

NEGATIVE POPULATION GROWTH

Contact: Craig Lewis
2861 Duke Street, Suite 36
Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone: 703.370.9510 / Fax: 703.370.9514
media@npg.org / www.NPG.org



Press Release

For immediate release

New NPG Forum Paper Examines Population Pressures on Mountain Towns

Population Growth Threatens the Future of America's Mountain Communities

Alexandria, VA, (October 21, 2026): Negative Population Growth, Inc. (NPG) has published a new Forum paper by writer and researcher Mark Cromer titled [*The Long Goodnight of Rocky Mountain High*](#). The paper examines how population growth and expanding development are transforming America's mountain communities, challenging their ability to preserve the natural landscapes, small-town character, and quality of life that have long attracted residents and visitors alike.

From Gatlinburg, Tennessee, and Leavenworth, Washington, to Stowe, Vermont, and Flagstaff, Arizona, Cromer explores the growing pressures facing communities once somewhat protected from rapid development by their mountainous geography. Today, rising housing costs, tourism-related development, and increasing demand for housing and supporting infrastructure are reshaping these destinations.

“Granular data aside, there are ample indications that the rising tide of pressures associated with population growth is also impacting mountain towns and communities across the country,” Cromer writes. He notes that mountain geography has historically limited the pace of development compared with rapidly expanding metropolitan areas, but those geographic constraints no longer offer the same degree of protection.

Housing availability is among the most pressing challenges. “Mountain towns across the United States are facing significant pressures to accelerate the building of high-density, multifamily housing, and to significantly increase the footprint of that housing and its supporting infrastructure as quickly as possible,” Cromer observes. The paper highlights the scale of these challenges through examples such as Stowe, Vermont, where a housing needs assessment indicates that approximately 1,700 additional residential units could be necessary to meet projected needs and state housing targets if the town does not restrict second homes and short-term rentals. Similar development pressures are evident in Gatlinburg and Leavenworth, where tourism-driven housing demand has contributed to affordability challenges for local workers.

Beyond housing, Cromer considers the broader consequences of population growth, including traffic congestion, mounting demands on infrastructure and natural resources, habitat loss, and the gradual erosion of mountain communities' distinctive character.

Cromer's findings underscore the importance of incorporating population growth into decisions about natural resources, infrastructure, housing affordability, and the long-term sustainability of communities across the United States.

Since 1972, NPG has worked to educate both the public and policy leaders about the impacts of overpopulation. With a steadfast commitment to reducing population growth to achieve a sustainable balance with our environmental resources, NPG continues to be a leading voice of reason in a world often driven by the pursuit of perpetual growth. NPG advocates for the adoption of its [Proposed National Population Policy](#), with the goal of eventually stabilizing U.S. population at a sustainable level – far lower than today's. We do not simply identify the problems – we propose solutions. For more information, visit our website at [NPG.org](https://www.npg.org), follow us on Facebook [@NegativePopulationGrowth](#), or follow us on X [@npg_org](#).