land), at the foothills of the Gila National Forest, is a wildfire risk area. In 2018, 51 home insurance contracts were not renewed – about one in 100 policies. In 2023, the number doubled to 100 nonrenewals.[xxxi]

HOME VALUES SOAR IN HIGH AND MEDIUM SHARE PUBLIC LANDS COUNTIES

Average Monthly Home Value Index by Share of Federally Owned Land in the County (Oct 2014-2024)



Notes: *Data is smoothed and seasonally adjusted. Counties with 24% or less or no public land have nearly identical trend lines.*

Attracting New Residents Amidst Increased Home Costs

Home Values in High Share Counties are 40% Higher than National Average

Although housing costs in every county are rising, counties with high shares of public lands see the highest home value increase and the most frequent population decline. **Home values in high share public lands counties (85%+) are 40% higher than the national average.**[xxxiii] With such large amounts of public land in the county's jurisdiction, these counties have the most restricted buildable land and land access and face unique pressures from second homeownership and short-term rentals.

Rising housing costs, limited buildable land and taxable land constraintsplace barriers on counties with high shares of public land when rebuilding or strengthening the county's workforce. With housing costs in these counties close to double the national average, it can be nearly impossible to retain existing residents or encourage residents to move into the county to support the workforce and greater community. In addition, remote areas make it diffcult to build new homes and attract new residents.[xxxiii]

Petersburg Borough, Alaska
(97% federal public land)

Petersburg Borough, Alaska is providing detailed, pre-permitted blueprints to residents to make it easier for people to add Accessory Dwelling Units, or small homes, to their property. Due to the county's remote location and rural nature, new buildings in the county can face challenges with infrastructure costs. By building additional homes on a single property, the new homes can use existing infrastructure like roads, sewer or water.[xxxiv]

Blaine County, Idaho
(87% federal public land)

Blaine County, Idaho's home values have soared since 2020, making housing unattainable to most local essential workers. To combat the increasing home values (in October 2024, the average home value in the county was $940,791) the county's school district collaborated with a local affordable housing developer, Advocates for Real Community Housing (ARCH). The partners recently finished five rent-controlled homes, only available to school district employees who would not have to pay more than 30% of their adjusted gross income for rent.[xxxv]

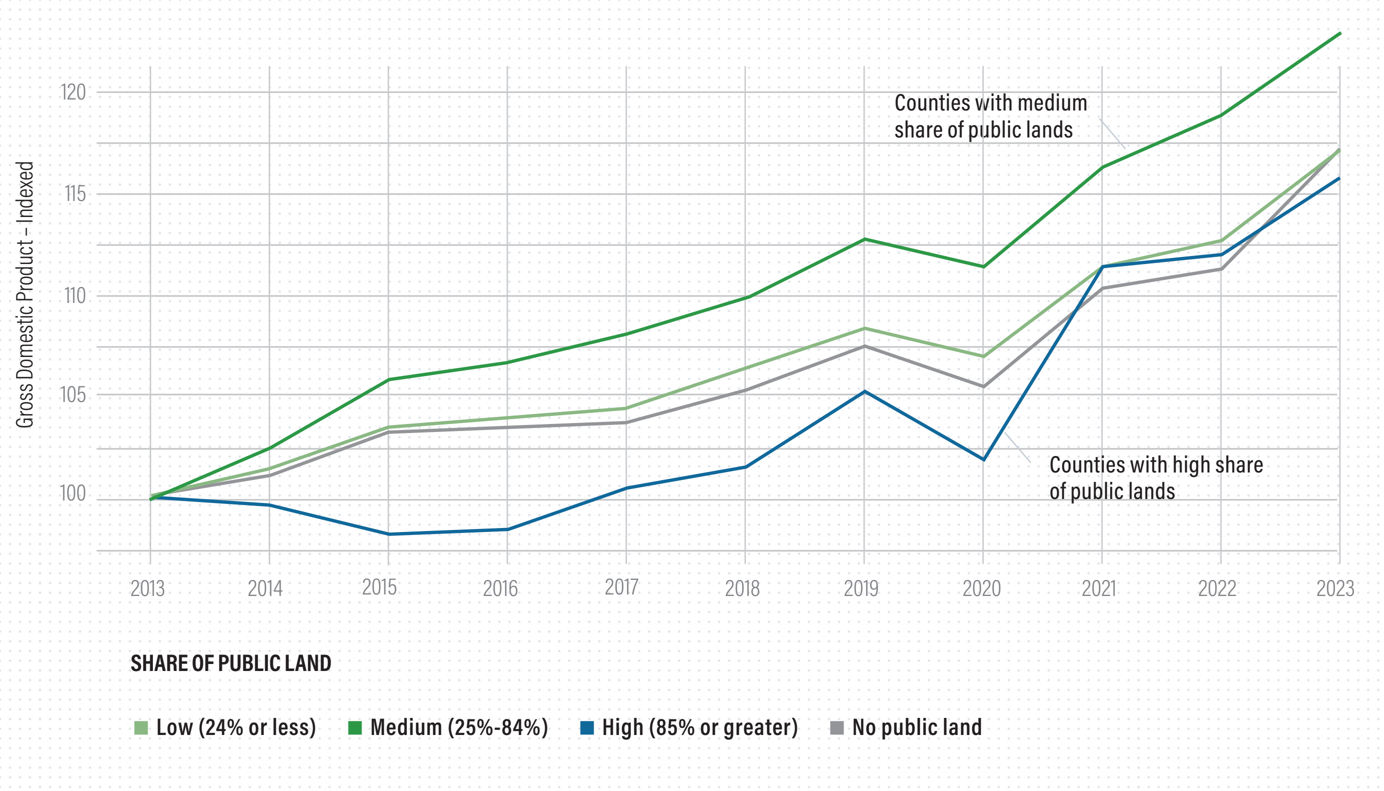
GDP Across Public Lands Counties

The Share of Public Lands Plays Key Role in Economic Resilience

Over the past decade, **high share public lands counties have seen limited GDP growth** in comparison to all other categories, in most cases even non-public lands counties. Meanwhile, medium share counties have experienced substantial GDP growth - over 7% more than high share counties. This may reflect the diverse attributes of medium share counties, which include 363 counties that span 37 states. Although GDP is increasing, counties are still faced with the challenge of increased demands outpacing revenues. [xxxvi] [xxxvii]

HIGH SHARE PUBLIC LANDS SEE SLOWEST ECONOMIC GROWTH

Economic Output of Counties, Categorized by Share of Federal Public Land (2013-2023)



Volatile Landscapes

High Share Public Lands Counties Experience the Slowest GDP Growth

There are various reasons that high share public lands counties have seen lower economic growth over the past decade. While the tourism industry is generally experiencing strong growth, other major industries on public lands—such as agriculture, ranching, and farm work—are highly vulnerable to external pressures like natural resource shortages and untold federal regulations, natural disasters or shifts in landscape health. Therefore, these counties must leverage visitor-driven growth and manage risks tied to primary industries.

