

Responses to comments of Referee #1 to the paper “Integrated response and transit time distributions of watersheds by combining hydrograph separation and long-term transit time modeling”

Comment:

My greatest concern with the paper is the lack of data presented. The authors spend large effort to present how the data has been collected, model description and results. But nowhere is the actual isotopic data found. The lack of data is problematic as I as reader have no possibility to understand how relevant the data is for the task ahead. The use of isotopic data has great potential but unless it shows enough separation between the event and pre-event fraction it cannot be used. I therefore urge the authors to present the basic 18O information from both precipitation and stream water.

Response:

We decided to focus on the results of model application and less on providing details on the isotopic data. Since all reviewers agreed that this is a substantial shortage of the paper, we are certainly happy to extend the paper to include the isotopic data for the three streams and precipitation. In this response, we present the data as detailed tables, which will not be in the final manuscript, but two figures, showing the baseflow samples and selected event samples (see next response). Baseflow samples were taken every two weeks.

B1S		B2S		BBS		precipitation	
date	d18O (‰ V-SMOW)	date	d18O (‰ V-SMOW)	date	d18O (‰ V-SMOW)	date	d18O (‰ V-SMOW)
		15-May-06	-11.14	15-May-06	-11.40	31-Oct-05	-16.26
30-May-06	-11.08	30-May-06	-10.96	30-May-06	-11.02	15-Nov-05	-13.21
				14-Jun-06	-11.77	30-Nov-05	-11.59
22-Jun-06	-11.20	22-Jun-06	-11.18	22-Jun-06	-11.49	15-Dec-05	-9.66
3-Jul-06	-11.10	3-Jul-06	-11.10	3-Jul-06	-10.97	30-Dec-05	-9.05
31-Jul-06	-10.80	31-Jul-06	-10.94	31-Jul-06	-11.19	15-Jan-06	-10.70
15-Aug-06	-10.81	15-Aug-06	-10.63	15-Aug-06	-10.83	30-Jan-06	-8.29
30-Aug-06	-10.82	30-Aug-06	-10.64	30-Aug-06	-10.80	15-Feb-06	-10.21
15-Sep-06	-11.64	15-Sep-06	-10.75	15-Sep-06	-10.61	28-Feb-06	-4.06
29-Sep-06	-11.56	29-Sep-06	-10.84	29-Sep-06	-10.99	15-Mar-06	-9.05
15-Oct-06	-11.79	15-Oct-06	-11.54	15-Oct-06	-11.77	30-Mar-06	-10.23
30-Oct-06	-11.37	30-Oct-06	-11.40	30-Oct-06	-11.66	15-Apr-06	-9.27
15-Nov-06	-11.72	15-Nov-06	-11.71	15-Nov-06	-11.89	30-Apr-06	-14.15
30-Nov-06	-11.91	30-Nov-06	-11.59			15-May-06	-19.79
15-Dec-06	-10.99	15-Dec-06	-11.57	15-Dec-06	-11.72	31-May-06	-15.63
30-Dec-06	-11.57	30-Dec-06	-11.32	30-Dec-06	-11.29	15-Jun-06	-20.25
15-Jan-07	-10.69	15-Jan-07	-10.01	15-Jan-07	-11.26	30-Jun-06	-15.78
31-Jan-07	-11.27	31-Jan-07	-11.22	31-Jan-07	-11.09	15-Jul-06	-10.63
15-Feb-07	-9.73	15-Feb-07	-9.99	15-Feb-07	-9.62	31-Jul-06	-10.23
1-Mar-07	-11.64	1-Mar-07	-10.97	1-Mar-07	-10.77	15-Aug-06	-7.33
16-Mar-07	-11.41	16-Mar-07	-11.05	16-Mar-07	-11.05	30-Aug-06	-8.94
30-Mar-07	-11.56	30-Mar-07	-11.41	30-Mar-07	-11.25	15-Sep-06	-8.19
16-Apr-07	-11.41	16-Apr-07	-11.49	16-Apr-07	-11.83	30-Sep-06	-10.20
1-May-07	-12.01	1-May-07	-12.00	1-May-07	-11.96	15-Oct-06	-15.62
15-May-07	-11.80	15-May-07	-11.75	15-May-07	-11.91	31-Oct-06	-13.54
30-May-07	-12.78	30-May-07	-12.92	30-May-07	-13.29	15-Nov-06	-15.21
						30-Nov-06	-18.56
						15-Dec-06	-13.99
						30-Dec-06	-10.48
						15-Jan-07	-5.51
						31-Jan-07	-7.16
						15-Feb-07	-3.15
						1-Mar-07	-4.45
						16-Mar-07	-6.93
						30-Mar-07	-9.45
						16-Apr-07	-15.18
						1-May-07	-16.52
						15-May-07	-15.59
						30-May-07	-14.46

