

Old Springs

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THE LIED RESEARCH REPORT

DATA BRIEFING: UP IN SMOKE – CALCULATING WILDFIRE EXPOSURE IN NEVADA

Lied Center
for Real Estate

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Executive Summary

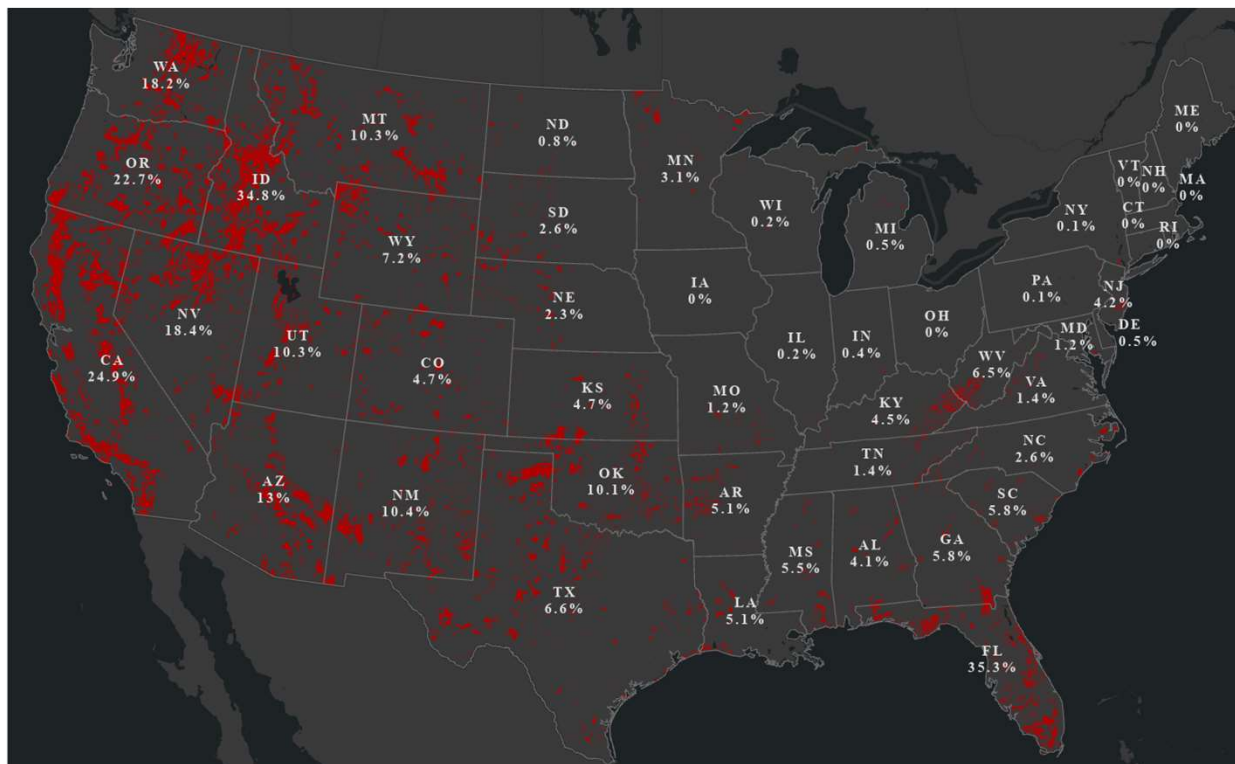
In the aftermath of the devastating Southern California wildfires in January 2025, which burned over 50,000 acres and caused an estimated \$50 billion in economic damages not counting the loss of life, wildfire risk awareness was heightened across the country. While not all areas are equally likely to experience a wildfire, they are more common across most of the Western United States than one may expect. In this brief, we explore the spatial extent of wildfire across the entire country with a focus on Nevada.

We obtain spatial data on wildfires from across the U.S., from 1984 through 2004. We analyze this data in ArcGIS Pro and

calculate the total amount of acres within the state that have burned in this period. We then convert this into a percentage of all land within the state that has been burned and display this in Figure 1.

While California has experienced 8 of the 10 most economically destructive wildfires in U.S. history, according to the Insurance Information Institute, it has had less of its land touched by wildfires than Florida and Idaho. In both states, over 34% of the state's land has been impacted by a wildfire in the past 40 years. ***In Nevada, 18.4% of the state's land area has burned – the fifth most in the country – since 1984.***

Figure 1: Percent of each state's land burned by wildfire from 1984-2024



Source: Map produced by the Lied Center for Real Estate using MTBS and U.S. data. Wildfire burn scars shown in red.

