Hydrology and Earth System Sciences Discussions

Hydrol. Earth Syst. Sci. Discuss., referee comment RC1
https://doi.org/10.5194/hess-2021-175-RC1, 2021
© Author(s) 2021. This work is distributed under
the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License.

Comment on hess-2021-175

Anonymous Referee #1

Referee comment on "A novel method for increasing water-yields, pine forests of the Northern Gulf of Mexico, USA " by Christy Ann Crandall et al., Hydrol. Earth Syst. Sci. Discuss., https://doi.org/10.5194/hess-2021-175-RC1, 2021

This manuscript outlines a method for prioritizing areas for forest thinning to increase water yields. The area of interest is the northern Gulf Coast of Florida, a region that has seen the consequences of severe drought in recent decades.

While this is an important topic, and I would be interested in seeing this method developed and implemented further, I cannot recommend this manuscript for publication in HESS. The overall quality of the manuscript is poor, and neither the content nor the presentation of the manuscript meet the high standards of the journal.

First, I am not sure this is a really a new method or simply a case-study applying concepts presented previously in Cohen 2018. In the latter case, the novelty of the approach diminishes, and the manuscript then becomes a simple case study (which is not unimportant, but would need to be presented differently).

Second, this manuscript would need a thorough rewrite. Suggesting individual edits at this point would be exhausting, but some general issues I will note include the following:

- Abstract mentions new method several times but never remotely articulates what it is.
- There are many grammatical errors including errors in tense and subject-verb agreement.
- Paragraphs often cover a multitude of topics (some relevant and some not) which are not united by a topic sentence.
- While the above structural flaws are a concern, my biggest issue is that parts of the manuscript, especially in the introduction, shared a considerable amount of language from previously published products. While these products are cited in the text, the similarity of the text suggests a lack of originality and/or poor synthesis of ideas and may in some cases cross the line into plagiarism.

Therefore, I recommend that this manuscript be rejected in its current form. I do think the content shows promise for publication in a different outlet once all of the above issues are carefully and critically addressed.