

This discussion paper is/has been under review for the journal Biogeosciences (BG).
Please refer to the corresponding final paper in BG if available.

The impacts of climate, land use, and demography on fires during the 21st century simulated by CLM-CN

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Received: 15 August 2011 – Accepted: 22 September 2011 – Published: 28 September 2011

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Published by Copernicus Publications on behalf of the European Geosciences Union.

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Abstract

Landscape fires during the 21st century are expected to change in response to multiple agents of global change. Important controlling factors include climate controls on the length and intensity of the fire season, fuel availability, and fire management, which are already anthropogenically perturbed today and are predicted to change further in the future. An improved understanding of future fires will contribute to an improved ability to project future anthropogenic climate change, as changes in fire behavior will in turn impact climate.

In the present study we used a coupled-carbon-fire model to investigate how changes in climate, demography, and land use may alter fire emissions. We used climate projections following the SRES A1B scenario from two different climate models (ECHAM5/MPI-OM and CCSM) and changes in population. Land use and harvest rates were prescribed according to the RCP 45 scenario. In response to the combined effect of all these drivers, our model estimated, depending on our choice of climate projection, an increase in future (2075–2099) fire carbon emissions by 17 and 62 % compared to present day (1985–2009). The largest increase in fire emissions was predicted for Southern Hemisphere South America for both climate projection. For Northern Hemisphere Africa, a region that contributed significantly to the global total fire carbon emissions, the response varied between a decrease and an increase depending on the climate projection.

We disentangled the contribution of the single forcing factors to the overall response by conducting an additional set of simulations in which each factor was individually held constant at pre-industrial levels. The two different projections of future climate change evaluated in this study led to increases in global fire carbon emissions by 22 % (CCSM) and 66 % (ECHAM5/MPI-OM). The RCP 45 projection of harvest and land use led to a decrease in fire carbon emissions by –5 %. Changes in human ignition led to an increase in 20 %. When we also included changes in fire management efforts to suppress fires in densely populated areas, global fire carbon emission decreased by –6 % in response to changes in population density.

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We concluded from this study that changes in fire emissions in the future are controlled by multiple interacting factors. Although changes in climate led to an increase in future fire emissions this could be globally counterbalanced by coupled changes in land use, harvest, and demography.

1 Introduction

Contemporary landscape fires emit about 1.6 to 2.8 PgCyr⁻¹ into the atmosphere (van der Werf et al., 2010). This equals around 20–30% of present day fossil fuel burning emissions (Boden et al., 2009). Changes in fires and subsequent changes in ecosystem carbon stocks can therefore have considerable impacts on atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations and future climate change. In addition, increases in fires represent a severe hazard to human health and ecosystem services, which in many areas will require the development and implementation of new adaptation strategies (Bowman et al., 2009).

From paleorecords we know that climate, and particularly rapid climate change, played an important role in determining broad-scale levels of fire activity (Marlon et al., 2009). Observations from more recent decades clearly show a link between changing climate and fire behavior (Soja et al., 2007). For example, in the western United States higher temperatures increased the duration and intensity of wildfires since the 1980s (Westerling et al., 2006). Human-induced climate change has had a detectable influence on the area burned by forest fire in Canada over recent decades (Gillett et al., 2004). Accelerated carbon losses for the last decades were reported for Alaskan forests and peatlands (Turetsky et al., 2011).

Fires depend on fuel type, fuel moisture, and fuel availability. In addition, fires require an ignition source which can be either of natural (lightning) or anthropogenic origin (Thonicke et al., 2001; Arora and Boer, 2005). Climate impacts fires directly by modulating fuel moisture and indirectly through the climate control of fuel availability (Flannigan et al., 2009). Fuel availability, for example, depends on the rate of plant

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growth and litter decomposition that are sensitive to climate change. Fuel availability is controlled by fire as well, which consumes biomass and lowers fuel loads. As such fires and fuel availability are coupled via a negative feedback loop, that will critically define how fires will change in the future.

5 Fires are directly anthropogenically controlled through human caused ignition and fire management efforts, set in place to suppress fires in places were properties are at risk (Bowman et al., 2009). Land use and wood harvest rates impact fires indirectly by controlling fuel loads and fuel connectivity (Marlon et al., 2009). Consequently, fires depend on social and economic drivers of land use and on demographic trends, which
10 also influences rate of regional and global climate change.

Here we investigated how fires may change during the 21st century. We used a global land carbon model that interactively simulated landscape fires, with fires responding to climate, land use and demographic driving variables. The model accounted for fires controlled by fuel moisture, fuel availability, and the abundance of
15 ignitions sources (Kloster et al., 2010). We examined how future changes in climate, land use, and demography were likely to influence trajectories of fire emissions during the 21st century. We also considered indirect controls, including for example climate-induced changes in fuel. In the following method section we will introduce the fire model, that was evaluated for the 20th century in an earlier work (Kloster et al., 2010)
20 and our simulation design. In the results section we discuss the simulated future fire emissions and the contribution of the single forcing factors (climate, land use, and demography) to the overall response. The conclusion section summarizes the results and discusses the limitations of our approach.

2 Model

25 All simulations in this study were performed with a modified version of the Community Land Model version 3.5 (CLM3.5; Oleson et al., 2008; Stoeckli et al., 2008) extended with a carbon-nitrogen biogeochemical model (Thornton et al., 2007, 2009; Randerson et al., 2009) hereafter referred to as CLM-CN. The modifications of the model physics

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beyond CLM3.5 incorporate most of the updates of the model that now make up CLM version 4 (Lawrence et al., 2011a) and were described in more detail previously by Kloster et al. (2010), which applied an identical model setup as used in this study.

Fires were represented in the model by a modified version of the fire algorithm developed by Arora and Boer (2005). This fire algorithm was implemented into CLM-CN to simulate landscape fires for the 20th century and was described and evaluated in detail in Kloster et al. (2010). We briefly describe the fire algorithm here.

Fire carbon emissions (FCE) to the atmosphere were parameterized following a modified Seiler and Crutzen (1980) approach (van der Werf et al., 2006):

$$FCE(x, t) = A(x, t) \sum C_i(x, t) \cdot cc_i(x, t) \cdot mort_i(x, t) \quad (1)$$

with A representing the area burned, C the carbon pool sizes for the different fuel and plant functional types (i) considered in CLM-CN, cc the combustion completeness, and $mort$ the mortality factor for any given location x and time t . cc and $mort$ varied for different fuel and plant functional types (i) within CLM-CN.

The burned area was parameterized in the fire algorithm as a function of a potential burned area modified with a fire occurrence probability (Arora and Boer, 2005). The potential burned area was defined by the fire spread rate, which was parameterized as a function of wind speed and fuel moisture. The fire occurrence probability was the product of three probability functions representing the availability of biomass, fuel moisture status, and the likelihood of the ignition. Ignition sources can have either a human or lightning origin. Human ignition was scaled for this study with population density. A lightning climatology was constructed using monthly mean maps from the Lightning Imaging Sensor/Optical Transient Detector product (LIS/OTD) modified by a latitudinally varying ratio of the cloud-to-ground flashes to total flashes (Pierce, 1969). In addition the model accounted for fire management (e.g. fire suppression) in areas that were densely populated by reducing burned areas in regions with high population densities. The burned area was assumed to affect the different PFTs in proportion to their abundance.

