

Dear reviewers and editors,

Thank you for all the comments We have worked to improve the manuscript based on these suggestions and feel that the new paper has improved to address many of these concerns. A consistent comment was on the absence of several material measurements for the substrates. Unfortunately, because we no longer have access to these materials, we cannot make these measurements. We do not believe having this information would alter our results or interpretations of our results, but agree that in the future it would be good to have these data for comparisons with other studies. We have tried to address this concern by providing additional information as well as citations for data sheets from the material manufacturers. We have also tried to ensure that the that there was sufficient information in the paper on preparation of the substrate and experimental parameters such that the study could be repeated by future researchers. In addition, we have addressed two terminology concerns including the use of the term permanent gully rather than ravine and the term fine grained rather than mud.

We have also addressed more substantive comments regarding if we reached the second stage of gully evolution and how our results compare with other studies. To address these, we have modified figure 5 significantly and added to our discussion to incorporate other comparable research. We feel this has clarified how our experiments fit into the broader discussion of gully evolution.

Below we have included detailed responses to all reviews as well as the marked manuscript.

Thank you for your contributions to our manuscript.

Sincerely,

Stephanie S. Day

Comments on Impacts of Changing Hydrology on Ravine Growth: Experimental Results Hydrol. Earth Syst. Sci. Discuss.,  
<https://doi.org/10.5194/hess-2017-567>

Dear authors, dear reviewers, dear editors,

I read the experiments with interest. I consider it as an interesting contribution to erosion science. I have a main comment to  
5 assess about the interpretation. The total sediment removal volume ( $V_s$ ) is shown to be not dependent of the flow rate  
(discharge) (fig 5a). This implies the presented linear relation between the mean water discharge and the mean sediment  
discharge (fig 5b), as the total volume of water ( $V_w$ ) is constant, and the total experiment duration ( $T$ ) is used to calculate both  
sediment discharge ( $Q_s$ ) and water discharge ( $Q_w$ ):  $Q_s = V_s/T$  and  $Q_w = V_w/T$ .

It is also presented that the sediment discharge is not constant during the experiment, at the beginning of each experiment the  
10 sediment discharge is high and increases to reach a maximum during the ravine formation, then decreasing to get a significantly  
lower value (fig 4 and 5). If the water discharge increases during the experiment, a second peak of sediment discharge is  
observed following the liquid discharge increase. This is clearly shown on the graphs and explained in the text.

For the longest runs (ie, low water discharge as the water volume is constant in the experiment design) the sediment flux at the  
end of the experiment seems to have reached a relatively constant value, drastically lower as during the ravine formation (run  
15 6 and first stage of run 11 for example). Thus the total removal volume would roughly corresponds to the volume exported  
during the ravine formation, with a negligible contribution of the flux existing during a following relatively steady state. Indeed  
if the experiments would be conducted with a higher volume of water delivered at the same discharges, we could expect a  
quite unchanged removal volume.

Thus it seems confusing to present measured erosion as solid discharge (averaged during the experiment time) and it would be  
20 more clear to present it as total removal volume (both in the graph and in the text).

We could consider a first stage during which the ravine forms and adjusts to the constant discharge, with a removal volume  
not dependent on the discharge, and a second stage where the ravine is in steady state with this discharge. During ravine  
formation and adjustment to the discharge, the eroded volume would not be dependent on the discharge. During the second  
stage, the solid discharge is drastically lower and could follow the dependence between solid and liquid discharges known in  
25 river systems.

As a second sediment load peak is observed when the discharge is increased (in the experiment conducted with larger water  
volume – runs 10-12 and 18-20), the total eroded load in a ravine could be function of water discharge fluctuation and  
temporarily. Note that the total eroded load is higher for experiments conducted with increasing water discharge (and higher  
water volume) (figure 3a), which could support this hypothesis. Nevertheless, in those experiments the final steady state (if  
30 existing) has not been reached (fig 5 c and 5d) mitigating any interpretation.

Considering the previous comments, I put into question the discussion about the independence between liquid discharge and  
sediment discharge, it also put into question part of the discussion on the implication of the presented study results for natural  
systems.

Finally I assess some specific comments: As on the precise measurement, the sediment flux is not null at the beginning of the experiment (figure 4), there are no reason to link the first point of the data sets to figure 5 to the origin. Moreover, erosion may begin as soon as the notch outlet is open, with no tend to a null flux when the time from the opening tends to zero.

5 Some modification I propose in the conclusion:

paragraph 1 (p.11 l. 2-5) The experiments here suggest that water volume, rather than discharge, [-(remove) controls the total volume of erosion in ravines because sediment discharge rates are linearly related to water discharge rates,] [(+add in place) controls the total volume of erosion during the ravine formation.] This result holds true for both transport-limited and detachment-limited systems.

10 paragraph 2 (p.11 l. 5-7) As long as slope is a free parameter in these rapidly-evolving systems, [-(remove) each] [(+add in place) changes in] flow rate can be accommodated through [-(remove) changes] [(+add in place) an adjustment] in both cross-sectional and longitudinal channel geometry. Wider channels were typically shorter and thus steeper.

paragraph 3 (p.11 l. 8). “well known” is an unnecessary precision, I would delete it. I hope those comments could help to improve this article and make a great publication.

15 Yours sincerely, Dr Valentin Wendling

Thank you, Dr. Wendling, for this thoughtful and thought-provoking comment. We had considered this issue before, but this got us thinking of better ways to look at the data, resulting in significant modification of figure 5. The figure now shows the sum percent of the sediment removed through time, resulting in a figure that more clearly shows changes to sediment discharge through time. We would expect that if we were capturing the second stage of ravine evolution where sediment discharge decreases significantly we would see a non-linear trend, yet this is only seen in a few of the experimental runs. These runs correspond with those runs where the channel interacted with the basin walls. By modifying this figure, we were able to more clearly see that we do not in fact capture the second stage of ravine evolution with a low discharge regime as we originally believed, with a few exceptions. This finding may suggest that the result we have found is only true in the first high discharge stage of ravine evolution. This is consistent with our data with the exception of runs 6 and 11 where there was a peak captured and a later decrease in sediment discharge. These runs were consistent in the total volume of sediment removed for the 190 litres, which suggests that perhaps the volume sediment discharge relationship is correct, yet more study would be required to identify this relationship over both stages of ravine evolution.

30 We have modified the discussion and conclusion to reflect these changes to our thinking in how our results fit into the two stage ravine growth model.

We have also edited the manuscript to reflect all proposed modifications to the conclusion.

Summary: The manuscript shares details of an experimental study of ravine growth using a saturated substrate and regulated overland flow water volumes. Based on the experimental design, the authors make a case for channel width defined through hydraulic geometry. Sediment transport is modeled in the usual case, with the exception of varying slope, which the authors explain accounts for the linear nature of sediment flux.

Review: There are several aspects of the study that should be reported that are absent. While the study is very intriguing, an overall lack of experimental methods limits the utility of the results and impact the vitality of the interpretations.

First, simply listing that you used a topographic scanner provides limited information on the applicability of DEMs obtained during overland flow. Perhaps more applicable to the “mud” samples, how exactly was the bed position determined for slope calculations during overland flow? If the entire sample had a sheet flow, then how were elevations determined beneath the flow? Was flow stopped so topography could be determined? Also, please clarify the gridding choice of 2 x 2.5 cm.

Second, there should be more information concerning the soils and their preparation. “Mud” is extremely generic. And, did anyone look at the bulk density of these samples? Water content and bulk density have an impact on erodibility and, therefore, an impact on the outcome of the experiment. Please be explicit concerning the sample, especially how the sample was prepared.

Also, what was the initial slope of the samples?

Third, records of this type are not unique, as many have reported similar findings (not referenced). And, why allow slope to vary in your sediment transport model but not in your widening model? Also, comparisons made between rainfall derived erosion and overland flow (only) erosion are not comparable. Why then use Istanbuluoglu for comparisons? Volume is the only comparable term in the two studies, i.e. overland flow volume (current work) and storm volume (past).

As an opinion for the work, I believe that the experimenters neglected important issues of the study in this report. I do not think that the interpretations are incorrect but are skewed to the experiment. The interpretations are eloquent and the overall presentation is very well positioned. However, I regret that, without pertinent information concerning the systems employed and material used, the manuscript should be sent back to the authors for major revision. I will be happy to review another version.

Thank You, Dr. Wells, for your comments, we have made significant modification to our manuscript to reflect your suggestions, and feel that it has been greatly improved.

Based on your first comment, we have worked to clarify much of our methodology per your suggestion. The laser scanner we used was developed in house at the St. Anthony Falls Laboratory and therefore there is little published information about it.

We provided more details about the scanner in page 4 lines 29-31. You also noted the unusual gridding of the scanner. This is a result of the topographic laser scanner system built for these basins. There were two laser scanners that each collected points at 2 cm intervals moving across the basin, each of which were spaced 2.5 cm apart and moved 5 cm after completing a single row of data. The scanner uses a red laser and therefore the flow was indeed stopped to make measurements.

Based on your second comment, information about the substrate was also clarified. The term “mud” was replaced with “fine grained” throughout the text, to more precisely describe the substrate. Unfortunately, we did not collect data regarding the bulk density and water content of each bed preparation and therefore we could not add these data to the text. This would be useful information to record in future studies, and may explain some of the variation we saw, yet we might expect that the variation among the substrate preparations would also reflect the variation within a single substrate, making sampling difficult. Throughout each of our experiments we worked to be as consistent as possible including creating an initially flat bed and vertical knickpoint, yet variability certainly exists even in these controlled settings. This variability is important to note as it is likely a fraction of the variability present in the natural systems we are working to better understand.

