



1 Accounting for multiple forcing factors and product substitution 2 enforces the cooling effect of boreal forests

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19

20 **Abstract** There is dispute over the climate change mitigating effect of boreal forest management due to the contrasting
21 influence it has on different vectors influencing radiative forcing (RF). For the first time, this study has combined the
22 estimated effects of carbon sequestration in forests and wood products, the surface albedo of forests, the direct and
23 indirect forcing of secondary organic aerosols and the avoidance of fossil emissions by product substitution, both in
24 the current and predicted 2050 climate. The aerosol effect was comparable in magnitude to that of carbon sequestration
25 and increased in importance in a warmer 2050 climate. Harvesting decreased the formation of climate cooling aerosols.
26 The aerosol effect was also larger than the opposing impact of increased surface albedo due to clear cutting in conifer
27 forests. When all above mentioned RF factors were accounted for, the RF of conifer-dominated stands was less
28 negative than that of broadleaf-dominated stands, despite the higher carbon sequestration of the former. Considering
29 also the cooling effect of product substitution, the differences in the RF impact of management alternatives that
30 maintained or increased forest biomass were small. However, the outcome depended heavily on the wood use pattern
31 and the assumed product substitution. A substantial increase in harvest with a clear increase in the share of small
32 dimension fiber and fuel wood use led to a clear climate warming effect in the simulations.

33



34 1 Introduction

35 The boreal biome comprises 1/5th of the terrestrial carbon sink and about a third of terrestrial carbon stocks (Pan et al.
36 2011), and its associated effects on surface albedo (A) and secondary organic aerosols (SOA) may have a considerable
37 climate impact (Betts 2000, Tunved et al. 2006). Recently, the cooling impact from afforestation in the boreal zone
38 has been questioned, because models have indicated that the climate warming effect due to increased radiative forcing
39 (RF) from boreal forests' low albedo (Betts 2000) may exceed their cooling impact by carbon sequestration (Avila et
40 al. 2012). However, this argumentation does not account for the possible climate cooling effect of boreal forests via
41 their influence on SOA formation, nor product substitution. Forest ecosystems are producing large amounts of
42 Biogenic Volatile Organic Compounds (BVOC), which leads to SOA production and a greater climatic cooling effect
43 (Tunved et al. 2006) than, e.g., grasslands. Different forest management strategies (e.g. variations in harvest intensity,
44 selection of regenerated species and length of rotation period) can have significant impacts on carbon sink and storage
45 (Pihlainen et al. 2014), as well as on the non-carbon effects, i.e., albedo (Matthies and Valsta 2016) and SOA
46 formation.

47

48 Over half of the boreal forest area is currently managed or commercially operable, providing up to 17% of the global
49 industrial roundwood harvest (Burton et al. 2010, Gauthier et al. 2015). Since wood products can be used for
50 substituting more carbon intensive non-wood alternatives, the use of forests provides a potentially very useful and
51 cost-efficient tool for mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions (Sathre and O'Connor 2010). The current harvest level
52 of European forests is substantially lower than their wood increment (Forest Europe...2011), which could be seen as
53 an opportunity to increase biomass utilization to replace fossil fuels. Given the multitude of climate impacts associated
54 with forest management, an assessment of its net influence cannot, therefore, only be reduced to carbon storage or the
55 substitution of fossil fuels by bioenergy. A more comprehensive consideration is required that includes both
56 substitution and non-carbon effects.

57

58 In this study, we evaluate four key climate impacts of forest management: (1) carbon sequestration (in trees and soil,
59 i.e. forest ecosystems, and harvested wood products), (2) surface albedo of forest area (A), (3) forest originating
60 aerosols (SOA), and (4) avoided CO₂-emissions from wood energy and product substitution (PS). We calculate the
61 net of these effects at both a single stand and regional level, and also consider the effect on global climate if this
62 management is scaled up to the boreal forest level (Fig. 1). Our aim was to have a more comprehensive analysis of
63 climate impacts than the carbon balance. We were particularly interested in on the climatic balance of forest
64 originating SOAs and forest related albedo, and how the avoided CO₂ emissions through product substitution
65 compensate the carbon sink reduction caused by wood harvesting. Finland was used as a case study region based on
66 the wide availability of data and validated models for predicting the dynamics of managed boreal forests (Salminen et
67 al. 2005, Mäkelä et al. 2008a,b, Tuomi et al. 2011, The Finnish Statistical...2014).

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69

70



71 2 Materials and Methods

72 2.1 Overall description of the study

73 First, we simulated RF for boreal forest management in Finland at the stand level for three dominant boreal tree species
74 in single species stands (Table 1, Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), Norway spruce (*Picea abies*), and silver birch (*Betula*
75 *pendula*)), and for different site fertility over 100 years under both the current and projected 2050 climate (SRES A2
76 scenario, ensemble median climate model inmcm3.0, IPCC 2007) (Fig. 1, a and b). Then we estimated RF
77 development at the regional level in Finland, initializing the simulations with recent forest inventory data (The Finnish
78 Statistical... 2014) for both climate conditions (Fig. 1, c). Forest management scenarios were expressed as the ratio
79 of forest harvest to the present current annual stem wood increment (CAI, same absolute harvest levels also in 2050
80 climate) at the regional level (Fig. 1, d). For stand level simulations, the local impact of a management change was
81 expressed as the change in RF at the top of atmosphere per square meter of forest. The RF values were then compared
82 to a forest just after clear-cutting (bare land) which was used as a reference here (year 0, Fig. 2 and Fig. 4, a and b).
83 We also calculated cumulative radiative forcing over time (CRF) for illustrating the cumulative effect of separate
84 forcing agents (Fig. 4, c and d). For regional level simulations we reported the change in global RF due to the changes
85 of Finnish forests from their current state (Fig. 5, The Finnish Statistical... 2014).

86

87 2.2 Estimation of the forest development and the radiative forcing effects of carbon sequestration

88 Forest growth in Finland under the current climate was simulated with MOTTI, which is an empirical stand-level
89 analysis tool and decision support system for forest management (Salminen et al. 2005). MOTTI was used for
90 calculating tree growth dynamics for pure stands of Norway spruce, Scots pine and silver birch for site fertility types
91 in 3 classes (fertile, medium fertile, infertile). For each combination of tree species and site fertility, the forest
92 management practices spanning a stand's whole rotation in the simulations followed the recommendations for private
93 forest owners in Finland (Table 1, Recommendations for...2006). These recommendations are implemented in
94 MOTTI system and could be selected as an option in simulations. In the simulations, each stand type was artificially
95 regenerated by planting with site specific stand density. Thereafter, the tending of saplings, pre-commercial thinning,
96 commercial thinnings and final harvest was performed according to the recommendations. The timing of the pre-
97 commercial thinning was based on the site specific tree height while the timing of the commercial thinning depended
98 on the site specific basal area limit defined in the recommendations. Whenever this limit was crossed a thinning from
99 below was performed. In the first commercial thinning, the opening of strip roads was mimicked by removing 18 %
100 of the stand basal area. The treatment intensity was defined on the basis of the basal area in such a way that removal
101 of trees decreased the stand basal area to the recommended level. The timing of final harvest was based on either stand
102 age or stand mean diameter (Fig. 2, Table 1). Final harvest was done in a conventional Finnish way i.e. as a clear cut
103 in which trees are topped, limbed and stems cut to the pre-defined lengths at the harvesting site. Harvesting residues,
104 i.e. tree tops, removed branches and stumps were left at the site. The simulation setup covered about 94% of the
105 upland forest growing sites in Finland (The Finnish Statistical...2014). Litter input into soil was calculated by
106 multiplying simulated biomass compartments and turnover rates in MOTTI with biomass expansion factors (BEF)
107 used in the Finnish greenhouse gas inventory (Official Statistics of Finland 2017). The soil decomposition model



