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Fire-Prone Parts of Rural Northern California Are Losing Residents, Bucking National Trend

Tuolumne County, CA, in the Yosemite foothills, lost more residents than any other fire-prone U.S. county in 2025, according to Redfin. It was followed closely by Sutter County, also in rural Northern California. Most fire-prone counties are gaining residents.

SEATTLE — July 27, 2026 — Fire-prone parts of rural Northern California are losing more residents than they're gaining, bucking the national trend of Americans moving into fire-prone parts of the nation. That's according to a new report from Redfin, the real estate brokerage powered by Rocket. Roughly two-thirds of the fire-prone counties in the U.S. are gaining more residents than they're losing.

Tuolumne County, CA, located in the Yosemite foothills and about 170 miles east of San Francisco, lost 775 more residents than it gained last year. That's a modest net outflow, but it's the largest among the fire-prone counties in this analysis. It also marks the first time the county has experienced a net outflow in a decade, except 2022.

Sutter County, CA, located about 40 miles north of Sacramento, had the second-biggest outflow of residents in 2025, losing 754 more residents than it gained—the third straight year of outflow from the area. Another Northern California county—Lassen, located in far northeastern California and known for its rugged outdoor recreation—comes in fourth, with a net outflow of 502 residents in 2024, marking the eighth straight year of population losses. Starr County, TX, about 70 miles from the city of McAllen on the Mexico border, is third (-603).

Americans Are Leaving These Fire-Prone Counties Fast
The 10 high-fire-risk counties with the largest net outflows in 2025

Rank	U.S. county	Net domestic outflow	Share of homes facing high fire risk	Median home-sale price (June 2026)
1	Tuolumne County, CA	-775	96.9%	$395,883
2	Sutter County, CA	-754	86.8%	$438,214
3	Starr County, TX	-603	91%	$123,153
4	Lassen County, CA	-502	96.8%	$325,083
5	Summit County, UT	-445	95%	$1,738,096
6	Taylor County, FL	-442	94.6%	$249,297
7	Lea County, NM	-386	93%	$321,772
8	Elmore County, ID	-334	94.4%	$390,897
9	Chaves County, NM	-325	86.6%	$211,653

10	Blaine County, ID	-314	92.1%	$1,241,497

This is based on a Redfin analysis of domestic migration data from the U.S. Census Bureau (excludes immigration) and climate-risk scores from First Street. Redfin defines a high-risk county as one that ranks in the top 10% when it comes to the share of homes facing high fire risk—in other words, counties with 84.3%-99.8% of homes facing high risk. Migration data for 2025 covers July 1, 2024-July 1, 2025. A “net outflow” measures how many more people moved out of than into an area, while a “net inflow” measures how many more people moved in than out.

Unlike many fire-prone parts of the U.S. that continue to attract new residents, these Northern California counties face a combination of rising insurance costs, limited housing and job growth, and geographic isolation, along with persistent wildfire risk. Those challenges are outweighing the area's traditional appeal: outdoor recreation, scenic landscapes and relatively affordable homes. The population losses also follow several years of increasingly destructive wildfires, particularly in Tuolumne County.

“Wildfire risk alone is rarely enough to deter people from living somewhere. But when the area is isolated and also lacks job opportunities, it’s tough to justify living there,” said Daryl Fairweather, Redfin’s chief economist. “By contrast, fire-prone places that also happen to have booming job markets and proximity to major city centers are still attracting new residents, because those advantages often outweigh concerns about wildfire risk.”

The other fire-prone counties with the biggest net outflow of residents are mostly rural, inland parts of the country. Summit County, UT, home to Park City, comes in fifth, followed by Taylor County, FL, near Tallahassee, and Lea County, NM, an oil producer that borders Texas. One more southeastern New Mexico county is on the list, along with two small-town Idaho counties.

It’s also worth noting that Summit County, UT (Park City) and Blaine County, ID (Sun Valley) are expensive ski towns; average people are increasingly priced out of them.

Most Fire-Prone U.S. Counties Are Gaining Residents, Led By Arizona and Utah

Pinal County, AZ, located between Phoenix and Tucson in central Arizona, gained 21,315 more residents than it lost in 2025—the biggest net inflow of any fire-prone county in the U.S., by far.

Washington County, UT, home to St. George and Zion National Park, had the second-biggest net inflow, gaining 4,714 more residents than it lost last year. Parker County, TX, located near Fort Worth, comes in third, with a net inflow of 4,614.

One other Arizona county and one other Utah county—Tooele, located near Salt Lake City—are among the top 10 fire-prone places gaining the most residents. Texas is home to four of them, and Creek County, OK rounds out the 10.

Of the 308 fire-prone counties in the analysis, 204 are gaining more residents than they're losing. And the fire-prone counties that are gaining residents are seeing much bigger net inflows than the net outflows mentioned above.

Unlike the rural parts of Northern California that are losing residents, the fire-prone parts of America that are gaining population tend to offer economic and lifestyle advantages that outweigh wildfire risk for many people. They also tend to be located on the fringes of fast-growing metropolitan areas, where housing is typically more affordable than in nearby big cities. In nine of the 10 of the fire-prone counties gaining the most residents, the typical home costs less than $600,000—and in five of the 10, the typical home costs less than $400,000.

For instance, many people move to Pinal County because homes cost less than they do in nearby Phoenix, but it's close enough to commute to jobs in the bigger city. Washington County draws retirees, remote workers and outdoor enthusiasts thanks to its warm climate, relatively low taxes and access to recreation—plus, it has job opportunities in healthcare, construction and tourism.

To read the full report, including a table with county inflow data and a methodology, please visit: redfin.com/news/fire-prone-counties-migration

About Redfin

Redfin is a technology-driven real estate company with the country's most-visited real estate brokerage website. As part of Rocket Companies (NYSE: RKT), Redfin is creating an integrated homeownership platform from search to close to make the dream of homeownership more affordable and accessible for everyone. Redfin's clients can see homes first with on-demand tours, easily apply for a home loan with Rocket Mortgage, and save thousands in fees while working with a top local agent.

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