**Reading Questions**

Tilman et al. 1996. Productivity and sustainability influenced by biodiversity in grassland ecosystems. Nature. 379: 718-720.

1. **What is the big picture question being asked by these authors?**
2. **What are some of the strengths of this research and the author’s experimental design?**
3. **Why are grasses and grassland ecosystems ideal model systems to test the effect of species diversity on ecosystem functioning and nutrient retention?**
4. **From an environmental stability point-of-view why should scientists and land managers be concerned about nutrient retention and/or losses (especially nitrogen)?**
5. **Have students compare figures 1c and 2b and ask the following questions:**