

1 We would like to thank the editor for his very careful editing and constructive  
2 suggestions. In the following part, we make point-by-point responses to the  
3 comments and suggestions.

4

5 Thank you for responding to the reviewer's comments. I have 3 main concerns: 1)  
6 The manuscript is still not prepared for publication. There are numerous syntax problems  
7 that must be corrected, Many figures still need work, and figure 11 is missing!

8 Response: We appreciate the efforts the editor made to correct numerous syntax  
9 problems of our manuscript. We make all changes according to the suggestions.

10

11 2) Reviewer 2 asked you to investigate "how can you separate the effect of gravel on soil  
12 properties and other measured parameters" if the mudstone bedrock is included in your soil  
13 pit samples and analysis. Again the question comes up as to how representative the site is.

14 Response: Thank you for your comments. Weathered mudstone is included in the  
15 sampling and analysis. It is not easy to separate the effects. Therefore, we used  
16 "coarse fragment soils", rather than gravel, throughout the manuscript.

17

18 We mentioned in Section 2.1 that:

19 "Based on the map of Li et al. (2015), soils of this region belong to Gelisols and  
20 Inceptisols, which occupy 34% and 28% of the total area of permafrost region of  
21 the QTP, respectively."

22 And in Section 4.1 that:

23 "The weight fraction of coarse fragment soil (diameter > 2mm, including gravel) in  
24 the soil samples we analyzed was greater than 55% on average. While the typical  
25 soil types considered in land surface models and other models usually have much  
26 smaller diameter. For comparison, the fractions of gravel considered in Pan et al.  
27 (2017) ranges from 5% to 33% and from 10% to 28% for the Madoi and Naqu  
28 sites, respectively. The Beiluhe site and the aforementioned sites are located in

1 regions with Gelisols and Inceptisols, which occupy ~62% of the permafrost  
2 regions of the QTP (Li et al., 2015). It is possible that coarse fragment soil  
3 commonly exists on the QTP. The dataset of Wu and Nan (2016) indicated that  
4 gravel content widely exists on the middle and west part of the QTP.”

5 Apart from these sources, we cannot assess the representativeness of the site.  
6

7 3) Reviewer 2 thinks rightly so that your measured porosity is low because you did not use  
8 a vacuum to draw water through your sample (not weigh it under a vacuum condition). As  
9 a result, you will likely still have a fair amount of air. Rather than continue to have to deal  
10 with this as a nagging issue, I suggest that you run the simulations using calculated  
11 porosities. At the very least, discuss the differences in the two approaches.

12 Response: Thank you for your suggestion. We misunderstood the meaning of  
13 reviewer 2.

14 As mentioned in 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph of Section 2.2, porosity is calculated based on  
15 equation 2, where weights of dry sample and saturated sample are used. The  
16 reviewer 2 mentioned that water of sample should be drawn under a vacuum  
17 condition, otherwise, there might be some water remained in the sample, and cause  
18 underestimation of porosity. However, sample was first dried in an oven for over 48  
19 h, then weighed. Therefore, we believe that there might be a very low amount of  
20 water remained in the samples, especially for samples with poor water holding  
21 capacity (Figure 5).

22 As suggested, we add values of porosities derived from bulk density in Section 3.1.1,  
23 and discuss the uncertainties relating to porosity measurement in Section 4.3.1. We  
24 also made additional model simulations using the calculated porosities (Figure S6-S8).