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The model represented deforestation fires by allowing for a variable fraction of deforestation carbon to be combusted, with the fraction depending on fuel conditions during the year of land clearing (Kloster et al., 2010). Within CLM-CN land use change and wood harvest were prescribed (Hurtt et al., 2006). Land use conversion transferred biomass into paper and wood products with the remainder left on site (Houghton et al., 1983). Here we explicitly attributed a fraction of the on-site fraction to burning. The fraction was allowed to vary as a function of fuel moisture conditions, with drier fuels more likely to be burned in the process of deforestation.

Our model simulations has a spatial resolution of $1.9^{\circ} \times 2.5^{\circ}$. More details on the forcing data are given in Sect. 3.

The model was able to capture much of the observed mean and variability in fire carbon emissions (Kloster et al., 2010). Global annual mean fire carbon emissions varied between 2.0 and 2.4 PgC yr⁻¹ for the time period 1997 to 2004, which lies within the uncertainty of satellite-based estimates. The best match with observations was found when the model accounted for both human ignition and fire suppression as a function of population density. The simulated trend in fire carbon emission over the 20th century was broadly consistent with observational constraints.

3 Simulation setup

In the present study we analyzed CLM-CN simulations covering the time period 1798–2100 (Table 1). For the years 1798–2004 these simulations are described in detail in Kloster et al. (2010). As described below, we extended these simulations through the year 2100.

For the 20th century we used NCEP/NCAR reanalysis climate forcing, including temperature, precipitation, wind, humidity, pressure, and solar radiation, from Qian et al. (2006). A 25 yr repeat cycle of the reanalysis from years 1948–1972 was used to drive the model for the time period of 1798–1948. From year 1949 onwards the model years corresponded to the reanalysis years. The simulations applied transient varying

nitrogen deposition (Lamarque et al., 2005), atmospheric CO₂ concentration (C4MIP reconstruction from Friedlingstein et al., 2006), population density (KleinGoldewijk, 2001), and harvest/land cover (Hurt et al., 2006) change for the years 1798–2004.

We extended these simulations into the future by applying climate anomalies based on future climate projections of the coupled climate models ECHAM5/MPI-OM (Roegner et al., 2006) and CCSM (Meehl et al., 2006), both forced with the SRES A1B scenario (Nakicenovic et al., 2000). Both climate model simulations cover the time period 1860 to 2100. The climate models differ in their future projections. For example, the global mean temperature increases are stronger in the ECHAM5/MPI-OM projection compared to CCSM (Fig. 1a).

We defined climate anomalies as the mean difference between monthly mean future projections and a base period (1948–1972) for the climate models and applied these to the NCEP/NCAR reanalysis climate forcing (1948–1972) used to force the CLM-CN model. As a result CLM-CN was in this study forced from 1973 onwards with NCEP/NCAR reanalysis climate forcing scaled by climate anomalies. A subset of our simulations used three different ensemble climate model simulations from each climate model. The different ensembles led to very similar results for both climate model projections and will not be further discussed.

Future changes in population density followed the SRES A1 projections for the SRES world regions (CIESIN, 2002), in which global population increases up to the year 2050 and slightly declines afterwards (Fig. 1b). Future atmospheric CO₂ concentration followed the SRES A1B projections, while nitrogen deposition remained at a present day level. Future harvest/land cover change rates were prescribed following the Representative Concentration pathways (RCPs) projections 30, 40, 60, and 85 (Moss et al., 2010). The land cover change and wood harvest trajectories were represented in CLM-CN through annual time series of vegetation parameters as described in Lawrence et al. (2011b). The RCPs are named according to their radiative forcing level in 2100, i.e. RCP 85 corresponds to a radiative forcing of 8.5 W m⁻² in 2100. The single RCP projections are seamlessly integrated with past land cover change estimates through

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the year 2005 derived by Hurtt et al. (2006). The RCP projections differ, for example, in the projected crop area (Fig. 1c). These variations in land cover have important consequences for landscape and deforestation fires.

In sensitivity experiments single forcing factors (climate, population density, and harvest/land cover change) were individually held constant at preindustrial (year 1850) values throughout the simulation period (Table 1). We then took the difference between the primary simulation and the single forcing runs to isolate the contribution of a single factor to changes in fires.

4 Results

We found that global fire emissions increased in response to combined changes in climate, land use change, and demography. Global annual mean fire carbon emissions from the simulation (AB-HI-FS, Table 1) for which we obtained the best match with contemporary observations (Kloster et al., 2010) are shown in Fig. 2. In these simulations both human ignition and fire suppression parameterization were derived from time series of population density (SRES A1B) and harvest and land use followed the RCP 45 projection. We forced the model with two different climate projections (ECHAM5/MPI-OM or CCSM, see also Table 1). Global annual mean future (2075–2099) fire emissions increased by 17 % for CCSM and by 62 % for ECHAM5/MPI-OM compared to present day (1985–2009). This corresponded to increases of 0.29 and 1.03 PgC yr⁻¹, respectively. The largest increase in absolute terms for both climate projections occurred in Southern Hemisphere South America (0.20 and 0.57 TgC yr⁻¹, respectively).

Regionally we found strong differences in the response, as a result of combined changes in climate, land use change, and demography. To disentangle the simulated changes in future fire emissions caused by these different drivers we performed sensitivity simulations in which the drivers were kept constant individually at their preindustrial level. The result is summarized in Fig. 3 and Table 2. Globally, projected changes

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in climate led to an increase in fire carbon emissions in 2075–2099 compared to preindustrial (+22 % and +66 % for CCSM and ECHAM5/MPI-OM, respectively). Changes in population density led to an increase in fire emissions when only human ignition was taken into account by +22 %. When changes in fire management efforts to suppress fires in densely populated areas also were included, fire carbon emissions decreased by –6 %. Projected harvest and land use change led to a decrease in fire emissions, with the magnitude of the response depending on the RCP scenario applied (–5 to –35 %).

In the following sections we examine the simulated changes in future fire emissions attributable to different drivers (climate, population density, and harvest/land cover change) in more detail.

4.1 Response of fire to future changes in climate

Fire emissions respond to changes in climate via a range of factors, including changes in fuel moisture, fuel availability, and fire spread (e.g. Spracklen et al., 2009; Flannigan et al., 2009). Changes in fire emissions are closely connected to changes in the hydrological cycle. However, future projections of the hydrological cycle are very uncertain. While models show, for example, a consistent increase in globally averaged precipitation with global warming, they differ substantially in magnitude as well as in the spatial and seasonal distributions (Meehl et al., 2007). To partly account for this, we investigated the impact of changes in climate on fire emissions using output from two different coupled ocean-atmosphere models (CCSM and ECHAM5/MPI-OM) both forced with the IPCC SRES A1B scenario.

The annual mean fire emissions changes due to climate at the end of the 21st century (2075–2099) simulated for the different climate projections differed substantially in their spatial distribution (Fig. 4). Globally, the annual mean emissions increased for both climate projections. By the end of the 21st century (average 2075–2099) fire emissions were 66 % higher compared to preindustrial times for ECHAM5/MPI-OM. The CCSM climate projection led to an increase of +22 %, see also Table 2. Regionally, the

response for the two climate projections was largest for Southern Hemisphere South America, central Asia, and Northern Hemisphere Africa (Table 2).