Esmeralda County, Nevada (97% federal public land)

Esmeralda County, Nevada's least populated county, is heavily reliant on the mining industry. With almost half of total jobs in the county in the mining sector, the county's economy is dependent on natural resources and impacted significantly by swings and changes with federal or state regulations. In the last few years, the county's economy has taken a severe downturn: Between 2020 and 2022, the county's GDP decreased 12 percent. In a unique economic opportunity, the Rhyolite Ridge Lithium-Boron Project gained full regulatory approval after a four-year federal permitting and environmental review process. This project would transform the county's economy and double the population. The project remains complex with environmental concerns and potential litigation that could slow movement. Esmeralda County must navigate the balance between federal processes, environmental stewardship and natural resources to rebuild their economy. [xxxviii]

Custer County, Idaho (93% federal public land)

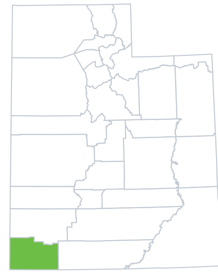
Custer County, Idaho, located in central Idaho, faced severe drought conditions in the summer and fall of 2024. In addition to affecting everyday life, droughts have major impacts on agriculture – a sector that provides 12% of total jobs in the county. On Dec. 9, 2024, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture designated an agricultural disaster in Custer County, a product of extreme drought and wildfires during the growing season.

The county must now leverage intergovernmental partnerships to rebuild the agriculture-dependent economy. The U.S. Small Business Administration recently made low-interest federal disaster loans available to eligible small businesses, a step in rebounding the economy and recovering from the natural disaster. [xxxix]

Washington County, Utah

Visitor and Population Growth are Strong, but Water Shortages Prevail

75%
Federal Public Land



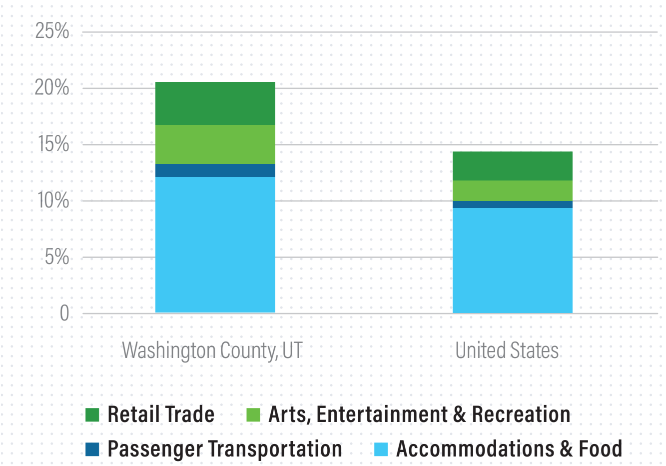
Washington County, Utah, located in the southwestern corner of the state of Utah, is home to Zion National Park and the city of St. George. The county is three quarters federally owned, with the federal public land being managed by the USFS, BLM and NPS. Other notable characteristics of the county include:

- From 2010 to 2022, the county's population increased nearly 37%**,** with a 12.3% increase in just the last three years.[xl] This dramatic increase is partially due to the popularity of the county for retirees – the number of residents 65 and older has grown by 81.4% over the same time frame and now accounts for over a fifth of the county's population.[xli]
- Visitation has also increased, with Zion National Park receiving over 4.6 million visits in 2023; in all, visitors spent $903.5 million in Washington County, which supported more than 8,520 jobs – a 5% increase from 2022.[xlii]
- The county has capitalized on visitor growth, with services-related jobs growing 170% since 2001, and travel/tourism industries now making up a fifth of the county's employment.[xliii]
- Natural resource challenges persist, as water is scarce in the region. The county released a $1.1 billion plan to recycle wastewater in addition to building a new reservoir in order to provide clean water for its growing number of residents.[xliv]

Key County Economic and Demographic Statistics	
+12.3% Short-Term Population Change, 2020-2023	**+36.8%** Long-Term Population Change, 2010-2022
+10.1% GDP Change, 2020-2022	**$7.9 Billion** 2022 Economic Output
$187.5 Million FY24 Budgeted Expenditures	**$3.8 Million** FY24 PILT Payment
2% FY24 Budget Covered by PILT	**+0.6%** Home Value Change, Oct 2023-Oct 2024

Data Sources: *U.S. Department of Commerce. 2023. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Accounts, Washington, D.C., reported by Headwaters Economics' Economic Profile System (headwaterseconomics.org/eps).*

INDUSTRIES THAT INCLUDE TRAVEL & TOURISM, PERCENT OF EMPLPOYMENT, 2023



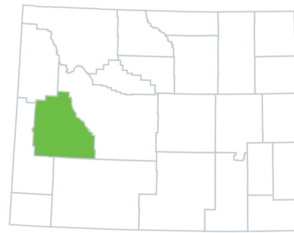
Data Sources: *U.S. Department of Commerce. 2023. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Accounts, Washington, D.C.; U.S. Department of Labor. 2024. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Washington, D.C., reported by Headwaters Economics' Economic Profile System (headwaterseconomics.org/eps).*

Sublette County, Wyoming

Struggling to Harness Population Growth as an Economic Asset

78%

Federal Public Land

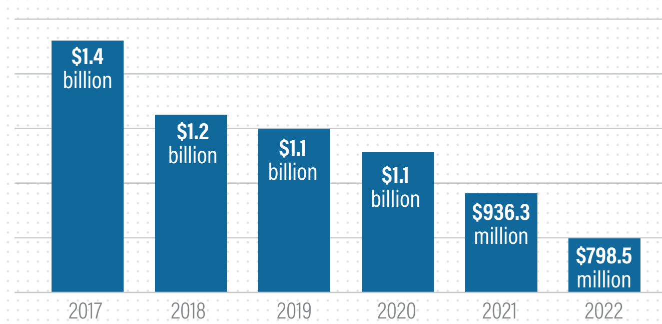


Sublette County, Wyoming sits on the western side of the state and is situated near Bridger Teton National Forest and Grand Teton National Park. Although no national park land is located within the county, it has been a hotspot for amenity migration and has seen a recent uptick in population. However, the county has not seen the same growth in its economy.[xlv] Other notable characteristics of the county include:

- The county is almost 80% federally owned, with management split between USFS and BLM.
- From 2010 to 2022, the county decreased 5.6% in population. However, that trend reversed in post-Covid years, as the county is now the fastest growing in the state, with a 2.8% increase in the last three years.[xlvi]
- The county's location has made it a popular destination for remote workers since 2020.
- Although the population is growing faster than the rest of the state, the economy is facing a steep decline – agriculture and mining make up nearly a quarter of employment in the county, industries which are dependent on natural resources and landscape health.[xlvii]
- From 2010 to 2022, non-services related employment lost 1,700 jobs, mainly in the mining industry.[xlviii]
- Although the county's economy is struggling, the combination of amenity migration and visitor boosts have caused a 3.6% home value increase in the last year.

