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Dear editor,

Please find attached the manuscript *Major interaction reorganizations punctuate the assembly of pollination networks* which we are submitting for consideration as a Letter in *Ecology Letters*.

Our research deals with two fundamental aspects of ecological theory: to understand not only how species-rich communities assemble, but also how these assemblages change through time. Furthermore, as the world continues to lose species at an alarming rate, it has become increasingly imperative to aid the recovery of lost interactions and component biodiversity through ecological restoration. When a species goes extinct, not only a species is lost, but also its interactions. We know little, however, about how to re-assemble interacting communities through restoration, or the process of ecological network assembly more generally.

Using extensive surveys of pollinators spanning eight years comprising ~20,000 pollinator visitation records, we explore the assembly of plant-pollinator communities at native plant restorations in the Central Valley of California. For the first time in the ecological literature we employ a newly developed method to examine the temporal changes in networks. Among other things, we find that species are highly dynamic in their network position, causing community assembly to be punctuated by major interaction reorganizations. The most persistent and generalized species are also the most variable in their network positions, contrary to what is expected through preferential attachment theory — an assembly theory otherwise well-supported in the network literature. Our study is the first long-term study on the temporal assembly of ecological networks. It also challenges the hypothesis that mutualistic systems assemble through preferential attachment (Bascompte and Stouffer, 2009).

Our results are compelling and provide empirical evidence that widen our understanding on how communities assemble and how species interactions change through time. Furthermore, our results also contribute to the knowledge of how communities will be able to maintain function in the face of species extinction. And finally, our results challenge the view that communities assemble through preferential attachment. We believe that these exciting results that link three major ecological fields (interaction networks, community dynamics and restoration ecology) that will be of broad interest to the readership of *Ecology Letters*.

Our manuscript is original and was carried out fully by the authors. All authors agree with the contents of the manuscript. This manuscript is not published, nor is it in consideration for publication elsewhere. All research not of the authors' is fully acknowledged. The authors declare no conflict of interest. All appropriate ethical standards were followed. Thank you for reviewing

our manuscript and we hope you will find it suitable for publication.

Regards, Lauren C. Ponisio, PhD
Claire Kremen, Professor