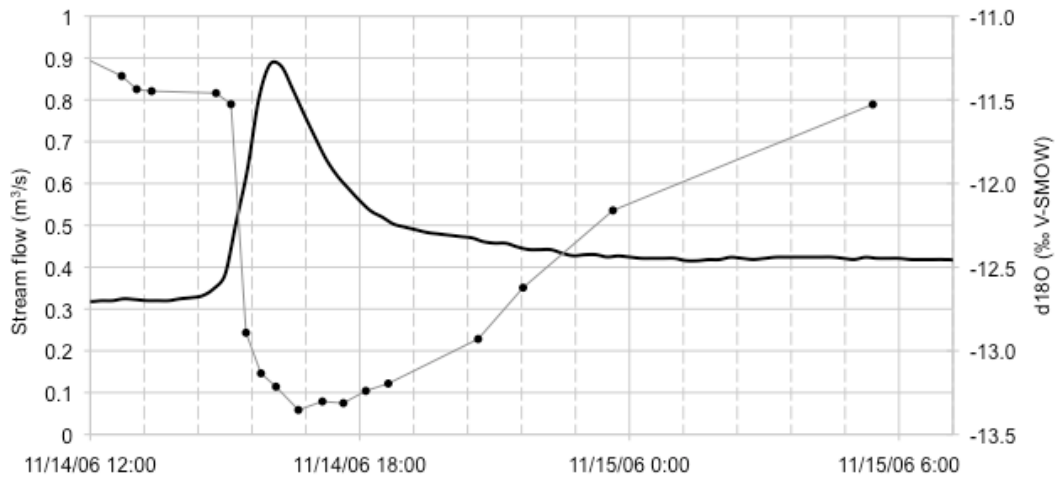
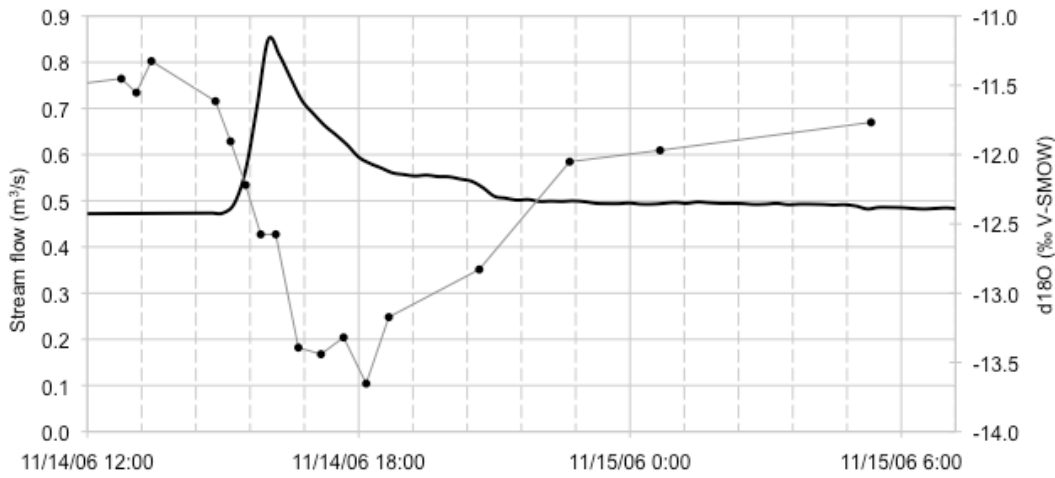
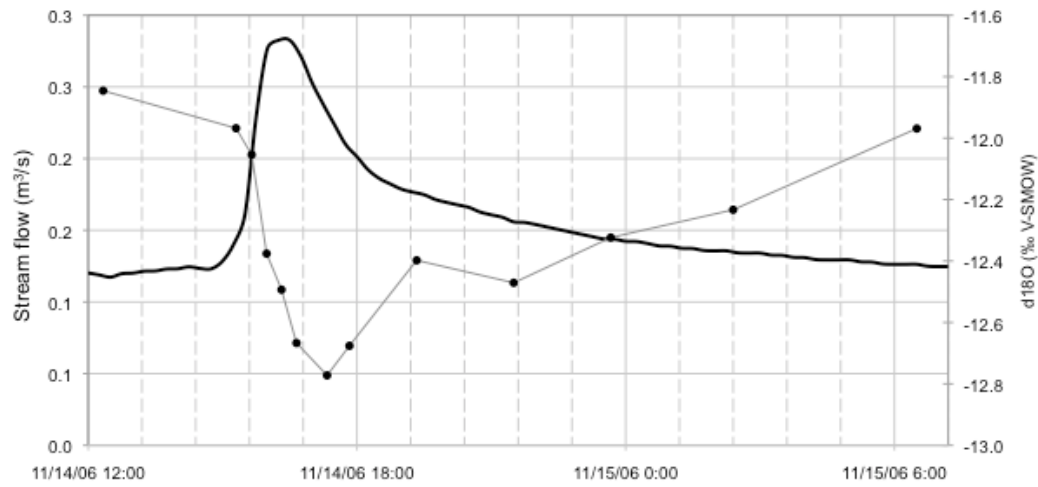