Based on your third comment, we have added additional references to our text and modified our discussion to include some additional studies. Regarding your comments on the widening model, we tested the width equation from Wells et al., 2013 that does include slope, but it didn’t fit our data as well as the Leopold and Maddock hydraulic geometry equation. A short description about this is included in the discussion section of the paper. We appreciate your comment on the variation in process between rainfall and overland flow, yet in a saturated substrate the erosion should be comparable as no water will infiltrate the subsurface. While rain splash may contribute to detachment this is generally not significant. Finally, we have kept our discussion of the Istanbuluoglu paper, because it focuses on volume, which is the focus of this study, and it represents what we anticipated our results to be. Moreover, this paper has a careful discussion of processes observed, and the variation between processes is critical to understanding why our results vary. We did include some additional discussion in page 10 lines 1-10 to reflect this variation in headcut propagation process.

This paper deals with the important problem of gully or ravine growth. The paper has its merits as it presents a considerable amount of experimental data (20 experiments in total) using two different substrates and different hydrology settings. Some interesting problems such as width – discharge relation and modeling sediment transport are tackled. However, in its present form it needs still a bit of work. The results, presentation of the results and analysis is quite confusing. I believe the results are very interesting, but they need to be “fleshed out” considerably before this paper can be published.

Main comments

Minor comments

Thank you for your comments on our manuscript. We have made significant modification to the text to reflect your suggestions, and feel that the paper has been greatly improved. Below we have responded to each of your individual comments. -The introduction gives a very good overview of the problem and state of the art. -The article claims to be studying ravines or permanent gullies. Yet this experiment is clearly tailored at measuring what happens during a newly forming incision, that erodes from scratch. I believe the results would be different if erosion would be analysed in an existing channel (or existing permanent gully). These might well respond to changes in discharge.

- Our results are focused on the development or growth of a large permanent gully or ravine where a steep knickpoint is propagating up onto a flat terrain, they would certainly be different for an existing channel.

-The choice and description of materials is crucial and should be better explained. “Mud” is not an objective description as far as I know. The 96 micrometer substrate classifies as sand following objective classification systems (0.05 – 2 mm) and the finer one as silt.

- The term “mud” has been replaced with “fine grained” throughout. The materials were selected based on what was available, yet they were effective at capturing two end members of a system.

What are the indications for cohesion and that the finer substrate really acts as detachment limited? What is the critical shear stress of these materials? Other properties such as angle of repose will also greatly influence wall stability and could be useful to include.

- The cohesive substrate was determined to be detachment limited by modeling the ravine growth using detachment limited equations. It is described early as detachment limited which is supported later in the results and discussion sections. This has been further clarified in the text. In addition, the fine grained substrate forms steep vertical walls, which add qualitative support to the idea that the substrate is cohesive and is likely to behave as detachment limited. We agree that these other properties may be useful, but they were not measured in the experiments. In future work this should be considered.

-The experimental setup strikes me as odd to investigate ravine erosion/concentrated flow erosion. Why was a flat bed used? This way the flow does not concentrate until the outlet? From the only picture that is included of the experiments (Figure 1) it seems like you have multiple gully/ravine heads in the mud substrate. What is the effect of this on your results?

- The experiment was originally designed to examine the impacts of hydrology changes on flat agricultural landscapes. We believe that the experiments are interesting without representing a specific case study, so the field area that was the impetus for this study was left out. By only forcing the flow to concentrate at the outlet we are able to investigate the process of head cutting, which is a dominant mechanism for ravine growth.

-The presence of several knickpoints in the mud case seems to indicate the presence of plunge pools. These could potentially be very important yet I am missing an explanation on this. See for example results by Govers et al. Earth Science Reviews 2007.

- In some cases there was a small secondary gully head that formed, yet a typically there was a larger head that was the most dominant. These are an excellent reminder of the natural complexity in a system. Here while we tried to control the system closely, there was always quite a bit natural variability. We have included a brief description of plunge pools in our discussion. We have elements of plunge pools in our system, yet are missing other elements, such as significant undercutting and blocky failures.

-The presentation of experimental results is quite confusing. The authors use a mix of “water delivery rate”, flow rate and discharge (figure 3), sediment volume removed versus mass (it should be easy to convert the first into solid discharge rates using the bulk density of the sediment) etc. Also a mixture of units is used (m<sup>3</sup> in the text versus cm<sup>3</sup> in figure 3)

- Discharge and m<sup>3</sup> is now being used throughout. The volume vs mass is a result of each graph being presented in the units the data were collected in. Bulk density was not measured for each experiment and therefore the conversion cannot be made.

-It is not surprising to me that no good relation can be found with discharge. Previous studies, mentioned in the introduction, clearly indicate that gullies grow fast in early stages and then reach a more stable state. Figure 4 and 5 clearly shows this as sediment flux peaks in the beginning and then declines.

- While other studies do find a rapid early channel evolution followed by a stable state, they do not explore how discharge impacts that period. We would argue that our data suggest that the length of the rapid growth phase may be dependent on the flow rate. It is also worth noting that it isn't clear from our data that all channels reached that stable state, only in our lowest discharge case did the channel erosion approach zero, in some experiments that sediment discharge continued to increase or was stable throughout the experiment. It might be interesting to extend the experiments to lower volumes of water, I am inclined to believe that the results would be similar.

-The text includes a lot of statements that are not backed up by data. For example, p.6 lines 11-12: “channels in the sand erode due to head cut propagation as well as lateral channel migration”. No picture or DEM is included however comparing the results and evolution in both substrates so there is no way to check this. The only available figure 6 is difficult to compare and raises further questions. I recommend to align this graphs in the same direction (flow direction for example, with the outlet facing up). In the mud, two gully heads have formed. This confirms my point made earlier about the experimental setup. How was this handled in the data analysis? As flow splits, how was this modeled? Is the measured channel width the sum of both channels? could this explain why you see no increase in width with increase of discharge for the mud case. See papers by Torri et al. on using channel junctions of rills to model width downstream (10.1016/j.geomorph.2005.11.010).

- The image in figure six shows some lateral channel migration because the channel eroded along the entire length and was made wider, but did so only on one side. All images will be made available in a supplement which will make this clearer for other experiments as well so the statement is not simply an observation, but is rather backed by additional data.
  - The graphs have been aligned the same direction.
  - Channel width was measured downstream of the confluence between the multiple channels. This was clarified in the text. Channels did widen as discharge was increased, they simply didn't widen downstream of the newly eroded areas. We might expect that given enough time to fully adjust to the new discharge that the downstream reaches of the gully would have also widened.
- Another example are the statements about slope that are made in the text, yet no discussion is given on the slope results presented in table 2. -In paragraph 3.2 the authors are mixing results and materials and methods or model description. I believe these equations should go in materials and methods.
- The methods section focuses on the methodology of the experiment to answer our guiding question for this research. Additional information is provided as analysis in the results and analysis section of the paper. As these equations focus on additional analysis rather than the methods of answering the overall guiding question they are not appropriate for that section.
- p8 line 5 "our sediments were easily eroded" Isn't this contradictory to claiming the mud case is detachment limited?
- Once detached the sediments were easily removed from the system
- What is the use of describing your experimental conditions in a table if you then cite flow rates etc. in every figure (example fig5)?
- The graphs were modified to use run name rather than indicate flow rate in the legend.
- p.9 lines 1-4. This is an interesting conclusion. I think it merits some expansion, which comes after line 25. I think this would be clearer if the two paragraphs that are in between were moved. This width-discharge relation is used commonly in gully erosion models but lacks differentiation according to material type as far as I know. Did you measure top width or bottom width? I could not deduct this from the materials and methods. In many field studies bottom width was measured.
- The paragraphs mentioned were shifted.
  - Channel top width was measured, yet in our substrates bottom width is essentially equal to top width. In the fine grained substrate this was a result of the sediment's cohesion which formed nearly vertical walls. In the sand substrate this is a result of the banks being very low and therefore the bottom and top were impossible to differentiate.
- Why not use the more common term gully erosion in stead of ravine erosion? (2844 terms in WoS versus 212 results)
- We have replaced the term ravine with permanent gully throughout the manuscript.
- if SI units are not deemed illustrative, please use at least standard abbreviations throughout the text for example p5line 1: ml/s figure 2 time (min) not (m) -table 1. Why call this flow? Flow rate or discharge.



- Abbreviations have been standardized in figures and text.

-The quality of the figures is not very high and looks like they have been done using a standard spreadsheet. Please improve using a more professional graphing programme (R, sigmaplot, grapher, whatever,. . .).

- Thank you for your feedback

5 -p.6 lines 1-2 and assuming that you have Dunnean runoff generation as you have in your experiments. With Hortonian overland flow generation, the whole situation changes.

- Thank you

-p.5 line 28. Explain meaning of the threshold line. -p7 line 2 Nachtergaele -figure 7. Please indicate the exact values used for

10 b. 0.4 or 0.39 (text??). What is the value in case a.

- The values reported for b in the text and on the figure (0.39 for the sand and 0.27 for the fine grained substrate) are the values that gave the best fit for our data. These are slightly lower than those found for gullies and ravines, yet are within the range for bedrock and alluvial streams.

15 • Because the values of a are not typically reported since this is simply a scaling factor we didn't include that in the text. The values we got for a were 16.8 in the sand channel and 8.5 in the fine grained substrate.

