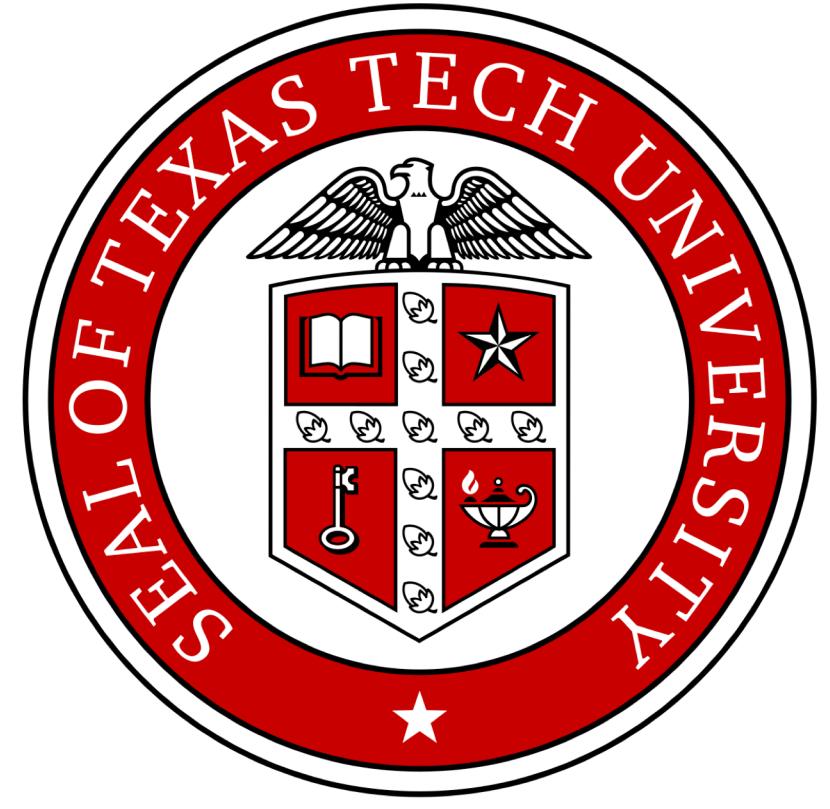




# Mesquite alters community structure, but not diversity in shortgrass prairie

Poster available at:  
bit.ly/2Ya7ZS6



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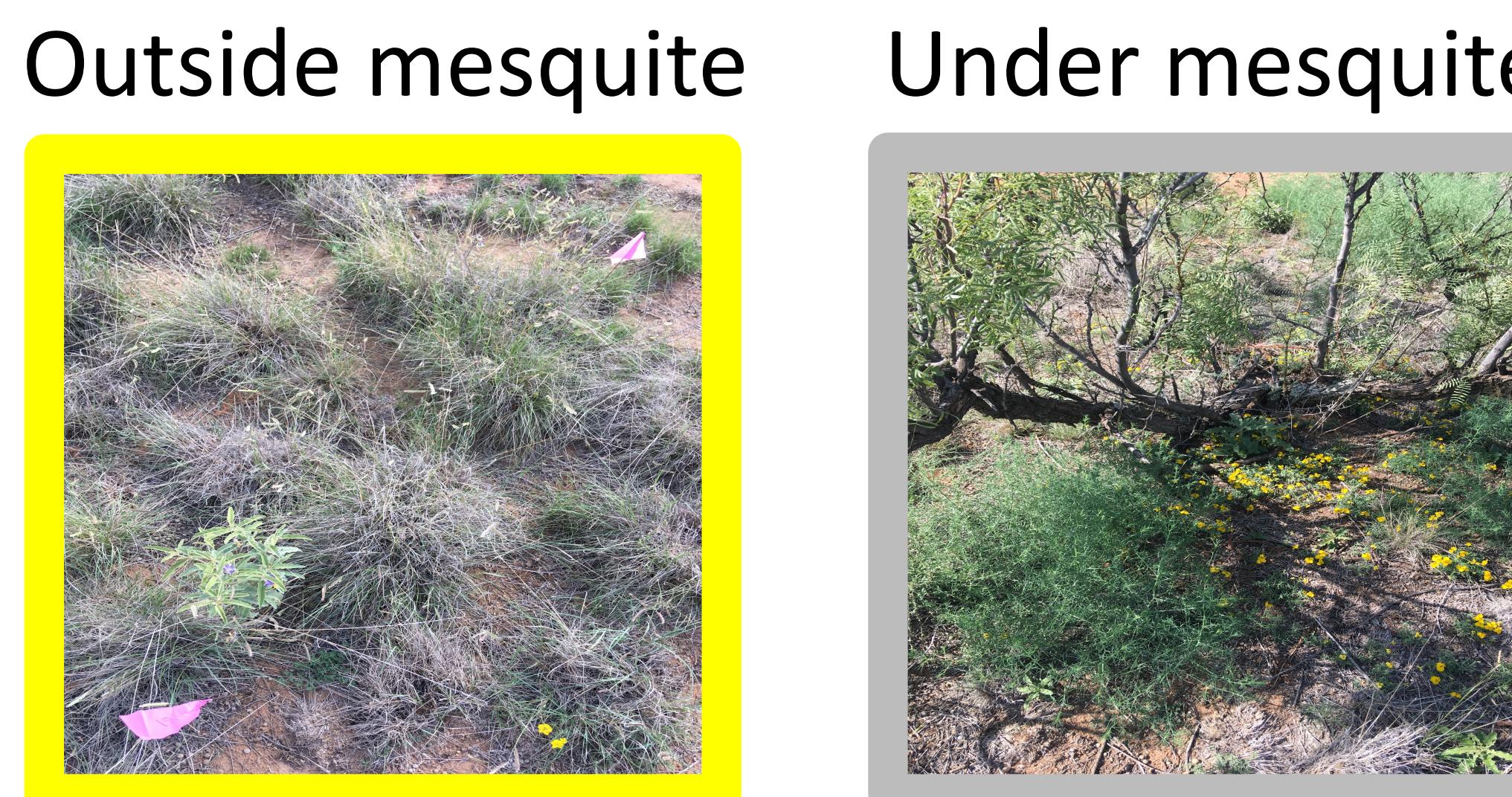
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## Mesquite: an invasive species in southwestern grasslands

