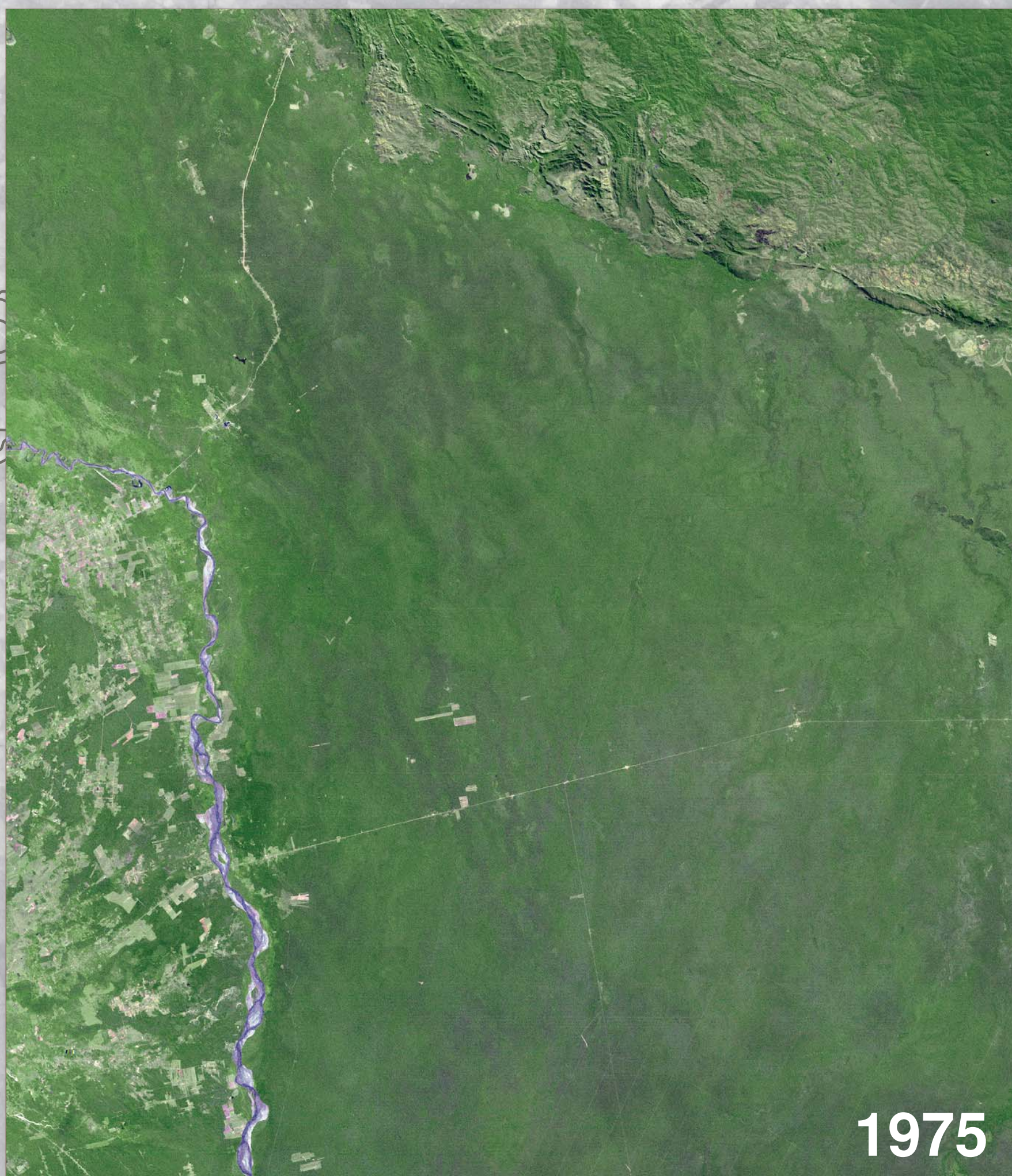


Landcover Change in Bolivia



Forest to Agriculture

Santa Cruz is situated in the rich, fertile Bolivian lowlands, highly suitable for agriculture. The area was formerly isolated due to natural boundaries like forest, mountains, rivers. But the isolation was overcome by the construction of a highway and railway link in mid 50's. The population of Santa Cruz increased from 26,000 to 1.1 million in the last 35 years. Land reform, infrastructure improvements and colonization are the three main factors that influenced the influx into Santa Cruz in the 1950's. The new highway from Cochabamba to Santa Cruz and a rail system that connected Santa Cruz with Sao Paulo, Brazil, allowed the transportation of goods encouraging commercial farming in the region. The government also facilitated new settlers coming into the region. The series of satellite images show Landuse change due to human encroachment in forested areas of Santa Cruz from dense forest in 1975 to mostly agriculture just 25 years later