Key County Economic and Demographic Statistics	
+2.8% Short-Term Population Change, 2020-2023	**-5.6%** Long-Term Population Change, 2010-2022
-24.4% GDP Change, 2020-2022	**$798.5 Million** 2022 Economic Output
$267.3 Million FY24 Budgeted Expenditures	**$1.2 Million** FY24 PILT Payment
0.5% FY24 Budget Covered by PILT	**+3.6%** Home Value Change, Oct 2023-Oct 2024

GDP BY YEAR FOR THE COUNTY, 2017 TO 2022



Data Sources: *U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis – Local Area Gross Domestic Product, 2022 vintage*

Pocahontas County, West Virginia

County Residents Face Headwinds from Visitor Boost

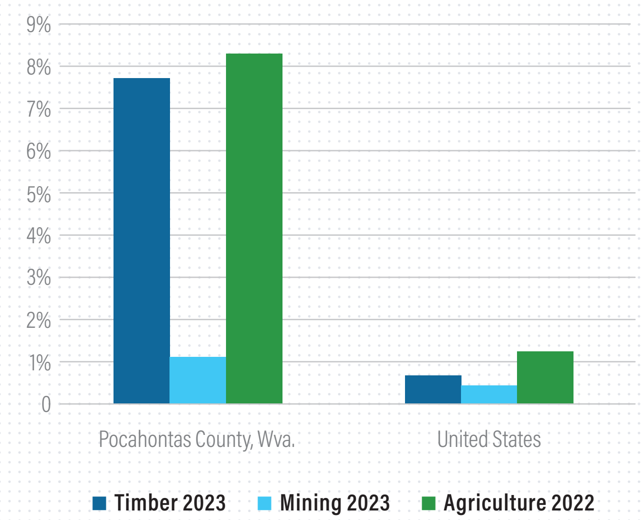
Pocahontas County, West Virginia is situated on the eastern side of the state. Home to headwaters of eight rivers and located in the Appalachian Mountains, over half of the county is federally owned land, all managed by the USFS. Other notable characteristics of the county include:

- The county decreased nearly 10% in population from 2010 to 2022 and saw a -1.3% change in the last three years.[xlix]
- Like most of the state, the county primarily employs people in commodity sectors like timber, mining or agriculture – sectors that are not only subject to federal regulation and could be greatly affected by natural disasters, but also dependent on natural resources and landscape health.
- While the county's population has decreased, visitor traffic has increased since 2020, as people visit the county's resorts and trails.
- The potential profit from short-term rentals has encouraged landlords to turn properties from long to short-term rentals, limiting local housing supply and driving up home values.[l]

52%
Federal Public Land

Key County Economic and Demographic Statistics	
-1.3% Short-Term Population Change, 2020-2023	**-10%** Long-Term Population Change, 2010-2022
-4.7% GDP Change, 2020-2022	**$266.5 Million** 2022 Economic Output
$9.3 Million FY24 Budgeted Expenditures	**$1 Million** FY24 PILT Payment
10.2% FY24 Budget Covered by PILT	**+4.5%** Home Value Change, Oct 2023-Oct 2024

COMMODITY SECTORS, PERCENT OF EMPLOYMENT



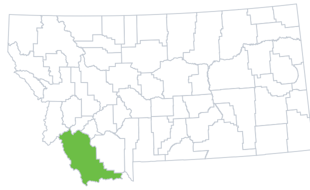
Data Sources: *U.S. Department of Commerce. 2023. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Accounts, Washington, D.C.; U.S., as reported in Headwaters Economics' Economic Profile System (headwaterseconomics.org/eps).*

Beaverhead County, Montana

Continued Growth Becoming Unaffordable for Residents

59%

Federal Public Land

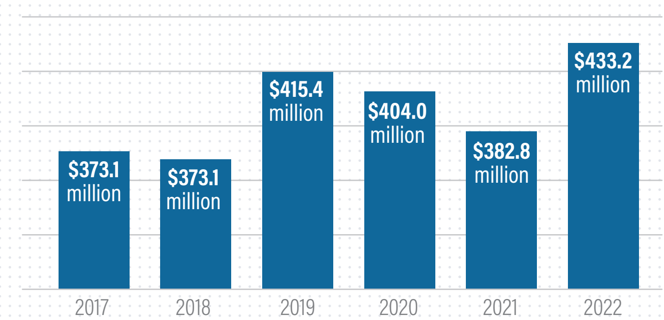


Beaverhead County, Montana is located in the southwest corner of the state along the great Continental Divide. Over half of the county is federally owned, with the land being managed primarily by the USFS, BLM and FWS. Other notable characteristics of the county include:

- The county has a steadily growing population with a 5% increase from 2010 to 2022 and a 5.5% increase from 2020 to 2023.[li]
- The county has seen a subsequent boost in its economy, with a 16.1% increase in GDP from 2017-2022 and a 30% and 32% increase in non-services and services-related industries, respectively.[lii]
- Agriculture is one of the major sectors of employment in the county, making up 8.6% of total jobs.[liii]
- The median household income in the county is $55,867, well below the median U.S. household income of $75,149.
- While the median income may be expected for a rural area, the housing values are not aligned, making the area unaffordable for its long-time or new residents. As of October 2024, the average home value in Beaverhead County, Montana is $360,211, higher than the U.S. average of $355,390.

Key County Economic and Demographic Statistics	
+5.5% Short-Term Population Change, 2020-2023	**+5%** Long-Term Population Change, 2010-2022
+7.2% GDP Change, 2020-2022	**$433.2 Million** 2022 Economic Output
$14 Million FY24 Budgeted Expenditures	**$985.3K** FY24 PILT Payment
7% FY24 Budget Covered by PILT	**+5.7%** Home Value Change, Oct 2023-Oct 2024

GDP BY YEAR FOR THE COUNTY, 2017 TO 2022



Data Sources: *U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis – Local Area Gross Domestic Product, 2022 vintage*

To explore economic data for all counties, visit NACo's County Explorer tool at **ce.naco.org**

Structural Limits

"It's hard to provide the resources for our children, our schools, our teachers — all of the things that all counties and municipalities are trying to afford when you don't have the funding to do so." [liv]

— Washington County, Utah

Nontaxable Land

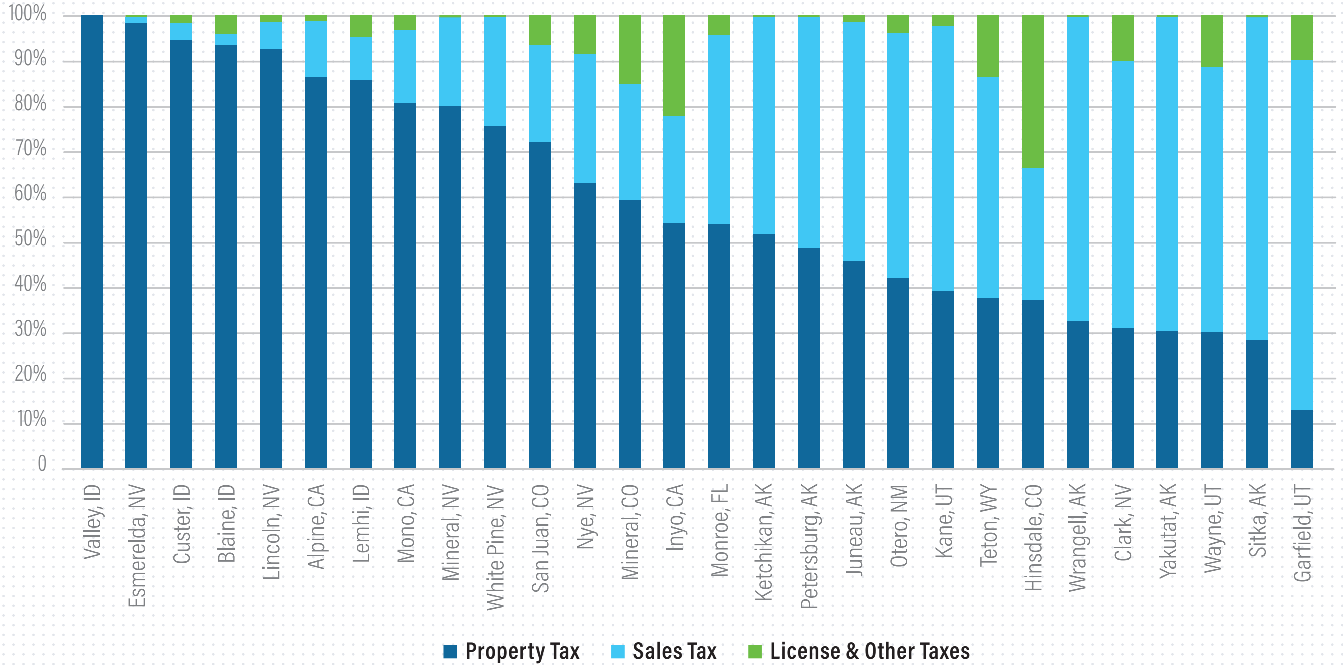
High Share Public Lands Counties Diversify Tax Revenue

