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The effect of peatland drainage and rewetting (ditch blocking) on extracellular enzyme activities and water chemistry

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Abstract
Extensive areas of European peatlands have been drained by digging ditches in an attempt to improve the land, resulting in increased carbon dioxide fluxes to the atmosphere and enhanced fluvial dissolved organic carbon (DOC) concentrations. Numerous peatland restoration projects have been initiated which aim to raise water tables by ditch blocking, thus reversing drainage-induced carbon losses. It has been suggested that extracellular hydrolase and phenol oxidase enzymes are partly responsible for controlling peatland carbon dynamics, and that these enzymes are affected by environmental change. The aim of this study was to investigate how drainage and ditch blocking affect enzyme activities and water chemistry in a Welsh blanket bog, and to study the relationship between enzyme activity and water chemistry. A comparison of a drained and undrained site showed that the drained site had higher phenol oxidase and hydrolase activities, and lower concentrations of phenolic
compounds which inhibit hydrolase enzymes. Ditch blocking had little impact upon enzyme activities; although hydrolase activities were lowered 4-9 months after restoration, the only significant difference was for arylsulphatasearylarylsulphatase. Finally, we noted a negative correlation between β-glucosidase activity and DOC concentrations, and a positive correlation between arylsulphatase activity and sulphate concentration. Phenol oxidase activity was negatively correlated with DOC concentrations in pore water, but for ditch water phenol oxidase correlated negatively with the ratio of phenolics to DOC. Our results imply that drainage could exacerbate gaseous and fluvial carbon losses, and that peatland restoration may not reverse the effects, at least in the short term.

Key words: ditch blocking, peatland restoration, phenol oxidase, β-glucosidase, dissolved organic carbon, phenolics,

1. Introduction

Northern peatlands are important carbon stores, but many have been drained for forestry, agriculture, and peat harvesting. In the UK drainage ditches were predominantly dug during the 19th and 20th centuries. The size and spacing of ditches varies but in UK blanket bogs they are typically around 0.5 m deep, with 7-20 m spacing (Stewart & Lance, 1991). It has been suggested that blanket bogs are somewhat resistant to drainage, with water table drawdown occurring only in the immediate vicinity of ditches (Stewart & Lance, 1991), and the magnitude of drawdown will depend on ditch spacing and the hydraulic conductivity of the peat (Armstrong, 2000). Nevertheless, long-term drainage can lead to the establishment of deeper water tables (Holden et al., 2011), and even slight changes in water tables can have ecological effects (Price et al., 2003).
Blanket bogs are largely ombrotrophic, and often found at the headwaters of river catchments, making them sources of potable water as well as sources of dissolved organic carbon (DOC) (Hope et al., 1999). The quality of water draining these systems thus has relevance for aquatic ecosystems (Karlsson et al., 2009), water treatment (McDonald et al., 1991), and human health issues (Chow et al., 2003). DOC is a natural export from peatlands, but there is evidence that DOC concentrations are higher in drained bogs (Glatzel et al., 2003, Wallage et al., 2006). The drainage of ombrotrophic bogs generally leads to an increase in carbon dioxide (CO$_2$) emissions and a decrease in methane (CH$_4$) emissions (Bussell et al., 2010).

In an attempt to reverse these drainage-induced biogeochemical changes, numerous peatland restoration projects have been initiated. Sites that have been ditched are restored by blocking the ditches with dams. The aim is to return the water table to pre-drainage levels. Some success has been observed on blanket bog: 6-7 years after rewetting, Holden et al. (2011) observed that a ditch-blocked site had hydrological functioning intermediate between an undrained site and drained site. Similarly, Wilson et al. (2011a) and Worrall et al. (2007) both noted increases in the water table after blocking.

One aspect of drainage that has received little attention is the activity of soil extracellular enzymes. Extracellular enzymes are involved in peatland carbon cycling (Freeman et al., 1997) but their activities are constrained by the conditions that exist in peat soils. Recalcitrant phenolic compounds are released by plants (Wetzel, 1992) and degraded by phenol oxidase, which has limited activity in northern peatlands due to the acidic pH, low temperatures and low oxygen content (Pind et al., 1994, Freeman et al., 2001a, Tahvanainen & Haraguchi, 2013). The build-up of phenolics in turn inhibits the activity of hydrolase enzymes (Freeman et al., 1990, Wetzel, 1992); resulting in low rates of decomposition. Conversely, increased peat aeration stimulates phenol oxidase activity, lowers phenolic
concentrations, and removes the inhibitory effect on hydrolase enzymes (Freeman et al.,
2001a). It can therefore be hypothesised that long-term drainage would lead to increased
phenol oxidase activity, reduced phenolic concentrations and increased hydrolase activity,
thereby resulting in greater overall soil decomposition rates and contributing to carbon loss
(hypothesis 1). Theoretically, ditch blocking would reverse this by raising the water table,
and leading to suppressed phenol oxidase activity, increased phenolic concentrations and
reduced hydrolase enzyme activity (hypothesis 2). The aim of this study was to test these
hypotheses using two sites located within a large peatland. A further aim was to examine
enzyme activities and to determine if they were related to DOC or phenolic concentrations, as
past studies have shown contradictory results.

