

**DeSantis, R. D., Hallgren, S. W., Lynch, T. B.,  
Burton, J. A. & Palmer, M. W. (2010): Long-term  
directional changes in upland Quercus forests  
throughout Oklahoma, USA. Journal of  
Vegetation Science 21: 606-615. DOI:  
10.1111/j.1654-1103.2010.01168.x**

Reference: DeSantis, R. D., Hallgren, S. W., Lynch, T. B., Burton, J. A. & Palmer, M. W. (2010): Long-term directional changes in upland Quercus forests throughout Oklahoma, USA. Journal of Vegetation Science 21: 606-615. DOI: 10.1111/j.1654-1103.2010.01168.x

Short reference: DeSantis et al. (2010)

First author: DeSantis, Ryan D.

Year: 2010

Abstract

Long-term directional changes in upland Quercus forests throughout Oklahoma, USA

Ryan D. DeSantis, Stephen W. Hallgren, Thomas B. Lynch, Jesse A. Burton & Michael W. Palmer

Abstract:

Questions: (1) How have the composition and structure of undisturbed upland Quercus forests changed over 50 years across a large region and moisture gradient; (2) What factors are associated with long-term and broad-scale changes in these forests?

Location: Oklahoma, USA.

Methods: We re-sampled 30 forest stands originally sampled in the 1950s across a large geographical area and compared basal area, tree density, and sapling density between the sampling periods using paired t-tests, CCA, and DCA. We examined vegetation dynamics in the context of drought indices compiled for the sample period.

Results: Total and Quercus stellata basal area and tree density increased, but Q. stellata and Q. marilandica sapling density decreased. Juniperus virginiana and woody species richness increased for all measures. DCA indicated that re-sampled stands generally changed from Q. stellata-Q. marilandica-dominated

forests to forests with greater woody species richness and more *J. virginiana*. *Q. stellata* remained a dominant tree species; otherwise, composition shifted towards mesophytic and invasive woody species. Measurements taken in the 1950s immediately followed a major drought; whereas subsequent decades were significantly moister.

Conclusions: Fire exclusion and drought may have played an important role in driving changes towards lower dominance by *Quercus*, increased importance of mesophytic and invasive species, and greater woody species richness. These phenomena are similar to those found in *Quercus*-dominated forests throughout the northern hemisphere.

forest dynamic, gap dynamic, succession

forest stand structure: community structure

climate: microclimate, climate of stand

Notes

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Tartalom:

Introduction

Methods

Study area

Vegetation sampling

Environmental variables

Data analysis

Results

Basal area

Tree density

Sapling density

Drought incidence

Discussion

Acknowledgements

References

Supporting information

Drought; Fire exclusion; Forest dynamics; *Juniperus virginiana*; mesophication; Oak; Oklahoma; *Quercus marilandica*; *Quercus stellata*; Species composition; Vegetation change

Címszavazva - GE

Publisher: International Association for Vegetation Science

Journal: Journal of Vegetation Science

Location: ER Archívum (2010/P-005)

Type: scientific paper

Katalógusba vette: Gulyás Györgyi

Katalógusbavétel időpontja: Wed, 09/08/2010 - 12:00