

1 **The effect of input data resolution and complexity on the**
2 **uncertainty of hydrological predictions in a humid,**
3 **vegetated watershed**

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11 **Abstract**

12 Uncertainty in hydrological modeling is of significant concern due to its effects on prediction
13 and subsequent application in watershed management. Similar to other distributed
14 hydrological models, model uncertainty is an issue in applying the Soil and Water
15 Assessment Tool (SWAT). Previous research has shown how SWAT predictions are affected
16 by uncertainty in parameter estimation and input data resolution. Nevertheless, little
17 information is available on how parameter uncertainty and output uncertainty are affected
18 by input data of varying complexity. In this study, SWAT-Hillslope (SWAT-HS), a modified
19 version of SWAT capable of predicting saturation-excess runoff, was applied to assess the
20 effects of input data with varying degrees of complexity on parameter uncertainty and output
21 uncertainty. Four digital elevation model (DEM) resolutions (1, 3, 10 and 30 m) were tested
22 for their ability to predict streamflow and saturated areas. In a second analysis, three soil
23 maps and three land use maps were used to build nine SWAT-HS setups from simple to
24 complex (fewer to more soil types/ land use classes), which were then compared to study the
25 effect of input data complexity on model prediction/output uncertainty. The case study was
26 the Town Brook watershed in the upper reaches of the West Branch Delaware River in the

1 Catskill Region, New York, USA. Results show that DEM resolution did not impact
2 parameter uncertainty or affect the simulation of streamflow at the watershed outlet but
3 significantly affected the spatial pattern of saturated areas, with 10m being the most
4 appropriate grid size to use for our application. The comparison of nine model setups
5 revealed that input data complexity did not affect parameter uncertainty. Model setups using
6 intermediate soil/land use specifications were slightly better than the ones using simple
7 information, while the most complex setup did not show any improvement from the
8 intermediate ones. We conclude that improving input resolution and complexity may not
9 necessarily improve model performance or reduce parameter and output uncertainty, but
10 using multiple temporal and spatial observations can aid in finding the appropriate
11 parameter sets and in reducing prediction/output uncertainty.

12 **Keywords:** Input data complexity, parameter uncertainty, output uncertainty, SWAT-HS,
13 Catskill region

14 1. Introduction

15 Uncertainty in hydrological modeling is of significant concern due to its effects on prediction
16 and subsequent decision making (Van Griensven et al., 2008;Sudheer et al., 2011). The
17 uncertainty of a model can be associated with different components: (i) model structure, (ii)
18 input data, and (iii) model parameters (Lindenschmidt et al., 2007). Uncertainty due to model
19 structure results from assumptions or simplifications made in the formulation of the model,
20 and in application of the model under conditions that are not consistent with those
21 assumptions or simplifications (Tripp and Niemann, 2008). Input data uncertainty is caused
22 by changes in natural conditions, limitations of measurement, and lack of data (Beck, 1987).
23 Parameter uncertainty results from the non-linear response of predictions to parameter
24 changes and parameter interdependence leading to the possibility that changes in some
25 parameters may be compensated for by changes in others, so that different parameter sets
26 may produce the same simulated results (Bárdossy and Singh, 2008). This so-called

1 equifinality is very common in hydrological models and is one of the main causes for
2 uncertainties in model predictions (Beven and Freer, 2001).

3 SWAT-Hillslope (SWAT-HS) (Hoang et al., 2017) is a modified version of the Soil and Water
4 Assessment Tool (SWAT) (Arnold et al., 1998) that improves the simulation of saturation-
5 excess runoff and creates interaction in flow and substance transport between the upland
6 areas and the valley bottom. Initial testing of SWAT-HS was carried out in the Town Brook
7 watershed, a 37 km² headwater watershed in the upper reaches of the West Branch Delaware
8 River in the Catskill Mountains of New York. The West Branch Delaware River drains into
9 the Cannonsville Reservoir, part the New York City (NYC) water supply system which
10 supplies high quality drinking water to over 9 million people in NYC and nearby
11 communities. In this region, rainfall intensities rarely exceed infiltration rates and saturation-
12 excess runoff is common (Walter et al., 2003). Results showed good agreement between
13 measured and modeled streamflow at both daily and monthly time steps. More importantly,
14 the model predicted correctly the occurrence of saturated areas on specific days for which
15 observations are available, which was not achieved with application of the standard SWAT
16 model. Consequently, SWAT-HS performs well for our study region and shows promise as
17 a good model for humid vegetated areas where saturation-excess runoff is dominant. The
18 model modification is relatively new and research into its proper application is ongoing. Here
19 SWAT-HS is applied to evaluate the effect of complexity of input data on parameter
20 uncertainty and model prediction/output uncertainty.

21 In previous SWAT studies, parameter uncertainty has received the most attention among the
22 three types of model uncertainty (Cibin et al., 2010;Sexton et al., 2011;Shen et al., 2008;Shen
23 et al., 2010). These studies confirmed limited identifiability of SWAT parameters and
24 equifinality in calibrating discharge at the outlet of the watershed. Sexton et al. (2011) found
25 that the model output uncertainty is not only caused by uncertainty of sensitive parameters
26 but also contributed by non-sensitive parameters, and thus, suggested considering non-
27 sensitive parameters in calibration and uncertainty analysis. Parameter uncertainty caused
28 the least uncertainty for runoff (Shen et al., 2008;Shen et al., 2010) and greatest uncertainty

1 for sediment (Sexton et al., 2011) among streamflow, sediment, nitrogen and phosphorus
2 outputs. Moreover, the effect of parameter uncertainty can be temporally and spatially
3 different. Temporally, parameter uncertainty causes higher output uncertainty in high-flow
4 periods (Shen et al., 2008;Sexton et al., 2011;Shen et al., 2012). Spatially, SWAT generally
5 predicted streamflow with less uncertainty in watersheds in humid climates relative to arid
6 or semi-arid climates (Veith et al., 2010). The source of uncertainty is mainly influenced by
7 parameters associated with runoff (Shen et al., 2008). However, soil properties can also
8 contribute to uncertainty (Shen et al., 2010).

9 Effects of input data uncertainty have been evaluated in several SWAT applications by
10 exploring the sensitivity of required input data for SWAT model set up, including the DEM,
11 soil, and land use, on model outputs. While most studies focused on the sensitivity of
12 predictions to DEM resolution, a few studies focused on the effects of soil and land use with
13 varying spatial scales. Cotter et al. (2003) found that DEM resolution is the most sensitive
14 input variable, while soil and land use resolution have insignificant impacts on the
15 simulation of streamflow, sediment, nitrate, and total phosphorus. They suggested that the
16 minimum DEM resolution should range from 30 to 300 m, and minimum land use and soils
17 data resolution should range from 300 to 500 m. Chaubey et al. (2005) showed the significant
18 impact of DEM resolution not only on watershed delineation, stream network and subbasin
19 classification, but also on streamflow and nitrate load predictions. Based on SWAT
20 application to a 21.8 km² watershed in Lower Walnut Creek, central Iowa USA, Chaplot
21 (2005) proposed an upper limit of 50m for the DEM for watershed simulation, after
22 determining that coarser grid sizes do not substantially affect the runoff but result in
23 significant errors for nitrogen and sediment yields. Geza and McCray (2008) and Mukundan
24 et al. (2010) compared SWAT streamflow simulations using a low resolution State Soil
25 Geographic database (STATSGO) and a high resolution Soil Survey Geographic database
26 (SSURGO) soil database. While Geza and McCray (2008) found that STATSGO performed
27 better than SSURGO before calibration and the opposite was observed after calibration,

1 Mukundan et al. (2010) found insignificant differences between the two datasets in
2 simulating streamflow.

3 Most previous SWAT studies focused on how SWAT predictions are affected by uncertainty
4 of parameter estimation and different input data. Limited information is available on how
5 the parameter uncertainty and output uncertainty are affected by different input data with
6 the exception of Kumar and Merwade (2009) who tested the impact of watershed subdivision
7 and the use of two soil datasets (STATSGO and SSURGO) on streamflow calibration and
8 parameter uncertainty. Although there have been numerous studies on the effect of DEM
9 resolution on SWAT predictions, none have discussed its effects on model uncertainty and
10 specifically on parameter uncertainty. Moreover, these studies on model uncertainty used an
11 integrated response of the watershed (i.e., discharge at the outlet) for assessing complex
12 processes inside the watershed and have not used additional spatial datasets that may reduce
13 model uncertainty.

14 The two main objectives of this paper are to evaluate: (i) the effect of DEMs of various spatial
15 resolutions (1, 3, 10, and 30 m) on the uncertainty of streamflow and saturated area
16 predictions, and (ii) the impact of combinations of soil and land use data with various degrees
17 of complexity on the uncertainty in model simulation. In both analyses, we not only
18 investigate the effect on model prediction/output uncertainty but also discuss their effect on
19 the uncertainty in parameter estimation. Through this study we seek to answer specific
20 questions including identifying the suitable DEM resolution in order to get good model
21 performance, and the appropriate complexity of the distributed input data. Answers to these
22 research questions will be the basis for reducing decision uncertainty on model input
23 selection in our future applications of SWAT-HS in the NYC water supply system.

24

1 **2. Material and methods**

2 **2.1. Study area: Town Brook watershed, New York**

3 The 37 km² Town Brook watershed is located in the Catskill Mountains, Delaware County,
4 New York State (Fig. 1) and is the headwater of the Cannonsville Reservoir watershed which
5 is one of four reservoir watersheds in the New York City's Delaware system. Elevation ranges
6 from 493 to 989 m. The area is humid with an average temperature of eight (8)°C and average
7 annual precipitation of 1123 mm/year. Approximately 1/3 of the total precipitation in the
8 region falls as snow (Pradhanang et al., 2011). Most soils are either silt loam or silty clay loam.
9 The upper terrain of the watershed has shallow soils (average thickness 80 cm) overlaying
10 fractured bedrock and steep slopes (average slope 29%), while deeper soils (average thickness
11 180 cm) underlain by a dense fragipan restricting layer and gentler slope (average slope 14%)
12 are common in the lower terrain. Deciduous and mixed forests predominate in the upper
13 terrain, covering more than half of the land area. In the lowland area, the principle land uses
14 are agriculture (32%) that includes dairy and beef farms with cropland and pastures;
15 brushland (9%); and residential areas (4%).

16 **2.2. Brief description of SWAT-HS**

17 SWAT-HS is a modified version of the SWAT model version 2012 (SWAT2012) that is capable
18 of predicting saturation-excess runoff. Two main modifications made in SWAT-HS include:
19 (i) adding information on topography and soil water storage capacity to the modeling unit of
20 SWAT, i.e. Hydrological Response Unit (HRU); and (ii) introducing a surface aquifer that
21 allows lateral exchange of subsurface water from upslope to downslope areas.

22 Similar to SWAT, SWAT-HS divides the watershed into subbasins. Additionally, the
23 watershed is divided into a maximum of 10 wetness classes, each of which consists of areas
24 in the subbasin with similar topographic indices. Subsequently, the subbasin is further
25 divided into HRUs that are unique combinations of soil, land use, and slope as in SWAT plus
26 an additional component: wetness class. The topographic index (TI) is defined as:

$$1 \quad TI = \ln\left(\frac{\alpha}{\tan(\beta)K_s D}\right) \quad (1)$$

2 where TI is the soil topographic index [with units of $\ln(\text{d m}^{-1})$], α is the upslope contributing
3 area per unit contour length (m), $\tan(\beta)$ is the local surface topographic slope, K_s is the mean
4 saturated hydraulic conductivity of the soil (m d^{-1}), and D is the soil depth (m).

5 The soil water storage capacity of the wetness classes is defined as the amount of water in the
6 rootzone between field capacity and saturation. This was assumed to vary across the soil
7 wetness classes following a Pareto distribution (Hoang et al., 2017). Wetness classes that are
8 located in the downslope areas have lower storage capacities, which means they are ‘wetter’
9 than wetness classes in the upslope areas with smaller TI values and higher storage
10 capacities. The wetter the wetness class, the faster the runoff response is during a rainstorm.
11 A surface aquifer is introduced to connect all wetness classes across the hillslope and
12 transmits subsurface flow that is generated from this aquifer (known as lateral flow in SWAT)
13 laterally through the hillslope from “drier” (upslope) to “wetter” (downslope) wetness
14 classes.

