Supporting information for Hurtt *et al*. (2002) *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* **99** (3), 1389–1394. (10.1073/pnas.012249999)

Appendix 3

The total area burned in the coterminous U.S. in ED from 1700 to 1990 is plotted in Fig. 4.

Data on the area burned by fires is only available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the period after 1925. The estimates of the area burned before that are large and uncertain and based on estimates of the area extent of fire-prone ecosystems and their corresponding mean fire return intervals. Although the estimate by Houghton *et al.* (1) was relatively involved and considered different types of fire-prone ecosystems with different estimated fire return intervals, such large estimates are not difficult to rationalize. Simply assuming, for example, that 1/3 of the country burned with an average 3-year fire return interval would yield and estimate of approximately 850,000 $km^2\ y^{-1}$. Fortunately, however, our model estimates are not particularly sensitive to the area burned prior to the historical record (see Appendix 6).

Reference:

1. Houghton, R. A., Hackler, J. L. & Lawrence, K. T. (2000) *Global Ecol. Biogeogr.* **9,** 145–170.