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**Burial of downed dead wood is strongly affected by log attributes, forest ground
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Abstract

Dead wood can represent a substantial portion of forest ecosystem carbon stocks and is often reported following good practice guidance associated with national greenhouse gas inventories. In high latitude forest ecosystems a substantial proportion of downed dead wood is overgrown by ground vegetation and buried in the humus layer. Such burial obfuscates the important process of dead wood carbon transfer to other pools (e.g., litter and soil) and emission to the atmosphere (i.e., rates of decay).

Using data from the Swedish National Forest Inventory, we found that the proportion of downed logs that is buried increased from temperate to boreal forests. Several factors affect the probability of burial, including log attributes (e.g., decay class), ground vegetation (e.g., moss dominance, type of moss cover), and edaphic conditions (e.g., soil type, depth of organic layer). Combined assessments suggest that about 24 % of the carbon in the above-ground downed dead wood pool was found to be buried in boreal forests. Dead wood burial has important implications for forest carbon dynamics and associated monitoring (e.g., United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change reporting) as such a pool typically decomposes much slower compared to above-ground dead wood.

37

Introduction

Buried wood is defined as downed dead wood that is more than 50 % covered by soil, litter, or ground vegetation (Moroni et al. 2015). Until recently, it has been assumed that all downed wood is completely decomposed above-ground with associated rates of wood decomposition and carbon (C) dynamics being modelled using wood decay functions parameterized with decay rate constants (Laiho and Prescott 2004, Rock et al. 2008). Recently, it has become

44 evident that burial of downed dead wood is widespread in boreal forests (Moroni et al. 2015)
45 where the amount of buried wood can equal or even exceed the amount of aboveground dead
46 wood (Harvey et al. 1981, Hagemann et al. 2009, Hagemann et al. 2010).

47 Dead wood can represent a substantial portion of the total C stock in forest ecosystems. It has
48 been found that downed dead wood can account for approximately 20 % of total ecosystem C
49 in old-growth (Harmon et al. 1990) and secondary (Bradford et al. 2009, Woodall et al. 2013)
50 forests. Despite this, numerous aspects of dead wood dynamics remain as substantial
51 knowledge gaps (Russell et al. 2015) of which the phenomena of buried dead wood looms
52 large. There is no evidence to suggest that buried dead wood is included in forest C stock
53 estimates despite the inherent effect it has on detrital decomposition rates and C temporal
54 dynamics. It has been documented that the climatic conditions affect the rate of wood
55 decomposition (Russell et al. 2014), but the process of burial would certainly alter this rate for
56 any given piece of dead wood. In cool and moist environments, burial can slow down
57 decomposition (Jomura et al. 2007, Hagemann et al. 2010), effectively preserving the wood
58 (see also Eckstein et al. 2009, Edvardsson et al. 2012 documenting wood preservation for
59 millennia in peat deposits). Furthermore, dead wood is an obligatory C pool for reporting in
60 international greenhouse gas accounting following the IPCC recommendations (IPCC 2006).

61 Although wood burial has been documented as a widespread phenomenon, it is not ubiquitous
62 across global forest ecosystems. In their review, Moroni et al. (2015) documented that the
63 amount of buried wood differs substantially across forest ecosystems and hypothesized
64 several factors that may influence wood burial, including *wood properties* (e.g., decay class,
65 log dimension, tree species), *stand attributes* (e.g., ground vegetation – especially the moss
66 cover, tree species composition, well-drained versus paludified ground) and *disturbance*
67 *factors* (e.g., forest fires, forest management). As their review summarized data across rather
68 heterogeneous data sources, they were unable to rank the importance of these factors,

69 although they strongly emphasized the importance of paludified (i.e., waterlogged or swamp)
70 forests as a hotspot for large quantities of buried wood.

71 In this study, we present the first comprehensive dataset to document the frequency of buried
72 wood across a wide range of forest conditions in temperate and boreal forests using national
73 forest inventory data from Sweden which documents nearly all the potential factors
74 hypothesized as important for wood burial. Using this information, we assess their relative
75 importance and quantify the amount of C in buried and above-ground wood which refines our
76 understanding of the proportion of C transferred to other forest C pools (e.g., soil) across
77 varying forest types and climate zones.