Potential economic growth across public lands counties is limited by property tax caps and lack of taxable land – restrictions that severely limit most counties' primary source of revenue. Structurally, public lands counties rely heavily on property taxes as the highest source of county-generated tax revenue (60%), even with the limits of nontaxable land in the county jurisdiction.

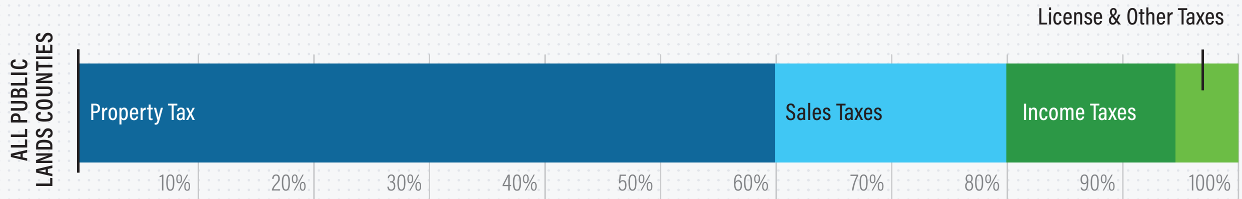
In high share counties, land limitations are pronounced so diversification emerges more prominently in the tax structure – **property taxes make up only 36% of total county-generated revenue in these high share counties.**

HIGH SHARE PUBLIC LANDS COUNTIES MUST DIVERSIFY TAX REVENUE

County-Generated Tax Revenue Breakdown for Counties with 85%+ Federal Public Land



County-Generated Tax Revenue Breakdown for Counties for All Public Lands Counties



Note: *this chart excludes county charges, which make up 34% of county-generated revenue for these counties.*

State Tax Caps

States with 25% or More Public Lands Have Multiple State-Imposed Property Tax Caps

In the **12 states where 25% or more of the land is federally owned, nearly all counties face two or more property tax caps imposed by the state**, with counties in eight of those states facing three or more tax caps imposed by the state.[lv][lvi]

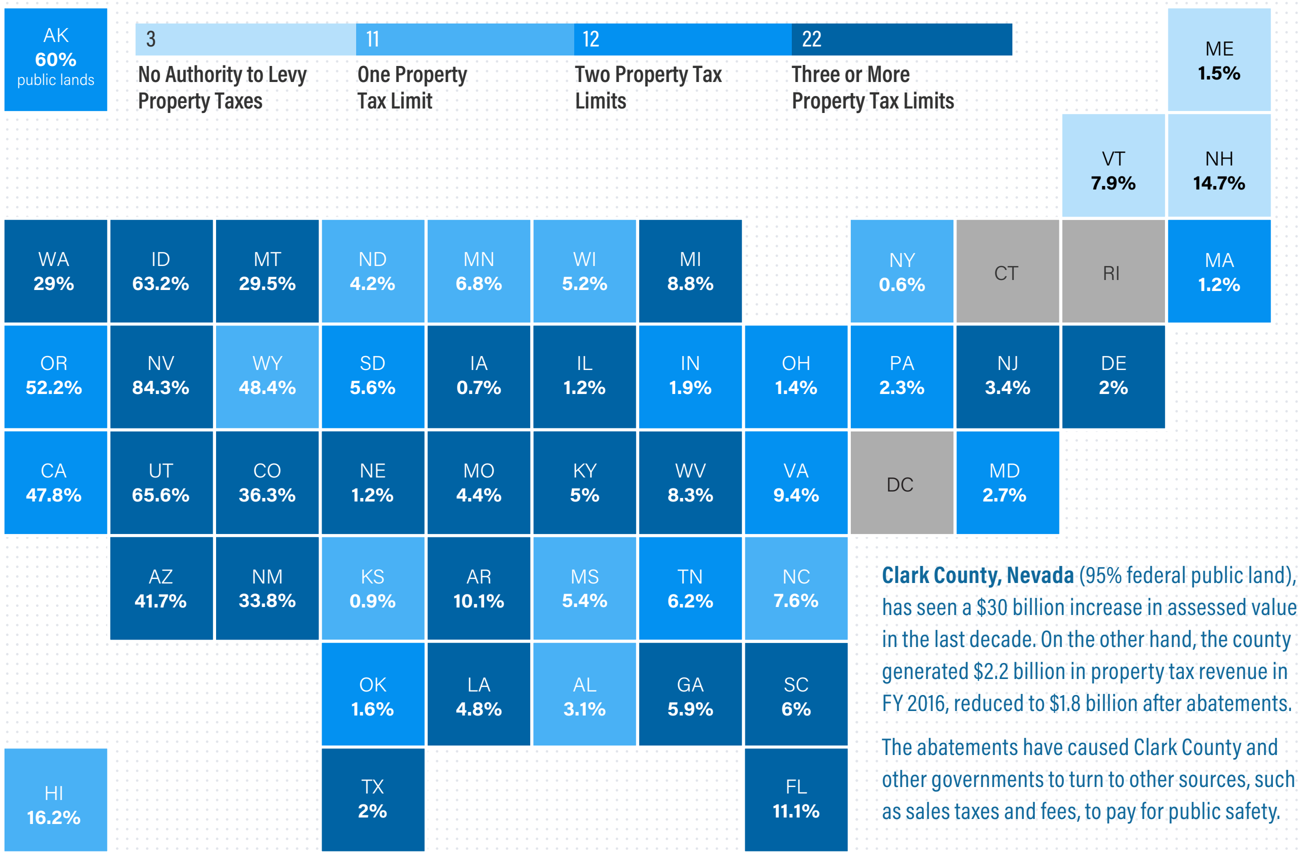
Property tax is a main source of income for most counties and public lands counties are working with a disadvantage: these counties cannot impose property taxes on federal public land. Therefore, caps on property tax increases are uniquely burdensome for public lands counties.

Additional challenges exist for these counties when attempting to increase property taxes. For example, in Nevada, lawmakers capped annual property tax increases on residential property at 3% and other property at 8% in 2005.[lvii] In New Mexico, the state does not allow the value of residential property to increase by more than 3 percent each year or by more than 6.1 percent every two years if the owners remain the same.[lviii]

These policies limit counties' ability to respond to changing economic conditions or adequately fund critical county services, making it significantly challenging for counties to remain financially sustainable while addressing the unique needs of residents and local economies.

