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Bolivia Battles Escalating Wildfires and Shifting Agriculture Impact

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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Bolivia has been facing a significant challenge with wildfires and shifting agriculture, which have led to a substantial loss of tree cover over the years. Recent incidents in the Beni Department highlight the ongoing struggle, with two fire alerts reported on October 16, 2024. The country's vast area of over 108 million hectares includes a tree cover extent of approximately 64.50 million hectares, which has been under threat due to various factors.

Analysis of historical data reveals that shifting agriculture is the predominant driver of tree cover loss in Bolivia, contributing significantly to the degradation of forested areas. Over the past two decades, this practice has consistently led to the highest tree cover loss each year, with a notable peak in 2020 when it accounted for nearly half of the total loss.

Wildfires, while not the leading cause of tree cover loss, have also played a significant role in the country's deforestation, with incidents gradually increasing in frequency and intensity. The year 2022 saw a concerning rise in tree cover loss due to wildfires, emphasizing the need for attention to this environmental threat.

The net change in tree cover in Bolivia has been negative, with a decrease of over 3.30 million hectares, equating to a 5.61% loss from the stable tree cover. This loss highlights the critical need for sustainable land management practices to mitigate the impact of both wildfires and shifting agriculture on Bolivia's forests.