

# 1 Effect of Digital Elevation Model Spatial Resolution on

## 2 Depression Storage

### 3 Short running time Effect of DEM Spatial Resolution on Depression 4 Storage

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## 15 Abstract

16 Surface water storage—including wetlands and other small waterbodies—

17 has largely been disregarded in traditional hydrological models. In this

18 paper, the grid resampling method is adopted to study the influence of the

19 digital elevation model (DEM) grid resolution on depression storage (DS)

20 considering different rainfall return periods. It is observed that the DEM

21 grid size highly affects DS, and the higher the grid resolution is,

22 larger the DS value. However, when the grid resolution reaches a certain

23 value, the maximum DS value decreases. This suggests that a critical grid

24 resolution value exists at which the water storage capacity of depressions

25 is maximized, namely, 20 m in this work. This phenomenon is further

26 verified in two test cases with and without the infiltration process, i.e.,

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calculations of the local area and without infiltration area, respectively. This research may facilitate the accurate computation of the DS process, which is greatly affected by the grid resolution, thereby improving the reliability of hydrological models.

**Keywords** digital elevation model; depression storage; grid resampling; hydrological models; grid resolution; infiltration

## 1. Introduction

The effects of microtopography on hydrological processes have become an important topic to further improve the accuracy of terrain calculation. As one of the most common microtopographic structures, depressions are widely distributed across all types of soils, vegetation types, and rocks, and even in the form of gullies, these structures notably affect the runoff yield and concentration (Hartman, 2004). Depressions in the landscape vary in size, from relatively small, unmanaged water storage systems to large, regularly managed water bodies, such as lakes and reservoirs, small surface depressions, such as wetlands embedded in highlands or river corridors, ponds, and similar small water bodies (Rajib, Golden, Lane, & Wu, 2020). Lakes and reservoirs, as the main aquatic systems considered in the quantification of the availability of water resources, set the storage capacity. In previous studies (Dang, Chowdhury, & Galelli, 2020; Liu et al., 2018), small surface depressions have not been included in traditional watershed hydrological dynamic models, and surface depressions have thus been ignored on a large scale. However, the impact of these small depressions on the hydrological system has increasingly been acknowledged (Cohen et al., 2015; Yu & Harbor, 2019).

It is necessary to quantitatively describe surface depression storage (DS) at the watershed scale. The following fundamental question occurs: What are the roles of surface depressions in a given hydrologic system?

Studies have demonstrated the notable influences of hydrologic processes. It has been found that surface DS is a component of the rainfall-runoff process, rainfall reaches the Earth's surface in amounts that vary spatially and temporally. Some rainfall is intercepted and retained by the vegetation cover, reaches the ground and infiltrates at a rate dependent on soil conditions. When the rainfall intensity exceeds the soil infiltration capacity, surface depressions are filled, and the water stored in these depressions is denoted as DS. Surface runoff is initiated when surface depressions are completely filled and overflow occurs. Surface runoff continues to flow across elevation watershed elements depending on the rainfall, infiltration and microrelief conditions of the relief created by human cultural practices or nature (Mitchell & Jones, 1976).

A digital elevation model (DEM) contains abundant landform information (Yu, Chen, & Ai, 2007) and is one of the methods to represent the elevation of the Earth's surface. It has been applied in various fields, such as modeling (Deel, & Steinhilber, 1998), geomorphology (Delclaux, Genton, & 2009), quality assessment (Cesmenek-Demargne & Puech, 2000), topographic feature extraction (Zhu, Wu, Zhu, & Tang, 2006; Tang, Ge, Li, & Zhou, 2005), geological hazard monitoring (Zhao, Li, Feng, Wang, & Hu, 2016) and natural hazard mapping (Li, Solana, Canters, & M Kervyn, 2017). Since DEM directly reproduces the spatial characteristics of the terrain, its accuracy exerts an important influence on numerical simulation. Therefore, DEM-based methods have received increasing attention (Loye, Jaboyedoff, & Pedrizzini, 2009). The change of DS value can be caused by different DEM resolution. Fortunately, the main data acquisition

83 techniques and processing methods are related to specific terrain and land  
84 cover types, and DEMs are not immune to inherent errors, while the  
85 accuracy of each data set is often unknown and inconsistent (Mukherjee  
86 et al., 2013). At present, the applicability of digital surface model (DSM)  
87 accuracies has been studied in soil erosion (Hou et al., 2020), digital soil  
88 mapping (DSM)-based prediction models (Sena, Veloso, Fernandes-Filho,  
89 Francelino, & Schaefer, 2020), and iterative water surface storage  
90 reduction (Amoah, Amatya, & Nnaji, 2012; Abedini, Dickinson, & Rudra,  
91 2006). In related research, Abedini et al (2006) found that digital mapping  
92 allowed visualization of the location and topology of potential  
93 surfaces and the manner in which water likely flows from one depression  
94 to another. Based on pond analysis and associated spatial mapping, it was  
95 observed that most geometric characteristics related to DS size and  
96 spatial location, including the area, volume, and depth, were  
97 dependent on the DEM resolution. In their research, the relationship between the contribution  
98 area of each depression and its surface area at pond depths was  
99 established, and the mechanism underlying this relationship was examined  
100 (Abedini, Dickinson, & Rudra, 2006). However, relatively little is known  
101 regarding the influence of the DEM spatial resolution on depression water  
102 storage.