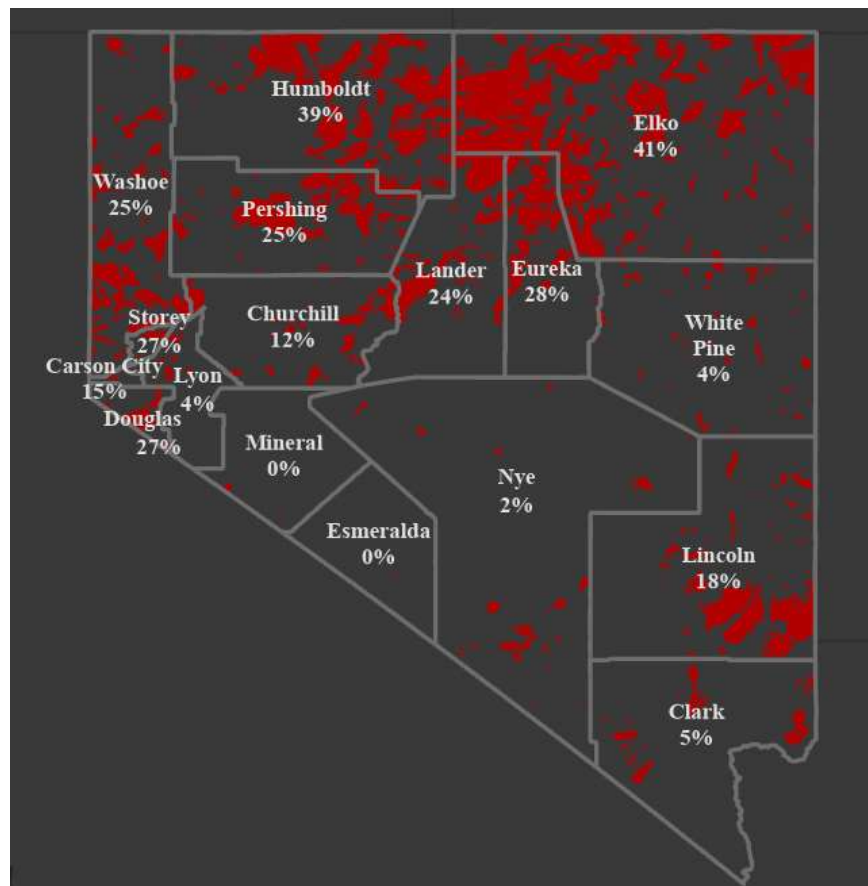
Impacts across Nevada

Using the same data and calculations, we can explore the extent of wildfires within Nevada at the county-level, which we show in Figure 2. Northern Nevada has experienced a significantly larger number and total acres burned by wildfires than Southern Nevada, which is expected due to the differences in climate, terrain, and the presence of forested land in the north. Elko County has had the largest percentage of the county land that has been burned at 41%, followed by Humboldt (39%) and Eureka (28%). In Southern Nevada, wildfires are infrequent, but Lincoln County (18%) has

experienced a significant percentage of wildfire exposure within its borders. In the urban counties of Nevada, both Washoe (25%) and Carson City (15%) have experienced noticeable wildfire burns within each of them, while Clark County has only had 5% of its total land burned by wildfires since 1984.

While we do not look at the housing market impacts of wildfires in this brief, research has shown that wildfire risk creates inefficiencies in the demand and supply-side of the market, particularly as construction encroaches wildfire-prone areas.

Figure 2: Percent of Nevada county's land burned by wildfire from 1984-2024



Source: Map produced by the Lied Center using MTBS and U.S. data. Wildfire burn scars shown in red.

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This report utilizes MTBS wildfire data for the United States, which is publicly available here: <https://tinyurl.com/ymhtzzp3>. MTBS (Monitoring Trends in Burn Severity) is a joint program administered by the United States Geological Survey and the United States Forest Service to map wildfires across the country. Within the data, wildfires may have occurred over previously burned areas following fuel regrowth, meaning the same area may have burned multiple times over the reference period. Additional mapping data obtained from TIGER via the United States Census Bureau. All analysis performed in ArcGIS Pro by Lied Center research staff.

About the Lied Center for Real Estate

The Lied Center for Real Estate was established in 1989 by the Lee Business School at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas to foster excellence in real estate education and research. Through partnerships with business and community leaders, the Lied Center strives to improve real estate business and effective public-policy practices in Southern Nevada. The center produces relevant and timely real estate market reports, supports educational programs in commercial real estate for students and professionals, and provides community outreach and continuing education.