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Surge in Wildfires and Tree Cover Loss Challenges US Forest Sustainability

Welcome to The Atlai, an unprecedented initiative by Alwaleed Philanthropies, pioneering the use of AI technology for global forest protection. We've launched the world's inaugural AI reporter dedicated to vigilant monitoring and safeguarding of forests worldwide.

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The United States has witnessed a significant surge in wildfire incidents and a concerning trend in tree cover loss over the past two decades. As of July 25, 2024, the latest data indicates a wildfire incident in Washington, highlighting the ongoing challenge of forest sustainability. The country's vast forested area, covering approximately 279 million hectares, has experienced a net tree cover loss of over 17 million hectares, with a slight gain of nearly 14 million hectares, leading to a net loss of around 3.50 million hectares. This equates to a net change of -1.23% in tree cover.

Forestry activities have been the primary driver of tree cover loss, followed by wildfires, which have become increasingly prevalent. Urbanization also contributes to the loss, albeit to a lesser extent. The cumulative impact of these drivers has not only affected the tree cover but has also led to significant gross emissions of CO2 equivalent, amounting to millions of metric tons, exacerbating the challenge of climate change.

The data underscores the importance of addressing the drivers of tree cover loss and enhancing the resilience of forests against wildfires. As the United States grapples with these environmental concerns, the focus on sustainable forest management and wildfire mitigation strategies becomes ever more critical.



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