

Estimating canopy gross primary production by combining phloem stable isotopes with canopy and mesophyll conductances

Antoine Vernay¹, Xianglin Tian², Jinshu Chi¹, Sune Linder³, Annikki Makela², Ram Oren⁴, Matthias Peichl¹, Zsofia Stangl¹, Pantana Tor-Ngern⁵, and John Marshall¹

¹Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences - Umea Campus

²University of Helsinki

³Southern Swedish Forest Research Centre, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), PO Box 49, SE-23053

⁴Duke University

⁵Chulalongkorn University

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Abstract

Gross primary production (GPP) is a key component of the forest carbon cycle. However, our knowledge of GPP at the stand scale remains uncertain because estimates derived from eddy covariance (EC) and EC itself rely on semi-empirical modeling and the assumptions of the EC technique are sometimes not fully met. We propose using the sap flux/isotope method as an alternative way to estimate canopy GPP, termed GPP_{iso}/SF, at the stand scale and at daily resolution. It is based on canopy conductance inferred from sap flux and intrinsic water-use efficiency estimated from the stable carbon isotope composition of phloem contents. The GPP_{iso}/SF estimate was further corrected for seasonal variations in photosynthetic capacity and mesophyll conductance. We compared our estimate of GPP_{iso}/SF to the GPP derived from PRELES, a model parameterised with EC data. The comparisons were performed in a highly instrumented, boreal Scots pine forest in northern Sweden, including a nitrogen fertilised and a reference plot. The resulting annual and daily GPP_{iso}/SF estimates agreed well with PRELES, in the fertilised plot and the reference plot. We discuss the GPP_{iso}/SF method as an alternative which can be widely applied without terrain restrictions, where the assumptions of EC are not met.

Keywords

Nutrients/nitrogen, phloem transport, transpiration, mesophyll conductance, carbon isotopic composition

1 | INTRODUCTION

Gross primary production (GPP) represents the highest flux in the carbon (C) budget of a forest ecosystem. GPP has been commonly estimated using many approaches, such as eddy covariance (EC), empirical models, and upscaling ecophysiological measurements at stand scale (Baldocchi, 2003; Beer et al., 2010; Peichl, Brodeur, Khomik, & Arain, 2010). However, there are still some uncertainties in these GPP estimates (Campbell et al., 2017). For example, accurate EC estimates are based on a set of assumptions, such as homogeneous flat terrain and turbulent mixing of air (e.g. Baldocchi, 2003). Because the assumptions are not always met, the estimates are prone to ~20% uncertainty (Jocher et al., 2017; Keenan et al., 2019; Wehr et al., 2016).

Assuming that the EC assumptions are met, a semi-empirical model such as PRELES (PREdict Light-use efficiency, Evapotranspiration and Soil water) can estimate GPP (GPP_{PRELES}) in a given forest ecosystem

using the EC data for model parameterisation (Mäkelä et al., 2008; Peltoniemi, Pulkkinen, Aurela, Pumpanen, Kolari, & Mäkelä, 2015). PRELES can subsequently be used for gap-filling the EC data that have been filtered out or are otherwise missing. One of the advantages of PRELES is that it estimates ecosystem fluxes (GPP and evapotranspiration) by using routinely measured weather data. It means that GPP_{PRELES} can be estimated everywhere with no additional measurement than weather conditions (Tian et al., 2020). This approach allows one to go back in time for estimating GPP of the boreal forest in years for which EC are not available (Minunno et al., 2016).

The weakness of GPP estimates from PRELES is that its estimates are often unanchored by methods that are independent of EC. Previous studies that compared between biometric/component fluxes and GPP from EC (GPP_{EC}) data have found that the GPP trends agreed reasonably well over several years, but often failed to find the same absolute values at annual scales (Curtis et al., 2002; Ehman et al., 2002; Peichl, Khomik, & Arain, 2010). These studies underlined two main kinds of errors, one due to EC measurements and the other due to the allometric equations and component fluxes. Thus, neither PRELES, EC nor biometric methods can be considered an absolute standard.

A third, alternative approach for estimating GPP is to scale up tree-level ecophysiological measurements to the stand level. This approach requires the scaling of component fluxes such as leaf photosynthesis or sap flux. For example, the Conductance Constrained Carbon Assimilation model (4C-A) combined sap flux-based stomatal conductance with light-dependent photosynthetic parameters to produce vertically explicit photosynthesis estimates in both single- and multi-species stands (Kim, Oren, & Hinckley, 2008; Schäfer et al., 2003). These parameters were used to estimate the vertically explicit ratio between internal C concentration in the stomatal cavity, (C_i) and atmospheric C concentration (C_a) (C_i/C_a) or, weighted by vertical leaf area distribution, a canopy-scale effective C_i/C_a at diurnal resolution. Although it described photosynthesis well (Schäfer et al., 2003), the method required detailed information on canopy architecture and gas exchange properties, which are not straightforward to obtain.

A simpler way forward is to infer intrinsic water use efficiency (WUE_i) from $\delta^{13}C$ (Cernusak et al., 2013; Ehleringer & Farquhar, 1993). WUE_i represents the ratio between net photosynthesis and the stomatal conductance (g_s) to water vapour (Flexas et al., 2016). It is also equivalent to the CO_2 diffusion gradient between the atmosphere and the substomatal cavity when considering g_s for CO_2 (Farquhar, O’Leary, & Berry, 1982). The WUE_i can be estimated from $\delta^{13}C$ in phloem ($\delta^{13}C_p$) contents, which estimates WUE_i at the tree scale (Ubierna & Marshall, 2011; Werner et al., 2012). Tree-scale WUE_i can be upscaled to the stand by measuring several trees representing the area of interest. The $\delta^{13}C_p$ measurement integrates the signal from the whole canopy, and therefore improves on Hu, Moore, Riveros-Iregui, Burns, & Monson. (2010), who used a similar approach, but based their $\delta^{13}C$ estimates on sugar extracts from foliage. The elimination of photosynthetic parameters, the phloem sampling, and the long time-step reduce error propagation as we scale up the whole tree measurements to the stand. The scale of the calculated WUE_i thus matches the scale of the transpiration estimate.

Some studies using $\delta^{13}C$ to estimate WUE_i (Seibt, Rajabi, Griffiths, & Berry, 2008; Wingate, Seibt, Moncrieff, Jarvis, & Lloyd, 2007) and GPP (Hu et al., 2010; Klein, Rotenberg, Tatarinov, & Yakir, 2016) have highlighted the importance of mesophyll conductance (g_m). The g_m describes the ease with which CO_2 can diffuse from the substomatal cavity to the chloroplasts, where carbon assimilation actually occurs (Flexas, Ribas-Carbó, Diaz-Espejo, Galmès, & Medrano, 2008; Warren & Adams, 2006). Because g_m is finite, assuming that it is infinite leads to an overestimation of WUE_i (Seibt et al., 2008; Wingate et al., 2007). There is as yet no agreement about how to model g_m , but it has often been estimated from g_s (Warren, 2008).