25 Please see the

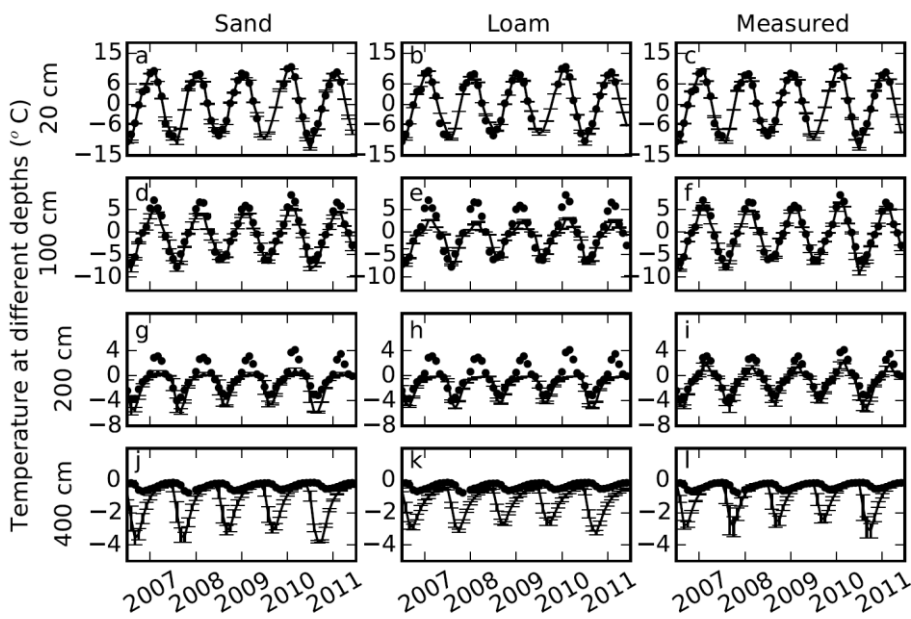
26 Section 3.1.1

27 “The porosity calculated from bulk density ( $= 1 - \text{bulk density} / 2.65 \text{ g cm}^{-3}$ ) ranged  
28 from 29.8% to 39.2%.”

29 Section 4.3.1

1 "It is ideal to draw water in soil samples under a vacuum condition before  
2 weighing dry soil sample. Unfortunately, we do not have such instrument. We dried  
3 soil samples in an oven at 65 °C for over 48 h, which is commonly used in ecological  
4 studies, e.g. Qin et al. (2018). The measured porosities are generally smaller than  
5 those calculated from bulk density. We made additional model simulations using  
6 porosities calculated from bulk density in combination with other measured  
7 parameters. Results showed that the RMSEs of ALD and PLB were 0.55 m and 4.78  
8 m, respectively (Figures not shown). While those used measured porosities were  
9 0.28 m and 6.71 m. Considering the importance of porosity on simulated permafrost  
10 dynamics, it is important to draw water out of soil samples before weighing dry soil  
11 samples in the future."

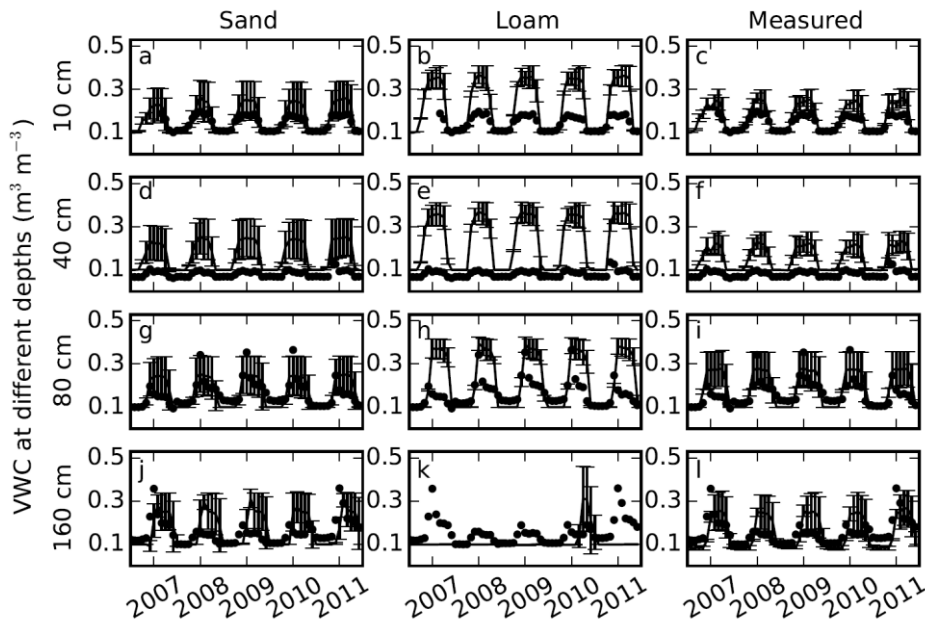
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13

14 Figure S6. Comparisons of soil temperatures simulated using default parameters for  
15 sand, loam, and our measured parameters (lines) with measured soil temperatures  
16 (dots) at 20, 100, 200 and 400 cm depths. Error bars show the standard deviations  
17 calculated based on 9 simulations with 3 different slopes and 3 different soil  
18 thicknesses.(Calculated porosities from bulk density are used).

