Reference 1: Data requirements for WRENSS Simulations

To run a WRENSS simulation two files are required. The first is a "control" file containing information describing a watershed and the streamflow data and precipitation data to be used in the simulation (Table 1). The second is a unit file containing information for each harvest clock to be harvested in the watershed (Table 2).

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Field name	Туре	Size	Dec	Description
SCENARIO	С	100		Joint identifier to link this table with the harvested blocks in tbl_Units. This name must be the same as the one used for all of the harvested blocks in any given scenario, usually a watershed.
AREA_CUT	Ν	20	5	Total area of the scenario or watershed in km ² .
WS_STATION	С	100		The name or identifier of a stream gauging station in the Foothills Model Forest Area. Can be supplied at run time.
WS_YIELD	Ν	20	5	Supplied by link to WS_STATION at run time.
WS_STAT	С	6		Unless specified as Max or Min, defaults to Avg at run time.
WS_PERIOD	С	9		Supplied by link to WS_STATION at run time.
WS_REGION	С	100		The name of the type of analysis used in peak flow determinations, Instantaneous Max or Daily Max. Can be supplied at run time.
REGION	С	5		WRENSS regions CM or RM only. Can be supplied at run time.
WX_SOURCE	С	100		The name or identifier of a weather station in the Foothills Model Forest Area. Can be supplied at run time.
WX_STAT	С	6		Unless specified as Max or Min, defaults to Avg at run time.
WX_PERIOD	С	9		Supplied by link to WX_STATION at run time.
ANNUAL_PPT	Ν	20	5	Supplied by link to WX_STATION at run time.
BASE_YEAR	N	6	0	Default of 1-year prior to earliest year in the BLK_YRCUT field in tbl_Units is supplied by WrnsSdr at run time. Any year earlier than the first year cut can be supplied by the user.
START_YEAR	N	6	0	Default of 1-year prior to earliest year in the BLK_YRCUT field in tbl_Units is supplied by WrnsSdr at run time. Any year earlier than the first year cut can be supplied by the user.
END_YEAR	N	6	0	Default of 100-years after the START_YEAR is supplied by WrnsSdr at run time. This default of 100 years can be changed in the WrnsSdr Global Options form. Any year later than the first year cut can be supplied by the user.
RECORDNO	N	10	0	The user should not enter any information into this field. It is used internally within WrnsSdr.

Table 1 – Watershed data for WRENSS simulations (Control File)

SCENARIO	Title of scenario being tested.		
AREA CUT	Area of harvested unit in hectares		
NUMBLOCKS	Number of blocks comprising the harvested unit. This field and the BLKSIZE field allow the grouping of several blocks of similar size, species, aspect and year of harvest into one area. The Total area of all of these similar blocks goes into AREACUT field, and either the number of blocks comprising that area go into this field or the average size of the		
DLKQIZE	Individual block goes into the BLKSIZE field.		
BLKSIZE	The very the block or group of blocks was out in your format		
BLK ELEV	The average elevation of the block or group of blocks in meters. Used in WRNSSDR-MF to adjust precipitation data from a different elevation to that the cut blocks being analyzed.		
BLK ASPECT	The average aspect of the block as N, S, or EW. Aspect is used in conjunction with precipitation to estimate potential evapotranspiration. Maximum potential ET on south aspects and minimum on north aspects.		
BLK REGEN	The species that the block is to be regenerated on a block. Lodgepole Pine, White Spruce or Deciduous are the only appropriate choices.		
BUF SPECIES	The species of the surround stand, again LPP or WS or Deciduous are the only appropriate choices. Used to estimate species harvested on existing cut blocks.		
BUF BA	The basal of the surrounding stand in m ² /ha. Used to estimate basal on existing cut blocks.		
LUT BASEBA	The anticipated basal area of regeneration on the site at maturity, or the number of years in the rotation. Represents maximum basal area in ratio to adjust ET upwards or downwards.		
LUT BAYEAR	The anticipated number of years to reach the basal area at maturity or the number of years in the rotation.		
IN BAFUNCT	The name of the basal area growth function for regeneration in the unit. This is assigned during operation of WRNSSDR-MF.		
BUF HT	The height of the surrounding stand in meters. Used to estimate redistribution effects of snow movement in cut blocks and surrounding stands.		
LUT BASETH	The anticipated height of the regeneration on the site at maturity or at the end of the rotation.		
LUT THYEAR	The anticipated number of years to reach the height of maturity, of the number of years in the rotation.		
IN THFUNCT	The name of the height growth function for regeneration in the unit. This is assigned during operation of WRNSSDR-MF.		
IN RECORD	Block ID. This may be changed to a 15 character wide field if necessary to identify your blocks. This is not used in WRNSSDR-MF runs.		