2. Materials and Methods
2.1. Study sites

The study was carried out on the Migneint blanket bog, North Wales (UK).
According to the JNCC National Vegetation Classification (NVC), it includes areas of mire
habitat of classes M18, M19 and M20. Mean annual rainfall is 2.2 m and mean annual
temperature 5.6 °C (Billett et al., 2010).

The primary field site was the Afon Ddu catchment (latitude 52.99 N, longitude 3.82
W, 490 m above sea level) which was drained during the 1970s and 1980s. The ditches run
downslope and were blocked in February 2011. A replicated experiment was established in
August 2010 which comprises four ditches that have been left open as controls, and eight that
have been blocked using two different methods. Four have been blocked using peat dams,
for which the peat is extracted from ‘borrow pits’ adjacent to each ditch. The other four have
been blocked using a reprofiling technique, which involves the ditch vegetation being
removed, and the peat bottom being compressed to destroy any natural pipes that may be
present. The ditch is then infilled with peat from borrow pits and the vegetation is replaced.

As in the previous treatment peat dams are also constructed along the ditch.

A second nearby field site, was used to provide a comparison with undrained conditions; the Bryn Du site (latitude 52.97 N, longitude 3.82 W, 460 m above sea level) includes four control plots on intact blanket bog that has not been drained.

2.2. Soil Sampling

At the Afon Ddu soil samples were taken from each of the twelve ditches in June, July, August, September and November 2011. These samples were used to test the effect of ditch blocking on enzyme activities. Additional soil samples were taken from areas of bog between ditches to examine the effects of enzyme activities on DOC and phenolic concentrations. At Bryn Du, soil samples were taken from each of the four control plots in June and September 2011. All soil samples were taken to 10 cm depth. Each soil sample comprised 2-4 sub-samples of soil (taken from an area of approximately 1 m²) to minimise the influence of small-scale spatial variation in enzyme activity. Samples were stored in the dark at 4°C. Soil water content was determined by weighing 1 g of sample, drying for 24 hours at 105°C and re-weighing.

2.3. Water sampling and water tables

Water samples were taken from the ditches at the Afon Ddu and from piezometers 2-3 m adjacent to ditches (i.e. water and soil samples were taken from approximately the same locations for ‘ditch’ and ‘bog’ samples). Piezometers were constructed from PVC pipe with intakes at 10-15 cm depth. Water samples at Bryn Du were extracted using Rhizon samplers (Rhizosphere Research Products) at a depth of 10 cm. Water samples were collected in 60 ml Nalgene ® bottles and were stored in the dark at 4°C.
Water tables were measured using dipwells constructed from PVC pipe; for each ditch, a dipwell was positioned 2 m either side of the ditch. Water tables were manually recorded on an approximately monthly basis from April to November 2011. Dipwell length was 1000 mm. Every 100 mm, four drilled holes of 8 mm diameter were evenly spaced around the pipe to allow water entry.

2.4. Laboratory analysis

Phenol oxidase activity was measured using a method modified from Pind et al. (1994), using 1 cm$^3$ of soil. Analysis of hydrolase activity was measured using a method modified from Freeman et al. (1995), using 1 cm$^3$ of soil. Further information concerning the enzyme assays can be found in Dunn et al. (2013).

Water samples were filtered at 0.45 μm. Ion concentrations were determined using either a DX-120 Ion Chromatograph (Dionex), or an 850 Professional IC (Metrohm). DOC concentrations were analysed using a Thermalox Total Carbon analyser (Analytical Sciences). Phenolic concentrations were determined using a method adapted from Box (1983), and were derived from a standard curve using phenol standards.