78

79 **Material and methods**

80

81 *Sampling protocol*

82 Sweden has 28.1 million hectares of productive forest (average growth $> 1 \text{ m}^3/\text{ha}/\text{year}$)
83 spanning the following climate zones roughly from south to north: temperate (2 % of the area,
84 also labeled nemoral zone), hemiboreal (24 %), south boreal (12 %), mid boreal (43 %,
85 including 2 % in north-south boreal) and north boreal (19 %, including 5 % in the alpine
86 zone). The Swedish National Forest Inventory (Swedish NFI) is a stratified systematic
87 cluster-sampling inventory of concentric sample plots (Fridman et al. 2014). The sample plots
88 are clustered into permanent and temporary tracts. Permanent tracts are re-measured every 5th
89 year and temporary tracts are measured only once. A complete inventory of dead wood with
90 stems diameters (i.e., DBH) of at least 100 mm was introduced in 1994 (Fridman and
91 Walheim 2000). The dead wood inventory plots had a radius of 10 m. Downed logs were

92 recorded if: a) the point of inclusion (thickest end of the log) was inside the plot, and b)
93 minimum 1.3 m of the log length had a diameter > 100 mm (corresponding to a minimum
94 diameter of 100 mm at breast height for standing dead trees). Logs covered by vegetation
95 were recorded when the trunk outline was clearly visible below the ground vegetation, but no
96 vegetation was removed to seek additional logs. The whole log was considered when
97 recording vegetation cover, even if the log was partially outside the plot. Log volume was
98 calculated from the log length and mid diameter inside the plot. The dead wood data used in
99 this study are from permanent plots surveyed during 2004-2008.

100 For each sample plot, several tree-, stand-, and site variables are recorded. The variables from
101 the Swedish NFI used in this study are listed in Table 1.

102 *Data preparation*

103 The field data from the Swedish NFI database comprised a combination of continuous, semi-
104 quantitative, and categorical variables. Some of the variables were re-coded prior to the
105 statistical analysis (Table 1).

106 <Table 1>

107 The principal response variable in this study, *buried*, was derived from primary data on log
108 length cover by vegetation. The primary data was re-coded from a continuous scale of 0-100
109 percent to 0 (less than 50 % cover) or 1 (minimum 50 % cover) to conform to a definition of
110 buried wood proposed by Moroni et al. (2015).

111 A system with five decay classes (D0-D4) is based on the proportion of the length of the dead
112 wood objects consisting of decomposed soft wood (within parenthesis): Recently dead (D0;
113 no decomposed wood), little decayed (D1; 1-9%), little-medium decayed (D2; 10-25%),
114 medium decayed (D3; 26-75%), very decayed (D4; 76-100%). In the field, a section is

considered to have “soft wood” if a sharp instrument, such as a knife or similar, easily penetrates the surface when pushed into the wood. The final D4 stage is further characterized by being soft through the whole cross-section, i.e. a sharp instrument can be pushed through the log.

For most variables we kept the field data unchanged. We pooled similar categories for variables with few observations in certain categories to improve the balance of observations across the categories (e.g., for peat cover the two intermediate classes were pooled: 15100 logs were on plots with 0 % peat cover, 543 logs on less than 50 % peat cover, 427 logs on more than 50 % peat cover, and 1175 logs on plots with 100 % peat cover). For the variable *tree species* we recoded the field data by keeping only the tree species *Pinus sylvestris* (n = 5577 logs), *Picea abies* (n = 5783 logs), *Betula* spp. (n = 3806 logs) and pooled the remaining 20 tree species categories (n = 2079 logs). Before this recoding we assessed the effect of full tree species resolution in logistic regression analysis and found that the effect of individual tree species was either non-significant (18 tree species categories) or weakly significant (p-values $\approx$ 0.05 level; 4 tree species categories). We also assessed the effect of reduced tree species resolution in cross-validation tests and found that the predictive ability of the model with 4 tree species categories was almost identical to that of the model with 23 tree species categories.

Prior to the boosted regression tree analysis (see below), we adjusted high values for *trunk diameter* (all diameters > 350 mm were set to 350 mm) and *stand age* (all stand ages > 200 years were set to 200) to avoid misleading partial dependence plots due to weak empirical support from few observations.

