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Mountain market reset: Sellers adapt as buyers regain power in May

Curr RE

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Remember when buyers had to waive inspections, skip appraisals, and wave goodbye to their sanity to get a house?

Those days are fading. From Grand County to Telluride, from Steamboat Springs to the Gunnison Valley, the May report from the Colorado Association of Realtors tells a consistent story: inventory is building, buyers are back in the driver's seat, and sellers who price smart are still winning.

More choices, more breathing room

Buyers in mountain markets are seeing options they haven't had in years. Grand County is a perfect example.

Winter Park, Granby, and Grand Lake all saw inventory climb through spring, giving shoppers real choices for the first time in a long time.

"May 2026 was the month Grand County's market found its footing," said Grand County realtor Monica Graves. "More inventory, more buyer choice, steady demand, and a return to a balanced mountain real estate market."

That sentiment echoes across the Rockies.

In Summit, Park, and Lake counties, 891 active residential listings hit the market in May, ranging from a $119,000 Park County starter to a $25 million Breckenridge estate. About 42% of those listings topped $1 million.

Demand for mountain living isn't going anywhere; it's just getting more selective.

Sellers, it's time to get real

Don't mistake "balanced" for "easy." Sellers who overprice are learning that lesson fast.

In the Steamboat Springs area, homes are averaging 90 days on market year-to-date. In Grand Lake, buyers are waiting out sellers at 100 days. In Pagosa Springs, the luxury segment has a 9.6-month supply, with only 19 of 85 homes priced above $1 million selling through May.

"Sellers in this price point will need patience, more time to sell, competitive pricing, a show-ready home, and creative marketing beyond normal to stand out," said Pagosa Springs realtor Wen Saunders.

The Evergreen and Foothills market echoes that reality. Inventory hit a 10-year high this spring, yet strong sellers are still moving homes.

The key? Pricing strategy, property condition, and realistic expectations.

The bright spots are real

Not every story functions as a warning.

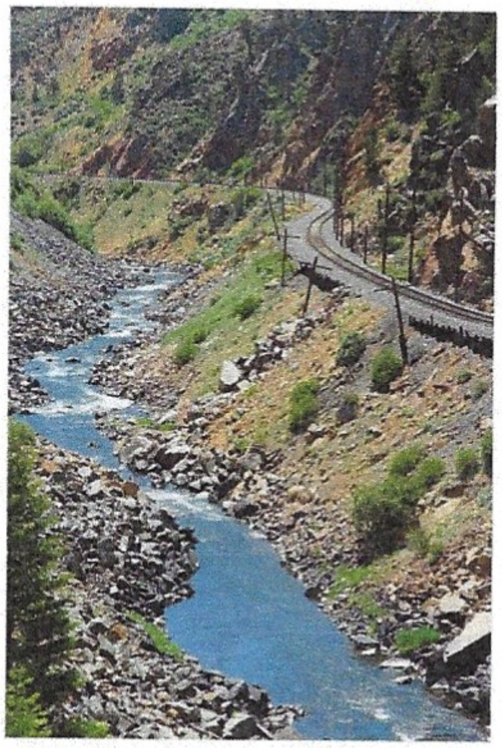
Durango and La Plata County posted a 40% year-over-year jump in single-family sales in May; rural Durango is up 42% year-to-date, and in-town condo and townhome listings surged 93% over last May. That's momentum.

Crested Butte is seeing luxury pull its weight too, with the average single-family sale price climbing to $2.97 million from $2.42 million a year ago.

Summit County single-family sales jumped 27% year-over-year in May, with average prices up 6% to $2.68 million.

What it all means

Whether you're buying a ski condo or selling a mountain



retreat, this market rewards the prepared.

Buyers, have leverage.

Sellers, have demand.

Colorado's mountains aren't on sale. But for the first time in years, they're negotiable.

Sara B. Hansen has been an editor and writer for more than 20 years. Her professional background includes editing positions at The Denver Post, The Des Moines Register, The Fort Collins Coloradoan, and At Home with Century 21. She's also the founder and editor of DogsBestLife.com and the author of "The Complete Guide to Cocker Spaniels."