STATES WITH A QUARTER OR MORE PUBLIC LAND FACE MULTIPLE STATE-IMPOSED PROPERTY TAX CAPS

Percent Public Land and Number of State Property Tax Caps by State, as of April 2017

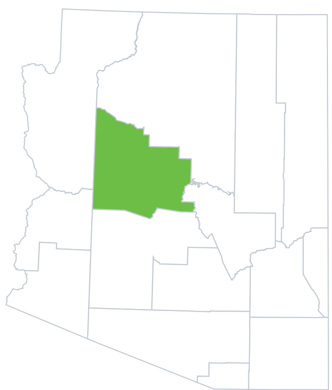


Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)

PILT Payments Pace Below County Expenditure Increases

Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) is a federal program that aims to offset losses in property tax on federal public lands and help counties afford services for the county's residents.[lix] However, considering the surge of services associated with increased population, visitor traffic and overall required county response, the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program has not appropriated funding in a proportionately increasing manner. **From 2017 to 2022, local expenditures for community service delivery in counties that received PILT increased 25% while PILT payments overall increased 18%, a 7% offset on average.**[lx lxi]

The PILT program is critical to serve resident and visitor needs in public lands counties, especially as tax caps and geography restrict the revenue generation. Public lands counties are facing new economic challenges while federal payments are not reflecting a parallel change.



Yavapai County, Arizona
(50% federal public land)

2022 PILT payment: $3.8 million

2022 property taxes: $68.6 Million

% Change in PILT payment, 2017-2022: 14%

% Change in total county expenditures, 2017-2022: 21%

Utah County, Utah
(47% federal public land)

2022 PILT payment: $1.9 million

2022 property taxes: $56.5 million

% Change in PILT payment, 2017-2022: 8%

% Change in total county expenditures, 2017-2022: 76%

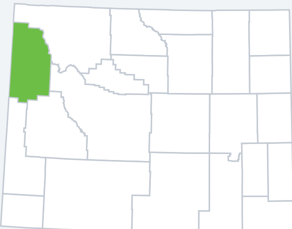
County Responses to Public Lands Constraints

"Even if visitors aren't staying in Mariposa or any of the gateway counties for a week, just people using the parks to transit the Sierra Mountains supports our economy, and when you need a reservation to drive on a road, that makes it tough for us." [lxii]

— Mariposa County, Calif.

County Responses to Public Lands Constraints

The following spotlights share individual solutions and county responses to unique public lands challenges in each county's economic landscape.



Teton County, Wyo.
97% federal public land

RESTRICTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO PRIMARY, NOT SECONDARY, RESIDENTS

Teton County, Wyo. is building workforce homes intended to serve households that earn more than 120% of the Median Family Income but cannot afford a market home. **To ensure the housing benefits those who call the county home and work to serve the community, eligibility is limited to families in which at least one person in the household works full-time for a local business**, and 75% of the total household's income must be earned from a local business.[lxiii] With local partners like Habitat for Humanity of the Greater Teton Area, the county has built over 140 homes for local workers since 2017.

This strategy prioritizes local housing for those who contribute to the local economy and helps with the amenity migration challenge that many counties face.

Nevada County, Calif.
35% federal public land

OVERCOMING PERSISTENT CHALLENGES WITH AUTHORITY

Nevada County, Calif. is home to the Yuba River, which is managed by various federal, state, and private entities. Although the county has effectively no authority over the river, it faces the effects of increased visitor traffic on county services like public safety and emergency services.

To coordinate a response to the effects of increased visitation, **the county created the South Yuba River Public Safety Cohort, a multi-agency working group of stakeholders to coordinate public safety and law enforcement** in the area. So far, accomplishments of the group, including the placement of emergency call boxes and increased support for river ambassadors, have improved safety and emergency responses in the area.[lxiv]

This cohort is crucial to ensuring the county shares the responsibilities of the increased visitation, and it is a joint effort with partners and managing authorities to provide critical services.

Larimer County, Colo.
49% federal public land

EDUCATING COMMUNITY ON NATURAL DISASTER RESPONSE

Larimer County, Colo. has experienced the most federally declared disasters in the state of Colorado since 1965. After back-to-back disasters in the early 2010s, including the 2012 High Park Wildfire and the 2013 Larimer County Floods, the county recognized the need for a public education campaign around disaster response and preparedness.

The Larimer County Office of Emergency Management created Larimer Connects to conduct outreach and education on resilience, social connectivity, preparedness and hazard awareness.[lxv] Through strengthening the community's knowledge, the county's residents and, therefore, its economy are more prepared to withstand natural disasters.

Public lands counties see higher rates of some natural disasters, like floods and fires, and must reckon with a more widespread population when faced with these challenges.[lxvi] Preparing every resident to respond to a disaster can help strengthen the community and limit the disaster's impact.

Beaver County, Utah
77% federal public land

ESTABLISHING INTERGOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS TO MITIGATE RISK AND IMPROVE FOREST HEALTH

Beaver County, Utah in collaboration with the state of Utah's Department of Natural Resources, is taking advantage of the USFS' Shared Stewardship program to complete the Beaver River Watershed Improvement Project.

Shared Stewardship is an opportunity for state, local and tribal governments to work with the federal agency to address challenges of forests and grasslands and improve forest health and resiliency across management jurisdictions. Beaver River Canyon was identified as a top priority due to its sensitive ecological resources, important watershed and significant values at risk.[lxvii]

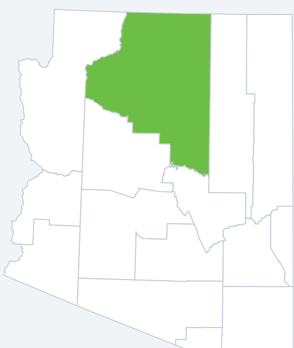
The Beaver Canyon Infrastructure Project is a continuation of work that has been occurring for several years. Through Shared Stewardship, forest treatments are now being implemented at a greater pace and scale to mitigate fire behavior, protect values at risk and improve watershed health in the area. This initiative showcases the importance and potential of county governments to work with federal agencies in the management of federal land.

Modoc County, Calif.
67% federal public land

CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING TO ADVANCE SHARED COUNTY-FEDERAL INTERESTS

Modoc County, Calif. works closely with the USFS as managers of the public land in the county, with monthly meetings between the agency and supervisors of the county. In this partnership, the county recognized that many projects experienced challenges due to personnel limitations. To maintain projects in the region, **the county partnered with the Modoc County Farm Bureau to hire retired workers for temporary positions**. In 2023, the county and farm bureau hired retirees for a range of positions from entry-level to forest scientists. The program has proved successful and even received recognition from the regional forest.[lxviii]

Through creative problem-solving and clear communication, public lands counties can work with federal agencies to advance projects and strengthen the county workforce.