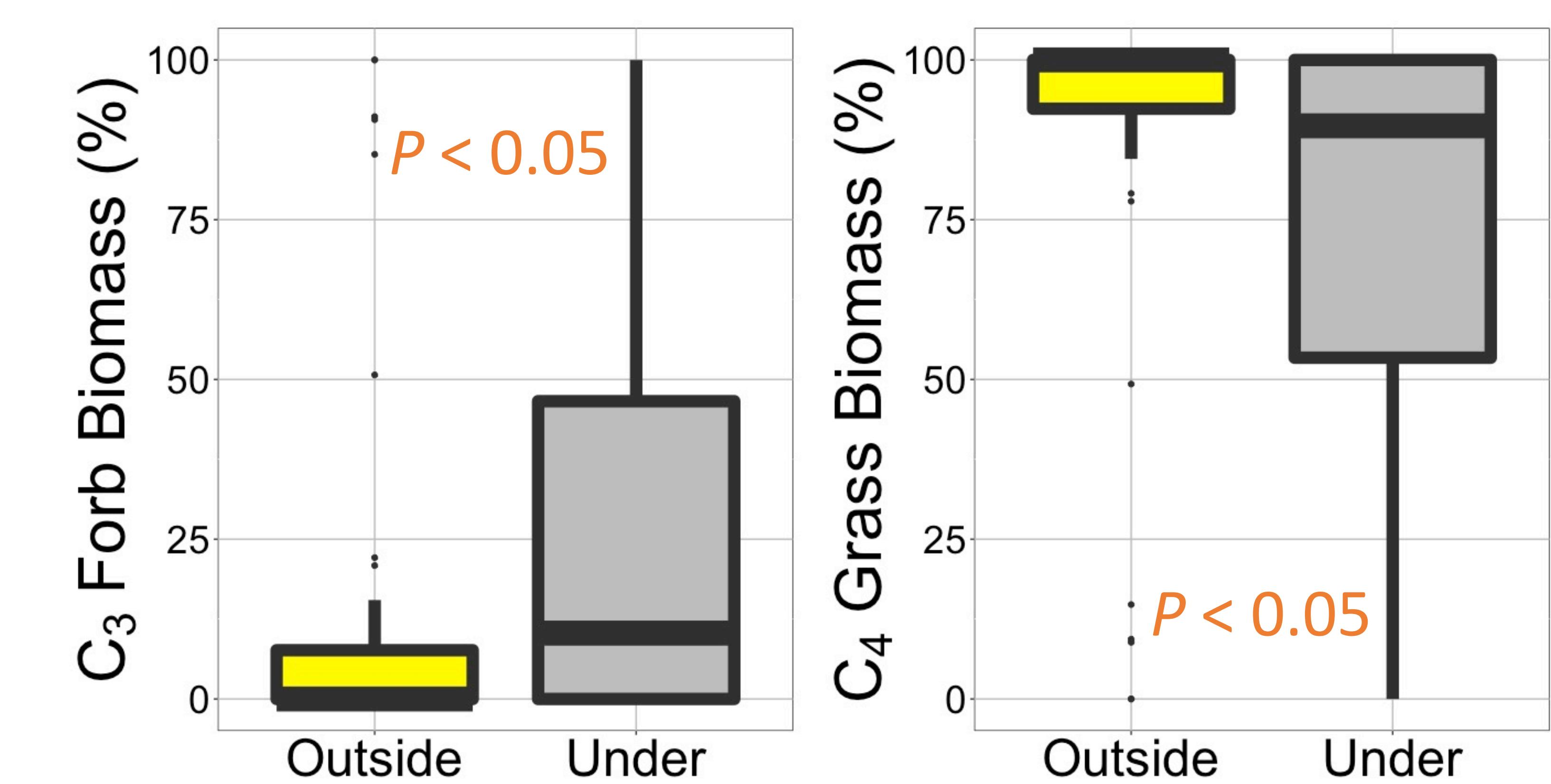