108 YASSO07 (Tuomi et al. 2011) was used to simulate soil carbon dynamics with the obtained litter inputs. The carbon
 109 stores and decay of harvested wood products were computed from the timber harvest assortment information that
 110 MOTTI simulates, and species-specific product distributions and life cycle information. For sawlogs, the allocation
 111 of roundwood to industrial products was based on Karjalainen et al. (1994) because that source enabled species-wise
 112 computations. Karjalainen et al. (1994) was the most detailed source available and resulted in the breakdown of
 113 production given in Table 2. Pulpwood-sized wood was added to fibre products from sawlog residues and consumed
 114 for paper and packaging products. Storage of carbon in products was based on four lifecycle categories with
 115 exponential decay, given in Karjalainen et al. (1994).

116

117 The total uncertainty of modeled forest carbon dynamics was assumed to be 15% in our analysis. This value consists
 118 of parametric uncertainty of MOTTI (Salminen et al. 2005) and Yasso (Tuomi et al. 2011) models, and errors in BEFs
 119 between different stand age classes.

120

121 The marginal annual change of RF due to annual carbon stock changes (in trees, soil and harvested wood products)
 122 was estimated following Lohila et al. (2010). The RF is defined here as a local change in the radiative energy balance
 123 (W m^{-2}) at the tropopause per one square meter in response to the change of the state of 1 m^2 of forest area for the
 124 stand-wise simulations. The RF estimates due to the annual changes in biomass were converted to CO_2 equivalent
 125 emissions/sinks assuming 50% carbon concentration in dry woody biomass. The decay of atmospheric CO_2 emissions
 126 was estimated using the lifetime function f , (IPPC 2007):

127

$$128 \quad f(t) = a_0 + \sum_{j=1}^3 a_j e^{-t/\tau_j} \quad (1)$$

129

130 where t is time, $a_{j,j} = 1, 2, 3$ are weights, and τ_j are time constants (IPCC 2013). From these the cumulative changes
 131 in atmospheric CO_2 due to different harvest scenarios were estimated and dynamics of RF impact were derived.

132

133 To illustrate the cumulative warming impact of forest management within a defined timeframe (T) we calculated the
 134 cumulative radiative forcing (CRF) (F^C) as:

135

$$136 \quad F_i^C(T) = \int_0^T F_i(t) dt \quad (2)$$

137

138 Here F_i is RF related to effect i (CO_2 , A, SOA and PS) and $T = 100$ yr. Accordingly, the total CRF is:

139

$$140 \quad F_{tot}^C(T) = \sum F_i^C(T) \quad (3)$$

141

142 For the landscape level simulations we estimated the impact of the management of the whole forestry area of Finland
 143 for the whole globe (Sect. 2.7).



144

145 2.3 Estimation of the climate change effects on the forest carbon sequestration

146 To analyse forest growth and carbon sequestration under climate change, the process-based models OptiPipe (Mäkelä
147 et al. 2008b) and PRELES (Mäkelä et al. 2008a) were used. In the OptiPipe model, tree volume growth was obtained
148 through the allocation of gross primary production (GPP) depending on the C:N ratio, temperature sum and soil
149 nitrogen availability. Soil nitrogen availability increases concurrently with the increasing temperature sum. The
150 potential increase of soil nitrogen availability was set higher in simulations for fertile forest sites than for poorer sites
151 (Mäkelä et al. 2008b). The GPP prediction in PRELES is based on the concept of light use efficiency. The model uses
152 daily values for the absorbed photosynthetically active radiation (aPAR) and modifiers for atmospheric CO₂
153 concentration, light, temperature, vapor pressure, soil water and phenological state for GPP calculation (Peltoniemi et
154 al. 2015). The obtained relative changes in volume growth were used to modify the growth functions of MOTTI for
155 the 2050 climate.

156

157 The GPP potential of Finnish forests, used as an input in OptiPipe, was estimated using PRELES for the mean climate
158 model projections of SRES A2 climate scenario (IPCC 2007) (between RCP6.0 and RCP8.5 scenarios, Rogelj et al.
159 2012) for the year 2050. The constructed climate scenarios combined a daily observed data set on a 10 x 10 km grid
160 over Finland (Venäläinen et al. 2005) with changes in the long-term average, simulated by an ensemble of 8 Global
161 Circulation Models (GCM, CMIP3, Meehl et al. 2007) for the A2 emission scenario for 2011-2040, 2041-2070 and
162 2071-2100. The development of atmospheric CO₂ concentration during 21st century was obtained from the BERN
163 carbon cycle model (IPCC 2013). Details of the construction of climate scenarios are described by Rötter et al. (2013).
164 In the delta change method, the projected climate changes are added/multiplied (depends on the variable) to the
165 observed climate variables in the reference period. It is also assumed that the climate model bias remains the same in
166 the simulations of future climate (Meehl et al. 2007). Firstly, the monthly long-term changes in air temperature (T,
167 °C), precipitation (R, %), vapor pressure (hpa), global radiation (%) between the reference period (1971-2000) and
168 future period for each GCM and emission scenario were calculated. The GCM grid cell center points were re-projected
169 to the projection of the grid of the observed database and monthly changes were bi-linearly interpolated to estimate
170 values for the center points of the 10 x 10 km grid cells. For each grid cell, monthly changes were linearly interpolated
171 to daily changes, which were added to the observed time-series.

172

173 2.4. Estimation of the radiative forcing effects of product substitution

174 The avoided CO₂ emissions related to wood utilization were computed separately for harvested sawlogs and
175 pulpwood. For sawnwood, the substitution factors of individual studies listed in Sathre and O'Connor (2010) were
176 used as data points to compute the average values for avoided carbon emissions per carbon in raw material. They were
177 0.913, 0.905, and 0.819, for Scots pine, Norway spruce and silver birch, respectively. For determining the uncertainty
178 range of the values, standard errors of 0.566, 0.560, 0.507 were used for each species, respectively, calculated from
179 the individual studies reported in Sathre and O'Connor (2010). For avoided emissions due to pulpwood use (Pingoud
180 et al. 2010), a common value across species of 0.695 was used. Same CO₂ atmospheric life function (IPCC 2007) was



181 used as in case of forest carbon accounting (Sect. 2.2) for the decay of avoided emissions effect. Also RF due to the
182 avoided emissions was estimated following Lohila et al. (2010).