2.5. Statistical analysis

Statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS v16.0.1 (IBM Corporation). The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to test the normality of data, and log 10 or square root transformations were attempted on any data that failed this. For the comparisons of the drained and undrained site, t-tests were used, or the non-parametric Mann-Whitney test (for any data that could not be transformed to normality). To compare unblocked ditches to the two ditch blocking treatments, repeated-measures ANOVAs with Tukey HSD post-hoc tests were carried out. If transformations failed to produce normal data, then the non-parametric
Kruskal-Wallis test was used. Linear regression was used to test for relationships between variables.

3. Results

3.1. Site comparison – effect of long term drainage

A comparison of the Bryn Du data with that from the open ditches at the Afon Ddu shows that the drained site had higher hydrolase (driven by arylsulphatase and β-glucosidase) and phenol oxidase activity (Figure 1 and 2). Additionally, Bryn Du displays a significantly higher phenolic concentration; 5.6 mg L\(^{-1}\) compared with 4.8 mg L\(^{-1}\) at the Afon Ddu (one-tailed t-test, \(p = 0.02\)). There was no significant difference in pH; 4.27 at Bryn Du and 4.18 at the Afon Ddu. Despite the significant difference in arylsulphatase activity, there was no significant difference in pore water sulphate concentrations between the two sites: mean concentrations for the period March-November 2011 (monthly sampling, \(n = 4\) per site) were 2.2 mg L\(^{-1}\) at the Afon Ddu, and 1.0 mg L\(^{-1}\) at Bryn Du (with respective standard errors of 0.8 mg L\(^{-1}\) and 0.5 mg L\(^{-1}\)). The only ion for which a significant difference was found was phosphate; concentrations at Bryn Du were often below the detection limit of the analyser (Table 1). There was no significant difference in the water content of soil samples (91.0%, SE = 0.6% at Bryn Du, 90.7%, SE = 0.8% at the Afon Ddu).

3.2. Effect of ditch blocking on enzyme activity and phenolic compounds

At the Afon Ddu experimental site 4-9 months after ditch-blocking, there was no significant difference between treatments for the activity of β-glucosidase, xylosidase or chitinase. There was a significant difference for arylsulphatase; activity was higher in the control ditches compared to the reprofiled ditches (Figure 3). Sulphate concentrations were
lowest for reprofiled ditches (1.8 mg L$^{-1}$ compared to 2.2 mg L$^{-1}$ for open ditches and 2.5 mg L$^{-1}$ for dammed ditches) but this difference was not significant.

There was no significant treatment effect on phenol oxidase activity (Figure 4).

There was no significant difference in ditch water pH between treatments; mean values for the length of the study were 4.21 (open), 4.34 (dam) and 4.20 (reprofiled). The depth to the water table was greatest for open ditches, with a mean of 14.8 cm (SE = 1.1 cm, min = 1.2 cm, max = 46.5 cm) for the study period. Mean depth to the water table was 10.7 cm (SE = 0.8 cm, min = 1.8 cm, max = 28.7 cm) for dammed ditches, and 9.9 cm (SE = 0.7 cm, min = 1.9 cm, max = 23.9 cm) for reprofiled ditches ($n = 80$ for each treatment). The difference in water tables between open and blocked ditches was significant ($p < 0.01$). Mean soil water content of samples was 90.7% (open, SE = 0.4%), 89.2% (dam, SE = 0.7%) and 88.1% (reprofiled, SE = 0.6%). Repeated-measures ANOVA showed no significant difference in mean water content. There was no significant difference between treatments for phenolic or DOC concentrations (Figures 5 and 6).

3.3. Enzymatic controls on biogeochemistry

A significant negative relationship was found between β-glucosidase activity and DOC concentration in both ditch and pore waters (Figure 7). No direct relationship was found between either phenol oxidase activity and DOC ($r^2 = 0.02$) or phenol oxidase and phenolics ($r^2 = 0.09$) for ditch water, but there was a significant negative relationship between the phenolic to DOC ratio and phenol oxidase activity (Figure 8). For pore water this was not the case; there was no correlation between phenolic to DOC ratio and phenol oxidase activity ($r^2 = 0.05$), and the strongest relationship (highest $r^2$ value) was between phenol oxidase activity and DOC concentration (Figure 8). There was a weak positive correlation between arylsulphatase activity and sulphate concentration in ditch water (Figure 9).
4. Discussion