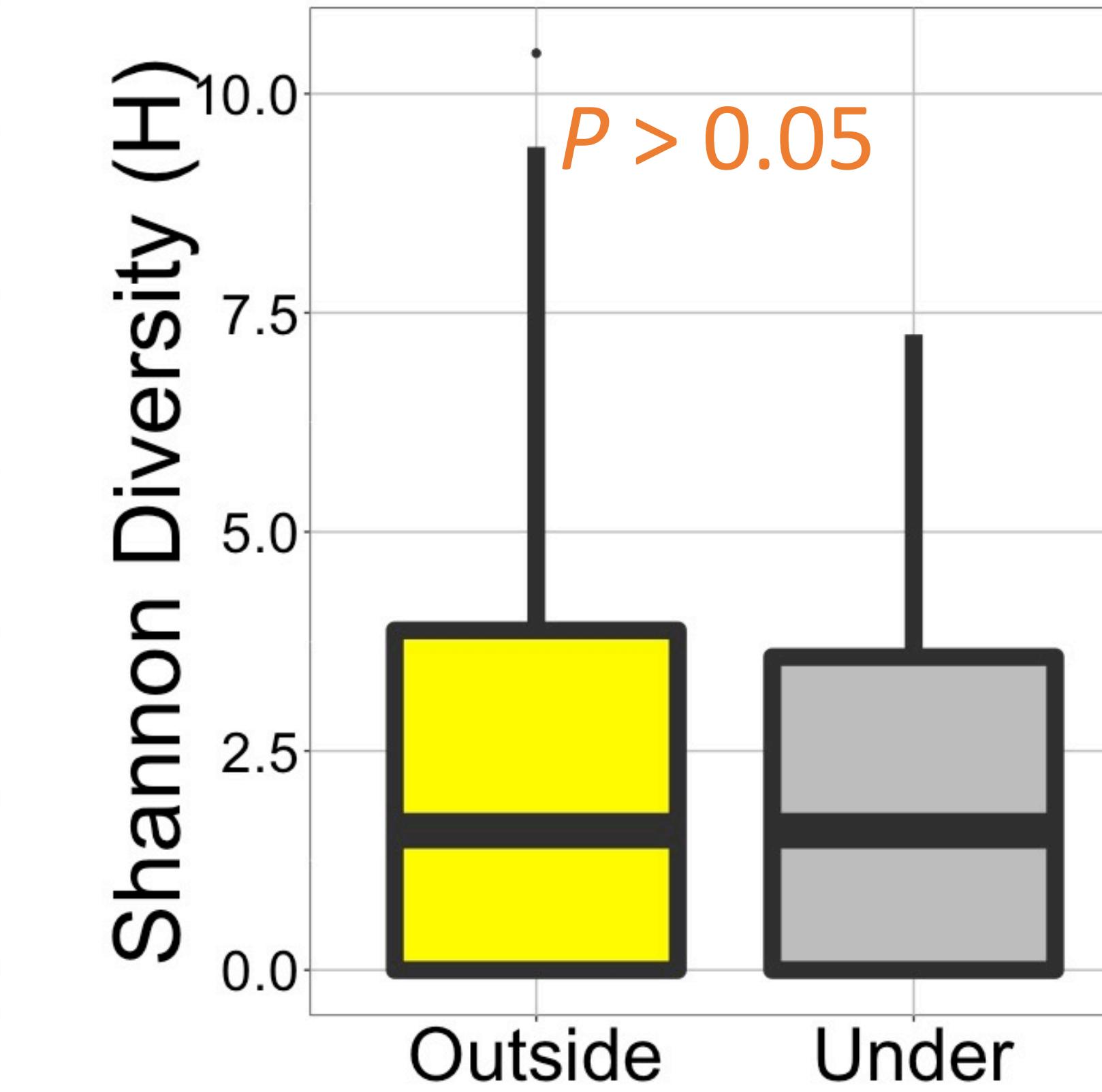