15 SWAT-HS removes the original curve number method of SWAT in predicting total surface
16 runoff. Instead, it simulates infiltration-excess runoff and saturation-excess runoff separately
17 with different methods. Infiltration-excess runoff is predicted using the Green-Ampt method
18 built into SWAT. Saturation-excess runoff in SWAT-HS is generated in the “wetter”
19 (downslope) wetness classes by two processes: (i) rain falls in wet areas with limited storage
20 capacities where the excess water becomes runoff, and (ii) water from the upland areas is
21 transported laterally to the lowland areas and the water exceeding soil storage capacity
22 becomes runoff (see Supplementary materials for more details).

23 **2.3. Methodology**

24 **2.3.1. Effect of DEM resolution**

25 Four DEMs from fine to coarse resolution were used to set up the SWAT-HS model for the
26 Town Brook watershed. The resolutions employed were 1m, 3m, 10m, and 30m. The 1m DEM

1 (DEM1m) was derived from 2009 aerial LiDAR data acquired by New York City Department
2 of Environmental Protection (RACNE, 2011). This was resampled to create 3m, 10m and 30m
3 resolution DEMs (DEM3m, DEM10m and DEM30m).

4 DEMs were used to delineate the watershed, calculate flow paths, slopes, drainage areas, and
5 compute gridded values of TI. Based on TI values, the watershed was divided into 10 wetness
6 classes (Fig. 4). Wetness class 1 covering very small fraction of the watershed (0.59%)
7 corresponds to the perennial stream network and is the “wettest” wetness class. We grouped
8 50% of the watershed with the lowest TI values in the upland as the “driest” wetness class
9 (wetness 10) because saturated areas never exceeded 50% of the watershed based on
10 observations (Harpold et al., 2010) and predictions by other watershed models (SMR (Agnew
11 et al., 2006), SWAT-VSA (Easton et al., 2008) and SWAT-WB (White et al., 2011)).
12 Subsequently, we divided the remaining areas into 8 wetness classes (wetness class 2 – 9)
13 with approximately equal areas (~ 6% each) based on TI values. Applying the same procedure
14 of wetness class division using four DEM resolutions, four SWAT-HS setups have
15 approximately similar areal percentage of each wetness class.

16 HRUs were created based on 10 wetness classes, 17 soil types, and 11 land use types. A single
17 time series of daily precipitation and temperature data were interpolated from a 4km x 4km
18 gridded PRISM climate dataset (Daly et al., 2008) using the inverse distance weighting
19 method. Solar radiation data were derived as the average of airport stations at Albany and
20 Binghamton supplied by the Northeast Regional Climate Center. Relative humidity and wind
21 speed were generated by the built-in weather generator in SWAT. The procedure outlined
22 above is similar to the SWAT-HS setup used by Hoang et al. (2017).

23 Four SWAT-HS setups were run on a daily time step from 1998 – 2012. The first 3 years were
24 used as the warming up period and the model was calibrated and validated for the periods
25 2001-2007 and 2008-2012, respectively. We excluded the year 2011 from the validation period
26 because there were two extreme events (Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee) in August
27 2011 that the model could not capture well. The calibration was carried out in 2 stages, i.e.
28 snowmelt calibration and flow calibration, and by applying Monte Carlo sampling method.

1 For snowmelt calibration, we calibrated 5 snowmelt related parameters in group (i) (Table 1)
2 by generating randomly 10,000 parameter sets, running these sets using SWAT-HS,
3 comparing the streamflow predictions with observations and choosing the best parameter set
4 with the best fit to streamflow observations (highest value of daily Nash Sutcliffe Efficiency
5 (NSE)) to use for the flow calibration stage. For flow calibration, 10,000 parameter sets of 9
6 flow parameters in group (ii) (Table 1) were generated which were then run with SWAT-HS.
7 The simulations in the flow calibration stage were used for uncertainty analysis.
8 We evaluated the effect of DEM resolution on representing topographical characteristics of
9 the watershed by comparing the statistical distributions of elevation, slope angle, upslope
10 contributing area, and TI using DEMs with various spatial resolutions (1m, 3m, 10m and
11 30m). Subsequently, to evaluate the effect of DEM resolution on model uncertainty, we
12 compared the four SWAT-HS setups with different DEM resolutions based on: (i) the
13 uncertainty in streamflow predictions using “good” performance parameter sets, (ii)
14 predictions of saturated areas and their uncertainties, and (iii) uncertainty in parameter
15 estimation. We used the Generalized Likelihood Uncertainty Estimation (GLUE) approach
16 (Beven and Binley, 1992) to estimate the uncertainty in streamflow and saturated area
17 predictions caused by parameter uncertainty. For each model setup, “good” simulations were
18 identified as those with a Nash-Sutcliffe Efficiency (NSE) greater than 0.65 for use in
19 uncertainty estimation of streamflow. Subsequently, from these “good” simulations, we
20 compared predictions of saturated areas with our available field observations of saturated
21 areas to re-select the “good” parameter sets for both simulated streamflow and saturated
22 areas, to estimate the uncertainty in predicted saturated areas. Six observations of saturated
23 areas (28, 29, 30 April 2006, 12 April 2007, 7 June 2007, and 2 August 2007) are available for
24 small area in the headwaters of the Town Brook watershed.

25 **2.3.2. Effect of soil and land use complexity**

26 We built nine SWAT-HS setups ranging from simple (fewer soil types/land use classes/fewer
27 HRUs) to complex (more soil types/ land use classes, more HRUs) based on three soil maps

1 and three land use maps. In all nine setups, the 10m DEM was used based on its performance
2 as the best predictor of saturated areas (see discussion).

3 Three soil maps were created with increasing levels of complexity (Fig. 2). The simplest map
4 (*TBsoil_1*) had a homogenous soil type, which was created using area-weighted average soil
5 data from the 4 dominant soil types (*Hcc*, *LhB*, *OeB*, *WmB*) in Town Brook. The second soil
6 map *TBsoil_2* has a unique soil type for each wetness class and was created by area-weighted
7 averaging of dominant soil properties in the corresponding wetness class. The most complex
8 soil map *TBsoil_3* consisted of all 17 soil types.

9 Three land use maps with increasing levels of complexity were created (Fig. 2). The simplest
10 land use map (*TBlanduse_1*), had agriculture as the representative land use for the watershed
11 because it is one of the dominant land uses and potentially has a more significant impact on
12 water quality than other land use types. The more complex land use map (*TBlanduse_2*)
13 classifies Town Brook into 3 diverse land use types: agriculture, forest and urban areas. The
14 most complex one (*TBlanduse_3*) contains all 11 land use types.

15 HRUs were generated based on a wetness map (10 classes), soil map, land use and slope
16 maps. We assumed that slope does not have an impact on HRU discretization to simplify the
17 set up. We also set a threshold of 1% for soil and 1% for land use to eliminate minor soil types/
18 land uses that cover only less than 1% of the sub-basin area.

19 The nine model setups are categorized in 3 groups: (i) *simple*: the setups that use either the
20 simplest soil or land use (TB1-TB5), (ii) *intermediate*: the setups that use the average
21 complexity for maps of either soil or land use (TB6 – TB8); and (iii) *complex*: the setup that
22 uses the most complex maps (TB9) (Table 2).

23 To evaluate the effect of soil and land use data complexity on model uncertainty, we
24 compared the nine SWAT-HS setups using the same methodology used to evaluate the effect
25 of DEM resolution on model uncertainty that is described above.

1 3. Results

2 3.1. The effect of DEM resolution on model uncertainty

3 3.1.1. Effect on topographic characteristics

4 DEM resolution has varying effects on the distribution of elevation, slope angle, upslope
5 contributing area, and TI values. However, the distributions of elevation are similar using
6 different DEMs, indicating no effect from DEM resolution (Fig. 3a). The finer resolution
7 DEMs (DEM1m and DEM3m) are able to give more precise slope values. Therefore, coarser
8 DEM resolutions produce slightly narrower slope distributions, lower mean slope angles,
9 lower probability for steep slopes and higher probability for gentle slopes than the finer DEM
10 resolutions because of the smoothing of topography and loss of topographic details (Figure
11 3b). DEM resolution has a significant effect on the calculated values of upslope contributing
12 areas (Fig. 3c). With the finer spatial resolutions, grids in DEM1m and DEM3m have smaller
13 contributing areas than the ones in coarser resolution DEM10m and DEM30m. This results in
14 substantial differences in the distribution of TI in that the finer resolution DEMs provide
15 lower values of TI (Fig. 3d). The impact of DEM grid size on TI distribution is mainly due to
16 its impact on upslope contributing area rather than slope. Our results are consistent with
17 previous studies on the effect of DEM resolution on topographic attributes and topographic
18 wetness index (Gillin et al., 2015; Sørensen and Seibert, 2007; Zhang and Montgomery,
19 1994; Thompson et al., 2001).

20 Depending on the DEM used, the four wetness maps formed by grouping areas of similar TI
21 into 10 wetness classes show remarkable differences (Fig. 4). It should be noted here that the
22 differences are in the spatial distribution of wetness classes while the areal percentage of each
23 wetness class is approximately similar irrespective of the DEM used. In Figure 4, we show
24 the wetness maps for the headwater area where observations of saturated areas are available.
25 It can be clearly seen that the spatial patterns of wetness classes in coarser resolution DEMs
26 (10m and 30m) are quite similar, but are very different from the finer resolution DEMs (1m
27 and 3m). DEM1m has a complex pattern with all wetness classes spread out, making it

1 difficult to see their boundaries, while the pattern becomes more coherent in coarser DEMs
2 where the boundaries of the wetness classes are easier to distinguish. Our results are
3 consistent with previous studies on the effect of grid size on spatial patterns of topographic
4 wetness index that have been reported by Thomas et al. (2017), Erskine et al. (2006), Zhang
5 and Montgomery (1994).

6 **3.1.2. Effect on the prediction of streamflow**

7 To evaluate the effect of DEM on the uncertainty of streamflow predictions, we compared
8 streamflow outputs from 10,000 Monte Carlo simulations of four model setups with DEMs
9 of different resolutions (Fig.5a). Subsequently, we evaluated and compared streamflow
10 estimates in the validation period based on only “good” parameter sets (Fig. 5b). Statistical
11 criteria for evaluating uncertainty are shown in Table 3. The comparison between observed
12 flow and 90% prediction uncertainty measured between 5th and 95th percentiles of predicted
13 flows from “good” parameter sets is shown in Figure S3 in the Supplementary Materials. In
14 all setups, more than 50% of the parameter sets give “satisfactory” performances ($NSE \geq 0.5$)
15 (Fig. 5). Of the total randomly generated parameter sets, 14-23% give “good” streamflow
16 performance in the four setups, with higher percentages in coarser resolution setups
17 (DEM10m and DEM30m) (Table 3). For the calibration period, the maximum NSE, NSElog
18 and Kling-Gupta Efficiency (KGE) values are equivalent (around 0.69, 0.82 and 0.81,
19 respectively) in the four setups. However, the median NSE, mean NSE, mean NSElog and
20 mean KGE are all higher in coarser resolution setups (DEM10m and DEM30m) than the
21 higher resolution ones (DEM1m and DEM3m). In the finer resolution setups, there are higher
22 percentages of parameter setups that give poor fit to observed streamflow (NSE is negative)
23 which causes lower mean values of NSE as well as NSElog and KGE. The uncertainty ranges
24 of predicted flows, particularly intermediate flows are wider in the finer resolution setups
25 (Fig. S3) although uncertainty bounds match observations very well in all four setups. For
26 the validation period, the “good” parameter sets all give above satisfactory to good fit to
27 observations and relatively similar performance to each other. Generally, there are only slight

1 differences in SWAT-HS performance on streamflow using different DEMs implying the
2 insignificant effect of DEM resolution on streamflow simulation and the uncertainty of
3 streamflow outputs.

4 Although the effect of DEMs on streamflow prediction is minor, the setups using coarser
5 resolution DEM10m and DEM30m are slightly better and preferred for application. These
6 two setups give higher NSE value ranges and significantly higher mean NSE values resulted
7 from all random combinations of parameters than the finer resolution setups. These two
8 setups also have more “good” parameter sets indicating higher probability to get “good”
9 representation of the modeled watershed. This implies better streamflow prediction by these
10 two setups even without calibration.