In the fire model applied in this study simulated fires depended directly on probability functions representing the availability of biomass (aboveground biomass), moisture (soil moisture), and ignition (lightning and human ignition) (Kloster et al., 2010). The moisture and biomass probability functions responded to changes in climate. Changes in fire emissions as a response to climate change followed in most regions closely the simulated response in soil moisture and resulting moisture probability for fire occurrence (Figs. 5d and 6b). Reduced soil moisture coincided in many regions with decreased aboveground biomass and thus lower fuel loads (Figs. 5c and 6a). Therefore, changes in simulated fire emissions were a result of changes in moisture and changes in biomass. However, the overall response pattern was dominated by the simulated response in the moisture probabilities. Only in some regions, changes in fire emissions were dominated by differences in the aboveground biomass. Southern Europe, for example, experienced a decrease in precipitation rates according to both applied future climate forcings. The lower precipitation rate led to an increase in moisture probability, but also to a decrease in available biomass for burning and thus a decrease in aboveground biomass and fuel load. Overall the decrease in fuel load (biomass probability) prevailed for Southern Europe resulting in lower future fire emissions (Fig. 4).

Large parts of the Northern Hemisphere showed strong spatial coherency in the response of fire to the two climate projections, with increasing future fire emissions, for example, in Northern Europe and decreasing emissions over Southern Europe (Fig. 4). For the boreal regions (Boreal Asia and Boreal North America) the changes in precipitation from the two different climate projections were very similar (Fig. 5b), as were the simulated changes in moisture (Fig. 5d) and biomass (Fig. 5c).

Regions that showed a change in the month of maximum burning had a tendency of shifting the maximum burning later into the year (up to +4 months) for many regions at mid and high latitudes of the Northern Hemisphere (Fig. 7a). In South America, in contrast the month of maximum burning shifted to earlier periods or remained unchanged.

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The majority of the grid cells in burn regions, however, showed no change in the month of maximum burning. The length of the burning season (number of months in which fire emissions occurred) extended in some regions (Fig. 7b). This change in the fire regime was especially prominent in Central Asia. Here fire emission peaked not only in May but also in August and emissions stayed relatively high in between (Fig. A1). Fires were simulated for all months of the year, including December and January, which experienced no burning without changing climate. This increase in fire emissions and the longer burning season was a result of decreasing soil moisture, which was most pronounced for the ECHAM5/MPI-OM climate projection (Fig. A1). At the same time, fuel loads were reduced lowering the biomass probability, which however, was not sufficient to outweigh the increase in fire emissions caused by drier fuels.

The difference in the global response of fire emissions to changes in climate was largely explained by differences over South America and Africa. South America and Africa were the continents that contributed the most to the preindustrial global annual fire emissions (~25% and ~50%, respectively, Table 2). For South America both future climate forcings led to an increase in fire emissions. However, the response was stronger for the ECHAM5/MPI-OM forcing (+61% and +84% for Northern and Southern Hemisphere South America, respectively) than for the CCSM forcing (+22% and +33%, respectively, Table 2). The difference in fire emissions responses for the two climate projections was a result of differences in projected changes in soil moisture (Fig. 9b). The decreases in soil moisture from the ECHAM5/MPI-OM projection resulted in increases in fire carbon emissions for Southern Hemisphere South America not only in September, but also high emissions in October and November (Fig. A2). The ECHAM5/MPI-OM climate projections decreased precipitation to almost zero in August averaged over Southern Hemisphere South America. This resulted in lower soil moisture in September and a slow recovery in October and November. The CCSM climate projections led to a different response. Here the soil moisture was simulated lower in the future for April to September, leading to higher fire emissions in these months at the onset of the fire season.

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For Africa fire emissions increased with the ECHAM5/MPI-OM climate projection (+50%), while they decreased with CCSM climate projection (−5%). Both projections showed an increase in precipitation over Africa (Fig. 5b). However, only the simulation forced with CCSM forcing resulted in an increase in soil moisture (Fig. 5d) over central Africa and thus a decrease in fire emissions. In contrast, the simulation forced with ECHAM5/MPI-OM projection showed an decrease in soil moisture over much of Africa, despite increasing precipitation. The decrease in soil moisture was caused by higher evaporation rates that exceeded the increase in precipitation. Higher evaporation rates were in turn caused by increases in surface temperatures that were stronger in the ECHAM5/MPI-OM projection compared to the CCSM projection (Fig. 5a). While the precipitation change by the two climate models over Africa was comparable, the overall changes in the hydrological cycle defining the soil moisture and thus fire occurrence probability were not. This was also reflected in the seasonal changes (Fig. A3). With the ECHAM5/MPI-OM forcing fire emissions increased for Northern Hemisphere Africa strongly in the burning season and the months with maximum emissions remained February and March. With CCSM climate projections, however, the simulated decrease in fire emissions was most pronounced for these peak months.

4.2 Response of fire to future changes in population density

The response of fire emissions to changes in population density is controlled via two counteracting processes. An increase in population leads to an increase in ignition sources as well as to an increase in fire management efforts set in place to suppress fires. In the model, the probability of human ignition increased with increasing population density, while fire suppression rates were highest in densely populated areas (Kloster et al., 2010). Changes in population density were prescribed following Klein-Goldewijk (2001) up to the year 2004. For future years (2005 to 2100) population densities were scaled for the SRES world regions following the A1 projection (CIESIN, 2002), for which global total population increases in the future up to the year 2050 and slightly declines afterwards (Fig. 1b).

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When only human ignition was considered in the model, global future fire emissions increased until 2050 as a response to globally increasing population density and stayed almost constant thereafter (Fig. 3, HI case). Taking also fire management into account, global fire emission did not change significantly over the course of the 21st century (Fig. 3; HI-FS case).

When only human ignition was considered fire emissions increased globally by 20 % compared to preindustrial times (Table 2). Regionally, increases in fire from human ignition were largest in central America (a 47 % increase) and Equatorial Asia (a 44 % increase). When fire suppression was included, in some regions fire emissions still increased (Northern Hemisphere South America (+22 %), Southern Hemisphere South America (+3 %), boreal North America (+3 %), Australia (+14 %)). However, globally the increase in fire suppression dominated the response and fire emissions decreased globally by -6 %. Decreases were largest in southern East Asia, Europe and the Middle East (-33, -29, and -29 %, respectively).

4.3 Response of fire to future changes in harvest and land use

The impact of harvest and land use on simulated fire emissions occurs as a result of two different mechanisms. Harvest and changes in land use alter the biomass available for burning and thus emissions from natural landscape fires. In addition, fires are often used as a tool for forest clearing leading to an additional fire source (deforestation fires). For the 20th century we found that globally total fire emissions (landscape and deforestation) decreased as a result of harvest and land use change (Kloster et al., 2010). The simulations presented here showed that this trend generally continues (Fig. 9). Although the response varied considerably between different harvest/land cover change projections (RCP 26, 40, 60, and 85, respectively).

Globally, total (deforestation and landscape) fire emissions decreased by the largest amount for the RCP 85 projection (averaged over the period 2075–2099 by -35 %, Table 2). The weakest response was simulated in the RCP 45 scenario (-5 %). RCP 26 and RCP 60 had globally a very similar response (-21 and -22 %).

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At a regional scale, RCP 26 and RCP 60 scenarios differed considerable. RCP 30 led to strong decreases in total fire emissions over northern and Southern Hemisphere Africa (−33% compared to −16% for RCP 60), while for RCP 60 the decrease was strongest over south East and Equatorial Asia (−52% compared to −30% for RCP 26).

For all the RCP projections deforestation fire emissions were lower during 2075–2099 compared to present day, as a result of decreased land conversion rates (see also Fig. 1c). Although, the RCP projection 30 and 85 peaked in between (~2020 and ~2015, respectively). Averaged over 2000–2024 deforestation fires emitted globally 134, 64, 145, and 86 Tg C yr^{−1} (RCP 26, 45, 60 and 85, respectively). This was reduced for the period 2075–2099 to 60, 15, 58, and 35 Tg C yr^{−1}, respectively. Thereby, the burning fraction of the biomass that was left on site after land use conversion remained relatively constant over time (between 33 to 42%).