Data analysis

138 We analyzed the data using two methods. First, we used boosted regression trees (BRT, R
139 package gbm) to assess the quantitative effects of different log properties, stand attributes,
140 and climate zones on the burial probability. This is an exploratory machine learning method
141 that builds up a predictive model based on regression trees (Elith et al. 2008). This method
142 has gained popularity because it scores among the best in predictive performance tests, easily
143 handles a mixture of categorical and quantitative predictors, and assumes no specific
144 functional response of the phenomenon to be modelled. The partial dependence plots from
145 BRT models display the effect of each predictor on the response (i.e., probability of wood
146 burial). The measurement unit in the partial dependence plots is the marginal effect of the
147 predictor on $\text{logit}(p)$ of the response, after accounting for the average effects of all other
148 predictors in the model. Thus, effect values close to 0 have negligible marginal effect on the
149 response (a burial probability of 0.5). An effect value of -1.5 roughly corresponds to a
150 probability of 0.2 while 1.5 roughly corresponds to a probability of 0.8. Similarly, effect
151 values of -0.5 and 0.5 roughly correspond to probabilities of 0.4 and 0.6, respectively.

152 We also used logistic regression to assess the effect of the same log properties, stand
153 attributes, and climate zones that were analyzed using the BRT method. We found very
154 strong agreement between the two methods as the coefficients from the logistic regression
155 varied in the same manner as the response levels from the BRT analysis. Since the two
156 methods produced similar results we chose to only present results from the BRT analysis as
157 they are more illustrative than those from the logistic regression.

158 We calculated the C content of wood in different decay classes based on Sandström et al.
159 (2007) that provide C content for decay stages being used in this study. We adopted their
160 values and assigned C content to decay class D0 through decay class D4 using tree species
161 specific values for pine, spruce, and birch. Next, we quantified the amount of C in all buried

and all exposed logs (i.e., not buried) separately and calculated the proportion of C that was buried as a percentage of the C in all exposed and buried logs.

Results

Using a definition of buried wood being 50% or more covered by ground vegetation, our analysis of 17,245 logs across Sweden using boosted regression trees revealed significant drivers of dead wood burial with serious implications for C monitoring and associated C dynamics.

Log attributes

A log's decay class was the factor that most strongly affected the probability of burial. This is indicated by the widest effect range of this factor (Figure 1, upper left panel) as compared with the effect range of the factors in the other partial dependence plots (Figure 1). These effect levels correspond to a probability range between 0.2 and 0.8 due to this factor alone (see methods for interpretation of the effect values).

<Figure 1>

There was no difference in burial probability between pine and spruce logs. The birch logs had slightly lower burial probability as compared with the conifer logs (Figure 1, upper central panel). The category "other trees" had a significantly higher burial probability, but this was likely an artifact due to the censoring effects of unidentified trees biasing results towards moderate to very decayed logs. In two alternative analyses (not included) with moderate or

full tree species resolution there was no consistent and significant effect of identified tree species, except for aspen that had slightly reduced burial probability.

We found a surprising increase of burial probability from the smallest to the largest logs. This factor was of minor importance; however, as the partial dependence effect was slightly below zero for log diameters below 15 cm and slightly above zero for log diameters above 30 cm (Figure 1, upper right panel).

Stand attributes

The surface vegetation (i.e. cryptogams comprising lichens and mosses) was the most important stand attribute affecting wood burial. The burial probability increased from lichen-dominated ground, to fresh feathermoss type (e.g., *Hylocomium splendens*, *Pleurozium schreberi*, *Ptilium crista-castrensis*) dominance, and further to minerotrophic and ombrotrophic peat mosses (Figure 1, mid row, left panel).

The field layer vegetation (i.e., the vascular plants) had almost no effect on wood burial probability. Most vegetation types had effects close to zero indicating neutral effect on wood burial (Figure 1, mid row, central panel). Only two vegetation types (“no field vegetation” and “poor dwarf shrub”) exhibited slightly reduced burial probability and two vegetation types (tall herbs, tall sedges) had slightly increased burial probability.

The edaphic conditions also influenced the burial probability. We found a large difference between logs resting on moraine or peat soil contrasting with those on rocky ground with strongly reduced burial probability (Figure 1, mid row, right panel). In addition we found that

peat depth > 1 m increased burial probability compared with shallower peat depths (Figure 1, bottom row, central panel).

