Comment on cp-2021-132
Anonymous Referee #2

Referee comment on "Was there a glacial outburst flood in the Torngat Mountains during Marine Isotope Stage 3?" by Tamara Pico et al., Clim. Past Discuss., https://doi.org/10.5194/cp-2021-132-RC2, 2021

Manuscript Number: cp-2021-132

Manuscript Type: Research Article
Title: Was there a glacial outburst flood in the Torngat Mountains during Marine Isotope Stage 3?
Authors: Tamara Pico, Jane Willenbring, April S. Dalton and Sidney Hemming

Comments to Authors:

Pico et al’s manuscript provides evidence of an outburst flood from Glacial Lake Koroc in the Torngat Mountain of northern Quebec and Labrador, Canada. Using two $^{10}$Be cosogenic exposure ages they suggest this outburst occurred during MIS 3 and the flood volume could have contributed to surface ocean freshening and measurable meltwater signal in δ$^{18}$O records. The manuscript is, for the most part, clearly written, and is well supported by figures. However, I have a number of concerns that need to be addressed before this manuscript is ready for publication.

1). The authors constrain the age of Glacial Lake Koroc using two $^{10}$Be cosogenic exposure ages. My main concern is the small sample size and the possibility of inheritance in these samples. The presence of a cold-based ice sheet covering the study area is
highlighted in the text (lines 293-296). It, therefore, seems equally plausible that the high
elevation shorelines dated in this study could be one of the earliest stages of a post-LGM
lake in the region and samples simply appear older due to inherited $^{10}$Be concentrations.
The authors explore the possibility of erosion and burial of the sample site but no mention
of inheritance in the samples is made.

2). More detail is needed regarding the geomorphic/sedimentological evidence for pre-
LGM Glacial Lake Koroc. No details regarding the mechanism of failure and evidence for a
spillway that drained the lake are discussed, despite ‘outburst flood’ being in the title.
During LGM ice recession, multiple glacial lakes occupied the Tornagat Mountains. Could
this not have been the case for pre-LGM and if so, what is the likelihood that this lake
didn’t drain into another lower elevation lake nearby? Is it likely that the whole lake
drained during the outburst event? Without the elevation of the spillway, this cannot be
assessed.

3). The main conclusion drawn in this study is the contribution an outburst flood from this
lake could have had to surface ocean freshening and possible implications this may have
had for Heinrich events.

‘A freshwater volume of 1.14x10$^{12}$ m$^3$, associated with the glacial lake outburst described
in this

study could contribute to the large $\delta^{18}$O recorded for MIS 3 Heinrich events
(minimum volume

required = 1.4x10$^{13}$ -2.3 x10$^{14}$ m$^3$ ; Hemming, 2004).’

The minimum volume stated is from Hemming, 2004 is ‘a value assuming a volume the
area of the Heinrich layers, and the thickness of the mixed layer is mixed one time with
enough ice and water to make the d18O excursion’. However, my understanding of the
paper is that 0.6 -1.9 Sv of water over 1 yr to 500 yrs is needed to explain the observed
$\delta^{18}$O excursion. The estimate presented in this manuscript is 0.004x 10$^6$ over 3 days.
This seems to be significantly less water than is needed to contribute to the $\delta^{18}$O
excursion observed during a ~500 yrs of a typical Heinrich Event.
Line edits:

Line 24: Provide a value for the magnitude of freshwater flux in the abstract. Consider also adding the lake name to the abstract.

Line 27: Present freshwater flood volume in km$^3$ rather than m$^3$.

Line 123: Delete space.

Figure 3: Please add the drainage route to panel B. It would also be useful to add the location of mapped shorelines to this figure.

Line 206: Evidence for outlet needs to be clearly stated.

Line 232/233: More information is needed regarding the duration of ice cover during the LGM. The uncertainty surrounding the 20 kyr ice cover is very briefly mentioned and needs to be more clearly stated.
Line 232: Add space ‘concentration( Gosse and Phillips, 2001)’

Line 235: Add space ‘calculation(Jones et al., 2019)’

Line 230: Add a brief statement to highlight that this is a minimum age

Line 234: You describe the impact of GIA on your ages however no age GIA correct age is available to the reader. Consider adding these ages to the text and Table S2.

Line 206: ‘The shoreline is an erosional feature, and there is a small inlet channel at this elevation with rounded imbricated cobbles, suggestive of outburst flooding.’ Imbricated sediment can be produced by outburst events. However, is these are within a small inlet channel how do they suggest outburst flooding?

Line 263: Should glacial not be capitalized in ‘Pre-LGM glacial Lake Koroc”?

Supplementary Material Line 18: Table S2 seems to be identical to the table above