

Biogeosciences Discuss., referee comment RC2
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Comment on bg-2021-15

Anonymous Referee #2

Referee comment on "Effects of clear-fell harvesting on soil CO₂, CH₄, and N₂O fluxes in an upland Sitka spruce stand in England" by Sirwan Yamulki et al., Biogeosciences Discuss., <https://doi.org/10.5194/bg-2021-15-RC2>, 2021

This is a very clear and well written paper on the impact of clearfelling of adjacent Sitka Spruce stand on GHG fluxes. As the authors say, there are not many studies on this topic, and IPCC inventory currently does not include the impact GHG emissions from felling and thinning operations. So, this paper will add considerably to the literature.

The authors could only investigate GHG fluxes from areas where brash mats were cleared. To measure brash as well would have required two eddy covariance towers (one site A and the other in site B), and I suppose this was not an option.

Their CO₂ methodology is not the standard gas flow through system (IRGA), but instead the authors opted to use the static chamber, taking 4 samples over the chamber closure period, and analyses these gas samples also for CO₂. They provided a convincing comparison of both systems, and demonstrated the differences in soil respiration rate measurements were very small. I certainly agree, that the large heterogeneity of the forest floor would have not enabled a direct comparison of CO₂, N₂O and CH₄ fluxes, and that using the IRGA outside the static chamber would have been probably more uncertain than providing data from the SAME chamber for all 3 GHG.

Line 136-137: Could you add how many samples had to be discarded

Line 141: delete 'also'

Figures and tables, were appropriate: It would clearer if you mention that there are 8

chambers per site

Table 4: there are two overlapping values, last column, 1st row

Line 182: At what temperature did you dry the soils?

Line 183: 'Soil tree live and dead fine root biomass' The 'Soil tree' part of the sentence is very confusing. Do you mean to say: 'Live and dead fine root biomass'?

Line 235: Table 2: 'area A (mature spruce stand) and area B (clearfell area after year 1)' It would be clearer if you write: 'area A (mature spruce stand, remaining) and area B (a mature spruce stand clearfelled after year 1)'

Line 256: '(1.6 t ha⁻¹ cf. 4.9 t ha⁻¹)' what does cf stand for?

Line 262: a fullstop is missing

Line 291 Table 4: There are two overlapping values in Row 1, Column 7

Line 372/373: Q10 comparison with Siberian Larch and UK Oak forests. Would it not be more meaningful to compare your data with CO₂ Q10 values from temperate climate Sitka spruce plantations?

Line 415: 'reflect a time lag in the microbial community change' fair enough, but should you not also mention that fungal decomposition also causes this time lag. Can you provide a reference?