Reviewers questions are somewhat comprehensively addressed in the latest draft of the introduction

~~Response to reviewer 1~~

1. ~~Overview, main points and importance to the scientific world~~
2. ~~How to provide information to support the research questions STILL TO DO~~
3. ~~Elevation influence should be explained thoroughly in introduction~~

~~Response to reviewer 2~~

1. ~~First, and most importantly, we agree with the assessment that a model comparing persistence and recovery, or intrinsic versus extrinsic effects on populations, are not apt as a means of conveying the importance of empirical evidence which we found.~~
2. ~~In addition we acknowledge flaws in the introduction where we failed, until this point, to lay out a systematic review of the connection between fire history at Mt Desert, stipulating to known aspects of that history, including facts about serotiny, acknowledging not well studied influences of elevation and topography on population performance.~~
3. ~~A major rewrite of the introduction refocuses the subject away from a dual conceptual model towards a more comprehensive examination of factors which are considered as possible influences on pitch pine performance in the context of fire history, or elevation, or an interaction between the two. With respect to measures of traits, we stipulate that all of the trees within each of four groups are of uniform age—that is we have a grasp of stand age based on use of post-fire aging of trees and trees in non-fire settings.~~
4. ~~We have, in addition to clarifying fire history data (specifying origin of fire, date of fire intensity of fire), reported specific evidence of serotiny levels beginning in the late 1990’s through the present, first for South Cadillac trail and elsewhere through anecdotal reports from Day, for example, about the disappearance of serotiny, going back at least two decades.~~

In response to the editor comments.

1. ~~Fire history is known for all four sites DONE~~
2. ~~We did not perform any experiments or manipulations DONE~~
3. ~~The fire as reported seventy-five years ago was “severe” according to the Bar Harbor FD DONE~~
4. ~~Trees in the fire zone were all of similar height, caliper and canopy (see data) DONE~~
5. ~~Trees in the fire zone did provide seed because the existing trees on South Cadillac trail were destroyed. The ‘new trees’ show no basal scars and no pyrogenic carbon deposits were found on the soil surface nor as a result of excavations EXPLAIN AND SHOW THIS~~
6. ~~The relation between hypothesis testing and metricization is linear~~
7. ~~Trees were selected carefully at each site in order to maximize random distances between trees, where there was a small difference in elevation between low lying populations and an understandable difference in high elevation populations given the lack of forest density~~
8. ~~All of the soil surfaces including relatively flat, ledge and cliff systems had uniformly similar soil depth and soil chemistry (as reported)~~
9. We should resolve df differences if these are indeed a problem
10. I am not sure I understand the term “erasing impact of fire” ??????
11. ~~There was no conceivable means of replicating this study since it was observational not manipulated~~