

Summary of changes:

*We have extensively revised the manuscript to address the concerns of the editor and two reviewers, including rewriting, editing and adding more text in several sections based on the reviews. We also clarified a number of confusing sentences throughout the manuscript, updated tables, figures, references and the supplementary document, and performed an overall grammar check. Please refer to “response to reviewers” for detailed information. Here are the **major** revisions we have made in the manuscript:*

- 1. We edited the title as “High-resolution mapping of time since disturbance and forest carbon flux from remote sensing and inventory data to assess harvest, fire, and beetle disturbance legacies in the Pacific Northwest”. Quantification and mapping of time since disturbance is an important objective in this paper, while applying carbon flux trajectories to newly derived time since disturbance map is another focus.*
- 2. We rewrote many paragraphs in the “Introduction”, particularly the last paragraph where all of the objectives are listed. Now it reads as “This study estimates and maps time since disturbance at a fine scale of 30 m from RS-derived products and FIA-derived biomass growth curves, and then maps net ecosystem productivity (NEP) based on disturbance history, time since disturbance and carbon flux legacy. The specific objectives in this study are to: (1) introduce a method for inferring a pixel’s representative time since disturbance from RS-derived biomass and disturbance products at the 30 m resolution; (2) map NEP based on pre-existing, model-derived carbon stock and flux trajectories that describe how NEP changes with time following harvest, fire, or bark beetle disturbances of varying severity; (3) propagate uncertainties from RS-derived biomass products and FIA into uncertainty quantification of stand age and NEP. Our research represents an approach to map carbon stocks and fluxes at a high resolution across the conterminous US in support of national carbon monitoring, reporting, and management.”*
- 3. We have added more explicit descriptions on the CASA modelling, carbon stocks, allocations and transfers in live pools and dead pools, and carbon emissions from dead carbon pools in section 2.3.1. In this study, we mainly focused on the approach of combining CASA-derived trajectories with the newly mapped time since disturbance derived from objective 1 to demonstrate that this method can be used to develop spatial representations of NEP.*
- 4. We have added more discussion of assumptions made in this study in section 4.1. We present a mature characterization and propagation of errors from biomass and disturbance year input data sources, and formally assess how these can bias stand age and NEP estimates. These major error sources are fully propagated as part of the uncertainties that we provide as a distribution of estimates, including quantiles and standard deviations, instead of a single value. However, we are unable to assess potential biases from some of the input datasets/parameters due to limited/no information on those errors.*
- 5. We replaced Fig. 5 (now Fig. 4) by a figure displaying full range of NEP after harvest (Fig. 4a, 4b), fire (Fig. 4c, 4d) and bark beetle (Fig. 4e, 4f). More texts were added in caption of Fig. 5 (now Fig. 4).*
- 6. We included a carbon allocation and transfer flowchart of CASA model (Fig. S1) and post-disturbance trajectories on NEP, heterotrophic respiration (R_h), carbon stocks in carbon pools (soil organic carbon, litter, slow turnover soil carbon, aboveground coarse woody debris,*

belowground coarse woody debris, and total live woody biomass) in the supplementary document. Fig. S2, S3, S4, S5, S6 present post-disturbance NEP curves across forest types, productivity classes, and disturbance types, and Fig. S7, S8, S9, S10, S11 are shown for Rh trajectories. Characteristic trajectories of post-disturbance carbon stocks in carbon pools are provided as well (Fig. S12, S13, S14, S15, S16, S17 for harvest as an example).

Interactive comment on “High-resolution forest carbon flux mapping and monitoring in the Pacific Northwest with time since disturbance and disturbance legacies inferred from remote sensing and inventory data” by Huan Gu et al.

Anonymous Referee #1

Received and published: 16 June 2016

We would like to thank the reviewer for giving us very helpful suggestions that help us greatly improve the quality of this manuscript. We provided our responses to all the comments point by point below (italicized typeface) with page (P) and line (L) numbers referred if necessary.

General comments

The manuscript aims to address current issues in constraining forest C dynamics and stocks in relation to multiple different types and intensity of disturbance. The authors combine a range of data including national inventories, management databases, airborne and space-borne remote sensing. These data are then combined / utilized through both statistical (yield curves) and simulation based modelling (CASA) approaches. As such the manuscript is highly relevant and well within scope of Biogeosciences and I believe will ultimately be published in Biogeosciences. However I believe there is additional scientific value that should be drawn from the current analysis and a substantial re-write to improve readability prior to publication. The following general comments are split broadly between scientific and presentation.

Globally C stored in forests is split roughly equally between woody biomass and soil organic matter (e.g. Pan et al 2011). However the manuscript focuses on estimates of above ground biomass stocks and disturbance to these stocks, lacking any analysis or discussion of soil carbon stocks. I recognize that the authors report net ecosystem productivity (defined as $NEP = NPP - Rh$), but I would prefer you to distinguish between accumulation and losses between the live biomass and dead organic matter. Or state clearly why not given that you are reporting ecosystem scale values. Also I do not believe that the authors have extracted all relevant information for the above ground biomass stocks. For example in Section 3.4 L29 The authors state “Spatial variations in mean annual NEP are noticeably correlated with the time since disturbance, forest type group, and site productivity strata...”. This could be shown more clearly in an x~y plot and / or this “noticeable” correlation could be explicitly quantified to distinguish the relative importance of the drivers. Further detail follows in the specific comments section.

Response: *In this study, aboveground biomass accumulation curves were used for two purposes: (1) to infer stand age from RS-derived biomass data for objective 1; (2) to be a constraint to adjust wood turnover rate (mortality and shedding) and default output NPP by a scalar parameter NPP_{scalar} in CASA modeling, which hence influences accumulation of live biomass and amounts of carbon allocated to live and dead pools, this was clarified at lines P8L8 to P8L10.*

More details on CASA modeling were provided, including CASA modeling, carbon stocks, allocations and transfers in live pools and dead carbon pools, and emissions from dead carbon pools at lines P7L29 to P9L9. It reads as:

“The CASA model used here is based on Randerson et al. (1996) and operates on a monthly time step. It uses a light use efficiency approach to simulating net primary productivity (NPP) based on RS-derived absorption of photosynthetically active radiation, biome parameters, and climate data. The model then allocates NPP to three live carbon pools (leaves, roots, and wood), and transfers carbon to dead pools (litter and soils) based on biome-specific rates of tissue turnover. Carbon in dead organic matter pools is

transferred between pools (surface structural C, surface metabolic C, soil structural C, soil metabolic C, aboveground coarse woody debris C, belowground coarse woody debris C, surface microbial C, soil microbial C, slow C and passive C) (Fig. S1). Amounts of carbon transferred to microbial pools and carbon emitted to the atmosphere from microbial decomposition of soil and litter, i.e. heterotrophic respiration (Rh), depend on the rate and efficiency of heterotrophic consumption which varies between pools in the model, and also depends on biome- and pool-specific chemistry and site-specific climate setting such as soil moisture and temperature. The difference between NPP and summed Rh of the ten detrital pools is then calculated as NEP. Aboveground biomass-age curves sampled from FIA database were used as a constraint to adjust wood turnover rate (mortality and shedding) and default output NPP by a scalar parameter, which hence influences accumulation of live biomass and the amounts of carbon allocated to live and dead pools. The adjustment of those CASA parameters was performed for each specific combination of forest type group and site productivity class. Implementation of the model involved a simulation sequence beginning with spin-up to equilibrium carbon pools using FIA-adjusted NPP followed by a pre-disturbance with ensuing regrowth to a set of pre-disturbance ages, and lastly imposition of the disturbance of interest to generate flux and stock dynamics in response to harvest, fire, or beetle outbreak disturbance types at different severities. The fate of carbon influenced by disturbances varied by disturbance type as described below. Disturbance types considered in the model included stand-replacing harvest, fire, and bark beetle outbreak, with full descriptions of the carbon dynamics in pools after disturbances provided in Ghimire et al., 2012, Williams et al., 2014, Ghimire et al., 2015 and described further below.

Model treatments of disturbance impacts to the carbon cycle were as follows. For all disturbance type cases, a post-disturbance decline and ensuing recovery of NPP and fractional allocation to wood were modelled as a negative exponential function of time since disturbance, recovering to the pre-disturbance level within eight years (Williams et al. 2012). The mortality and fate of disturbance killed and/or combusted carbon pools differed by disturbance type. For harvest (Williams et al. 2014), the post-disturbance biomass was set to 50% of the aboveground live wood biomass reported in FIA data for the 0 to 20 year old age class, regardless of the pre-disturbance biomass condition. Harvest-killed live wood, leaves, and roots were calculated from their corresponding fractions of pre-disturbance to post-disturbance conditions. Eighty percent of the disturbance-killed aboveground live wood was assumed to have been removed from the site with the remainder being treated as slash subject to decomposition as coarse woody debris. All leaves of disturbance killed trees are assumed to decompose on-site. All belowground wood that succumbs to mortality enters a belowground coarse woody debris carbon pool. For fire (Ghimire et al. 2012), disturbance kill is portrayed as partial mortality events in which fires reduce pre-fire live biomass pools based on the fractional tree mortality which varies by forest type and fire severity class (high, medium, or low to match the Monitoring Trends in Burn Severity dataset). The amount of live biomass remaining after a fire is calculated from the fraction of vegetation mortality emerging from an extensive literature survey. Fire-killed material is either directly combusted and released to the atmosphere or transferred to dead carbon pools. The same applies to foliage and root mortality, though roots are not directly combusted. Fire killed trees enter a new standing dead pool in the model with a fast turnover fall rate of 10 years post fire with transfer to the CWD pool. Litter and soil organic carbon in the upper soil layers were also vulnerable to combustion. All of these rates were based on literature review (Ghimire et al. 2012). For bark beetle outbreaks (Ghimire et al. 2015), beetle killed biomass was simulated for a wide range of intensities from near zero to 100% mortality to generate a family of curves that could be applied in the mapping stage. Beetle attack caused leaf carbon to enter the surface litter pool, aboveground wood to enter a snag pool, belowground wood and fine root to enter corresponding soil carbon pools. The portions killed for each were based on the percent mortality

imposed for each severity level being simulated, derived from the ratio of the biomass at the midpoint of each severity class (of 1680 levels of intensity) to the pre-disturbed aboveground biomass values corresponding to the mean age of a given forest type under attack (Ghimire et al. 2015). Soil carbon pools respond to all of these dynamics according to the model's climate-mediated turnover times for each carbon pool, and the associated carbon flows (Fig S1)."

In addition, we included a carbon allocation and transfer flowchart of CASA model (Fig. S1) and post-disturbance trajectories on NEP, heterotrophic respiration (Rh), carbon stocks in carbon pools (live and dead) in the supplementary document. Fig. S2, S3, S4, S5, S6 presents post-disturbance NEP curves across forest types, productivity classes, and disturbance types, and Fig. S7, S8, S9, S10, S11 are shown for Rh trajectories. Characteristic trajectories of post-disturbance carbon stocks in carbon pools (soil organic carbon, litter, slow turnover soil carbon, aboveground coarse woody debris, belowground coarse woody debris, and total live woody biomass) are provided as well (S12, S13, S14, S15, S16, S17 for harvest as an example). In this study, we mainly focused on the approach of combining NEP trajectories with the newly mapped time since disturbance derived from objective 1 to simply demonstrate that this method can be used to develop spatial representations of NEP.

For section 3.4 L29 (now P12L6 to P12L7), we estimated NEP based on carbon flux trajectories, which vary by time since disturbance, forest type group and site productivity. The relationships between NEP and these variables have been presented in the trajectory curves in Fig. 4 and Fig. S2, S3, S4, S5, S6 in supplementary document. Because these trajectories are directly applied to map NEP, there is limited new information, if any, in the fact that NEP is correlated with time since disturbance, forest type group, and site productivity strata. Therefore, we think x~y plot is unnecessary. Furthermore, our intention is not to explore relationships between NEP and input data. Correspondingly, we revised the sentence in question to read "Spatial variations in mean annual NEP are determined by differences in strata of ..."

The overall writing style of the manuscript needs to be improved to benefit the flow of reading and in particular clarity. For example the methods overview needs to be clearer as to the overall structure of the analysis and their connections. The authors provide extensive detail on the data sources and what information they provide, however the fact that these data will be used as constraints or drivers in the CASA model is not made clear until the final section before the results in Section 2.3.1. This is particularly confusing as all the description of data given is in reference to above ground biomass while at the same time stating that the results from the analysis are the net ecosystem productivity. Moreover the number of words in both the methods and results sections dedicated to the various disturbance maps produced appears disproportionate given that the title and the conclusions imply that C stocks and dynamics are the primary focus. I would consider a way to simplify this information and attempt to move some of it into the supplementary material. Also I note that Figures 10 and 11 do not feature in the results section at all, instead are used to introduce new information in the discussion which is inappropriate. These figures should be introduced in the results section if they could be moved to the supporting information.

Response: *We apologize that our title didn't fully convey main objectives and focuses of this manuscript, we edited the title as "High-resolution mapping of time since disturbance and forest carbon flux from remote sensing and inventory data to assess harvest, fire, and beetle disturbance legacies in the Pacific Northwest". We also rewrote the last paragraph in Introduction at lines P3L27 to P4L2, where now all of the objectives are listed. Quantification and mapping of time since disturbance is an important objective in this paper, and while it is being generated for the purpose of carbon flux, the characterization of carbon fluxes was the focus of the group's prior work and is thus of less emphasis here. We did revise the present paper to include a more comprehensive overview of the carbon modeling performed in our prior work.*

*The purpose behind why we introduce a number of data sources is **not** to describe how they are used as constraints or drivers of the CASA modelling, though biomass~age curves is a constraint to adjust CASA model; **but rather to** introduce the methodology of how we make use of those currently available data sources to infer a pixel's representative time since disturbance, which is objective 1 in this paper. Since all the input data sources can be used directly except for a disturbance map with disturbance type/severity and biomass~age growth curves, so we provided explicit description of how to derive these two important components, and the resulting maps, figures and numbers. Another objective is to make use of the time since disturbance map that we derived for objective 1 with carbon flux trajectory curves from our previous work to map NEP. Since the processes of the CASA model and the methods for deriving carbon flux trajectories were each described in detail in our prior papers (Ghimire et al., 2012, Williams et al., 2014, Ghimire et al., 2015), here we emphasize the approach of applying these trajectories and resulting NEP maps.*

For Fig. 10 and Fig. 11, we divided the two relevant paragraphs in "Discussion" into three parts. The sentence introducing the comparison between the results from this study and those of previous work was moved to "Materials and Methods" and the comparison of those results (formerly Fig. 10 and Fig. 11, now Fig. 9 and Fig. 10) were moved to "Results". We keep associated discussion about likely sources of the discrepancy in the "Discussion" section.

Specific comments

The following comments are broken down into Abstract, Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion and Conclusion sections. General comments on each section will be followed by specific comments with page (P) and line (L) numbers.

Abstract The abstract could be made to flow more easily and make clear that the analysis is feeding into a C-cycling model that represents both the live and dead carbon pools. This will reduce confusion between described / yield curves used which constrain above ground biomass while at the same time reporting a net ecosystem value.

Response: *We edited the abstract to reflect objectives of this manuscript. We clarified biomass growth curves and carbon flux trajectories were used for different objectives. The CASA carbon cycle model was now mentioned in the abstract at lines P1L18 to P1L19.*

Introduction All relevant information appears to be present in the introduction, however not all of the information is clear. I would recommend the use of topic-sentences to improve clarity of your message for each paragraph. Moreover there are a number of sentences where the wording is awkward to read.

Response: *We rewrote most of the "Introduction", making the objectives much clearer and the content proportional to the objectives.*

P2L29 "...remote sensing techniques..." should include "...remote sensing (RS) techniques" as RS is used later.

Response: *Acronym of remote sensing has been included in brackets at line P2L32.*

P2L30 "...remote sensing techniques provide..."

Response: *"... are providing ..." has been changed to "... generate ..." at line P2L33 to avoid repeat use of the word "provide" in the same sentence.*

P2L32 “Such products miss small scale events and extend only so far back in time...” awkward wording. Please reconsider e.g. “However, RS products frequency miss small scale events and only cover the last several decades...”

Response: *This sentence was edited as “However, such disturbance products only record events that occurred within the last several decades, ...” at lines P3L2 to P3L3.*

P3L8 “...provide a way forward to capture at least some of the information that is missing but needed...” awkward wording, Please reconsider rewording.

Response: *This sentence was edited as “Nonetheless, RS-derived forest biomass still provides a valuable way of characterizing the pixel-scale (e.g. 30m or 250 m) legacy effects of disturbance that occurred prior to RS observations, which is required for quantifying carbon stock recovery and carbon uptake and release rates over large areas.” at lines P3L13 to P3L15.*

P3L9 – L20 The final paragraph would be a good place to make a clear statement of the studies objective (key questions) and novelty. However the final paragraph here mixes further introduction and aims. This could be split and made clearer.

Response: *We rewrote the last paragraph in Introduction at lines P3L27 to P4L2, where now all of the objectives are listed. Now it reads as “This study estimates and maps time since disturbance at a fine scale of 30 m from RS-derived products and FIA-derived biomass growth curves, and then maps net ecosystem productivity (NEP) based on disturbance history, time since disturbance and carbon flux legacy. The specific objectives in this study are to: (1) introduce a method for inferring a pixel’s representative time since disturbance from RS-derived biomass and disturbance products at the 30 m resolution; (2) map NEP based on pre-existing, model-derived carbon stock and flux trajectories that describe how NEP changes with time following harvest, fire, or bark beetle disturbances of varying severity; (3) propagate uncertainties from RS-derived biomass products and FIA into uncertainty quantification of stand age and NEP. Our research represents an approach to map carbon stocks and fluxes at a high resolution across the conterminous US in support of national carbon monitoring, reporting, and management.”*

Methods The methods are very long (which I accept may be required) and would benefit from an improved overview section. Where possible the methods sections would benefit from moving some material to the supplementary material to improve focus.