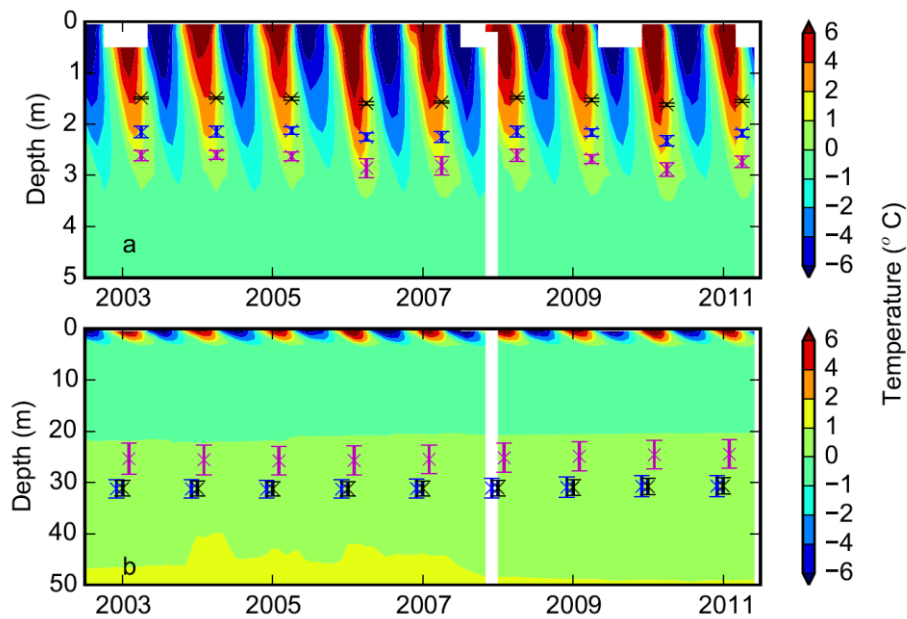
1



2

3 Figure S7. Comparisons of soil volumetric liquid water content (VWC) simulated using  
4 default parameters sand, default loam, and measured parameters (lines) with  
5 measured soil moistures (dots) at 10, 40, 80 and 160 cm depths. Error bars showed  
6 the standard deviation calculated based on 9 simulations with 3 different slopes and  
7 3 different soil thicknesses (Calculated porosities from bulk density are used).

8



1  
 2 Figure S8. Contour plots showing a) soil temperature ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) from borehole  
 3 measurements down to 5 m superimposed with simulated active layer depths over  
 4 the period of 2003-2011; and b) ground temperature down to 50 m superimposed  
 5 with the simulated permafrost low boundary. Black, blue and magenta represent  
 6 simulations with loam, sand and measured parameters, respectively. Error bars show  
 7 the standard deviation calculated based on 9 simulations with 3 different slopes and  
 8 3 different soil thicknesses. (Calculated porosities from bulk density are used).

9  
 10 Page 4 Section 2.1 What is the depth to zero annual amplitude, and the temperature  
 11 there? This paper could get cited just for that piece of information. Rather than  
 12 12 m, use the depth of zero annual amplitude because it yields MAGT (mean  
 13 annual ground temperature).

14 Response: Thank you for your suggestion. We now include depth of zero annual  
 15 amplitude and the multi-year annual mean temperature.

16 "Based on measurement, active layer depth is  $\sim 3.3$  m, depth of zero annual  
 17 amplitude is  $\sim 6.2$  m, and the lower boundary of permafrost is at a depth of  $\sim 20$  m.

1 The multi-year mean ground temperatures at 0.5, 6, and 60 m are about -0.52, -0.30  
2 and 1.81 °C, respectively.”

3

4 Page 6 Section 2.3 You don't say what permafrost dynamics you intend to model  
5 anywhere! It isn't until section 3.2 that we find out it is soil temp., liquid water,  
6 ALD, and PLB.

7 Response: Thank you for your comments. We now provide descriptions about the  
8 simulation of permafrost dynamics at end of Section 2.3.