The different magnitudes with which landscape fire emissions decreased in the single RCPs (−20, −5, −21, −34% for RCP 26, 45, 60, 85, respectively) was partly reflected in the different projections for wood harvest rates that were on average 0.77, 0.78, 1.51, and 1.83 PgC yr^{−1} between preindustrial times and 2100 for the scenarios RCP 26, 45, 60 and 85, respectively. Harvest led to a reduction of biomass available for burning, which overall reduced natural landscape emissions. However, the response varied considerably on regional scale for the different harvest and land use change projections (Fig. 9).

Note here, that Lawrence et al. (2011b) found that the carbon harvest rates in our model for the RCP 60 and RCP 85 were higher than what was intended to be prescribed from the wood harvest areas given by the harmonized RCP projections (Hurtt, 2009). The simulated wood harvest carbon flux for RCP 60 and RCP 85 was ~5 and 8 PgC yr^{−1} in 2100, respectively. The Global Land Model (GLM, Hurtt (2009)), which harmonized the RCP projections for the usage in the CMIP5 process (Taylor et al., 2009), reported harvest carbon fluxes which were substantially lower for 2100 (~2 and 3 PgC yr^{−1}, respectively). The differences were a result of different assumptions on

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logging techniques and secondary tree growth in the different RCPs, which will have to be further investigated. Lower wood harvest rates, might led to a less pronounced decrease in landscape fire emissions caused by harvest/land use as simulated here.

5 Discussion and conclusions

We applied a global land carbon model (CLM-CN) that interactively simulated landscape fire carbon emissions to investigate the response of future fires to projected changes in climate, population density, and harvest/land cover change during the 21st century. A previous study showed that the model captured the large scale contemporary observed fire patterns as well as observed trends in fire emissions during the 20th century, leading to some confidence that the model includes parameterizations that represent the sensitivity of fire emissions to important climate and land cover drivers.

We tested the response of future fire emissions to a range of future forcing projections and found that in the model:

- Fire emissions increased as a response to future climate change. For this analyses we applied future climate projections from two different climate models (CCSM and ECHAM5/MPI-OM), both following the SRES A1B scenario. Use of the ECHAM5/MPI-OM climate projection to force CLM-CN resulted in a considerable increase in fire emissions globally (+66 % in 2075–2099 compared to preindustrial). Fire emissions increased less when we used CCSM climate projections (+22 %). In most regions changes in fire emissions were caused by primarily changes in the length and intensity of the dry season, with many regions showing increases in the drought stress during the dry season. Climate-induced changes in fuel availability also had effect on fire emissions, with reduced levels of net primary production and fuel loads limiting fire emissions in some regions.
- Fire emissions increased globally as a response to increases in future population densities (SRES A1B) when only the impact on human ignition probability was

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taken into account. Fire emissions remained almost constant globally as a response to changing population density in the future when besides human ignition also fire management (e.g. fire suppression) set in place in densely populated areas was considered. In this case emissions increased in South America, Australia and boreal North America but decreased in all other regions.

- Fire emissions decreased as a response to future projections of harvest/land cover change. In all future projections harvest/land cover change reduced available fuel load and consequently natural fire emissions. The decrease in total (natural and deforestation) fire emissions was weakest (–5 %) in the RCP45 and strongest (–35 %) in the RCP85 projections averaged over the period 2075–2099.
- Overall fire emissions increased in the future assuming that harvest/land cover change will follow the RCP 45 trajectory and population changes will impact fire ignition and suppression in the case of the CCSM climate forcing by 17 % and the ECHAM5/MPI-OM climate forcing by 62 % compared to present day.

Increasing future fire emissions have been reported in earlier work based on global fire models with varying levels of complexity (Scholze et al., 2006; Krawchuk et al., 2009; Pechony and Shindell, 2010). However, regionally the response pattern differed substantially in these global studies as well as in regional studies that focused on the impact of climate change on fires for specific regions (mostly North America, e.g. Spracklen et al., 2009; Euskirchen et al., 2009; Amiro et al., 2009; Flannigan et al., 2000). Flannigan et al. (2009) analysed around 40 published studies that investigated the implications of changing climate for global wildland fire on different scales and with models of different complexity. They concluded that fire activity will generally increase in the future, but there will be regions with no changes and regions with decreases. For the boreal and temperate regions they found an overall consensus that the fire season will be lengthened in the future, which was consistent with our results. Differences in projected fire emissions partly reflected differences in the fire models, which span a range of empirical and prognostic approaches. However, they also result from

the use of different projections of future climate in individual studies. Our simulations showed that climate projections for the 21st century from two different global climate models that both applied the same SRES A1B scenario resulted in projected fire emission trends that showed considerable difference for example in Africa, between a slight decreasing trend up to a moderate increase in future fire emissions. In a recent study Pechony and Shindell (2010) showed that the same climate model but different SRES projections resulted in broadly similar spatial patterns of fire emissions but different magnitudes. Similar findings were reported by Scholze et al. (2006). These differences in climate projections reflect the range of possible future climate developments and applied in fire models the range of possible climate driven changes in fire emissions. In light of this variability between climate models, an intercomparison of the sensitivity of fire models to future climate change would require the use of the same climate projection. This could be done, for example by embedding multiple fire emissions models within the same vegetation-carbon model. Our study suggests, in addition, that changes in population and harvest and land use will also have a considerable influence on the trajectory of fire emissions during the 21st century. Projections of these factors and their influence of fire emissions vary considerably depending on future scenario assumptions of socio-economic development and the implementation of these land use scenarios within Earth System Models.

Although our model captures some of the temporal and spatial variability of contemporary fires (Kloster et al., 2010) there are a number of processes in the model that are based on a rather incomplete understanding of human-fire interactions (Pechony and Shindell, 2010). Human-fire interactions are to a large part socio-economically controlled with varying fire management practices ranging from active fire suppression efforts, typically applied in regions where high property values are at risk, to the use of fires for conversion of vegetation (Bowman et al., 2009). These fire management practices in turn depend on fuel characteristics that will change with a changing climate (Flannigan et al., 2009). This makes it particularly difficult to take changing fire management practices into account for future fire emission predictions. Comprehensive

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information on past fire activity, e.g. reconstructed from charcoal sediments (Power et al., 2010), explored in more detail in conjunction with reconstructed land use change pattern will hopefully allow for improvements in our current understanding of human-fire interactions.

5 Another parameter we did not consider in the fire model is the impact of climate change on lightning activity and subsequent effects on ignition. Price and Rind (1994) explored the impact of climate change on lightning-caused fires and concluded for North America that the burned area will increase by 78 % as a response to increased lightning activity caused by a doubling of atmospheric CO₂ concentration. To our knowl-
10 edge there is no estimate how increased lightning activity affects fire emissions on a global scale. Such an assessment, however, will have to take into account the number of human ignitions and fire management efforts as well.

Due to computational limitations we were only able to apply climate projections from two different climate models, which, however, showed large differences in the simulated future fire emissions. In the future it will be desirable to apply a larger set of future climate model projections. CMIP5 (Taylor et al., 2009) will form here a ideal consistent basis.

The simulation presented here showed that climate also had a substantial indirect control on future fire carbon emission through the alteration of fuel availability. Harvest and land use also impacted fire emissions through changes in fuel load. A coupled vegetation-carbon model as used in this study allowed us to account for this, in contrast to other studies that were solely based in statistical relationships (Krawchuk et al., 2009) or did have to prescribe biomass density (Pechony and Shindell, 2010). How-
20 ever, fire emissions will be also indirectly controlled through changes in vegetation structure that is in turn partly controlled by fire itself. This feedback can be accounted with dynamic global vegetation models (DGVMs) which should be the preferred tool to study fire-climate interactions.