Figure 2. Stream discharge and stream isotope signal for event 2 for B1 (top), B2 (center) and BB (bottom).

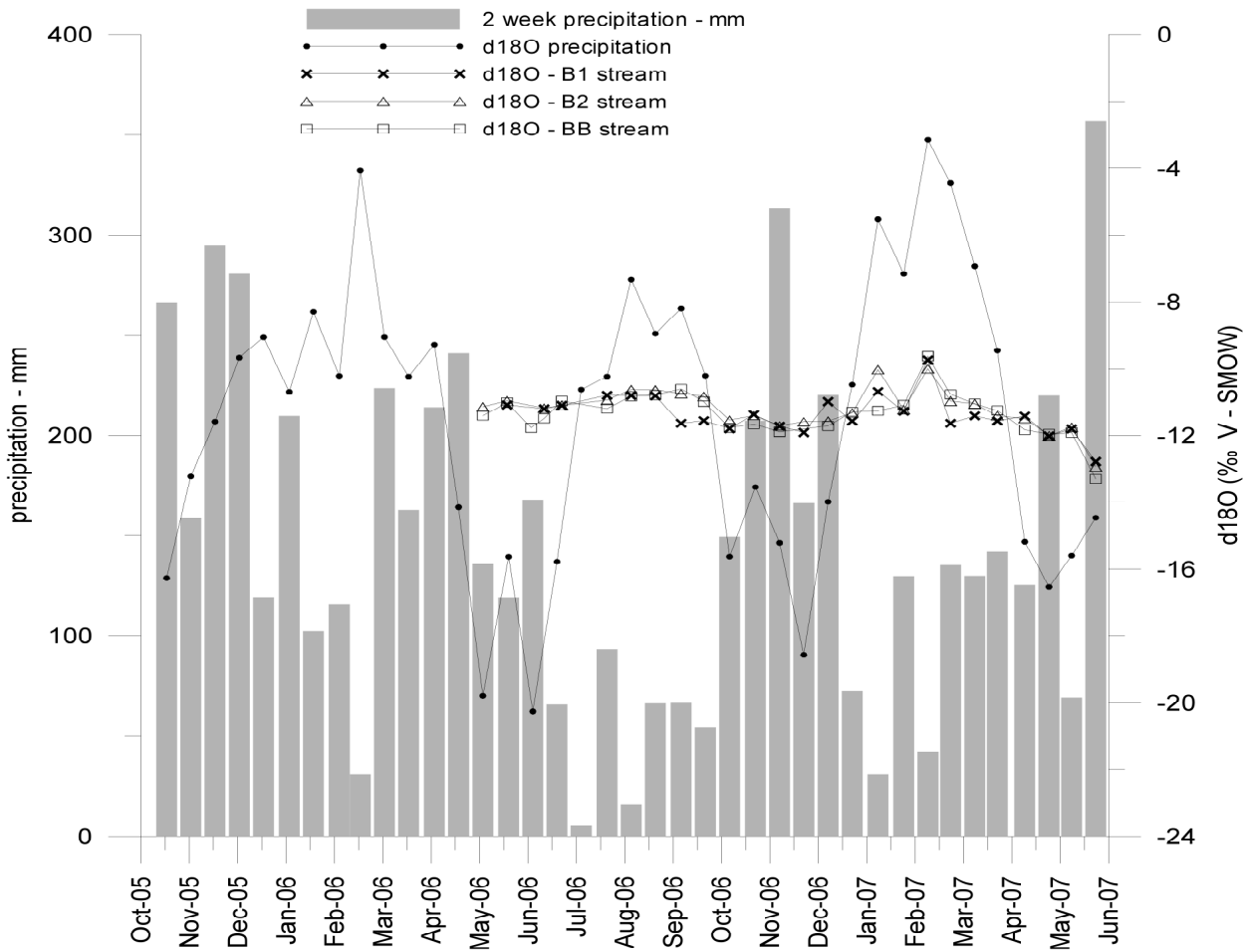


Figure 3. Isotopic signal in precipitation and streams compared with the amount of precipitation for 2-week periods.

Also I find both the legend and figure text too minimalistic. The reader should be able to read the figure texts as standalone. As it is now you have to know all abbreviations to understand what the figure is about. And the axis should also be somewhat self-explanatory.

We will change this according to the suggestion.

In the use of isotope hydrograph separation (IHS) methods it is important to investigate the result uncertainty. There are several methods to do that (for example the one presented by Genereux, D., Quantifying uncertainty in tracer-based hydrograph separations. *Water Resour. Res.*, 34, 915-919, 1998). As the paper stands now the authors go into great depth to explain variability in the event/pre-event fraction without knowing if the pre-event water component is statistically different between sites.

Detailed uncertainty propagation as for example proposed by Genereux (1998) cannot be applied to this method, since it is a model that is optimized to the observations of runoff and isotopic signal. The only possible method to

investigate uncertainty is MC simulations to assess parameter uncertainty, but also effects of pre-event water component uncertainty. This could certainly be done, but would in our opinion add a complete new story line to the paper. We wanted to focus in this paper on combining event based hydrograph separation with baseflow transit time modeling to derive a complete TTD. If we would add uncertainty methods we believe that the main points are being watered down. However, we have already started with a new study to implement uncertainty estimation to this approach and we hope to publish this in near future.

Baseflow samples (pre-event water) for the analyzed events are not different between sites as can be seen in the following table.

	B1S	B2S	BBS
Mean	-11.3613	-11.2084	-11.3345
Median	-11.4114	-11.2023	-11.2550
Standard dev	0.5851	0.6191	0.6795