We present a new GPP model, hereafter called $GPP_{iso/SF}$, combining sap flux, $\delta^{13}C_p$, and mesophyll conductance based on approaches developed previously (Hu et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2008; Klein et al., 2016; Schäfer et al., 2003), and compare it to estimates from PRELES. We estimated $GPP_{iso/SF}$ of whole trees at a daily time step and then scaled it up to the stand level. The sap flow/isotopic method would, however, only consider the tree contribution to the ecosystem GPP, in contrast to PRELES, which considers the contribution of the whole ecosystem, including understorey and overstorey species. The understorey contribution from

2015). This was necessary to account for pronounced seasonal and annual variation in these variables at our high latitude.

2.3 | Μεασυρεμεντζ οφ δ¹³π

We measured the δ¹³C of the solutes in the fluid moving through the phloem (δ¹³C_p, Phloem samples were collected at breast height on 15 tree trunks in each plot with a cork-corer 9 mm in diameter. The samples were collected on 18 October 2011 and 11 November 2011 and then every 14 days from 26 April to 25 September, 2012. In the field, bark and wood were carefully removed and a disc, which included the active phloem, was dropped into a 6 mL vial containing 2 mL of exudation solution (15 mM polyphosphate buffer: sodium hexametaphosphate, Sigma, München, Germany). The solution was chosen to minimise the blockage of cut phloem cells without adding carbon to the exudate solution. The exudation lasted for 5 hours (Gessler, Rennenberg, & Keitel, 2004) and the exudate was then stored in a freezer until it was freeze-dried. Because the phloem solute concentration is much higher than in adjacent tissues, the exudate was dominated by phloem sap. The solutes were redissolved in 150 µL and the resulting solution was pipetted into a tin capsule and dried at 60 °C for 12 hours. The samples were then loaded into an elemental analyser (NA 2500; CE Instruments, Milan, Italy) coupled to an isotope ratio mass spectrometer (Delta Plus; Finnigan MAT GmbH, Bremen, Germany) for δ¹³C analysis. The analysis were performed at the SLU stable isotope laboratory (SSIL, Umeå, Sweden, www.slu.se/en/departments/forest-ecology-management/ssil). Isotopic results were expressed in

2.4 | Transpiration estimate

We used the canopy transpiration model of Tor-Ngern et al. (2017) to avoid the need to repeat their scaling from trees to canopy. The model was originally derived using the measurements at the two plots in Rosinedal. Per-tree transpiration rates were derived from sap flux measured with Granier thermal dissipation probes (Granier, 1985, 1987;) set in five to eight mature trees at varying depths in both the R and F plots (data and methods in Tor-Ngern et al. (2017)). Tree daily transpiration (E_{cd}, mm d⁻¹tree⁻¹) was then upscaled to stand level.

The stand-level transpiration estimates were modeled from VPD_Z and relative extractable water (REW). VPD_Z is the integral of daytime mean atmospheric vapour pressure deficit. To estimate it, we first defined daytime as the period when PPF exceeded a threshold of 10 µmol m⁻²s⁻¹ (Hultine et al., 2008). VPD_D was then calculated (Murray, 1967; Ngao, Adam, & Saudreau, 2017) for the daylight period, as follows:

$$VPD_D = (0.6108 \times e^{\frac{17.27 \times T_a}{T_a + 237.3}}) \times (1 - \frac{RH}{100}) \text{Eqn. 1}$$

Second, VPD_D (kPa) was integrated over the number of daylight hours (Oren, Zimmermann, & Terbough, 1996):

$$VPD_Z = VPD_D \times \frac{n_D}{24} \text{Eqn. 2}$$

with n_D being the number of daylight hours. VPD_Z thus combines daytime VPD and daylength in a single variable.

REW was calculated at 15 cm depth as follows (Granier, Loustau, & Bréda, 2000):

$$REW = \frac{SWC_t - SWC_{WP}}{SWC_{FC} - SWC_{WP}} \text{Eqn. 3}$$

where SWC_t is the mean volumetric soil water content (m³ m⁻³) per day. SWC was measured with reflectometric soil moisture probes (SM300, Delta-T Devices, Cambridge, UK) at 15cm depth. SWC_{WP} and SWC_{FC} are the soil water content at wilting point and field capacity, respectively. They were estimated from the annual minimum and maximum SWC, respectively, at our sites. For the F plot, SWC_{WP} and SWC_{FC} were 0.052 and 0.306 m³ m⁻³, respectively, and for the R plot, the values were 0.052 and 0.218 m³ m⁻³. The F plot had a higher SWC_{FC} value because the soil organic layer was deeper than in the R plot (Hasegawa et al., personal communication).

Using the parameters above, the model of stand-level transpiration rate begins with an estimate of the maximal transpiration rate (E_{cdmax}). It then adjusts the maximum rate downward for REW, as follows:

$$E_{cdmax} = 1.812 \times (1 - e^{(-3.121 \times VPD_Z)}) \text{Eqn. 4}$$

$$E_{cd} = E_{cdmax} \times (1 - e^{(-18.342 \times REW)}) \text{Eqn. 5}$$

Eqn. 4 means that the maximal E_{cdmax} is 1.812 mm d⁻¹ at high VPD_Z.

Canopy conductance to H₂O was then inferred from corresponding E_{cd} and VPD_D as:

$$g_C = \frac{\frac{E_{cd}}{M_{H_2O}} \times 1000}{\frac{VPD_D}{P_{145}}} \text{Eqn. 6}$$

in mol H₂O m⁻² ground area d⁻¹ with M_{H_2O} the molar mass of water (18 g mol⁻¹) and P_{145} , the atmospheric pressure at 145 m a.s.l (99.6 kPa).