Stand age had a minimal effect on wood burial. There was a slightly reduced burial probability during the first 0-20 years after stand replacement (typically clear-felling), while the burial probability was more or less constant at a neutral level in young, typically managed forests, as well as old unmanaged forests (Figure 1, bottom row, left panel).

Climate zones

We coarsely examined the effect of climate on downed dead wood burial through assuming broad vegetation zones representing general climate zones. We observed a weak effect of vegetation zone on wood burial with slightly increasing probability from the temperate and hemiboreal zone, through the south boreal zone, to the mid- and north boreal zone (Figure 1, bottom row, right panel).

Soil carbon input from dead wood

A significant portion of above-ground dead wood is buried and thereby contributes to the forest soil C pool over long time scales. Using the C content of logs in different stages of decay we quantified the remaining C in the buried logs to see how much of the C from the logs that entered the soil.

For all logs combined, the remaining proportion of C that entered the soil was 20.7 %. When we restricted the sample to the logs in the boreal zone (n = 11 388 logs) this proportion

increased to 24.7 %, while it was 14.6 % for the logs in the temperate and hemiboreal zone (n = 5857 logs).

When we grouped the logs in different soil classes, it turned out that only 4 % of the C became buried in forest on rocky ground, while the proportion increased to 20 % on moraine soil, and 27 % on peat soil (Figure 2). The corresponding proportions in boreal forests were 1 %, 24 %, and 31 % for rocky ground, moraine soil and peat soil, respectively (Figure 2).

<Figure 2>

Also, the ground vegetation significantly affected the burial of downed logs. When we grouped the logs according to the surface vegetation, it turned out that 11 % and 20 % of the C was buried in lichen-dominated and lichen-rich vegetation, respectively. In fresh “feathermoss type” vegetation, the proportion of buried C was 20 %, while the proportions increased to 23 % and 32 % in minerotrophic brown moss vegetation and ombrotrophic *Sphagnum* moss vegetation, respectively (Figure 3). All these proportions of buried C were somewhat higher in the boreal zone. Especially for the lichen-rich and feathermoss types there was a pronounced difference in C burial between the temperate and boreal zone (Figure 3). For the *Sphagnum* moss vegetation, we found an additional effect of peat depth, as the proportion of buried C was 31 % from logs on peat deposits 0.3-1.0 m deep, while the corresponding proportion was 36 % buried C from logs on peat deposits more than 1.0 m deep (Figure 3). In this swamp forest vegetation, the differences between temperate and boreal zones were much smaller (Figure 3).

<Figure 3>

A closer inspection of Figures 2 and 3 suggests that the burial probability of decay class D1 and especially in class D2 is a key factor in determining the proportion of C that is buried in different forest types. In Lichen-dominated vegetation none of the logs in decay class D1

were buried and only 9 % of the logs in decay class D2. In contrast, for logs in *Sphagnum* moss vegetation on deep peat deposits, about 20 % of the D1 logs were buried and close to 50 % of the D2 logs. Thus, in lichen-dominated vegetation nearly all wood was decomposed above-ground, while a substantial proportion of medium-decayed logs became buried in peat soils with *Sphagnum* vegetation. In other forest types the situation is intermediate between these two situations.

Discussion

Wood burial has recently been documented as a common and widespread phenomenon, especially in boreal forests (Moroni et al. 2015). In this study, we present the first analysis quantifying the probability of burial across different environmental conditions based on a comprehensive national forest inventory of Swedish boreal forests. We found that 24.9 % of all logs were buried (defined as a log with more than half its length covered by ground vegetation). The C in buried logs comprised 20.7 % of the C in all logs (i.e. buried and exposed logs combined). Behind these aggregated values, we found large differences in the burial probability and buried C across forest types.

Factors affecting burial

Decay class emerged as the single most important factor that affected wood burial. The decay relationship is rather obvious, as logs sink to the ground when they lose their structural integrity as a result of the decay (Fraver et al. 2013). Furthermore, the cross-section collapses to an ellipsoid and finally the log is fragmented in small pieces. During this process logs become increasingly prone to overgrowth by the ground vegetation. Thus, for all logs combined and for different subsets we found a consistent pattern of increasing probability of

274 wood burial with advanced degree of decay. The same pattern was reported by Moroni et al.
275 (2015) and can be postulated as perhaps a universal relationship.

