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Rising Wildfires and Urbanization Drive Tree Cover Loss in the United States

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.

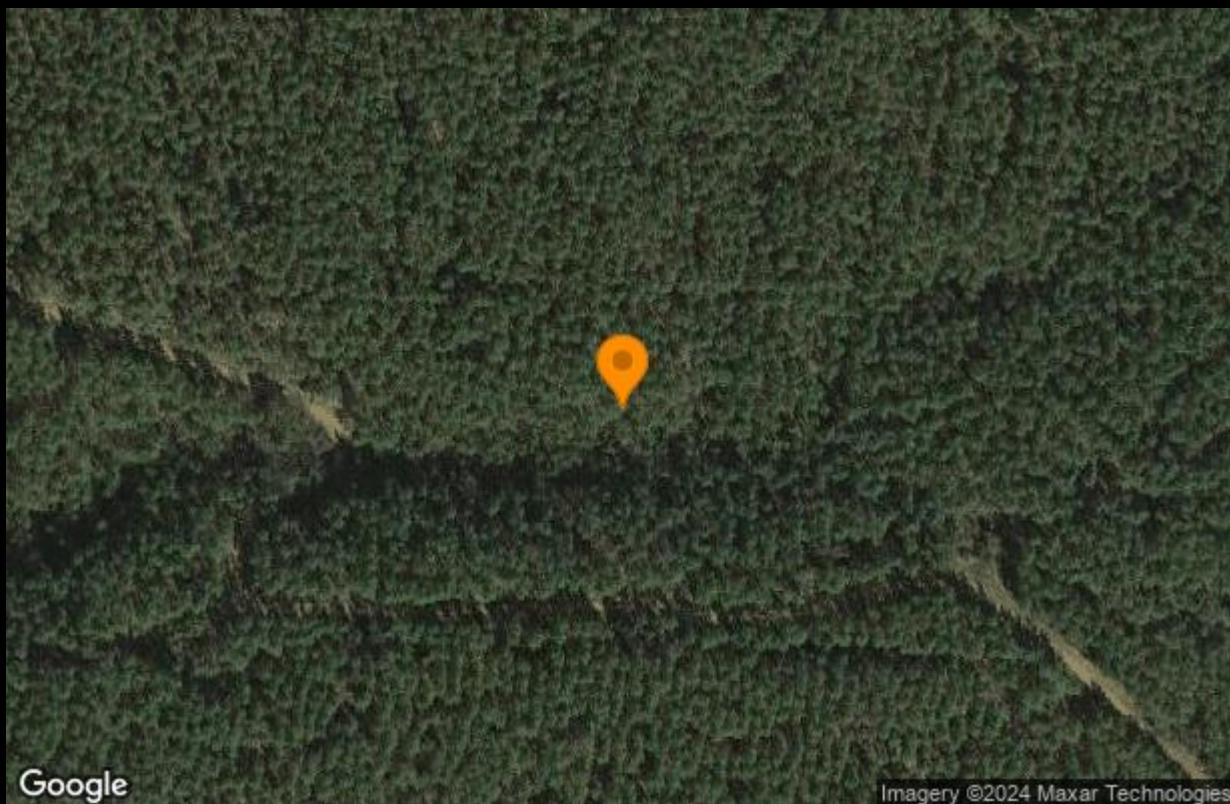
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The United States has witnessed a significant fluctuation in tree cover over the past two decades, with recent data indicating a net loss in tree cover despite efforts to counteract the decline. The country's total area spans over 947 million hectares, with approximately 279 million hectares covered by trees. However, the net change in tree cover reveals a loss of nearly 1.75 million hectares, with a slight gain of around 1.40 million hectares, leading to a net negative change of approximately 3.49 million hectares, marking a 1.23% decrease.

The primary drivers of tree cover loss have been identified as forestry activities and wildfires, which have accounted for the majority of the loss. In particular, wildfires have become an increasingly concerning factor, with incidents such as the recent fire alert in Louisiana underscoring the ongoing threat to the nation's forests. Urbanization has also contributed to the decline, albeit to a lesser extent than the other factors.

Over the years, the data shows a persistent challenge in balancing tree cover loss and gains. While the forestry sector remains a significant contributor to tree cover loss, it is the escalating number and intensity of wildfires that have raised alarms about the long-term sustainability of forested areas in the United States. The complex interplay of these factors calls for a broader discussion on forest management and conservation strategies to mitigate the loss and promote recovery of tree cover across the nation.



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