

***Interactive comment on* “Controls on the temporal and spatial variability of soil moisture in a mountainous landscape: the signatures of snow and complex terrain.” by C. J. Williams et al.**

Anonymous Referee #3

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I can see from the other reviewer comments that mine will be a minority opinion—perhaps because my expertise is a somewhat outside of the focus of this paper. I am quite certain that there is valuable information in the paper but as a "non expert" but never the less (I hope) a competent hydrologist—the significance of the research was not obvious to me. I do not believe that the authors have clearly articulated or explained the significance of the work to a broader audience. Why for example is it surprising that for a semiarid watershed where ephemeral snow drifts occur each winter—that the distribution of snow will have a major and in fact the major influence on soil water. I would have thought that this is obvious to even the casual observer. Yet this seems to be the

major conclusion of the paper. Obviously I am missing something but my point is that if the authors want their work to be read and understood by a broader audience then it should be very clear what the results are and why they are important. As I read the paper now—what I come away with is that soil is wetter where snow accumulates.

I am not in agreement that the Tables are particularly useful or even appropriate in a journal article. Yes they are full of data and may be useful to modelers or others who would like to use the data (and could be made available through some other venue) but they do nothing to help communicate the major findings of the paper—unless the reader spend a very long time trying to determine the important trends on their own.

My recommendation would be to simplify the presentation and to put a little more effort on the front end and in the discussion to make the results of the paper of more interest to a broader audience.

Interactive comment on Hydrol. Earth Syst. Sci. Discuss., 5, 1927, 2008.

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