4.1. Effects of long term drainage

Results from a comparison between an undrained site and a drained site support hypothesis 1; that drainage leads to lower phenolic concentrations, and enhanced activities of phenol oxidase and hydrolases. This is in agreement with Freeman et al. (2001a), who showed that increased oxygen availability following drainage stimulates phenol oxidase activity, which in turn degrades phenolics and removes the inhibition on hydrolase enzymes. The enhancement of hydrolase activity was partly controlled by increased β-glucosidase activity, a response which has been observed before (Fenner et al., 2005). Additionally, long-term drainage leads to greater water table fluctuations (Holden et al., 2011) which can exacerbate the effects of seasonal drought, leading to an associated increase in oxygen availability of a magnitude to override pH controls and consequently stimulate phenol oxidase activity. As an aside, it should be noted that phenolics were measured in pore water at the undrained site and ditch water at the drained site; this will somewhat confound the results, as pore water and surface water would have some natural differences. However, this does not impinge on the enzyme data where methods were identical at both sites.

It is important to acknowledge that the observed differences in biogeochemistry may not have been due to drainage, as this was a limited comparison of two sites (i.e. with no data from before the Afon Ddu catchment was drained), with pseudoreplication (i.e. sampling over time) rather than true replication. The sites are close together and share the same climate and similar peat characteristics, and the only difference in pore-water ion concentration was observed for phosphate. Nevertheless, it could be that some other factor is responsible for the differences in enzyme activity.
4.2. Effect of ditch blocking

Although ditch blocking appeared to lower the activity of each of the hydrolase enzymes studied, arylsulphatase was the only enzyme to show a statistically significant difference. As such we are unable to find support for hypothesis 2: that ditch blocking would suppress phenol oxidase activity, leading to a subsequent increase in phenolics and lowered hydrolase activities. Fenner & Freeman (2011) noted that upon rewetting after drought, phenol oxidase activity did not immediately decline, and remained high (for a period of months to years) as a legacy from the previous aerobic conditions. It should be noted that there was no significant difference in soil moisture between the blocked and open ditches, despite the fact that the depth to the water table was significantly greater around open ditches. It could be that a lack difference in soil moisture is due to the fact that water tables were relatively high for all treatments, therefore making soil moisture insensitive to ditch blocking. Additionally, Holden et al. (2011) suggest that ditch blocking only partially restores the hydrological functioning of blanket bog, and other evidence suggests that it could be several years before the rewetting suppresses enzyme activity (Fenner & Freeman, 2011). It might be expected that enzyme activity would increase in the reprofiled ditches due to the disturbance that this method involves; large volumes of peat are removed from the adjacent borrow pits to infill the ditch, which might theoretically allow some oxygen infiltration. However, the enzyme response was identical for the dammed ditches and the reprofiled ditches, suggesting this was not the case. As such, it may be that the ditch blocking was on wet and dense peat, and therefore very little air entered or became trapped in the peat.

The suppression of arylsulphatase activity in the reprofiled ditches could have repercussions on CH$_4$ fluxes. Raising the water table will alter the redox conditions and stimulate the methanogenic community, thus increasing CH$_4$ emissions (Komulainen et al., 1998, Urbanová et al., 2011). Coupled to this, arylsulphatase releases sulphate which is
implicated in reduced CH$_4$ emissions when the water table falls. The suppression of 
arylsulphatase following ditch blocking could result in a reduced rate of sulphate production 
which would then contribute to the enhanced CH$_4$ fluxes (Freeman et al., 1997). A weak but 
significant, positive relationship was found between arylsulphatase activity and sulphate 
concentrations in ditch water, but no significant difference in sulphate concentration was 
detected between treatments.

We observed no change in ditch water DOC concentrations immediately after ditch 
blocking, and this is similar to studies of blanket bogs that have noted small changes in DOC 
following ditch blocking (i.e. differences of approximately 1 mg L$^{-1}$, e.g. Gibson et al., 2009, 
Ramchunder et al., 2012) or even small increases (e.g. Wilson et al., 2011b). The lack of 
change in DOC concentration can be explained partly by the overall lack of response in 
enzyme activities. Considering that other ditch blocking studies have speculated that the 
action of enzymes could be involved in any restoration-induced changes in DOC dynamics 
(e.g. Wallage et al., 2006, Worrall et al., 2007), it is interesting to note that there has 
apparently been only one other study that investigated the response of enzymes to ditch 
blocking. Bonnett et al. (2008) compared hydrolase activities around a natural gully and 
around a ditch that had been blocked twelve years previously. They noted no difference in 
ychodrolase activities in surface peat samples, but some differences at depth; for instance, β- 
glucosidase activity was lower around the blocked ditch at both 25 cm and 45 cm. Some 
studies have suggested that DOC concentrations are lowered following restoration; Wallage 
et al. noted substantially lower pore water DOC (60-70% compared to a drained site) 
concentrations at a blanket bog where ditch blocking had occurred 6 years previously. This 
could be indicative of suppressed enzyme activities in the longer term following blocking. 
However, another study at the same site found similar fluxes and concentrations of DOC in 
ditches (Armstrong et al., 2010), thus adding further complexity to the issue.
It should be noted that the early post-restoration measurements of DOC concentration and water table that are reported here are part of a long-term experiment. It may well be that the short-term response of these variables is different to that of any long-term response.