Increasing fire activity as a response to climate change will itself lead to changes in climate (Randerson et al., 2006; Bowman et al., 2009). To understand this fire-climate

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feedback we will have to improve our current ability to represent fires as an active climate dependent component of the Earth System. A fire model as presented in this study is a first step towards this direction.

Acknowledgements. This work was supported by the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF ATM-0628637, NSF AGS-1048890). For computational support the authors acknowledge NSF and the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR). NCAR is sponsored by the NSF.

The service charges for this open access publication have been covered by the Max Planck Society.

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Table 1. Control and transient model simulations analyzed in the present study. Simulations used different treatment of human ignition potential, and different assumptions about harvest/land cover change as well as climate forcing.

Name	Human ignition ¹	Pop. density ²	harvest/land cover change ³	Climate forcing ⁴ future
Transient simulations: 1798–2100				
AB-26-E1	constant=0.5	–	RCP 26	ECHAM 1
AB-45-E1	constant=0.5	–	RCP 45	ECHAM 1
AB-45-C1	constant=0.5	–	RCP 45	CCSM 1
AB-60-E1	constant=0.5	–	RCP 60	ECHAM 1
AB-85-E1	constant=0.5	–	RCP 85	ECHAM 1
AB-HI-45-E1	human ignition	transient	RCP 45	ECHAM 1
AB-HI-FS-45-E1/2/3	human ign. and fire suppr.	transient	RCP 45	ECHAM 1/2/3
AB-HI-FS-45-C1/2/3	human ign. and fire suppr.	transient	RCP 45	CCSM 1/2/3
Sensitivity simulations: 1798–2100				
AB-LUC-E1	constant=0.5	–	–	ECHAM/MPI-OM 1
AB-45-CLIM	constant=0.5	–	RCP 45	NCEP/NCAR
AB-HI-PI-45-E1	human ignition	preindustrial	RCP 45	ECHAM/MPI-OM 1
AB-HI-FS-PI-45-E1	human ign. and fire suppr.	preindustrial	RCP 45	ECHAM/MPI-OM 1

¹ Different treatment of human ignition: either a constant value of 0.5 (constant), allowing for human ignition as a function of population density (HI), or human ignition and fire suppression (HI-FS).

² Population density was allowed to vary between 1798 and 2100 (for 1798 to 2004 following KleinGoldewijk (2001), from 2005 onwards scaled with the SRES A1 projections for the SRES world regions (CIESIN, 2002)) or was held constant at a preindustrial value.

³ Harvest/land cover change: either no harvest/land cover change (–) or transient historical harvest/land cover change between 1850–2004 and between 2005–2100 projected harvest/land cover change following the RCP 26, 45, 60, and 85, respectively (Hurt et al., 2006; Moss et al., 2010).

⁴ Climate forcing: either cycling periodically through NCEP/NCAR data (Qian et al., 2006) for the years 1948–1972 or cycling through 1948–1972 followed by the full time series for the years 1948–2004. For future climate forcing (2005–2100) we scaled NCEP/NCAR forcing with future climate anomalies simulated by the climate model ECHAM/MPI-OM (Roeckner et al., 2006) or CCSM (Meehl et al., 2006) applying three different ensembles (1–3) each.



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Table 2. Changes in global annual mean fire emissions caused by different forcings agents averaged over the period 2075–2099 in [TgCyr^{-1}]. Number in brackets are changes in percentage. Simulations with transient varying forcings were compared to a control simulation in which the forcing was kept constant at preindustrial level. The difference in percentage was calculated relative to the control simulation. Regions used in this study were identical to the one defined in van der Werf et al. (2006): BONA: Boreal North America, TENA: Temperate North America, CEAM: Central America, NHSA: Northern Hem. South America, SHSA: Southern Hem. South America, EURO: Europe, MIDE: Middle East, NHAF: Northern Hem. Africa, SHAF: Southern Hem. Africa, BOAS: Boreal Asia, CEAS: Central Asia, SEAS: South East Asia, EQAS: Equatorial Asia, AUST: Australia.

	Climate ¹	Climate ¹	Harvest/LCC ²	Harvest/LCC ²	Harvest/LCC ²	Harvest/LCC ²	pop. density ³	pop. density ³
	ECHAM/MPI-OM	CCSM	RCP30	RCP45	RCP60	RCP85	HI	HI FS
BONA	23.0 (256)	27.0 (300)	-4.0 (-13)	0.0 (0)	-18.0 (-56)	-15.0 (-47)	7.0 (39)	2.0 (12)
TENA	55.0 (56)	21.0 (21)	-34.0 (-22)	-1.0 (-1)	-57.0 (-37)	-57.0 (-37)	29.0 (24)	-22.0 (-19)
CEAM	36.0 (32)	36.0 (32)	-41.0 (-27)	-3.0 (-2)	-45.0 (-29)	-77.0 (-50)	54.0 (47)	-20.0 (-17)
NHSA	127.0 (61)	47.0 (22)	-14.0 (-4)	0.0 (0)	-17.0 (-5)	-42.0 (-13)	73.0 (35)	47.0 (22)
SHSA	597.0 (84)	237.0 (33)	-134.0 (-10)	-20.0 (-2)	-130.0 (-10)	-293.0 (-22)	173.0 (15)	35.0 (3)
EURO	53.0 (166)	33.0 (103)	-50.0 (-54)	-8.0 (-9)	-47.0 (-51)	-39.0 (-42)	7.0 (9)	-17.0 (-29)
MIDE	2.0 (13)	1.0 (7)	-10.0 (-53)	-2.0 (-11)	-5.0 (-26.3)	-7.0 (-37)	3.0 (20)	-4.0 (-29)
NHAF	156.0 (72)	-35.0 (-16)	-40.0 (-33)	-51.0 (-12)	-63.0 (-15)	-152.0 (-36)	62.0 (19)	-76.0 (-23)
SHAF	121.0 (35)	10.0 (3)	-145.0 (-29)	-38.0 (-8)	-87.0 (-17)	-197.0 (-39)	88.0 (21)	-25.0 (-6)
BOAS	39.0 (650)	33.0 (550)	-3.0 (-7)	-1.0 (-2)	-5.0 (-11)	-14.0 (-30)	2.0 (6)	-1.0 (-3)
CEAS	182.0 (200)	73.0 (85)	-91.0 (-28)	-47.0 (-15)	-165.0 (-52)	-190.0 (-59)	33.0 (15)	-42.0 (-24)
SEAS	82.0 (36)	15.0 (7)	-134.0 (-37)	-60.0 (-16)	-190.0 (-52)	-178.0 (-49)	49.0 (18)	-78.0 (-33)
EQAS	50.0 (70)	19.0 (27)	-14.0 (-11)	-3.0 (-2)	-67.0 (-54)	-70.0 (-57)	34.0 (44)	-4.0 (-5)
AUST	23.0 (30)	6.0 (8)	-28.0 (-29)	3.0 (3)	-28.0 (-29)	-54.0 (-55)	19.0 (26)	10.0 (14)
GLOB	1386.0 (66)	469.0 (22)	-769.0 (-21)	-199.0 (-5)	-822.0 (-22)	-1278.0 (-35)	591.0 (20)	-177.0 (-6)

¹ Response to climate change: future climate anomalies simulated by the climate model ECHAM/MPI-OM (Roeckner et al., 2006) or CCSM (Meehl et al., 2006).