9 “Soil temperatures, soil liquid water content, temperature in rock layers, active layer  
10 depth (ALD) and permafrost low boundary (PLB) were simulated explicitly.”

11

12 Page 6 Section 2.3 It makes no sense to me why you rescale your 30 min interval  
13 data to monthly, and then downscale the monthly to daily time intervals. Soil  
14 temperatures in the model are updated daily. Simply use daily values determined  
15 from your 30 min data.

16 Response: Thank you for your comments. The family of TEM models is designed to  
17 simulate ecosystem dynamics over large regions. The monthly data from Climate  
18 Research Unit (CRU) is usually used as input. Daily data is downscaled within TEM  
19 to simulate environmental processes. Therefore, when we have daily or hourly  
20 dataset, we need to create monthly data first for driving model. We did not  
21 provide this explanation in the revised manuscript.

22 Page 7 Konard or Konrad. Check the spelling throughout the paper.

23 Response: Thank you for our comments. We used Konrad consistently throughout  
24 the manuscript.

25 Page 7 Follow this with some text about your assumptions regarding  $T_f$  and 0 deg. C.

26 Response: Thank you for your suggestion. We add description on the assumption.

27 “In DOS-TEM, freezing or thawing processes are assumed to be happened at  $T_f$ ,  
28 following most of the land surface models (e.g. Oleson et al. 2010).”

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Page 10 Please address R2's comment about measured versus calculated porosity here.

Response: Thank you for your suggestion. We include porosity which is calculated from bulk density. Table 1 is updated.

"The porosity calculated from bulk density ( $= 1 - \text{bulk density} / 2.65 \text{ g cm}^{-3}$ ) ranged from 29.8% to 39.2%."

Page 10. Section 3.1.2 Give the threshold value here.

Response: Thank you for your suggestion. We include the threshold value in the text.

"The difference of saturated thermal conductivity between frozen and unfrozen states was about  $0.85 \text{ W m}^{-1} \text{ K}^{-1}$ . There existed a threshold of soil wetness (i.e.  $\sim 0.28 \text{ m}^3 \text{ m}^{-3}$ ), below which frozen soil thermal conductivity was slightly smaller than unfrozen soil (Figure 4a)."

Page 14 Section 3.3.2. "Both 10 times? "

Response: Thank you for your comments. We modify the sentence to make the point clear.

"Among all the 18 cases with RMSEs less than the individual "best" RMSE, porosity was included 18 times, followed by thermal conductivity and hydraulic conductivity **both** with 10 times."

Page 16 Nowhere in the results do you mention permafrost degradation. See sections 3.2.3 and 3.2.4. You cannot say this.

Response: Thank you for your comments. We modify the sentence to make the point clear.

1 "As shown in this study, soil thermal and hydrological properties depend largely on  
2 soil water content."

3

4 Page 17 Delete. This is not related to the section heading, and is a distraction from  
5 the work in the paper.

6 Response: Thank you for your suggestion. We delete these sentences in the revised  
7 manuscript.

8

9 Page 18 This whole paragraph needs to be revised. You do not treat organic content,  
10 so that should be acknowledged, then go on to say why it was OK for you, but also  
11 why it should be looked into. The first sentence should be incorporated into the  
12 preceding paragraph.

13 Response: Thank you for your suggestion. We modify these sentences as suggested.

- 14 1) The first sentence is moved to the end of previous paragraph;  
15 2) We acknowledge that we did not consider the organic content explicitly in this  
16 study and explain the reason

17 "In the site considered in this study, the amount of organic soil carbon in soil was  
18 small (Figure 2), and we did not consider the effects of organic soil carbon on soil  
19 properties explicitly."

- 20 3) The reason why organic soil content should be considered has already explained  
21 in previous version of manuscript.

22

23 Page 19 Reference style is inconsistent. Follow a uniform style. Some references are  
24 in the wrong order. Please go over references carefully.

25 Response: Thank you for your suggestion. We go over the references carefully and  
26 make sure the style of references consistent and in right order.

27

28 Table 4 and 5

29 This is a mess and hard to read because of the line breaks. Figure out how to  
30 organize this table so that the substitutions are in line.