4.3. Enzymatic controls on biogeochemistry

For both pore water and ditch water a weak negative relationship was observed between β-glucosidase activity and DOC concentration. Freeman et al. (1997) found the same relationship for a peatland in mid Wales, and concluded that DOC represented a substrate for β-glucosidase, with the metabolic products then being microbially degraded under anaerobic conditions.

There have been conflicting reports of the effect of phenol oxidase on phenolic concentrations. Freeman et al. (2001a) originally showed that increased phenol oxidase activity led to decreased phenolic concentrations, a result replicated by Fenner et al. (2005). However, Toberman et al. (2008) found a positive relationship between phenol oxidase activity and phenolics, and speculated that it could be possible for phenol oxidase to partially degrade complex phenolic compounds, thus releasing smaller, soluble phenolics. We found no relationship between phenol oxidase and phenolics. However, phenolics are a component of DOC, and (because DOC concentrations vary according to season and weather events) phenolic concentrations will also fluctuate. As such, by taking the phenolic to DOC ratio (as in Peacock et al., 2013) then a significant negative relationship was observed with phenol oxidase, for ditch water. This observation suggests that phenol oxidase did not absolutely lower phenolic concentrations, but that it lowered phenolic concentrations relative to total DOC concentration. For pore water this relationship was not found; instead there was a significant negative relationship between phenol oxidase activity and DOC concentration. It
has been suggested previously that the phenolic to DOC ratio is an important factor in enzymatic degradation (Freeman et al., 1990).

These results suggest that the action of enzymes on DOC/phenolics is complicated, occasionally contradictory, and sometimes unrelated. Indeed, Kane et al. (2014) emphasise the complexity of these interactions, and point out that positive feedbacks can exist between the release of labile DOC and enzyme activities. Although the relationships reported here between enzyme activities and DOC/phenolics are only weak, this is perhaps to be expected. In a natural system there will be multiple drivers that interact in a complex way to control fluvial carbon losses, with enzymes playing only a small part in the overall system.

It is useful to consider that drainage in this context can be used an analogue for a prolonged drought events. Climate change in Europe is likely to result in more frequent and prolonged droughts (Alcamo et al., 2007). Our findings thus agree with others (e.g. Freeman et al., 2001a, Fenner & Freeman, 2011) in suggesting that future climate change may stimulate the activities of phenol oxidase, β-glucosidase and arylsulphatase. These changes could result in enhanced losses of gaseous and fluvial carbon from peatlands, although the increased activity of arylsulphatase in the drained site might be expected to suppress CH₄ fluxes (Freeman et al., 2007). As a proxy for a recovery from severe drought, our data show that the activity of carbon-cycling enzymes remain high as a legacy of the previous aerobic conditions. The only significant change was a reduction in arylsulphatase activity in reprofiled ditches, which might therefore contribute to the enhanced CH₄ fluxes that are sometimes seen following ditch blocking (e.g. Green et al., 2014, Cooper et al., 2014).

4.4. Conclusions

Our results suggest that drainage increased enzyme activity, specifically phenol oxidase, β-glucosidase and arylsulphatase. Enhanced activities of these enzymes could result
in increased losses of greenhouse gases (Freeman et al., 2001a) and DOC (Freeman et al., 2001b). Following ditch blocking there was no evidence that enzyme activities were suppressed, apart from lowered arylsulphatsase activities in reprofiled ditches. The absence of an effect on enzyme activities may have been due to a legacy of enhanced enzyme activity that was stimulated through drainage, combined with the absence of any post-blocking change in soil moisture. Furthermore, any changes may have been mediated by the weather during the monitoring period.

It is clear that long term monitoring is necessary to elucidate exactly when peatland restoration will begin to influence the activity of extracellular enzymes, as changes can create both positive and negative feedbacks to ecosystem processes (Sinsabaugh, 2010). Finally, the fact that arylsulphatase activity responded to both drainage and ditch blocking lends some evidence to suggest that it may be more sensitive to environmental change than other hydrolases.