11 **3.1.3. Effect on the prediction of saturated areas**

12 The probabilities of saturation in 10 wetness classes were compared among four DEM
13 resolution setups using only “good” parameter sets for both streamflow and saturated area
14 predictions (Fig. 6). The probability of saturation, which indicates the number of days in the
15 calibration period when the wetness class is saturated, shows no significant difference among
16 the four setups indicating that DEM resolution does not have an impact on the probability of
17 saturation. It is important to note that we tried to keep the areal percentage of each wetness
18 class approximately the same in the four setups using different DEMs. The ‘good’ parameter
19 sets in four setups should give comparable predictions of streamflow, percentage of
20 watershed area that is saturated, and the time that each wetness class was saturated, which
21 results in similar probability of saturation. Wetness classes 7 to 10 are predicted to be mostly
22 dry, implying that almost 70% of the watershed is rarely saturated. Wetness class 1 has a high
23 probability of saturation (80-100%) because its soil water storage capacity is very low, i.e., the
24 wetness class is prone to saturation whenever there is precipitation. The probability of
25 saturation decreases in the more upslope wetness classes: 60-80% in wetness class 2, 30 – 50%
26 in class 3, 5 – 22% in class 4, 1 – 9% in class 5, 0-3% in class 6, 0-1% in class 7, 0-0.3% in class
27 8, 0-0.08% in class 9, and 0% in class 10. We also observed that the uncertainty of saturation

1 probability of the more upslope wetness classes is lower because they only respond to high
2 rainfall events.

3 The results of the probability of saturation correspond well with the uncertainty of
4 percentage of saturated areas shown in Figure 7. The four model setups do not have
5 significant differences in the percentage of saturated areas in the watershed. The maximum,
6 minimum, and interquartile range indicated by the top and bottom values of the four box
7 plots are slightly different because of minor differences in division of wetness classes in the
8 watershed. For the majority of the time, no more than approximately 25% of the total
9 watershed area is saturated. The watershed can be saturated up to more than 50% in extreme
10 events that are shown as outliers in the boxplots. The median percentage of saturated areas
11 in the watershed is only around 7-8%.

12 Although the statistical distributions of saturated areas in four DEM setups are relatively
13 similar, the spatial distributions of saturated areas simulated in a small headwater area (Fig.1)
14 on specific days (28-30 April 2006) when observations are available appeared to be different
15 as shown in Figure 8. In Figure 8, the saturated areas simulated in four DEM setups
16 correspond to the saturation of wetness classes 1, 2 and 3. Saturated areas cover
17 approximately equal areas of the watershed for the different DEM resolutions, but differ
18 significantly in spatial distribution. The saturated areas resulting from DEM1m and DEM3m
19 are scattered, not well connected, and broadly distributed. For coarser resolution DEM10m
20 and DEM30m, saturated areas connect well with each other and with the areas concentrated
21 near streams. The percentages of simulated saturated areas that intersect with observations
22 increase with coarser resolution DEMs: 34% (DEM1m), 53% (DEM3m), 85% (DEM10m) and
23 90% (DEM30m). Therefore, based on visual comparison with observations and our
24 calculation, the coarser resolution DEMs give better fits to observed saturated areas than the
25 higher resolution DEMs. Among the four DEMs, DEM10m provides the most realistic
26 representation of saturated areas and reasonable fit to observations.

1 **3.1.4. Effect on parameter uncertainty**

2 Figure 9 shows the comparison between the distribution of “good” parameters for streamflow
3 (in light green) and the distribution of “good” parameters for both streamflow and saturated
4 areas (in green) in four SWAT-HS model setups with different resolution DEMs. Only two
5 parameters distributions (*latb* and *Smax*) are plotted in Figure 9 because they are the most
6 sensitive parameters (Hoang et al., 2017). Although the number of good parameters for
7 streamflow varies in four setups, the ranges of good parameter values and the shape of their
8 distributions are alike for all calibrated parameters. Using multiple observations (both
9 streamflow and saturated areas) helps to reduce a great number of “good” parameters in all
10 4 setups but does not significantly narrow down the value ranges of good parameters. The
11 similarity in the distribution of good parameters in four setups with different DEM resolution
12 implies that DEM resolution has a negligible impact on parameter uncertainty for this
13 watershed.

14 **3.2. Effect of soil and land use input complexity on model uncertainty**

15 **3.2.1. Effect on uncertainty in streamflow predictions**

16 All nine SWAT-HS setups with different degrees of complexity are able to obtain good model
17 performance and are comparable to one another (Fig. 10 and Table 4). More than 50% of the
18 total simulations in each setup produce NSE greater than 0.5, which corresponds to
19 “satisfactory” performance. All setups also have high percentages of “good” performance
20 (12.5 – 22.6%), with TB1 and TB8 having the lowest and highest percentages, respectively.
21 The maximum NSE, NSElog and KGE obtained from nine setups are relatively equivalent.
22 The mean values of three metrics are slightly different, except for the TB3 setup with the
23 lowest mean values in all three metrics. This is also reflected in Figure S4 (Supplementary
24 Materials) showing that all setups capture measured streamflow well within their
25 uncertainty ranges with TB3 being the poorest setup with the widest uncertainty range.
26 Applying only the “good” parameter sets in the validation period, we observe insignificant
27 differences among the nine setups, but TB3 still performs the worst in low flow with the

1 lowest NSElog. All these “good” parameter sets give above ‘satisfactory’ to “good” fit to
2 observations in the validation periods implying that all nine setups are reasonable to use for
3 flow predictions. In spite of minor differences, from all the evaluation criteria, TB3 gives the
4 poorest performance among nine setups followed by the simplest setup TB1. Setups TB6 to
5 TB9 give equally good performance and are better than the remaining ones.

6 Grouping the nine setups into three groups: (i) *simple* (TB1 – TB5), (2) *intermediate* (TB6 – TB8);
7 and (iii) *complex* (TB9), we observe that the model performance of setups in *intermediate*
8 groups are slightly better than the *simple* one although the differences are small. The
9 *intermediate* group has a higher number of “good” parameter sets, a higher mean NSE in the
10 calibration period, as well as consistently better performance in the validation period. The
11 most complex setup (TB9) gives equally good performance as setups in the *intermediate* group
12 with no improvement in any statistical metric.

13 All nine setups use the same DEM with 10m resolution and have the same distribution of
14 wetness classes; therefore, the distributions of their predicted saturated areas, are similar and
15 thus are not shown here.

16 **3.2.2. Effect on parameter uncertainty**

17 We tested the effect of soil and land use complexity on parameter uncertainty by comparing
18 the distribution of good parameters among nine setups with different degrees of complexity
19 as in Figure 11. We only showed the distribution of one calibrated parameter *latb* as an
20 example because we observed the same behavior in the remaining calibrated parameters.
21 Similar to the comparison of four setups using different DEMs, the nine setups with different
22 degrees of complexity produce different numbers of good parameters for streamflow and
23 saturated areas, but are similar in the shape of their distributions and value ranges.
24 Accordingly, soil and land use complexity have negligible effect on parameter uncertainty.

1 4. Discussion

2 The objective of this study is to estimate uncertainty in model parameterization, and
3 predictions of streamflow and saturated areas due to the effects of DEM resolution and
4 complexity in model setup, specifically combinations of land use and soils. The following
5 sections discuss the proposed research questions based on the results obtained.

6 4.1. What is the most suitable DEM resolution to use in SWAT-HS?

7 Our results show that randomly generated parameter values from coarser resolution DEMs
8 (DEM10m and DEM30m) perform better for streamflow prediction. However, after
9 calibration, the effect of DEM resolution on the uncertainty of streamflow prediction is very
10 minor. This result is in agreement with Liu et al. (2005) using the Wetspa model with 50 –
11 800m cell sizes, Molnar and Julien (2000) using the CASC2D model with 127 – 914 m cell
12 sizes, and Chaplot (2005) using SWAT with 20-500m DEMs. These studies found that
13 discharge was simulated equally well irrespective of DEM resolution as long as parameters
14 are calibrated properly. Kuo et al. (1999) found only minor effects of grid size ranging from
15 10-400m on discharge during dry years.

16 For models calibrated for both streamflow and saturated areas, DEM resolution has very
17 limited impact on probability of saturation in wetness classes and percentage of saturated
18 areas in the watershed. However, it greatly influences the spatial distribution of saturated
19 areas. SWAT-HS simulates the saturation-excess runoff coming from saturated areas based
20 on a statistical soil water distribution assigned to wetness classes. The “*wettest*” wetness
21 classes downslope with lowest soil water storage capacity are saturated first followed by
22 “*drier*” adjacent wetness classes located more upslope. Therefore, the distribution of
23 saturated areas follows the distribution of wetness classes categorized by the values of TI.
24 Accordingly, the sensitivity of DEMs on saturated areas predictions can be explained by the
25 effect of DEM resolution on TI.

1 Figure 12 shows the relationships of TI with slope angle, upslope contributing area and
2 elevation using two representative DEM resolutions: 1m and 10m. It is evident that DEM 1m
3 can capture a significantly wider range of slopes than DEM 10m because of its finer
4 resolution. Also, the percentage of grids that have low values of TI is significantly higher in
5 DEM 1m than in DEM 10m (Figure 12 uses red lines for reference), which also can be seen in
6 Figure 3d. Low TI values are usually found in grids with steep slopes or with low upslope
7 contributing areas (according to Equation 1). Because DEM 1m captures steep slopes at a local
8 scale and has a high number of grids with low upslope contributing area (Fig. 3c), the
9 percentage of low TI values in DEM 1m is much higher. If we look at the relationship between
10 TI and elevation, we can see that the distribution of TI values in DEM 1m spread out wider
11 than in DEM10m at all elevations. This explains why the distribution of TI values in DEM1m
12 has a more complex pattern while DEM10m has a more coherent pattern with high TI grids
13 well matched to the stream network (Fig. 13). Realistically, the highest TI value grids should
14 be located in downslope, near-stream, low elevation areas while the lowest TI value grids
15 should be in upslope, high elevation areas. Therefore, in this case study, the coarser DEMs
16 (DEM10m and 30m) give a better and more realistic representation of the landscape than the
17 finer DEMs (DEM1m and 3m). This is possibly the reason why the coarser DEMs setups have
18 higher probabilities for good performance (i.e., a higher number of 'good' parameter sets)
19 and have better performance in all aspects as compared with the finer DEMs.

20 Our findings are in agreement with Lane et al. (2004) who used a high resolution LiDAR 2m
21 DEM with TOPMODEL, which simulates hydrology based on TI. TOPMODEL predicted the
22 widespread existence of disconnected saturated zones that expanded within an individual
23 storm event but which did not necessarily connect with the drainage network. They found
24 that using the LiDAR 2m DEM, TI has a complex pattern, associated with small areas of both
25 low and high values of the TI, leading to the appearance of disconnected saturated areas.
26 After remapping the topographic data at progressively coarser resolutions by spatial
27 averaging of elevations within each cell, they found that as the topographic resolution is

1 coarsened, the number and extent of unconnected saturated areas were reduced and the
2 catchments displayed more coherent patterns, with saturated areas more effectively
3 connected to the channel network. Moreover, Quinn et al. (1995) showed how progressively
4 refining model resolution from 50 m to 5 m reduces the kurtosis in the distribution of TI
5 values and increases quite substantially the number of very low index values. Wolock and
6 Price (1994) showed that hydrological predictions are affected by DEM resolutions in
7 TOPMODEL.

8 Our results show that DEM10m is the best choice among four DEMs tested because of its
9 slightly better performance for streamflow and more importantly, its good fit to observations
10 of saturated areas. Although DEM30m also gives very good results for streamflow and
11 distribution of saturated areas, we did not choose DEM30m because its coarse cell size may
12 overestimate the extent of actual saturated areas. Therefore, DEM10m is the preferred choice
13 to scale-up the application of SWAT-HS to larger watersheds in the New York City water
14 supply system for future applications. Our choice of DEM10m is in agreement with Kuo et
15 al. (1999) who evaluated the effect of DEM grid sizes ranging from 10-400m on runoff and
16 soil moisture for a variable-source area hydrology model and observed that by using the
17 10x10m grid cells, the overall pattern of simulated wet areas showed a close correspondence
18 with the poorly drained areas defined in the soil survey. Zhang and Montgomery (1994), in
19 a study that evaluated grid size effect using TOPMODEL, also suggested that a 10m grid size
20 presents a rational compromise between increasing resolution and data volume for
21 simulating geomorphic and hydrological processes. In contrast, Thomas et al. (2017)
22 indicated that LiDAR DEM 1-2 m is optimal for modeling hydrologically sensitive areas
23 (runoff generating areas) and is far better than the radar based DEM 5m. However, their case
24 study is a complex agricultural catchment dominated by micro-topographic features, which
25 can only be captured using high resolution DEMs. Our choice of DEM10m is in contrast to
26 Buchanan et al. (2014) who preferred DEM3m rather than DEM10m because of the better fit
27 with the observed patterns of soil moisture collected in five different agricultural field sites.