103 Therefore, it is necessary to study the influence of the DEM accuracy  
104 on DS. In this paper, through terrain resampling, the influence of the DEM  
105 accuracy on DS within the same area is studied, local research area and  
106 without infiltration area are selected to verify the obtained results and  
107 determine the optimal DEM grid resolution. The answers to our research  
108 questions may pave the way for a new comprehensive  
109 assessment method of surface DS and provide important insights for those  
110 who study, manage and simulate surface water resources worldwide.

## 111 2. Materials and methods

### 112 2.1 Study area of rainfall-runoff simulation

113 The model is applied in the Wangmaogou catchment, which is a small  
114 semi arid loessal catchment (  $37^{\circ}36'03''N$ ) located in Suide County, Shanxi Provin  
115 1a). It covers an area of approximately  $5.9\text{ km}^2$ , with an altitude ranging  
116 from 934.55 to 1187.75 m. The main ditch is 3.75 km long, the average  
117 ditch bottom drops to 2.7%, the gully density is  $4.31\text{ km/km}^2$ , the ground  
118 slope ranges from  $0^{\circ}\sim 15^{\circ}$  accounting for 8.6% of all slopes  
119 accounting for 20.1% of all slopes,  $16^{\circ}\sim 35^{\circ}$  accounting for 40.9% of all  
120 slopes, and  $>35^{\circ}$  accounting for 30.4% of all slopes. The land surface is  
121 fractal and the land form is complex, which is a typical  
122 of the Loess Plateau in the Loess hilly gully area.  
123 A collecting tank is placed at the channel outlet to collect basin water (Fig.  
124 1b). DEM and land use/land cover (LULC) maps are employed to simulate  
125 rainfall-runoff processes in the considered catchment areas. A DEM of the  
126 study area is obtained as 1000 topographic map and then resized to  
127 different resolutions, i.e., 2 m, 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m.  $P=1$ ,  $P=2$ ,  $P=10$   
128 and  $P=50$  are selected as rainfall return periods, and the rainfall duration  
129 is set to 2 h (Fig. 2). It is assumed that the soil is saturated due  
130 to previous rainfall, so a constant infiltration rate is used.  
131 The Manning coefficient (Fig. 3c) and soil infiltration rate (Fig. 4d) and  
132 are related to the land use type (Table 1).

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135 Fig. 1 Location and basic characteristics of Wangmaogou

136

137 Fig. 2 Rainfall at the different frequencies

138 Table 1 Infiltration rate (mm/h) and Manning coefficient ( $\text{s/m}^{1/3}$ ) considering the

139 different land uses



153 source  $S_b$  and friction source  $S_f$ ,  $z_b$  is the bed elevation, and  $C_f$  is the

154 bed roughness coefficient  $C_f = gn^2/h^{1/3}$  computed with  $n$  and  $g$

155 denoting the Manning coefficient and

156 respectively. In addition, the wave celerity  $c = \sqrt{g(h + z_b)}$ , is

157 introduced in this work and implemented when appropriate (Liang,

158 Simons, & Hinkelmann, 2013).

159 The graphics processing unit (GPU)-accelerated surface water flow

160 and associated transport model (GASPI) is used to solve dynamic wave

161 method to simulate rainfall process. The Godunov scheme for

162 volume method is applied to discretize

163 To address the problems of abrupt flow and discontinuity, the mass and

164 momentum fluxes at the interface of a given cell are calculated

165 the Harten-Lax-van Leer compacted (HLLE) wave approximate Riemann

166 solver. The code is written in C++ and CUDA, which is run on GPUs to

167 substantially accelerate the computation process (Liang, & Smith, 2015).

## 168 2.3 Depression storage (DS) model

169 The rainfall distribution on the ground is divided into

170 runoff, DS, infiltration and evaporation, and the changes observed in the

171 overland flow area and subsurface soil-water content

172 model with a physics-based continuity model comprising

173 nonlinear ordinary differential and continuity (Equation 1),

174 2012):

$$\frac{dQ_0}{dt} = W = IN(t) - O(t) \quad (3)$$

$$\frac{dQ_v}{dt} = IN(t) \quad (4)$$

$$CW = Q_0 + Q_v \quad (5)$$

Where  $Q_0$  is the water stored in the overland plume ( $\text{mm}^3$ ),  $Q_v$  is the

water stored in the upper vadose zone ( $\text{mm}^3$ ),  $W_0$  is the initial water content ( $\text{mm}^3/\text{mm}^3$ )

( $\text{mm}^3/\text{s}$ ),  $IN(t)$  is the total infiltration flow ( $\text{mm}^3/\text{s}$ ),  $CW$  and  $O(t)$  denote

the cumulative rainfall ( $\text{mm}^3$ ) and overland flow ( $\text{mm}^3/\text{s}$ ), respectively.

Evaporation is disregarded in the above equation, and seepage flow in

the region remains stable, but the infiltration amount in each region

differs.  $W$  is the time constant of the regional experiments. In addition,

the overland flow plume includes DS areas where water accumulates

during the water inflow period and other areas where water inflow is not

enough to maintain free water at the soil surface.