Response: *We made several edits in “2 Materials and Methods”, especially making the “2.1 Overview” more clarified.*

P3L25 “...recent disturbance...” how recent?

Response: *“...recent disturbance...” at line P4L8 refers to disturbance since the starting year of disturbance products as noted in the manuscript. It was edited as “a recent disturbance since the beginning of the relevant RS observations”.*

P3L28 “...terms “time since disturbance” and “stand age” ” would it be possible to pick one of these terms and use it consistently?

Response: *We prefer to use term “time since disturbance” based on context of this paper, while in FIA and other papers, such as Pan et al. (2011), “stand age” was mainly used for undisturbed forests. To make the connection between two terms, here we wrote: terms “time since disturbance” and “stand age” are used interchangeably for recently undisturbed forest pixels thereafter at lines P4L11 to P4L12.*

P3L29 “It was inferred...” possibly “Stand age was inferred...” would be clearer?

Response: *The sentence was edited as “Stand age was inferred ...” at line P4L12.*

P3L30 “The (yield?) curves were sampled from FIA data and specific to forest type and group and site productivity class.” Is this information known in all cases? If not, what is assumed in their place?

Response: *Two out of 16 forest type groups did not have FIA-derived biomass-age curves available, they are “Pinyon/Juniper” and “California Mixed Conifer”, so we used curves of “Other Western Softwood” instead.*

P4L1 “Net ecosystem productivity (NEP)” prior to this point all data / methods mentioned implies that this study is focusing on above ground biomass only. A link to CASA needs to be made earlier to make this clear.

Response: *Two main objectives in this paper are to map time since disturbance and NEP. In section “2.1 Overview”, we spent the first paragraph on methods to infer time since disturbance, and the second paragraph on mapping NEP. So we think it’s appropriate to mention NEP at the beginning of the second paragraph. Besides, CASA model was mentioned here at lines P4L17 to P4L18 now.*

P4L13 It would be useful to have a table with the different data sources listed and state the data and time period they cover.

Response: *We added a new table (Table 1, shown below) in the manuscript to summarize the data sources.*

Table 1. Data sources for inferring time since disturbance for recently disturbed and undisturbed forest pixels.

Data	Description	Source	Year	Input for recently disturbed or/and undisturbed forests
NAFD	Forest disturbance	Landsat	1986-2010	a, b
MTBS	Burned area and severity	Landsat	1986-2010	a
ADS	Area of insect outbreak and number of trees killed	Aerial survey	1997-2010	a
NBCD	Aboveground live biomass	Landsat, SRTM, FIA	2000	b
Forest Type Group	Forest type group	MODIS, NLCD, etc.	2001	b
Site Productivity	Fraction of high productivity	FIA	1984-2014	b
Biomass-age Curves	Biomass accumulation as a function of stand age	FIA	1984-2010	b

^a Data is one of the inputs for inferring time since disturbance for recently disturbed forest pixels.

^b Data is one of the inputs for inferring time since disturbance for recently undisturbed forest pixels.

P5L1 “These assumptions...been reported in the literature.” Long sentence, can you break some of the sentences with lists, multiple concepts or conditions down.

Response: *This sentence has been broken into a short sentence with three lists at lines P5L20 to P5L23. It reads as “These assumptions are based on the rationales: (1) MTBS records most of the notable fire events in the region, (2) harvest events are one of the most ubiquitous stand replacing disturbance types active in the region, (3) ADS-mapped polygons of bark beetle infestations often include unaffected stands as has been reported in the literature”.*

P5L5-10 Consider making this list in a table

Response: We keep four rules in lists.

P5L11-12 “The target year...was 2010”. Possibly make this point earlier say in the overview or introduction aims?

Response: Target mapping year of 2010 was now mentioned in “2.1 Overview” at line P4L9.

P5L23 “age class from ...” how many age classes, are all equal in size?

Response: There are 11 age classes in total: 0-20, 20-40, 40-60, 60-80, 80-100, 100-120, 120-140, 140-160, 160-180, 180-200, 200+. This information has now been included in Table S1.

P5L25 All other units are given as SI. Please do so here too. Also it is odd that up until now forest biomass as been discussed, here you have swapped into volume. Can you convert or is there a reason for this?

Response: The unit “cubic feet/acre/year” here is used by FIA and is the output unit from FIA EVALIDator. We didn’t convert it to SI, since readers will know how we combine 7 site productivity classes (0-19, 20-49, 50-84, 85-119, 120-164, 165-224, 224+ cubic feet/acre/year) into two classes.

P6L1 “Differences in forest masks...” which forest masks? Which products you are using?

Response: Different forest masks were used in NAFD disturbance products and NBCD biomass products. This sentence was edited as “Differences in forest masks between NAFD disturbance and NBCD biomass products led to” at line P6L21. In our study, NAFD-based forest mask was used for the analyses and mapping.

P6L2 “These were replaced by the mean biomass of other undisturbed pixels...” The distributions of stand age in Figure 11 are not Gaussian, would the median be better or is there little difference?

Response: This is a great point. We do compare mean and median biomass of other undisturbed pixels with the same forest type and site productivity class (10 classes here from 0 to 1 with equal interval), and we found there is little difference between mean and median values.

P6L12-13 Again SI units please.

Response: Same reason as previous comment on SI. That is, we would like to keep the unit consistent with outputs from FIA EVALIDator, so readers would know how we combine 7 site productivity classes (0-19, 20-49, 50-84, 85-119, 120-164, 165-224, 224+ cubic feet/acre/year) into two classes.

P6L24 “In reality f_{high} is almost always between 0 and 1.” Can you say what the mean value is or distributional information? Something more informative.

Response: maximal $f_{high} = 0.996$, minimal $f_{high} = 0.015$ and mean $f_{high} = 0.530$ in PNW. We included maximal f_{high} and minimal f_{high} values in the manuscript at lines P7L12 to P7L13.

P7L4 This is the first mention of the CASA model. Please provide a brief description of the mode and how it works. This is needed given that you make reference to its process representation in the discussion P11L1-5. Also what is the model time step used. Over what period is CASA simulating these forests (prior to 2010)? which meteorological drivers are used (e.g. ERA-Interim, GFS)? How realistic are the spin up pool sizes relative to field estimates in undisturbed pixels. Your estimate of C loss in response to disturbance will partially dependent on soil losses which will also be dependent on their initial magnitude

after spin up (e.g. Exbrayat et al., 2014). If this information is available in the cited literature please make this clear.

Response: We now include the following descriptions of CASA model at lines P7L29 to P9L9. It reads as:

“The CASA model used here is based on Randerson et al. (1996) and operates on a monthly time step. It uses a light use efficiency approach to simulating net primary productivity (NPP) based on RS-derived absorption of photosynthetically active radiation, biome parameters, and climate data. The model then allocates NPP to three live carbon pools (leaves, roots, and wood), and transfers carbon to dead pools (litter and soils) based on biome-specific rates of tissue turnover. Carbon in dead organic matter pools is transferred between pools (surface structural C, surface metabolic C, soil structural C, soil metabolic C, aboveground coarse woody debris C, belowground coarse woody debris C, surface microbial C, soil microbial C, slow C and passive C) (Fig. S1). Amounts of carbon transferred to microbial pools and carbon emitted to the atmosphere from microbial decomposition of soil and litter, i.e. heterotrophic respiration (Rh), depend on the rate and efficiency of heterotrophic consumption which varies between pools in the model, and also depends on biome- and pool-specific chemistry and site-specific climate setting such as soil moisture and temperature. The difference between NPP and summed Rh of the ten detrital pools is then calculated as NEP. Aboveground biomass-age curves sampled from FIA database were used as a constraint to adjust wood turnover rate (mortality and shedding) and default output NPP by a scalar parameter, which hence influences accumulation of live biomass and the amounts of carbon allocated to live and deal pools. The adjustment of those CASA parameters was performed for each specific combination of forest type group and site productivity class. Implementation of the model involved a simulation sequence beginning with spin-up to equilibrium carbon pools using FIA-adjusted NPP followed by a pre-disturbance with ensuing regrowth to a set of pre-disturbance ages, and lastly imposition of the disturbance of interest to generate flux and stock dynamics in response to harvest, fire, or beetle outbreak disturbance types at different severities. The fate of carbon influenced by disturbances varied by disturbance type as described below. Disturbance types considered in the model included stand-replacing harvest, fire, and bark beetle outbreak, with full descriptions of the carbon dynamics in pools after disturbances provided in Ghimire et al., 2012, Williams et al., 2014, Ghimire et al., 2015 and described further below.

Model treatments of disturbance impacts to the carbon cycle were as follows. For all disturbance type cases, a post-disturbance decline and ensuing recovery of NPP and fractional allocation to wood were modelled as a negative exponential function of time since disturbance, recovering to the pre-disturbance level within eight years (Williams et al. 2012). The mortality and fate of disturbance killed and/or combusted carbon pools differed by disturbance type. For harvest (Williams et al. 2014), the post-disturbance biomass was set to 50% of the aboveground live wood biomass reported in FIA data for the 0 to 20 year old age class, regardless of the pre-disturbance biomass condition. Harvest-killed live wood, leaves, and roots were calculated from their corresponding fractions of pre-disturbance to post-disturbance conditions. Eighty percent of the disturbance-killed aboveground live wood was assumed to have been removed from the site with the remainder being treated as slash subject to decomposition as coarse woody debris. All leaves of disturbance killed trees are assumed to decompose on-site. All belowground wood that succumbs to mortality enters a belowground coarse woody debris carbon pool. For fire (Ghimire et al. 2012), disturbance kill is portrayed as partial mortality events in which fires reduce pre-fire live biomass pools based on the fractional tree mortality which varies by forest type and fire severity class (high, medium, or low to match the Monitoring Trends in Burn Severity dataset). The amount of live biomass remaining after a fire is calculated from the fraction of vegetation mortality emerging from an extensive literature survey. Fire-killed material is either directly combusted and

released to the atmosphere or transferred to dead carbon pools. The same applies to foliage and root mortality, though roots are not directly combusted. Fire killed trees enter a new standing dead pool in the model with a fast turnover fall rate of 10 years post fire with transfer to the CWD pool. Litter and soil organic carbon in the upper soil layers were also vulnerable to combustion. All of these rates were based on literature review (Ghimire et al. 2012). For bark beetle outbreaks (Ghimire et al. 2015), beetle killed biomass was simulated for a wide range of intensities from near zero to 100% mortality to generate a family of curves that could be applied in the mapping stage. Beetle attack caused leaf carbon to enter the surface litter pool, aboveground wood to enter a snag pool, belowground wood and fine root to enter corresponding soil carbon pools. The portions killed for each were based on the percent mortality imposed for each severity level being simulated, derived from the ratio of the biomass at the midpoint of each severity class (of 1680 levels of intensity) to the pre-disturbed aboveground biomass values corresponding to the mean age of a given forest type under attack (Ghimire et al. 2015). Soil carbon pools respond to all of these dynamics according to the model's climate-mediated turnover times for each carbon pool, and the associated carbon flows (Fig S1)."

Meteorological and satellite based drivers, soil type, biome (forest) type, and other parameter and driver datasets are all described in the original papers (Ghimire et al., 2012, Williams et al., 2014, Ghimire et al., 2015), from which the corresponding results were directly taken.

P7L10 "...curves describing carbon fluxes and stocks..." which stocks / fluxes where are they?

Response: *They include carbon stocks in carbon pools (soil organic carbon, litter, slow turnover soil carbon, aboveground coarse woody debris, belowground coarse woody debris, and total live woody biomass), NPP, Rh and NEP. This sentence was edited as "...curves describing carbon stocks in carbon pools (soil organic carbon, litter, slow turnover soil carbon, aboveground coarse woody debris, belowground coarse woody debris, and total live woody biomass), NPP, Rh and NEP with time since disturbance ..." at lines P9L11 to P9L13. The complete set of these stocks and fluxes trajectories are shown in the supplementary document.*

All these curves were derived in our prior work (Ghimire et al., 2012, Williams et al., 2014, Ghimire et al., 2015), citations were added at the end of this sentences.

P7L15 "This study emphasized the use of NEP curves. Fig. 5 ..." Figure 5 seems to show that C losses do no occur whereas losses do occur in the results (Table 2) as presumably soil and litter C is being decomposed and undergoing mineralisation. So where is the C source represented?

Response: *C losses occur after disturbances, Fig. 5 (now Fig. 4) was replaced by a figure displaying full range of NEP after harvest (Fig. 4a, 4b), fire (Fig. 4c, 4d) and bark beetle (Fig. 4e, 4f). More texts were added in caption of Fig. 5 (now Fig. 4), "The typical pattern of NEP following a disturbance involves a large negative value immediately after disturbance, a rise for a number of years to reach a maximum rate of carbon uptake, and then a gradual decline to a steady state."*

Results

What is the primary focus of the manuscript? A large part of the results section is taken up with a description of the various input maps into the analysis. Much of it seems like it should be in the methods sections as a description of the inputs or could be moved to the supporting information. Unless these are actually new numbers derived from the combination of multiple maps. At the moment it is not clear. Possibly an overview could be given to the results as it takes a lot of reading before you get to any information on the estimates of biomass stocks.

Response: We included four sections in “Results”, the first is about a disturbance map, and the second is on biomass~age growth curves. We provided the resulting maps, figures and numbers of a disturbance map with disturbance type/severity and biomass growth curves, because all the input data for inferring time since disturbance can be readily used except for these two important components, besides these results are new. The third and fourth sections are maps of time since disturbance and NEP, which are the main objectives of this paper. We hope that the substantial revisions we have made clarify the corresponding focus of this manuscript.

P9L11-12 “...these curves yielded a smoothed fit to the inventory data rather than showing a saw-toothed increase with stand age.” Here are you referring to saw-toothed due to managed thinning or stem mortality events?

Response: FIA samples were compiled from FIA plot measurements in Oregon and Washington. Managed thinning or stem mortality events could be part of reasons, but there are also some other possible reasons causing the erratic and fluctuating jumps, such as vagueries of plot-to-plot variability that span climate, soils, topographic and other variations across sampling plots.

P9L23 “Uncertainty on the time since disturbance forest pixels is not currently available from disturbance products and this was not mapped” Could the uncertainty in the yield curves on growth since disturbance be included? How strongly do the yield curves constrain CASA?

Response: No, it would not be logically sound or feasible to use uncertainty in the yield curves to characterize uncertainty in the time since disturbance mapped from remote sensing (Landsat spectral reflectances).

The yield curves provide very important adjustments to the default NPP and wood turnover rates in the biome-scale parameters in the CASA model. Without this adjustment, the CASA model, which is designed for global scale applications, would not provide an accurate and fitting representation of forest biomass for the fine-scale and diverse settings of the US where we are applying the model.

P9L29 “Spatial variations in mean annual NEP are noticeably correlated with...” Why not actually correlate them to quantify this? A new x~y figure might be useful here too.

Response: We estimated NEP based on carbon flux trajectories, which vary by time since disturbance, forest type group and site productivity. The relationships between NEP and these variables have been presented by trajectory curves in Fig. 4 and Fig. S2, S3, S4, S5, S6 in supplementary document, and are directly applied in the mapping exercise so there is no new information derived in the mapping aside from the spatial allocation. The patterns are indeed interesting and can be important for some applications but an x~y plot would not be particularly instructive (it would simply recover the trajectories applied in the mapping). Besides, we didn’t mean to explore relationships between NEP and input data. So we edited this sentence as “Spatial variations in mean annual NEP are determined by differences in strata of ...” at line P12L6.

P9L30-31 “...weaker carbon sinks in the eastern, drier portion of the study area...” Again this could be show in an x~y plotting soil moisture / precipitation against C sink strength to quantify.

Response: Here we meant to describe a spatial pattern in NEP map, which has lower NEP values in the east side of the study area. We mentioned “drier” just because the eastern part of study area is less humid from our knowledge. We do not intend to emphasize the relationship between NEP and soil moisture/precipitation. We removed “drier” from the text at line P12L8.

P10L6 “Forestlands free of recent disturbance...” could be “Undisturbed forests are...” just trying to be consistent with the terms you use.

Response: Edited as “Recently undisturbed forests are ...” at line P12L15.

Discussion

P10L21-23 Awkward sentence please rephrase / breakdown into smaller parts.

Response: This sentence was shortened as “Our method of inferring time since disturbance to estimate carbon flux and biomass accumulation relies on a number of data products and assumptions that need to be critically evaluated.” at lines P13L3 to P13L4.

P10L25-26 Odd place the begin new paragraph. You appear to be continuing your point from the first paragraph.

Response: We would like to keep each assumption as one paragraph, we also added more discussion on the first assumption at lines P13L6 to P13L12.

P10L27 It is not clear what you mean. Are you talking about how the stand-level biomass estimate was calculated or how the real world stand was managed / grew?

Response: We mean how the real world stand was accumulated to the current amount of biomass. The sentence was edited as “... how that stand-level biomass was actually achieved ...” at line P13L21.

P10L29 “...or also from a recent disturbance that reduced biomass to the current level.” I think you need a reference here.

Response: Reference “Xu et al., 2012” was added at the end of this sentence at line P13L24.

P10L30 “...varies depending on the type of stand-replacing disturbance”. Are you referring to e.g. clear felling vs fire?

Response: Correct.

P11L1-4 Currently you have not described the model used to provide required background for these statements.