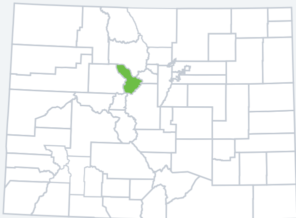
Coconino County, Ariz.
40% federal public land

LEVERAGING FEDERAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS FOR LAND MANAGEMENT

Coconino County, Ariz. is part of a multi-agency effort along with Coconino National Forest, the City of Flagstaff and the Four Forest Restoration Initiative, among others, to treat unhealthy and unnaturally crowded forests in strategic locations to protect communities and preserve vital watersheds.[lxix]

Many of these projects use Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) agreements and other contracting mechanisms, allowing the USFS to work with partners like the National Forest Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, county, state, and local governments, as well as other non-profits. These agreements facilitate important collaborative management projects on national forest lands.

These intergovernmental agreements lead to successful completion of projects like the Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project, which aims to protect and preserve the main source of drinking water in the City of Flagstaff. By collaborating with public land management agencies, Coconino County can treat more acres and complete larger projects.



Summit County, Colo.
81% federal public land

FORGING PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPORT A GROWING ECONOMY

Summit County, Colo. is a popular ski resort destination and home to numerous mountain ranges. The natural amenities in the county have made it an increasingly high-cost-of-living area. While the county's economy is thriving, the housing costs in the area proved unaffordable for the local workforce and USFS employees.

To alleviate these costs, **the USFS and the county signed a 50-year lease for the development of 177 affordable workforce housing units** at the forest's aging Dillon Work Center Administrative Site.[lxx] This lease is a first of its kind for the USFS, the first lease signed under the authorities in the 2018 Agriculture Improvement Act, and it paves the way for public lands counties to continue growing the local economy while partnering with federal agencies in land management.[lxxi]

Mariposa County, Calif.
53% federal public land

FEDERAL AUTHORITY CHALLENGING LOCAL ECONOMIES

Mariposa County, Calif. is a gateway community to Yosemite National Park.

From July to mid-October 2024, the National Park Service tested a new reservation system to enter Yosemite, similar to one that was in place during COVID. **The ticket system is a possible solution to overcrowding in the park; however, it led to a drop in lodging revenue between 15-25% in the gateway communities, a rate that could severely harm local economies if it continued.**[lxxii]

Considering these impacts, coordination among the intergovernmental parties is crucial to solve this unique issue of visitor congestion while still allowing the county's economy to thrive.

Conclusion

Nearly two-thirds of counties in the United States have federal public lands within the county jurisdiction. These counties differ considerably in their share of public land and related economic challenges and opportunities. In all public lands counties, challenges persist as county service demands grow and outstrip county resources.

Among medium share public lands counties (25–84% federal land), 69% experienced population growth in 2023, indicating continued appeal and migration into these regions along with an increased strain on county services. In contrast, half of the high share counties (85% or more) saw population decline that same year, suggesting that extensive federal land presence may pose barriers to growth or reflect limited development opportunities.

Regardless of population status, housing values have risen significantly across public lands counties. Between 2014 and 2024, average home values in medium and high share public lands counties nearly doubled—up 99%—with 56% of that increase occurring between 2020 and 2024. These figures underscore growing pressure on housing affordability, especially in high demand areas with limited buildable and taxable land.

Continuing with the trend of growth, medium share counties saw a 23% average increase in GDP between 2013 and 2023. High share counties, on the contrary, continue to be challenged by the limited amount of available land and saw the slowest economic growth out of any category, just 16%, between 2013 and 2023. These counties are also forced to rely less on property taxes, which make up just 36% of their locally generated revenue, compared to 60% for all public lands counties. All counties in the 12 states with the highest federal land ownership face two or more property tax caps imposed by the state, further shaping local revenue structures.

Federal support through PILT (Payments in Lieu of Taxes) has grown, but not in line with expenditures. From 2017 to 2022, PILT-receiving counties saw a 25% increase in local community service spending—from $463.7 billion to $577.3 billion—while total PILT payments rose by just 18%, from $464.6 million to $549.4 million. These combined figures illustrate the varied conditions and constraints shaping counties with significant federal land ownership.

Due to the complex picture of public lands counties in the U.S., analyzing economic trends and spotlighting county responses can help to share the public lands county story.

Appendix

"We have some of the premier outdoor recreation activities in the country, if not the world, our economy is so much based on tourism and outdoor recreation, but it also has its challenges." [lxxiii]

— Coconino County, Ariz.

Individual County Economic Trends

ECONOMIC INDICATORS OF MEDIUM AND HIGH SHARE PUBLIC LANDS COUNTIES

PILT Remains Small Share of County Expenditure Needs, and Tax Burden Shifts to Residents

County	Share of Federal Public Land	PILT Received FY24	FY24 PILT as Percent of FY24 General County Fund Expenditures
Sitka Borough, Alaska	99% (High)	$872.6K	2.1%
Wrangell Borough, Alaska	98% (High)	$466.1K	7.2%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Alaska	98% (High)	$1.5M	5.8%
Esmeralda County, Nev.	97% (High)	$167.5K	1.9%
Teton County, Wyo.	97% (High)	$2.4M	3.1%
Pitkin County, Colo.	84% (Medum)	$1.9M	3.6%
Lander County, Nev.	84% (Medium)	$1.3M	3%
Idaho County, Idaho	84% (Medium)	$2.2M	5.3%
Dagget County, Utah	83% (Medium)	$173.4K	5.8%
Mineral County, Mont.	82% (Medium)	$599K	N/A

NACo's economic profiles on County Explorer allow for the examination of a single county and its individual economic trends. Scan the QR code on the inside back cover to explore economic trends in any county.

ECONOMIC INDICATORS OF PUBLIC LANDS COUNTIES WITH HIGHEST GDP GROWTH

Home Values Still Tend to Outpace GDP Change

County	Share of Federal Public Land	GDP change, 2020-2022	Average Home Value, Oct 2024	Median Household Income, 2019-2023 Average	Percent Home Value Change, October 2020-2024
Teton County, Wyo.	97% (High)	+31.9%	$2.2 Million	$112.7K	+82.7%
Garfield County, Utah	91% (High)	+31.1%	$308.7K	$61.7K	+38%
Mineral County, Nev.	94% (High)	+21.2%	$408.6K	$52.5K	+42.6%
Blaine County, Idaho	87% (High)	+20.5%	$938.5K	$84.5K	+59.4%
San Juan County, Colo.	90% (High)	+19.8%	$532.9K	$73.9K	+61.9%
Beaver County, Utah	77% (Medium)	+42.8%	$289.9K	$85.6K	+41.9%
Stewart County, Tenn.	33% (Medium)	+42.3%	$239.2K	$62.1K	+41.6%
Denali Borough, Alaska	58% (Medium)	+37.5%	N/A	$88.9K	N/A
Scott County, Ark.	64% (Medium)	+35.1%	$145.5K	$46K	+15.6%
Juab County, Utah	73% (Medium)	+33.3%	$418.5K	$89.8K	+34.5%
Jones County, N.C.	14% (Low)	+40.3%	$123.4K	$55.7K	+50.2%
Madison County, Ark.	9% (Low)	+39.1%	$241.7K	$53.9K	+42.7%
Shelby County, Texas	12% (Low)	+30.2%	$193.5K	$50.4K	+2.3%
Sevier County, Ark.	8% (Low)	+28.3%	$153.7K	$51.6K	+25.3%
Gilmer County, Ga.	21% (Low)	+24.9%	$400.5K	$72.5K	+66.2%