1 The difference in scale of case studies (field scale vs. watershed scale) and characteristics of
2 case studies (agricultural fields vs. a mixture of forest and agriculture) between Buchanan et
3 al. (2014) and our study may have resulted in different conclusions on choice of the
4 appropriate DEM resolution. Therefore, the sensitivity of DEM resolution may depend on
5 the scale and characteristics of the watershed. The dominant hydrological process in the
6 watershed may have a big impact on the sensitivity of DEM on hydrological prediction. In
7 our watershed, lateral flow is a dominant flow component and saturation-excess runoff is a
8 dominant type of surface runoff, thus, topography is the most important factor.
9 Consequently, the DEM that represents a realistic distribution of TI with high TI area
10 compatible with the main stream network gave a better model performance. This also
11 explains why the coarser DEM (10m and 30m) setups have higher probabilities for good
12 performance than the finer DEMs (1m and 3m). In a field-scale watershed, finer DEM
13 resolution is probably better because it can capture a more detailed and realistic
14 representation of TI distribution. In an agricultural area dominated by tile drainage, DEM
15 resolution may not be sensitive.

16 It should be noted here that all four DEMs in this study are derived from the same source of
17 2009 aerial LiDAR data with 1 meter resolution. The coarser DEMs (DEM3m, DEM10m and
18 DEM30m) are resampled products from DEM1m. Therefore, the four different DEM
19 resolutions carry similar information, but differ in topographic smoothing. A comparison of
20 various resolution DEMs from different sources may not yield the same results.

21 **4.2. What is the appropriate complexity of the distributed soil and land use inputs?**

22 From our comparison of nine SWAT-HS setups in three groups of complexity (*simple*,
23 *intermediate* and *complex*), we found that with all randomly generated parameter values, the
24 *intermediate* and *complex* groups are better than the *simple* group based on slightly higher
25 mean NSE values and a higher probability of good performance based on randomly
26 generated parameter values. The TB3 setup, which was built from the most complex soil map
27 (17 soil types) and the simplest land use map (1 land use) and the simplest setup TB1 are the

1 two poorest setups in the *simple* group. Additionally, compared to the *intermediate* group, the
2 *complex* group does not gain any improvement from using inputs that are more detailed.
3 However, with proper calibration, all nine models are able to provide good performances
4 and their “good” parameter sets continue to perform equally well in the validation period. In
5 addition to streamflow, all nine setups are able to capture saturated areas correctly on specific
6 days where observations are available. We conclude that increasing spatial input details does
7 not necessarily give better results for streamflow simulation as long as the model is properly
8 calibrated. However, over-simplification like the simple setups TB1, TB3 with only one land
9 use type may have greater impacts on water quality modeling. We recommend using
10 *intermediate* inputs for the SWAT-HS setup that adequately represent the spatial distribution
11 of dominant soils and land use types.

12 Our results are in agreement with previous studies on the effect of model input complexity
13 on streamflow simulation. Using an urban hydrological distributed model in a small
14 residential area, Petrucci and Bonhomme (2014) showed that the inclusion of some basic
15 geographical information that helps to correctly estimate impervious cover and identify
16 paths for surface water improves the model performance, but further refinements are less
17 effective. Finger et al. (2015) compared different setups with increasing detail in input
18 information using the HBV model and three observational data sets. They found that
19 enhanced model input complexity does not lead to a significant increase in overall
20 performance in water quantity, but suggested that the availability and use of different
21 datasets to calibrate hydrological models might be more important than model input data
22 complexity to achieve realistic estimations of runoff composition. Muleta et al. (2007) also
23 showed that streamflow simulated by SWAT is relatively insensitive to spatial scale when
24 comparing multiple watershed delineations from different soil and land use input data.

25 In comparison with the effect of DEM resolution, the importance of soil and land use
26 information is not as significant in the prediction of both streamflow and saturated areas. As
27 our studied watershed is a rural area and dominated by saturation-excess runoff, topography

1 and the wetness conditions of areas in the watershed are more important than land use in
2 water quantity modeling. Moreover, SWAT-HS uses TI as the basis for hydrological
3 modeling, thus, the effect of DEM resolution on hydrological predictions is dominant.
4 Therefore, when the appropriate DEM resolution is used, soil and land use information
5 become less sensitive to hydrological predictions. We think that this finding is applicable to
6 watersheds where application of SWAT-HS is suitable, i.e., watersheds dominated by
7 saturation-excess runoff. This finding may be also valid in applications of other topography-
8 based watershed models including: TOPMODEL (Quinn and Beven, 1993; Beven and Kirkby,
9 1979), SWAT-VSA (Easton et al., 2008), SWAT-WB (White et al., 2011). These results may not
10 be applicable in water quality modeling. Since land use information controls the inputs of
11 nutrients and information of other human activities that affect water quality, the water
12 quality prediction is expected to be very sensitive to the details of land use.

13 **4.3. How does input complexity affect parameter uncertainty and model output** 14 **uncertainty?**

15 Our results show that regardless of the level of detail of input data, we obtained numerous
16 sets of parameter values that give equally good performance for streamflow and saturated
17 area predictions. Modifying the level of detail in input data changes the number of “good”
18 parameter sets, but the ranges of “good” parameter values and the shape of their distributions
19 remain the same. The number of randomly generated Monte Carlo parameter sets is
20 sufficiently high to give a good coverage of parameter space. Although different inputs result
21 in varied numbers of “good” parameter sets, those numbers in all setups are adequate to
22 represent the distribution of ‘good’ parameter which reflects their sensitivities to hydrological
23 prediction. Therefore, we conclude that for this case study and the particular model SWAT-
24 HS, using higher resolution DEM or adding complex information on soil or land use does not
25 reduce parameter uncertainty or solve the equifinality problem. This statement may not be
26 valid for other areas that are characterized by numerous land uses and complex variations in

1 topography and soil types. This is also not valid for physically based models which require
2 detailed soil and land use information and a minimum number of parameters for calibration.
3 Combining different observations (temporal observations of streamflow and spatial
4 observations of saturated areas in multiple days) in calibration will help to reduce the number
5 of “good” parameter sets and choose the appropriate parameter sets that give good
6 representation of hydrological processes in the watershed. The importance of using multiple
7 data sets have been addressed in Finger et al. (2015), McMillan et al. (2011) and Kirchner
8 (2006). Our study is not aimed at solving the equifinality problem, but rather reduces the
9 number of solutions considered when using SWAT-HS to predict streamflow. The outcome
10 of this study directly reduces the decision uncertainty with regard to selecting the optimum
11 combination of input datasets for model setup that gives the best model results both spatially
12 and temporally. This has implications for watershed modeling by reducing model run time
13 as we scale-up the application of SWAT-HS to other larger watersheds within the NYC water
14 supply system.

15 **5. Summary and conclusions**

16 This paper is a follow-up to our previous study using the SWAT-HS model, investigating the
17 effect of input data complexity on the uncertainty in predictions of streamflow and saturated
18 areas. The input data include DEMs with different resolutions and different combinations of
19 simple to complex soil and land use maps. The main objectives are to explore whether using
20 more complex spatial data yields better, more robust results, and guide the selection of the
21 most appropriate input data for future applications of SWAT-HS in other watersheds or
22 larger watersheds within the New York City water supply system.

23 We chose DEM10m resampled from LiDAR DEM1m as the most appropriate resolution
24 because DEM10m gives a better physical representation of the landscape and is a
25 compromise between the high resolution 1m and 3m DEMs that provide too much spatial
26 detail that effects the calculation of upslope contributing areas and TI, and coarse resolution

1 DEM30m that averages out the essential details. We recommend the use of an intermediate
2 soil and land use map for our future applications of SWAT-HS. Our results show that
3 streamflow is not sensitive to both DEM resolution and soil and land use complexity as long
4 as proper calibration is carried out. However, DEM resolution has a significant impact on the
5 spatial distribution of predicted saturated areas due to its substantial control on the
6 distribution of TI values. The effect from soil and land use inputs becomes minor when the
7 appropriate DEM resolution is used in the model setup.

8 For the New York City watershed region, our study will provide a guidance for choosing
9 input data (DEM resolution and the degree of complexity for soil and land use) to apply
10 SWAT-HS in a larger scale watershed which requires division into multiple subbasins and a
11 certain degree of complexity for soil and land use information. Our results are particularly
12 informative when we use SWAT-HS to identify critical runoff generating areas and locations
13 within the watershed where management interventions for water quality improvements (e.g.
14 Phosphorus load reduction) are most effective. Besides New York City watersheds, our
15 findings are applicable to watersheds with similar land use, topography, and climate, but
16 similar investigation is needed in other regions using the methodology described in this
17 paper.

18 From this study it can be inferred that hydrological prediction is very sensitive to the choice
19 of DEM (with greater effects on prediction of saturated areas than streamflow), when using
20 a hydrologic model that uses topographic index as the basis for hydrological modeling in a
21 watershed that is dominated by saturation-excess runoff. With SWAT-HS and models that
22 are based on TI such as TOPMODEL, SWAT-VSA and SWAT-WB, DEM resolution is more
23 influential than the complexity of soil/land use information. When the appropriate DEM
24 resolution is used, soil and land use information become less influential to hydrological
25 predictions.

26 Regardless of the level of detail for input data, the equifinality problem can cause uncertainty
27 in modeled results when using different SWAT-HS setups. Increasing input data complexity

1 does not help to reduce parameter uncertainty and the uncertainty of model predictions.
2 However, using multiple types of observed datasets such as spatial observations in addition
3 to the conventional temporal observations can eliminate a high number of unsuitable
4 parameter sets and guide selection of the appropriate parameter sets that give good temporal
5 and spatial predictions for streamflow and saturated areas.