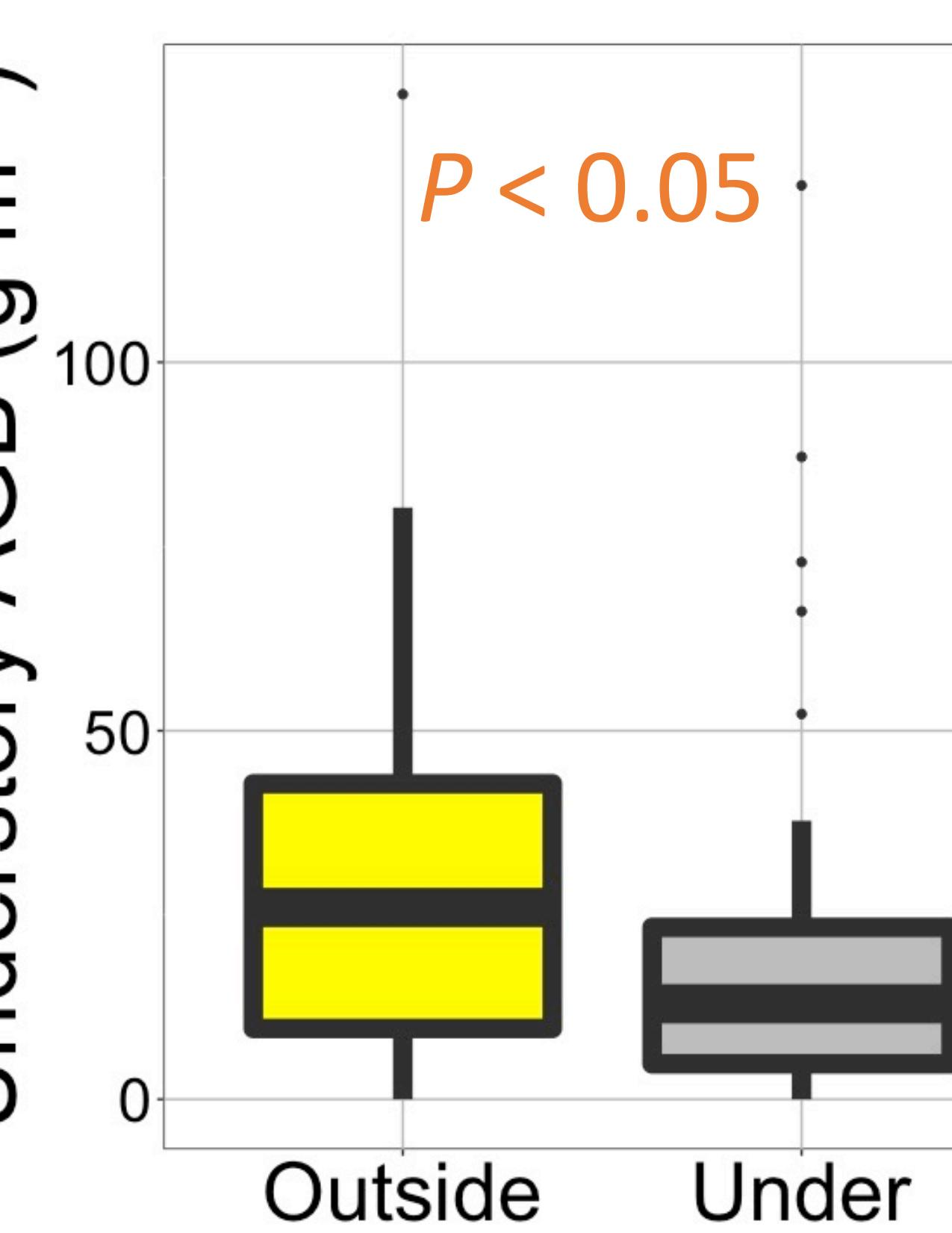