The water content depends on saturated and unsaturated infiltration

flows:

$$IN(t) = IN_{sat}(t) + IN_{unsat}(t) \quad (6)$$

where  $IN_{sat}(t)$  is the transient, saturated infiltration flow under DS

conditions ( $\text{mm}^3/\text{s}$ ) and  $IN_{unsat}(t)$  is the transient, non-saturated infiltration

flow under non-DS conditions ( $\text{mm}^3/\text{s}$ ). In this paper, infiltration was

assumed to occur under saturated conditions. Therefore,  $IN_{sat}(t)$  can be

calculated as follows:



$$IN_{sat}(t) = K_{sat} \times \left[ \psi_f \times \left( \frac{\theta_s - \theta(t)}{F} \right) + 1 \right] \times A_{DS} \quad (7)$$

$$F = z^f(t) \times (\theta_s - \theta(t)) \quad (8)$$

where  $K_{sat}$  is the saturated hydraulic conductivity (mm/s),

$\psi_f$  is the suction at the wetting front,  $\theta_s$  is the saturation in the wetting

front (dimensionless),  $\theta(t)$  is the instantaneous volumetric water content

in the wetting front (dimensionless),  $F$  is the cumulative infiltration

(mm),  $A_{DS}$  is the DS area (mm<sup>2</sup>), and  $z^f(t)$  is the instantaneous water

infiltration depth (mm).

In the land plume region without DS, assuming that water infiltration occurs under unsaturated conditions, the following applies:

$$IN_{unsat}(t) = K_h(\theta(t)) \times \left[ \psi_f \theta(t) \times \left( \frac{\theta(t) - \theta_i}{F} \right) + 1 \right] \times (A(t) - A_{DS}) \quad (9)$$

where  $K_h(\theta(t))$  is the variable hydraulic conductivity,  $\theta_i$  is the

antecedent soil-water content,  $A(t)$  is the saturated area of the overland

plume at time t (mm<sup>2</sup>),  $K_h(\theta(t))$  and  $\psi_f \theta(t)$  are adopted to predict the

relative hydraulic conductivity based on the soil-water retention curve.

## 2.4 Model validation

The considered catchment area is Wangmaogou. A 2-m grid is selected for model validation purposes, and the Wangmaogou hydrological station

at the outlet of the Wangmaogou watershed is selected to acquire rainfall data. The rainfall period lasts from 0:25 on July 15, 2012, to 5:25 on July 15, 2012, and the rainfall return period is 100 years, as shown in Fig. 3. Measured discharge data are also provided by the hydrological station. The Manning coefficient of the different land uses is determined based on the Manning coefficient of Engman (1986), and the parameters of the Green-Ampt infiltration model are retrieved from the literature (Zhong, Chao, & Dong, 2008). The simulation time is set to 10 h. Because of heavy rain, the simulation evapotranspiration and plant interception performance of the model is evaluated with the Nash-Sutcliffe efficiency (NSE).

$$NSE=1-\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n_d}(M_i-S_i)^2}{\sum_{i=1}^{n_d}(M_i-\bar{M})^2} \quad (10)$$

where  $n_d$  is the length of the data series,  $M_i$  is the observation date,  $S_i$  is the simulated date, and  $\bar{M}$  is the mean observed value. When NSE is 1, the simulation result is ideal, and when NSE varies between 0.75 and 1, the simulation result is very good. When NSE varies between 0.65 and 0.75, the simulation result is good, and when NSE ranges from 0.5 to 0.65, the simulation result is satisfactory. In contrast, when NSE is lower than 0.5, the simulation result is unsatisfactory (Moriassi et al., 2007).

Fig. 3 Rainfall process in the study area

Fig. 4 shows that in the case of the 2-m grid, the simulation results pertaining to the whole study area are consistent with the trend of the measured data, but the peak lag is approximately 0.5 h. Moreover, the flow dissipation process occurs slightly faster, which may be caused by

error in land use interpretation based on remote sensing data, but overall effect is good. The NSE value is 0.78, which meets the requirements.

Fig. 4 Comparison of the observed and simulated discharge processes

### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1 Effect of the DEM accuracy on depression storage (DS) in the overall study area under infiltration

The resolution of the original DEM of the study area is 2 m $\times$ 2 m and contains 1606 $\times$ 1710 cells. To determine the influence of grid coarsening on the level of detail generated with the DEM, computing regions with resolutions of 4 m $\times$ 4 m, 10 m $\times$ 10 m, 20 m $\times$ 20 m and 40 m $\times$ 40 m are obtained via resampling, and the corresponding grid numbers are 803 $\times$ 855, 321 $\times$ 342, 161 $\times$ 171 and 81 $\times$ 86, respectively. The input DEMs in each simulation case are shown in Fig. 5. To see the effect of the grid resolution on the terrain more clearly, the local terrain is enlarged. The differences between these seven DEMs resulted from the interpolation stage during DEM construction. Fig. 5 shows that with increasing grid resolution, the map gradually appears to be blocked.