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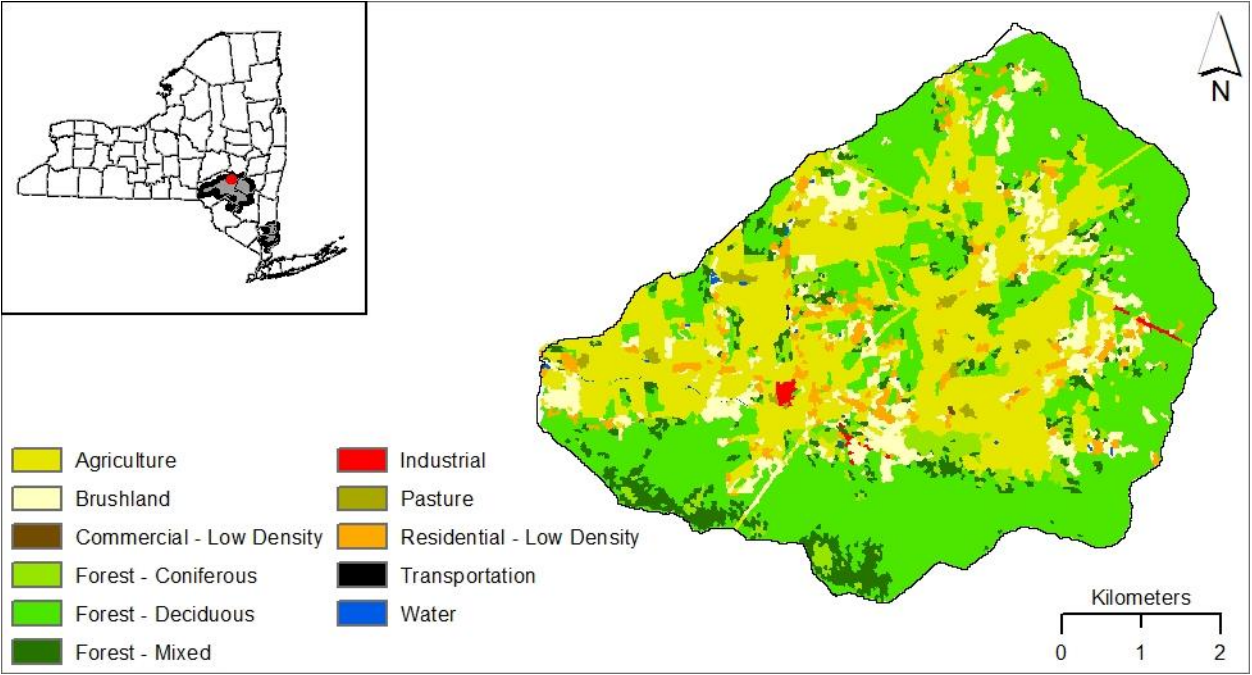
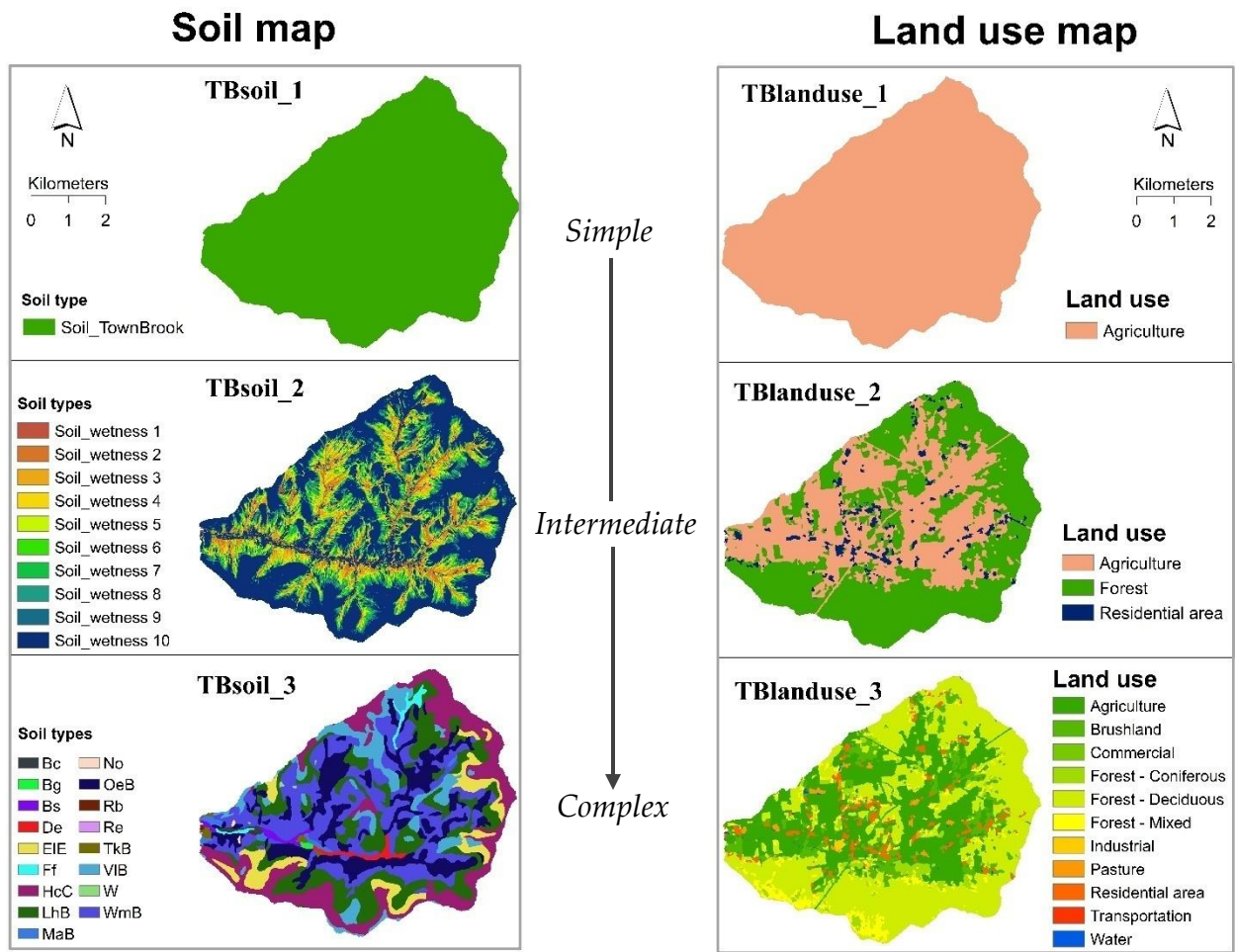


Figure 1: Town Brook watershed, Delaware County, New York

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3 **Figure 2: Soil and land use maps with increasing levels of complexity to build SWAT-HS**

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model setups

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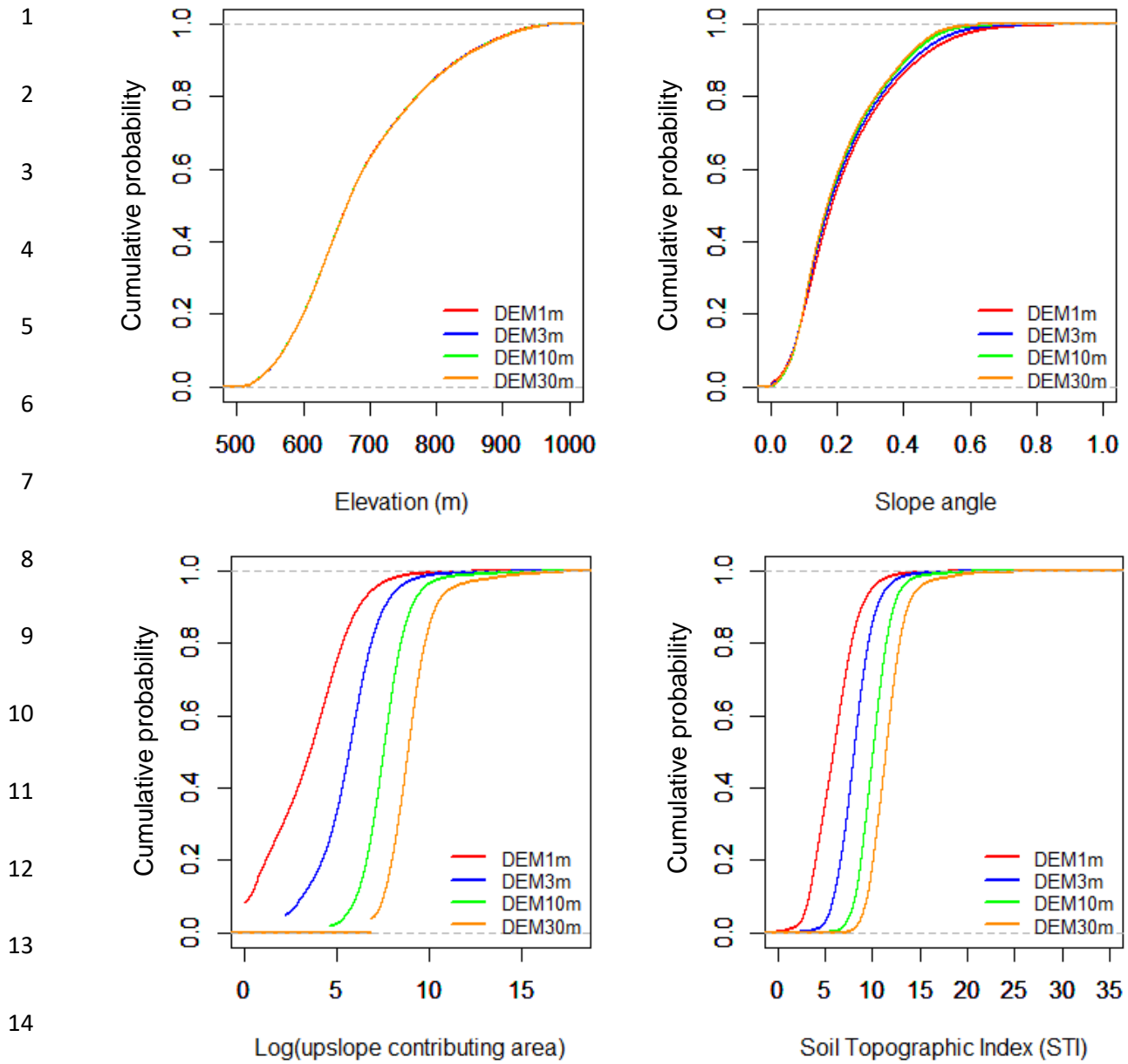
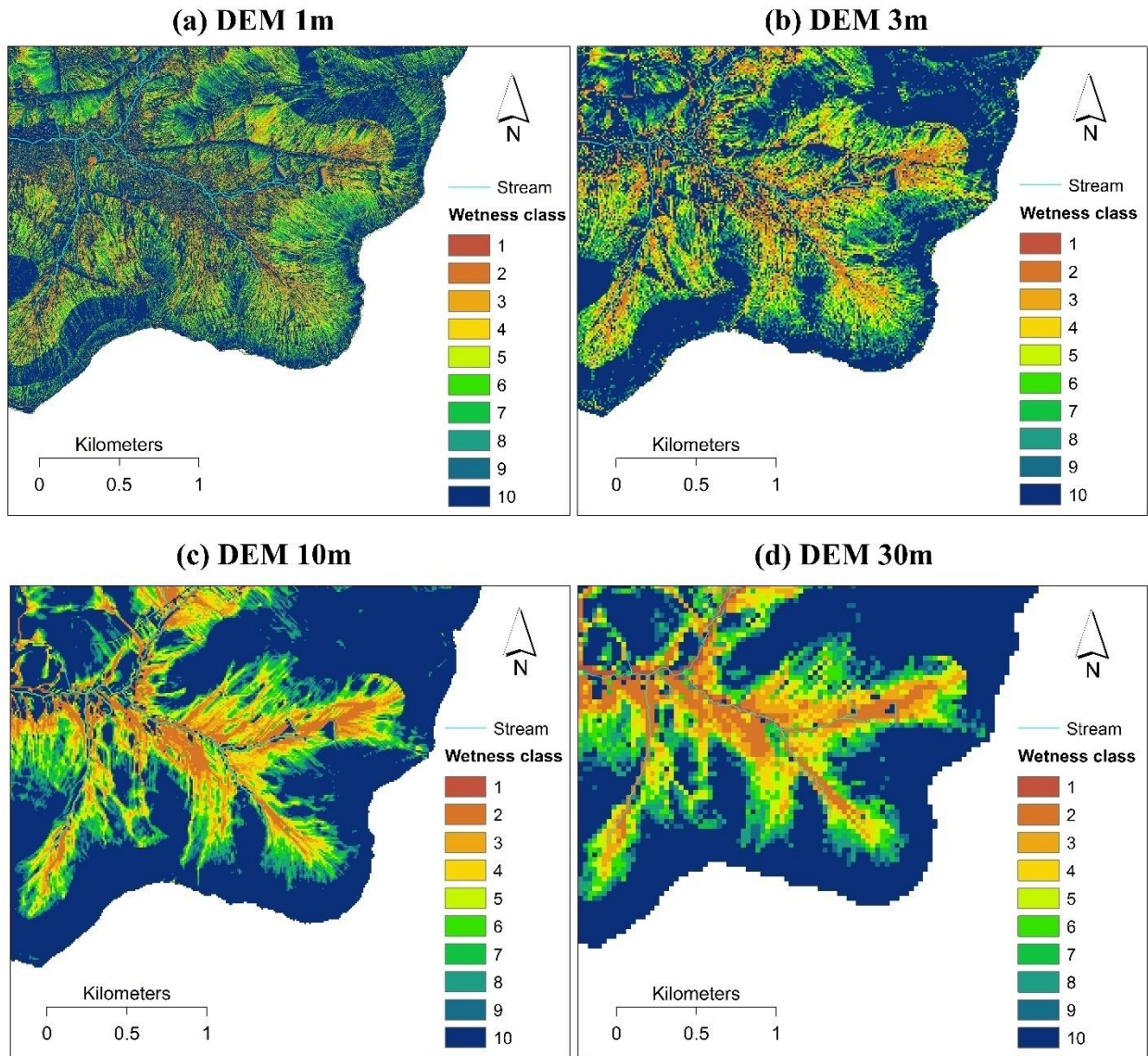


Figure 3: Difference in cumulative probability distribution of elevation, slope, upslope contributing area and topographic index between different DEM resolutions

