

Interactive comment on “Long-term vegetation monitoring in Great Britain – the Countryside Survey 1978–2007 and beyond” by Claire M. Wood et al.

Anonymous Referee #1

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I have no doubt about the excellence of the data. The collected data to monitor ecological and land cover change is very intensive with nested research design with huge number of records. It is a complication of three replications and the fourth one is already started. The good thing about this repeated survey is that they are improving the method by adding more and more types of plots such as the U, A and D plots were started from 1998 (second survey) and M plot was introduced in 2007. They also increased the number of plots from 256 to 596 and 591. Finally, the best thing is to make the data open access.

However, I have a concern with limited open access of the data. The Authors clearly mentioned that "the location of the 1km sample squares is not disclosed(Line No.

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120-121)". In such cases, the study can not be replicated or resurvey by other parties.

A philosophy behind an open access data is to allow interested parties to reanalyses the data, and if wish, to resurvey the area to verify or to replicate the study or to study the change from previous study. However, the authors clearly mention a reason behind not to disclose the location of 1km square plots as "so that the squares do not attract additional research on the land.... " (Line No. 121 - 122). This may fulfill the legal requirement, however it does not advocate good science.

Finally, the authors write, "The intention is that a repeat survey will be undertaken in the near future..." (Line No 542 – 543). My impression here is, sorry to be rude, the authors are also in favour of repeated study, however in absence of the location of the plots, on one else can do it and only by themselves !!

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