

Interactive comment on “Managing fire risk during drought: the influence of certification and El Niño on fire-driven forest conversion for oil palm in Southeast Asia” by Praveen Noojipady et al.

Anonymous Referee #3

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The authors compare fire activity and deforestation between RSPO-certified and non-certified oil palm plantations in Southeast Asia, arguing that RSPO certification has led to reduced fire activity during dry years. This is a well-written paper and the overall result is important. My only significant concern is the assumption that dry conditions during the big fire years were the same with respect to the locations of certified and non-certified plantations.

Comments P1L21: should this be ‘did not stop altogether’?

P3L30: I didn’t understand the ‘(ever)’ and ‘(never)’ wrt certified and non-certified

P4L20: The end of this sentence implies that Southeast Asia has little rainfall season-

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ality, which I don’t think you mean to say.

P6L28: How are you excluding the possibility that the certified plantations just weren’t as dry in 2015 compared to, say, 2006? Figures A3 and Figure 5 clearly show a drop in fire activity over the analysis period over the certified plantations, but from Figure 1, these plantations are not evenly distributed across Sumatra and Kalimantan. It’s possible that these regions, for example south-central Kalimantan, were just wetter in 2015 than previous years, given that regional rainfall can vary across El Niño years. Or perhaps they were drier, in which case your argument about RSPO effects is strengthened. Either way, regional rainfall needs to be looked at or mentioned as a possible factor.

P7L9: change ‘direct’ to ‘directly’

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