# Impacts of Changing Hydrology on ~~Ravine-Permanent Gully~~ Growth: Experimental Results

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**Abstract.** ~~Ravines-Permanent gullies~~ grow through head cut propagation in response to overland flow coupled with incision and widening in the channel bottom leading to hillslope failures.— Altered hydrology can impact the rate at which ~~ravines~~ ~~permanent gullies~~ grow by changing head-cut propagation, channel incision, and channel widening rates. Using a set of small physical experiments, we tested how changing overland flow rates and flow volumes alter the total volume of erosion and resulting ~~ravine-gully~~ morphology.— ~~Ravines-Permanent gullies~~ were ~~modeled~~~~modelled~~ as both detachment-limited and transport-limited systems, using two different substrates with varying cohesion.— In both cases, the erosion rate varied linearly with water discharge, such that the volume of sediment eroded was a function not of flow rate, but of total water volume.— This implies that efforts to reduce peak flow rates alone without addressing flow volumes entering ~~ravine-gully~~ systems may not reduce erosion. The documented response in these experiments is not typical when compared to larger pre-existing channels where higher flow rates result in greater erosion through non-linear relationships between water discharge and sediment discharge.— ~~Ravines-Permanent gullies~~ do not respond like pre-existing channels because channel slope remains a free parameter and can adjust relatively quickly in response to changing flows.

## 1 Introduction

~~Ravines-Permanent gullies~~ are first-order, deeply-incised, ephemeral streams with steep head cuts.— Also known as ~~permanent gullies~~~~ravines~~ (Poesen et al. 2003), ~~ravines-permanent gullies~~ form part of a continuum between ephemeral gullies and perennial channels. ~~Ravines-Permanent gullies~~ can be highly erosive, accounting for 10-94% of the total sediment yield in a watershed (Poesen et al., 2003, and references therein).— ~~Ravines-Gullies~~ pose a hazard to infrastructure, agricultural productivity, and human safety through rapid propagation of head-cuts in both rural and urban environments; and they contribute to the rapid transport of sediment and nutrients from the uplands to mainstem channels (Bull and Kirkby, 2002; Gran et al., 2011; Poesen et al., 2003).

~~Ravines-Permanent gullies~~ initiate in places where concentrated flow can erode and move sediment (Mosley 1974; Merritt 1984; Bennett et al., 2000; Bryan, 1990; Knapen and Poesen 2010).— These topographic lows may be subtle, but where they

connect with incised river valleys, steep knickpoints can rapidly form and propagate as head cuts. ~~Ravine-Gully~~ head cut propagation occurs primarily by groundwater sapping or piping, overland flow, or a combination of these processes. Groundwater sapping typically forms ~~amphitheater~~~~amphitheatre~~-type headcuts (Hinds, 1925; Howard, 1988; Lamb et al., 2006) which propagate as the soil is weakened through saturation at the water table causing failure ~~to-in~~ the sediment above (Dunne, 1990).—Where groundwater follows concentrated flow paths, piping can trigger head cut initiation and drive head cut retreat (Fox and Wilson, 2010; Nichols et al., 2017; Wilson, 2009; 2011).—Overland flow erosion can also cause head cut propagation in multiple ways including granular erosion and slab failure.—Slab failure relies on the constant wetting and drying experienced at the headcut between events.—Tension cracks form as the soil dries, and during wet times water flows into these cracks dislodging the slab (Dietrich and Dunne 1993; Istanbuluoglu et al., 2005).—Another form of slab failure occurs in layered substrate where a lower highly erosive layer is scoured away leaving the upper resistant layer overhanging until it eventually breaks away (Chu-Agor et al., 2008; Holland and Pickup, 1976; Robinson and Hanson, 1994; Stein and La Tray, 2002). In both of these slab failure mechanisms, head cut retreat temporarily ceases after slab failure with the slab protecting the head cut until the slab itself is eroded away (Robinson and Hanson, 1994; Istanbuluoglu et al., 2005). Granular erosion is driven by high shear stress at steep head cut slopes and can be enhanced through focused erosion of plunge pools and impinging jet scour (Alonso et al., 2002; Flores-Cervantes et al., 2006).—The focus in this paper is on ~~ravines-permanent gullies~~ that grow as a result of granular sediment transport in a homogeneous substrate driven primarily by overland flow.

~~Ravine-Permanent gully~~ initiation and growth have been found to be a function of sediment texture and erodibility, slope, land-use, vegetation cover, soil moisture, headcut size, climate, and hydrology (Ambers et al., 2006; Chiverrell et al., 2007; Flores-Cervantes et al., 2006; Istanbuluoglu et al., 2005; Knapen et al., 2007; Nachtergaele et al., 2001; Poesen et al., 2003, 2011; Stankoviansky, 2003; Vandekerckhove et al., 2000; Vanwalleghe et al., 2003, 2005), but understanding the relative importance of each factor remains a challenge.—Of the many variables impacting ~~ravine-gully~~ erosion, the two humans most readily impact are hydrology and land cover.—Here the focus is on ~~ravine-gully~~ response to changes in hydrology.

Hydrology is altered in agricultural areas through complex changes to the volume and/or rate at which water enters ~~ravine permanent gully~~ networks as overland flow, groundwater flow, or pipe flow. Agricultural development can involve direct modification of hydrology in the form of irrigation in dry climates and sandy soils or ~~artificial~~ drainage in wetter climates and less permeable soils.—While irrigation has little impact on overland flow due to transpiration (Haddeland et al., 2005), combined changes to land cover and drainage associated with conversion from native vegetation to row-crop agriculture tend to increase the rate and volume of water entering a stream network (Blann et al., 2009; Robinson and Rycroft, 1999; van der Ploeg et al., 1999; Wiskow and van der Ploeg, 2003). Following harvest, fields are left bare for a portion of the year (1-6 months), which can lower evapotranspiration and increase volume of overland flow, particularly if the ground is frozen and infiltration cannot occur (Pierson et al., 2007). In addition, the removal of roughness elements when fields are bare can increase

rates of overland flow entering ravines-gullies (Abrahams and Parsons, 1991; Einstein and Barbarossa 1951; Eitel et al., 2011; Farres, 1978; Römkens and Wang, 1987).

Although changes to hydrology in urban areas are different from those in agricultural areas, the impacts on ravinepermanent gully hydrology can be similar, with increased impervious surface area and rerouting of water through infrastructure leading to more direct hydrologic connections between uplands and ravinesgullies. Although the presence of storm sewers and water retention ponds may mitigate the effect of increased impervious area, many urban areas see an increase in overland flow rates and the overall volume of overland flow (Arnold and Gibbons, 1996; Espey et al., 1965; Paul and Meyer, 2001; Seaburn 1969). Increased gullying is particularly of concern in urban areas with rapid population growth, intense rainfall, and infrastructure that promotes flow concentration into erodible areas (Adediji et al., 2013; Ebisemiju, 1989).

Ravines-Permanent gullies evolve over shorter time scales than larger pre-existing channels. Previous numerical and physical experiments of ravine-gully evolution identified two stages to ravine-or-gully growth: an early stage of rapid evolution and a later stage of growth within a more static form (Parker, 1977; Kosov et al., 1978; Parker and Schumm, 1982; Sidorchuk, 1999; Bennett et al., 2000). During this early phase, the ravinesgullies should be more responsive to changes in hydrology as both channel cross-sectional geometry and longitudinal profile geometry are more adaptable. During the latter phase, changes in hydrology would be accommodated through erosion focused on head-cuts at the channel tips and channel incision and widening with ensuing adjustments to side slopes (Sidorchuk, 1999; 2006).

Because anthropogenic alterations to the landscape involve both changes in flow rate and volume, we chose to investigate those two aspects of hydrologic change using a physical experimental basin. Two different experimental substrates were used to measure the effects of changing flow rates on both detachment-limited and transport-limited systems. These two types of erosion represent a continuum, where the volume of sediment carried out of the system is controlled by the ability of the flow to dislodge sediment from the substrate vs. the ability of the flow to carry easily eroded sediment. Commonly “detachment-limited” is used to describe bedrock rivers, while “transport-limited” is used to describe alluvial rivers. Given that ravines permanent gullies are incisional systems and may be down-cutting through non-alluvial substrate, the detachment-limited model may be more appropriate for ravine-permanent gully systems than classic transport-limited models for alluvial systems.

Physical experiments, like the ones we discuss here, offer a setting where most variables can be controlled and time scales for channel evolution are greatly reduced. Moreover, using experiments allows us to make measurements at a high spatial and temporal density to ensure that much of the variability in the system is captured. Such experiments are not intended as scale models; rather, they are small systems in which scale-independent processes can be studied under controlled conditions (Paola et al., 2010). Here we utilize physical experiments of ravines-permanent gullies to focus on a basic question: how does changing

the rate of delivery of a fixed quantity of water change the total volume of sediment removed and the morphology of the resulting ~~ravine~~permanent gully?