183

184 **2.5 Estimation of the radiative forcing effects of surface albedo**

185 Models of forest albedo were estimated for an area located in central Finland based on MODIS MCD43A3 blue-sky
186 albedos (Schaaf et al. 2002) and forest resource data produced by the Natural Resources Institute Finland (Tomppo et
187 al. 2008). Regression models were used to estimate the tree species specific forest albedos for different volume
188 thresholds utilizing information on the fractional covers of different forest types within the MODIS pixels (Kuusinen
189 2014). The land cover data were divided into five components: clear cut (growing stock $\leq 5 \text{ m}^3 \text{ ha}^{-1}$), young stand (pine
190 or spruce forest with growing stock $> 5 \text{ m}^3 \text{ ha}^{-1}$ but $< 60 \text{ m}^3 \text{ ha}^{-1}$), pine forest (growing stock $\geq 60 \text{ m}^3 \text{ ha}^{-1}$), spruce
191 forest (growing stock $\geq 60 \text{ m}^3 \text{ ha}^{-1}$) and deciduous broadleaved forest (growing stock $> 5 \text{ m}^3 \text{ ha}^{-1}$). Species-specific
192 albedo for Scots pine and Norway spruce were assumed to follow a stepwise function during the total rotation. Albedo
193 was assumed to be highest in open clear cuts and linearly decrease for Scots pine and Norway spruce stands until the
194 growing stock reached $60 \text{ m}^3 \text{ ha}^{-1}$. Deciduous broadleaved species (mainly birches) albedo was noted to be insensitive
195 to changes in growing stock, so it was estimated as one value for the total rotation (stand volume $> 5 \text{ m}^3 \text{ ha}^{-1}$). Monthly
196 means of component albedos were calculated for February-September, but due to low solar zenith angles during
197 winter, there were no good quality albedo retrievals available from October to January. For December and January,
198 the same albedo values were used as for February; October was given albedo equivalent to that of September and for
199 November albedo was linearly interpolated between the values of October (September) and December (February).
200 The resulting albedo values were translated into net shortwave radiation at the top of atmosphere using ECHAM5
201 radiative transfer model. The method is explained in more detail in Matthies et al. (2016). The uncertainty of the
202 albedo impact on RF was estimated to be 25%. This albedo uncertainty includes the differences between vegetation
203 types and in radiative transfer. The uncertainty of the RF from albedo of different forest types was estimated as a
204 proportion of their RF in a clear-cut area (used as a reference here). This assumes that changes in RF are directly
205 proportional to changes in albedo. The analysis is based on published values of RF and their errors (Table 1 in
206 Kuusinen et al. 2013).

207

208 **2.6 Estimation of the radiative forcing effects of forest-originating aerosols**

209 Measurements in a boreal Scots pine forest (SMEAR II, Hakola et al. 2012, Bäck et al. 2012, Aalto et al. 2014) and
210 literature values of BVOC emission potentials for different species (Hakola et al. 1998, 2001, 2003, 2006, Smolander
211 et al. 2014) were used to simulate SOA formation for forests of different age and species composition using the one-
212 dimensional chemical-transport model SOSAA (Boy et al. 2011). The model was constructed to reproduce boundary
213 layer transport, emissions, chemistry and aerosol dynamics. Since SOSAA is a column model, it assumes horizontal
214 homogeneity, with the consequence that simulations were carried out for individual tree stands under the assumption
215 that the gas- and particle phase compounds from one stand did not interact with other stands. The simulated aerosol
216 loading for the atmospheric boundary layer column was then employed to estimate the direct and indirect aerosol
217 induced RF. The indirect effect, which dominates the aerosol radiative effects, is based on the method by Kurtén et



218 al. (2003). The meteorological transport was based on the coupled plant-atmosphere boundary layer model SCADIS
219 (Sogachev et al. 2002, Sogachev and Panferoy 2006, Sogachev et al. 2012). The most important supporting equations
220 are provided in Boy et al. (2011), and updates and validations are presented in Mogensen et al. (2015). The emissions
221 of organic vapors from the canopy were calculated by a modified version of MEGAN 2.04 (Guenther et al. 2006,
222 Smolander et al. 2014). The estimated emissions are highly dependent on meteorological factors (in particular
223 temperature and light), forest leaf area and leaf biomass, and furthermore, the emission potentials of individual organic
224 compounds that are specific for individual tree species (Mogensen et al. 2015). The data on Silver birch and Norway
225 spruce emission potentials was much less than those of Scots pine, and therefore simulations include more uncertainty
226 regarding these species.

227

228 The SOA effects were calculated for three different ages of pine, spruce and birch forest (Fig. 3 and Table 3) and the
229 values over the stand development were interpolated from those stages. The uncertainty range of SOA RF was adopted
230 from the study by Spracklen et al. (2008). They found a RF range from -1.6 to -6.7 Wm⁻² for the SOA effect for the
231 difference between no forest and closed canopy. Our simulations gave an average value for the same difference of -
232 3.8 Wm⁻² when the current species distribution in Finland was assumed (50% Pine, 35% Spruce and 15% Birch). This
233 yielded an average range of ± 70% for the SOA effect. The aerosol dynamics module in the SOSAA model was based
234 on the University of Helsinki Multicomponent Aerosol model (UHMA, Korhonen et al. 2004) and described in a
235 recent publication by Zhou et al. (2014).

236

237 For the climate change effect in the SOSAA, the daily weather for year 2050 was predicted using the SRES A2
238 emission scenario and the csiro_mk3_5 climate model (0.34°C lower annual mean temperature in 2050 than projected
239 by ensemble median model). The simulated meteorological parameters in SOSAA were then nudged towards these
240 predictions. The BVOC emission changes were calculated using the temperature dependency as expressed in MEGAN
241 2.04. Outputs from various climate models were used, in order to constrain SOSAA by the expected ambient
242 concentrations of O₃, SO₂, CO, NO, NO₂ and CH₄ in year 2050. The predicted mole fractions of SO₂ and O₃ were
243 obtained from GFDL-CM3 from the CMIP5 data archive (<http://cmip-pcmdi.llnl.gov/cmip5/index.html>). The
244 predicted mole fraction of CH₄ was taken from CESM1-WACCM (from NCAR). There exists no predicted mole
245 fractions of NO, NO₂ and CO for year 2050, therefore the annual mean emission rates of NO and CO from IPCC
246 RCP4.5 were utilized. It was assumed that there is an identical change in the NO₂ concentration as in the NO
247 concentration. This means that the 2010 measured concentrations were multiplied with the following factors:
248 O₃•1.0472, SO₂•0.3144, CO•0.3927, NO•0.2336, NO₂•0.2336, and CH₄•1.0562. The model was initialized with the
249 same background aerosol concentrations as in the current climate (year 2010) and constrained with the same
250 condensation sink as in 2010.

251

252 The changes in direct RF from aerosols were calculated between each canopy condition of the forest and species
253 (Table 3). The method is based on the supplementary material of Paasonen et al. (2013) and on the article Lihavainen
254 et al. (2009).



255

256 The monthly mean cloud cover fraction was calculated from ECMWF reanalyzed low cloud cover fraction, which is
257 also expected to have contributed towards the uncertainties. The changes in indirect RF from aerosols were calculated
258 similarly as above between each canopy condition of the forest and tree species (Table 3) based on the method
259 presented in Kurtén et al. (2003). The results in both direct and indirect forcing calculations were averaged for annual
260 values in $W m^{-2}$, which represents the total amount of the radiative effect for 1 square meter of forest.