Fig. 5 Comparison of the computational regions with the different resolutions

Under rainfall return periods of  $P=1$ ,  $P=2$ ,  $P=10$  and  $P=50$ , the DS time lags behind the rainfall, which is manifested as the maximum DS time occurring later than the peak rainfall time (Fig. 6). Under a rainfall return period of  $P=1$  (Fig. 6 (a)), the rainfall peak occurs at 3060 s, the maximum rainfall reaches 59.796 mm, and the corresponding maximum DS time is 6300 s, which is 3240 s behind the rainfall peak. Under a rainfall return period of  $P=2$  (Fig. 6 (b)), the peak rainfall occurs at 3060

s, the maximum rainfall reaches 84.560 mm, and the maximum DS times are 5220 s, 5580 s, 6660 s, 7020 s and 7200 s at grid resolutions of 2 m, 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, respectively. Compared to the rainfall peak, the time lag is 2160 s, 2520 s, 3600 s, 3960 s and 4140 s, respectively. Under a rainfall return period of  $P=10$  (Fig. 6 (c)), the rainfall peak occurs at 3060 s, and the maximum rainfall is 142.058 mm. The corresponding maximum DS times are 4680 s at a grid resolution of 2 and 4 m, 6300 s at a grid resolution of 10 m, 7380 s at a grid resolution of 20 and 40 m. Compared to the rainfall peak, the time lag is 1620 s, 1800 s, 3240 s, 4320 s and 4320 s, respectively. Under a rainfall return period of  $P=50$  (Fig. 6 (d)), the peak rainfall occurs at 3060 s, and the maximum rainfall reaches 99.552 mm. The corresponding DS maximum times are 4320 s, 4500 s, 5400 s, 7380 s and 7380 s at a grid resolution of 2 m, 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, respectively. Compared to the rainfall peak, the peak value time lag is 1260 s, 1440 s, 2340 s, 4320 s and 4320 s, respectively.

Based on the above data, it is found that under a rainfall return period of  $P=1$ , because the rainfall is relatively low, the maximum DS time is consistent and unaffected by the grid resolution. With increasing rainfall intensity, the occurrence time of the maximum DS value corresponding to rainfall return periods of  $P=2$ ,  $P=10$  and  $P=50$  gradually increases with increasing grid resolution, but certain differences exist. For example, considering rainfall return periods of  $P=1$  and  $P=50$  and a grid resolution of 20 and 40 m, the maximum DS value occurs at 7380 s, which indicates that the calculated results remain basically consistent when the rainfall intensity is sufficiently high and a coarse grid resolution is adopted. In addition, Fig. 6 shows that the grid resolution exerts a certain impact on DS. With the occurrence of rainfall, the DS value sharply increases first, then tends to remain stable and finally gradually decreases.

Fig. 6 shows the variation in the DS value over time with the rainfall at the different grid resolutions. As shown in Fig. 6 (a), the DS trend is  $10\text{ m} > 20\text{ m} > 40\text{ m} > 4\text{ m} > 2\text{ m}$ , and Fig. 6 (b) shows that the DS trend is  $20\text{ m} > 40\text{ m} > 10\text{ m} > 2\text{ m} > 4\text{ m}$ , while based on Fig. 6 (c), the DS trend is  $40\text{ m} > 20\text{ m} > 10\text{ m} > 4\text{ m} > 2\text{ m}$ . As shown in Fig. 6 (d), the DS trend is  $40\text{ m} > 20\text{ m} > 10\text{ m} > 4\text{ m} > 2\text{ m}$ . The grid resolution imposes little effect on DS when the rainfall return period is  $P=1$  and  $P=2$  (Fig. 6 (a) and Fig. 6 (b)). However, under rainfall return periods of  $P=10$  and  $P=50$ , the trend of  $40\text{ m} > 20\text{ m} > 10\text{ m} > 4\text{ m} > 2\text{ m}$  is observed. Moreover, the results based on the 50-year return period reveal that the grid resolution greatly influences DS under heavy rainfall.

Fig. 6 Effect of the different DEM spatial resolutions on DS

Under a rainfall return period of  $P=1$ , topographic water maps at grid resolutions of  $2\text{ m}$ ,  $4\text{ m}$ ,  $10\text{ m}$ ,  $20\text{ m}$  and  $40\text{ m}$  are shown in Fig. 7. The results indicate that at a grid resolution of  $2\text{ m}$ ,  $4\text{ m}$ ,  $10\text{ m}$ ,  $20\text{ m}$  and  $40\text{ m}$ , the corresponding maximum DS capacity reaches  $80186.53\text{ m}^3$ ,  $80780.65\text{ m}^3$ ,  $81248.03\text{ m}^3$ ,  $81632.16\text{ m}^3$  and  $79849.37\text{ m}^3$ , respectively. Compared to the  $2\text{-m}$  grid resolution, the maximum capacity increases by  $0.77\%$ ,  $0.66\%$ ,  $0.25\%$  and  $-0.37\%$  for grid resolutions of  $4\text{ m}$ ,  $10\text{ m}$ ,  $20\text{ m}$  and  $40\text{ m}$ , respectively.