We applied two filters and one correction to these conductance data. First, we accounted for the acclimation of photosynthetic capacity to air temperature (Mäkelä, Hari, Berninger, Hänninen, & Nikinmaa, 2004). We did this because of the tight coupling of photosynthesis and stomatal opening (Farquhar & Wong, 1984; Medlyn et al., 2011; Tuzet, Perrier, & Leuning, 2003), which allows us to account for the low stomatal conductance during the wintertime. Photosynthetic capacity $\hat{\alpha}$, (Mäkelä et al., 2004) was estimated as follows:

$$\hat{\alpha} = \max\{c_1 \times S(t) - S_0, 0\} \text{Eqn. 7}$$

where c_1 a coefficient of proportionality (0.0367 m³ mol⁻¹ °C), $S(t)$ is the state of photosynthetic acclimation (°C) at time t , and S_0 a threshold value of the state of acclimation (-5.33 °C). $S(t)$ was obtained on daily time scale in two steps:

$$\Delta S(t) = \frac{T_a(t) - S_t}{\tau} \text{Eqn.8}$$

Where $T_a(t)$ is daily mean temperature on day t and τ the time constant (8.23 days)

$$S(t+1) = S(t) + \Delta S(t) \text{Eqn. 9}$$

This model describes the linear increase in photosynthetic capacity with temperature in boreal conifers. We corrected our g_C values as follows (Mäkelä et al., 2008):

$$g_C \hat{\alpha} = \frac{\hat{\alpha}}{\hat{\alpha}_{max}} \times g_C \text{Eqn. 10}$$

with $\hat{\alpha}_{max}$ the mean value of $\hat{\alpha}$ when photosynthetic capacity was maximal. For $\hat{\alpha}_{max}$, we used the averages from July of 2012 and 2013. July was chosen because temperatures and PPFD were both high and the canopy was presumably near its photosynthetic capacity throughout this period.

Recall that g_C was estimated from VPD_D (Eqn. 6). Because VPD_D was in the denominator and approached zero in early spring, the estimates of g_C were often noisy at that time. Therefore, we filtered and removed all VPD_D values < 0.1 kPa. During the summer time (June-August) the filter threshold was increased to 0.25 kPa. The higher transpiration rate and a longer day-light period during summer created uncertainty in the g_C calculation (Emberson, Wieser, & Ashmore, 2000; Tarvainen, Röntfors, & Wallin, 2015), but we reduced the summer filter threshold to the minimum that would allow us to keep as many data as possible. We filled the resulting GPP gaps using a predictive model ($g_C = a \times \hat{\alpha} + b$) with a and b determined for each combination of treatments. We replaced the GPP_{iso/SF} outliers and filtered values by the predicted functions only during the thermal growing season. We did this because the common gapfill functions are based on EC data and we wished to maintain our independence from EC data. The gaps were much larger outside the thermal growing season than within it; because tree photosynthesis is reduced during that time we chose not to fill these gaps.

Using the phloem samples collected between October 2011 and September 2012, we estimated isotopic discrimination against ¹³C (Δ ,

$$\Delta = \frac{\delta^{13}C_a - \delta^{13}C_p}{1 + \left(\frac{\delta^{13}C_p}{1000}\right)} \text{ Eqn. 11}$$

We fitted linear interpolations (Figure S1) to determine a daily value of Δ . This step allowed us to estimate $GPP_{\text{iso/SF}}$ at a daily time scale.

The intrinsic water use efficiency for the stand (WUE_i) was then inferred from the following equation (Seibt et al., 2008), in each plot:

$$WUE_i = \frac{C_a}{r} \times \left[\frac{b - \Delta - f \times \left(\frac{\Gamma^*}{C_a}\right)}{b - a_a + (b - a_i) \times \frac{g_{C\hat{\alpha}}}{r \times g_m}} \right] \text{ Eqn. 12}$$

where C_a is the atmospheric CO_2 concentration ($\mu\text{mol mol}^{-1}$), r the ratio of diffusivities of water vapour relative to CO_2 in air (1.6), b the fractionation during carboxylation (29‰ the fractionation during photorespiration (16.2‰) (2013), a_a and a_i the fractionations of the diffusion through air (4.4‰) (dissolution in water (1.8‰) mesophyll conductance ($\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2} \text{ d}^{-1}$). The resulting value has units of $\mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ mol air}^{-1}$. The CO_2 compensation point (Γ^* , $\mu\text{mol mol}^{-1}$), was calculated according to the following formula (Medlyn et al., 2002):

$$\Gamma^* = 42.75 \times e^{\frac{37830 \times (T_K - 298)}{298 \times T_K \times R}} \text{ Eqn. 13}$$

with T_K the ambient temperature (K) and R the universal gas constant ($8.314 \text{ J mol}^{-1} \text{ K}^{-1}$).

We also used the $\delta^{13}C_p$ from 2012 to estimate WUE_i for the same dates in 2013, assuming that WUE_i was mainly affected by $g_{C\hat{\alpha}}$ and its link with VPD_D and not by the absolute values of $\delta^{13}C_p$. Similarly, we estimated Δ in October and November 2012 and 2013 based on the 2011 measurements of $\delta^{13}C_p$. WUE_i was then calculated on a daily time scale, based on the daily-modeled values of Δ .

2.5 | g_m assumptions

We used three different assumptions to obtain g_m values:

- (i) constant $g_m/g_{C\hat{\alpha}} = 2.67$. This approach allowed the g_m estimate to vary during the growing season.
- (ii) constant g_m . This value was determined during several summer days, but was used throughout the year.
- (iii) infinite g_m ($g_m[\infty]$), meaning that in Eqn. 12, the $\frac{g_{C\hat{\alpha}}}{r \times g_m}$ term tends to 0.

The values for $g_m/g_{C\hat{\alpha}} = 2.67$ and a constant $g_m = 0.31 \text{ mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ were calculated from discrimination against ^{13}C measured at our site with a Picarro isotopic CO_2 analyser (G2131-I, Picarro Inc., California, USA) and standard gas exchange according to Stangl et al. (2019).

Gross primary production ($\text{g C m}^{-2} \text{ ground area d}^{-1}$) was then calculated from Eqn. 10 and Eqn. 12:

$$GPP_{\text{iso/SF}} = WUE_i \times g$$

$$C\hat{\alpha} \times \frac{M_C}{10^6} \text{ Eqn. 14}$$

with M_C the molar mass of C (12 g mol^{-1}).

2.6 | PRELES model

We used the PRELES model to derive GPP_{PRELES} for 2012 and 2013. The model was first parameterised using a Bayesian approach (e.g. Minunno et al., 2016; Tian et al., 2020) for Rosinedal with EC data available from 2014 to 2017 (Jocher et al., 2017). The model was run with environmental data measured on site (temperature, VPD, PPFD, and precipitation) in 2012 and 2013. Canopy leaf area index (LAI) was estimated in 2011 - 2013 (Lim et al., 2015), excluding understorey vegetation. The model predicts GPP at the stand level (Peltoniemi et al., 2015) and thus provides our best estimate of the year when the phloem samples were collected. We implemented PRELES with the daily mean of these data to get an estimation of GPP_{PRELES} in both R and F stands. It provided a comparison against our GPP calculations for 2012 and 2013.