261

262 **2.7 Estimation of the radiative forcing effects of forest area simulations**

263 The forest area simulations were calculated for the three main boreal species (Scots pine, Norway spruce and silver
264 birch, Sect. 2.2) with considerations for variations in site fertility and differences in age distribution in the forest. The
265 forest data of the 11th Finnish national forest inventory (The Finnish Statistical...2014) were used to initialize the
266 simulations under the current climate, i.e. the current age structure of forests was used for the initialization. Four
267 different harvest scenarios were modeled, with harvest levels being relative to current annual increment (CAI) of the
268 forests (50%, 65%, 100% and 130% of CAI). The scenario of 65% harvest level corresponds the current harvest level
269 and was thus used as a reference for the other scenarios. The annually harvested volume consisted of volume from
270 recommended thinnings and from the final harvests. In order to obtain the targeted harvest level, the recommended
271 site-specific age of final harvest was delayed from the recommended minimum final felling age if needed. Shorter
272 rotation times than the recommended minimum final felling age were not used in the simulations. The resulting forest
273 area dynamics were coupled with stand level values (Sect. 2.2) of RF changes at different ages in order to obtain total
274 RF changes of forest area over the simulated time period, i.e. surface area of each species and site type combination
275 was multiplied with stand specific RF change curve (Fig. 4). The forest area RFs were areal integrals of stand RF
276 caused by carbon sequestration, surface albedo, aerosol and product substitution effects expressed relative to the initial
277 state of the forest. No spatial interaction between forest stands was assumed. Under the 2050 climate (Sect. 2.3), the
278 forests were initialized using the same site and age distributions as in the current climate. However, the initial volume
279 and growth of these classes corresponded to the new equilibrium in 2050 climate by modifying the growth functions
280 in MOTTI.

281

282 **3 Results**

283 Forest management has a clear effect on radiative forcing (RF) regionally. The simulations show that both warming
284 and cooling can be attributed to management options, including the choice of tree species and the rotation period. The
285 RF was more negative with decreasing harvest levels, which is mainly attributable to higher carbon sequestration and
286 SOA formation. Substituting fossil fuels and fossil based material generated accumulation of avoided emissions which
287 reduced greatly differences between harvest schemes. At the stand level, the combination of all effects level resulted
288 in a large negative RF over the rotation (Fig. 4, Table 4). The 100-year average RF was increasingly negative with
289 increasing site fertility, and the contribution of SOA and PS together were over 70% of the total cooling impact in all
290 cases (Table 4). The inclusion of the SOA effect to RF assessment of the biosphere increased the negative RF of boreal



291 forests, i.e. climate cooling influence, and enforced the warming impact of forest harvesting. The cooling impact of
292 PS increased along the larger harvests but depended greatly on the substitution factors (Fig. 4).

293

294 In the SOA effect, the increased cloud albedo due to forest VOCs dominated since direct RF effect of aerosol particles
295 ranged only from 3% to 6% in different species. The different effects had different dynamics with respect of forest
296 development. Harvesting caused an increase in RF due to the loss of carbon sequestration and a decrease in SOA, but
297 a decrease due to an increase in PS and also in A in the conifers. The deciduous silver birch stand's A had an opposite
298 effect to that of the conifer stand's, being slightly higher than the open area A, i.e. clear cut had a warming effect in
299 terms of A in silver birch. These differences between spruce and birch stands are illustrated more clearly by the
300 cumulative RF (Fig. 4 c and d). The largest impact in CRF in all stands was caused by PS, due to its cumulative nature.

301

302 Under the 2050 climate, the SOA effect over stand rotation was larger than in the current climate (from -2.3 to -5.4
303 Wm^{-2} for the herb rich spruce site type) due to enhanced BVOC emissions and subsequent SOA formation, related to
304 increased temperatures. This effect more than compensated for the increase in RF from reduced carbon sequestration
305 (from -3.8 to -2.4 Wm^{-2}) due to more rapid biomass turnover (litter and soil carbon, also shorter stand rotation time)
306 in the warmer climate.

307

308 Forest management schemes at the regional level were simulated with different annual harvest intensities (50%, 65%,
309 100% and 130% harvest relative to the present CAI) using the modeled stand level increment curves. Totaling the
310 considered direct effects of forests (immediate A, SOA and CO_2 , excluding PS), meant that any harvest level below
311 100% of the current growth of Finnish forests, i.e., harvest schemes that increase the forest biomass from current, had
312 a cooling influence relative to the present state under the current climate (Fig. 5a). The difference between the lowest
313 and highest harvest levels of Finnish forests (50 vs. 130% of CAI) led to a net global RF difference of approximately
314 0.003 W over 50 years (the time period considered most important for climate mitigation actions) with the two lightest
315 harvest scenarios clearly cooling the climate and the most extreme harvest scenario clearly warming the climate from
316 the present (Fig. 5a).

317

318 When the product substitution (PS) effect was also considered, the differences in the RF impact between harvest levels
319 was reduced (Fig. 5b). Particularly, the RFs of the harvest intensities that maintained or increased the forest wood
320 stock were all within the assessed uncertainty ranges. The average substitution factors for saw logs and pulpwood (0.9
321 and 0.7 kg avoided C emissions per kg of C in wood, respectively) led to comparable RF influences over the first 50
322 years between PS and the other effects. The higher PS associated with a higher harvest rate largely compensated for
323 the lower direct cooling effect of SOA and CO_2 so that the net difference between these harvest levels (50% - 100%)
324 was small (Fig. 5b).

325

326 The differences in RF between the harvest levels increased further under the 2050 climate. Largely due to changes in
327 SOA forcing, the higher harvest rates had a bigger warming influence than in current climate, while change in the



328 difference between the lowest harvest rates was minor (Fig. 6). In the 2050 climate analyses, the PS was not considered
329 since it is a property of the technosphere (comprised of all of the structures that humans have constructed) and thus
330 larger and more rapid changes in it could occur than in the forest related properties of biosphere. Overall, the estimated
331 uncertainties for the non-carbon effects and PS exceeded those for forest carbon balances.

332

333 **4 Discussion**

334 Our results show that the rarely considered cooling via the formation of SOA as well as avoided emissions by product
335 substitution (PS) play dominant roles in the climate forcing of boreal forests' management. Together, the climate
336 cooling impact of these two effects was about 70% of the average RF effect over stand rotation, but their response to
337 forest management was mutually opposite; harvesting increased cooling by the PS effect but decreased it by the SOA
338 effect. The analysis showed that a changing climate will lead to an increased importance of SOA. Aerosol and albedo
339 effects were large enough to modify the carbon sequestration based order of dominant species' climate change
340 mitigation potential, shifting the rankings of spruce and birch dominated stands. The CRF curves show explicitly how
341 fundamental the inclusion of SOA and PS effects is for the climatic impact of forest management decisions. The large
342 differences in regional RF values between different scenarios underline the importance of forest management as a
343 driver of climatic forcing.