Fig. 7 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution ( $P=1$ )

Considering a rainfall return period of  $P=2$ , topographic water maps at grid resolutions of  $2\text{ m}$ ,  $4\text{ m}$ ,  $10\text{ m}$ ,  $20\text{ m}$  and  $40\text{ m}$  are shown in Fig. 8. The results reveal that when the grid resolution is  $2\text{ m}$ ,  $4\text{ m}$ ,  $10\text{ m}$ ,  $20\text{ m}$  and  $40\text{ m}$ , the corresponding maximum DS capacity reaches  $119592.273\text{ m}^3$ ,  $120517.364\text{ m}^3$ ,  $124033.924\text{ m}^3$ ,  $123953.299\text{ m}^3$  and  $123264.262\text{ m}^3$ , respectively. Compared to the  $2\text{-m}$  grid resolution, the maximum capacity increases by  $0.77\%$ ,  $0.66\%$ ,  $0.25\%$  and  $-0.37\%$  for grid resolutions of  $4\text{ m}$ ,  $10\text{ m}$ ,  $20\text{ m}$  and  $40\text{ m}$ , respectively.

capacity increases by 0.77%, 3.71%, 3.65% and 3.07% at a grid resolution of 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, respectively.

Fig. 8 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution (P=2)

Under a rainfall return period of P=10, topographic water maps at grid resolutions of 2 m, 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m are shown in Fig. 9. The results show that the corresponding maximum DS capacity reaches 202162.55 m<sup>3</sup>, 214898.83 m<sup>3</sup>, 226961.43 m<sup>3</sup>, 226299.13 m<sup>3</sup> and 227446.22 m<sup>3</sup> at a grid resolution of 2 m, 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, respectively. Compared to the 2-m grid resolution, the maximum capacity increases by 1.35%, 7.32%, 11.94% and 12.10% at a grid resolution of 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, respectively.

Fig. 9 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution (P=10)

Considering a rainfall return period of P=50, topographic water maps at a grid resolution of 2 m, 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m are shown in Fig. 10. The results demonstrate that at a grid resolution of 2 m, 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, the corresponding maximum DS capacity reaches 279762.009 m<sup>3</sup>, 283762.567 m<sup>3</sup>, 300493.363 m<sup>3</sup>, 326691.991 m<sup>3</sup> and 331127.814 m<sup>3</sup> respectively. Compared to the 2-m grid resolution, the maximum capacity increases by 1.43%, 7.41%, 16.77% and 18.10% at a grid resolution of 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, respectively.

Fig. 10 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution (P=50)

The above results indicate that the grid resolution exerts an important influence on the DS capacity under the different rainfall return periods (Figs. 7-10). Except for the rainfall return period of P = 50, the influence of the grid resolution on the maximum DS capacity reveals that the maximum storage capacity first increases and then decreases with increasing grid resolution. Considering rainfall return periods of P=1 and

356 P=2, the peak DS value occurs at the 20- and 10-m grid resolution  
357 respectively, and the maximum DS value differs little between the 10- and  
358 20-m grid resolutions (with a relative error of 0.06%). However, the  
359 maximum DS capacity is observed under a rainfall return period of P=10  
360 and P=50 (Fig. 11), where the difference in maximum DS value between  
361 the grid resolutions of 20 and 40 m is only 0.01% and 0.02%,  
362 respectively. Compared to the total area, these differences are negligible.  
363 Therefore, although a maximum DS value is not found when P=10 and  
364 P=50, compared to the low grid resolution, a certain grid resolution trend  
365 exists involving DS maximization. This result is expected considering  
366 that the peak discharge remains the same for models of all grid sizes in  
367 the extreme cases with (1) no surface saturation at a very low rainfall  
368 intensity and (2) complete surface saturation at a very high  
369 intensity.

370 This result indicates that there is a DEM grid resolution value beyond  
371 which the computed hydrologic response is less sensitive to the grid size.  
372 This may be attributed to soil-water deficiency inconsistencies and to the  
373 consideration of stable infiltration in the models. The variation in rainfall  
374 return period leads to different rainfall amounts, and rainfall must meet  
375 the infiltration demand before runoff can be generated. However, the  
376 infiltration rate in the area remains constant, which affects the  
377 generation of rainfall runoff under a short return period occurring later  
378 than that occurring under a long return period. This suggests that the soil  
379 is more likely to become quickly saturated under a long rainfall return  
380 period, the saturated area increases, and a large soil area becomes  
381 saturated. Therefore, the probability of runoff generation is higher, and  
382 runoff occurs earlier. When the rainfall return period is P = 50 in this  
383 study, heavy rainfall completely saturates the soil surface within a short  
384 time, resulting in a certain unpredictability of the calculation results. The

reason for this phenomenon is that with increasing grid resolution, grid spacing gradually increases, and the grid size varies due to changes in the grid resolution. In this process, a grid “blanket” phenomenon occurs, which results in parts of the terrain belonging to depressions at previous resolution no longer contributing to depressions at the new resolution. Although the number of depressions decreases, the area of the determined depressions increases (Fig. 11), which also indicates that the DS increases with increasing grid resolution. Therefore, under the same rainfall return period, DS increases with increasing grid resolution. However, a certain grid resolution value exists where the peak DS value is attained.

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Fig. 11 Change in the maximum DS capacity with the grid resolution in the overall study area under infiltration

### 3.2 Effect of the DEM accuracy on depression storage (DS) in a local study area under infiltration

To further examine the effect of the different DEM resolutions on DS, a local study area is selected within the overall study area (as shown in Fig. 12). The resolution of the newly generated DEM is 2×2 m, with a total of 488326 grids. Through resampling, new local calculation areas with DEM resolutions of 4 m×4 m, 10 m×10 m, 20 m×20 m and 40 m×40 m are obtained, and the corresponding grid numbers are 243×163, 97×65, 49×33 and 24×16, respectively. Any differences between these DEMs are the result of the interpolation stage during DEM construction.