2.7 | Model comparisons

To compare the PRELES estimates for 2012 and 2013 to the $GPP_{iso/SF}$ estimate, we first chose to calculate $GPP_{iso/SF}$ based on $g_m/g_{C\hat{\alpha}} = 2.67$ (Stangl et al., 2019). The constant ratio assumption is widely used in the literature (Klein et al., 2016; Seibt et al., 2008). Second, we tested the $GPP_{iso/SF}$ estimate in the F plot against the R plot. Finally, the annual sums were calculated and compared for $GPP_{iso/SF}$ and GPP_{PRELES} in 2012 and 2013. We combined 2012 and 2013 in order to estimate the inter-annual variability of the different approaches. The standard deviation (SD) was calculated from the mean annual sum in 2012 and 2013.

2.7 | Statistics

There was no replicate of the R and F treatments so it was impossible to perform analyses of variance to infer any fertilisation effect. However, we could not ignore the effect of the fertilisation on the F plot (Lim et al., 2015). We therefore presented the plot differences recognising that they may include a pre-existing plot effect as well as a fertiliser effect.

However, because 15 trees were sampled at each site for $\delta^{13}C_p$ estimate, we did analyse a ‘plot effect’. We performed the same analyses of variance with WUE_i which could be estimated for all of the 15 trees at each date. When necessary, $\delta^{13}C_p$ and WUE_i data were log-transformed to meet normality and homoscedasticity requirements. Temporal variations of $\delta^{13}C_p$ and WUE_i were analysed with a linear mixed model to take into account the repeated $\delta^{13}C_p$ sampling within individual trees in 2012. ‘Sampling date’, ‘plot’ and ‘plot \times sampling date’ were assigned as fixed factors whereas the ‘tree identity’ was considered as a random factor. Similarly, we determined the variance between the different annual sums of $GPP_{iso/SF}$ (according to the three g_m assumptions) and with GPP_{PRELES} : ‘plot’ and ‘method’ (three g_m assumptions + PRELES) factors were tested on the mean value in 2012-2013. Daily GPP regressions were run with a first-order autoregressive structure, applying the `corAR1` correlation option. The analyses were performed with R `nlme` package (Pinheiro, Bates, DebRoy, & Sarkar, 2016). The `anova` function from ‘`car`’ library and multiple pairwise comparisons (library ‘`lsmeans`’ and ‘`multcompView`’) were performed.

Finally, we applied a Monte Carlo method to analyse the error propagation in our $GPP_{iso/SF}$ model. This approach was already used in a previous study estimating GPP over a few days (Hu et al., 2010). We randomly sampled from the uncertainty ranges of Δ , E_{cd} , and $g_m/g_{C\hat{\alpha}}$ to calculate $GPP_{iso/SF}$ in an iterative manner (1000 times). The seasonal pattern of Δ was modeled with the loess method (Cleveland, Grosse, & Shyu, 1992). The uncertainty of daily Δ was estimated based on the residual variance in the curve fitting. Uncertainty of E_{cd} (from Eqn 4 and 5) was calculated based on the original regression analysis of the transpiration model in Tor-Ngern et al. (2017). Uncertainty of $g_m/g_{C\hat{\alpha}}$ was estimated based on the field measurements in Stangl et al. (2019). Uncertainty of Γ^* (from Eqn. 13) was estimated based on the mismatches in the original model fitting in Bernacchi, Singaas, Pimentel, Portis Jr, & Long (2001). Errors in those inputs were assumed to follow normal distributions or truncated normal distributions (see Table S1). The 95% confidence intervals were calculated to illustrate the predictive uncertainty in our $GPP_{iso/SF}$ estimate (Figure S2). The Sobol indices (Saltelli et al., 2008) were also calculated to partition the variance into these uncertainty sources (Table S1). This method allows us to deal with the absence of replicate sites.

Using Bayesian calibration, we adjusted parameters of PRELES according to their ability to reproduce EC observations (Tian et al., 2020). The Bayesian framework treated all terms in the model calibrations and predictions as probability distributions (Clark, 2007; Dietze, 2017). The joint posterior distribution of parameters was obtained using Markov chain Monte Carlo sampling techniques (Hastings, 1970; Metropolis, Rosenbluth, Rosenbluth, Teller, & Teller, 1953). Meanwhile, the probability density distribution of measurement error was estimated. Based on the parametric uncertainty from the joint posterior distribution and the measurement uncertainty from the error distribution, we estimated the 95% confidence intervals of daily GPP predictions, which describes the ranges of eddy covariance observations that could possibly occur.

All analyses were conducted with R software, version 3.5.1 (R Core Team, 2016).

3 | RESULTS

3.1 | Environmental data

We first present seasonal variations of the precipitation, PPFD, temperature and VPD_Z in 2012 and 2013, which were typical of boreal forests (Figure 1). The annual mean temperature during 2012 and 2013 was 1.6 °C and 3.3 °C, and the total precipitation 796 mm and 542 mm, respectively. Precipitation was relatively high during the thermal growing season limiting the potential for drought during the growth period. The light level increased almost three months before the start of the thermal growing season and the maximum values were in June before they decreased until winter. The temperatures were the highest in July-August and reached very low values in winter. Temperatures stayed below zero for several months. Finally, VPD_Z was highest during the thermal growing season although its increase started around March for both years. VPD_Z showed high variability over the whole year.

3.2 | Stand canopy conductance

Stand conductance, $g_{C\hat{\alpha}}$, is an important component of the estimation of $GPP_{iso/SF}$. Stand conductance showed strong seasonal trends with no difference between the F and the R plot (Figure 2). $g_{C\hat{\alpha}}$, started to increase in both plots on March 12th in 2012 and on April 14th in 2013. The difference was due to low temperatures in March 2013 compared to 2012. The winter and fall periods rarely showed any positive conductance because the VPD and $\hat{\alpha}$ corrections filters forced the values to zero. The rates were highest from early June until the beginning of September, which is the core of the thermal growing season. During this period the ratio $\hat{\alpha}/\hat{\alpha}_{max}$ was close to 1 (Figure S3) meaning that photosynthetic capacity had reached its seasonal maximum (Mäkelä et al., 2008). Conductance fell through September and October, returning to zero in both plots on the 25th of October in 2012 and the 4th of December in 2013 (Figure 2).