## 2 Methods

We performed experiments at the St. Anthony Falls Laboratory at the University of Minnesota, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

- 5 These experiments tested how different overland flow rates affect erosion and ~~ravine~~permanent gully growth on a series of ~~ravines~~permanent gullies initiated through base level fall, a common feature of post-glacial landscapes in the Upper Midwest, USA (Belmont et al., 2011; Gran et al., 2013; Lenhart et al., 2013).— We represented a range of natural ~~permanent ravines~~ gullies using two different substrates.— These substrates varied in material and grain size with one representing a ~~more cohesive~~ detachment-limited system and the other a transport-limited system.— The fine-grained substrate was composed of 12  $\mu\text{m}$
- 10 ceramic spheres (~~Zeeospheres~~)—(i.e. ~~mud~~), with a density of ~~2.5 typical bulk nsg cm<sup>3</sup>~~ (~~reference the distributor's website Zeeospheres G series data sheet~~). ~~Tand~~ the natural cohesion of this substrate caused it to behave as a detachment-limited system, ~~as empirically shown in the results section of this paper~~.— The coarser substrate was composed of 96  $\mu\text{m}$  quartz sand ~~with a density of 2.65 g cm<sup>3</sup> (AGSCO technical data)typical bulk~~—;— This sand lacked cohesion and behaved as a transport-limited system.— The experimental basin size varied for each material type; the basin used with the ~~mud~~fine grained substrate
- 15 was 1 x 1 m, while the basin filled with the sand substrate was 2 x 4 m thus allowing room for the more rapid growth of the ~~ravines~~permanent gullies in the more easily erodible substrate.— For both substrates, water flowed out through a 76 mm wide notch at the downstream end of the basin (Fig. 1).— To initiate each run, we dropped the notch to 0.14 m below the surface of the substrate, thus creating a single abrupt base level drop.— During each run a knickpoint developed at this notch and propagated upstream, carving a deep ~~ravine~~permanent gully in the substrate.
- 20 To initialize each run, the substrate material was mixed with water and smoothed into the basin to create a flat bed. Experiments began with a ~~fully~~ saturated bed to ensure that water flowed over the surface rather than infiltrating into it.— We determined that the bed was at saturation and no longer over-saturated when there was no longer water on the surface of the sediment and water was no longer flowing out the downstream outlet.— We analysed the bed saturation by visual inspection rather than waiting a standard length of time because changes in humidity and temperature affected evaporation rates.
- 25 Beginning with a saturated substrate allowed us to assume that the net flow was relatively constant in the ~~cross-channel~~cross-channel direction and no water was lost to ~~saturating infiltration into dry the~~ sediment.

For each experimental run, water flowed over the uniform substrate as overland flow. We generated an even sheet flow by allowing water to flow over a broad crested weir as water was added to an upstream settling basin (Fig. 1).— We controlled the flow rate of the water entering the settling basin with a constant-head tank, which received water from a tank with a

30 predetermined volume of water (190 or 380 ~~liters~~litres). The flow rate was held constant through the entire run when only 190

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literslitres of water were used.— When 380 literslitres of water were used, the flow rate was held constant for the first 190 literslitres, then increased and held constant for the second 190 literslitres.— Flow rates varied from 4 to 311 ml./s<sup>lee</sup> in the fine grained mud substrate and 55 to 262 ml./s<sup>lee</sup> in the sand (Table 1; Fig. 2).

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We collected topographic data before, during, and after each experimental run using a fully automated topographic scanner developed by engineers at the St. Anthony Falls Laboratory.— The topographic scanner uses a standard laser that collects 2000 points per second in a gridded pattern. atData were collected with 2 x 2.5 cm point spacing and approximately 0.5 mm vertical resolution.— For each experiment, we collected 2-5 topographic scans per 190 literslitres of water.— The experiment was paused at these intervals to complete the scans; ensuring that no data were lost in areas where water was present.

Topographic data were gridded to form a Digital Elevation Model (DEM).— To determine the total volume of sediment removed during each experimental run, we subtracted the DEM of the last scan from the DEM created from the initial scan over the flat initial surface.— At each cell the vertical change was multiplied by the area of the cell to give a volume change.— The total volume change was summed for each experimental run.— We also calculated the volume of sediment eroded at intermediate scans to measure sediment flux over time.— Because these data only provide coarse temporal measurements of sediment flux, we collected-samplesampled sediment flux out of the experiment for 5 seconds every minute during experimental run 11 to measure sediment flux at higher time resolution.

We imported the DEMs into ArcGIS to measure channel width and slope;— using the profile tool in the 3D analyst toolbox. Channel width is defined as the distance between channel banks on a cross section. Where multiple channels formed the cross section was selected just below the confluence of these channels.— In the fine grained mud substrate, channel width was roughly equal to the valley width along the full channel length.— In the sand substrate, channels meandered, and therefore we measured channel width in the most upstream portion of the channel where migration had not yet occurred, and the valley width was equal to the channel width.— We also measured the channel length and used this measurement to approximate knickpoint retreat rate.— In both substrates we measured the channel length from the outlet to the break in slope at the flat upland surface. Slope was measured along the channel profile.— In the fine grained mud-substrate we measured channel slope three separate ways: along the bed, along the knickpoint, and the average channel slope along the complete channel, including both channel bed and knickpoint zones.— Where there was more than one knickpoint, we measured the bed slope and knickpoint slope for each section and averaged.— Only one slope measurement, the average channel slope, was made on channels formed in the sand

substrate, ~~because~~ knickpoints were less prominent. In both substrates, average channel slope is a function of channel length, because elevation change for each channel is the same.

### 3 Results and Analysis

These experiments show that the total eroded volume shows no consistent trend with the water delivery rate. For all 190 ~~liter~~litre experimental runs, the volume of sediment removed ranges from  $8.9 \times 10^{-3}$  –  $2.4 \times 10^{-2}$  m<sup>3</sup> with no clear trend (Fig. 3A). This result was the same for both the sand and the ~~fine grained mud~~ substrate. Similarly, there is no trend in the volume of sediment removed in the 380 ~~liter~~litre runs, yet the volume of eroded sediment is greater ( $2.8 \times 10^{-2}$  –  $3.9 \times 10^{-2}$  m<sup>3</sup>) than for the 190 ~~liter~~litre runs (Fig. 3). Put another way, the sediment discharge is linearly related to water discharge (Fig. 3B). For a natural system this implies that in a given storm event the amount of sediment eroded from a ~~ravine~~ permanent gully is proportional to the amount of precipitation rather than the storm intensity assuming flow rate generates shear stresses that surpass the critical shear stress of the sediment.

~~In experimental run F-11, in both substrates, the sediment discharge peaked early and rapidly decreased. This is especially visible where sediment discharge measurements were taken every minute of experimental run 11 (Fig. 4), but the This pattern is also apparent seen in several other experimental runs using the coarser resolution erosion data collected from the topographic scans, most prominently in run F-6 (Fig. 5). The experimental runs where this pattern was observed were also those where the channel interacted with a wall (see supplemental data). After a channel touches a wall it is no longer able to widen, and flow preferentially remains against that smooth surface. While it was observed that The erosional pattern was also qualitatively observed as the channels appeared to propagate most rapidly early in the experiment and then slow with each successive time interval, the scan data suggest that the total volume of sediment removed was relatively constant throughout the experiment except where the channel interacted with a wall. For the 380 litre runs, where discharge was increased, there was a corresponding increase in sediment discharge, which was then maintained throughout the second half of the experiment. Similarly when flow rate was increased in the 380 liter runs, a flush of sediment came out initially with a corresponding burst of upstream head cutting followed by a decrease in sediment discharge and rate of upstream propagation.~~

#### 3.1 Channel Morphology

While sediment volumes removed are roughly the same in the ~~fine grained mud~~ and sand channels, there are differences in how they erode. Channels in the ~~fine grained mud~~ substrate erode primarily via head cut propagation. In contrast channels in the sand substrate erode due to head cut propagation as well as lateral channel migration (see supplementary data).

The experiments also demonstrate a relationship between channel width and discharge. Generally, higher flows resulted in shorter, wider channels (Table 2). In particular, the ~~390-380 liter~~litre runs reveal both the importance the total flow volume

has on erosion volumes and how increasing flow rate affects channel geometry.—In the cohesive ~~fine grained mud~~ substrate, higher flows in the second half of the experiment formed a wider channel upstream of the already eroded ~~ravine gully~~, yet ~~the without altering the~~ pre-existing channel ~~was not altered~~ during the ~~course rest~~ of the experiment (Fig. 6).—Channel widths before the increased flow ranged from 0.16 to 0.40 m for a flow rate of 73-77 ml ~~× sec<sup>-1</sup>~~ and increased to 0.28 to 0.61 m for flow rates ranging from 143 to 234 ml ~~× sec<sup>-1</sup>~~.—The channels formed in the sand substrate responded differently; these channels widened along the entire channel length when flow was increased (Fig. 6).—In the sand channels widths varied from 0.14 to 0.19 m for initial flows which varied from 42 to 81 ml ~~× sec<sup>-1</sup>~~, and the entire channel width increased to 0.24 to 0.43 m for the higher flows ranging from 185 to 225 ml ~~× sec<sup>-1</sup>~~ (Table 2).

The hydraulic geometry equation for width developed by Leopold and Maddock (1953) was used to quantify the relationship between width,  $W$ , and discharge,  $Q$ , for these experiments to determine how the experimental channels compare with natural channels:

$$W = aQ^b \quad (1)$$

where  $a$  and  $b$  are constants. The range of empirically-derived exponents for  $b$  is between 0.3 and 0.5 derived from field measurements of both bedrock and alluvial streams (Knighton, 1998; Leopold and Maddock, 1953; Montgomery and Gran, 2001; Whipple, 2004).—Studies of rills and ephemeral gullies have found that ~~these is~~ relationships hold ~~s~~ with a  $b$  value of 0.4 – 0.5 (Natchergaele et al., 2002; Torri et al., 2006).

To test how well these field-measured values describe our experimental channels, we calculated width using the reported values for  $b$  and iterated to find the best fit for  $a$ .—In ~~addition~~ ~~addition~~, ~~a~~ we also iterated to determine what  $b$  value most accurately describes the trend in our experimental data.—The root mean square error (RMSE) was calculated for each data set and is reported as a percentage of the average measured width value.