344

345 Naudts et al. (2016) concluded that forest management favoring conifers has contributed to climate warming since
346 1750's, particularly in the European temperate forest. Their conclusion was based on carbon sequestration together
347 with albedo and evapotranspiration impacts. We show here that including the effects of forest management on SOA
348 formation acts in the same direction as Naudts et al. (2016) conclusion. The SOA-induced cooling of closed canopy
349 forest relative to the reference clearcut was comparable to that caused by carbon sequestration over stand rotation.
350 Although the maximum cooling by SOA over rotation was lower than that of cumulative carbon sequestration, the
351 average cooling was comparable since the SOA effect tracked the size of the canopy whereas the carbon effect
352 followed biomass accumulation in trees, litter and harvested wood products. For the coniferous species, the SOA
353 induced cooling exceeded the warming induced by low albedo of forest cover under the present climate. The SOA
354 effect thus increased the climate warming impact of forest harvesting even in the boreal region. The SOA-induced
355 cooling of birch exceeded that of conifers, enforcing the Naudts et al. (2016) conclusion, though the leaf biomass is
356 lower in silver birch than in coniferous species. These species-specific differences in RF are mainly caused by their
357 different emission rates of BVOCs (Mentel et al. 2009). The differences increased under the 2050 climate (the net
358 difference of local RF between birch and spruce in herb-rich sites increased from -2.2 to -10.6 Wm⁻² without the PS
359 effect) as the relative importance of carbon sequestration decreased due to more rapid carbon turnover, whereas the
360 BVOC emissions and SOA formation simultaneously gained importance. This suggests that tree species selection in
361 favor of broadleaf species with higher BVOC emission rates can be of equal or greater importance than species
362 selection for albedo proposed earlier (Betts 2000, Spracklen et al. 2008, Bright et al. 2014). This result bears
363 significance for the vegetation climate feedback since growth predictions suggest that warming climate favors
364 broadleaf species over conifers (Kellomäki et al. 2008). We would like to point out that the uncertainty related to the



365 emission potentials of Norway spruce and especially silver birch is high due to very limited published data.
366 Unpublished preliminary results (completed after submission of this manuscript), however, suggest that the
367 monoterpene emission of silver birch used for this study could be in the order of 6-18 times too high. This would
368 decrease the aerosol RF of birch so significantly that conifers forests would be cooler than silver birch forest with
369 respect to aerosol RF.

370

371 These results strongly suggest that the SOA effect needs to be included in a full assessment of the climate impacts of
372 forest management, however, the conclusions are conditional to our current understanding of SOA formation.
373 Numerous atmospheric processes and feedback mechanisms influence the RF of aerosols. For example, it was recently
374 discovered that the composition of aerosol size distribution is influenced by Highly Oxidized organic Molecules
375 (HOMs) (Ehn et al. 2014, Jokinen et al. 2015). Further, the exact effect of clouds on climate depends on cloud altitude,
376 which was not accounted for in our simulations. The average RF values due to SOA impacts are in the middle range
377 of previously estimated values (Spracklen et al. 2008), which is reassuring and gives confidence to the estimates.

378

379 Our results suggest a weaker albedo impact than indicated previously (Betts 2000). However, the estimated albedo
380 effect was largest in relative terms in low fertility forests (Forest Resources...2000) which probably correspond better
381 to the Siberian forests where a large albedo impact has been estimated (Betts 2000). Nevertheless, our estimates of
382 the RF due to albedo changes were relatively small. Estimates of the albedo effects of deforestation of boreal forests
383 vary widely in the literature (Betts 2000, Bright et al. 2014, Alkama and Cescatti 2016). Similar to our study,
384 O'Halloran et al. (2012) also derived albedo values from MODIS data for stands of different ages but obtained a
385 somewhat larger albedo difference than our study between forest and no-forest patches. This was mainly due to lower
386 winter and spring albedo of mature forests than in the study applied here (Kuusinen et al. 2012). Our estimates are
387 averages of clear-cut areas and forest stands at different ages for large forest areas and should therefore be
388 representative of prevailing conditions in Finland. Nonetheless, the different studies may reflect differences in forest
389 structure and conditions and empirical data have uncertainties of its' own depending on the length of time series or
390 accuracy of inventory data etc. Therefore, caution must be used when interpreting the results for the whole boreal
391 forest. Overall, the importance of the springtime albedo effect will decrease in a warmer climate with a shorter snow
392 cover period.

393

394 The avoided emissions are pivotal for assessing the climate change mitigation efficiency of forest management.
395 Without it, the lower the harvest the larger the cooling climate impact. Conversely, numerous studies agree that in the
396 long run the avoided emissions of product substitution inevitably lead to climate cooling as they accumulate over time
397 (Sathre and O'Connor 2010). At the time of harvest, carbon stored in the forest is lost and, assuming a given demand
398 of products, fossil fuel emissions are reduced as wood products can act as substitutes. Our results show that in a region
399 of established forest management with sustained harvest without a reduction in the regional wood inventory (Gauthier
400 et al. 2015), a moderate decrease or increase of the harvest rate may not bring about large changes in net climate
401 benefits if the substitution effect is considered in the time range of 50 years. This result is highly sensitive to the



402 substitution factors. Within the time span of our analysis, a tightening climate policy should lead to a lower C intensity
403 of the energy system, leading to lower substitution benefits of biomass (Pingoud et al. 2012). A coefficient of variation
404 $\pm 62\%$ was used here for sawn timber based on the reported values of Sathre and O'Connor's (2010). With high values
405 of substitution factors (i.e., replacement of high emission products with wood) the equal cooling was obtained with
406 low harvesting scenario (50% of CAI) and when harvest equaled growth (100% of CIA), whereas low substitution
407 values required low harvest scenarios for maximum cooling. Extremely intensified forest harvests (130% of CAI),
408 with an associated decrease in harvested wood dimensions led to clear reductions in the associated cooling effect (Fig.
409 5). This is due to smaller substitution factors of pulp and energy wood relative to those of long-lived timber products.
410 Hence, the combination of larger harvests and a shift in wood use to products with low substitution factors, such as
411 pulp or bioenergy, is not beneficial from a climate change mitigation viewpoint.

