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Dendrochemistry: Tools for Evaluating Variations in Past and Present Forest Environments

Guest Editor:

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Message from the Guest Editor

Dear Colleagues,

Dendrochemistry, the measurement of inorganic elements in growth rings of trees followed by analysis and interpretation of changes in environmental chemistry through time, is both promising and challenging. For environmental situations where the abundance of an element or multiple elements has changed through time, direct monitoring of environmental chemistry might not extend very far back in time, if at all. Accordingly, estimating past element abundance of a site using trees is enticing. Even tree-ring records just 20 to 30 years in length, which would be considered short in traditional applications of dendrochronology, could be usefully long in dendrochemistry. Given that dendrochemistry truly works, it could be applicable in many environmental situations such as long-term changes in forest soil chemistry (e.g., N or P), abrupt changes in elements due to natural causes (e.g., ash deposits from explosive volcanic eruptions), or subtle increases in elements that might be harmful to human health (e.g., various metals) due to inadvertent contamination.



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