Using the field-derived  $b$  exponents ranging from 0.3-0.5, the RMSE is 29-31-% of the average measured width in the ~~fine grained mud~~ substrate.—The best fit for the experimental data results in a  $b$  value of 0.27 resulting in an RMSE of 28.5-% (Fig. 7).—In the sand substrate the best fit for the data falls within the range of field-derived exponents.—The error is minimized when  $b$  is 0.39 resulting in an RMSE of 9-% (Fig. 7).

### 3.2 Modelled Sediment Transport

Results from these experiments appear to conflict with standard sediment transport equations which generally predict a non-linear increase in sediment flux as discharge increases (e.g. Engelund and Hansen, 1967; Meyer-Peter and Müller, 1948; Parker, 1990; Wilcock and Crowe, 2003), yet these equations typically include an additional factor, often slope, which, if also varied, can account for changes in discharge resulting in a linear increase in sediment flux.—Below are examples of commonly



used sediment transport models that, when applied to these experiments, account for the linear nature of the sediment flux discharge relationship.

Commonly erosion in detachment-limited systems is ~~modeled~~modelled by the stream power incision model (Howard and Kerby, 1983):

$$dz/dt = kQ^{m_d} S^{n_d} \quad (2)$$

where  $k$ ,  $m_d$  and  $n_d$  are constants,  $dz/dt$  is vertical erosion rate, and  $S$  is the slope. In the detachment-limited ~~fine grained mud~~ substrate, all erosion took place at the knickpoint and therefore we consider only knickpoint retreat rate and use  $S_k$ , knickpoint slope, in place of  $S$ . Because this rate is a horizontal ~~retreat rate~~ rather than vertical ~~retreat-incision~~ rate we must convert Eq. (2) appropriately:

$$U \cdot S_k = -dz/dt \quad (3)$$

$$U = kQ^{m_d} S_k^{n_d-1} \quad (4)$$

where  $U$  is the knickpoint retreat rate. The exponents  $m_d$  and  $n_d$  have been derived for a variety of natural environments. Typically the  $m_d + n_d$  ratio (concavity index) is approximately 0.35 - 0.6 (Whipple and Tucker, 1999; Baldwin et al., 2003). The exponent  $n_d$  ranges between 2/3 and 5/3 depending on the erodibility of the substrate where more easily eroded sediment has a lower value for the exponent  $n_d$  (Foley 1980; Howard and Kirby 1983; Whipple et al., 2000). The exponents  $m_d$  and  $n_d$  for uniform detachment-limited landscapes (i.e. badlands) reported by Howard and Kerby (1983) are 4/9 and 2/3, respectively. While the  $m_d + n_d$  ratio is slightly higher than reported elsewhere, we used these values to model erosion in our experiments because, like the badlands, our experimental set-up was spatially homogeneous and easily eroded. RMSE was measured between the calculated  $U$  and the measured  $U$  and minimized by modifying the coefficient  $k$ . The RMSE was 25-% of the measured average knickpoint retreat rate for the fine grained substrate. ~~The detachment-limited equation is not appropriate for the sand substrate because there is both headward and lateral erosion, which is not captured by the equation. In addition, the knickpoint slope cannot be measured in the sand substrate.~~

Sediment loads from the sand substrate were ~~modeled~~modelled with the transport-limited equation (Pelletier, 2011):

$$q_s = kQ^{m_t} S^{n_t} \quad (5)$$

where  $k$ ,  $m_t$  and  $n_t$  are constants and  $q_s$  is the volumetric unit sediment flux. This equation can be derived from the Engelund and Hansen (1967) equation where both  $m_t$  and  $n_t$  equal 5/3. Engelund and Hansen (1967) is the ideal equation to use because it does not have an incipient motion threshold as many other sediment transport equations do. Here again the RMSE was

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measured between the measured and calculated  $q_s$  and minimized using the coefficient  $k$ . The RMSE was 41-% of the average volumetric unit sediment discharge for the sand substrate. ~~The transport-limited equation was also tested with the fine grained substrate. For this test the average slope was used for  $S$  and the RMSE calculated was 86% of the average volumetric unit sediment discharge. This high RMSE value supports the observation that the fine grained substrate does not behave as a transport limited system.~~

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#### 4 Discussion

Our experiments demonstrate that, over a range of conditions, the sediment volume eroded during ~~ravine-permanent gully~~ growth under application of a fixed volume of water is independent of the rate at which the water is supplied. ~~Thus~~ Thus, sediment discharge is linearly related to water discharge in both detachment-limited and transport-limited systems. These results contrast with data from many pre-existing streams where changing flow intensity has resulted in increased erosion volume (i.e., Boateng et al., 2012; Ma et al., 2010; Naik and Jay, 2011), yet ~~this previously observed response~~ these data may not be directly applicable to early-stage ravines/gullies. We suggest that because ~~ravines-gullies~~ are actively evolving in response to a given hydrology, the channel morphology that develops reflects that hydrology, with erosion balanced by altering channel slope. This is supported by sediment transport Eqs. (4) and (5), which, when applied to our experiments, ~~are able to~~ predict the measured sediment discharges by including the effects of both discharge and slope. In pre-existing channels where channel slope may take tens of thousands of years to adjust to changing flows, both of these equations would predict a non-linear increase in sediment discharge with increasing water discharge. ~~Ravines-Permanent-Gullies~~ evolve more rapidly in response to the imposed discharge and can balance erosion by adjusting channel slope in response to a change in the hydrologic regime.

Moreover our findings suggest that anthropogenic changes to discharge regime could affect channel morphology (i.e. channel width), without changing sediment ~~input-output~~ derived from ~~ravines/permanent gullies after an initial response period.~~ It is important to note that there was an initial increase in sediment discharge when Where water discharge was increased in the ~~3890 liter/litre~~ runs, ~~but~~ the channel quickly evolved in response to the new discharge by creating a wider channel. In these experiments the observed response to the increased discharge differed for the ~~fine grained/mud~~ and sand substrate (Fig. 6) suggesting cohesion may be a ~~dominant-n important~~ factor in ~~the~~ how a channel initially responds to a new discharge regime.

The results of our experiments follow the hydraulic geometry relationship for width in Eq. (1) although with lower exponents than usually measured in field studies for alluvial and bedrock channels (Knighton, 1998; Leopold and Maddock, 1953; Montgomery and Gran, 2001; Whipple, 2004) and ephemeral-rills and ephemeral gullies (Nachtergaele et al., 2002; Torri et al., 2006). While this relationship is typically applied to describing width or discharge changes in a single channel, it works here for these separate channels because each comparable channel is carving through the same substrate. In the fine grained

substrate the empirical exponent  $b$  for these data is lower than has been derived for natural channels. This may be a result of the steep channel walls developed in these experiments; in natural ~~ravine~~<sup>permanent</sup> gullies where near vertical channel walls are less common, we expect that this exponent would be closer to the reported values. In the sand substrate where steep channel walls could not develop, the empirical exponent  $b$  is 0.4039 which is only slightly lower than the range typically considered for alluvial channels (Rodríguez-Iturbe and Rinaldo, 1997), but similar to exponents found in rills and ephemeral gullies (Nachtergaele et al., 2002; Torri et al., 2006).

Channel width has also been modelled by Wells et al. (2013) who found that both slope and discharge play a role in setting channel width. This relationship was tested for the results of these experiments, yet it was not as strong as the relationship with discharge alone. Slope in the Wells et al. (2013) study could not change during the experiment, which contrasts with our experiments where slope is a free parameter that adjusts to discharge. This finding further supports the distinction between rapidly evolving channels like ~~ravine~~<sup>permanent</sup> gullies, and more stable systems where slope does not change as quickly causing channel adjustments to occur primarily through changes in channel width and through a non-linear erosion response.

Experiments focused on headcut growth completed by Bennett et al. (2000) also reported a linear relationship between water discharge and sediment discharge, yet the water discharge was lower and the slope of the relationship was much higher in our results. This may suggest that a nonlinear relationship between sediment and water may develop over a wider range of flow rates than tested here, yet more research would be required. In addition, Bennett et al. (2000) noted two dominant processes for head cut migration: surface seal failure, which is similar to slab failure ~~reported in other papers~~, and plunge pool scour, where headcut migration is driven by undercutting. Although both of these mechanisms could lead to large blocks of sediment collecting at the base of the headcut, creating periods of quiescence in headcut migration, the authors do not indicate that headcut migration stalled in their experiments. The erosion mechanisms described by Bennett et al. (2000) are similar to the mechanisms observed in our experiments, in that there was a continuous headcut ~~propagation~~<sup>propagation</sup>, although we did not observe significant plunge pool development.

The effects of changing hydrology on newly evolved channels are difficult to study in nature, but physical and numerical models can be used to examine long-term channel evolution under a range of conditions. In ~~one a~~ numerical study, Istanbulluoglu et al. (2005) tested the effect of changing rain intensity while storm volume was held constant. The ~~modeled~~<sup>modelled</sup> results of their study showed an increase in the volume of sediment eroded as intensity increased. This result is in direct conflict with our results, yet there are many distinctions between the two studies that may explain this discrepancy. The Istanbulluoglu et al. (2005) model assumed gully erosion due to slab failure in a detachment-limited system. While the ~~fine grained mud~~ substrate in our physical experiments was also detachment limited, erosion occurred grain by grain

rather than as large blocks. Once these grains were detached, the flow was easily able to carry them through the channel and there was no measurable deposition in any of the experimental runs. In contrast, erosion in the slab failure model occurred in response to pore pressure build up in tension cracks resulting in large failures. This slab failure model does not require that the flow be able to carry the detached sediment and often resulted in deposition at the toe of the knickpoint, which increases resistance to future failure.