276 We found a weak relationship of increasing probability of burial with increasing log diameter.
277 This relationship was quite surprising and in conflict with the results from Dynesius et al.
278 (2010) who found that increasing trunk diameter reduced vegetation cover and probability of
279 wood burial. In the study of Dynesius and co-authors, all logs were experimentally felled and
280 placed in known positions 5 years prior to the re-inventory. Thus, we consider their
281 documented effect to represent the real relationship between log diameter and overgrowth. It
282 is worth noting that many logs in the Dynesius study were positioned in swamp forest with
283 *Sphagnum* moss vegetation on deep peat deposits causing rapid burial (see growth rates of
284 *Sphagnum* mosses below).

285 In our study, we interpret the positive relationship between log diameter and burial probability
286 at least to some extent to be an artifact due to reduced detection probability of smaller
287 partially overgrown logs with implication regarding the monitoring of dead wood resources.
288 Often the top section of small diameter logs is overgrown and becomes almost invisible
289 during inventory activities. Small logs can easily go unnoticed, especially if the exposed part
290 is outside the inventory plot. Large diameter logs are often visible when overgrown as one
291 still can see its outline underneath the ground vegetation. Thus, we assume that the real
292 relationship is more likely to be the opposite in accordance with the finding of Dynesius et al.
293 (2010). It is; however, a possibility of increased probability of burial of large logs due to the
294 fact that larger logs take longer to decay and thus have a longer residence time with more
295 chance for the log to be covered by the surface vegetation. Unfortunately, we cannot sort out
296 the relative importance of these opposing effects of log size from the current data set
297 suggesting a need for continued research.

The surface vegetation of cryptogams (lichens and mosses) had a strong effect on wood burial. The lowest probability of burial occurred in lichen-dominated vegetation, it gradually increased across types with lichens frequently present (but not dominating) and feathermoss types, to vegetation with peat-forming mosses where *Sphagnum*-mosses facilitated the highest probability of burial. In the Swedish NFI, the vascular vegetation was characterized separately from the surface vegetation. The majority of these types had no effect on wood burial. Only one of the vascular vegetation types (tall herbs) was rather common and also exhibited an effect on wood burial. It should be noticed that this particular vegetation type “buries” downed logs through the accumulation of dead plant material from the previous growing seasons. Such dead plant material decomposes completely during the summer with the logs becoming exposed again in the late summer/early fall.

These findings clearly suggest that it is the surface layer component of lichens and mosses that drives the wood burial process rather than the vascular plants. Thus, our results strongly support the hypothesis by Moroni et al. (2015) who suggested that mosses are more important than vascular plants for wood burial. The vertical growth of *Sphagnum* mosses is typically 3-6 cm per year (Asada et al. 2003, Breeuwer et al. 2008). This growth rate fully accounts for the burial of some logs during a 5-year period as observed by Dynesius et al. (2010).

The edaphic conditions also affected the burial probability and the decisive factor is most likely the compactness of the ground. Rocky ground strongly decreased wood burial in contrast to moraine and peat soils. It should be noted that the operational criterion for separating between moraine or peat soils in the Swedish NFI is whether the peat thickness is shallower or thicker than 30 cm. Thus, in many sites the moraine soil type is overlaid by a thin peat layer. We found an additional effect that deeper peat deposits increased the probability of burial. The underlying mechanism is most likely how soon the trunk achieves ground contact. Dynesius et al. (2010) found that the proportion of log with ground contact

was the single most important factor that facilitated burial. Thus, when a tree falls on rocky ground, moraine soils, or on soils with a shallow peat layer, the branches act as stilts and delay ground contact as well as overgrowth by the vegetation. On deep peat deposits, fallen trees are rapidly absorbed by the loose ground and *Sphagnum* moss growth.