² Response to Harvest/land cover change: projected changes following the RCP 26, 45, 60, and 85, respectively (Hurtt et al., 2006; Moss et al., 2010).

³ Response to changes in population density: allowing for human ignition as a function of population density (HI), or human ignition and fire suppression (HI-FS).

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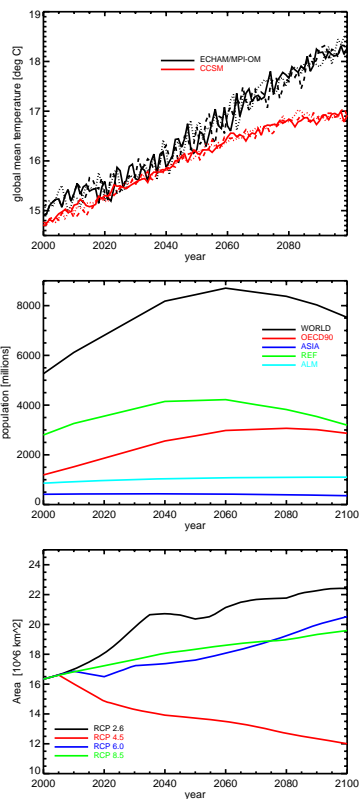


Fig. 1. Forcing factors applied in this study. **(a)** Climate – global annual mean surface temperature in [deg C] as simulated with ECHAM/MPI-OM (Roeckner et al., 2006) and CCSM (Meehl et al., 2006). Both models applied the IPCC A1B SRES scenario forcing (Nakicenovic et al., 2000). For each model three ensemble simulations are shown; **(b)** population – total population for the IPCC A1B SRES scenario for the SRES regions and the global total (CIESIN, 2002); **(c)** land use change – global total crop area for the different RCPs.

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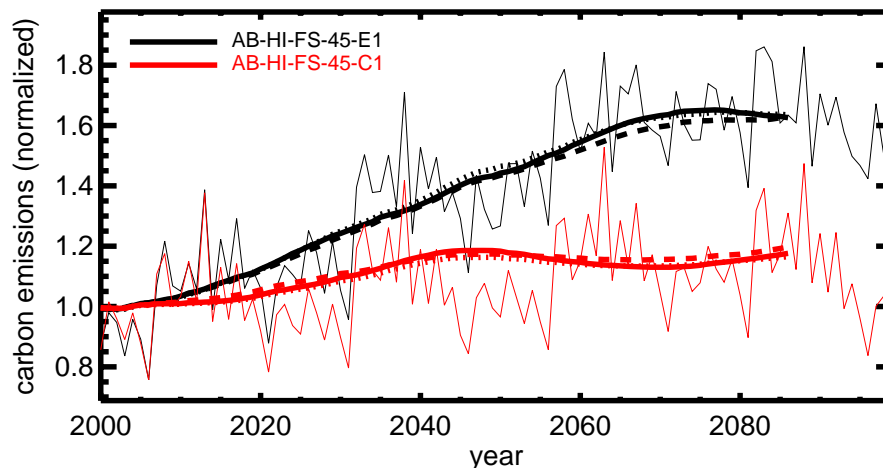


Fig. 2. Change in future global annual mean fire emissions normalized to the mean state 1990–2009 as simulated with two different climate forcings (ECHAM/MPI-OM (E1; Roeckner et al., 2006) or CCSM (C1; Meehl et al., 2006)) when human ignition (HI) and fire suppression (FS) was taken into account and future LUC/Harevest followed RCP 45. For each experiment three ensemble simulations are shown (see also Table 1 for a description of the experiments). The timeseries were smoothed with a 25 yr running mean. In addition, for each experiment one ensemble is shown with a yearly time resolution (thin solid line).

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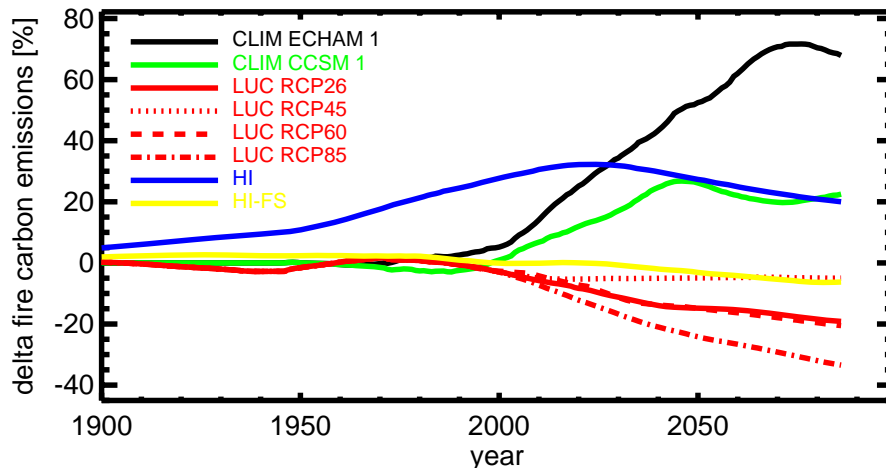


Fig. 3. Change in global annual mean fire emissions 1900 to 2100 in [%] introduced by different forcings: climate: ECHAM/MPI-OM (CLIM ECHAM 1, Roeckner et al., 2006) in black and CCSM (CLIM CCSM 1, Meehl et al., 2006) in green, respectively; harvest/land use change in red for RCP 26, 45, 60, and 85, respectively; human ignition in blue; human ignition and fire suppression in yellow. Simulations with transient varying forcings are compared to a control simulation in which the forcing is kept constant at preindustrial level. The difference in percentage is calculated relative to the control simulation. The timeseries were smoothed with a 25 yr running mean.

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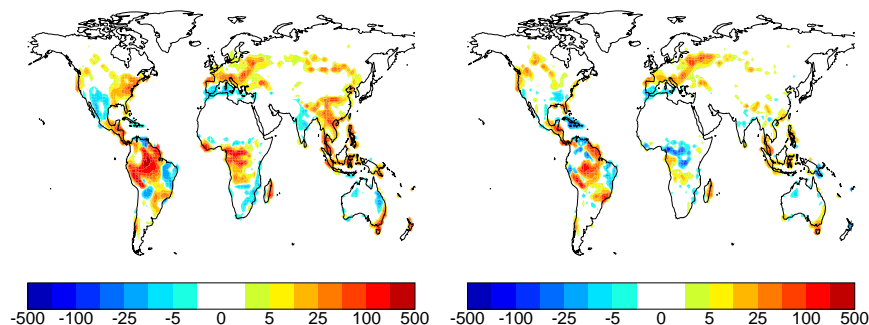


Fig. 4. Change in annual mean fire emissions in $[gC (m^{-2} yr)]$ averaged over 2075–2099 introduced by changes in climate. Simulations with transient varying forcings are compared to a control simulation in which the forcing is kept constant at preindustrial level. Left side: ECHAM/MPI-OM A1B (Roeckner et al., 2006) future climate forcing (AB-45-E1 minus AB-45-CLIM); Right side: CCSM A1B (Meehl et al., 2006) future climate forcing (AB-45-C1 minus AB-45-CLIM).