Table 2 - Harvest data for WRENSS simulations (Unit file)

Reference 2 WRENSS

WRENSS

WRENSS (<u>Water Resource Evaluation for Non-Point Silvicultural Sources</u>) was developed by the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA 1980). WRENSS was designed to be used as an operational tool for forest planning. It is relatively simple in concept and has modest data requirements. It is not a "high end" research model designed to simulate daily flows (i.e. routed runoff).

Swanson (1997) prepared a computer version of the procedure (WRENSS) for Alberta conditions and modified it by linking climate and flow databases to the program. WRENSS uses long-term monthly precipitation, annual flow data from representative watersheds, GIS-generated harvest data, watershed characteristics, and growth functions to estimate changes in annual water yield. Swanson also included methods for estimating changes in peak flows for 2, 10, 20, 50 and 100 year recurrence intervals. Estimates of watershed disturbance in terms of equivalent clear-cut area (ECA) (Ager A. A. and C. Clifton. 2005) based on recovery of basal area or water yield increases are included in WRENSS. Version 3.0 of WrnsEcaAb (Swanson 2000) was used in this assessment.

Estimated changes in annual water yield are based on seasonal water balance calculations of generated runoff (GRO), which is water that will eventually become runoff but has not reached the stream channel. Increases in water yield (ΔQ) are a change in evapotranspiration (ΔET) resulting from the removal of forest cover. Increases in water yield are obtained by taking the difference in GRO before and after harvesting.

Eq.1 GRO = Input – Losses = $P - ET \pm \Delta S$ P = precipitation ET = evapotranspiration losses ΔS = change in watershed storage.

Eq.2 $\Delta Q \sim \Delta ET = (P_{after harvest} - GRO_{after}) - (P_{before harvest} - GRO_{before})$, where precipitation before and after harvest is assumed to be the same.

GRO is strongly affected by watershed storage and in the short term may not equal actual flow (Q_A). Over the long-term however GRO = Q_A as average annual change in watershed storage approaches zero (Δ S~0). Long term precipitation and streamflow data are essential for the application of WRENSS.

Increases in water yield in WRENSS are expressed as area-millimeters (area-mm) and percentages. Area – mm is the volume of increased flow (or reduced ET) expressed as a uniform depth over a watershed. Increases in water yield are expressed as percents of the mean annual water yield (base yield in WRENSS) for the watershed being analyzed or a nearby representative watershed, which is of similar size, forest cover and climate (i.e. precipitation). Percent increases should be considered as relative changes (e.g. small, medium, and large). Few if any models are capable of providing exact, absolute outputs. Furthermore, annual water yields are highly variable among watersheds and hydrologic regions. For example, annual yields in some years in boreal forest watersheds can be 0-100 mm, while in the Rocky Mountains water yields can be 400-800 mm. An increase of 40 mm in a Rocky Mountain watershed would be a small percentage compared to a similar increase in a boreal forest watershed. Percentages must be carefully interpreted.

Water responses provided by WRENSS are cumulative in that they can show both water yield increases and the rate of hydrologic recovery, which is the time for evapotranspiration and water flows to return to pre-harvest levels. Hydrologic recovery in WRENSS is estimated in two ways. The first is the traditional approach based on the recovery of basal area to pre-harvest conditions with the establishment of forest regeneration. Recovery occurs when current basal area equals maximum basal area for a given site. The second is based on the recovery of simulated water yield increases to preharvest or undisturbed conditions ($\Delta Q \sim 0$). Hydrologic recovery based on water yield was defined as the time required for the maximum increases in annual flow (or peak flows) to decrease to levels equal to or less than 1%. The time required for hydrologic recovery is a function of the amount and frequency of harvesting in a watershed, and the occurrence and rate of growth of forest regeneration.

Equivalent Area Clearcut (ECA) is an index of hydrologic recovery. It is a measure of the disturbed area (i.e. harvest blocks) in a watershed that is in a condition to contribute extra water to streamflow. ECA is at a maximum at the time of harvest and then decreases with the establishment and growth of regeneration. The physical model supporting ECA is that vegetation removal changes water yield in rough proportion to the leaf surface area or basal area removed from a site (Ager and Clifton 2005).