412

413 The approximate difference between the climatically 'best' and 'worst' simulated management schemes for Finnish
414 forests without the substitution effect up to year 2050 reached 0.13 % of the global anthropogenic RF in 2011 (0.003
415 out of 2.29 Wm^{-2} , IPCC 2013). While this number is low, it is important to note that Finland covers approximately
416 2% of the total boreal forest area (Burton et al. 2010). Although most boreal forests are currently not managed at the
417 intensity found in the Nordic region, more than half of the biome is commercially utilized (Burton et al. 2010, Gauthier
418 et al. 2015). Accordingly, the influence of the selected management could be around 3% (about -0.08Wm^{-2}) of the
419 current anthropogenic RF in 50 years in the current climate, and even higher with climatic warming. The resulting
420 warming effect with increasing harvests can be viewed as a climate debt that results from forest utilization. It may be
421 counterintuitive that such a debt results even though the harvested forests regenerate. However, regeneration is time
422 dependent and therefore, at the landscape level, forest carbon density and SOA formation decrease due to harvesting,
423 as well as with their associated RF effects. To estimate the net effect, we must also consider how the forest products
424 as a whole influence the climate, in relation to alternative products and production chains. These substitution effects
425 have to be always analyzed against the reference situation. At the stand level analysis, we used clear cut area as the
426 reference situation while mature unharvested forest could be seen preferential especially from viewpoint of the carbon
427 dynamics. This does not, however, affect how different stands compare to each other. The main reason for this
428 selection of the reference was that albedo and VOC emissions of clear cuts are equal between species and rotation
429 times while they differ for mature forests. Also, the modeling of the development of unharvested mature forest is far
430 from not being ambiguous. At the landscape level, we used the scenario corresponding the current harvest level as a
431 baseline (65% of the present CAI), i.e. the continuation of the business-as-usual. When the avoided emissions from
432 product substitution were considered, the differences between the moderate harvest rates (50-100% of current growth)
433 were within the uncertainty range. This would mean that within this range, the choice between more or less intensive
434 forest management neither cools nor warms the climate within a 50 year period, assuming the wood use portfolio does
435 not change. However, the result depends on the prevailing production technologies. While the direct impacts of forest
436 on atmosphere depend on biosphere processes, the substitution effect can change quite drastically with technological
437 innovations, and therefore its long term prediction is difficult. The selection of a reference situation is not a trivial.

438



439 The results of this study demonstrate that deciding on a climate beneficial forest management requires a holistic
440 consideration of all associated effects, and that appropriate management of boreal forests can have an important
441 climate change mitigation role. The inclusion of the rarely considered SOA effects enforces the view that the lower
442 the harvest the more climatic cooling boreal forests provide. Including the effect of product substitution highlights the
443 importance of the kinds of wood products that are manufactured from harvested wood. Our results, in support of
444 previous similar findings, should act to caution policy makers who are emphasizing the increased utilization of forest
445 biomass for bioenergy over long lasting wood products to combat climate change (Kallio et al. 2013, Söderberg and
446 Eckerberg 2013). It has been shown that forest management aimed at maintaining the standing biomass with
447 sustainable timber supply is also preferred by many private forest owners in Finland (Valkeapää and Karppinen 2013).
448 This study's results demonstrate that such management is also superior to intensive forest biomass use for short-lived
449 wood products in providing the most climate cooling influence. Additionally, sustainable harvest options provide
450 greater consideration for other ecosystem services and an insurance for possible adverse effects of climate change on
451 boreal forest health (Gauthier et al. 2015). Overall, managed boreal forests can provide non-trivial sustained climate
452 cooling without any land-use changes while simultaneously maintaining their other important economical and
453 ecological roles.

454

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663 **Table 1: Silvicultural recommendations (Recommendations for...2006) implemented in MOTTI simulation model and**
 664 **applied in business as usual (BAU) scenario simulations. The newly established stands after regeneration on the Herb-rich**
 665 **sites were evenly divided between silver birch and Norway spruce in the simulations while on the other site types it was**
 666 **assumed that stands regenerate with the same species as in previous generation.**
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Silvicultural treatment	Tree species		
	silver birch	Norway spruce	Scots pine
<i>Forest type/site fertility</i>	Herb-rich	Herb-rich/Mesic	Sub-xeric
<i>Regeneration type</i>	Planting	Planting	Planting
<i>Regeneration density</i>	1600 trees ha ⁻¹	1600-1800 trees ha ⁻¹	1800-2000 trees ha ⁻¹
<i>Sapling tending</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Pre-commercial thinning</i>			
height	4-7 m	3-4 m	5-7 m
density after thinning	1600 trees ha ⁻¹	1600-1800 trees ha ⁻¹	1800-2000 trees ha ⁻¹
<i>First commercial thinning</i>			
height	14-16 m	12-16 m	13-15 m
density after thinning	700-800 trees ha ⁻¹	900-1000 trees ha ⁻¹	900-1000 trees ha ⁻¹
<i>Second commercial thinning</i>			
age	50 years	50 years	55 years
basal area before	22 m ² ha ⁻¹	28 m ² ha ⁻¹	25 m ² ha ⁻¹
basal area after	15 m ² ha ⁻¹	19 m ² ha ⁻¹	17 m ² ha ⁻¹
<i>Final harvesting</i>			
age	65-90 years	67-90 years	75-90 years
diameter	28-32 cm	22-28 cm	23-28 cm

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673 **Table 2: Shares of products when processing sawlogs.**

Product	Scots pine	Norway spruce	silver birch
Sawnwood	43.5 %	40.0 %	4.8 %
Plywood	0.0 %	3.1 %	34.2 %
Fibre products	43.5 %	42.7 %	35.0 %
Process energy	13.0 %	14.2 %	26.1 %
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %

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691 **Table 3: The characteristics of stands used in modeling the emissions of organic vapors (BVOC) by MEGAN2.04 and the**
 692 **formation of secondary organic aerosols (SOA) by SOSAA. We had standard emission potentials of BVOCs that are**
 693 **different from zero only for April through September for birch due to the leaves fall off the trees and for May through**
 694 **September for Norway spruce.**
 695

Species	Age (yrs)	Canopy height (m)	Canopy depth (m)	Biomass (g/cm ²)	LAI (m ² m ⁻²)	BVOC emission (month)
Scots pine	50	18.53	8.76	0.05043	2.666	M01-M12
	20	6.74	5.2	0.05161	7.0963	M01-M12
	15	3.56	3.56	0.01939	6.934	M01-M12
Norway spruce	50	17.2	10.4	0.12225	6.798	M05-M09
	30	10.3	5.86	0.13344	13.344	M05-M09
	15	4.02	4.02	0.06798	12.225	M05-M09
silver birch	50	27.74	11.1	0.01957	1.725	M04-M09
	20	14.4	7.2	0.02865	8.022	M04-M09
	10	6.75	6.08	0.00616	5.48	M04-M09

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703 **Table 4: The 100-year average local radiative forcing (RF, W m^{-2}) in the current climate of the three most common forest**
 704 **site types in Finland by separate influences (CO₂ sequestration in forest stands and wood products (CO₂), surface albedo**
 705 **(A), aerosols (SOA) and avoided emissions from the use of wood products (PS) and in decreasing order of site productivity.**
 706 **Values are relative to bare land.**

Site type- combination	species	Total	CO ₂	A	SOA	PS
(in Wm^{-2})						
Herb-Rich Birch		-13.0	-3.3	-0.1	-3.4	-6.1
Herb-Rich Spruce		-11.8	-3.8	1.5	-2.3	-7.1
Mesic Spruce		-8.9	-2.6	1.4	-2.3	-5.5
Sub-Xeric Pine		-4.1	-1.5	1.0	-1.4	-2.2

