

Response to the Editor

1-

Thank you for addressing many of the comments from the reviewers and myself. There is still work needed before publication. Figure 4 still has incorrect analysis and the revision included does not address the comments from the reviewers and me. At line 115 the replication is not clear because '2 replicates' is difficult to interpret. However, you sampled 3 replicate locations at each of your study sites. The T-SOCS of each of these, not the combined value, is needed for the Figure 4 plot. This will give you 3 replicate locations (summed over the 3 depth intervals at each replicate location) x 4 study sites = 12 points. You do not do regression through a mean value. There is a standard deviation in Table 5, so you must have replicates.

Answer: Suggestions were adopted. Figure 4a with combined values was deleted. Also, modification was done in figure 5 in order to avoid regression with 4 points.

2-

Another comment raised by reviewers is misleading interpretation because of the use of latitude. To some extent this has been fixed but the text implies broad geographic spread. Northerly and southerly would be more appropriate. Latitude in soil studies tends to be used when there is a very large change, such as between countries across a continent.

Answer: Suggestions were adopted

3-

Please address Figure 4 and tone down the arguments about latitude. The paper does not need to go back to reviewers.

Answer: All corrections were made.