ECONOMIC INDICATORS OF PUBLIC LANDS COUNTIES WITH LOWEST GDP GROWTH

Counties with Falling GDP See Notable Home Value Increases

County	Share of Federal Public Land	GDP change, 2020-2022	Average Home Value, Oct 2024	Median Household Income, 2019-2023 Average	Percent Home Value Change, October 2020-2024
White Pine County, Nev.	94% (High)	-18.5%	$169.9K	$72.3K	+16%
Esmeralda County, Nev.	97% (High	-12%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mineral County, Nev.	88% (High)	-5.8%	$114.6K	$50.6K	-7.1%
Lincoln County, Nev.	94% (High)	-4.5%	$197.8K	$69.5K	+19.5%
Alpine County, Calif.	93% (High)	-4%	$497.6K	$110.8K	+26.8%
Billings County, N.D.	46% (Medium)	-58.5%	$261.8K	$81.3K	N/A
Carter County, Mont.	28% (Medium)	-29.4%	$159.6K	$52.2K	+67%
Eureka County, Nev.	79% (Medium)	-28.3%	$132.7K	$73.1K	-11.8%
McKenzie County, N.D.	30% (Medium)	-27.2%	$322.8K	$88.3K	+9%
Powder River County, Mont.	28% (Medium)	-26.5%	$244.2K	$68K	+75.6%
Slope County, N.D.	18% (Low)	-53.5%	N/A	$62.5K	N/A
Monroe County, Ohio	8% (Low)	-36.8%	$143.8K	$59K	+6.9%
Morton County, Kan.	23% (Low)	-31%	$97.8K	$65.6K	+10.3%
Niobrara County, Wyo.	7% (Low)	-24.7%	$180.3K	$49K	+29.7%
Fallon County, Mont.	11% (Low)	-23.8%	$168.2K	$72.3K	+12.3%

Notes

All analyses are based on 3,069 counties with active county governments. Thus, Connecticut, Rhode Island and portions of Alaska and Massachusetts are excluded since they do not have active county governments.

Independent cities in Virginia are also excluded from the analysis. New York City is a consolidation of the five boroughs of the city of New York:

- Manhattan (New York County)
- The Bronx (Bronx County)
- Brooklyn (Kings County)
- Queens (Queens County)
- Staten Island (Richmond County)

The Woods and Poole Complete Economic and Demographic Data Source includes estimated data for Gross Regional Product (GRP), Employment by Industry, and Total Personal Income for 2022 and 2023. GRP data for 2003-2021 was sourced from the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Federally owned land acreage by agency is estimated using ArcGIS, with exact amounts unknown due to technical issues (Congressional Research Service report R42346).

The Zillow Home Value Index (ZHVI) shows typical home values in the 35th to 65th percentile, and the Zillow Observed Rent Index (ZORI) shows rents in the 40th to 60th percentile. Some counties may be missing from Zillow data.

Endnotes

[i] In 2023, 61% of counties with federal public land saw an increase in population.

[ii] Ban, C. (2024, Aug. 12). Public lands challenges are as varied as their counties – County News. https://www.naco.org/news/public-lands-challenges-are-varied-their-counties.

[iii] Although public lands counties are concentrated in the West, every state with county government has counties with federal public land in their jurisdiction.

[iv] In 2023, 61% of public lands counties saw an increase in population.

[v] Among medium share public lands counties (25-84% federal public land), 69% of counties experienced growth in 2023.

[vi] This is especially true in counties with National Park Service land, as search and rescue incidents have increased every year since 2019.

[vii] From 2013 to 2023, counties with 25-84% share of public lands saw an average change in GDP of 23%.

[viii] From 2013 to 2023, counties with 85% or greater share of public lands saw an average change in GDP of 16%.

[ix] In 2023, 50% (14 out of 28) of these counties with high share of public lands (85%+) experienced a decline in population.

[x] In October 2024, the average home value in high share counties (85%+) was $498,917 compared to $356,981 nationally.

[xi] States with 25% or more federal public land: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

[xii] In 2017, expenditures in these counties totaled $463.7 billion. In 2022, the number was $577.3 billion.

[xiii] In 2017, total PILT payments were $464.6 million. In 2022, the total payments were $549.4 million.

[xiv] Beaver River Project – Utah Shared Stewardship. https://utah-shared-stewardshiputahdnr.hub.arcgis.com/pages/beaver-river-project.

[xv] While these five agencies manage the large majority of public land, other managing agencies include the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

[xvi] Congressional Research Service (2020, Feb. 21). Federal land ownership: overview and data – CRS. https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/ R42346.

[xvii] Podcast: Talking with Public Lands County Leaders, Part II – County News. https://www.naco.org/news/podcast-talking-public-lands-county-leaders-part-ii.

[xviii] In 2023, counties with a medium shares of public lands grew in population at a higher rate and declined in population at a lower rate than non-public lands counties. Medium share of public lands in a county as mentioned here includes those with 25-84% of public lands within their jurisdiction.

[xix] In this context, modest growth is defined as 2% or more, slight growth is between 0 and 2%, slight decline is between 0 and -2% and modest decline is -2% or less.

[xx] Hjerpe, Evan; Hussain, Anwar; Holmes, Thomas. 2020. Amenity migration and public lands: Rise of the protected areas. Environmental Management. 66(1): 56-71. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00267-020-01293-6.

[xxi] Congressional Research Service (2024, May 7). Search and Rescue (SAR) Operations on Federal Lands – CRS. https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/IF12020.pdf.

[xxii] The park carried out at least 400 backcountry evacuations that year, the most reported in 20 years.

[xxiii] McGivney, A. (2022, Jan. 1). Everyone came at once: america's national parks recon with record-smashing year – The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/jan/01/national-parks-us-tourism-crowds-busy.

[xxiv] In 2023, 14 of the 28 counties (50%) with 85% or more public land saw growth in population, and half saw decline. Every other category of county saw higher rates of growth: 58% (no public land), 59% (low shares) and 69% (medium shares).

[xxv] Ibid.

[xxvi] White Pine County, Nevada. Budget & Finance. https://www.whitepinecounty.net/241/Budget-Finance.

[xxvii] In the last ten years, these counties have seen a 99% increase in average home value, with 56% of that change occurring from 2020 to 2024.

[xxviii] 12 of the 14 top states at risk for wildfires are located in the West, where nearly half the land is federally owned.

[xxix] Insurance Information Institute (2018, Apr. 4). Background on: Wildfires – III. https://www.iii.org/article/background-on-wildfires.

[xxx] Solis, J. (2024, Dec. 16). As destructive wildfires grow, western states face a home insurance crisis – Nebraska Examiner. https://nebraskaexaminer.com/2024/12/16/as-destructive-wildfires-grow-western-states-face-a-home-insurance-crisis/.

[xxxi] Flavelle, C. (2024, Dec. 18). Insurers Are Deserting Homeowners as Climate Shocks Worsen – The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/12/18/climate/insurance-non-renewal-climate-crisis.html.

[xxxii] For counties with 85 percent or more of public lands, the average home value index was $498,917 compared to $356,981 nationally in October of 2024.

[xxxiii] 44% of homes in the 28 counties with 85% or higher shares of public lands were built before 1980.