Response: This has now been added as noted above (responses to the comment starting with P7L4 above).

P11L4 “...initial rise through stand initialization.” Are you talking about early phases of forest growth? How long does initialization take?

Response: Establishment of stands can of course take a variable amount of time depending on many factors. In the modeling (as described in our prior work) we assumed that NPP post disturbance rises to a steady rate over the course of 8 years post-disturbance, and that allocation of NPP to woody biomass also increases over that interval.

P11L9 “...which are sure to have errors.” Are there any estimates of this error?

Response: We meant to say input maps (maps of biomass, forest type group, site productivity and forest disturbance) have errors. The accuracies of biomass and forest type group were assessed and provided by the data provider, however site productivity and forest disturbance not.

P11L9-13 Should this not be first introduced in the methods section if these describe errors between field information and the maps you have used to constrain your model. Also, is there a bias associated with these errors? If so, how do you expect these biases to impact your analysis. Might a bias here impact the differing conclusions between here and your previous works?

Response: *We intend to discuss that there are errors associated with these input maps, and how we partly account for these uncertainties in this study. We developed more discussion on these, including:*

(1) Adding a new discussion paragraph on Kellndorfer NBCD biomass products. It reads as “Second, we assume remote sensing-derived NBCD biomass products were well calibrated by field-derived biomass. However, the correlation coefficients between observed and predicted biomass were estimated to be 0.62-0.75 in the PNW region (Kellndorfer et al., 2012). And at 30 m pixel level, NBCD biomass values were biased with a large number of zero biomass values that had predictions in local biomass products (Huang et al., 2015). Discrepancies in biomass values between remote sensing- and field-derived data lead to biased stand age, as well as associated carbon stocks and fluxes. These were addressed in this study by imposing 20% error to pixel level biomass estimates and replacing zero biomass by the mean biomass of neighboring forest pixels with the same forest type and site productivity.” at lines P13L13 to P13L19.

(2) Adding more discussion on forest type group, it reads as “Accuracy of forest type group map in the PNW region ranges from 61% to 69% (Ruefenacht et al., 2008); besides, forest type groups for some pixels undefined from original data were assigned as the forest types of the nearest pixels. For the same biomass value, inferred stand age and estimated carbon fluxes can vary greatly given difference in forest type group (Fig. 4 & Fig. 6); however, forest type group induced biases in NEP were not accounted due to the lack of information on associated errors from the spatial assignment of forest type group.” at lines P14L5 to P14L9. Uncertainties and associated errors from forest type group were not accounted due to the lack of information on those uncertainties. At the very least a confusion matrix would be required to characterize the probability mis-assignment and the probable alternative assignment of forest type group. Unfortunately such a confusion matrix was not made available for this mapped data product.

(3) Developing more discussion on ADS data, and now it reads as “The ADS dataset is known to be limited by the areas flown in the survey years, and likely underestimate the number of trees killed by bark beetles but likely overestimate the area of affected stands (Meddens et al., 2012). Uncertainties from ADS dataset have important consequences for the carbon balance and flux estimates from bark beetle outbreaks, part of them were accounted for by Ghimire et al. (2015).” at lines P14L9 to P14L13.

We expect errors from input map will bring bias in stand age and NEP estimates, so we propagated part of these uncertainties into our estimates, and provided a distribution of estimates, including quantiles and standard deviation, instead of a single value.

P11L27-28 Introducing new information in figures which are not described in the results. This should not be the case. If the figure and comparison is really needed then it should be included in the results and be part of the experimental design. or could be moved to SI.

Response: *We divided this paragraph into three parts. The sentence of introducing comparison was moved to “Materials and Methods” at lines P7L21 to P7L23, comparing results and Fig. 10 (now Fig. 9) was moved to “Results” at lines P11L28 to P11L31, and we keep the discussion on discrepancy from comparison in “Discussion” section at lines P14L27 to P15L4.*

P12L12-15 New analysis should not be introduced in the discussion. Also Figure 11 did not appear in the results either. Again, if these comparison and figure is needed then make it part of the experimental design and introduce it in the results section first.

Response: Similar to response to previous comment, we divided this paragraph into three parts. The sentence of introducing comparison was moved to “Materials and Methods” at lines P7L23 to P7L24, comparing results and Fig. 11 (now Fig. 10) was moved to “Results” at lines P11L31 to P12L4, and we keep the discussion on discrepancy from comparison in “Discussion” section at lines P15L5 to P15L10.

P12L14-15 “...distribution agrees well with that for our undisturbed...” poor working rephrase.

Response: This sentence was edited as “Overall, the pattern of FIA-derived age distribution matches well with that derived from our study, but with our study having consistently lower forest areas at age classes larger than 20.” at lines P12L1 to P12L3.

P12L18, P13L4,L18 Multiple definitions of what is a young forest. Can you reconcile these?

Response: P12L18: We replaced “stand of young ages” by “stand with ages ranging from 0 to 24” at lines P15L6 to P15L7.

P13L4: We deleted “young” from “young regenerating forests” at line P16L4.

P13L18: We replaced “relatively mature (>24 year old) forests” by “undisturbed forests during 1986-2010” at line P16L18.

P12L22 “A portion of this difference can be attributed to smaller net carbon losses...” If I understand correctly here you mean greater loss / more negative? Comparing between -4 TgC and -7 TgC? Not clear.

Response: Correct. This study reports more net carbon losses (-7 Tg C y^{-1}) than -4 Tg C y^{-1} reported in our previous work (Williams et al., 2014). The sentence was edited as “A portion of this difference can be attributed to larger net carbon losses from forestlands (-7 Tg y^{-1} carbon loss in this study vs. -4 Tg y^{-1} carbon loss in Williams et al.) due to recent (1986 to 2010) disturbance by either harvest or fire.” at lines P15L21 to P15L23.

P12L31-33 Is the PNW region representative of forestry in the US?

Response: We meant western US, not US at P12L31-33 (now P15L30 to P15L32). Bark beetle outbreak in PNW is not representative of forests in western US, where rocky mountain north (RMN) and rocky mountain south (RMS) regions contribute more to the net carbon release due to bark beetle disturbance (36%, 35%), while less (1%) in Pacific Southwest (PSW) region (Ghimire et al. 2015).

P13L19 Good to see some comparison with other studies. Are there any more available to broaden the discussion?

Response: Thank you. We have current discussions on NEP comparisons.

Figures

All of the figure captions need to be expanded to make clear where the data / analysis from each figure comes from and any key features. Also there appears to be substantial repetition of the disturbance figure. Can the figures be re-arrange to minimize this / move some of these maps to the SI.

Response: We edited all the figure captions to include more detailed descriptions, and deleted Fig. 1.

We provided two figures on forest disturbance, one is year of last disturbance map from NAFD, MTBS and ADS, and the other one is integrated disturbance map (disturbance year and type), which is one of the resulting figures and new contribution to current disturbance maps.

Figure 5. These NEP do not show C loss, even though your analysis does. These figures reinforce the confusion between whether or not you are analyzing the C balance of the ecosystem as a whole or just the live biomass. If you are analyzing the whole ecosystem the NEP would surely be negative directly after disturbance due to litter and soil C turnover?

Response: *We analyzed the whole ecosystem, and Fig. 5 (now Fig. 4) was replaced by a figure displaying full range of NEP after harvest (Fig. 4a, 4b), fire (Fig. 4c, 4d) and bark beetle (Fig. 4e, 4f). More texts were added in caption of Fig. 5 (now Fig. 4), “The typical pattern of NEP following a disturbance involves a large negative value immediately after disturbance, a rise for a number of years to reach a maximum rate of carbon uptake, and then a gradual decline to a steady state.”*

Figure 10. In your analysis are “Years Since Disturbance” and “Stand Age” the same thing? If so why in the same figure are you referring to this by different names. Particularly as in the caption you refer to both as “Stand age”.

Response: *In our study, for undisturbed or stand-replacing disturbed forests, “years since disturbance” and “stand age” are the same thing; while for partial disturbed forest, they are not. We used term “years since disturbance” in this paper, and Pan et al. (2011) used term “stand age”, so we keep both to be consistent with original paper. We edited the figure caption of Fig. 10 (now Fig. 9).*

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Interactive comment on “High-resolution forest carbon flux mapping and monitoring in the Pacific Northwest with time since disturbance and disturbance legacies inferred from remote sensing and inventory data” by Huan Gu et al.

Anonymous Referee #2

Received and published: 21 June 2016

We would like to thank the reviewer for giving us very helpful suggestions that help us greatly improve the quality of this manuscript. We provided our responses to all the comments point by point below (italicized typeface) with page (P) and line (L) numbers referred if necessary.

This is a pretty good and potentially useful paper that could be published after some modifications. The main problems I can identify are (1) the introduction is poorly written in places, (2) an important and highly relevant citation is missing, and (3) the discussion needs more work.

Response: *(1) We rewrote most of the “Introduction”, making the content proportional to the objectives. (2) The suggested citation was included in our introduction. (3) We expanded more in discussion. Please refer to point-by-point responses for detailed information.*

Detailed comments below address some problems with the introduction. The missing citation is more troubling since it presents an alternative approach to using the CASA model for estimating growth (or NEP) which is a center piece of this study. The citation is: Raymond, C. L., Healey, S., Peduzzi, A., Patterson, P. 2015. Representative regional models of post-disturbance forest carbon accumulation: Integrating inventory data and a growth and yield model. *Forest Ecology and Management* 336: 21-34. This should be referenced in a couple of places (p. 2 line 20 and p. 4 line 1).

Response: *Thanks for suggested citation, we have included it in our introduction at line P3L24.*

The discussion should compare using the CASA model and using the Raymond et al. approach which relies on an FIA driven empirical model, the Forest Vegetation Simulator (FVS). What are the advantages and disadvantages of each approach, and do they yield similar results (the regions are different but still may be able to compare results for one or two forest types). I also suggest that the discussion should explore in more depth the many assumptions and inferences that have to be made to estimate time since disturbance for “undisturbed” pixels (section 2.2.2). For example, the Kellndorfer biomass map used to estimate biomass of “undisturbed” pixels has fairly high uncertainty at the pixel level; some pixels were assigned forest types based on a nearby neighbor pixel, etc. By the way, the title of section 2.2.2 is an oxymoron – if the pixel is “undisturbed” there should not be a time since disturbance. So instead of “undisturbed” the authors should use a different term to identify pixels that had no detected disturbance since 1986, perhaps something like “recently undisturbed”.

Response: *We didn’t compare CASA and FVS models in discussion for two reasons: (1) the process of carbon cycle model is not the main focus in this paper, which has been described and discussed in our prior work (Williams et al., 2012, Ghimire et al., 2012, Ghimire et al., 2015). Our objective related to CASA is to use CASA-derived carbon stock and flux trajectories to do mapping; (2) it’s not appropriate to compare carbon trajectories developed for different study area. Both CASA and FVS models heavily depend on FIA data, without same/similar FIA input, the comparison won’t make a solid point. But when we moved to Rocky Mountain region in our future work, it sounds a good idea to make such comparison.*

We added a new discussion paragraph on Kellndorfer NBCD biomass products at lines P13L13 to P13L19. It reads as “Second, we assume RS-derived NBCD biomass products were well calibrated by

field-derived biomass. However, the correlation coefficients between observed and predicted biomass were estimated to be 0.62-0.75 in the PNW region (Kellndorfer et al., 2012). And at 30 m pixel level, NBCD biomass values were biased with a large number of zero biomass values that had predictions in local biomass products (Huang et al., 2015). Discrepancies in biomass values between RS- and field-derived data lead to biased estimates in stand age and associated carbon stocks and fluxes. These were addressed in this study by imposing 20% error to pixel level biomass estimates and replacing zero biomass by the mean biomass of neighboring forest pixels with the same forest type and site productivity.”

We also added more discussion on forest type group at lines P14L5 to P14L9. It reads as “Accuracy of forest type group map in the PNW region ranges from 61% to 69% (Ruefenacht et al., 2008); besides, forest type groups for some pixels undefined from original data were assigned as the forest types of the nearest pixels. For the same biomass value, inferred stand age and estimated carbon fluxes can vary greatly given difference in forest type group (Fig. 4 & Fig. 6); however, forest type group induced biases in NEP were not accounted due to the lack of information on associated errors from the spatial assignment of forest type group.”

The title of section 2.2.2 was edited as “Time since disturbance for recently undisturbed forest pixels”.

Specific comments

The title is too long and redundant. Suggest “High-resolution forest carbon flux mapping in the Pacific Northwest with disturbance legacies inferred from remote sensing and inventory data”. Could also leave out “in the Pacific Northwest”.

Response: *We apologize that our title didn’t fully convey main objectives and focuses of this manuscript, we edited the title as “High-resolution mapping of time since disturbance and forest carbon flux from remote sensing and inventory data to assess harvest, fire, and beetle disturbance legacies in the Pacific Northwest”.*

p. 1 line 22: delete the second “probabilistic,”

Response: *Second “probabilistic” was deleted as suggested at line P1L21.*

p. 1 line 26: re-word so that it does not appear that tracts of land can somehow “see”.

Response: *“seen” was deleted from the sentence at line P1L24.*

p. 2 line 13: replace “is itself a sort of record of” with “reflects”

Response: *Replaced as suggested at line P2L16.*

p. 2 line 14: replace “general” with “predictable rate of”

Response: *Replaced as suggested at line P2L16.*

p. 2 line 22-23: needs some rewording. The idea is that it is important to include smallscale disturbances down to some minimum threshold, not that disturbances typically are at this small scale.

Response: *The sentence was edited as “characterization of time since disturbance across landscapes at a scale of being able to detect small-scale disturbance events, typically around 100 m or less.” at lines P2L25 to P2L26.*

p. 2 lines 27-28: add “at smaller scales” to the end since national forests inventories can provide useful guidance only at larger scales. But importantly note, it is possible to conduct field inventories at very small scales, so the statement is not very correct at all, only partially correct with respect to national forest inventories.

Response: “at smaller scales” was added at the end of this sentence at line P2L31.

p. 3 lines 11-12: One objective is clearly stated. What are the others? The last sentence of this paragraph seems to be another objective, but then, I’m confused as to whether the purpose is to develop a method for large-scale monitoring and management, or small-scale, or both?

Response: We rewrote the last paragraph in Introduction at lines P3L27 to P4L2, where now all of the objectives are listed. It reads as “This study estimates and maps time since disturbance at a fine scale of 30 m from RS-derived products and FIA-derived biomass growth curves, and then maps net ecosystem productivity (NEP) based on disturbance history, time since disturbance and carbon flux legacy. The specific objectives in this study are to: (1) introduce a method for inferring a pixel’s representative time since disturbance from RS-derived biomass and disturbance products at the 30 m resolution; (2) map NEP based on pre-existing, model-derived carbon stock and flux trajectories that describe how NEP changes with time following harvest, fire, or bark beetle disturbances of varying severity; (3) propagate uncertainties from RS-derived biomass products and FIA into uncertainty quantification of stand age and NEP. Our research represents an approach to map carbon stocks and fluxes at a high resolution across the conterminous US in support of national carbon monitoring, reporting, and management.”

The last sentence of this paragraph is misleading, we have edited it as shown above. Our method will be used to map carbon stock and fluxes at a fine scale in the conterminous US.

p. 3 lines 27-28. Terminology again – “undisturbed” pixels by definition should not have a time since disturbance.

Response: “undisturbed forest pixels” has been edited as “recently undisturbed forest pixels” at line P4L12.

p. 3 line 32: Biomass curves were developed by forest type group and productivity class. How were these 2 classes allocated to the 5 NEP classes described on p. 4 lines 2-4?

Response: Biomass curves by forest type group and productivity class were derived from FIA and used to infer stand age for forest pixels undisturbed during remote sensing observation period.

NEP curves were derived from CASA carbon cycle process model with inclusion of disturbance processes. Biomass curves were used to adjust model’s rates of NPP and wood turnover for each forest type group and productivity class. At the final stage of the modeling, the disturbance processes imposed stand-replacing harvest, fire or insect-induced partial disturbance to generate carbon stock and flux curves as a function of time since disturbance, and are specific to forest type group, site productivity class, disturbance type and disturbance severity. Detailed descriptions of CASA model were provided at lines P7L29 to P9L9 now.

p. 3 line 35: add citation after “. . .varying severity”.

Response: Citations “Ghimire et al., 2012, Williams et al. 2014, Ghimire et al., 2015” were added after “. . . varying severity” at line P4L19.

p. 6 line 26: replace “stand” with “standard”

Response: Replaced as suggested at line P7L19.

p. 8 line 21: sentence that begins with “Again” needs editing.

Response: This sentence was edited as “Again in contrast, bark beetle outbreak areas for low and high productivity classes are similar in Douglas-fir forests, but beetle outbreak occurrence was about three times more likely in low productivity sites.” at lines P10L27 to P10L29.

p. 9 lines 24-25: the imprint is not so clear to me. Maybe need to highlight somehow on the graphic.

Response: We included the position description of Biscuit fire in the bracket at line P12L11, “bottom left of Fig. 8a, also refer to bottom left of Fig. 5a & 5b”.

p. 10 lines 12-14: One could argue that inventory data does not provide such a reliable estimate of biomass/age. Both of these variables can be rather difficult to measure/estimate especially with respect to the selection of biomass equations, but also the difficulty of assigning a stand age to stands that are uneven-aged.

