Landsat Portrait of America

A mosaic of Landsat 8 satellite images showing the contiguous United States of America

The Legacy of Landsat

The Landsat Program is a critical pillar of our national remote sensing capability and represents the world’s longest continuous series of images of the Earth’s surface.

As a joint initiative between NASA and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the first Landsat satellite (Landsat-1) was developed and launched in 1972. Since then, Landsat data have contributed to understanding the Earth’s environment, natural resources, and spaces of conflict by the civilian scientific community, government, commercial, industrial, civilian, military, and educational applications throughout the United States and worldwide.

In 1975, NASA Administrator James Fletcher predicted that if one space-age development would grow the world, it would be Landsat and the communication satellites. Since then, Landsat data have contributed to understanding the Earth’s environment, natural resources, and spaces of conflict by the civilian scientific community, government, commercial, industrial, civilian, military, and educational applications throughout the United States and worldwide.

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This Landsat 8 mosaic of the U.S. was created by Dovetail Labs (www.dovetailabs.com). In 2017 and 2018, Landsat.