3.3 | Isotopic data

The isotopic data from the atmosphere and from the phloem were also used to infer WUE_i . We observed strong, but different, patterns of seasonal variation for atmospheric $\delta^{13}C_a$ and for phloem contents ($\delta^{13}C_p$). From January to the beginning of February, $\delta^{13}C_a$ decreased to a minimum of -9.2 during the initial weeks of high photosynthesis in late June and early July. The main peaks of $\delta^{13}C_a$ occurred during the thermal growing season, when canopy conductance was also the highest. It then stabilised until late September, when it again began to fall (Figure 3-A). In contrast, the phloem data (Figure. 3-B) did not simply track the atmosphere. Instead they showed a steep drop only at the beginning of the thermal growing season. The $\delta^{13}C_p$ value depended significantly on the date (p-value < 0.0001, df = 1, F = 53.09, Figure 3-B). It was significantly higher in the F plot (-27.5(-28.0

3.4 | Intrinsic water use efficiency (WUE_i)

WUE_i is a key variable in the $GPP_{iso/SF}$ estimation procedure (Figure 4). For all three g_m assumptions, WUE_i showed a significant seasonal pattern ('date' effect, p-value < 0.0001, df = 1, F = 29), decreasing sharply as the thermal growing season began and increasing as it ended (Figure 4). It also decreased gradually over the summer. In 2012, the mean values on the fertilised plot were 6% higher for g_m , 7% higher for $g_m/g_{C\hat{\alpha}}$ = 2.67, and 9% higher for, $g_m = 0.31 \text{ mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}$ respectively. In 2013, the relative increase in WUE_i on the F plot was similar: 6%, 7% and 8% respectively. For both years, there was a significant 'plot' effect (p-value < 0.0001, df = 1,) and a significant effect of the g_m assumptions (p-value < 0.0001, df = 2) (Figure 4).

3.5 | Comparison of GPP estimates

Our first objective was to compare $GPP_{iso/SF}$ to GPP_{PRELES} for 2012 and 2013. To simplify the figure, we chose to represent only the assumption that $g_m/g_{C\hat{\alpha}} = 2.67$ (Figure 5), which allows g_m to vary during the season. The seasonal GPP patterns were similar between PRELES and the sap flux/isotopic method (Figure 5). Recall that GPP_{PRELES} included understorey vegetation. Correlation coefficients among methods and plots were all high, with minimum $r = 0.91$ (Figure S4). However, the fit was nonlinear; in 2012 and 2013 $GPP_{iso/SF}$ approached an asymptote at high levels of GPP_{PRELES} (Figure S4). The highest GPP_{PRELES} values did not match with the highest $GPP_{iso/SF}$ values; the peak of $GPP_{iso/SF}$ occurred earlier in the season

than those of GPP_{PRELES} . Interestingly, confidence intervals for $GPP_{iso/SF}$ and GPP_{PRELES} overlapped most of the time, even during the fall, when the offset was bigger than the rest of the year. However, the VPD filters removed many values during the fall, which allowed us to draw a confidence interval only during small periods at that time. As previously mentioned, the GPP values were gapfilled to draw a complete seasonal pattern, at least during the thermal growing season. The resulting annual sums were higher for $GPP_{iso/SF}$ than for PRELES on the control plot, but not on the fertilised plot (Figure 6).

3.6 | Fertilisation effect

Our second objective was to assess the effect of fertilisation on GPP. Using the annual sums, neither $GPP_{iso/SF}$ nor GPP_{PRELES} was significantly different between the F and the R plots (Figure 6). However, there were consistent trends; $GPP_{iso/SF}$ was higher by 10% in the F plot than in the R plot and GPP_{PRELES} was higher by 16% (Figure 6). Using the daily data corrected for autocorrelation, we found a significant increase in the F plot; $GPP_{iso/SF}$ was higher by 8% and GPP_{PRELES} was higher by 16% (Figure 7, Table 2 and see Figure S5 for others assumptions).

3.7 | Mesophyll conductance assumptions

The third objective was to compare $GPP_{iso/SF}$ using different methods of estimating g_m . Globally, there was a significant effect of ‘plot’ (p-value = 0.007, df = 5, F = 19) and ‘ g_m assumptions’ (p-value = 0.0002, df = 5, F = 75). Focusing on one plot at a time, we found a significantly lower $GPP_{iso/SF}$ in the control plot estimates when using $g_m/g_{C\hat{\alpha}} = 2.67$ as compared to the others. In the fertilised plot, we found significantly lower $GPP_{iso/SF}$ of $g_m/g_{C\hat{\alpha}} = 2.67$ compared to $g_{m[?]}$. The F plot was not significantly different from the R plot by any of these methods (Figure 8).

4 | DISCUSSION

Our study provided a new and simple method of independently estimating GPP and compared it to estimates from PRELES, a model parameterised with EC data. The two methods yielded similar estimates for both annual totals and seasonal patterns. We then used the two methods to compare a fertilised to an unfertilised plot. Both methods detected higher GPP on the F plot, but only when using the more abundant daily estimates (Figure 7).

Several previous studies have estimated GPP from Scots pine forests in northern Europe. Such EC estimates include $1001 \text{ g C m}^{-2} \text{ y}^{-1}$ (Magnani et al., 2007), $940 \text{ g C m}^{-2} \text{ y}^{-1}$ (Kolari, Pumpanen, Rannik, Ilvesniemi, Hari, & Berninger, 2004), $1047 \text{ g C m}^{-2} \text{ y}^{-1}$ (Lagergren et al., 2008), and $1072 \text{ g C m}^{-2} \text{ y}^{-1}$ (Duursma et al., 2009). There have been two estimates that were independent of EC. The first was a chamber-based estimate of $982 \text{ g C m}^{-2} \text{ y}^{-1}$ (Zha, Xing, Wang, Kellomäki, & Barr, 2007). The second, based on earlier measurements of NPP at our site, was $\sim 1000 \text{ g C m}^{-2} \text{ y}^{-1}$ (Lim et al., 2015). We compared our $GPP_{iso/SF}$ estimate minus our standard deviation for the reference plot ($1350 - 43 = 1303 \text{ g C m}^{-2} \text{ y}^{-1}$) to the mean of these published values plus the standard deviation ($1007 + 43 = 1050 \text{ g C m}^{-2} \text{ y}^{-1}$) and found that the published values were consistently lower than our $GPP_{iso/SF}$ estimate. The differences between the studies and our $GPP_{iso/SF}$ can be attributed to differences in site conditions, stand age, and method-specific shortcomings, including the filters and corrections embedded in each case. We discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each method below without claiming that either method is the “true” value of GPP.

4.1 | Strengths and weaknesses of PRELES

The key advantages of PRELES are that it is a compromise between predictive accuracy and model complexity. It can be calibrated with a few variables derived from EC measurements and hence run with a few environmental variables. The required EC data are available from many sites around the world (Baldocchi, 2003). PRELES has been reported to work well in all boreal forests (Minunno et al., 2016, Tian et al., 2020). Based on this assessment, we felt justified in using it, with calibration from 2014-2017 and environmental data from 2012-2013, to model carbon fluxes in 2012-2013.

Although the availability of EC data is an advantage for PRELES, EC data must be viewed with caution.

