



SF-Based Fitness App Commits To Planting 100,000 Trees

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The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reported that Earth loses roughly 18 million acres of forest per year. To put that number into perspective, that area is almost 1/5 the size of California. And deforestation is largely to blame. Planting trees at a large-scale, however, can help significantly.

Deforestation is one of the biggest contributors to climate change, yet human-driven practices such as agricultural expansion and timber extraction, make the devastating practice deadlier and more frequent over time.

Fortunately, some initiatives like Mr. Beast's [#TeamTrees](#) have already come out with solutions to mitigate the problem. Now, San Francisco-based fitness app [atlasGO](#) is taking a stab at deforestation with a new initiative dubbed [#Go4Trees](#).



The atlasGO team has partnered with non-profit organization One Tree Planted to plant trees | Credit: atlasGO

atlasGO Founder and CEO Thomas Querton told me his company has partnered with non-profit organization One Tree Planted to plant over 100,000 trees in California.

Recently, I was able to talk with Querton and learn more about his company's initiative — how it works and how you and I can get involved.

How atlasGO and #Go4Trees Work

The atlasGO app is an interactive fitness tracking tool that empowers runners to join forces with non-profit organizations and other companies and solve social and environmental issues.

Specifically, the company's new #Go4Trees campaign will plant one tree for every four miles run by a user. And it turns out, this project is close to home for atlasGO.

Why Planting Trees in California Makes Sense

The company is based in California, a state that has faced significant challenges in the past year with devastating wildfires. And another year back, in 2018, a series of deadly wildfires ravaged across the state, with Camp Fire becoming the most vicious wildfire in California's history.

This catastrophe claimed almost 100 lives and burned 153,335 acres of land. The wildfires also tore down nearly 20,000 structures, making them the costliest environmental disaster of 2019. Of California's 10 most destructive wildfires, 6 occurred in the past 3 years.

Additionally, until 2019, California has faced a seven-year drought. Last year, The New York Times reported over 300 water systems in the state weren't up to public safety standards.

About half of the state's failing water systems were in the state's largest agricultural region, San Joaquin Valley.

So, these are some pretty major environmental issues. But, how will planting trees help alleviate these crises? Well, Querton says both issues can be tackled by improving forest resilience.

The Implications of Planting Trees — and Why Now?

By clearing out forests at such a fast and massive scale, it severely endangers biodiversity and human livelihood. Not to mention, not only do trees capture and store carbon dioxide emissions, but they also trap harmful greenhouse gases.

Although Querton believes just planting trees alone won't be the end-all for climate change and environmental degradation, he says it's a positive start. "It helps people to take a first step, to fill up their personal value-action gap," he told me.

"Our intention is that users can learn more about the issue, as an example of how some easy behavioral adaptations can reduce your environmental footprint."

Source: <https://therising.co/2020/03/31/planting-100k-trees-atlasgo/>