408

Fig. 12 Comparison of the computational regions with the different resolutions

When the rainfall return period is  $P=1$ ,  $P=2$ ,  $P=10$  and  $P=50$  (Fig. 12), the water storage time in the local study area is the same as that in the whole study area, which demonstrates that the water storage process in depressions lags behind the rainfall process, and the maximum



storage time in depressions lags behind  
 Under a rainfall return period of  $P=1$  (Fig. 12 (a)), the peak  
 occurs at 3060 s, the maximum rainfall reaches 59.796 mm,  
 corresponding maximum DS time is 3240 s, 6660 s, 6660 s and 6840 s at a  
 grid resolution of 2 m, 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, respectively. Compared  
 to the rainfall peak, the time lag is 180 s, 3600 s, 3600 s, 3780 s and 3600  
 s, respectively. Considering a rainfall return period of  $P=2$  (Fig. 12 (b)),  
 the rainfall peak occurs at 3060 s, the maximum rainfall reaches 84.560  
 mm, and the corresponding maximum DS time is 3240  
 resolution of 2 m and is 7380 s at a grid resolution of 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and  
 40 m. Compared to the rainfall peak, the time lag is 180 s, 4320 s, 4320 s,  
 4320 s and 4320 s, respectively. When the rainfall return period is  $P=10$   
 (Fig. 12 (c)), the peak rainfall occurs at 3060 s, and the maximum rainfall  
 reaches 142.058 mm. The corresponding maximum DS time is 3240 s at a  
 grid resolution of 2 m and is 4860 s at a grid resolution of 4 m, 10 m, 20 m  
 and 40 m. Compared to the rainfall peak, the time lag is 180 s, 4320 s,  
 4320 s, 4320 s and 4320 s, respectively. Under a rainfall return period of  
 $P=50$  (Fig. 12 (d)), the peak rainfall occurs at 3060 s, the ma  
 rainfall reaches 199.552 mm, and the corresponding maximum DS time is  
 3240 s at a grid resolution of 2 m and is 7380 s at a grid resolution is 4 m,  
 10 m, 20 m and 40 m. Compared to the rainfall peak, the time lag is 180  
 s, 4320 s, 4320 s, 4320 s and 4320 s, respectively.

The above results demonstrate that except for the rainf  
 period of  $P=1$ , the maximum DS value under the other three rainfa  
 return periods at the different resolutions occurs at the same time. Except  
 for the 2-m grid resolution, the time to reach the maximum DS va  
 remains the same (7380 s). This may be related to the area si  
 rainfall level. In addition, considering a rainfall return period of  $P=1$ , the  
 maximum DS time remains consistent due to the relatively low rainfall,

which is unaffected by the grid resolution. In addition, Fig. 13 shows that the change in grid resolution impacts DS. With increasing rainfall return period, the DS capacity first sharply increases and then tends to steadily decrease (Fig. 13), and the variation in DS at the different grid resolutions reveals the same trend ( $20\text{ m} > 40\text{ m} > 10\text{ m} > 4\text{ m} > 2\text{ m}$ ), which does not change with the rainfall return period. These results show that the DS capacity increases with increasing grid resolution, and the DS capacity is the highest at a grid resolution of 20 m. This trend is basically consistent with the trend of the overall study area, which further verifies that the grid resolution influences DS. However, the results obtained with the 20-m resolution grid do not follow this rule, which may occur because the DS capacity increases with increasing grid resolution within a certain range, and beyond this range, the DS capacity decreases with increasing grid resolution. Zhang and Zhang, 2019 assessed the impact of the DEM grid size on landscape representation and hydrologic simulations. Their analysis of landscapes, a 10-m grid size represents a rational tradeoff between the resolution and data volume in the simulation of hydrological processes.

Fig. 13 Effect of the different DEM spatial resolutions on DS

A topographic water map under a rainfall return period of  $P=10$  is shown in Fig. 14. The results reveal that the maximum DS capacity is 3442.324 m<sup>3</sup>, 6974.789 m<sup>3</sup>, 8888.885 m<sup>3</sup>, 9468.357 m<sup>3</sup> and 8945.866 m<sup>3</sup> at a grid resolution of 2 m, 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, respectively. Compared to the 2-m grid resolution, the maximum DS capacity increases by 100.03%, 100.58%, 100.75% and 100.60% at a grid resolution of 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, respectively.

Fig. 14 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution (P=1)

As shown in Fig. 15, the topographic water map considering a rainfall return period of  $P=2$  shows that the maximum DS capacity reaches 4962.456 m<sup>3</sup>, 10704.740 m<sup>3</sup>, 13617.712 m<sup>3</sup>, 14478.020 m<sup>3</sup> and 13718.646 m<sup>3</sup> at a grid resolution of 2 m, 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, respectively. Compared to the 2-m grid resolution, at a grid resolution of 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, the maximum DS capacity increases by 115.71%, 174.41%, 191.75% and 176.45%, respectively.