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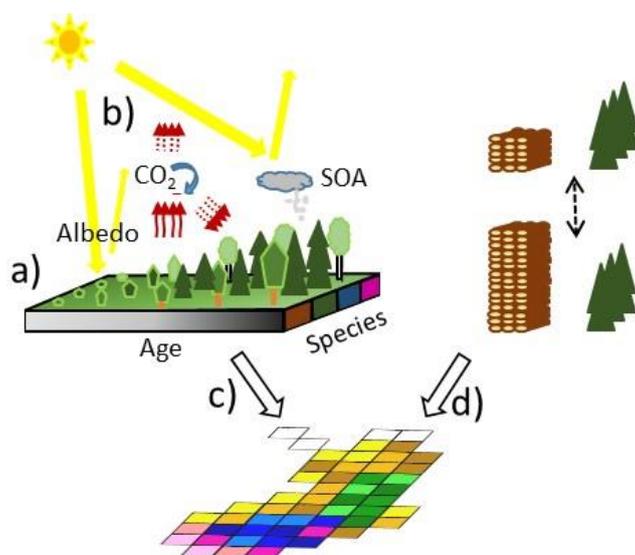
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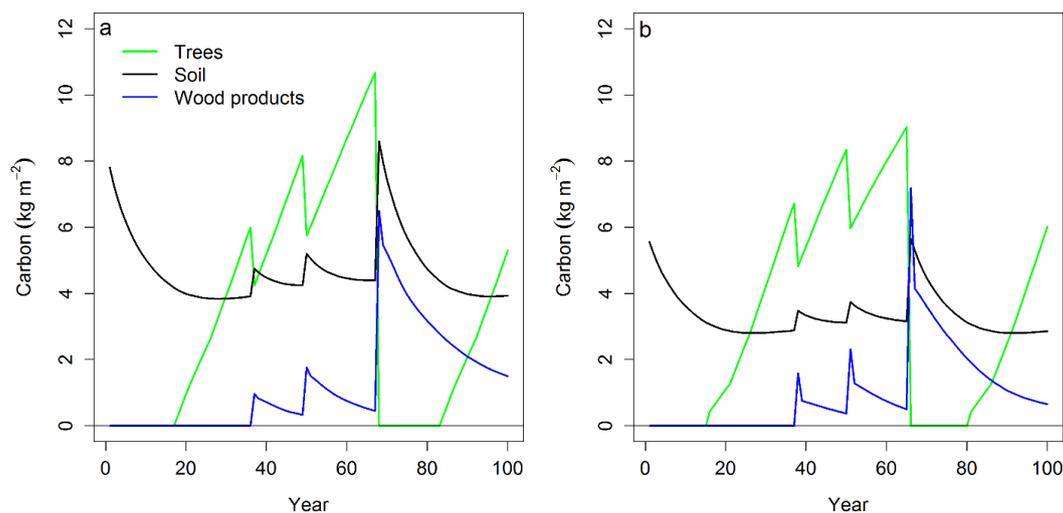
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739 **Figure 1: Schematic presentation of the study. We (a) simulated the stand development (changes of carbon storage in trees,**
740 **soil, and harvested products) of most common Finnish tree species at representative forest types (brown- sub-xeric Scots**
741 **pine, green- mesic Norway spruce, blue- herb-rich Norway spruce, purple- herb rich Silver birch) at the current and the**
742 **projected 2050 climate and (b) estimated the local radiative forcing (RF) considering surface albedo, CO₂ and secondary**
743 **organic aerosol (SOA) and avoided emissions from product substitution (PS) effects (yellow arrows indicate direct radiation**
744 **from sun, red arrows infrared radiation). Using this information and the state of the current forests of Finland (c) we**
745 **calculated how a change in their state influenced global RF relative to the present assuming different policy options for**
746 **harvesting (d) (annual harvest 50- 130% of current annual forest growth) up to 50 years from the initial state both in the**
747 **current and 2050 climate. Finally, we estimated our results at the level of managed boreal forests.**

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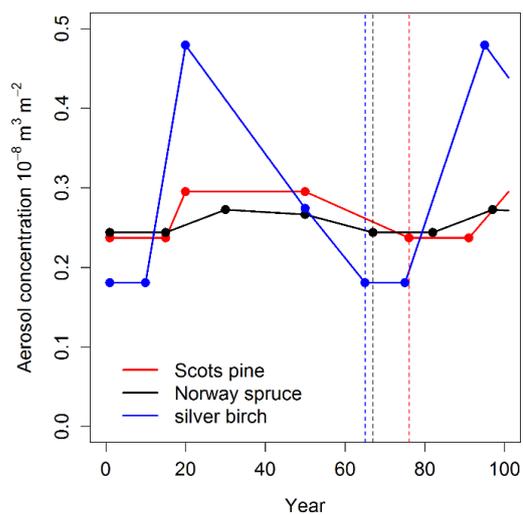
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778 **Figure 2: The dynamics of carbon in different compartments in a) fertile Norway spruce and b) fertile silver birch stands.**
779 **The clear cut has been done one year before the initialization. Stand development and litter inputs were simulated with**
780 **MOTTL. Soil carbon was simulated with Yasso07 and was ran to steady-state with the same forest management practices**
781 **as used in the simulations (Table 1, Recommendations for...2006). From the harvested timber and pulp wood, the**
782 **portfolio of wood products was formed (Table 2) and decay curves calculated on basis of Karjalainen et al. (1994).**
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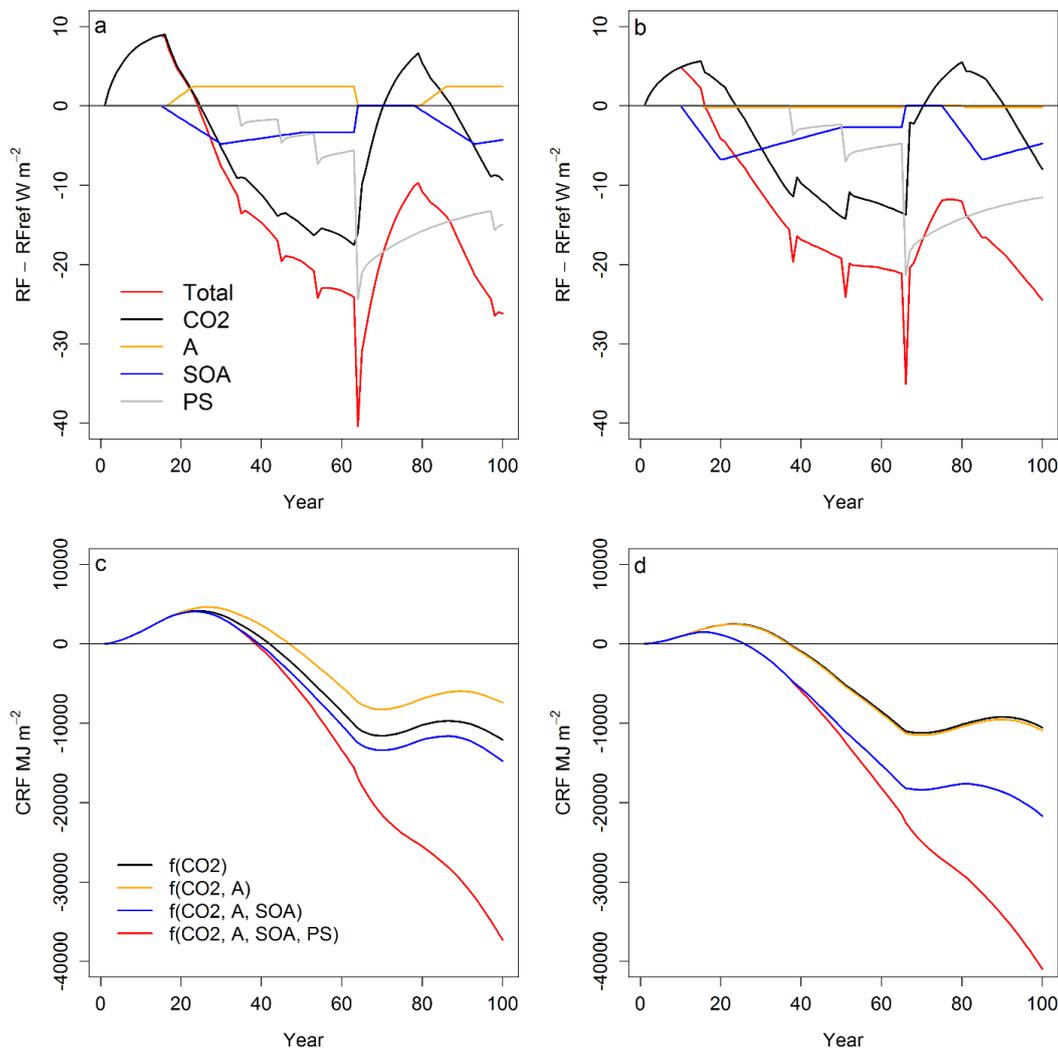
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Figure 3: The dynamics of boundary layer aerosols over 100 years in different stands. The dots are the stand ages where the biogenic volatile organic compounds and their effect on the aerosols was modeled (see Sect. 2.6 and Table 3). Lines are linear interpolations between dots. The starting point is bare land one year after clear cut (i.e. final harvest) and the vertical lines depict the year of next clear cut and the second rotation in different stands.