[xxxiv] Flor, H. (2024, July 8). Petersburg develops tiny home designs in hopes of easing housing market – KTOO. https://www.ktoo.org/2024/07/08/petersburg-develops-tiny-home-designs-in-hopes-of-easing-housing-market/.

[xxxv] Suppe, R. (2024, Aug. 5). Blaine County debuts affordable housing for school employees – Idaho Ed News. https://www.idahoednews.org/top-news/blaine-county-debuts-affordable-housing-for-school-employees/.

[xxxvi] Lawson, M. (2024, Sept. 12). Economic Impact of National Parks – Headwaters Economics. https://headwaterseconomics.org/public-lands/protected-lands/economic-impact-of-national-parks/.

[xxxvii] Counties with 25-84% of public land have grown their GDP over 5% more than counties without public lands. Economic output (GDP) is a measure of aggregate goods and services produced within a geographic area.

[xxxviii] Solis, J. (2024, Oct. 25). Feds approve Rhyolite Ridge lithium mine in Nevada – Nevada Current. https://nevadacurrent.com/2024/10/25/feds-approve-rhyolite-ridge-lithium-mine-in-nevada/#:~:text=There%20is%20currently%20only%20one,according%20to%20Ioneer%27s%20scheduling%20estimates.

[xxxix] Disaster Field Operations Center West. (2024, Dec. 10). SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans Available to Idaho Small Businesses – U.S. Small Business Administration. https://www.sba.gov/article/2024/12/10/sba-economic-injury-disaster-loans-available-idaho-small-businesses/.

[xl] Data Source: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2023. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office, Washington, D.C., as reported in Headwaters Economics' Economic Profile System (headwaterseconomics.org/eps).

[xli] Ibid.

[xlii] Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office (2024, June 6). Year in Review 2023 Annual Report – Greater Zion. https://issuu.com/greater_zion/docs/gz-annualreport-2023-web.

[xliii] Data Source: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2023. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Accounts, Washington, D.C., reported by Headwaters Economics' Economic Profile System, headwaterseconomics.org/eps.

[xliv] Condos, D. (2024, Feb. 6). How one of the nation's fastest growing counties plans to find water in the desert – KUNC. https://www.kunc.org/news/2024-02-06/how-one-of-the-nations-fastest-growing-counties-plans-to-find-water-in-the-desert.

[xlv] Tan, C. (2024, April 5). Sublette County is growing the fastest in Wyoming – Wyoming Public Media. https://www.wyomingpublicmedia.org/wyoming-economy/2024-04-05/sublette-county-growing-the-fastest-in-wyoming.

[xlvi] Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/sublettecountywyoming.

[xlvii] Data Source: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2023. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Accounts, Washington, D.C.; U.S. Department of Labor. 2024. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Washington, D.C., reported by Headwaters Economics' Economic Profile System (headwaterseconomics.org/eps).

[xlviii] Ibid.

[xlix] Data Source: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2023. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office, Washington, D.C., as reported in Headwaters Economics' Economic Profile System (headwaterseconomics.org/eps).

[l] Spencer, T. (2024, Oct. 25). As the tourism industry grows in Pocahontas County, rising housing and rent prices are squeezing residents – Mountain State Spotlight. https://mountainstatespotlight.org/2024/10/17/voters-election-2024-pocahontas-tourism/.

[li] U.S. Department of Commerce. 2024. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Office, Washington, D.C., as reported in Headwaters Economics' Economic Profile System, headwaterseconomics.org/eps.

[lii] U.S. Department of Commerce. 2023. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Accounts, Washington, D.C., reported by Headwaters Economics' Economic Profile System, headwaterseconomics.org/eps.

[liii] U.S. Department of Commerce. 2023. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Accounts, Washington, D.C.; U.S. Department of Labor. 2024. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Washington, D.C.

[liv] Ban, C. (2024, Aug. 12). Public lands challenges are as varied as their counties – County News. https://www.naco.org/news/public-lands-challenges-are-varied-their-counties.

[lv] States with 25% or more federal public land: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

[lvi] NACo interviews with state associations, as well as county and state officials; NACo analysis of state legislation.

[lvii] Gentry, D. (2023, March 15). Lawmakers try again to tweak property tax caps – Nevada Current. https://nevadacurrent.com/2023/03/15/lawmakers-try-again-to-tweak-property-tax-caps/.

[lviii] NACo interviews with state associations, as well as county and state officials; NACo analysis of state legislation.

[lix]

Program	Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)	Secure Rural Schools (SRS)
Year Enacted	1976	2000
Purpose	Help local governments offset **losses in property taxes due to the existence of non-taxable** Federal lands within their boundaries.	Compensate for **steep reductions in revenues from timber harvests**, which resulted from national policies that substantially diminished revenue-generating activities within federal forests.
% U.S. Entitlement Land	62%	24%
Uses of Payments	Any governmental purpose	Roads, schools and other municipal services
Total Payment	$621.2 million (FY 2024)	$272.6 million (FY 2023)

[lx] In 2017, expenditures in these counties totaled $463.7 billion. In 2022, the number was $577.3 billion.

[lxi] In 2017, total PILT payments were $464.6 million. In 2022, the total payments were $549.4 million.

[lxii] Ban, C. (2024, Nov. 18). Gateway counties remain wary of National Park Service crowd control plans – County News. https://www.naco.org/news/gateway-counties-remain-wary-national-park-service-crowd-control-plans.

[lxiii] Jackson/Teton County Affordable Housing. Workforce Homes. https://www.tetoncountywy.gov/720/Workforce-Homes.

[lxiv] Nevada County California Community Development Agency. South Yuba River Public Safety Cohort. https://www.nevadacountyca.gov/3678/South-Yuba-River-Public-Safety-Cohort.

[lxv] About Larimer Connects (Emergency Management) – Larimer County. https://www.larimer.gov/emergency/larimer-connects/about.

[lxvi] Federal Emergency Management Agency. Disaster Declarations for States and Counties – FEMA. https://www.fema.gov/ht/data-visualization/disaster-declarations-states-and-counties.

[lxvii] Beaver River Project – Utah Shared Stewardship. https://utah-shared-stewardship-utahdnr.hub.arcgis.com/pages/beaver-river-project.

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[lxix] U.S Forest Service (2022, Feb. 11). Coconino NF proud to be part of USDA's 10-year plan to fight wildfires in Arizona – USFS. https://www.fs.usda.gov/inside-fs/delivering-mission/deliver/coconino-nf-proud-be-part-usdas-10-year-plan-fight-wildfires.

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[lxxi] Ibid.

[lxxii] Ban, C. (2024, Nov. 18). Gateway counties remain wary of National Park Service crowd control plans – County News. https://www.naco.org/news/gateway-counties-remain-wary-national-park-service-crowd-control-plans.

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National Center for Public Lands Counties
Take a Closer Look at Your County's Data:
County Explorer Economic Profiles
Find recent data updates and other insights on NACo's County Explorer tool, a one-stop shop for accessing county level indicators , with over 1,000 maps from over 100 datasets available at ce.naco.org.

Join the Public Lands Conversation on the National Center for Public Lands Counties Knowledge Hub

The Public Lands Counties Knowledge Hub is a place to engage with our resources, access toolkits and land use plans and connect with peer counties across the country to discuss public land issues.

To learn more about the National Center for Public Lands Counties and how your county can get involved, access resources or contribute to the effort, contact us at **ncplc@naco.org.**

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