In the paper a large emphasis is placed on the fact that there is a difference between the three catchments. I think that authors could make a better attempt to justify this finding (see also the uncertainty above). Below are a few questions that come to mind.

1. There is a large difference in precipitation amount between the three different catchment despite the fact that they are adjacent (table 2). How does the fact that the precipitation at B1 and B2 are up to 50% higher compared to BB affect the pre-event water fraction calculation? And if the spatial variability between the three adjacent catchments is so large how has this variability in the precipitation been account for. Have any spatial interpolation been done?

Differences in precipitation between the three catchments were accounted for as the model was run separately with each data set for each catchment, since precipitation was measured separately in each catchment. It was then assumed that precipitation is homogeneous in each catchment. No geographical interpolation was done. The typical convective precipitation in this region is spatially very heterogeneous. Therefore, are dense precipitation network was set-up to account for varying precipitation input in each catchment.

2. The authors suggest that the 6% wetlands are the main cause of the large pre-event fraction. If this in fact is true still after all uncertainty been included, how reasonable is this? I would like to see a more thorough discussion to whether this small contributing area can affect the results in such a profound way. Are there no alternative reasons for why BB is responding differently?

This is a valid point. All three catchments have similar topography, soils and geology; catchments BB and B2 have similar land use (grassland dominated) with the exception of a greater proportion of wetlands in BB. Catchment BB seems to produce larger pre-event water, which could be linked to the presence of wetlands. While the area of wetlands is small, discharge coefficients at both the wetland and catchment scales (Roa-García, 2009) are higher for BB for large events suggesting a piston flow effect and supporting the larger pre-event water contribution to stream discharge with the presence of wetlands. Since we cannot absolutely prove this statement, we will discuss this in more detail.