Response: We added more discussion on the first assumption as suggested at lines P13L6 to P13L12. It reads as: “However, both stand age and biomass are difficult to measure and estimate, especially considering the difficulty of assigning a stand age to uneven-aged forest stands, as well as selecting appropriate species-specific biomass equations (Parresol, 1999). If FIA ages are older than actual stand ages, the associated forest biomass will be underestimated, and stand age inferred from biomass products will be overestimated. And younger FIA ages than actual ages will result in an overestimation in biomass accumulation, but an underestimation in biomass-inferred stand ages. Though a possible bias in stand ages, our estimates of carbon stocks and fluxes are not likely to be largely adjusted by a stand age bias within 5 years (Williams et al., 2012).”

p. 12 lines 1-7: not stated—TFIA does not do a good job of detecting recent disturbances because the remeasurement cycle in the PNW is about 10 years, so the average time lag of the data at any point in time is at least 5 years.

Response: We added the suggested point in this paragraph at lines P15L8 to P15L9, now it reads as “FIA data miss some recent disturbances, partly because FIA remeasurement cycle in the PNW region is about 10 years, with the average time lag of the data being around 5 years.”

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High-resolution mapping of time since disturbance and forest carbon flux from remote sensing and inventory data to assess harvest, fire, and beetle disturbance legacies in the Pacific Northwest

Huan Gu¹, Christopher A. Williams¹, Bardan Ghimire^{1,2}, Feng Zhao³, Chengquan Huang³

5 ¹Graduate School of Geography, Clark University, Worcester, MA 01610, USA

²Earth Sciences Division, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Berkeley, CA 94720, USA

³Department of Geographical Sciences, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, USA

Correspondence to: Huan Gu (HuGu@clarku.edu, guhuan114031@gmail.com)

Abstract. Accurate assessment of forest carbon storage and uptake is central to understanding the role forests play in the global carbon cycle and policy-making aimed at mitigating climate change. Disturbances have highly diverse impacts on forest carbon dynamics, representing a challenge to quantify and report. Time since disturbance is a key intermediate determinant that aided the assessment of disturbance-driven carbon emissions and removals legacies. We proposed a new methodology of quantifying time since disturbance and carbon flux across forested landscapes in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) at a fine scale (30 m) by combining remote sensing (RS) based disturbance year, disturbance type, and aboveground biomass with forest inventory data. When a recent disturbance was detected, time since disturbance can be directly determined by combination of three RS-derived disturbance products; and if not, time since last stand-clearing was inferred from RS-derived 30 m biomass map and field inventory-derived species-specific biomass accumulation curves. Net ecosystem productivity (*NEP*) was further mapped based on carbon stock and flux trajectories derived from Carnegie-Ames-Stanford Approach (CASA) model in our prior work that described how *NEP* changes with time following harvest, fire, or bark beetle disturbances of varying severity. Uncertainties from biomass map and forest inventory data were propagated by probabilistic sampling to provide a statistical distribution of stand age and *NEP* for each forest pixel. We mapped mean, standard deviation and statistical distribution of stand age and *NEP* at 30 m in the PNW region. Our map indicated a net ecosystem productivity of 5.9 Tg C y⁻¹ for forestlands circa 2010 in the study area, with net uptake in relatively mature (>24 year old) forests (13.6 Tg C y⁻¹) overwhelming net negative *NEP* from tracts that have recent harvest (-6.4 Tg C y⁻¹), fires (-0.5 Tg C y⁻¹), and bark beetle outbreaks (-0.8 Tg C y⁻¹). The approach will be applied to forestlands in other regions of the conterminous US to advance a more comprehensive monitoring, mapping and reporting the carbon consequences of forest change across the US.

1 Introduction

Disturbances profoundly alter ecosystems often with legacies that persist for decades to centuries (Turner, 2010). Correspondingly, time since disturbance is a key determinant of ecosystem structure, composition, and function (Jenny, 1980; Chapin et al., 2012). It is also a primary control on many components of the forest carbon cycle, such as live biomass, coarse woody debris biomass, forest floor biomass, biomass accumulation, and so forth (Bradford et al., 2008). Considering time since disturbance is therefore essential for quantifying and predicting a wide range of ecological functions, including carbon stocks and fluxes, which are highly dynamic following disturbances, presenting a significant challenge for carbon budget assessment (Williams et al., 2014).

A number of prior studies have sought to incorporate the time since last stand-clearing disturbance, analogous to forest stand age, as a determinant or predictor of carbon fluxes and stocks (Cohen et al., 1996; Chen et al., 2002; Chen et al., 2003; Law et al., 2004; Turner et al., 2004; Liu et al., 2011; Pan et al., 2011; Williams et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2012; Williams et al., 2014). Data from the Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) offers one source for characterizing time since stand-replacing disturbance at broad scales (Williams et al., 2012; Williams et al., 2014). Stand ages were recorded by coring and dating of large trees in forest plots (FIA, 2015), because high severity, stand replacing events that level all canopy dominants and even understory individuals leave a clearer mark of disturbance timing (Schoennagel et al., 2004). Aboveground live biomass also reflects the time since disturbance in so far, as biomass exhibits a predictable rate of accumulation following stand replacement. The rate of biomass accumulation is influenced by a wide range of factors, such as climate, soil and site fertility, species composition, successional dynamics, the type of stand-replacing disturbance, and impacts from varying severity disturbance events (Johnson et al., 2000). The complex combination of how these factors are distributed across landscapes challenges generic characterization of time since disturbance, and most importantly post-disturbance forest carbon dynamics. Though forest inventory remains one of the only ways of quantifying time since disturbance, it is an imperfect surrogate for time since disturbance at broad scales, because for low severity, partial disturbance events, time since disturbance can be difficult to quantify in field surveys.

Large-area fine-scale assessments of forest carbon stocks and fluxes require spatially extensive and continuous characterization of time since disturbance across landscapes at a scale of being able to detect small-scale disturbance events, typically around 100 m or less. FIA stand age plot data can be used to create a continuous forest stand age map at resolutions of 250 m in conterminous US (Pan et al., 2011). However, such efforts are significantly limited by sparse plot coverage, poor representation of partial disturbances, and the fact that stand age, disturbance legacies, and carbon stocks and fluxes all vary widely at 250 m and coarser scales. Quantification of carbon stocks and fluxes based on coarse-scale stand age information could be biased (Zhang et al., 2012). Thus, field inventory imputed carbon stocks and fluxes can only provide rough guidance for forest carbon management, monitoring and verification at small scales (Wilson et al., 2013).

A number of remote sensing (RS) data and methods are available to quantify disturbance timing or disturbance timing related attributes. Time-series Landsat data and disturbance detection methods generate spatially extensive characterization

of contemporary disturbance events and magnitude, providing a direct estimate of time since disturbance (Cohen et al., 2002; Goward et al., 2008; Huang et al., 2010; Zhu et al., 2012). However, such disturbance products only record events that occurred within the last several decades, thus missing the long-lasting legacies from disturbances that occurred before the beginning of the relevant remote sensing observations. Fortunately, such long-lasting legacy effects are partially captured from RS-derived stand ages or aboveground biomass (Cohen et al., 1995; Saatchi et al., 2011; Kellndorfer et al., 2013). Stand age maps directly determined from RS only offer rough age estimates binned into several classes over a large area, while aboveground biomass products estimated from optical, radar and lidar data can provide pixel-level biomass (Cohen et al., 1995; Saatchi et al., 2011; Kellndorfer et al., 2013). Such aboveground biomass products have the potential to support inferences about additional properties of a given forest stand such as stand age and disturbance legacy, particularly when considered within a well-defined regional context of typical biomass accumulation rates for a local set of edaphic, climatic, and forest-type settings (Zhang et al., 2014). There may be considerable ambiguity and confusion arising from incomplete information, as well as the potential for a range of field conditions that yield similar aboveground biomass or forest structure. Nonetheless, RS-derived forest biomass still provides a valuable way of characterizing the pixel-scale (e.g. 30m or 250 m) legacy effects of disturbance that occurred prior to RS observations, which is required for quantifying carbon stock recovery and carbon uptake and release rates over large areas. Combining disturbance products with other available disturbance layers is needed to distinguish among different disturbance types and severities to help assess carbon balance as a consequence of varying disturbance type and severity (Cohen et al., 2002).

Disturbance events are highly heterogeneous in space, with both occurrence and severity varying interactively with a wide range of site factors, resulting in highly diverse impacts on forest carbon dynamics (Turner, 2010). The effects of disturbances on forest carbon in US forests were assessed and simulated with time since disturbance from FIA data by a number of growth-based or process-based modelling approaches (e.g. Williams et al., 2016). This generates regional carbon stock and flux trajectories with time since disturbance following fire, bark beetle and harvest with varying severity (Turner et al., 2004; Turner et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2012; Ghimire et al., 2012; Williams et al., 2014; Ghimire et al., 2015; Raymond et al., 2015). Previous studies that used model-derived trajectory curves to map carbon fluxes as a consequence of disturbances mainly focused on only one of the disturbance types, but accounting for multiple disturbance types is necessary for more accurately mapping and reporting carbon dynamics (Williams et al., 2016).

This study estimates and maps time since disturbance at a fine scale of 30 m from RS-derived products and FIA-derived biomass growth curves, and then maps net ecosystem productivity (*NEP*) based on disturbance history, time since disturbance and carbon flux legacy. The specific objectives in this study are to: (1) introduce a method for inferring a pixel's representative time since disturbance from RS-derived biomass and disturbance products at the 30 m resolution; (2) map *NEP* based on pre-existing, model-derived carbon stock and flux trajectories that describe how *NEP* changes with time following harvest, fire, or bark beetle disturbances of varying severity; (3) propagate uncertainties from RS-derived biomass products and FIA into uncertainty quantification of stand age and *NEP*. Our research represents an approach to map carbon

stocks and fluxes at a high resolution across the conterminous US in support of national carbon monitoring, reporting, and management.

2 Materials and Methods

2.1 Overview

5 Time since disturbance for each forest pixel was identified with one of the following two approaches depending on whether a recent disturbance was detected. The indicators of forest disturbances including disturbance type and year were determined from combination of three RS-derived disturbance products based on assumed rules. For those pixels that have been mapped as having a recent disturbance since the beginning of the relevant RS observations, time since disturbance was directly estimated by the difference between the target mapping year (year 2010 in this study) and the year of the last observed disturbance. For forest pixels that were not disturbed during the time span of the disturbance product, we inferred time since last stand-clearing disturbance, which is also called “stand age” (Masek and Collatz, 2006); terms “time since disturbance” and “stand age” are used interchangeably for recently undisturbed forest pixels thereafter. Stand age was inferred from RS-derived biomass data by finding the typical stand age that corresponds to each pixel’s biomass according to field inventory-derived biomass-age curves, known as yield tables in forestry. The curves were sampled from FIA data and specific to forest type group and site productivity class. Consequently, maps of forest type group and site productivity aid pixel-level determination of which biomass-age curve is to be used for each pixel.

15 *NEP in 2010* across the PNW region was mapped based on carbon stock and flux trajectories derived from Carnegie-Ames-Stanford Approach (CASA) model in our prior work describing how *NEP* changes with time following harvest, fire, or bark beetle disturbances of varying severity (Ghimire et al., 2012, Williams et al. 2014, Ghimire et al., 2015). *NEP* curves with time since disturbance vary by forest type and site productivity class, and are unique to post-harvest (Williams et al. 2012), post-fire (Ghimire et al., 2012) and post-bark beetle (Ghimire et al., 2015) disturbance types. *NEP* trajectories were applied to pixels with attributes of time since disturbance, forest type group, site productivity class, disturbance type, and disturbance severity to estimate carbon fluxes in forests caused by post-disturbance growth and decomposition locally and regionally.

2.2 Inferring time since disturbance from remote sensing and inventory data

2.2.1 Time since disturbance for disturbed forest pixels

North American Forest Dynamics (NAFD) disturbance products, Monitoring Trends in Burn Severity (MTBS) and Aerial Detection Surveys (ADS) polygons were used to determine whether and when forest pixels were disturbed during 1986 to 2010 (Table 1). NAFD products include 25 annual and two time-integrated forest disturbance maps with spatial resolution of 30 m for the conterminous United States (CONUS) (Goward et al., 2015). These maps were derived from annual time series

Landsat images from 1986 to 2010 using the Vegetation Change Tracker (VCT) algorithm (Huang et al., 2009; Huang et al., 2010). In this paper, we used one of the time-integrated data layers, which maps the year of the most recent forest disturbance between 1986 and 2010. The MTBS project maps annual burned area and burn severity at 30 m resolution across all lands of the United States from 1984 to 2014 (Eidenshink et al., 2007). Burned areas were determined by the differenced Normalized Burn Ratio (dNBR) index calculated across time-series Landsat images. MTBS defines burn severity classes based on distribution of dNBR values and ecological settings. We integrated the annual MTBS data from 1986 to 2010 into two images: (1) year of the most recent fire event and (2) burn severity corresponding to the recent fire, and applied a NAFD forest area mask to the integrated maps. The ADS program conducts annual surveys to investigate forest injury caused by insect outbreaks using aircraft observations since 1997, and generates polygons recording a number of attributes including disturbance year, areas and number of trees killed by insects per area. We selected polygons attacked by bark beetles from 1997 to 2010, converted the number of trees killed by bark beetles per area to biomass killed per area by multiplying county-level FIA-derived average aboveground biomass per tree for corresponding forest types, and then binned biomass killed per area into different bark beetle severity levels (Ghimire et al., 2015). Those polygons were rasterized into two images with a cell size of 30 m: (1) year of bark beetle occurrence and (2) the severity of bark beetle outbreak represented by the amount of live biomass killed, with a NAFD forest mask applied to these two images.

Preprocessed layers of NAFD (Fig. 1a), MTBS (Fig. 1b) and ADS (Fig. 1c) data characterized the year of most recent disturbance events. These three layers were integrated to create a single 30 m resolution image of disturbance type associated with the last disturbance between 1986 and 2010. Since the NAFD disturbances have not yet been fully attributed to disturbance type, and because some pixels are recorded as having experienced more than one disturbance type, we made four simplistic rules to define a single disturbance type to each pixel. These assumptions are based on the rationales: (1) MTBS records most of the notable fire events in the region, (2) harvest events are one of the most ubiquitous stand replacing disturbance types active in the region, (3) ADS-mapped polygons of bark beetle infestations often include unaffected stands as has been reported in the literature (Meddens et al., 2012; Vanderhoof et al., 2014). Our four rules were: (1) When NAFD and MTBS overlap, if the two events are within 3 years we assigned fire to the pixel, and if the two were separated by more than 3 years, we assigned whichever event type was most recent event with harvest for NAFD, and fire for MTBS. (2) When NAFD and ADS overlap, if the two events were separated by more than 3 years, harvest was assigned to the overlapping areas, but if they occurred within three years of each other, bark beetle outbreak was assigned. (3) When MTBS and ADS overlap, the overlapping areas were assigned fire. (4) Harvest was assigned to all remaining disturbed pixels identified by NAFD. The year of last disturbance for each disturbed pixel was then assigned based on the year of disturbance in each corresponding disturbance data product. Time since disturbance for disturbed pixels was then calculated as the difference between target mapping year of 2010 and the year of last disturbance.

2.2.2 Time since disturbance for recently undisturbed forest pixels

For the remaining forest pixels having no disturbance detected during 1986 to 2010, national biomass datasets were used to identify the corresponding stand age inferred from biomass-age curves that are specific to forest type groups and site productivity classes (Table 1). Mapped strata of forest type group and site productivity were used to determine the appropriate biomass-age curve to be used in referring stand age from biomass.

Biomass-age curves were derived from the FIA database, sampled to provide means and sampling errors for two attributes: aboveground dry weight of live trees and area of forest land. The ratio of these two attributes provides aboveground live wood biomass per area. We obtained the ratios and associated errors for the PNW region through the USDA Forest Service FIA EVALIDator online tool (<http://apps.fs.fed.us/Evalidator/evaluator.jsp>). This yielded biomass per area within strata of forest type groups (28 classes), stand age (11 classes) and site productivity (7 classes) (Table S1). We combined the original 7 site productivity classes into high and low productivity classes, defined by the rate of forest volume growth as 120 to 225+ cubic feet/acre/year and 20 to 119 cubic feet/acre/year respectively. Ratios and sampling errors were recalculated for each forest type group, age class and site productivity based on this grouping. Biomass-age curves were fitted following Williams et al. (2012) by parameterizing a wood production model that best matches the field inventory data. A Monte Carlo approach was used to incorporate uncertainty in the biomass per unit area with one hundred samples of the biomass at each age class drawn probabilistically. We then fitted corresponding one hundred curves for each forest type and productivity class, providing a distribution of biomass at each stand age from years 1 to 200.

Pixel-level biomass was obtained from the National Biomass and Carbon data set for the Year 2000 (NBCD 2000) (Fig. 2a). The 30 m resolution biomass map was developed based on empirical modeling combining FIA data, InSAR data from 2000 SRTM, and Landsat ETM+ optical remote sensing (Kellndorfer et al., 2012). Only biomass estimates for undisturbed pixels were used for inferring stand age. Differences in forest masks between NAFD disturbance and NBCD biomass products led to a number of pixels having a biomass recorded as zero. These were replaced by the mean biomass of nearby undisturbed pixels with the same forest type and site productivity within this region. The 250 m forest type group maps we used were created by USDA Forest Service, and were derived from MODIS composite images in combination with FIA data and nearly 100 other geospatial data layers, portraying 28 forest type groups across the contiguous United States (Ruefenacht et al., 2008) (Fig. 2b). Differences in map resolution between disturbance and forest type maps led forest type to be undefined for some pixels along forest edges, so we assigned the forest types of the nearest pixel. Site productivity maps were also derived from FIA data (Fig. 2c) with the following procedure. The FIA dataset was sampled to obtain the area of each county across the region that is of each forest type group and site productivity class. We then created a continuous map of county numbers on a 0.01 degree grid, overlaid forest types, and integrated those with the data on each county's area of high and low productivity classes for the forest type that was most abundant in the pixel. This yielded a map of productivity class fractions, where each pixel has a fraction high productivity (summed over classes 1 to 3 spanning 120 to 225+ cubic feet/acre/year) and fraction low productivity (summed over classes 4 to 6 spanning 20 to 119 cubic feet/acre/year). In reality,

site productivity is unlikely to vary across the 30 m pixel scale as much as it does at the county scale, whereas high and low site productivity fractions are likely to vary across counties in some cases. However, an improved characterization is not available at this time.