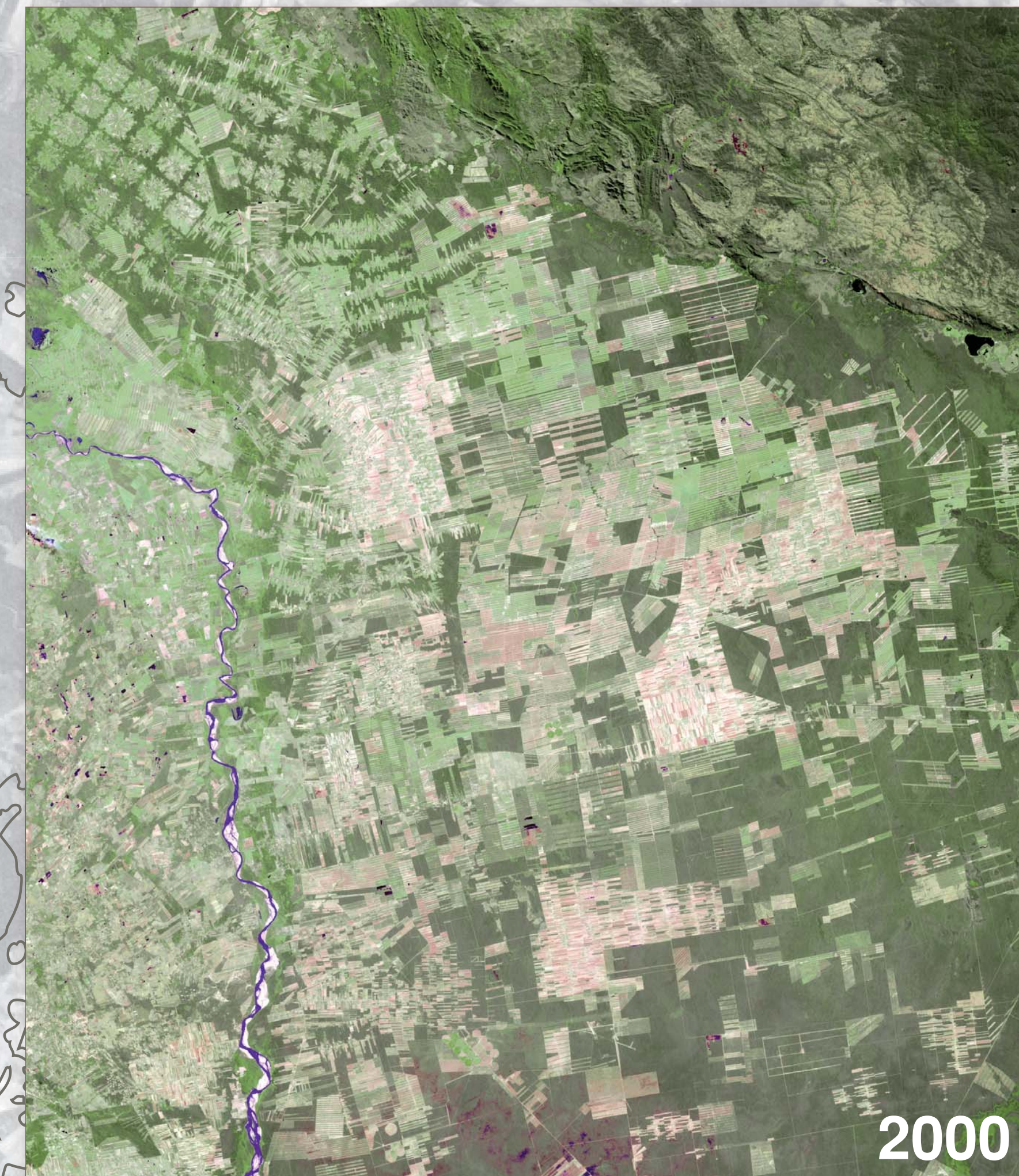
1975

In 1975, the forest region East of Santa Cruz remains intact.



1992

Resettlement of the rural people from the Antiplano (the Andean high plains) is evident by the starburst patterns in the upper left of the 1992 image,



2000

Large corporate agriculture can be seen as a second development pattern in the central portion of the imagery.



Aerial photograph of the areas settled by the rural people from the Antiplano (the Andean plains)



Aerial photograph of the corporate farming. Narrow strips of vegetation are left to protect vulnerable soils against wind erosion