In particular, at our site, preliminary analyses of the data revealed significant problems in the data despite the flat ground surface, uniform canopy, and low leaf area index. A careful study of the problem revealed significant decoupling of the above- and below-canopy air masses, which often led to advection (Jocher et al., 2018). It is common for EC studies to use a vertical wind speed cutoff, the u^* filter, to detect and remove such events (Aubinet et al., 2001; Papale et al., 2006). We found that the u^* filter was insufficient and that a measurement relying on the comparison of below-canopy and above-canopy vertical wind speeds was required (Jocher et al., 2018). This concern was earlier raised in another boreal forest in Finland (Alekseychik, Mammarella, Launiainen, Rannik, & Vesala, 2013). We used a decoupling filter (Thomas, Martin, Law, & Davis, 2013), which is still unusual in the EC community, to correct the EC data that were used to parametrize PRELES in this study. Unless this correction was performed, PRELES would have been parameterised incorrectly if we wished to quantify total ecosystem fluxes; it would only have described the decoupled fluxes.

4.2 | Strengths and weaknesses of sap flux/isotopic approach

4.2.1 | Combination of sap flux and isotopic measurements.

The key advantage of the sap flux/isotopic approach is that it is independent of eddy covariance. Moreover, it leans on two methods, sap flux (Poyatos et al., 2007) and isotopic measurements (Bowling, Pataki, & Randerson, 2008 and references therein) that have been widely used at many sites by ecosystem ecologists. The sap flux/isotopic approach combines them to estimate GPP at the tree scale, which can then be scaled up to the stand. In simple stand structures, that scaling is relatively easy. In sum, the sap flux/isotopic method provides a simple method to estimate tree GPP that, in combination with measurements of ground vegetation GPP, can provide an alternative estimate for comparison with GPP estimated by EC.

An additional strength of the sap flux/isotopic approach is that it provides more detail on the ecophysiological mechanisms underlying GPP variation. For example, we showed here that $g_{C\hat{\alpha}}$ was very similar between plots whereas WUE_i was different between the F and the R plot. This led us to conclude that the photosynthetic activity rather than stomatal conductance was the main driver of GPP variation between plots.

One critical advantage of the sap flux/isotopic method for estimating GPP is that its requirements for the terrain and atmospheric conditions are less restrictive than for EC measurements. It thus provides an empirical method that can be applied in hilly topography, complex canopy structure, and non-turbulent atmospheres.

The sap flux/isotopic method also has several important limitations. In particular, sap flux is a key variable in the $GPP_{iso/SF}$ approach in order to obtain transpiration. Although the technique describes temporal variation well, its use for quantitative estimates requires accounting for several known sources of variation (Oren, Phillips, Katul, Ewers, & Pataki, 1998). Examples include sap flux trends radially in the stem (Cohen, Cohen, Cantuarias Aviles, & Schiller 2008; Ford, McGuire, Mitchell, & Teskey, 2004; Phillips, Oren, & Zimmermann, 1996; Renninger & Schäfer, 2012), azimuthally around the stem (Cohen et al., 2008; Oren, Phillips, Ewers, Pataki, & Megonigal, 1999), with tree size (Schäfer, Oren, & Tenhunen, 2000), and with local competition (Xiong et al., 2015). In addition, corrections are required when probe length exceed the sapwood depth (Clearwater, Meinzer, Andrade, Goldstein, & Holbrook, 1999). Finally, the probes often require specific calibration (Steppe, De Pauw, Doody, & Teskey, 2010; Sun, Aubrey, & Teskey, 2012). Some corrections have been proposed to reduce uncertainties from random variation (Peters et al., 2018; Steppe et al., 2010; Sun et al., 2012), yet some tree-to-tree variation remains (Oren et al., 1998).

The model we used to estimate transpiration was carefully built to account for these errors. Tor-Ngern et al. (2017) began with high quality data based on careful accounting for radial and azimuthal variations and baseline corrections. They used one of the genera that Granier originally calibrated for. They recognised that the sensors were not specifically calibrated for *P. sylvestris*, but the values agreed well with previously reported results and were robust to the errors induced by the probes (Lundblad, Lagergren, & Lindroth, 2001; Poyatos et al., 2007). Likewise the data were carefully scaled up to the stand using detailed descriptions of the allometric parameters and tree sizes (Ford et al., 2004; Oren et al., 1998). Because the sap flux/isotopic

method is so dependent on quantitative sap flux data, other users must also ensure that their sap flux data remove any bias and thus are accurate as well as precise.

4.2.2 | High variability of VPD impacts on $g_{C\hat{\alpha}}$

There was considerable variation in our estimate of $g_{C\hat{\alpha}}$. Because $g_{C\hat{\alpha}}$ was calculated as the ratio between transpiration and VPD, low VPD caused high variability and improbable $g_{C\hat{\alpha}}$ results (Eqn. 6, Ewers, Oren, Johnsen, & Landsberg, 2001; Ewers & Oren, 2000). This was especially true in the early and late growing season. The same phenomenon occurred sporadically during the thermal growing season. It forced us to apply a filter and to replace the inconsistent data inside the thermal growing season by predictions from a simple regression between g_C and $\hat{\alpha}$. This filtering and replacement is a common procedure, especially at high latitudes where VPD is low (Emberson et al., 2000; Tarvainen et al., 2015). Although we are satisfied with this solution for the moment, a better means of dealing with low VPD should be sought.

4.2.3 | Phloem contents

We assumed that the phloem contents represented recent photosynthates. However, the phloem contents have to be used carefully before photosynthesis begins in spring. During this period, the phloem does not contain newly assimilated C (Dubbert, Rascher, & Werner, 2012; Gessler et al., 2004), but rather the mobilized C reserves that trees store in their tissues. This would lead to WUE_i values that do not represent current photosynthates (Michelot, Eglin, Duf rene, Lelarge-Trouverie, & Damesin, 2011). As soon as the environmental conditions improve in spring, stomatal conductance increases, the phloem fills with new photosynthates, and $\delta^{13}C_p$ begins to fall. This process may explain why $\delta^{13}C_p$ was the highest outside the thermal growing season and decreased when photosynthetic activity recovered. Without correcting the WUE_i , the annual $GPP_{iso/SF}$ became too high for spring in a boreal forest (Saurer et al., 2014; Tang et al., 2014). The influence of these high values was reduced by the $\hat{\alpha}$ correction. It is encouraging that the $\hat{\alpha}$ correction had almost no effect during most of the summer (Figure 3); this suggests that we have limited the impact of non-photosynthetic periods.

4.3 | Mesophyll conductance influenced $GPP_{iso/SF}$ estimates

The calculation of WUE_i would not have been valid if g_m had been considered infinite (Seibt et al., 2008; Wingate et al., 2007). Yet g_m is still frequently ignored by some global photosynthesis models and ecophysiologicalists (Hu et al., 2010; Rogers et al., 2017; Zhao et al., 2005), or is embedded within a constant empirical adjustment (Cernusak et al., 2013) most likely due to the challenges in its measurements (Flexas et al., 2008; Pons et al., 2009). Likewise, the global modelling community has been reluctant to account for it because of the lack of consensus about how to measure or model it (Rogers, Medlyn, & Dukes 2014).

