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3 Sept 2024

Indonesia Grapples with Tree Cover Loss Amid New Fire Incident in West Kalimantan

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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BODY

Indonesia faces a persistent challenge with tree cover loss as evidenced by the latest incident on September 3, 2024, where a fire alert was reported in West Kalimantan. Over the past two decades, the country has experienced a significant reduction in tree cover, with a net loss of 4,118,617 hectares, which constitutes a 2.62% decrease from its original tree cover extent. This loss is primarily driven by shifting agriculture, forestry, and urbanization.

Shifting agriculture alone accounts for a substantial portion of the tree cover loss, with tens of thousands of hectares affected annually. The forestry sector also contributes significantly to the loss, with figures reaching over 70,000 hectares in some years. Urbanization, while having a smaller impact in comparison, still plays a role in the reduction of tree cover.

The impact of these losses is not only ecological but also has a profound effect on carbon emissions. The total gross emissions from tree cover loss have reached staggering amounts, with certain years witnessing emissions exceeding one billion metric tons.

Despite the challenges, there is a silver lining as the data also shows gains in tree cover in some years. However, the overall trend remains concerning, with the losses outpacing the gains. The recent fire incident in West Kalimantan serves as a reminder of the ongoing struggle against environmental degradation in Indonesia.