Fig. 15 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution (P=2)

Under a rainfall return period  $P=10$ , a topographic water map is shown in Fig. 16. The results indicate that the maximum DS capacity reaches 8482.84 m<sup>3</sup>, 11104.126 m<sup>3</sup>, 124680.039 m<sup>3</sup>, 126176.840 m<sup>3</sup> and 24914.727 m<sup>3</sup> at a grid resolution of 2 m, 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, respectively. Compared to the 2-m resolution grid, the maximum DS capacity increases by 128.99%, 190.94%, 208.59% and 193.71% at a grid resolution of 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, respectively.

Fig. 16 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution (P=10)

A topographic water map considering a rainfall return period of  $P=50$  is shown in Fig. 17. The results reveal that the maximum DS capacity reaches 11970.784 m<sup>3</sup>, 18136.921 m<sup>3</sup>, 35741.983 m<sup>3</sup>, 37875.764 m<sup>3</sup> and 36110.953 m<sup>3</sup> at a grid resolution of 2 m, 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, respectively. Compared to the 2-m grid resolution, the maximum DS capacity increases by 135.05%, 198.58%, 216.40% and 201.66% at a grid resolution of 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, respectively.

Fig. 17 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution (P=50)

According to the above results and relationship between the maximum DS capacity and grid resolution (Fig. 18), the grid resolution exerts an

important influence on the DS capacity. With increasing grid resolution, the maximum DS capacity exhibits a trend of increasing first and then decreasing, and peak values are observed at the 20-m grid resolution. Compared to the whole calculation area, the DS trend in the local calculation area is more stable. This phenomenon verifies that under the same conditions, the trend obtained describing the overall study area is also suitable for the local study area, and the simulated DS trend in the local area remains more stable. The reason for these results is similar to that for the overall research area (as described in section 3.1).

Fig. 18 Change in the maximum DS capacity with the grid resolution in the local study area under infiltration

### 3.3 Effect of the DEM accuracy on depression storage (DS) of the overall study area without infiltration

Considering that infiltration also affects DS, sections (sections 3.1 and 3.2) adopted a constant infiltration rate in the calculations, and thus, in this section, DS variations considering different grid resolutions and rainfall return periods are studied by setting the infiltration rate to 0 in the overall study area of Wangmaogou.

Fig. 19 shows the relationship between the DS variation over time as a function of rainfall at the different grid resolutions. The results reveal that the change in grid resolution also impacts DS when infiltration is not considered, and with increasing rainfall return period, the DS variation trend shape is similar to the quasi-axisymmetric shape of the trend, which deviates from the DS change trend reported in sections 3.1 and 3.2. However, in regard to the rainfall peak, the peak values are the same with and without infiltration, and the DS trend is  $20\text{ m} > 4\text{ m} > 2\text{ m} > 10\text{ m} > 40\text{ m}$  under the different rainfall return periods, consistent with the results when considering infiltration.

occurs because the initial rainfall infiltrates into the soil when infiltration is included, and runoff can only be produced when the soil is completely saturated. In this process, because the rainfall infiltration rate into soil under a short return period is lower than that under a long return period, the DS capacity is also affected. However, in the ideal case of no infiltration, rainfall directly generates runoff, the DS curve rises sharply after rainfall initiation and then slowly decreases after it. The numerical difference at the end of the curve is relatively small between the different resolutions. Hence, the DS curve has an axisymmetric shape.

Fig. 19 Effect of the different DEM spatial resolutions on DS

Fig. 20 shows a topographic water map under a rainfall return period of  $P=1$ . The maximum DS capacity reaches  $32391.163 \text{ m}^3$ ,  $32387.163 \text{ m}^3$ ,  $32305.166 \text{ m}^3$ ,  $32497.578 \text{ m}^3$  and  $31311.627 \text{ m}^3$  at a grid resolution of 2 m, 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, respectively. Compared to the 2-m grid resolution, the maximum DS capacity differs by -0.01%, -0.02%, 0.03% and -3.33% at a grid resolution of 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, respectively.

Fig. 20 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution ( $P=1$ )

Fig. 21 shows a topographic water map considering a rainfall return period of  $P=2$ . The maximum DS capacity is  $458245.878 \text{ m}^3$ ,  $458245.878 \text{ m}^3$ ,  $45802.897 \text{ m}^3$ ,  $45993.106 \text{ m}^3$  and  $44714.091 \text{ m}^3$  at a grid resolution of 2 m, 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, respectively. Compared to the 2-m grid resolution, the maximum DS capacity increases by 0.02%, -0.06%, 0.36% and -2.43% at a grid resolution of 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, respectively.

Fig. 21 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution ( $P=2$ )

Fig. 22 shows a topographic water map under a rainfall return period of  $P=10$ , the results demonstrate that the maximum DS capacity reaches  $77031.272 \text{ m}^3$ ,  $77047.177 \text{ m}^3$ ,  $77025.945 \text{ m}^3$ ,  $77283.935 \text{ m}^3$  and  $75198.877 \text{ m}^3$  at a grid resolution of 2 m, 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, respectively. Compared to the 2-m grid resolution, the maximum DS capacity increases by 0.02%, -0.01%, 0.33% and -2.38% at a grid resolution of 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, respectively.