Experiments focused on headcut growth completed by Bennett et al. (2000) also reported a linear relationship between water discharge and sediment discharge, yet the water discharge was lower, and the slope of the relationship was much higher in our results. This may suggest that a nonlinear relationship between sediment and water may develop over a wider range of flow rates than tested here, yet more research would be required. In addition, Bennett et al. (2000) noted two dominant processes for head-cut migration: surface seal failure, which is described similar to the slab failure mechanism described above, and plunge pool scour, where headcut migration is driven by undercutting. While both of these mechanisms could lead to large blocks of sediment collecting at the base of the headcut, creating periods of quiescence in headcut migration as observed by Istanbulluoglu et al. (2005), the authors do not indicate this occurred, with headcut propagation at a near constant rate after a short period of adjustment. The erosion mechanisms described by Bennett et al. (2000) are similar to the mechanisms observed in our experiments, in that there was a continuous headcut proration, yet we didn't observe significant plunge pool development.

It is likely that both slab failure and grain-by-graingranular knickpoint propagation occur in ravines-permanent gullies throughout the world. The relative importance of each process is dependent on sediment type the substrate and the knickpoint slope. Tension cracks develop behind steep slopes where shrinkage occurs due to desiccation and horizontal tensile stresses generated in large part by gravity are greater than the tensile strength of the sediment (Darby and Thorne, 1994). Cracks like this are likely to form on the landscape above steep ravine-head cuts in cohesive sediment, between storm events. If we In neither our study nor the Bennett et al. (2000) did we model-had-modeled individual storm events rather than a constant overland flow. If we had, it is likely we would have also developed tension cracks in the cohesive mud-substrates. Because this was outside of the scope of these experiments it is difficult to form accurate conclusions on how the development of tension cracks and the subsequent failure events would have altered our-these results, but an analogous study that encouraged erosion by slab failure would be a useful extension.

The results of our experiments follow the hydraulic geometry relationship for width in Eq. (1) although with lower exponents than usually measured in field studies for alluvial and bedrock channels (Knighton, 1998; Leopold and Maddock, 1953; Montgomery and Gran, 2001; Whipple, 2004) and ephemeral rills and gullies (Nachtergaele et al., 2002; Torri et al., 2006).

While this relationship is typically applied to describing width or discharge changes in a single channel, it works here for these separate channels because each comparable channel is carving through the same substrate. In the fine grained mud substrate the empirical exponent  $b$  for these data is lower than has been derived for natural channels. This may be a result of the steep channel walls developed in these experiments; in natural ravines where near vertical channel walls are less common, we expect that this exponent would be closer to the reported values. In the sand substrate where steep channel walls could not develop, the empirical exponent  $b$  is 0.40 which is only slightly lower than the range typically considered for alluvial channels (Rodríguez-Iturbe and Rinaldo, 1997), but similar to exponents found in rills and ephemeral gullies (Nachtergaele et al., 2002; Torri et al., 2006).

Channel width has also been modeled modelled by Wells et al., (2013) who found that both slope and discharge play a role in setting channel width. This relationship was tested for the results of these experiments, yet it was not as strong as the relationship with discharge alone. Slope in the Wells et al., (2013) study could not change during the experiment, which contrasts with our experiments where slope is a free parameter that adjusts to discharge. This finding further supports the distinction between rapidly evolving channels like ravines, and more stable systems where slope does not change as quickly causing channel adjustments to occur primarily through changes in channel width and through a non-linear erosion response.

Our experimental results also lend support to are not clear with regard to Sidorchuk's (1999) two-stage ravine gully evolution model. For most runs it appears that the second stage of gully evolution was not achieved. In a few specific cases, most notably, runs F-6 and F-11 there does appear to be an early peak and later decrease and stabilization in sediment discharge. Surprisingly the results of these runs were not among the lowest total sediment discharges, as might be expected where the second stage was achieved. While it is not clear that the ravines we produced reached the second static stage of ravine evolution, they did show initially high sediment transport rates which decreased rapidly and then showed a slow steady decrease through the rest of the experiment. The initial high sediment flux we observed corresponds with the initial set up of the ravine slope and width. The slope and width was then maintained throughout the experiment unless the flow rate was increased corresponding to the steady decrease in sediment flux. When the flow rates increased there was a second increase and rapid decrease in sediment transport rate where the new channel slope and width was formed. It is possible that if these all the runs were allowed to continue we may have reached a stable system where the second stage of gully evolution was achieved. If this was allowed to occur, we would anticipate that additional water at the same discharge would not cause measurable erosion, potentially altering the relationship we have observed. What is not clear is how long it takes for this steady state to occur, and how this may relate to discharge.

Based on the results of this study and the comparison with previous ravine gully studies, it is important to consider a wide range of variables when mitigating ravine-permanent gully erosion. The results from our experiments suggest that during early stages of ravine-permanent gully growth, increasing overland flow rates will not result in increased sediment yield, if the

volumes of water delivered are not changed. Moreover, while sediment loads are not affected by changing flow rates, channel morphology is. Another important variable to consider is the mode of head cut retreat. The experimental results apply in environments with steep slopes where erosion is grain-by-grain. In places where tension cracks develop, the slab failure mechanism highlighted by Istanbulluoglu et al. (2005) might dominate. If the tension crack failure mechanism is the dominant process of head cut retreat, flow rates and storm intensity may become more important than they were in our study because the slabs may require a higher threshold to break up and mobilize, allowing further head-cut propagation.

## 5 Conclusion

These experiments highlight how young incising channels like ravines-permanent gullies can respond to changing hydrology differently than higher order channels that are later in their evolution. A relevant future study should investigate how natural ravines-gullies, which have a great deal more variability than this natural-experimental system, respond to changing hydrology. The conclusions from this project are outlined below:

- The experiments here suggest that water volume, rather than discharge, controls the total volume of erosion ~~in ravines because sediment discharge rates are linearly related to water discharge rates during permanent gully formation.~~ This result holds true for both transport-limited and detachment-limited systems.
- As long as slope is a free parameter in these rapidly-evolving systems, ~~changes in~~ changes in flow rate can be accommodated through ~~changes in~~ adjustment in both cross-sectional and longitudinal channel geometry. Wider channels were typically shorter and thus steeper.
- In both substrates, variations in channel width were described by the ~~well-known~~ hydraulic geometry relationship proposed by Leopold (1953), with wider channels forming in response to higher discharge.
- Sediment transport in sand and ~~fine grained mud~~ substrates was well described by the transport-limited sediment flux equation and the detachment-limited stream power equation, respectively.
- ~~Sediment transport was greatest at the beginning of each run and slowed through time, increasing again after discharge was increased. The high sediment transport likely corresponds with the time when the channel width and slope were being set.~~

## Competing Interests

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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Table 1: Experimental Run Parameters

| Run   | Substrate           | Water<br>Volume<br>(liters) | Total<br>Time<br>(min) | Flow 1 <sup>st</sup><br>190 liters<br>(cm <sup>3</sup> s <sup>-1</sup> ) | Flow 2 <sup>nd</sup><br>190 liters<br>(cm <sup>3</sup> s <sup>-1</sup> ) |
|-------|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MF-1  | Fine <del>Mud</del> | 190                         | 60.0                   | 52.58                                                                    |                                                                          |
| MF-2  | MudFine             | 190                         | 32.0                   | 98.58                                                                    |                                                                          |
| MF-3  | MudFine             | 190                         | 16.0                   | 197.16                                                                   |                                                                          |
| MF-4  | MudFine             | 190                         | 21.25                  | 148.45                                                                   |                                                                          |
| MF-5  | MudFine             | 190                         | 11.0                   | 286.77                                                                   |                                                                          |
| MF-6  | MudFine             | 190                         | 872.0                  | 3.62                                                                     |                                                                          |
| MF-7  | MudFine             | 190                         | 10.13                  | 311.40                                                                   |                                                                          |
| MF-8  | FineMud             | 190                         | 21.5                   | 146.72                                                                   |                                                                          |
| MF-9  | FineMud             | 190                         | 15.5                   | 203.52                                                                   |                                                                          |
| MF-10 | FineMud             | 380                         | 91.5                   | 71.69                                                                    | 66.41                                                                    |
| MF-11 | FineMud             | 380                         | 65.0                   | 73.36                                                                    | 143.39                                                                   |
| MF-12 | FineMud             | 380                         | 54.5                   | 76.94                                                                    | 233.67                                                                   |
| S-13  | Sand                | 190                         | 25.25                  | 124.93                                                                   |                                                                          |
| S-14  | Sand                | 190                         | 56.5                   | 55.83                                                                    |                                                                          |
| S-15  | Sand                | 190                         | 13.5                   | 233.67                                                                   |                                                                          |
| S-16  | Sand                | 190                         | 12.0                   | 262.88                                                                   |                                                                          |
| S-17  | Sand                | 190                         | 20.25                  | 155.78                                                                   |                                                                          |
| S-18  | Sand                | 380                         | 56.0                   | 80.88                                                                    | 185.56                                                                   |
| S-19  | Sand                | 380                         | 71.5                   | 55.34                                                                    | 217.55                                                                   |
| S-20  | Sand                | 380                         | 89.0                   | 42.06                                                                    | 225.32                                                                   |