For each recently undisturbed forest pixel, we extracted its biomass (B), forest type (T) and fraction of high productivity (f_{high}), and then retrieved 100 biomass trajectories for forest type T and for high and low productivity classes respectively. If the pixel was located at a high productivity site ($f_{high} = 1$), we treated 100 biomass curves for high productivity as 100 biomass realizations at stand ages from 0 to 200. All the biomass values among those realizations that lie within 20% of the pixel's observed B were pooled, and corresponding stand ages were derived (Fig. 3a). We then calculated the mean, standard deviation and each of the 10th quantiles from the pooled stand ages (10th, 20th, 30th, ..., 80th, 90th quantiles of stand age) (Fig. 3b). The quantiles provided a frequency distribution of stand age for the individual pixel. Similarly, if the pixel was entirely of low site productivity ($f_{high} = 0$), we followed the above steps but using trajectories for low productivity class to derive stand age distribution for low productivity (Fig. 3c). In reality, f_{high} is almost always between 0 and 1 (maximal $f_{high} = 0.996$, minimal $f_{high} = 0.015$ in PNW). In order to reflect high/low productivity proportion of the total, we combined the two distributions above (one for high and the other for low productivity classes) by making copies of the two distributions with $10 * f_{high}$ copies for the high productivity and $10 * (1 - f_{high})$ copies for the low productivity. We calculated the mean, standard deviation and quantiles from the combined distribution of stand age (Fig. 3d). Since year 2010 was the target year for our mapping of stand age and carbon fluxes while biomass maps were generated for the year 2000, we simply added 10 years to the inferred ages to get adjusted stand ages. Using the above procedure across all undisturbed forest pixels, we generated maps of the mean and standard deviation of stand age.

Finally, we merged the stand age map for undisturbed forest pixels with the time since disturbance map for disturbed pixels to obtain a continuous map for all the forest pixels across the study area. To evaluate the derived map of time since disturbance, we made comparisons with two currently available products. First, density curves of stand age were plotted from maps derived from this study and Pan et al. (2011) for the study area. Another comparison was made between the distribution of forest area with age class from this study and that sampled from the FIA dataset.

2.3 Estimating *NEP* and uncertainties across the PNW region

2.3.1 Carbon flux trajectories for harvest, fire and bark beetle

Carbon flux trajectories for post-harvest, -fire and -bark beetle outbreaks were derived from our prior work (Ghimire et al., 2012, Williams et al., 2014, Ghimire et al., 2015) involving an inventory-constrained version of the CASA carbon cycle process model with inclusion of disturbance processes. The CASA model used here is based on Randerson et al. (1996) and operates on a monthly time step. It uses a light use efficiency approach to simulating net primary productivity (*NPP*) based on RS-derived absorption of photosynthetically active radiation, biome parameters, and climate data. The model then allocates *NPP* to three live carbon pools (leaves, roots, and wood), and transfers carbon to dead pools (litter and soils) based

on biome-specific rates of tissue turnover. Carbon in dead organic matter pools is transferred between pools (surface structural C, surface metabolic C, soil structural C, soil metabolic C, aboveground coarse woody debris C, belowground coarse woody debris C, surface microbial C, soil microbial C, slow C and passive C) (Fig. S1). Amounts of carbon transferred to microbial pools and carbon emitted to the atmosphere from microbial decomposition of soil and litter, i.e. heterotrophic respiration (Rh), depend on the rate and efficiency of heterotrophic consumption which varies between pools in the model, and also depends on biome- and pool-specific chemistry and site-specific climate setting such as soil moisture and temperature. The difference between NPP and summed Rh of the ten detrital pools is then calculated as NEP . Aboveground biomass-age curves sampled from FIA database were used as a constraint to adjust wood turnover rate (mortality and shedding) and default output NPP by a scalar parameter, which hence influences accumulation of live biomass and the amounts of carbon allocated to live and dead pools. The adjustment of those CASA parameters was performed for each specific combination of forest type group and site productivity class. Implementation of the model involved a simulation sequence beginning with spin-up to equilibrium carbon pools using FIA-adjusted NPP followed by a pre-disturbance with ensuing regrowth to a set of pre-disturbance ages, and lastly imposition of the disturbance of interest to generate flux and stock dynamics in response to harvest, fire, or beetle outbreak disturbance types at different severities. The fate of carbon influenced by disturbances varied by disturbance type as described below. Disturbance types considered in the model included stand-replacing harvest, fire, and bark beetle outbreak, with full descriptions of the carbon dynamics in pools after disturbances provided in Ghimire et al., 2012, Williams et al., 2014, Ghimire et al., 2015 and described further below. Model treatments of disturbance impacts to the carbon cycle were as follows. For all disturbance type cases, a post-disturbance decline and ensuing recovery of NPP and fractional allocation to wood were modelled as a negative exponential function of time since disturbance, recovering to the pre-disturbance level within eight years (Williams et al. 2012). The mortality and fate of disturbance killed and/or combusted carbon pools differed by disturbance type. For harvest (Williams et al. 2014), the post-disturbance biomass was set to 50% of the aboveground live wood biomass reported in FIA data for the 0 to 20 year old age class, regardless of the pre-disturbance biomass condition. Harvest-killed live wood, leaves, and roots were calculated from their corresponding fractions of pre-disturbance to post-disturbance conditions. Eighty percent of the disturbance-killed aboveground live wood was assumed to have been removed from the site with the remainder being treated as slash subject to decomposition as coarse woody debris. All leaves of disturbance killed trees are assumed to decompose on-site. All belowground wood that succumbs to mortality enters a belowground coarse woody debris carbon pool. For fire (Ghimire et al. 2012), disturbance kill is portrayed as partial mortality events in which fires reduce pre-fire live biomass pools based on the fractional tree mortality which varies by forest type and fire severity class (high, medium, or low to match the MTBS dataset). The amount of live biomass remaining after a fire is calculated from the fraction of vegetation mortality emerging from an extensive literature survey. Fire-killed material is either directly combusted and released to the atmosphere or transferred to dead carbon pools. The same applies to foliage and root mortality, though roots are not directly combusted. Fire killed trees enter a new standing dead pool in the model with a fast turnover fall rate of 10 years post fire with transfer to the coarse woody debris pool. Litter and soil organic carbon in the upper soil layers were also vulnerable to

combustion. All of these rates were based on literature review (Ghimire et al. 2012). For bark beetle outbreaks (Ghimire et al. 2015), beetle killed biomass was simulated for a wide range of intensities from near zero to 100% mortality to generate a family of curves that could be applied in the mapping stage. Beetle attack caused leaf carbon to enter the surface litter pool, aboveground wood to enter a snag pool, belowground wood and fine root to enter corresponding soil carbon pools. The portions killed for each were based on the percent mortality imposed for each severity level being simulated, derived from the ratio of the biomass at the midpoint of each severity class (of 1680 levels of intensity) to the pre-disturbed aboveground biomass values corresponding to the mean age of a given forest type under attack (Ghimire et al. 2015). Soil carbon pools respond to all of these dynamics according to the model's climate-mediated turnover times for each carbon pool, and the associated carbon flows (Fig. S1).

For a given forest type, site productivity, and prior disturbance, this forest disturbance version of the CASA model simulates *NPP*, *Rh* and *NEP* as a function of time since disturbance. A family of curves describing carbon stocks in carbon pools (soil organic carbon, litter, slow turnover soil carbon, aboveground coarse woody debris, belowground coarse woody debris, and total live woody biomass), *NPP*, *Rh* and *NEP* with time since disturbance for each combination were created to represent uncertainties in the amount of biomass killed and left on site after a disturbance, the amount of biomass left live on site post-disturbance, and the rate of biomass accumulation and mortality (Ghimire et al., 2012, Williams et al., 2014, Ghimire et al., 2015). This study emphasized the use of *NEP* curves from our prior works combined with time since disturbance derived from this study to map spatially explicit *NEP* in the PNW region. Fig. 4 provides examples of post-disturbance *NEP* trajectories from our prior work, showing average of 20 simulations of post-harvest *NEP* (Fig. 4a, 4b), the average of 25 simulations of post-fire *NEP* for three different fire severities (Fig. 4c, 4d), and 1 simulation of post-bark beetle *NEP* for three examples of bark beetle disturbances that kill low, medium and high amounts of biomass (Fig. 4e, 4f) in high site productivity Douglas-fir stands in the PNW region. The typical overall pattern of *NEP* following a disturbance involves a large negative value immediately after disturbance, a rise for a number of years to reach a maximum rate of carbon uptake, and then a gradual decline to a steady state. The post-disturbance *NEP* curves across all forest types, productivity classes, and disturbance types are presented in the supplementary figures (Fig. S2, S3, S4, S5, S6), *Rh* trajectories are shown in Fig. S7, S8, S9, S10, S11, and characteristic trajectories of post-disturbance carbon stocks in carbon pools are provided as well (Fig. S12, S13, S14, S15, S16, S17 for harvest as an example).

2.3.2 Mapping *NEP* and uncertainties across the PNW region

The characteristic trajectories serve as look-up tables relating carbon fluxes and stocks (here just *NEP*) to years since disturbance within the strata of forest type group, site productivity fraction, disturbance type and severity. For disturbed pixels, the distribution of *NEP* corresponding to the pixel's time since disturbance and forest type was sampled for both high and low productivity classes, and then weighted according to the pixel's fraction of high site productivity (f_{high}). Weighting involved a simple repetition of each data population based on the pixel's fraction of high productivity, with $10 * f_{high}$ copies for the high productivity estimates and $10 * (1 - f_{high})$ copies for the low productivity population. These two populations were

then combined to create a single composite distribution representing the full probability distribution for the pixel's *NEP*. A similar procedure was performed for all remaining undisturbed forest pixels but including the additional uncertainty on the pixel's stand age. We propagated stand age uncertainty by obtaining the *NEP* distribution for each of the 10th quantiles of the age distribution corresponding to the pixel's biomass and forest type for both high and low productivity classes, and compositing these into a full probability distribution of the pixel's *NEP* based on the pixel's fraction of high probability (f_{high}). Finally, we calculated the mean, standard deviation and quantiles (10th, 20th, 30th, ..., 80th, 90th quantiles) of *NEP* distribution for each forest pixel across the PNW region.

3 Results

3.1 Disturbance maps derived from NAFD, MTBS and ADS

Across the 2.1×10^7 ha of forest in the PNW region, harvest was recorded as having affected the largest area (5.4×10^6 ha from 1986-2010) followed by bark beetles (1.8×10^6 ha from 1997 - 2010) and then fire (9.3×10^5 ha from 1986 - 2010). Their distributions are displayed in Fig. 5. Reported as percentages, harvest, bark beetles, and fire affected 26%, 9%, and 5% of all forestland in the PNW during their respective time intervals. Table 2 provides an additional report of each area by forest type and for high and low productivity class sites. Douglas-fir comprises nearly 50% of all forest in the PNW, with about 70% of it being in high productivity class lands. Ponderosa Pine, Fir-Spruce-Mountain Hemlock, and Hemlock-Sitka Spruce are the next most abundant forest type groups, comprising 17%, 15%, and 7% of the PNW forest, with 16%, 39%, and 85% in high productivity sites, respectively.

About half (52%) of all harvesting occurred in Douglas-fir forests, with 20% in Ponderosa Pine stands and 8% and 7% in Fir-Spruce-Mountain Hemlock, and Hemlock-Sitka Spruce stands. Of all forestland that burned, 37% was in Douglas-fir stands, 27% in Ponderosa Pine, and 21% in Fir-Spruce-Mountain Hemlock. Hemlock-Sitka Spruce was not vulnerable to fire. Though fire affected a larger area of low productivity sites for Ponderosa Pine and Fir-Spruce-Mountain Hemlock forest types, fire occurrence was equally likely across low and high productivity classes. In contrast, Douglas-fir stands had similar burned areas for low and high productivity sites, but low productivity sites were three times as likely to experience fire. Bark beetle outbreaks were most common in Douglas-fir stands, with 40% of all outbreak area, while 30% and 18% occurred in Fir-Spruce-Mountain Hemlock and Ponderosa Pine stands, respectively. As with fire, though a larger proportion of the total bark beetle outbreak area occurred in low productivity Ponderosa Pine and Fir-Spruce-Mountain Hemlock stands, their occurrence was equally likely across low and high productivity sites. **Again in contrast, bark beetle outbreak areas for low and high productivity classes are similar in Douglas-fir forests, but beetle outbreak occurrence was about three times more likely in low productivity sites.** Of all Douglas-fir stands, 28% were disturbed by harvest, 3% by fire, and 7% by bark beetles. Percentages for Ponderosa Pine stands were 31%, 7%, and 9% for harvest, fire, and bark beetles, and for Fir-Spruce-Mountain Hemlock they were 13%, 6%, and 17%, Hemlock-Sitka Spruce was mainly disturbed by harvesting (28%), with 0% for fire and 5% for bark beetles.

3.2 Biomass-age curves by forest types and site productivity classes

The fitted biomass regrowth curves exhibit considerable variations across forest types and site productivity classes (Fig. 6 for Douglas-fir, Ponderosa Pine and Fir-Spruce-Mountain Hemlock). Compared to Douglas-fir forests, Ponderosa Pine forests hold only about 28% to 33% as much biomass, and Fir-Spruce-Mountain Hemlock holds about 59% to 64% as much. Biomass accumulates more rapidly and to a higher maximum stock for high productivity sites for all forest types according to FIA data and corresponding model fits, achieving about 1.4 to 1.8 times the biomass at low productivity sites. But the biomass-age curves share some common features among different forest types and site productivity classes. Biomass accumulates rapidly at the early ages (~ 0-50 years), slowing down with age until it saturates often around 150-200 years. Besides, variation in biomass increases as a function of stand age both in the FIA data and in the model fits. The fitted curves provided a range and distribution of biomass at each stand age from 0 to 200. Because of the simple stand-level growth equation that was assumed, these curves yielded a smoothed fit to the inventory data rather than the erratic and fluctuating jumps imposed on the general increase with stand age seen in the field data.

3.3 Maps of time since disturbance and uncertainties across the PNW region

The forested landscape is a complicated mosaic of time since last disturbance (Fig. 7a). Overall, a wide range of years are spanned with abrupt discontinuities related to recent stand replacing disturbances, transitions between forest types, and transitions between site productivity classes. One feature that stands out prominently is the prevalence of recent disturbances along the eastern, drier side of the Cascade Range, resulting from both harvesting and bark beetle outbreaks (Fig. 5b). Large fires produce sizable patches with the same time since disturbance. The imprint of segments of relatively old, high-elevation forests is also evident. It should be noted that this map was not used directly in the computation of *NEP* for undisturbed forest pixels, which relied instead on stand age distributions for high and low site productivity classes, but it is presented here to provide a best estimate of disturbance timing at the pixel scale.

Uncertainty on the time since disturbance for disturbed forest pixels is not currently available from disturbance products and thus was not mapped. For undisturbed forest pixels, the uncertainty of stand age was represented by standard deviation of the full stand age distribution combined from high and low site productivity and reflecting high/low productivity proportion. The uncertainty map identifies locations where stand age is more tightly constrained by the data and method (Fig. 7b). Across all the stand ages inferred from the biomass data (undisturbed forest pixels), the spatially-averaged mean standard deviation of stand age is around 25 years.

Density curves of stand age were compared between maps derived from this study and from Pan et al. (2011) for the study area. In undisturbed areas, spatial pattern and density distribution of stand age between the two studies are mostly consistent (Fig. 9a, 9b), but this study has a much higher density at the age class of 0-10 years and a bit lower density at 50-100 years (Fig. 9c). Besides, the distribution of forest area with age class from this study was compared with that sampled from the FIA dataset (Fig. 10 for Douglas-fir and Fir-Spruce-Mountain Hemlock). We provided two age distributions from this study,

one sampled from only undisturbed pixels and another including all forested pixels. Overall, the pattern of FIA-derived age distribution matches well with that derived from our study, but with our study having consistently lower forest areas at age classes larger than 20. This is true except for in the youngest age classes when we include the pixels marked as disturbed in this study, finding a much larger frequency of young-aged forests.

5 3.4 Maps of NEP and uncertainties across the PNW region in Year 2010

Spatial variations in mean annual *NEP* are determined by differences in strata of time since disturbance, forest type group, and site productivity used in the mapping procedure (Fig. 8a). There is a general pattern of weaker carbon sinks in the eastern portion of the study area. Both sink strength and carbon source strength tend to be largest in the western areas of higher biomass. Recent (< 20 years) fire and harvest disturbances tend to create focused carbon sources on the landscape, giving way to sinks as regrowth ensues. For example, one can see a clear imprint of the well-known 2002 Biscuit fire in southwestern Oregon (bottom left of Fig. 8a, also refer to bottom left of Fig. 5a & 5b). Area with very recent, but low severity bark beetle outbreaks have an only muted reduction in *NEP* compared to nearby undisturbed forest, remaining carbon sinks despite the disturbance episode.