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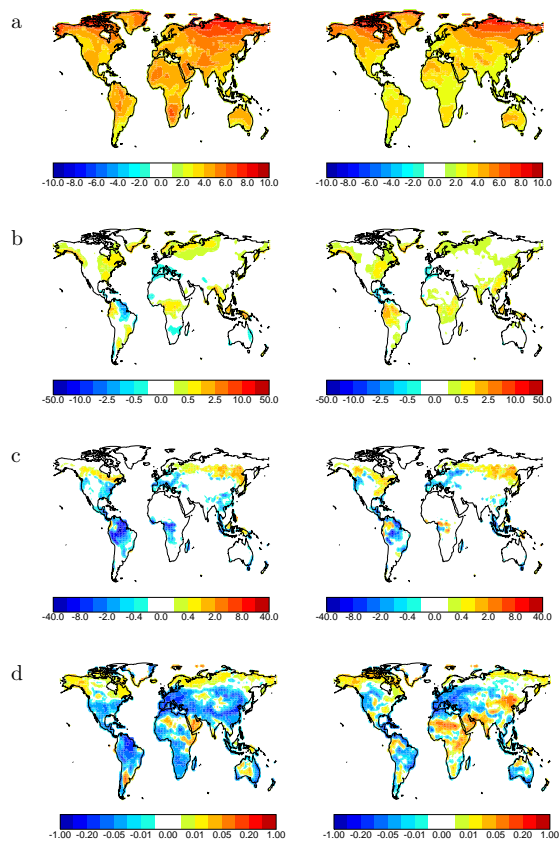


Fig. 5. Changes in climate parameters (annual mean) averaged over the period 2075–2099 compared to the control simulation with constant climate. Left side: ECHAM/MPI-OM (AB-45-E1 minus AB-CLIM-45), right side: CCSM (AB-45-C1 minus AB-CLIM-45). 1st row: temperature in [deg C]; 2nd row: precipitation in [mm d⁻¹]; 3rd row: aboveground biomass [kgC m⁻²]; 4th row: soil moisture [fraction of the plant-available volumetric water content of the top 5 cm of the soil column].

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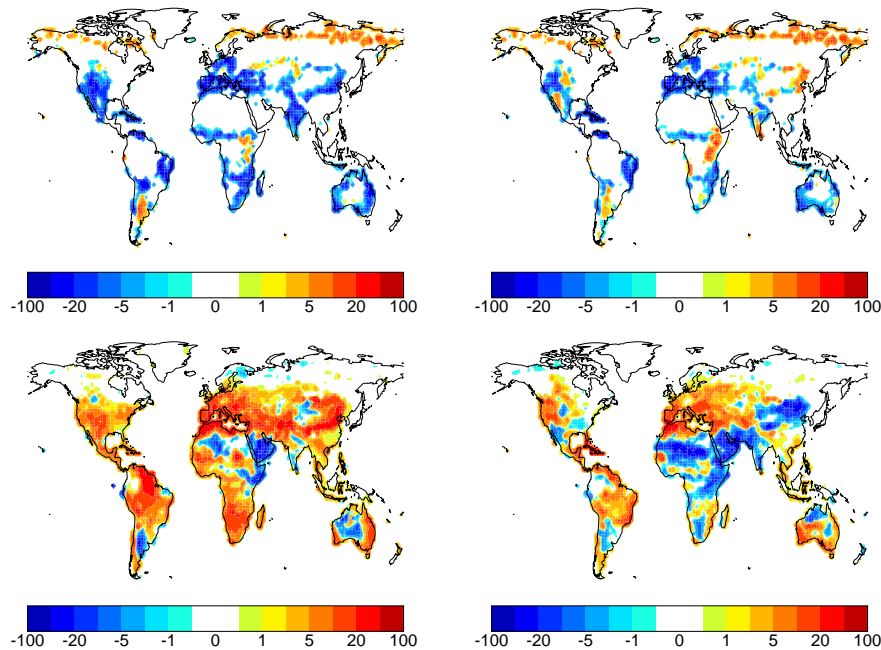


Fig. 6. Change in fire occurrence probabilities (annual mean) averaged over the period 2075–2099 compared to the control simulation with constant climate. Left side: ECHAM/MPI-OM (AB-45-E1 minus AB-CLIM-45), right side: CCSM (AB-45-C1 minus AB-CLIM-45). 1st row: biomass probability of fire occurrence [$\times 100$]; 2nd row: moisture probability of fire occurrence [$\times 100$].

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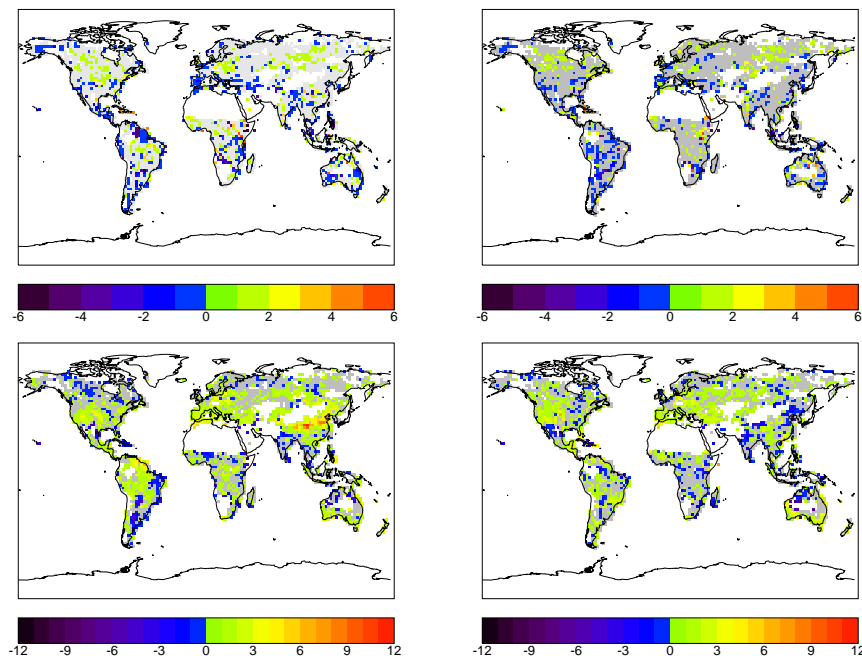


Fig. 7. Changes in fire seasonality averaged over the period 2075–2099 compared to the control simulation with constant climate. Left side: ECHAM/MPI-OM (AB-45-E1 minus AB-CLIM-45), right side: CCSM (AB-45-C1 minus AB-CLIM-45). 1st row: change in month with maximum burning [months]; 2nd row: change in number of months with fire occurrence [months].

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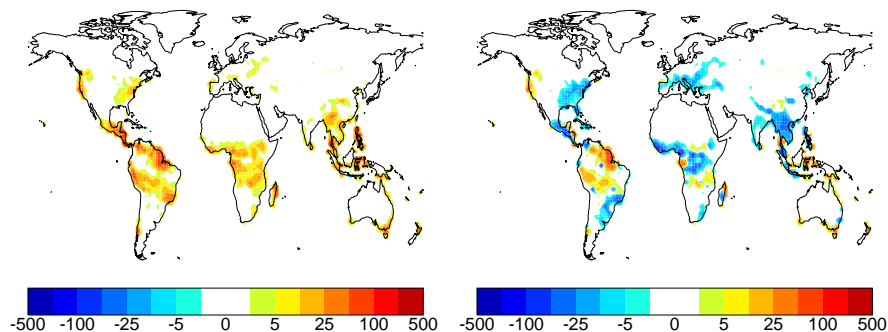


Fig. 8. Change in annual mean fire emissions in [$\text{gC} (\text{m}^{-2} \text{yr})$] averaged over 2075–2099 introduced by changes in population density. Simulations with transient varying forcings are compared to a control simulation in which the forcing is kept constant at preindustrial level. Left side: only human ignition considered (AB-HI-45-E1 minus AB-HI-PI-45-E1); right side: human ignition and fire suppression considered (AB-HI-FS-45-E1 minus AB-HI-FS-PI-45-E1).