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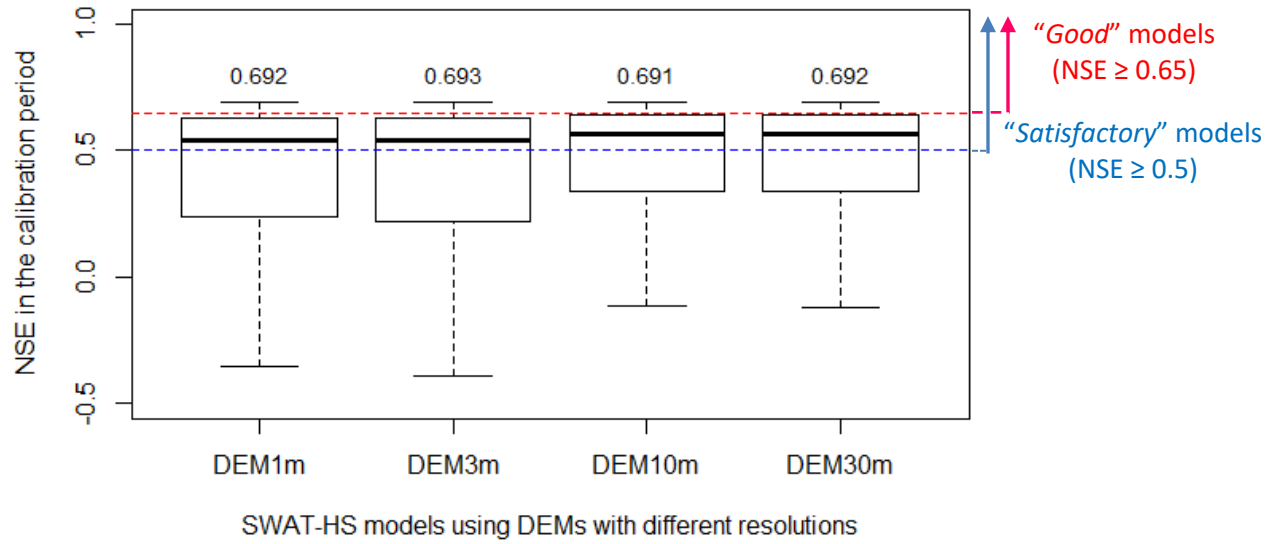
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Figure 4: Wetness maps created from DEMs with different resolutions

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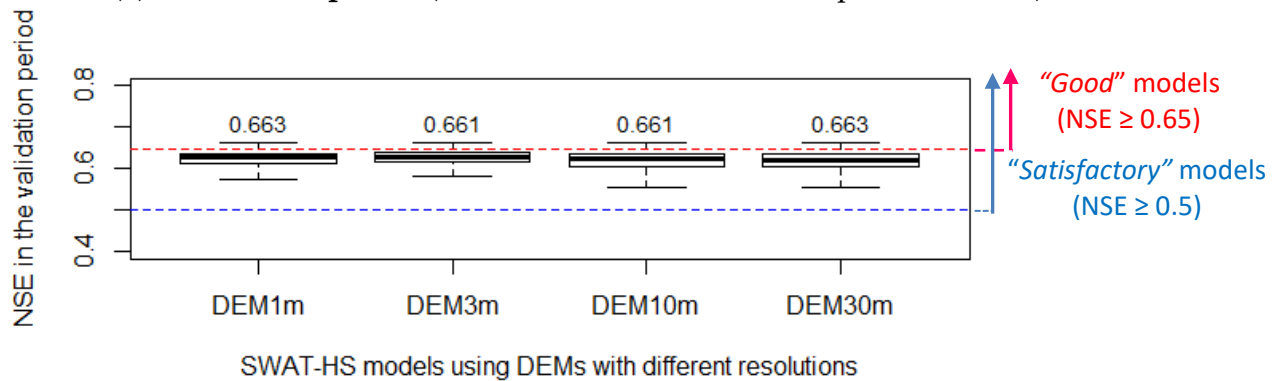
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(a) **Calibration period** (based on 10,000 Monte Carlo parameter sets)



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(b) **Validation period** (based on "good" Monte Carlo parameter sets)

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Figure 5: Boxplots of NSE values in SWAT-HS set ups with different DEM resolutions

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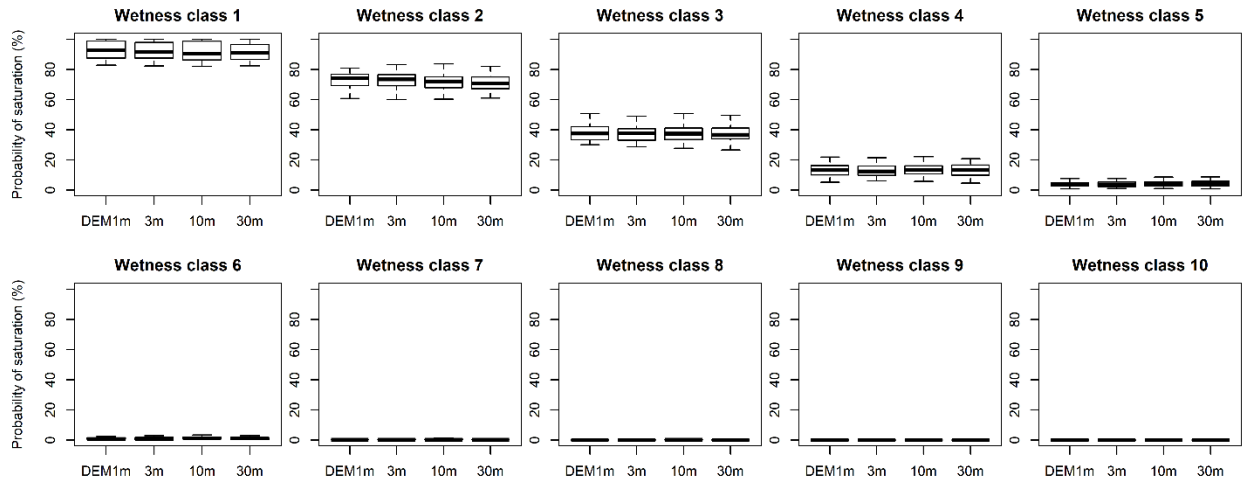
for calibration and validation periods (the number above the boxplot is the maximum NSE of

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each setup)

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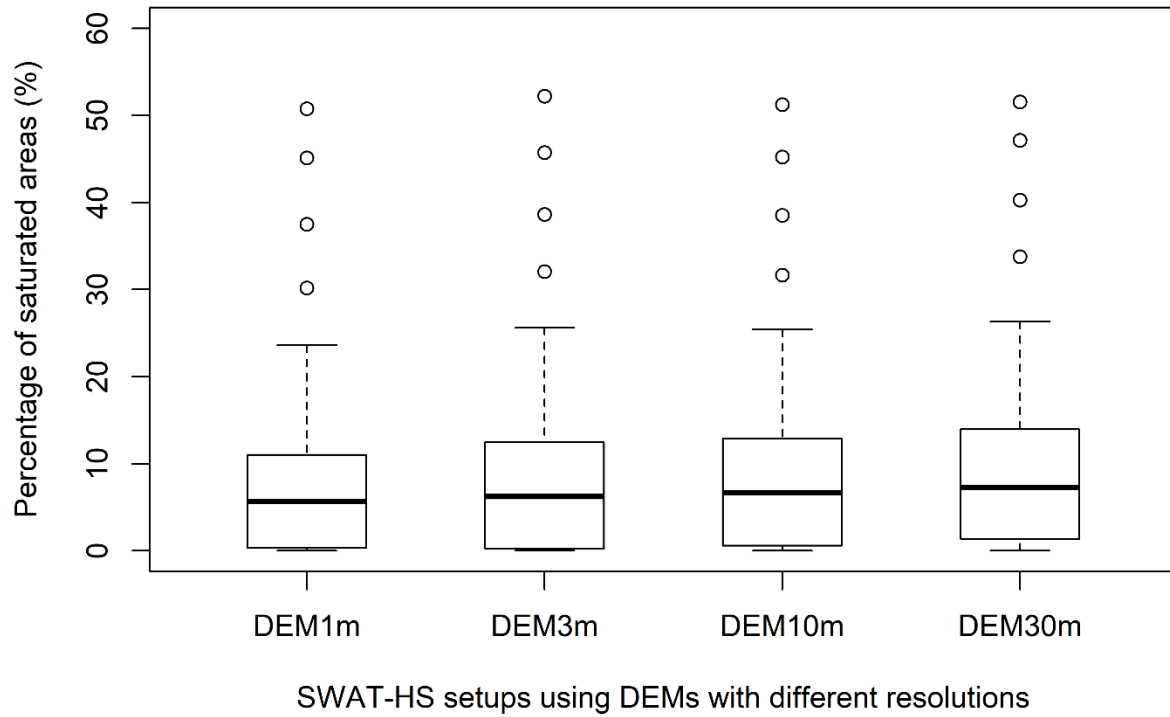
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3 **Figure 6: Probability of saturation of wetness classes in SWAT-HS set ups with different**
4 **DEM resolutions using good parameters for both streamflow and saturated areas**

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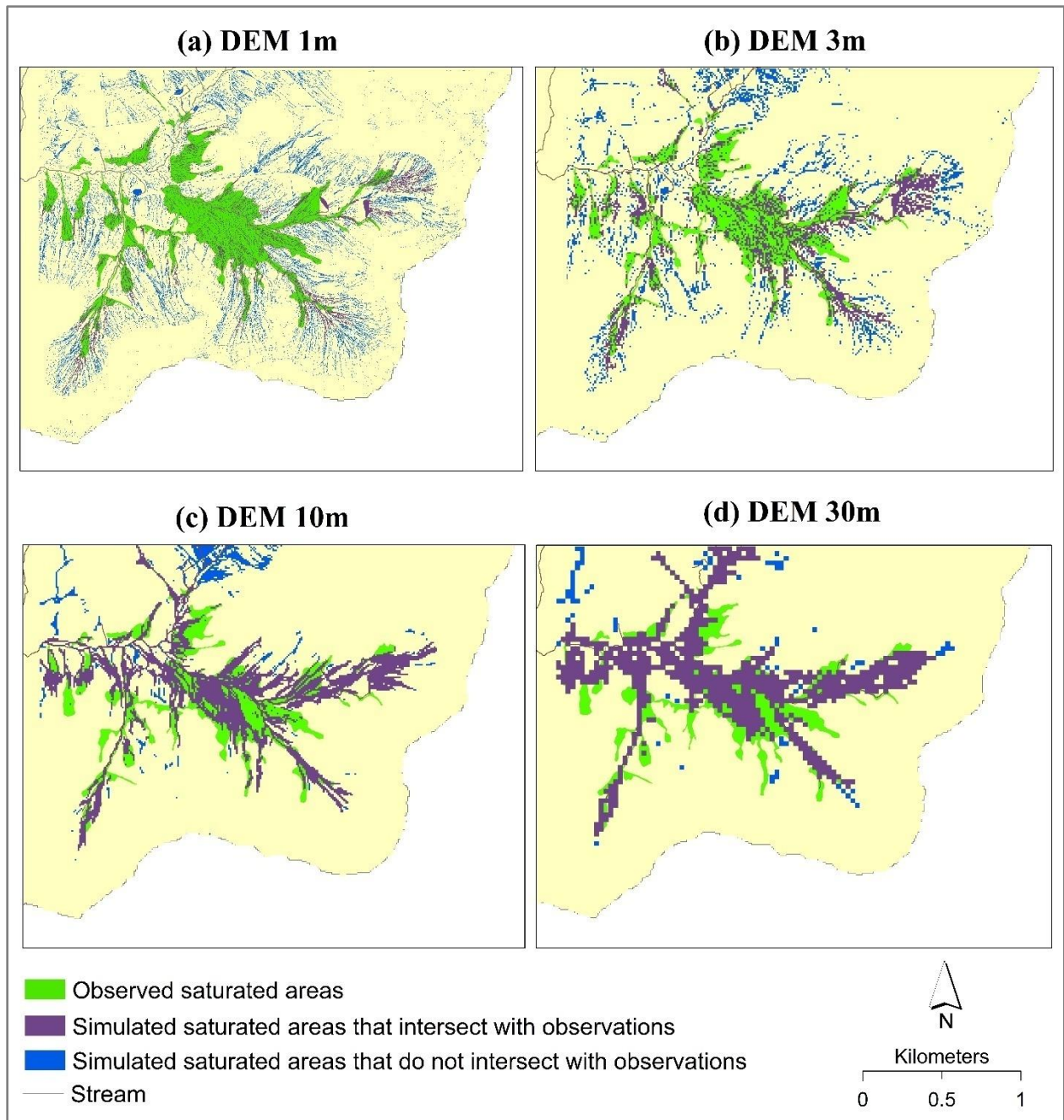