At the regional scale, *NEP* is estimated to be 5.9 Tg C y^{-1} , or about $28.5 \text{ g C m}^{-2} \text{ y}^{-1}$ averaged for the 2.1×10^7 ha forest (Table 3). Recently undisturbed forests are the region's main terrestrial carbon sink with *NEP* of $13.6 \pm 3.7 \text{ Tg C y}^{-1}$. In contrast, *NEP* for forests disturbed by harvest, fire and bark beetles within the prior two and a half decades are estimated to be $-6.4 \pm 2.3 \text{ Tg C y}^{-1}$, $-0.5 \pm 0.2 \text{ Tg C y}^{-1}$, and $-0.8 \pm 0.0 \text{ Tg C y}^{-1}$ respectively, serving as significant carbon sources. Table 3 also reports mean *NEP* by forest type groups for all forestland, and also separately for undisturbed and disturbed forests. Fir-Spruce-Mountain Hemlock followed by Douglas-fir and Hemlock-Sitka Spruce were the largest carbon sinks of 1.6 Tg C y^{-1} , 1.5 Tg C y^{-1} , and 1.5 Tg C y^{-1} respectively. Considering only undisturbed forestlands, Douglas-fir was the largest carbon sink of $7.9 \pm 2.1 \text{ Tg C y}^{-1}$, but this was mostly offset by it having also the region's largest carbon sources from harvest, fire events and bark beetle outbreaks with *NEP* of $-5.7 \pm 1.6 \text{ Tg C y}^{-1}$, $-0.4 \pm 0.1 \text{ Tg C y}^{-1}$, and $-0.2 \pm 0.0 \text{ Tg C y}^{-1}$ respectively. Douglas-fir's relatively large area-integrated carbon fluxes result not only from it being the most abundant forest type in the PNW region, but also its large disturbed areas and large carbon stock potential. Recently disturbed forests tend to aggregate to carbon sources. In some forest type groups we found a net carbon sink even for recently disturbed forests. For example, Lodgepole Pine had net carbon sinks for harvested and burned stands. This results from a large proportion of disturbance events having occurred early in the disturbance record allowing recovery and regrowth to overwhelm the carbon sources from the most recent events.

4 Discussion

4.1 Assumptions of method for mapping time since disturbance and NEP

Our method of inferring time since disturbance to estimate carbon flux and biomass accumulation relies on a number of data products and assumptions that need to be critically evaluated. First, the method assumes that field inventory data provide a reliable and well-constrained estimation of forest biomass as a function of stand age for regionally-specific strata of forest type and site productivity class. However, both stand age and biomass are difficult to measure and estimate, especially considering the difficulty of assigning a stand age to uneven-aged forest stands, as well as selecting appropriate species-specific biomass equations (Parresol, 1999). If FIA ages are older than actual stand ages, the associated forest biomass will be underestimated, and stand age inferred from biomass products will be overestimated. Likewise, younger FIA ages than actual ages will result in an overestimation in biomass accumulation, but an underestimation in biomass-inferred stand ages. Though a possible bias in stand ages, our estimates of carbon stocks and fluxes are not likely to be largely adjusted by a stand age bias within 5 years (Williams et al., 2012).

Second, we assume RS-derived NBCD biomass products were well calibrated by field-derived biomass. However, the correlation coefficients between observed and predicted biomass were estimated to be 0.62-0.75 in the PNW region (Kelldorfer et al., 2012). And at 30 m pixel level, NBCD biomass values were biased with a large number of zero biomass values that had predictions in local biomass products (Huang et al., 2015). Discrepancies in biomass values between RS- and field-derived data lead to biased estimates in stand age and associated carbon stocks and fluxes. These were addressed in this study by imposing 20% error to pixel level biomass estimates and replacing zero biomass by the mean biomass of neighboring forest pixels with the same forest type and site productivity.

Third, the approach described here assumes that stand-level biomass is a useful predictor of stand age, biomass accumulation and net carbon flux regardless of how that stand-level biomass was actually achieved (Zhang et al., 2014). However, a particular stand-level biomass may be reached from steady accumulation during a relatively disturbance-free interval of time, or from a decline of biomass accumulation after the biomass reaches the maximum, or also from a previous disturbance that reduced biomass and then accumulated to the current level (Xu et al., 2012). Information is also lacking on how the biomass-age relationship varies depending on the type of stand-replacing disturbance. Such path dependency can have important implications for the true stand age as well as for post-disturbance carbon fluxes and stocks by influencing species composition, stand structure, site fertility, and other relevant factors (Williams et al., 2012).

Next, the carbon cycle model used to estimate carbon fluxes as a function of time since disturbance relies on a simple growth rate equation to characterize biomass accumulation over time with a constant wood turnover time regardless of stand age and a constant rate of carbon allocation to wood. It also assumes that mean annual net primary productivity is constant after an initial rise through stand initiation (assumed 8 years of initialization in the model). These assumptions arise from limited data to describe these dynamics for the range of settings active at a continental-scale but improvement may be possible with

detailed explorations into regional parameterizations. Our prior work indicated some sensitivity of carbon flux estimation to these assumptions, though the impact on continental-scale carbon flux estimation was modest (Williams et al., 2012).

Finally, the method relies on maps of aboveground biomass, forest type group, site productivity class and forest disturbance which are sure to have errors. Accuracies of biomass and forest type group maps were assessed and provided by the data provider, while the rest of them were not. Accuracy of forest type group map in the PNW region ranges from 61% to 69% (Ruefenacht et al., 2008); besides, forest type groups for some pixels undefined from original data were assigned as the forest types of the nearest pixels. For the same biomass value, inferred stand age and estimated carbon fluxes can vary greatly given difference in forest type group (Fig. 4 & Fig. 6); however, forest type group induced biases in *NEP* were not accounted due to the lack of information on associated errors from the spatial assignment of forest type group. The ADS dataset is known to be limited by the areas flown in the survey years, and likely underestimate the number of trees killed by bark beetles but likely overestimate the area of affected stands (Meddens et al., 2012). Uncertainties from ADS dataset have important consequences for the carbon balance and flux estimates from bark beetle outbreaks, part of them were accounted for by Ghimire et al. (2015). Incorporation of local high-resolution high-accuracy maps for these strata into national maps can significantly reduce uncertainties in our mapping and interpretation of stand age, carbon accumulation and fluxes at fine scales (Huang et al., 2015).

Our analyses have sought to incorporate three main sources of uncertainties in input data layers to estimate mean annual *NEP* for a given pixel. The first is uncertainty in the biomass defined at a pixel scale. The second source of uncertainty comes from a range of potential stand ages that could correspond to a given biomass stock. The third source of uncertainty comes from the *NEP* that we estimate for a given stand age, forest type, site productivity, and prior disturbance type and severity. The first and second uncertainties were propagated to provide a probabilistic, statistical estimation of stand age. The full range distribution of stand age and the third uncertainty were further propagated by probabilistic sampling to obtain an *NEP* distribution for each forest pixel. The potential biases in *NEP* due to those uncertainties were reflected by standard deviation map of *NEP* in Fig. 8b. Though pixel-level accuracies are correspondingly low for many situations, aggregation to larger scales involves spatial cancellation such that regional and continental uncertainties are much reduced relative to what would be inferred directly from the pixel scale.

4.2 Comparing maps of time since disturbance to other studies

We identified disagreements of density curves derived from time since disturbance map in this study and stand age map in Pan et al. (2011) at the age class of 0-10 years and 50-100 years (Fig. 9c). There are a number of likely explanations for these discrepancies. The first is definitional, in this study we estimated time since disturbance including both partial and stand-replacing disturbances, resulting in assigning a young age to an old-growth forest stand undergoing a light-severity partial disturbance; while Pan et al. (2011) mapped stand age with consideration of only stand-clearing disturbance. The second cause could be related to the years included in each study, with a large percent of forestlands disturbed by harvest, fire or bark beetles between 2000 (mapping year in Pan's study) and 2010 (mapping year in this study) (Fig. 5). Other

factors that may contribute to this discrepancy include different datasets and methodology used for analysis and mapping, and different spatial resolutions between the maps. For example, when mapping at a much coarser resolution (250 m or 1 km), fragmented disturbed forest patches are likely lost due to disturbed areas taking up a small fraction in the coarse-scale pixel, yielding stand age for those areas represented by nearby undisturbed forest stands that are more abundant in that pixel.

5 The definition bias described above also applies to explain partially inconsistent distribution of forest area with age class from this study from the FIA dataset (Fig. 10). In this study, we included partial, low severity disturbances as stand with ages ranging from 0 to 24, but which are described as undisturbed forests of older stand age from 20-40 years up to 200+ years in FIA dataset. FIA data miss some recent disturbances, partly because FIA remeasurement cycle in the PNW region is about 10 years, with the average time lag of the data being around 5 years. We note that this definitional issue does bias
10 estimates of *NEP* or biomass, which are derived based on severity-specific carbon stock and flux trajectories.

The map of time since disturbance from this study having a spatial resolution of 30 m is able to distinguish finer differences in the stand age structure for persistent forests, but also able to capture abrupt discontinuities related to recent stand replacing disturbances, transitions between forest types, and transitions between site productivity class abundances. This fine spatial detail of the data indicates the information that is lost when stand age is spatially averaged to coarser grids. Such spatial
15 averaging of stand age becomes even more problematic when combined with the nonlinear relationships between forest properties and age, such as with biomass and *NEP*. Maps of time since disturbance and uncertainties from this study may be valuable in and of itself for various ecological applications even if our purpose was generate it as an intermediate variable needed en route to accurate description of, and interpretation of, carbon stocks and fluxes.

4.3 Comparing maps of *NEP* to other studies

20 The PNW-wide forest *NEP* reported here (6 Tg C y^{-1}) is lower than in our earlier work (11 Tg C y^{-1}) that used similar methods (see RS-based results in Williams et al. 2014). A portion of this difference can be attributed to larger net carbon losses from forestlands (-7 Tg y^{-1} carbon loss in this study vs. -4 Tg y^{-1} carbon loss in Williams et al.) due to recent (1986 to
2010) disturbance by either harvest or fire. Here we also include additional net carbon losses from bark beetle outbreaks (-0.8 Tg C y^{-1}) that were not considered in our earlier work. The remaining discrepancy (-1.2 Tg C y^{-1}) is necessarily due to
25 other methodological and data source innovations introduced here including: (1) use of the newly available Landsat-derived forest disturbance product that now offers full spatial coverage compared to only about 50% coverage previously, and (2) new use of biomass data to characterize stand age and associated carbon flux patterns.

The net carbon release from recent bark beetle outbreaks (-0.8 Tg C y^{-1} in 2010) is comparable to that reported in our earlier work (Ghimire et al. 2015). In our earlier work we reported that the PNW region contributed about 28% to the net carbon
30 release in western US regions. Applying that percentage to the US west-wide *NEP* reduction of 1.8 to 3.6 Tg C y^{-1} (Ghimire et al. 2015) indicates a *NEP* reduction for just the PNW of about 0.5 to 1.0 Tg C y^{-1} , within the range of the net carbon release induced by bark beetles reported here.

Additional points of comparison come from a variety of papers focused on regions of Oregon by Turner et al. (2004, 2007 & 2015). These studies report similar west versus east patterns of *NEP* across the mountain ranges of the region, and similar variation in *NEP* across forest types. However, the work of Turner et al. (2004, 2007 & 2015) tends to estimate higher *NEP* in regenerating forests (e.g. 14 to 99 years since stand clearing) in the Coast Range and West Cascades, reaching 250 to 390 g C m⁻² y⁻¹ whereas our curves peak at around 245 g C m⁻² y⁻¹ for the full PNW region (Fig. S1). This discrepancy could be due to the greater spatial detail on climate patterns included in their modelling work, and also plant productivity, allocation, and turnover rates prescribed at the ecoregion-scale in the work of Turner et al. (2004, 2007 & 2015). Given our work's aim of estimating forest carbon stocks and fluxes across the full conterminous US, it is not currently feasible to assemble the data needed to perform such fine-scale ecoregional calibration even while appreciating its value.

10 5 Conclusions

In this paper, we introduced a new methodology for comprehensively combining RS-based 30 m resolution data on disturbance year, disturbance type, and aboveground biomass with forest inventory data to quantify time since disturbance and associated carbon uptake and release across forested landscapes at a fine scale (30 m). Time since disturbance was an important intermediate variable that aided the assessment of disturbance-driven carbon emissions and removals legacies. We mapped mean, standard deviation and statistical distribution of stand age and *NEP* that were propagated from uncertainties of input data layers by probabilistic sampling. This method was applied to the Pacific Northwest (PNW) region of the US. Region-wide we found a net ecosystem productivity of 5.9 Tg C y⁻¹ for forestlands circa 2010, with net uptake in undisturbed forests during 1986-2010 (13.6 Tg C y⁻¹) overwhelming net negative *NEP* from tracts that have seen recent harvest (-6.4 Tg C y⁻¹), fires (-0.5 Tg C y⁻¹), and bark beetle outbreaks (-0.8 Tg C y⁻¹). Our proposed approach will be further applied to forestlands in other regions of the conterminous US to advance a more comprehensive monitoring, mapping and reporting the carbon consequences of forest change across the US.

Acknowledgements

This study was financially supported by NASA's Carbon Monitoring System program (NNH14ZDA001N-CMS) under award NNX14AR39G. Sincere thanks to Yu Zhou for the suggestions on CASA modelling. Thank you to associate editor and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments to greatly improve our paper.

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Tables

Table 1. Data sources for inferring time since disturbance for recently disturbed and undisturbed forest pixels.

Data	Description	Source	Year	Input for recently disturbed or/and undisturbed forests
NAFD	Forest disturbance	Landsat	1986-2010	a, b
MTBS	Burned area and severity	Landsat	1986-2010	a
ADS	Area of insect outbreak and number of trees killed	Aerial survey	1997-2010	a
NBCD	Aboveground live biomass	Landsat, SRTM, FIA	2000	b
Forest Type Group	Forest type group	MODIS, NLCD, etc.	2001	b
Site Productivity	Fraction of high productivity	FIA	1984-2014	b
Biomass-age Curves	Biomass accumulation as a function of stand age	FIA	1984-2010	b

^a Data is one of the inputs for inferring time since disturbance for recently disturbed forest pixels.

^b Data is one of the inputs for inferring time since disturbance for recently undisturbed forest pixels.

Table 2. Area (ha) of all forest lands, forests disturbed by harvest (1986-2010), fire (1986-2010) and bark beetle (1997-2010) by forest type groups, and for high and low site productivity classes in the PNW region.

Forest Type Group*	All Forest		Harvested		Burned		Bark Beetle Infested	
	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
Douglas-fir	6909151	3097083	2039661	752902	161221	181147	301234	416181
Ponderosa Pine	565633	2953701	188300	888668	39135	213925	53982	261530
Fir/Spruce/Mountain Hemlock	1220916	1914562	155898	250135	61140	135947	193838	343326
Hemlock/Sitka Spruce	1168836	211376	338263	45762	255	226	54352	19382
Pinyon/Juniper	79800	664050	10561	84517	2988	27601	250	1378
Alder/Maple	633369	43005	278797	18128	325	24	3442	290
Lodgepole Pine	135874	441717	38737	167320	13064	42235	22692	78753
Western Oak	52774	97472	15572	25392	4371	7817	1036	2026
California Mixed Conifer	16841	73817	5017	18369	550	1669	836	1376
Tanoak/Laurel	50897	26536	11291	5351	6431	3509	265	160
Other Western Hardwoods	39696	33718	10542	7342	535	844	912	777
Elm/Ash/Cottonwood	34093	17945	14779	7812	331	284	60	41
Western Larch	20464	28342	3126	4611	744	1436	5078	6597
Other Western Softwood	9956	24206	1441	2587	1711	6037	1726	5259
Western White Pine	7877	4471	204	183	7360	3951	35	37
Aspen/Birch	1908	2607	730	894	176	286	124	353

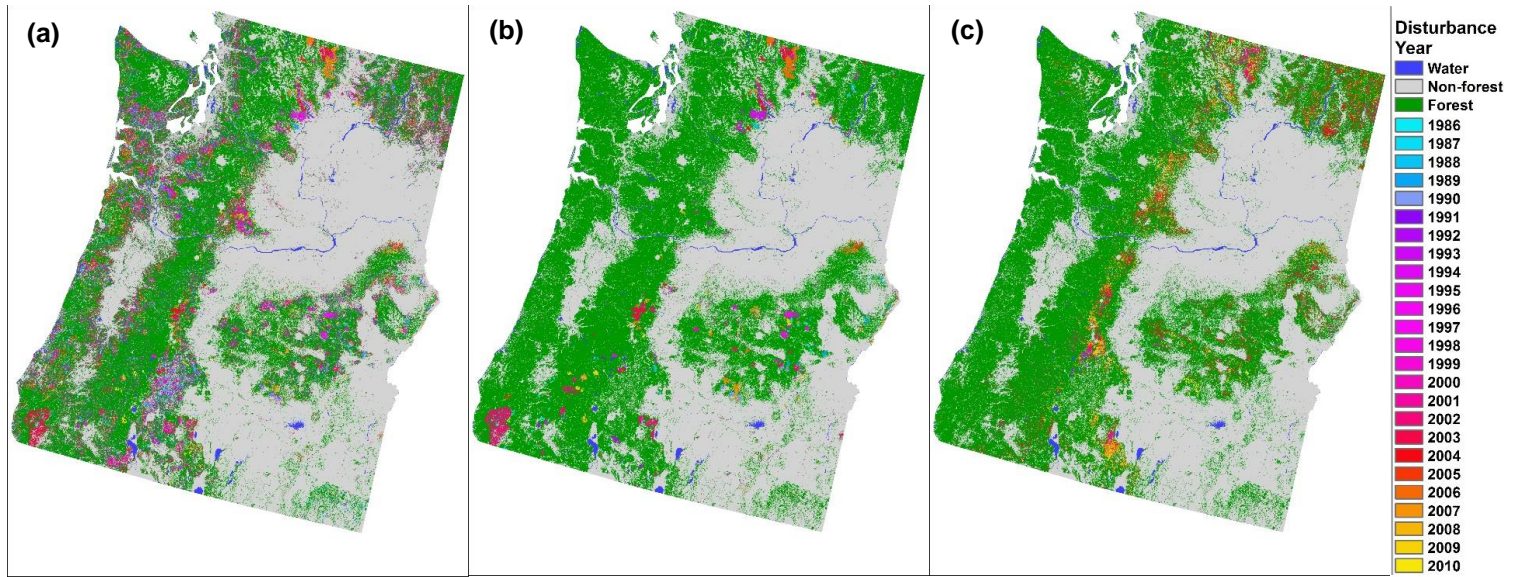
*Forest type groups are ordered by the forest areas from largest to smallest.

