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Solid Earth Discussions

Interactive comment on "The effects of grazing on the spatial pattern of elm (*Ulmus pumila* L.) in the sparse woodland steppe of Horqin Sandy Land in Northeastern China" *by* M. Zhang et al.

Anonymous Referee #2

Received and published: 25 December 2015

Dear author,

In your work about the spatial pattern of elm in woodland steppe, I have enjoyed when I reading the introduction of but the other parts not, and I don't know if this work is suitable to publish in Solid Earth or not.

When I read your work title I had the impression that you will investigate the interaction between some soil characteristics and its relation with the spatial pattern of elm. The title is too large (The effects of grazing on the spatial pattern of elm (Ulmus pumila L.) in the sparse woodland steppe of Horqin Sandy Land in Northeastern China) you can resume it especially the final part , you already told us about the exact location in your

abstract.

In the abstract part you used an abbreviation DBH, It will be good and easy for reader if you refer just one time to its meaning Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) and then you can use the abbreviation.

In the study area, you wrote (two permanent plots, with one of 44.2 ha (650 m$\times$680 m) that was fenced, and another of 10.5 ha (300 m$\times$350 m) that was grazed), but when you see the figure 1a you can found that the maximum x value is 250, in addition to the trees that located in the margin of this plot is parallel to 200 x value, that mean the real area will be 7 ha (200 $\times$ 350m) not 10.5ha. I think it will be good if modified the size of the two figures with different size, the big area have a big figure and the small area has the small one, and you can save or change the grade scale. Also, it will be good if you give to the points three different colors related to your studied classes, class 1(10cm$\leq$DBH$\leq$15cm), class 2 (15cm<DBH$\leq$20cm), and class 3 (DBH>20cm),and then you can present a legend with the color meaning in the figures.

In the part of Data Collection and Analysis you referred to Ripley's L(r) value = 0 for completely spatial randomness (CSR), L(r) > 0 for aggregated pattern, while L(r) < 0 for regular pattern, after your analysis you did not mention to this values in your discussion part even though it is explained in some results figures.

The discussion part it is not easy to follow, and the conclusion part it should improve to be clearer, you said degraded sandy land of Northern China, while you did not present any indicators about how is the degradation in your studied area.

Finally I hope that my comments will be useful for you,

Sameh Kotb

Interactive comment on Solid Earth Discuss., 7, 3339, 2015.