

Landslides

Too much water on a hillside
can lead to devastating results.

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A helicopter view of a landslide that occurred near Oso, Washington.



Landslides are one of the most common and dangerous natural disasters on the planet.

This rapid sliding of rocks, soil, mud, and other debris down a slope can be caused by earthquakes or the sudden introduction of excessive water. Heavy rain on steep hillsides without a stable root system from mature trees and other plants is a common factor leading to landslides. This could have been the cause of the recent landslide near Oso, Washington, pictured here. Scientists also believe logging in the area, and the removal of supporting roots, might have contributed to the landslide's severity. NASA uses satellites to look for sudden and massive rainfall around the world to help communities predict and prepare for landslides.