**Acknowledgements**

The authors thank Trystan Edwards, Helen Buckingham and Andrew Roberts of the National Trust for their involvement in the project. DOC and water table data were collected as part of the UK's Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) SP1202 project. This is a long-term project, and the analysis of early post-restoration data in this paper should not be taken to imply ditch blocking effects on DOC and water tables will be the same over two to four years as they are over the first year. Dr Richard Smart was involved with field data collection on SP1202. This work was written up through the assistance of a Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarship (KESS) PhD awarded to Mike Peacock. We thank two anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments.
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Table 1. Pore water ion concentrations and standard errors (mg L$^{-1}$) for the undrained Bryn Du site and piezometers associated with open ditches at the Afon Du. Values are means from monthly sampling for March-July 2011 ($n = 20$), except for chloride, phosphate and sulphate where extra data were available; these ions were measured monthly March-November 2011 ($n = 32$). For each site and month $n = 4$. The only significant difference between sites was found for phosphate (Mann-Whitney U test, $p = 0.001$).

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bryn Du</th>
<th>Afon Du</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sodium</td>
<td>4.00±0.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sulphate</td>
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Figure 1. Mean hydrolase activities (nmol g$^{-1}$ min$^{-1}$ MUF released) for drained and undrained sites. Error bars show standard error of the mean. Data are mean from two sampling dates, $n = 8$ for each treatment, except chitinase which is from one sampling date ($n = 4$). There were significant differences (*) between sites for β-glucosidase (one-tailed t-test, $p = 0.01$) and arylsulphatase (one-tailed t-test, $p = 0.02$).

Figure 2. Mean phenol oxidase activity (nmol dicq g$^{-1}$ min$^{-1}$) ($n = 8$) and total mean hydrolase activity (nmol g$^{-1}$ min$^{-1}$ MUF released) (i.e. sum of mean β-glucosidase, arylsulphatase, xylosidase and chitinase activity, $n = 28$) for drained and undrained sites. Error bars show standard error of the mean. The difference is significant (*) for phenol oxidase (one-tailed t-test, $p = 0.01$) and hydrolases (one-tailed t-test, $p = 0.01$).
Figure 3. Mean hydrolase activities (nmol g⁻¹ min⁻¹ MUF released) for open control ditches, dammed ditches and reprofiled ditches. Errors bars show standard error of the mean. Data are mean of five (approximately monthly) sampling dates. n = 20 for each treatment. The only significant difference (*) was for arylsulphatase (repeated measures ANOVA with Tukey HSD, p < 0.05).

Figure 4. Mean phenol oxidase activity (nmol dicq g⁻¹ min⁻¹) for open control ditches, dammed ditches and reprofiled ditches. Errors bars show standard error of the mean. Data are mean of five (approximately monthly) sampling dates. n = 20 for each treatment.
Figure 5. Mean phenolic concentrations (mg L$^{-1}$) for open control ditches, dammed ditches and reprofiled ditches. Errors bars show standard error of the mean. Data are mean of five (approximately monthly) sampling dates. $n = 20$ for each treatment.

Figure 6. Mean DOC concentrations (mg L$^{-1}$) for open control ditches, dammed ditches and reprofiled ditches. Errors bars show standard error of the mean. Data are mean of five (approximately monthly) sampling dates. $n = 20$ for each treatment.
Figure 7. Relationship between β-glucosidase activity and DOC concentration in ditch and pore waters. Data are from five sampling trips between June and October 2011. For ditch water $n = 60$, $r^2 = 0.20$, $p < 0.05$, $y = -1.05x + 39.36$. For pore water $n = 29$, $r^2 = 0.35$, $p < 0.01$, $y = -2.74x + 68.43$.

Figure 8. Relationship between phenol oxidase activity and the ratio of phenolic compounds to DOC in ditch waters, and the relationship between phenol oxidase activity and DOC concentration in pore waters. Data are from five sampling trips between June and October 2011. For ditch water $n = 56$, $r^2 = 0.19$, $p < 0.01$, $y = -0.0009x + 0.1939$. For pore water $n = 27$, $r^2 = 0.17$, $p < 0.05$, $y = -1.21x + 62.64$. 
Figure 9. Relationship between arylsulphatase activity (nmol g\(^{-1}\) min\(^{-1}\) MUF released) and sulphate concentration in ditch waters. Data are from five sampling trips between June and October 2011. \(n = 56, r^2 = 0.19, p < 0.01, y = 0.064 x + 0.563\).