ECA is defined as the area harvested times a reduction factor that describes the recovery of evapotranspiration losses. ECA estimates in WRENSS are provided in terms of basal area recovery (Eq.3) and recovery of water yield (Eq.4). ECA is expressed in hectares of harvested area and as a percent of the harvested area. %ECA in this assessment was reported as a percent of watershed area, which is hydrologically more informative.

Eq.3
$$ECA_{BA} = \frac{BA_{current}}{Max BA} \times Harvest Area$$

Max BA = maximum basal area possible for a given site $BA_{current}$ = basal area for year –n of a specified time series

Eq.4
$$ECA_Q = \frac{\Delta Yield_{current}}{\Delta Yield_{max Q}} \times Harvested Area$$

 Δ Yield_{maxQ} = maximum water yield increases in a given time series Δ Yield_{current} = water yield increase for year- n in a given time series It should be noted that hydrologic recovery based on ECA_Q includes both recovery of basal area and the effects of snow redistribution in harvest blocks (i.e. snow scour/sublimation). Hydrologic recovery based on maximum water yield increase can be shorter by half the number of years obtained with basal area. ECA_Q is considered a more direct and realistic estimate of hydrologic recovery, and was used in this report.

WRENSS also estimates increases in maximum daily and instantaneous flows due to harvesting for return periods of 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100-year events. WRENSS uses watershed area to estimate peak flows ($Q_{peak-area}$) for all return periods in the unharvested condition. The difference between the mean March to September streamflow in the unharvested and harvested condition is used to estimate the change in peak flow ($Q_{peak mean flow}$) caused by harvesting for each return period. The difference in $Q_{peak mean flow}$ between the harvested and unharvested conditions is added to $Q_{peak-area}$ to obtain the maximum flow for a given return period.

In WRENSS the maximum change in peak flow attributable to the effects of forest harvesting is constrained by the maximum reduction in daily evapotranspiration rate (i.e. the volume of extra water made available by harvesting), estimated by WRENSS for a completely undisturbed watershed.

In some situations (e.g. high precipitation) the change in peak flow can exceed the daily maximum evapotranspiration rate. When this occurs it is area weighted with respect to the amount of disturbance in the watershed. For example, if the maximum evapotranspiration was 5.0 mm/day and 47% of the watershed was undisturbed, it would be reduced to 2.65 mm/day (e.g. 5.0 mm/day*(1-0.47) = 2.65 mm/day or 4.13 m³/sec). The adjusted value would then be added to the estimated peak flow (i.e. $Q_{\text{peak-area}}$).

This constraint is built into the WRENSS program. The assumption inherent in this constraint is that the increase in peak flow generated by harvesting "alone" is controlled by the maximum reduction in daily potential evapotranspiration. Under these conditions the increase in maximum daily flows attributable to harvesting can be similar for a range of return periods, and persist for sustained periods until evapotranspiration recovers with regrowth of harvested areas. When this occurs, a plot of peak flow increases will appear to be flat or truncated.

WRENSS simulations can be based on average, maximum or minimum precipitation conditions. For average conditions, estimated changes in flow are what can be expected in an "average" year. WRENSS cannot provide an estimate of the effects of climatic variation on water yield and peak flows. Simulations for maximum or minimum conditions can provide an estimate of the effects of climatic extremes. In years of high precipitation flow changes would be larger and in years of low precipitation smaller. Precipitation inputs are constant for the length of a simulation and conditions being simulated.

WRENSS does not estimate flow for ungauged basins and does not produce routed stream flow (i.e. it does not indicate how much water will flow on a given day). It also does not carry over surpluses or deficits from one year to the next. The reliability of results from WRENSS can only be as good as the precipitation and flow data used. If precipitation data is representative, accurate and of sufficient duration, then WRENSS will provide an estimate of average annual water yield that is generally within 10% of measured water yield (Swanson 2000). However, it is important to remember that most precipitation data is usually under estimated.

Reference 3 Wrenss Inputs-Outputs

Note: %ECA estimates provided in input-output summaries are for the percent of disturbed area in a watershed. Maximum percent watershed ECA was obtained by expressing the maximum ECA in hectares as a percent of the watershed area. Example: Watershed LS _10 %Maximum Watershed ECA = 4639.5/39400 = 11.78.





Little Smoky 1a





Little Smoky 1b









































Muskeg Confluence 1a





Muskeg Confluence 2a