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3 **Figure 7: Percentage of saturated areas taking into account parameter uncertainty in the**
4 **calibration period in SWAT-HS setups using DEMs with different resolutions**

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Figure 8: Simulated and observed saturated areas from four SWAT-HS setups using different DEMs, 28-30 April 2006

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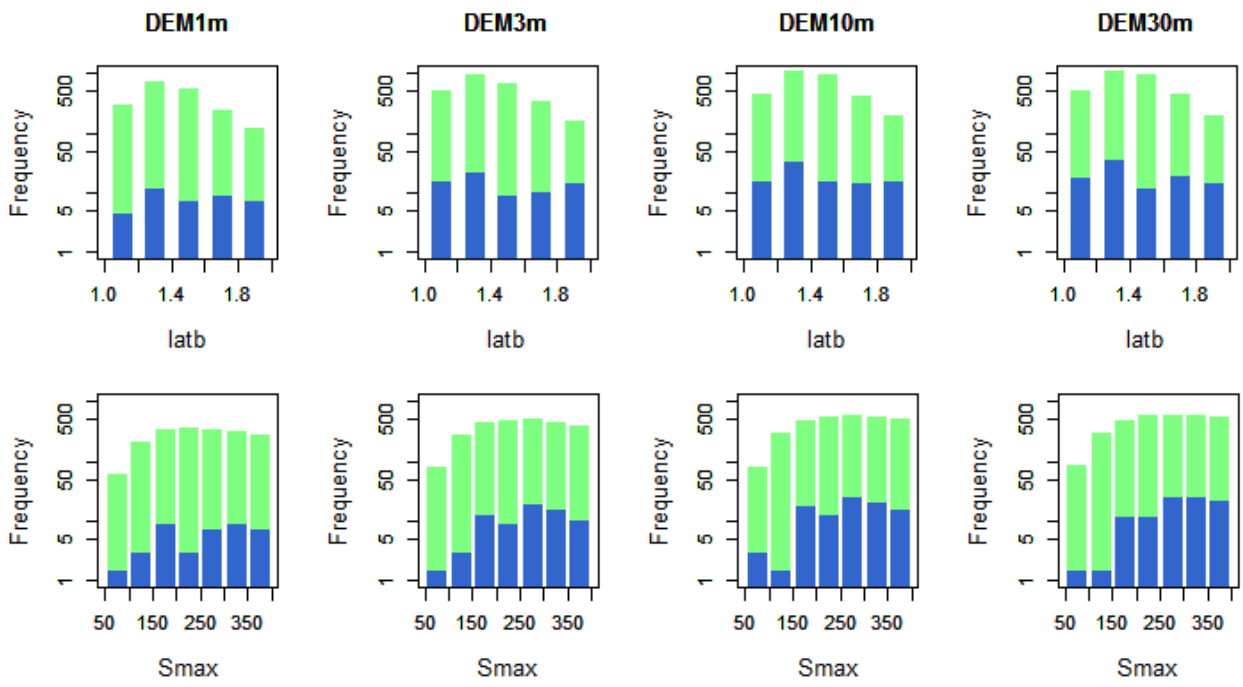
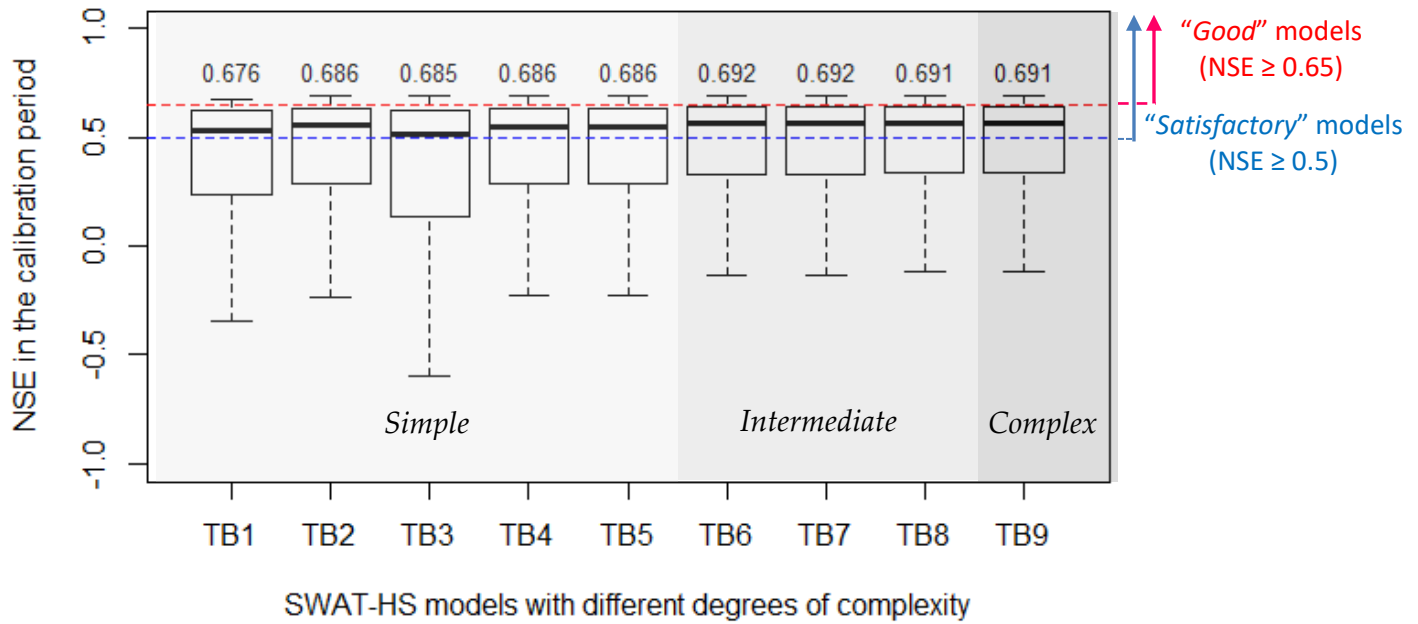


Figure 9: Distribution of "good" parameters for streamflow (in green) and for both streamflow and saturated areas (in blue) with log y axis in four SWAT-HS setups using different DEM resolutions

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(a) Calibration period (based on 10,000 Monte Carlo parameter sets)

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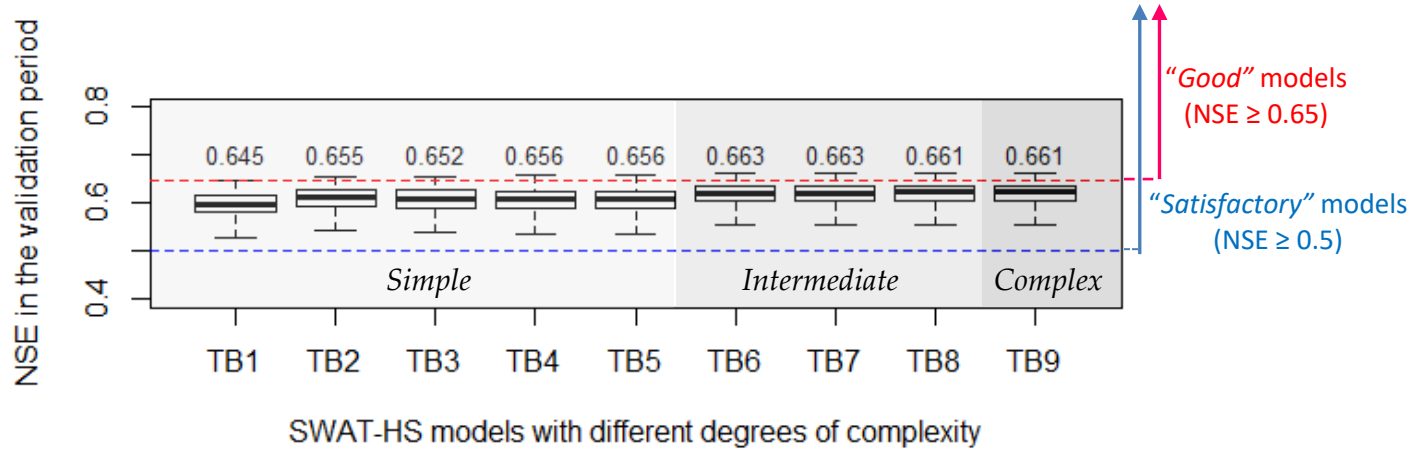
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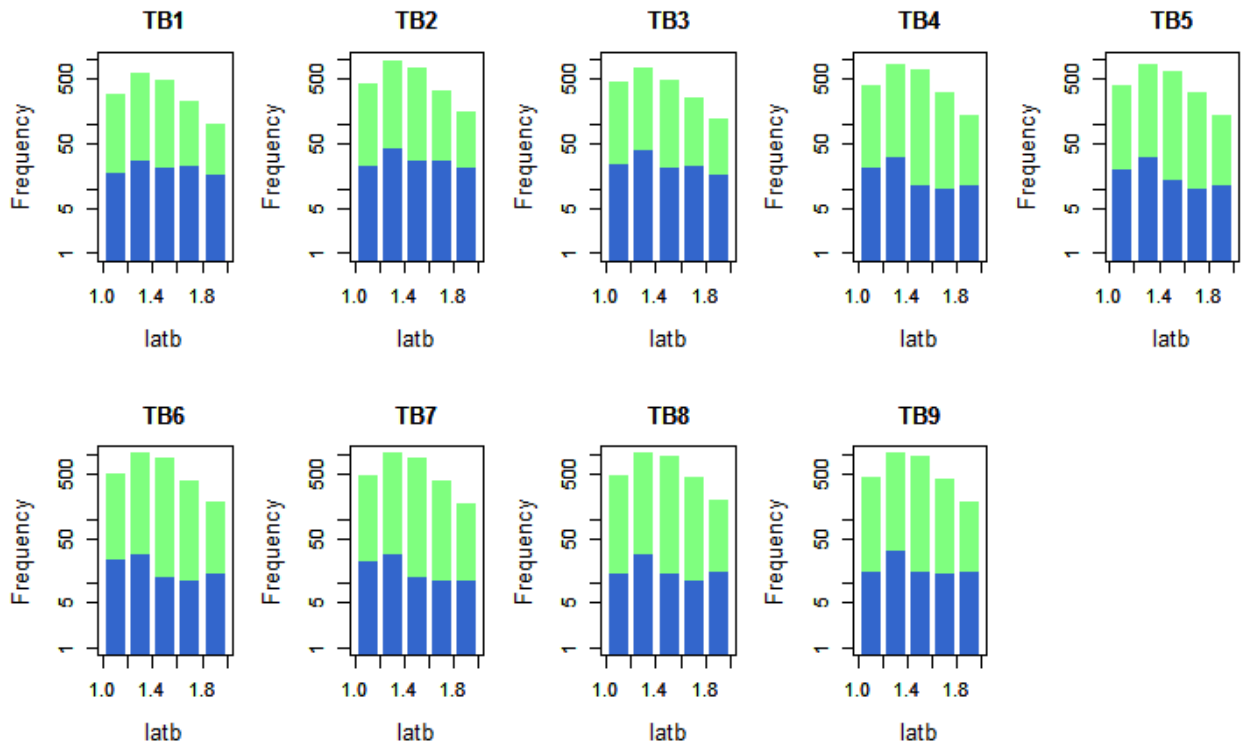
(b) Validation period (based on "good" Monte Carlo parameter sets)