One page 8, line 28-30 it is stated that the input data was extended by correlating the observed isotopic data to the nearest climate station. No such data comparison is presented. A comparison of both precipitation amount, timing and isotopic data is absolutely needed.

Figure 3 above shows the comparison between precipitation amount and isotopic composition for the present study. For the long term analysis, the isotopic composition data of precipitation was paired with the long term precipitation data of the closest GNIP stations (Pereira and Bogota). The correlations of the monthly average of precipitation for the period 1971 - 2007 of this climate station with the precipitation of the present study for the

years 2005 and 2006 was of 0.9 and 0.8 and the correlation of the overlapping monthly isotope ^{18}O values were $r^2=0.77$. We will add this information to the revised paper

Stream flow is another important factor that is used in this study. There is no information on what type of constructions that has been used (Natural sections, weirs, flumes). There is also no info on how well the stage/Q relationship worked. Analytical method: It is not important where the analyses have been conducted but rather what type of instrumentation that was used.

A natural cross-section was used in each of the streams to do the flow measurements with an OTT flow meter. 62, 44 and 50 measurements were taken for B1, B2 and BB respectively. Stage/Q discharge relationships were obtained as equations of the form:

$Q = k (h - h_0)^a$ using solver in excel and obtaining the graphs that were included in appendix 8 of my PhD thesis, which can be access through: <http://hdl.handle.net/2429/7703>

We will ad this information as well as the instrumentation for the isotope analysis in the revised manuscript.

Smaller comments

1. Why aren't the same events used for all three catchments (see table 2). This makes the entire comparison difficult.

The reason for this was that only events with complete data sets were used. Unfortunately not for all events sampled it was possible to obtain full data sets for all streams.

2. The headings in table two need better explanation.

Meas. RC = Measured run-off coefficient
Simul. RC = Simulated run-off coefficient
Q effic. = Q efficiency
C effic. = C efficiency
 $T_f(h)$ = Transit time of fast reservoir
 $T_s(h)$ = Transit time of fast reservoir
 $\Phi (-)$ = Portion of fast reservoir

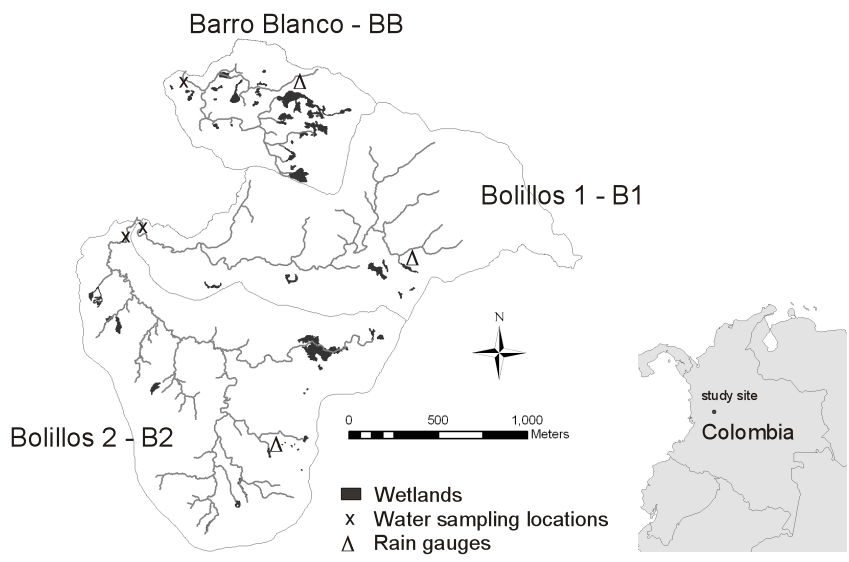
We will add this as a footnote to the table.

3. Table 1. Have you measured catchment size and catchment characteristics to one decimal point of a hectare? If so please provide an explanation of how this was conducted.

Field analysis was done using a 1 meter resolution image and the scale of the map generated was 1:5,000. We due to the uncertainty, we will provide the catchment size in the revised MS only to an accuracy to 1 hectare.

4. Fig 1. It would be beneficial if the precipitation stations are shown in the figure

We will do this and for the first information, the precipitation stations are included in the provided map:



5. Check your spelling of Kirchner. Some different ways are used.

Will be Corrected.