Fig. 22 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution ( $P=10$ )

With the use of a rainfall return period of  $P=50$  (Fig. 23), the maximum DS capacity is  $10822403.454 \text{ m}^3$ ,  $108168.570 \text{ m}^3$ ,  $108613.341 \text{ m}^3$  and  $105779.238 \text{ m}^3$  at a grid resolution of 2 m, 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, respectively. Based on a comparison to the DS capacity at the 2-m grid resolution, it is found that at a grid resolution of 4 m, 10 m, 20 m and 40 m, the maximum DS capacity increases by 0.03%, 0.05%, -0.36% and -2.26%, respectively.

Fig. 23 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution ( $P=50$ )

Figs. 20-23 show the impact of the rainfall return period on DS. The above analysis indicates that the rainfall return period also affects DS in the ideal case without infiltration, but the impact is smaller than that in the case with infiltration. The numerical difference is within  $\pm 1\%$  between the grid resolutions of 2 m, 4 m and 10 m. The DS capacity reaches its maximum value at a grid resolution of 20 m for different rainfall return periods. Therefore, it is considered that at grid resolution  $\geq 10$  m, the influence of the grid resolution on DS can be ignored. At grid resolutions higher than 10 m, the DS capacity increases and then decreases with increasing grid resolution. The maximum DS value occurs at a grid resolution of 20 m, which is consistent with that determined in the case with infiltration. This result

agrees with the law obtained in regard to the whole study area with infiltration, and the reason for this phenomenon is the same as that for the whole research area with infiltration. However, when infiltration is not considered, the influence of the grid resolution on DS under the different rainfall return periods is smaller than that in the case with infiltration. Therefore, it is concluded that infiltration also impacts DS.

Fig. 24 Change in the maximum DS capacity with the grid resolution in the overall study area without infiltration

#### 4. Conclusion

Resampling is performed with 2 m as the original grid resolution. Based on the theory of **SWEs** and **DS** and GAST models, in this paper, after model validation against measured data (**NS78**), the influence of the grid resolution on DS is compared and analyzed between different area sizes (overall and local areas) and infiltration conditions (with and without infiltration). Conclusions are presented below:

(1) In the whole and local study areas considering infiltration, with increasing grid resolution and under a longer rainfall return period, the DS capacity gradually increases at a DEM grid resolution lower than 20 m, and the increasing trend becomes increasingly obvious with higher resolution under a short rainfall return period. When the resolution is higher than 20 m, the DS increase rate tends to be constant or decreases.

(2) Under infiltration conditions, although the DS values in the whole and local study areas exhibit similar change trends with the variation in grid resolution, the fluctuation range of the DS value in the local research areas is larger than that in the whole research area under each rainfall return period.

(3) When infiltration is not considered, the DEM grid resolution

yields little effect on DS. In this study, when the DEM grid resolution is lower than 20 m, the DS difference only ranges from approximately -0.05% to 0.36%. At a DEM grid resolution higher than 20 m, the DS capacity gradually decreases, and the change trend is the same as infiltration is considered.

The research area size and infiltration rate at the different resolutions affect DS. High-resolution terrain data of large areas increase the stability of DS simulation values. In addition, infiltration is a factor influencing DS. Therefore, it is very important to select reasonable terrain data and infiltration process conditions in DS numerical simulation.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** Research was supported by National Natural Science Foundation of China (51609199), National Natural Science Foundation of China (52009199), and the Mobility program (M-0427).

**DATA AVAILABILITY** Trial data that support the findings of this study are available from the references listed in the article. Remaining data are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.



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## 748 **Figure legends**

749 Fig. 1 Location and basic characteristics of Wangmaogou

750 Fig. 2 Rainfall at the different frequencies

751 Fig. 3 Rainfall process in the study area

752 Fig. 4 Comparison of the observed and simulated discharge processes

753 Fig. 5 Comparison of the computational regions with the different

754 resolutions

755 Fig. 6 Effect of the different DEM spatial resolutions on DS

756 Fig. 7 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution

757 (P=1)

758 Fig. 8 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution (P=2)

759 Fig. 9 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution

760 (P=10)

761 Fig. 10 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution

762 (P=50)

763 Fig. 11 Change in the maximum DS capacity with the grid resolution in

764 the overall study area under infiltration

765 Fig. 12 Comparison of the computational regions with the different

766 resolutions

767 Fig. 13 Effect of the different DEM spatial resolutions on DS

768 Fig. 14 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution

769 (P=1)

770 Fig. 15 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution

771 (P=2)

772 Fig. 16 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution

773 (P=10)

774 Fig. 17 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution

775 (P=50)

776 Fig. 18 Change in the maximum DS capacity with the grid resolution in  
777 the local study area under infiltration  
778 Fig. 19 Effect of the different DEM spatial resolutions on DS  
779 Fig. 20 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution  
780 (P=1)  
781 Fig. 21 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution  
782 (P=2)  
783 Fig. 22 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution  
784 (P=10)  
785 Fig. 23 Corresponding time of maximum storage and DS distribution  
786 (P=50)  
787 Fig. 24 Change in the maximum DS capacity with the grid resolution in  
788 the overall study area without infiltration  
789