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Table 2: Experimental Results

| Run   | Volume Sediment<br>Removed (m <sup>3</sup> ) | Average<br>Slope | Bed Slope | Knickpoint<br>Slope | Width 1 <sup>st</sup> 190<br>liters (m) | Width 2 <sup>nd</sup> 190<br>liters (m) |
|-------|----------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| MF-1  | 0.011920                                     | 0.17             | 0.06      | 1.19                | 0.22                                    |                                         |
| MF-2  | 0.024506                                     | 0.20             | 0.04      | 0.60                | 0.48                                    |                                         |
| MF-3  | 0.017937                                     | 0.21             | 0.04      | 0.36                | 0.24                                    |                                         |
| MF-4  | 0.013776                                     | 0.27             | 0.03      | 0.62                | 0.43                                    |                                         |
| MF-5  | 0.010384                                     | 0.29             | 0.04      | 1.22                | 0.26                                    |                                         |
| MF-6  | 0.014903                                     | 0.12             | 0.10      | 0.27                | 0.13                                    |                                         |
| MF-7  | 0.08913                                      | 0.42             | 0.11      | 0.71                | 0.38                                    |                                         |
| MF-8  | 0.013908                                     | 0.37             | 0.06      | 0.67                | 0.43                                    |                                         |
| MF-9  | 0.018645                                     | 0.22             | 0.07      | 0.58                | 0.52                                    |                                         |
| MF-10 | 0.039053                                     | 0.15             | 0.05      | 0.81                | 0.40                                    | 0.49                                    |
| MF-11 | 0.030158                                     | 0.14             | 0.05      | 0.56                | 0.16                                    | 0.28                                    |
| MF-12 | 0.035532                                     | 0.16             | 0.03      | 0.29                | 0.38                                    | 0.61                                    |
| S-13  | 0.017762                                     | 0.06             |           |                     | 0.20                                    |                                         |
| S-14  | 0.018649                                     | 0.07             |           |                     | 0.13                                    |                                         |
| S-15  | 0.023796                                     | 0.06             |           |                     | 0.28                                    |                                         |
| S-16  | 0.016590                                     | 0.06             |           |                     | 0.27                                    |                                         |
| S-17  | 0.023569                                     | 0.06             |           |                     | 0.29                                    |                                         |
| S-18  | 0.031174                                     | 0.07             |           |                     | 0.19                                    | 0.39                                    |
| S-19  | 0.030587                                     | 0.06             |           |                     | 0.14                                    | 0.43                                    |
| S-20  | 0.028028                                     | 0.06             |           |                     | 0.15                                    | 0.24                                    |



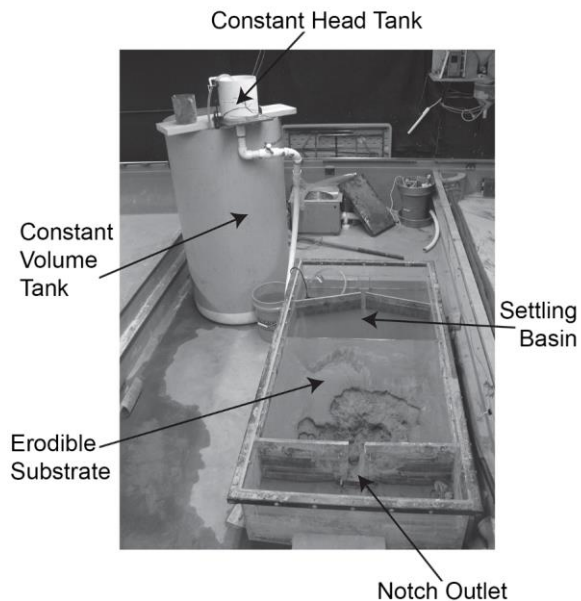


Figure 1: The experimental set up shown here allows water to flow from a settling basin over an erodible substrate and out through a 7.6 x 14 cm notch. The flow rates entering the basin range from 4 to 311  $\text{cm}^3\text{s}^{-1}$  and are controlled by a constant head tank. For each run a constant volume of water either 190 or 380 ~~liters~~litres is run over the erodible substrate. This figure shows the set up for the ~~fine grained mud~~ substrate, but the sand substrate set up was ~~similar~~similar, yet the erodible substrate was larger.

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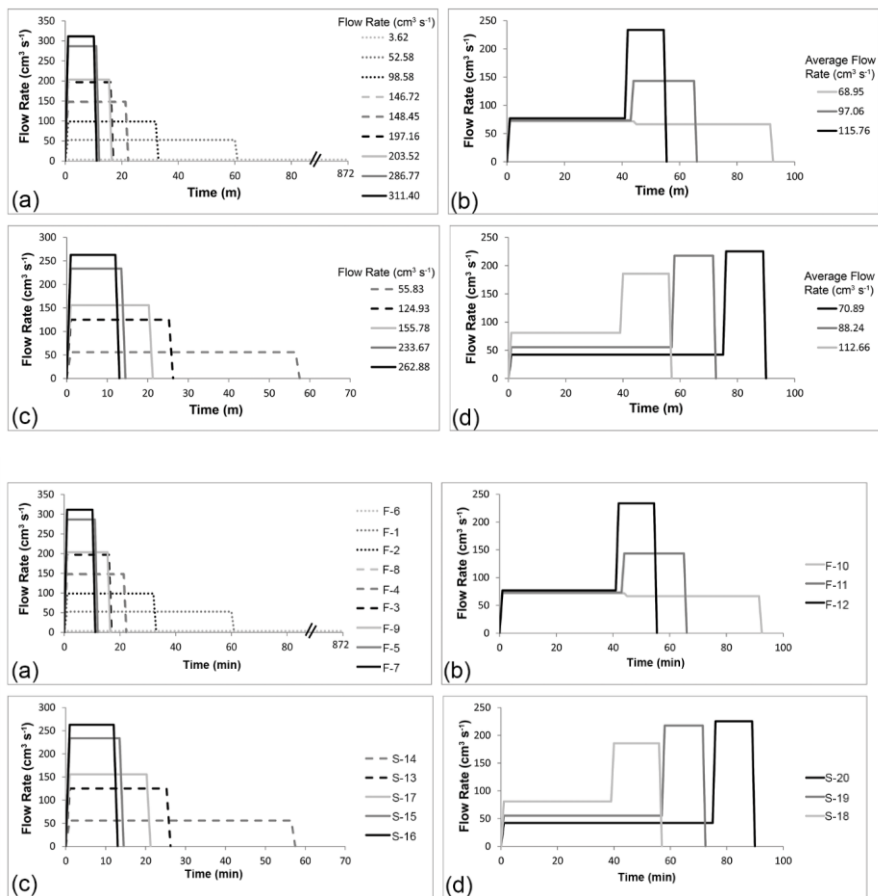
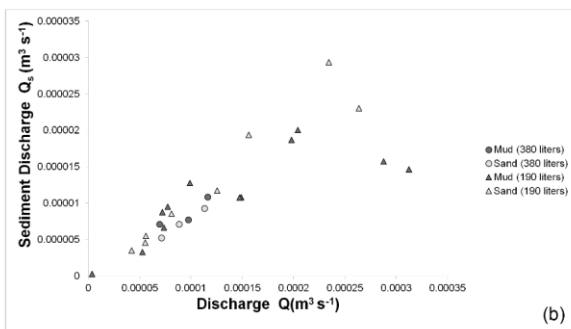
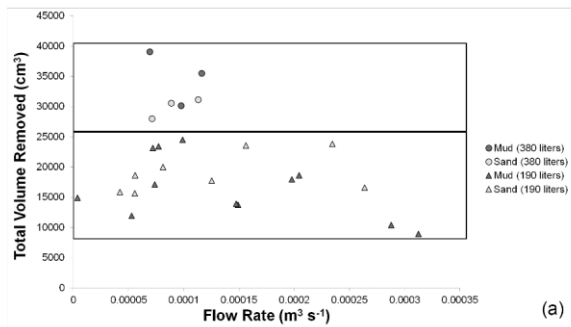


Figure 2: These hydrographs show the range of flow rates tested. Each set of curves is for a separate set of experimental runs. A) 190 litres of water over the fine grained mud substrate. B) 380 litres of water over the fine grained mud substrate. C) 190 litres of water over the sand substrate. D) 380 litres of water over the sand substrate.



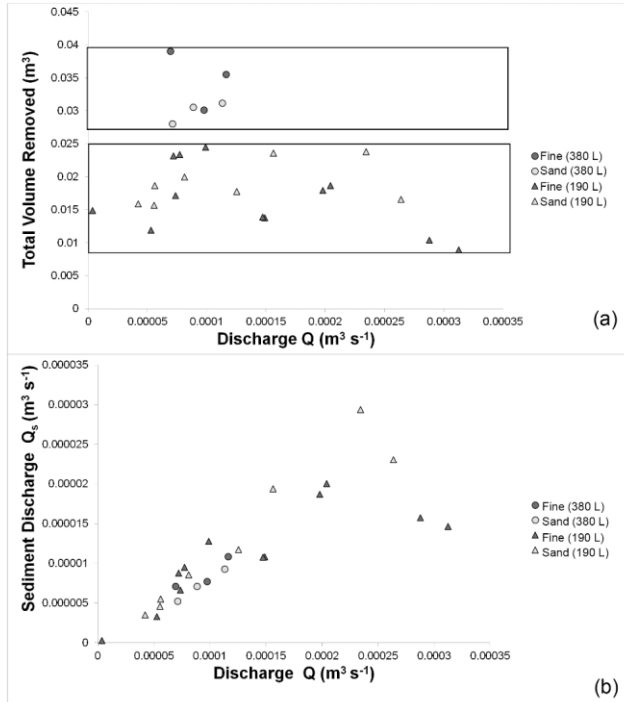


Figure 3: The results from these experiments show that the total volume of sediment removed is not dependent of flow rate (A) or that sediment discharge is linearly related to water discharge (B). These charts also show that while sediment discharge is the same for the 380 ~~liter~~litre runs as it is for the 190 ~~liter~~litre runs at a given discharge, the total volume of sediment removed is greater in the 380 ~~liters~~litres runs.

