

YOUR INSIDER'S RELOCATION GUIDE · PINETOP · LAKESIDE · SHOW LOW

Moving to the *White Mountains*

Everything you need to know about buying a home and building a life in Arizona's high country — from someone who lives it every day.

Shawn Wirtz

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WELCOME

A cooler, calmer way to live

If you're reading this, you've probably felt it — that pull toward tall pines, four real seasons, and a slower pace only a couple hours from the Valley. You're not alone, and you're in exactly the right place.

I'm Shawn Wirtz, a full-time REALTOR® with Advantage Realty Professionals and a longtime local here in Pinetop-Lakeside. I've spent years helping families trade Phoenix traffic and 115° summers for cabin porches, lake mornings, and a community where neighbors still wave. This guide is the conversation I have with almost every buyer who calls me about relocating — put on paper so you can start with your eyes wide open.

Inside, you'll find honest overviews of our mountain towns, what each season actually feels like, the recreation that makes people never want to leave, the practical stuff (schools, drive times, home types), and a simple roadmap for making the move. It's built to answer your questions — and to make the next one easy: **just call me.**

~6,900'

ELEVATION

4

REAL SEASONS

~3 hrs

FROM PHOENIX

2015

SERVING BUYERS
SINCE

"The White Mountains aren't a vacation you take — they're a life you get to keep. My job is to help you land in the right spot for the way you actually want to live."

A quick note: this guide covers the big picture. Prices, inventory, and interest rates move constantly, so for today's numbers and homes that fit you, reach out and I'll send a current, personalized snapshot.

WHY PEOPLE MOVE HERE

The high-country trade-up

At roughly 6,900 feet, Arizona's White Mountains offer something the desert can't: cool summers, snow-dusted winters, and a canopy of Ponderosa pine that stretches to the horizon.

For many of my buyers, the move starts as an escape from Valley heat and ends as a permanent change of life. Some come for a summer cabin and end up here full-time. Others are retirees chasing four seasons, remote workers who can live anywhere, or young families who want their kids to grow up outdoors. What they share is a want for **space, quiet, and nature at the doorstep** — without giving up a real community with hospitals, shopping, and an easy drive back to the city.

THE CLIMATE

Escape the heat

While Phoenix bakes, summer highs up here sit comfortably in the 70s–80s with cool nights. Fall turns golden, winter brings real snow, and spring is crisp and green.

THE ACCESS

Close, not cut off

Roughly a 3-hour drive from the Phoenix metro — near enough for weekend cabin life, far enough to feel like a different world.

THE LIFESTYLE

Outside your door

Lakes, trails, forests, and fishing are minutes away, not a road trip. Recreation isn't an event here — it's the daily backdrop.

THE COMMUNITY

Small-town roots

Local festivals, friendly neighbors, and a genuine sense of belonging — with the essentials (medical, grocery, dining) all close by.

"Most people think they're buying a house up here. What they're really buying is their weekends, their mornings, and the version of their family that spends more time outside."

KNOW THE AREA

The towns of the White Mountains

Each community here has its own personality. Finding your fit is half the fun — here's the honest shorthand I give buyers.

THE HEART OF THE PINES

Pinetop-Lakeside

The classic mountain-town experience: tall pines, cabins, lakes, dining, and a walkable feel. A favorite for second homes, retirees, and anyone who wants that "in the trees" lifestyle.

LAKES & LIVING

Lakeside

Rainbow Lake, forested neighborhoods, and easy access to everyday amenities. Popular with full-time residents and families in the Blue Ridge school district.

THE HUB

Show Low

The area's commercial center — hospital, shopping, and services — with more open, higher-desert terrain. A practical home base with quick access to it all.

WIDE-OPEN VALUES

Snowflake & Taylor

A short drive north into gentler, sunnier high-desert country. Bigger lots, horse property, and strong value for buyers who want land and elbow room.

DEEP WOODS

Heber-Overgaard

Quiet, heavily forested cabin country to the west along the Mogollon Rim. Ideal for buyers craving privacy and true getaway seclusion.

NOT SURE YET?

Let's match you

Tell me how you want to live — cabin retreat, lake house, horse property, or full-time family home — and I'll point you to the right towns and neighborhoods first.

Four seasons, four reasons

One of the biggest surprises for buyers coming from the desert: up here, the calendar actually changes. Here's what a year of mountain living looks like.

SPR

Spring

Crisp, green, and quiet before the summer crowds. Trout season opens, trails dry out, and it's a beautiful — and often smart — time to buy before demand climbs.

SUM

Summer

The main event. Highs in the comfortable 70s–80s while the Valley scorches. Lake days, camping, golf, and porch evenings. This is when second-home demand peaks — and when the mountains earn their reputation.

FALL

Fall

Arguably the local favorite. Aspens and oaks turn gold, the air goes cool and clear, and the pace relaxes. Prime time for scenic drives, hunting, and settling in.