We found an increasing probability of wood burial from the south to the north (i.e., latitudinal gradient). The increase was most pronounced from the temperate/hemiboreal to south boreal, and only a weak increase further to mid and north boreal (Figure 1). We attribute this increased probability towards the north at least partly to slower wood decomposition and longer residence time in the colder boreal climate (e.g., Russell et al. 2014). There were; however, different changes in the probability of burial between edaphic conditions and bottom vegetation types (Figures 2 and 3). In the Swedish NFI the mosses are not identified to species, but coarsely divided in “fresh” soil mosses (corresponding to feathermosses in the boreal zone) and peat mosses (that are further separated into *Sphagnum* mosses and other peat-forming mosses). When moving southwards from the boreal zone, the moss cover changes to other species with sparser surface cover due to stronger competition from grasses and herbs. In addition, there is also a change from thick humus layers in the boreal zone to other soil types towards south. So, although the surface vegetation class remains the same across the climate zones, the actual vegetation may be quite different.

Soil carbon input

The changing probability of burial across edaphic conditions and ground vegetation types strongly influenced the amount of C that entered the soil. The most common combination of edaphic condition and ground vegetation was moraine soil with feathermoss-type bottom vegetation (70 % of all logs occurred in this situation). In such situations, we found that about

24 % of the C in the wood was buried in the boreal forest. On rocky ground, the amount of buried C was only 1 % in the boreal zone while it was 31 % on boreal peat soils. On peat soils, both moss type and peat depth affected the amount of buried C with highest input rates in deep *Sphagnum* peat layers (38 % of C buried in the boreal zone). These quantitative effects of the edaphic conditions and vegetation types upon burial have not been documented before and show that it is instrumental to relate wood burial and C dynamics of dead wood to these forest conditions.

We want to stress that the proportion of buried C that is reported in our study is a static assessment and does not represent the proportion of buried C relative to the original input of C from natural mortality of trees. The amount of C in the logs was higher when the trees died, which makes the amount of buried C smaller relative to that reference. On the other hand, the actual amount of buried wood is higher since deeply buried logs were not recorded in this study. Thus, it is the relative difference in C burial across forest conditions that are noteworthy from our study and not the quantitative values as such.

Until recently, it has been assumed that all dead wood (except roots) is decomposed above-ground. Very little information exists about the effects of burial on wood decomposition rates. In Canada, Moroni et al. (2010) documented that the residence time of buried wood in well drained humus layers was 2-4 times longer than wood in above-ground positions in the same forests. From peat excavation sites in Sweden and Germany, it has been documented that buried wood has been well preserved for 5000-7000 years in permanently waterlogged peat soil (Eckstein et al. 2009, Edvardsson et al. 2012). These observations suggest that wood burial slows down the decomposition significantly under conditions typically found in boreal forests (both in humus on well drained moraine soils and peat layers in swamp forest). The elevated probability of burial and long-term preservation of buried wood in peatland forests

give strong support to the notion by Moroni et al. (2015) that paludified forests are particularly important sites for wood burial.

Monitoring and research challenges

In this study we have focused on differences in probability of burial across forest conditions and the implications for C dynamics in the forests. Several research challenges and knowledge gaps remain to be filled before we have a complete quantification of the prevalence of wood burial and its implications for forest C dynamics at a global scale. First, we recommend all national forest inventories to include the attribute “overgrown by vegetation” in their field forms when monitoring dead wood. It is instrumental to have a clear definition of burial separating coverage by live ground vegetation and dead vegetation/litter that seals the log from free air circulation, thereby being more influenced by the edaphic conditions than the aerial conditions. It is also instrumental to record key wood attributes (especially decay class) and stand attributes (especially edaphic conditions and ground vegetation types with special attention to dominance of lichens and different moss types). Such data from countries representing different climate zones and forest biomes will provide excellent data to demonstrate the frequency and importance of wood burial in different forest systems.

Second, there is a need to analyze the amount of C in wood at burial relative to that of the live tree and not only to other downed wood in various stages of decay. This should, however, be part of a larger scope addressing transition rates from live trees to standing dead trees, to downed logs in different decay classes and finally to buried wood, the transition time or transition probability per time unit, the effects of different environmental factors as demonstrated in our study, and finally, the associated C loss through decomposition between these transitions.

Third, it is important to document the effect of different edaphic conditions on the decomposition of buried wood. Soil moisture is most likely a key factor for subterranean decomposition and separating between well-drained soil, periodically inundated soil and permanent waterlogged soil is a logical first distinction. Ideally, this should be done using hydrological instrumentation, but indirect soil moisture classification using vegetation types will probably give significant response effects. A possible way to compare subterranean wood decomposition across different edaphic conditions is to measure decay rates of roots attached to stumps with known year of logging.