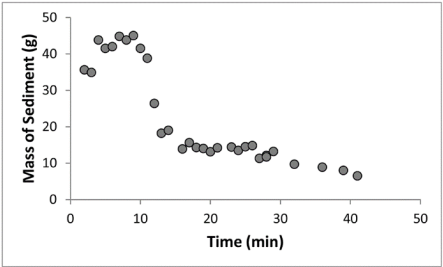
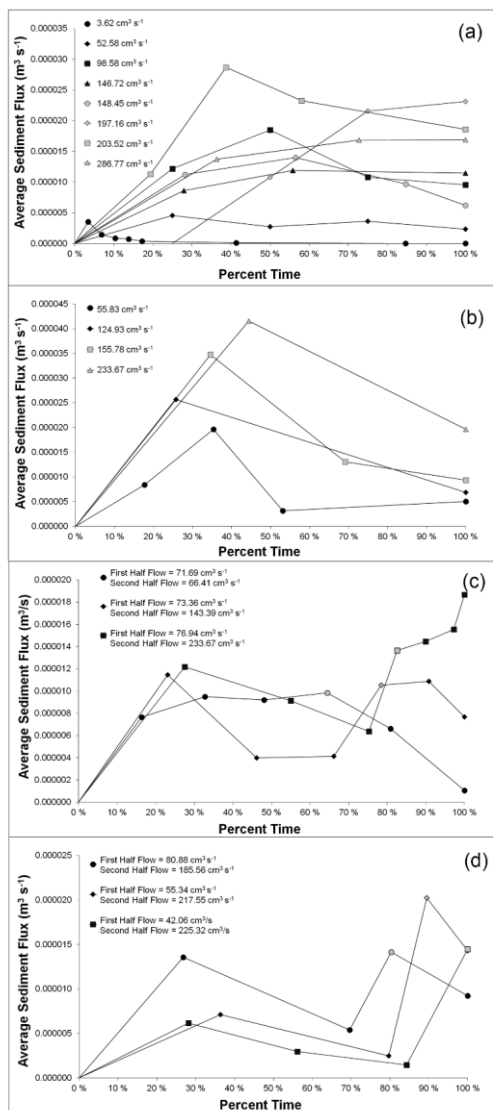
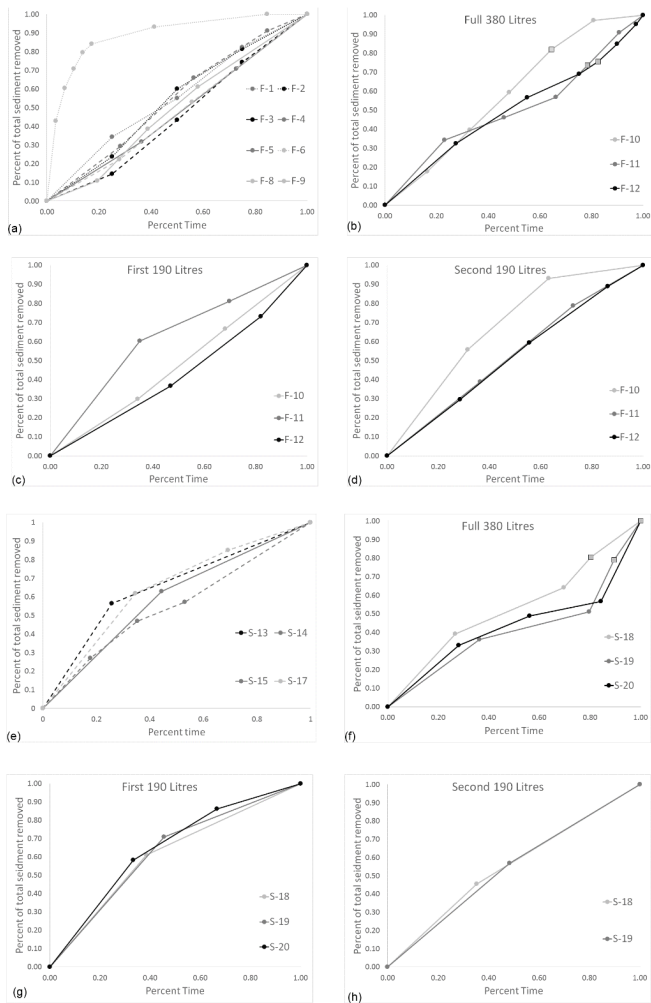


Figure 4: Samples collected for 5 seconds every minute during the first 190 liters of run 11 show a decrease in sediment load with time after an initial peak.





**Figure 5:** In general, sediment discharge was near constant throughout the experiments as indicated by the linear relationship between percent time elapsed and percent of total sediment removed in the graphs above. This result was generally consistent between— for both fine grained substrate (a-d) and the sand substrate (e-h). Results from the 190 L runs are graphed in a and e and

the 380 L runs are graphed in b and f with the first half broken out in c and g and the second half in f and h. The sediment flux over time in the 190-liter runs peaks and later decreases for both mud (A) and sand (B) runs. In the 380-liter runs sediment flux initially peaked for the first 190 liters and then underwent a second peak when the flow was increased for the second 190 liters. This trend can be seen in both the mud (C) and sand (D) runs, where the increase discharge is indicated with a gray marker.

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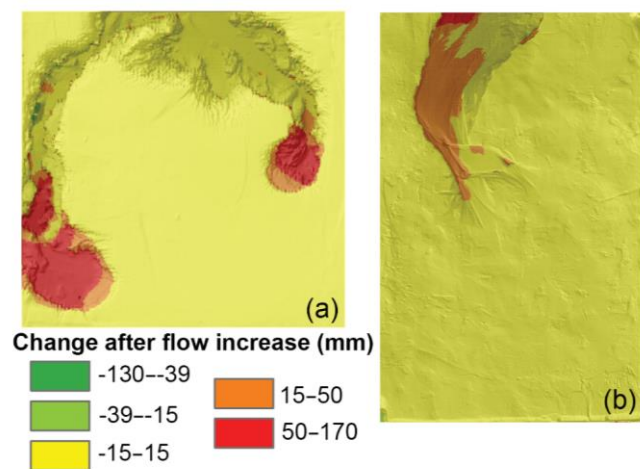
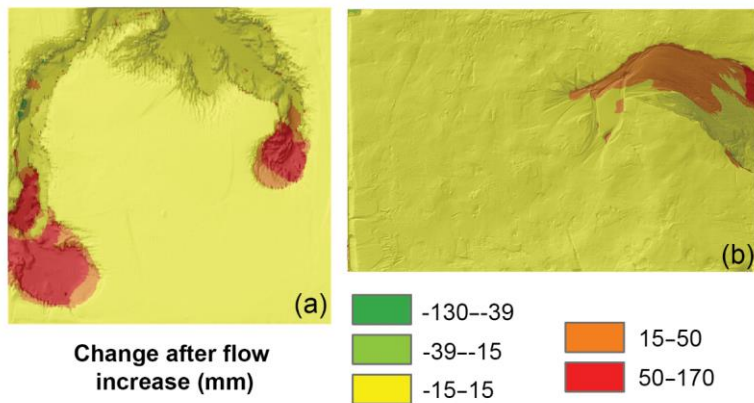


Figure 6: These differenced DEMs show how changes in flow impact channel width.— In the **fine grained mud**-runs (A) the width changed in the newly formed channel, while in the sand runs (B) the channel width was altered along the entire channel length. **Flow is bottom to top in both images.**

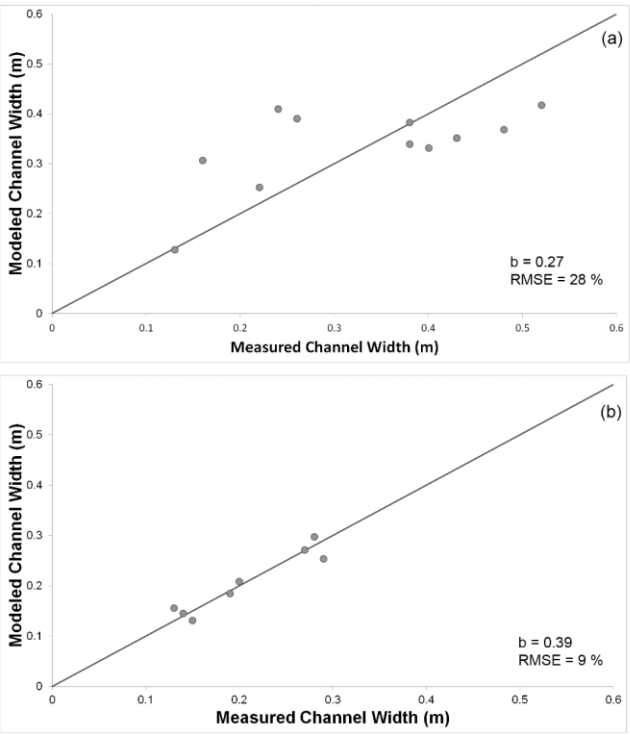


Figure 7: Channel width can be modeled using the hydraulic geometry relationship. In both plots the solid black line is a 1:1 line A) The relationship measured in the channels formed in the fine grained mud substrate has a constant  $b$  value that is less than the values commonly observed in nature. B) The relationship measured in the channels formed in the sand substrate has a constant  $b$  value of 0.4, which is in the intermediate range of the commonly proposed constants.

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