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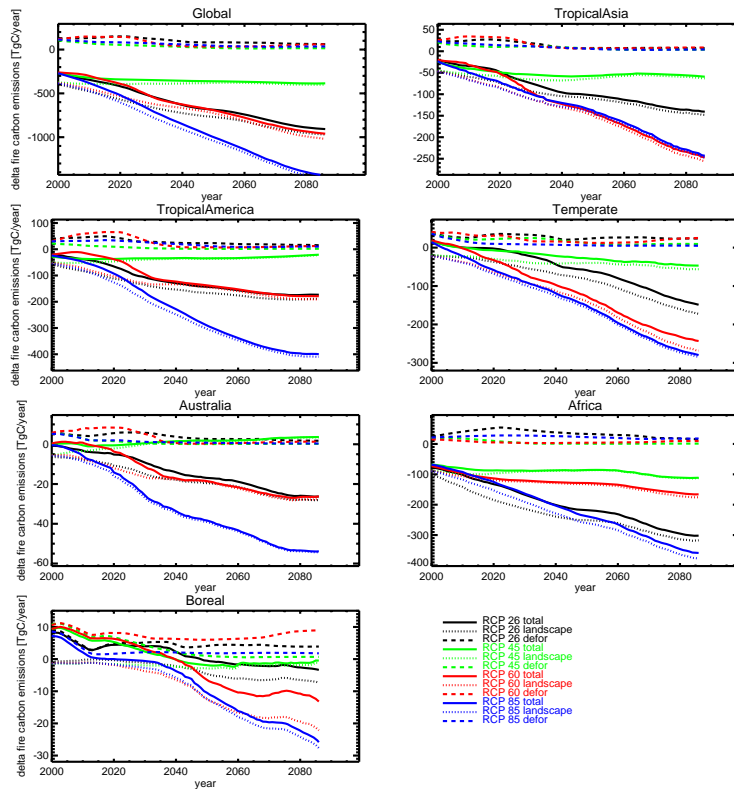


Fig. 9. Change in annual mean landscape, deforestation, and total (landscape plus deforestation) fire emissions in $[\text{TgC yr}^{-1}]$ introduced by different harvest/land cover change projections (RCP 26, 45, 60, 85) for different major world regions. Simulations with transient varying forcings are compared to a control simulation with constant harvest/land cover. The timeseries were smoothed with a 25 yr running mean. Similar to van der Werf et al. (2010) the different regions were composed of BONA and BOAS (Boreal), TENA, EURO, CEAS (Temperate), CEAM, NHSA, and SHSA (Tropical America), MIDE, NHAF, and SHAF (Africa), SEAS and EQAS (Tropical Asia), and AUST for Australia (see also Table 2).

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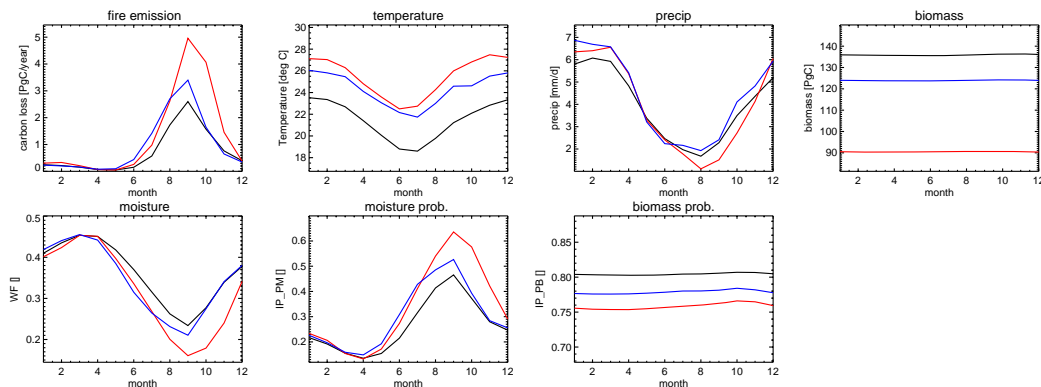


Fig. A1. Central Asia (CEAS): seasonal variation in fire carbon emissions [TgC yr^{-1}], climate parameters (temperature [deg C] and precipitation [mm d^{-1}]), aboveground biomass [gC m^{-2}] and moisture and biomass constrained fire occurrence probabilities (ip_pb and ip_pm []) averaged over the period 2075–2099. Red: ECHAM/MPI-OM climate forcing; blue: CCSM climate forcing; black: control simulation with constant climate.

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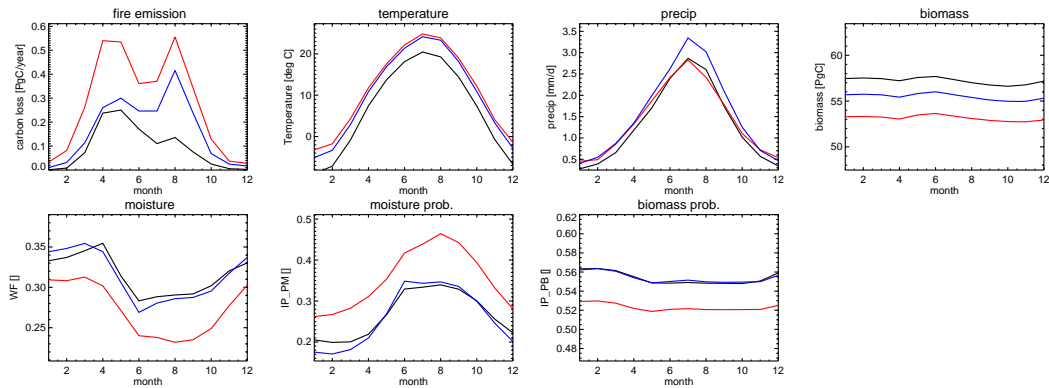


Fig. A2. Similar as Fig. A1 for the region Southern Hemisphere South America (SHSA).

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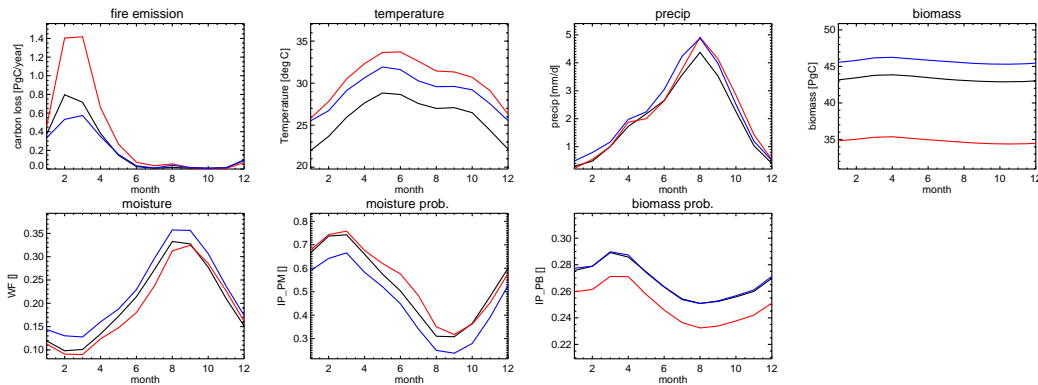


Fig. A3. Similar as Fig. A1 for the region Northern Hemisphere Africa (NHAF).

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