1 **Table 3.** Mean net ecosystem productivity (*NEP*) and total net carbon uptake by forest type group in all forests, recently undisturbed forests,
 2 forests disturbed by harvest, fire and bark beetle occurred during time span of remote sensing disturbance products.

Forest Type Group*	All Forests		Recently Undisturbed		Harvested		Burned		Bark Beetle Infested	
	Mean NEP (g C m ⁻² y ⁻¹)	Total NEP (Gg C y ⁻¹)	Mean NEP (g C m ⁻² y ⁻¹)	Total NEP (Gg C y ⁻¹)	Mean NEP (g C m ⁻² y ⁻¹)	Total NEP (Gg C y ⁻¹)	Mean NEP (g C m ⁻² y ⁻¹)	Total NEP (Gg C y ⁻¹)	Mean NEP (g C m ⁻² y ⁻¹)	Total NEP (Gg C y ⁻¹)
Douglas-fir	14.9	1489.2	128.6	7912.6	-205.7	-5745.7	-130.0	-445.0	-32.9	-235.0
Ponderosa Pine	16.9	594.2	47.4	887.9	-14.8	-159.2	-3.0	-7.7	-40.4	-127.1
Fir/Spruce/Mountain Hemlock	52.6	1649.7	108.3	2161.6	-22.0	-89.5	-35.0	-69.0	-66.2	-354.7
Hemlock/Sitka Spruce	107.5	1483.5	197.0	1816.6	-76.7	-294.6	-106.3	-0.5	-52.1	-38.3
Pinyon/Juniper	5.2	39.0	9.4	58.2	-18.7	-17.8	-1.9	-0.6	-48.7	-0.8
Alder/Maple	58.4	395.3	118.0	442.8	-16.7	-49.7	97.6	0.3		
Lodgepole Pine	9.6	55.7	36.6	78.6	4.2	8.6	28.2	15.6	-46.4	-47.0
Western Oak	9.5	14.2	28.4	26.7	-33.9	-13.9	5.8	0.7		
California Mixed Conifer	14.4	13.1	27.0	17.0	-19.5	-4.6	70.3	1.6	-51.4	-1.0
Tanoak/Laurel	79.0	61.2	161.8	81.6	-82.3	-13.7	-73.4	-7.3		
Other Western Hardwoods	43.7	32.1	62.0	32.5	-12.4	-2.2	59.5	0.8		
Elm/Ash/Cottonwood	29.9	15.6	119.4	34.3	-81.6	-18.4	-61.6	-0.4		
Western Larch	35.9	17.5	97.2	26.5	-34.7	-2.7	-21.1	-0.5	-50.0	-5.8
Other Western Softwood	-12.9	-4.4	26.4	4.1	-21.8	-0.9	-39.9	-3.1	-64.5	-4.5
Western White Pine	35.9	4.4	4.8	0.0	-14.6	-0.1	39.8	4.5	-53.3	0.0
Aspen/Birch	20.3	0.9	51.6	1.0	-14.8	-0.2	-9.8	0.0		
Total	28.5	5861.2	108.8	13581.8	-118.8	-6404.5	-55.1	-510.5	-46.2	-814.2

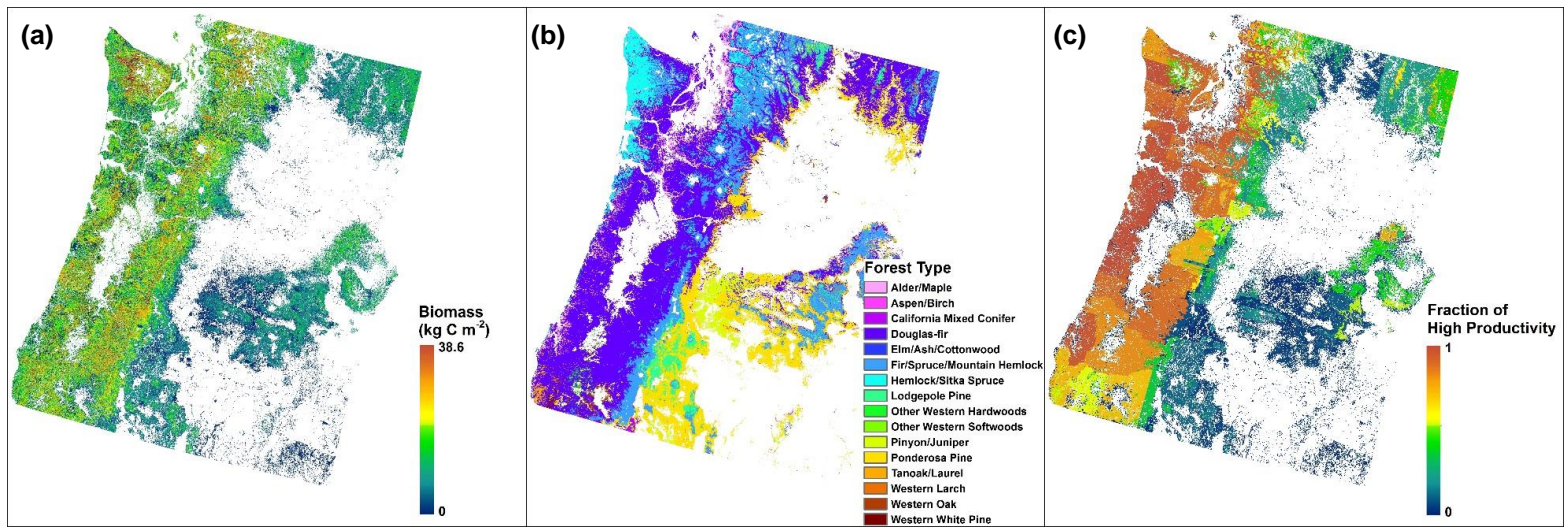
3 *Forest type groups are ordered by the forest areas from largest to smallest.

1 **Figures**



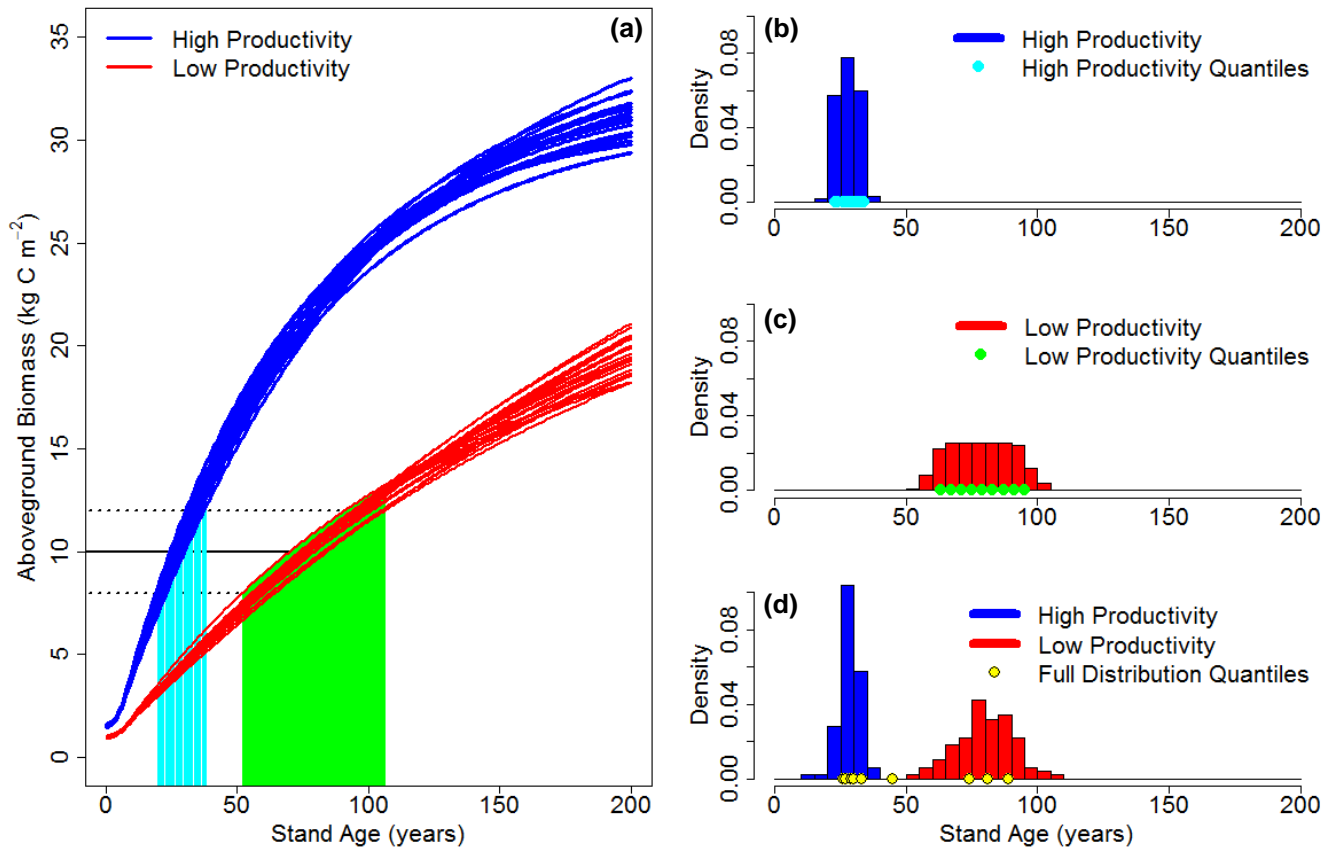
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3 **Fig. 1.** Year of last disturbance from (a) NAFD, (b) MTBS and (c) ADS data of the PNW region. The time period for NAFD, MTBS and ADS
4 datasets are 1986-2010, 1986-2010 and 1997-2010 respectively. **NAFD: North American Forest Dynamics, MTBS: Monitoring Trends in Burn**
5 **Severity, ADS: Aerial Detection Surveys.**



1

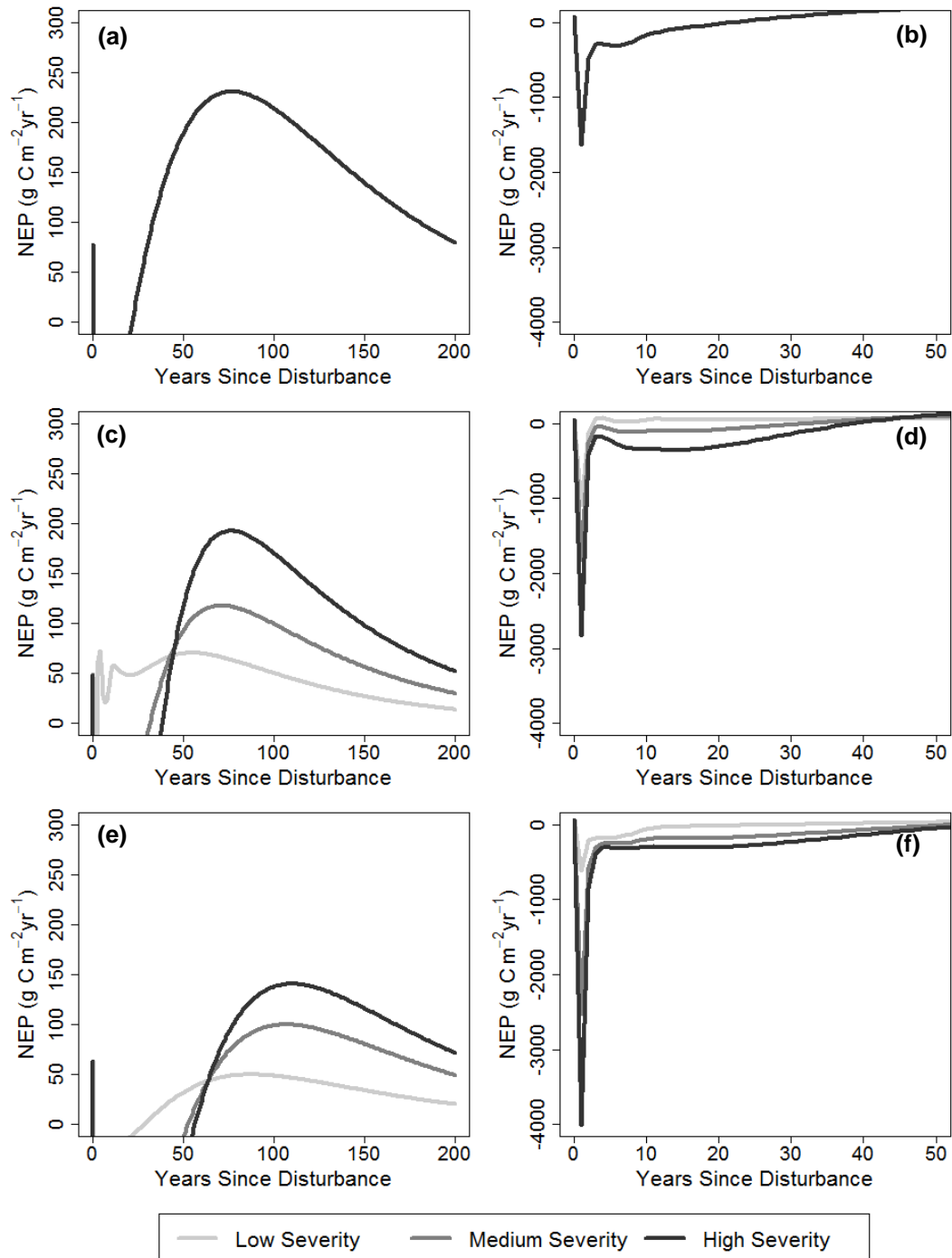
2 **Fig. 2.** Maps of (a) NBCD 2000 (National Biomass and Carbon Dataset) aboveground biomass, (b) forest type group and (c) site productivity in
 3 the PNW region.



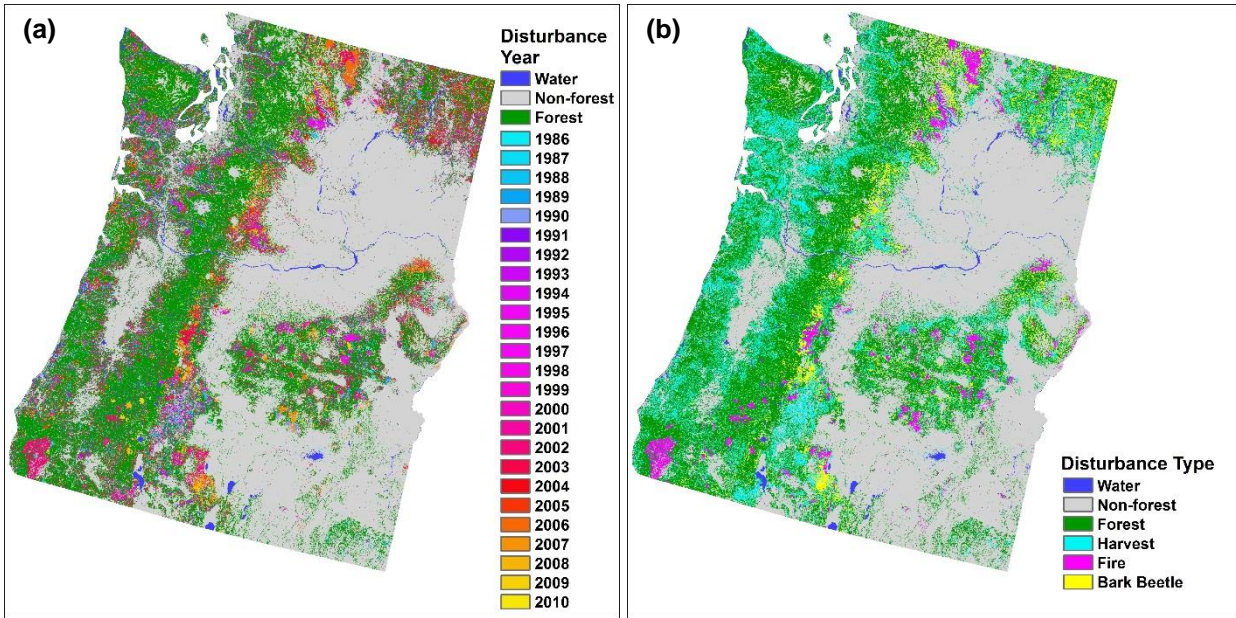
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2 **Fig. 3.** Stand age inferred based on field inventory-derived species-specific biomass-age curves (a) for a forest pixel of the
 3 same forest type group with aboveground biomass of 10 kg C m⁻² and having no recent disturbance. Histogram and quantiles
 4 of stand ages are shown for three site productivity classes: (b) high productivity site ($f_{high} = 1$), (c) low productivity site (f_{high}
 5 = 0), and (d) mixture of high and low productivity sites ($f_{high} = 0.6$).