WIN

Winter

Real snow — enough for sledding, snow play, and skiing at nearby Sunrise Park Resort — without the brutal cold of higher latitudes. Cozy cabin season, and a quieter market with motivated sellers.

"Buyers always ask which season is best to move. The truth: each one opens a different kind of opportunity. Tell me your timeline and I'll tell you how to play it."

THE LIFESTYLE

Your backyard is 1,000 square miles

People don't move here for the house alone — they move for everything around it. The White Mountains are one of Arizona's premier recreation regions, and most of it is minutes from home.

ON THE WATER

Lakes & fishing

Rainbow Lake, Woodland Lake, Show Low Lake, and Fool Hollow Lake put trout fishing, kayaking, and boating right in your neighborhood.

ON THE TRAILS

Hiking & biking

Hundreds of miles of forest trails — including the well-loved White Mountains Trail System — for hiking, mountain biking, and walking the dog in the pines.

IN THE SNOW

Winter sports

Skiing and snowboarding at nearby Sunrise Park Resort, plus sledding, snowshoeing, and cross-country close to home.

FAIR WEATHER

Golf & more

Mountain golf courses, horseback riding, ATV and off-road trails, camping, hunting, and wildlife everywhere you look.

Trout fishing

Boating & kayaking

Mountain biking

Skiing & snow play

Golf

Horseback riding

ATV / off-road

Camping

Hunting

Scenic drives

"Whatever pulls you outside — a fly rod, a mountain bike, a horse, or just a quiet porch — there's a home up here positioned to make it a daily habit. Finding that fit is the fun part of my job."

THE PRACTICAL STUFF

Schools, essentials & the kinds of homes here

Mountain living still comes with everyday life, and the area is well-equipped for it. Families are served by respected local districts including the **Blue Ridge Unified** and **Show Low Unified** school districts, plus charter and private options. Show Low anchors the region with a regional hospital, shopping, restaurants, and services, so you're never far from what you need.

The homes you'll find up here are as varied as the buyers who want them. When we talk, I'll help you weigh the trade-offs of each:

Mountain cabins	The signature White Mountains home — tucked in the pines, from cozy weekenders to year-round retreats.
Lakeside homes	Water views and walk-to-the-lake living around Rainbow, Woodland, and Show Low lakes.
Land & acreage	Build your own, or simply buy the space and privacy that's hard to find anywhere else.
Horse & ranch property	Room to roam — especially out toward Snowflake, Taylor, and the open high desert.
Luxury retreats	Elevated finishes, views, and privacy for buyers who want the mountains without compromise.
First homes	Approachable neighborhoods and starter properties for putting down full-time roots.

"There's no single 'White Mountains home.' The magic is matching the right property type, town, and elevation to how you actually plan to spend your time here."

The relocation roadmap

Buying from out of the area — or from the Valley — is easier than most people expect when you have a local guide. Here's the path I walk buyers through.

- ✓ **Get clear on the "why."** Full-time move, summer escape, investment, or future retirement? It shapes everything from town to home type.
- ✓ **Set your range & get pre-approved.** Know your comfortable budget and line up financing (I'm happy to connect you with local lenders who know mountain properties).
- ✓ **Pick your must-haves.** Acreage, lake access, garage/shop space, horse setup, low-maintenance for a second home — we prioritize together.
- ✓ **Tour smart.** I'll pre-screen listings and often preview on your behalf, so your trips up are efficient and you only see homes worth your time.
- ✓ **Understand mountain-specific details.** Wells & septic, snow access, wildfire & insurance, HOAs, and seasonal roads — I'll flag what desert buyers don't think to ask.
- ✓ **Make a confident offer.** I'll price it against real local comps and negotiate to protect you.
- ✓ **Close & settle in.** Inspections, utilities, and local connections — I hand you the keys and the local playbook.

"You don't need to figure the mountains out alone. That's literally what I'm here for — and the first call costs you nothing but a few good questions answered."

LET'S MAKE IT HAPPEN

Better Call *Shawn*

I'm a full-time White Mountains REALTOR® with Advantage Realty Professionals, helping buyers and sellers across the high country since 2015 — reflected in dozens of 5-star reviews. Whether you're a year out or ready this season, start the conversation now and I'll help you move at exactly your pace.

THREE EASY NEXT STEPS

- 01 Get new listings first.** Sign up for custom White Mountains listing alerts → ShawnWirtz.com/listing-alerts
- 02 Selling too?** Get a free, no-obligation home value → ShawnWirtz.com/home-value
- 03 Just want to talk it through?** Call or text me directly — real answers, no pressure.

Your mountains are waiting. Let's find your place in them.

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Information in this guide is provided for general relocation planning and is believed reliable but not guaranteed; details, market conditions, schools, and amenities change over time. This is not a solicitation to buyers or sellers already under a representation agreement. Shawn Wirtz, REALTOR®, Advantage Realty Professionals.