- In Texas, mesquite cover is increasing at 2.2% per year
- Little is known about the ecosystem impact

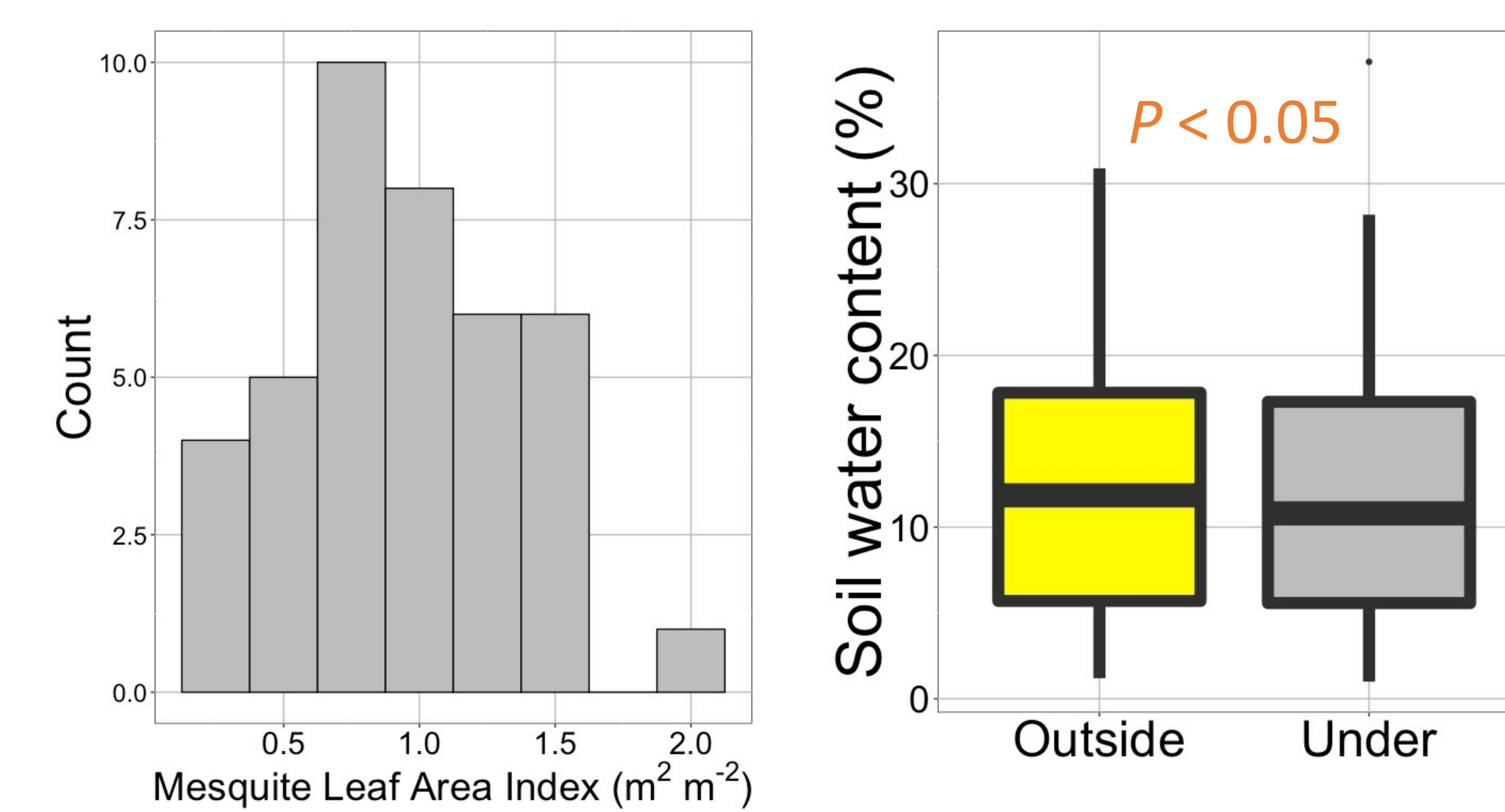
## Methods



- 40 paired rangeland plots
- Plant community: biomass and community composition
- Microhabitat: soil moisture



## Mechanism: decreased light availability and soil moisture



## What does this mean for the system moving forward?

- More total productivity (mesquite:  $>800 \text{ g m}^{-2}$ )
- No loss in plant diversity
- A whole new community of plants
- Cascading effects?