6



1
2 **Fig. 4.** Carbon flux trajectories of (a) (b) post-harvest (Williams et al., 2014), (c) (d) post-fire (Ghimire et al., 2012), and (e)
3 (f) post-beetles (Ghimire et al., 2015) for a range of severities in high site productivity Douglas-fir stands of the PNW
4 region. The typical pattern of *NEP* following a disturbance involves a large negative value immediately after disturbance, a
5 rise for a number of years to reach a maximum rate of carbon uptake, and then a gradual decline to a steady state.



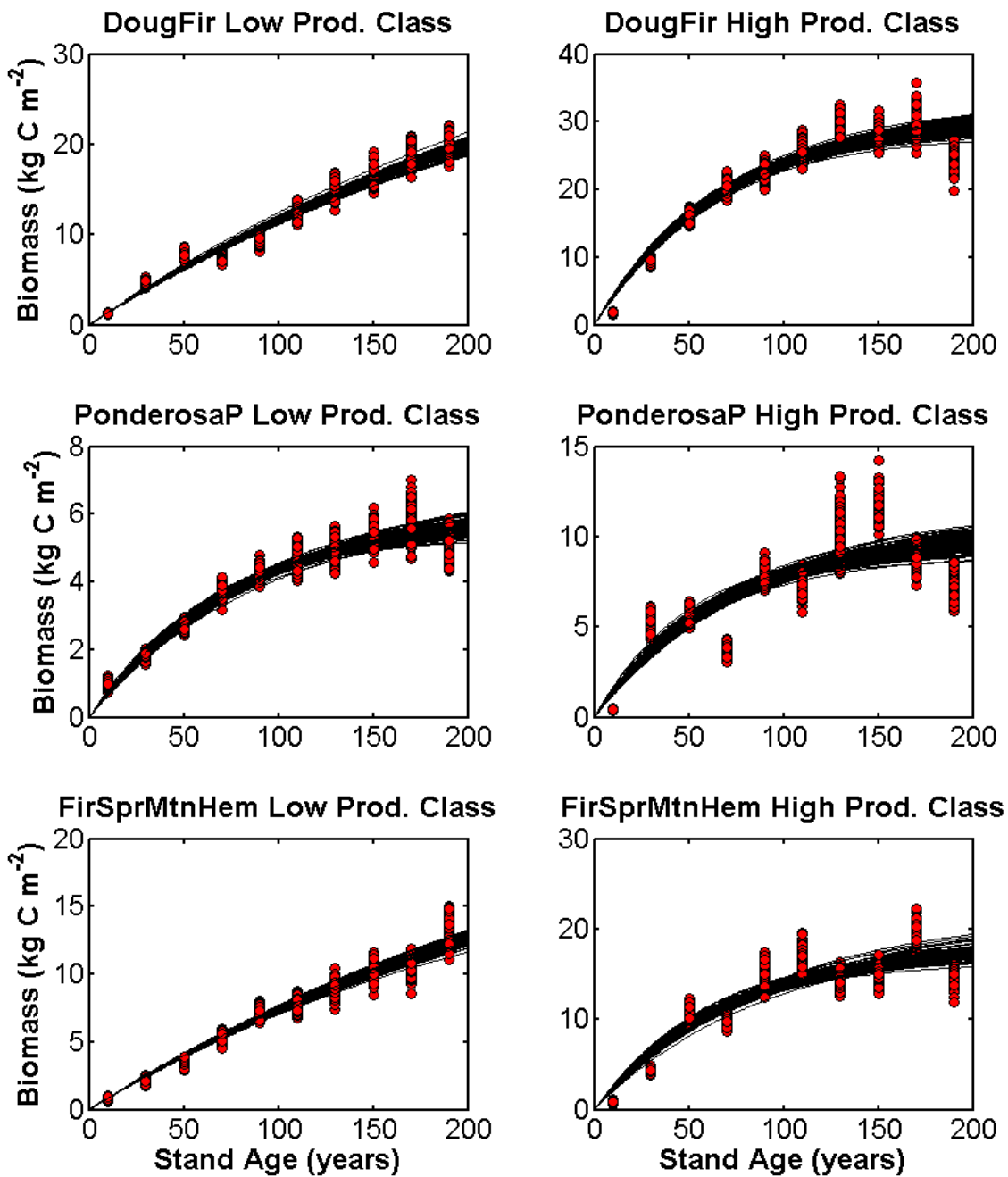
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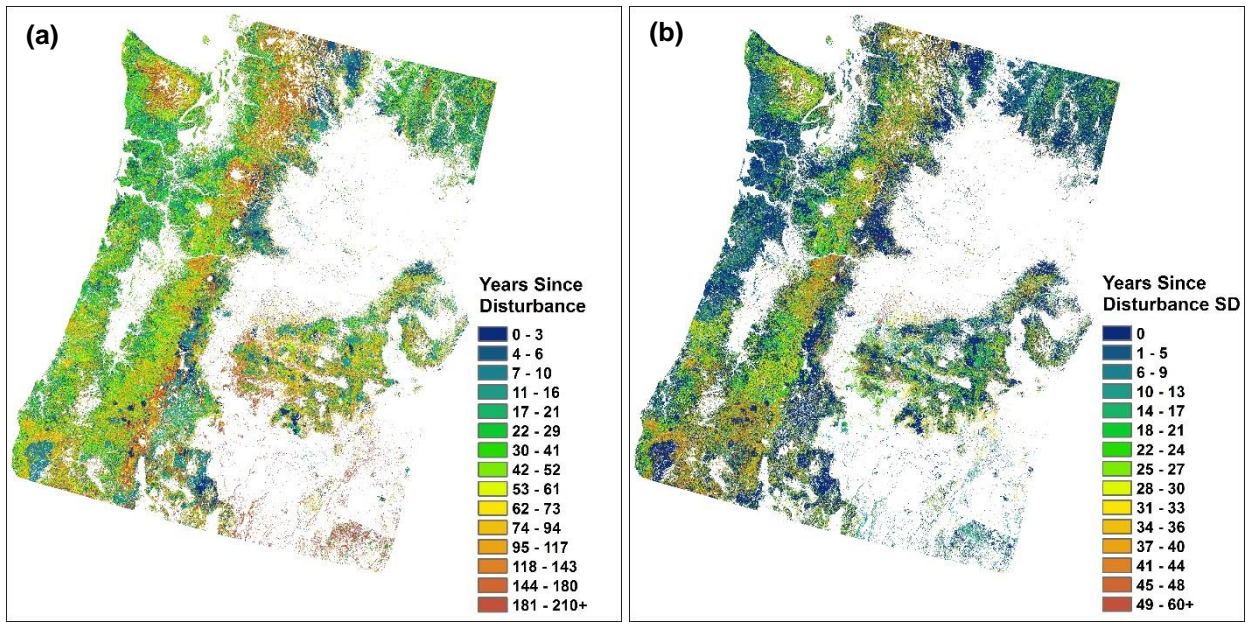
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Fig. 5. Maps of (a) disturbance year and (b) disturbance type integrated from NAFD (Fig. 1a), MTBS (Fig. 1b) and ADS (Fig. 1c) data in the PNW region. NAFD: North American Forest Dynamics, MTBS: Monitoring Trends in Burn Severity, ADS: Aerial Detection Surveys.

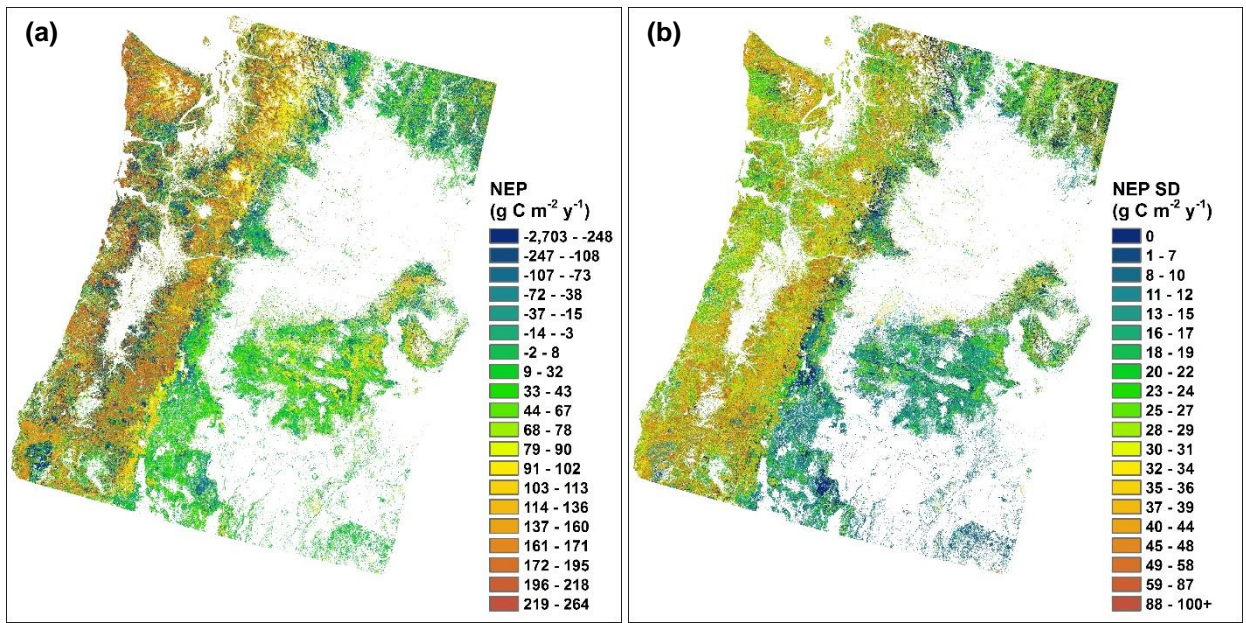


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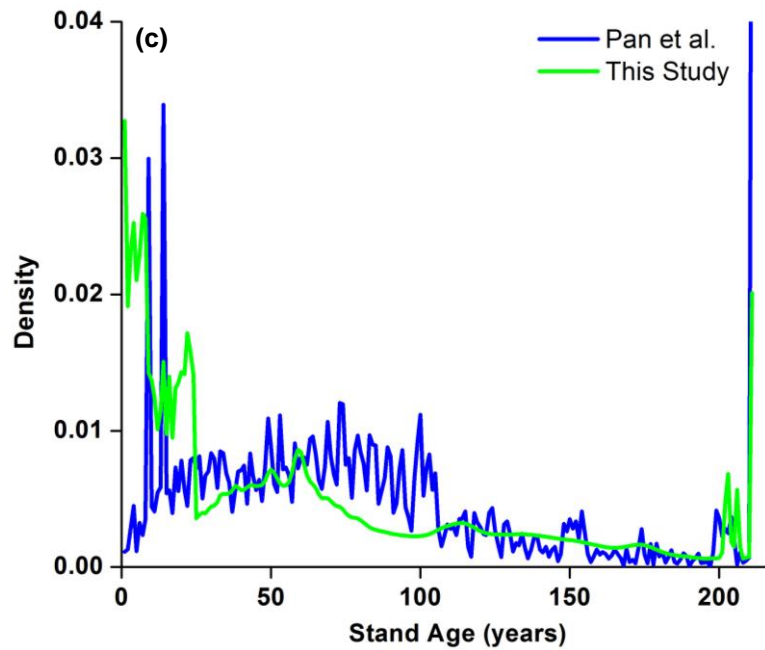
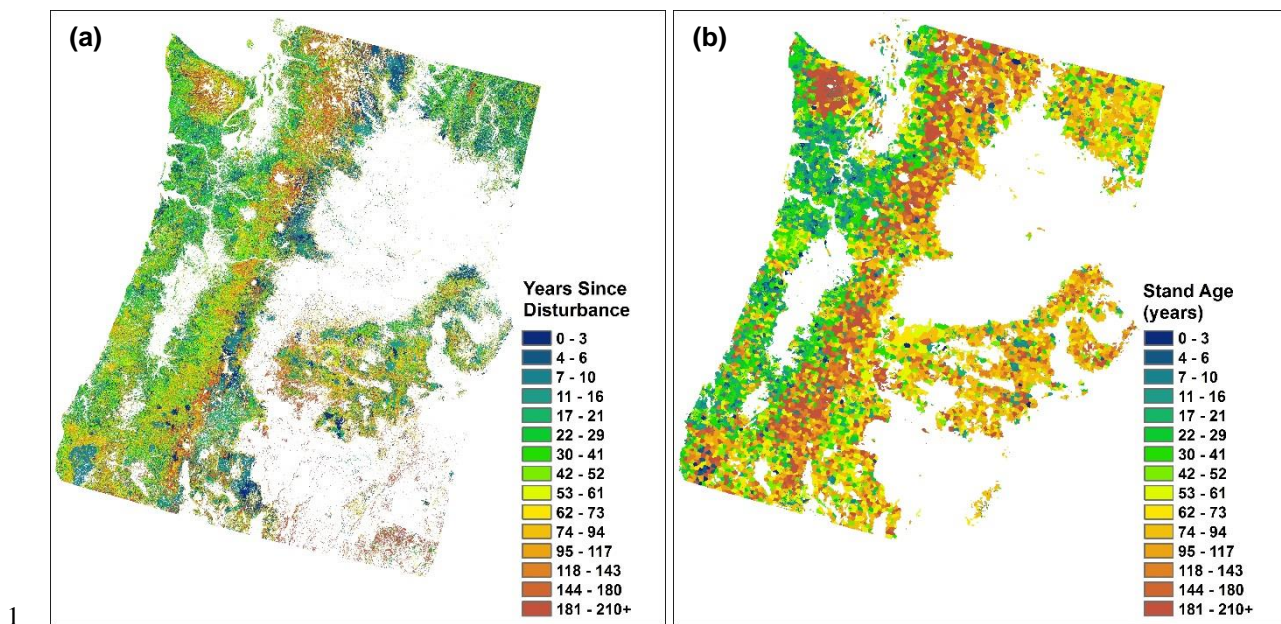
2 **Fig. 6.** Biomass-age curves sampled from FIA data for each forest type group and site productivity class in the PNW region.
 3 Curves for the three most abundant forest type groups are shown (DougFir is Douglas-fir, Ponderosa P is ponderosa pine,
 4 and FirSprMtnHem is fir/spruce/mountain hemlock). Red dots are independent samples drawn probabilistically from the FIA
 5 data.



2 **Fig. 7.** Maps of (a) years since disturbance and (b) standard deviation in 2010 in the PNW region.

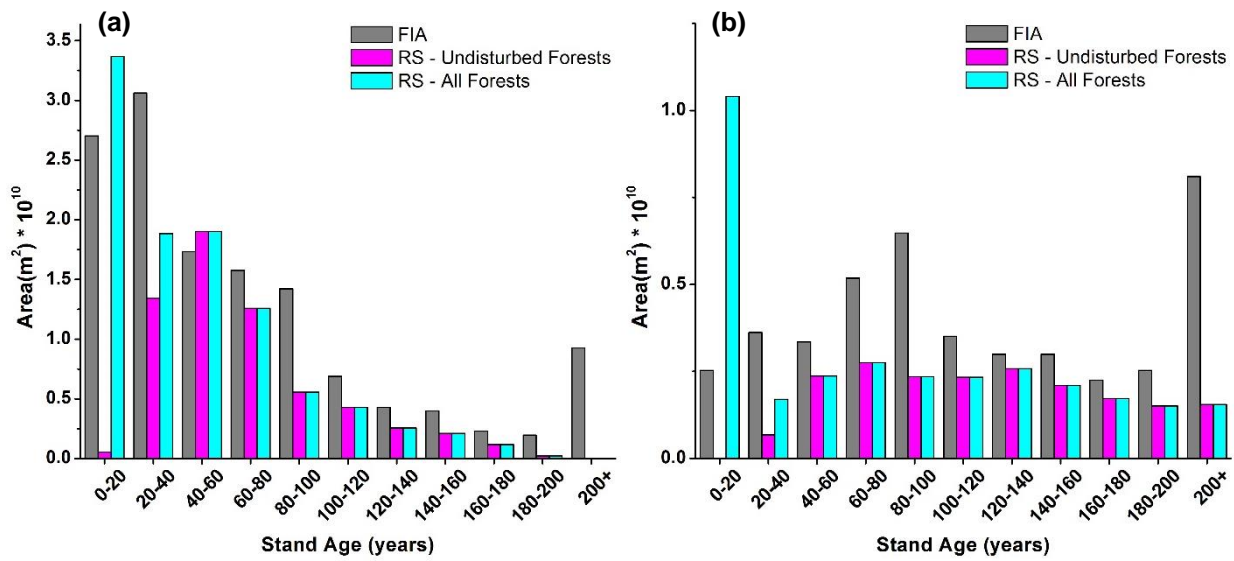


4 **Fig. 8.** Maps of (a) net ecosystem productivity (*NEP*) and (b) standard deviation in 2010 in the PNW region.



2

3 **Fig. 9.** Maps of time since disturbance from (a) this study (same as Fig. 7a) and stand age from (b) Pan et al. (2011) in the
 4 PNW region, associated density curves of stand age were plotted in (c).



1

2 **Fig. 10.** Distribution of forest area by age for (a) Douglas-fir and (b) Fir-Spruce-Mountain Hemlock of the PNW region
 3 comparing results from FIA data and remote sensing derived (RS-) estimates for undisturbed and all forests including those
 4 marked as disturbed in NAFD, ADS, and MTBS datasets and shown here as if they were stand clearing events.