Conclusions

We have documented that wood burial and soil C input from dead wood is common and important across nearly all boreal forest types. Wood burial seems to be equally frequent in young and old forests. The probability of burial varies; however, with ground vegetation and edaphic conditions. Thus, it is important to distinguish between different forest types both in C accounting and in modelling frameworks targeting forest C dynamics and trajectories of forest C accumulation in the context of climate change. As dead wood is a C pool central to the direction of C flow from living biomass to either the atmosphere as an emission or to other C pools (e.g., soils) as a transfer, accurately estimating associated C stocks and dynamics in C dense forests (e.g., boreal) should be a focal point of future research given humanity's desire to mitigate atmospheric CO₂.

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Draft

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4 Figure 1. Partial dependence plots from BRT model of downed wood burial
5 probability. Each panel displays the marginal effect of the predictor (on logit(p) of the
6 probability of burial) after accounting for the average effect of all other predictors. See
7 methods for interpretation of the effect response scale. The red line in each panel
8 represents no effect of the predictor. *Surface vegetation*: lichD = lichen dominance,
9 lichF = lichens frequent, fresh = fresh mosses, peatM = minerotrophic peat, peatO =
10 ombrotrophic peat. *Vascular vegetation*: a = bilberry, b = calluna, c = fern dominance,
11 d = broad grass, e = thin grass, f = lingonberry, g = low herb, h = low sedge, I = no
12 vegetation, j = poor dwarf bush, k = tall herb, l = tall sedge

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Figure 2. Percentage of buried logs in each decay class across different soil types. Uncertainty bars represent 95 % confidence intervals of the estimated percentages. Buried carbon is calculated as the amount of carbon in buried logs as the proportion of the carbon in above-ground plus buried logs. For each soil type, buried carbon is calculated for all logs combined and separated into subsets of logs in the temperate and boreal zones.

Figure 3. Percentage of buried logs in each decay class across different ground vegetation types for all logs (n = 17 245 logs) and for the subset of logs on Sphagnum ground vegetation on peat soil (two rightmost panels, n = 176 and 370 logs). Uncertainty bars represent 95 % confidence intervals of the estimated percentages. Buried carbon is calculated as the amount of carbon in buried logs as the proportion of the carbon in above-ground plus buried logs. For each ground vegetation type, buried carbon is calculated for all logs combined and separated into subsets of logs in the temperate and boreal zones.

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Table 1. Wood attributes and environmental factors recorded for downed dead wood in the Swedish national forest inventory.

Variable	Value range, field data	Value range, analyzed data
<i>Wood attribute</i>		
Vegetation cover (%), buried	0-100	0 or 1 (0-49 % or 50-100 % vegetation cover)
Trunk diameter (mm)	100-920*	100-350**
Decay class	5 classes	5 classes ¹
Tree species	23 classes	4 classes ²
<i>Stand attributes</i>		
Stand age (years)	0-350	0-200**
Surface vegetation (cryptogams)	5 classes	5 classes ³
Vascular plant vegetation	12 classes	12 classes ⁴
<i>Edaphic conditions</i>		
Soil type	5 classes	3 classes ⁵
Peat depth (cm)	30-510	3 classes ⁶
<i>Climate zone</i>		
Vegetation zone	7 classes	4 classes ⁷

* Maximum diameter of focal species were *Picea* 670 mm, *Pinus* 669 mm, *Betula* 820 mm

** truncated range to avoid misleading effects in partial dependence plots

1) D0, D1, D2, D3, D4, see main text for explanation

2) pine, spruce, birch, other tree species

3) lichen dominance, lichens frequent, fresh mosses, minerotrophic peat mosses, ombrotrophic peat mosses

4) bilberry, calluna, fern dominance, broad grass, thin grass, lingonberry, low herb, low sedge, no vegetation, poor dwarf bush, tall herb, tall sedge

5) moraine soil, peat soil, rock ground

6) 0-29 cm, 30-100 cm, 101-510 cm

7) temperate and hemiboreal, south boreal, mid boreal, north boreal

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