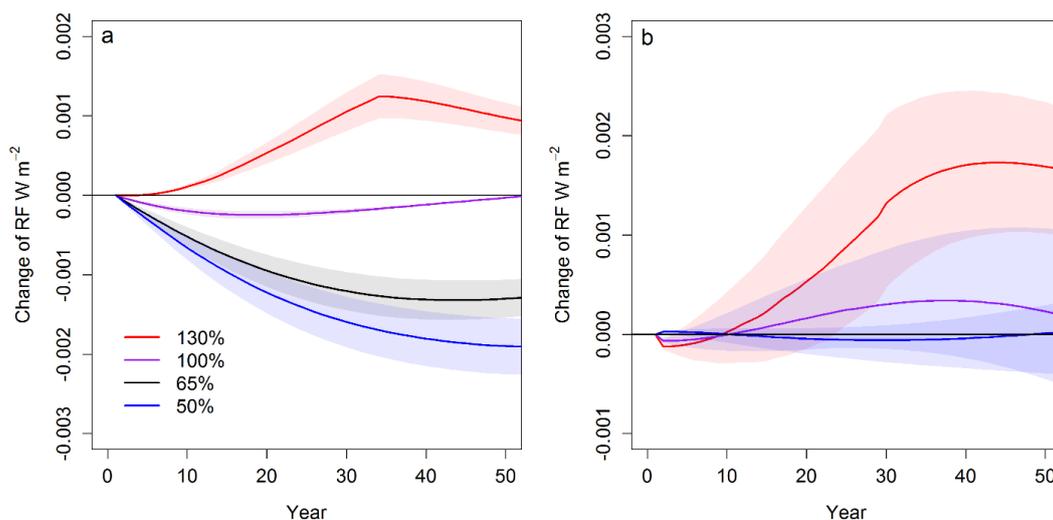


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Figure 4: The dynamic (a, b) and cumulative (c, d) local radiative forcing (RF) caused by CO_2 sequestration in forest stands and wood products (CO_2), surface albedo (A), aerosols (SOA) and avoided emissions from the use of wood products (PS) per unit area (m^2) for spruce stands (a and c) and equivalent outputs for birch stands (b and d) over 100 years in the present climate when the stands are managed according to recommended rotation lengths and management options. In subfigures a) and b) simulation curves show the change relative to RF at the initial state along stand development dynamics, i.e. how different forcing agents change along the vegetation dynamics relative to the clear cut area until final cut and growth of next tree generation. The thinnings during rotation period are shown as dips in curves. Aerosol forcing did not change during first 15 years after clear cut in spruce and 10 years in birch. The subfigures c) and d) show the cumulative radiative forcing (CRF) when different forcing agents are added one by one.



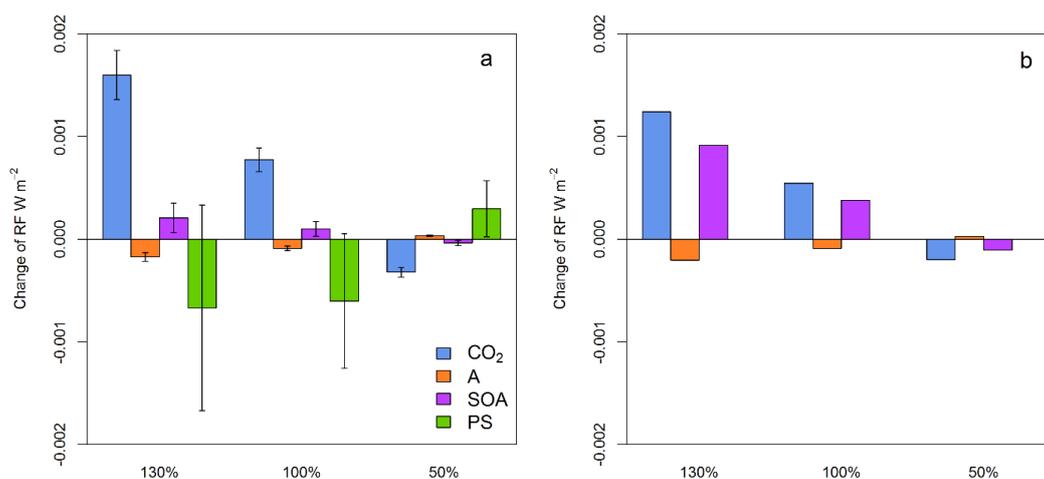
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829 **Figure 5: Simulated development of the net global radiative forcing (RF) due to different harvest intensities of Finnish**
830 **forests (2% of the boreal forest area) relative to their present state in the current climate a) excluding avoided emissions**
831 **(PS) from product substitution and b) the total impact including PS relative to a reference harvest level at 65% of the**
832 **present current annual increment (CAI, present harvest level). Different colors represent varying harvest levels given as a**
833 **percentage of present CAI in Finland in 2013 and the shaded area represents the estimated uncertainty (see text).**

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Figure 6: Contribution of different factors to the average change of net global radiative forcing (RF) in 50 years due to changes in Finnish forests (2% of the boreal forest area) relative to the harvest level (% current annual increment, CAI). At present, the harvest level is at 65% of CAI. Analyses were done in two different equilibrium climates a) the current and b) the projected 2050 climate. CO₂ includes carbon sequestered in trees, soil and forest products, A equals surface albedo, SOA aerosols and avoided emissions from the use of wood products (PS). The PS was not considered in 2050 climate (b) since it is a property of the technosphere and thus larger and more rapid changes in it could occur than in the forest related properties of biosphere. The range bars in a) indicate the uncertainty estimates (see text).

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