We compared three different ways of accounting for g_m . Simplest would be to assume a constant mean value (Keenan, Sabate, & Gracia, 2010). For example, we estimated GPP with a constant $g_m = 0.31 \text{ mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2}\text{s}^{-1}$ measured at the site (Stangl et al., 2019). The $GPP_{iso/SF}$ from the assumptions of $g_m = 0.31 \text{ mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ was not different from the $GPP_{iso/SF}$ from the $g_{m[?]}$ assumption. Perhaps this is because the constant g_m value was estimated during sunny days in the summertime and therefore represents the maximal g_m , under optimal conditions.

We therefore based our comparison with PRELES on a constant ratio: $g_m/g_{C\hat{\alpha}} = 2.67$. The ratio has the advantage of allowing g_m to vary seasonally. Variation responds to environmental factors (Bickford, Hanson, & McDowell, 2010; Cano, L pez, & Warren, 2014; Han et al., 2016; Xiong, Douthe, & Flexas, 2018); both diurnal (Bickford et al., 2010; Peguero-Pina et al., 2017; Stangl et al., 2019) and seasonal (Montpied, Granier, & Dreyer, 2009) variations have been reported. The use of a constant $g_m/g_{C\hat{\alpha}}$ ratio was certainly artificial (Xiong et al., 2018), but it is a relatively common assumption (Klein et al., 2016; Maseyk, Hemming, Anger, Leavitt, & Yakir, 2011). We suspect that the higher discrepancies between the $GPP_{iso/SF}$ and GPP_{PRELES} in the fall and to a lesser extent in the spring occurred because the constant ratio did not adequately account for seasonal dynamics in g_m . The need to refine our description of g_m is confirmed by the uncertainty analysis (Table S1 and Figure S3) The Sobol indices, which describe sources of uncertainty, showed that almost 75%

of the $GPP_{\text{iso/SF}}$ uncertainty came from the $g_m/g_{C\hat{\alpha}}$ estimate.

4.4 | Difference between fertilisation treatments

We found a slightly higher GPP in the fertilised plot than in the reference plots with the sap flux/isotopic method. Indeed, WUE_i in the F plot was higher than in the R plot, although $g_{C\hat{\alpha}}$ was not different. This means that photosynthetic rates were higher on the F plot, as demonstrated in previous studies in coniferous boreal forest: photosynthetic activity, which is the product of g_s for CO_2 and the $[CO_2]$ gradient between the atmosphere and the sub stomatal chamber (C_a-C_i) increases only if the CO_2 gradient increases for a given g_s value (Duursma & Marshall, 2006; Marshall & Linder, 2013).

The difference between the F and the R plots was only significant at the daily time scale, perhaps because of the large number of repeated measurements (Figure 7). However, this sap flux/isotopic result, corrected for autocorrelation, was validated with the daily PRELES estimates (Figure 7). However, it should be recognized that these daily estimates are not independent and may exaggerate our ability to detect a difference. In contrast, the annual sums did not detect a difference (Figure 6), perhaps because we were able to compare only two years, limiting the power of ANOVA. Thus, our annual sums did not find a significantly higher GPP in the F plot compared to the R plot, agreeing with previous studies focused on photosynthetic activity at shoot (Tarvainen et al., 2016) and stand scale (Lim et al., 2015). The daily estimates did not agree. Based on these mixed results, we suggest that GPP under the F treatment might be slightly higher, but that a replicated study would be necessary to settle this question.

However, the magnitude of the GPP increase differed between PRELES and sap flux/isotopic methods. The 8% increase in $GPP_{\text{iso/SF}}$ due to fertilisation was nearest to Lim et al (2015), who inferred a 3% difference in GPP between the same F plot and the R plot based on biometric measurements. In contrast, the GPP_{PRELES} value in the F plot was 16% higher than in the R plot, almost twice the increase estimated from $GPP_{\text{iso/SF}}$ and five times higher than in Lim et al. (2015).

4.5 | Role of understorey species

A key difference between the GPP methods is that $GPP_{\text{iso/SF}}$ quantified GPP of the trees only whereas GPP_{PRELES} quantified GPP of the whole ecosystem, which included understorey GPP. Understorey GPP was 41 g C m⁻² in a 120-year-old Scots pine boreal forest (Kulmala et al., 2011) and 5% of the ecosystem GPP in mixed spruce-pine forest (Palmroth et al., 2019). PRELES estimated understorey GPP at our site to be 7 and 9% of the ecosystem GPP, i.e., 90 g C m⁻² y⁻¹ and 123 g C m⁻² y⁻¹, on the reference and the fertilised plots in 2013, respectively (Tian et al., under review.). In other words, this preliminary estimate of fertilisation treatment would induce 2% increase of understorey GPP in 2013. A direct comparison of tree GPP between the sap flux/isotopic and PRELES (GPP_{PRELES} -7% and 9%) method would lead to 1369 vs 1194 g C m⁻² y⁻¹ in the R plot and 1483 vs 1248 g C m⁻² y⁻¹ in the F plot. However this estimate needs more replicates to confirm the understorey contribution to global GPP. As these methods continue to improve, it may become possible to solve for understorey GPP by difference. Note that if a next study shows that the fertilisation significantly increased understorey GPP, then $GPP_{\text{iso/SF}}$ would not detect it, but GPP_{PRELES} would. Future work should explore this possibility.

5 | Conclusions

The $GPP_{\text{iso/SF}}$ method provides an alternative empirical method to estimate forest stand GPP that is independent of eddy covariance (EC). We compared $GPP_{\text{iso/SF}}$ estimates from PRELES, a semi-empirical model parameterised with EC data. When compared across two years, the GPP estimates from the two methods were not significantly different. Moreover, when fertilised plot was compared to the reference plot using annual means, no differences were detected. However, when compared using daily estimates, the fertilized plot was 8% higher than the reference plot. The annual conclusion agrees with previous estimates on this site, the daily conclusion does not. Adjusting $GPP_{\text{iso/SF}}$ for g_m was necessary; we explored three alternatives for doing so. The inclusion of mesophyll conductance provides an empirical/mechanistic means of connecting isotopic measurements to gas-exchange measurements and $GPP_{\text{iso/SF}}$ provides a means of scaling from individual

trees to tree stands and canopies. Finally, a critical advantage of the sap flux/isotope based method for estimating GPP is that its requirements for the terrain and atmospheric conditions are less restrictive than for EC measurements. It can be applied in complex terrain, complex canopy structure, and non-turbulent atmospheres.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflicts of interest to report.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The experiment was designed by JDM and SL; JDM and AV conceived the ideas and designed the methodology for the model comparison; PT, MP, and ZRS collected the data; JC and MP analysed meteorological and EC data, RO and PT designed the transpiration model, JDM and AV proposed the sap flux/isotope method and made the cross analyses of the different models, AM and XT provided PRELES estimates and ZRS provided g_m data. AV and JDM wrote the manuscript. All the authors contributed critically to the drafts and gave final approval for publication.

