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To cite this version:

Isabelle Braud, J.F. Desprats, P.A. Ayral, C. Bouvier, J.P. Vandervaere. A method for mapping topsoil field-saturated hydraulic conductivity in the Cévennes-Vivarais region using infiltration tests conducted with different techniques. EGU General Assembly 2017, Apr 2017, Vienna, Austria. pp.1, 2017. hal-02606800

HAL Id: hal-02606800
https://hal.inrae.fr/hal-02606800
Submitted on 16 May 2020

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A method for mapping topsoil field-saturated hydraulic conductivity \( K_{fs} \) in the Cévennes-Vivarais region using infiltration tests conducted with different techniques

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1. CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

Context:
Flash floods are natural hazards that affect the Mediterranean region. They are caused by intense rainfall events but catchment characteristics, and particularly topsoil field-saturated hydraulic conductivity \( K_{fs} \) are also influential on the hydrological response. For distributed hydrological models, maps of \( K_{fs} \) are useful, as \( K_{fs} \) impacts Hortonian runoff, but they are difficult to obtain from point measurements.

Objectives:
- Propose a method to map \( K_{fs} \) from GIS layers with application to the Cévennes-Vivarais region where infiltration measurements obtained with different methods were available (Fig. 1)
- Propose a method to pool available infiltration measurements obtained with various techniques in the region for regionalization

2. STUDY AREA AND DATA

Study catchment and available data (Fig. 1 and 2): Infiltration measurements performed using:
- Guelph permeameter (GP) and Double Ring infiltration devices (DR) between 2002 and 2008 in the Gardon and Avène single ring (SR) infiltration measurements in the Claudéve catchment (2012) and Yzeron catchment (2008, blue rectangle in Fig. 1)
- Tension Disk Infiltrometers (TI)

3. POOLING INFILTRATION MEASUREMENTS

Raw data show significant difference in distribution among methods (Fig. 3) so pooling the data requires specific treatments

4. GEOMETRIC ANALYSIS

A two steps method for pooling \( K_{fs} \) data from various methods:
- Pooling of GP and DR data by geology * land use (Desprats et al., 2010, Fig. 4) and conversion of GP data to equivalent DR data
- Pooling SR and DR + TI data (Fig. 5) to get a final set of homogenized equivalent DR + TI data set

5. MAPPING TOPSOIL \( K_{fs} \)

Mapping method:
- Field data analysis show that geology and land use are significant explaining factors of \( K_{fs} \) and one value is assigned by geology * land use class (Fig. 6)
- Geology and land use were used to produce a map of \( K_{fs} \) (Fig. 7a) that is compared to a map derived from Rawls and Brakensiek (1985, RB85) pedotransfer function (Fig. 7b) based on a pedology map with associated soil data base including information about soil texture

Comparison of maps:
- A pattern more governed by land use resolution (30 m) for Fig. 7a and more related to the pedology map for Fig. 7b
- Lower range and lower absolute values with RB85 pedotransfer function
- RB85 values not representative of field in situ measurements (Braud et al., 2017)

6. CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

- A method was proposed to pool infiltration measurements of \( K_{fs} \) obtained with different techniques
- Geology and land use were found to be discriminant factors explaining the variability of \( K_{fs} \)
- Geology and land use can be used to map \( K_{fs} \)
- Perspective: use the map in a distributed hydrological model to assess if flash flood simulation is improved as compared to the use of pedotransfer functions

References:
Desprats, J.P., Carlsen, O., King, C., Marchand-Ad A., 2010. Cartographie de la perméabilité des sols pour l'aide à la prévision des crues ; cas d'étude sur le Gardon d'Anduze. La Houille Blanche 32: 38

Acknowledgements: This work was conducted with the support of: ANR FloodScale, Schap!, OHM-CV and MISTRAL'ShMyr