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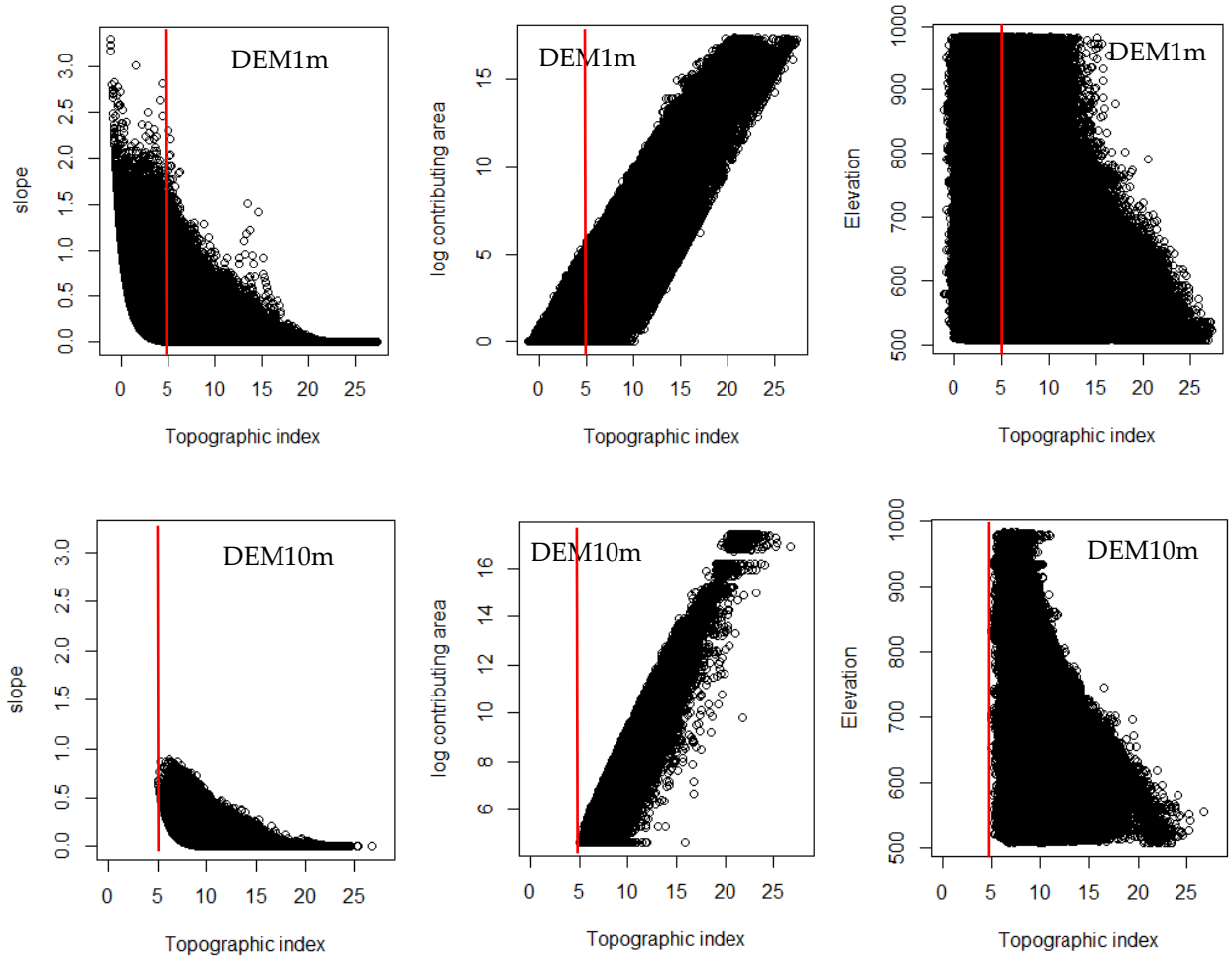
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Figure 10: Boxplots of NSE values in SWAT-HS set ups with different degrees of complexity for calibration and validation periods (The texts above the boxplot is the maximum NSE of each setup)



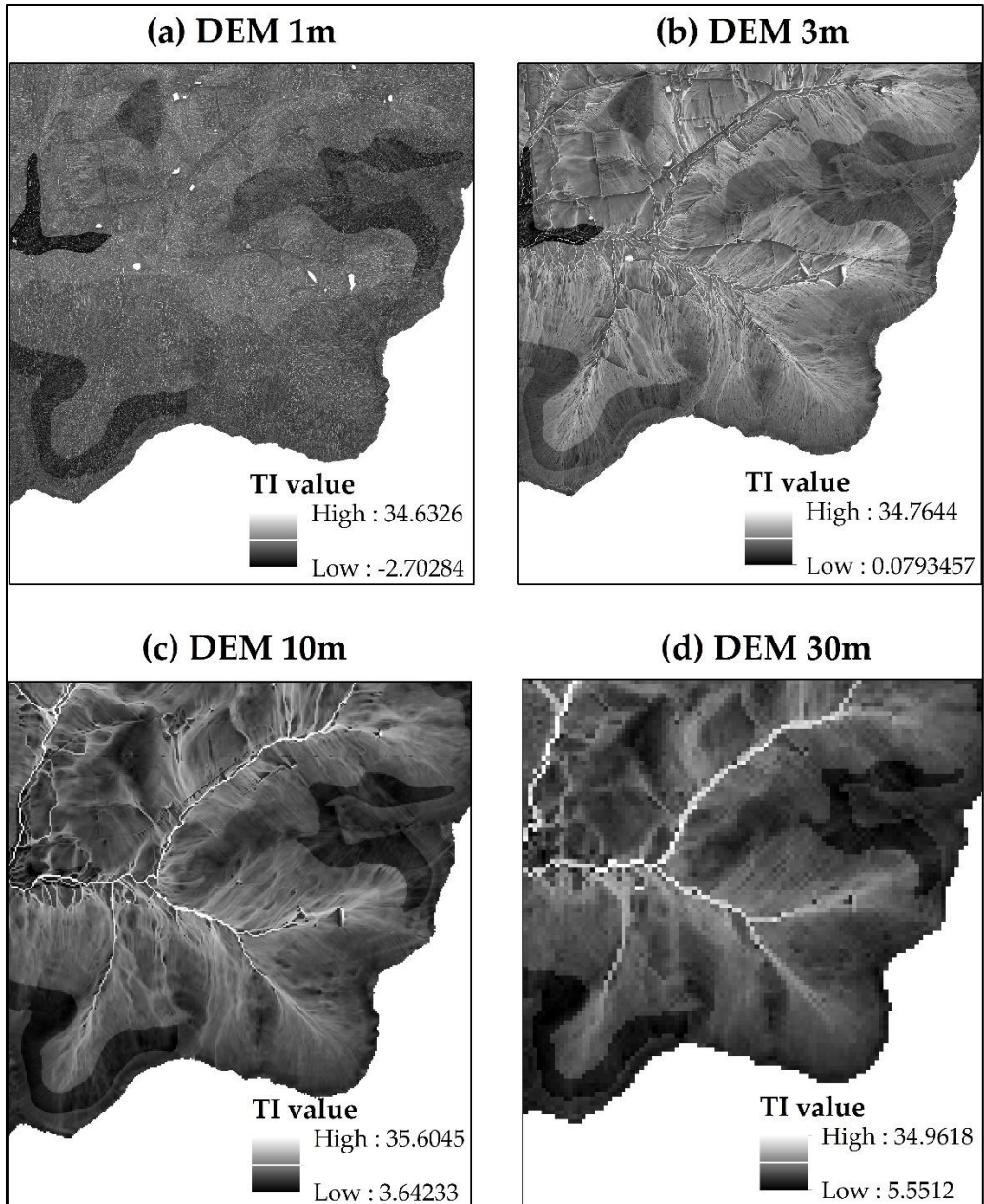
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Figure 11: Distribution of good parameter values (parameter *latb*) for streamflow (in green) and for both streamflow and saturated areas (in blue) with log y axis in nine SWAT-HS setups with different degrees of complexity



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Figure 12: Relationships of topographic index with slope, upslope contributing area and elevation with two different DEM resolutions: 1m and 10m (red lines are used as reference to compare the two DEM resolutions)



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Figure 13: Distribution of topographic index values using different DEMs

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2 **Table 1: SWAT-HS parameters for streamflow calibration**

Name	Unit	Definition	Range
<i>Group (i): Snowmelt calibration</i>			
SFTMP	°C	Snowfall temperature	-5 - 5
SMTMP	°C	Snowmelt temperature	-5 - 5
SMFMX	mm/°C	Maximum snowmelt factor	5 - 10
SMFMN	mm/°C	Minimum snowmelt factor	0 - 5
TIMP	-	Snow pack temperature lag factor	0 - 1
<i>Group (ii): Flow calibration</i>			
<i>RCHRG_PAF</i>	mm	Fraction of root zone percolation that recharges the surface aquifer	0-1000
<i>latA</i>		Surface aquifer non-linear reservoir coefficient	0 - 1
<i>latB</i>		Surface aquifer non-linear reservoir coefficient	1 - 3
<i>ALPHA_BF</i>	days ⁻¹	Baseflow recession constant	0 - 1
<i>EFFPORFACTOR</i>		Fraction of effective porosity that can hold water under saturated conditions	0 - 1
<i>EPCO</i>		Plant water uptake compensation factor	0 - 1
<i>ESCO</i>		Soil evaporation compensation factor	0 - 1
<i>Smax</i>	mm	Maximum soil water storage capacity in the watershed	100-400
<i>b</i>		Shape parameter defining the distribution of soil water storage capacity	0.1-3

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1 **Table 2: SWAT-HS model set ups with increasing levels of complexity**

SWAT-HS setups	Wetness classes	Soil map	Land use map	Number of HRUs	Degree of complexity
TB1	10	TBsoil_1	TBlanduse_1	10	Simple
TB2	10	TBsoil_2	TBlanduse_1	10	
TB3	10	TBsoil_3	TBlanduse_1	26	
TB4	10	TBsoil_1	TBlanduse_2	30	
TB5	10	TBsoil_1	TBlanduse_3	60	
TB6	10	TBsoil_2	TBlanduse_2	30	Intermediate
TB7	10	TBsoil_2	TBlanduse_3	60	
TB8	10	TBsoil_3	TBlanduse_2	80	
TB9	10	TBsoil_3	TBlanduse_3	146	Complex

- 2 TBsoil_1: homogeneous soil
- 3 TBsoil_2: 10 soil types (unique soil type for each wetness class)
- 4 TBsoil_3: 17 soil types
- 5 TBlanduse_1: homogenous land use (Agriculture)
- 6 TBlanduse_2: 3 land use types (Agriculture, Forest, and Urban)
- 7 TBlanduse_3: 11 land use types
- 8
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1 **Table 3: Statistical criteria to compare the effect of DEM resolution on model uncertainty**

		DEM1m	DEM3m	DEM10m	DEM30m
<i>Calibration period: based on 10,000 Monte Carlo parameter sets</i>					
Number of "good" parameter sets (%) for streamflow		1362	1890	2180	2293
Number of "good" parameter sets (%) for both streamflow and saturated areas		27	49	66	67
NSE	Max	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69
	Mean	0.09	0.05	0.33	0.34
NSElog	Max	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.83
	Mean	0.43	0.41	0.56	0.59
KGE	Max	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.81
	Mean	0.53	0.53	0.59	0.59
<i>Validation period: based on "good" parameter sets from calibration</i>					
NSE	Max	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66
	Mean	0.60	0.62	0.62	0.62
NSElog	Max	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82
	Mean	0.70	0.70	0.69	0.71
KGE	Max	0.79	0.78	0.79	0.79
	Mean	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.71

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Table 4: Statistical criteria to compare the effect of input complexity on model uncertainty

Statistical criteria/Setup		<i>Simple</i>					<i>Intermediate</i>			<i>Complex</i>
		TB1	TB2	TB3	TB4	TB5	TB6	TB7	TB8	TB9
<i>Calibration period: based on 10,000 Monte Carlo parameter set</i>										
Number of "good" parameter sets (%) for streamflow		1254	1917	1510	1753	1722	2194	2144	2258	2180
Number of "good" parameter sets (%) for both streamflow and saturated areas		76	99	88	60	61	64	61	59	66
NSE	Max	0.68	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69
	Mean	0.26	0.30	-0.08	0.30	0.30	0.34	0.33	0.34	0.33
NSElog	Max	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82
	Mean	0.55	0.55	0.37	0.58	0.57	0.56	0.56	0.55	0.56
KGE	Max	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.81
	Mean	0.59	0.59	0.51	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59
<i>Validation period: based on "good" parameter sets from calibration</i>										
NSE	Max	0.65	0.66	0.65	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66
	Mean	0.60	0.61	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62
NSElog	Max	0.79	0.80	0.79	0.81	0.81	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82
	Mean	0.70	0.70	0.57	0.71	0.71	0.69	0.69	0.68	0.68
KGE	Max	0.77	0.78	0.78	0.79	0.79	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.79
	Mean	0.72	0.71	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.71	0.70	0.70	0.70