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Table 1.

Abbreviations	Definitions
a_a	Fractionation during diffusion through air
a_i	Fractionation during diffusion through water
b	Fractionation during carboxylation
$\text{m}^3 \text{mol}^{-1} \text{ } ^\circ\text{C}$	0.0367
C_a	Ambient CO_2 concentration
C_i	Internal CO_2 concentration
E_{cd}	Transpiration rate at stand level
$E_{cd\text{max}}$	Maximal transpiration rate at stand level
f	Fractionation during photorespiration
g_m	Internal conductance
$g_m[?]$	Infinite value of g_i
g_C	Stomatal conductance at stand level
$g_C\hat{\alpha}$	Stomatal conductance at stand level corrected by $\hat{\alpha}$
GPP	Gross primary production
GPP _{EC}	Gross primary production estimated by eddy-covariance
GPP _{iso/SF}	Gross primary production estimated by combined method with isotopic data and sapflow measurements
GPP _{PRELES}	Gross primary production estimated by PRELES model
LAI	Leaf Area Index
M_C	Molar mass of carbon
$M_{\text{H}_2\text{O}}$	Molar mass of water
n_D	Number of day light hours
P_{145}	Atmospheric pressure at 145m a.s.l
PPFD	Photosynthetic photon flux density
R	Universal gas constant
r	Ratio of diffusivities of CO_2 and water vapour in the air
REW	Relative extractable water
RH	Relative humidity
$S(t)$	State of photosynthetic acclimation ($^\circ\text{C}$) at time t (day)
S_0	Threshold value of the photosynthetic state of acclimation
SWC _{FC}	Soil water content at field capacity
SWC _{t}	Soil water content at sampling time
SWC _{WP}	Soil water content at wilting point
T_a	Ambient temperature
T_K	Temperature

Abbreviations	Definitions
VPD _D	Day light mean VPD
VPD _Z	Normalised VPD
WUE _i	Intrinsic water use efficiency
$\hat{\alpha}$	Photosynthetic capacity
$\hat{\alpha}_{\max}$	Maximal photosynthetic capacity
Δ	Observed carbon discrimination during gas-exchange
$\delta^{13}\text{C}_a$	Ratio of heavy to light ^{13}C isotope in the air
Γ^*	CO ₂ compensation point

Table 2

		2012	2012	2012	2013	2013	2013
Method	g_m assumptions	a	b	R ²	a	b	R ²
GPP _{iso/SF}	$g_m/g_C\hat{\alpha} = 2.67$	1.06 (± 0.008)***	0.05 (± 0.04)	0.98	1.10 (± 0.01)***	0.04 (± 0.05)	0.98
	$g_m = 0.31$	1.07 (± 0.006)***	0.04 (± 0.04)	0.99	1.03 (± 0.008)***	0.08 (± 0.05)	0.98
	$g_m[?]$	1.06 (± 0.006)***	0.05 (± 0.04)	0.99	0.97 (± 0.01)***	0.27 (± 0.07)***	0.96
GPP _{PRELES}		1.15 ($\pm 1^E-6$)***	-3 ^E -6 ($\pm 3^E-6$)	0.99	1.16 (± 0.001)***	0.01 (± 0.006)	0.99

Figure captions

FIGURE 1: Environmental data in Rosinedal in 2012 and 2013. Sum of daily precipitation (A), daily mean photosynthetic photon flux density (B), daily mean temperature (C) and daily VPD during day light hours (D) in the fertilised (F, black circle) and in the reference (R, white circle) plots, respectively. Grey areas represent the thermal growing season.

FIGURE 2: Canopy conductance corrected by $\hat{\alpha}$ for the fertilised (black circles and, solid lines) and the reference (white circles, dashed lines) plots in 2012 and 2013. Grey areas represent the thermal growing seasons

FIGURE 3: Atmospheric $\delta^{13}\text{C}_a$ signature in 2012 and 2013 (A) and phloem $\delta^{13}\text{C}_p$ signature in 2012 (B) \pm SE (n = 15). ns, +, *, **, *** correspond to p [?] 0.1, $p < 0.1$, 0.05, 0.01 and 0.001, respectively, after pairwise comparison for each date. Grey areas represent the thermal growing seasons. The fertilised plot is represented in black circles and solid line and the reference plot in white circles and dotted line

FIGURE 4: Intrinsic water use efficiency at stand level (WUE_i) for fertilised (filled circles and solid line) and reference plot (empty squares and dashed line) in 2012 and 2013, assuming a $g_m[?]$ assumption (green), a $g_m/g_C\hat{\alpha} = 2.67$ assumption (yellow) or a $g_m = 0.31$ mol CO₂ m⁻²s⁻¹ assumption (blue). Grey areas represent the thermal growing season Statistical results comparing WUE_i between fertilised and reference plots: *** correspond to $p < 0.001$, respectively, after anova.

FIGURE 5: Daily GPP_{PRELES} (orange) and GPP_{iso/SF} (blue) in the fertilised plot (upper row) and in the reference plot (lower row). Shaded areas around the curves represent the Monte Carlo uncertainties. The shaded boxes represent the thermal growing seasons.

FIGURE 6: Annual sum of GPP for PRELES (2012 and 2013) and sap flux/isotopic (mean 2012 and 2013) method corrected by $\hat{\alpha}$ considering the g_m assumption, $g_m/g_C\hat{\alpha} = 2.67$. Errors bars correspond to standard deviation and their values are in brackets and letters shows the statistical differences between the treatment combinations ($\alpha = 0.05$).

FIGURE 7: Comparison of GPP on the fertilised plot vs the reference plot in 2012 (green) and 2013 (grey) with, GPP_{iso/SF} for $g_m/g_C\hat{\alpha} = 2.67$ assumption (A), and GPP_{PRELES} (B). The black dashed line represents

the 1:1 line.

FIGURE 8: Annual sum of GPP for sap flux/isotopic (mean 2012 and 2013) method corrected by $\hat{\alpha}$ considering the g_m assumptions, $g_m/g_{C\hat{\alpha}} = 2.67$, $g_m = 0.31 \text{ mol CO}_2\text{m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$ and infinite g_m . Errors bars correspond to standard deviation and their values are in brackets and letters shows the statistical differences between the treatment combinations ($\alpha = 0.05$).