1 Response: Thank you for your suggestion. We now remove the "+" from the header  
2 of table.

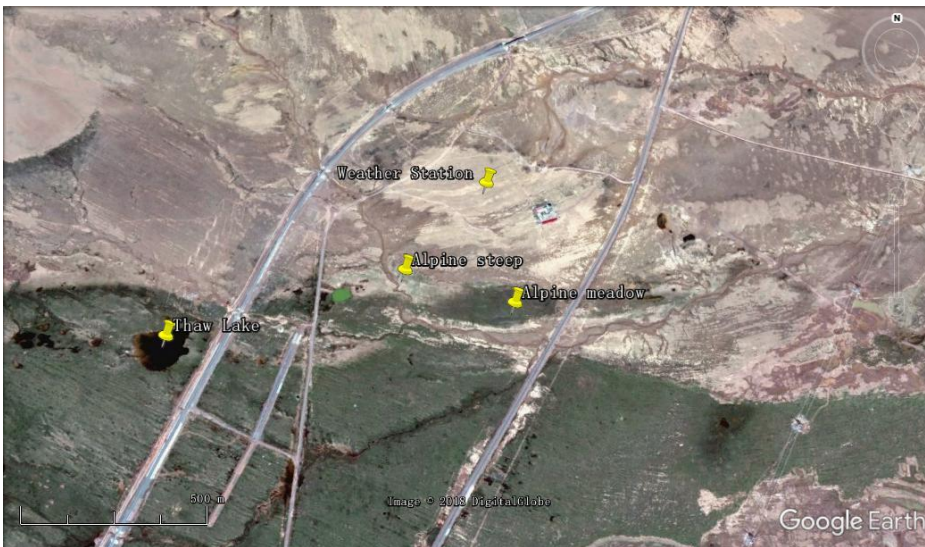
3

4 Figures still need work

5 P31 Figure1: This image is blurry. Use a full resolution image and include proper attribution to  
6 Google. I suggest saving the image from Google Earth that shows the attribution, then  
7 mark up the image with your locations and points. Save the image without compression.  
8 The image should be no less than 600 dpi

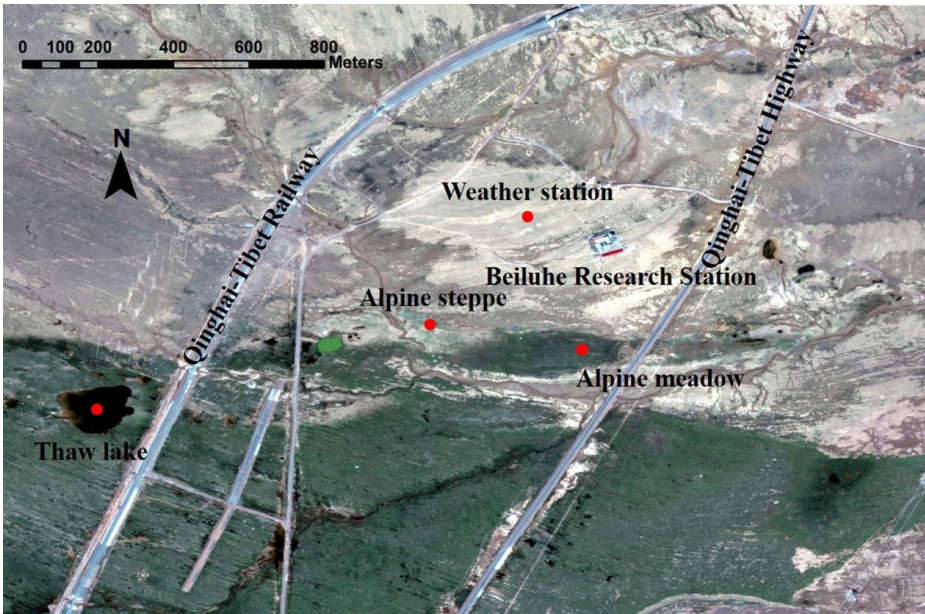
9 Response: Thank you for your suggestion. We do the work as suggested to save  
10 figure from Google Earth with attribution. However the image is blurry (Please see  
11 Figure S1-1, we have a problem of using Google Earth in China). We have to use  
12 third-part software to download high resolution image of Google Earth, but without  
13 attribution (Figure S1-2). In the modified manuscript, we use the high resolution  
14 image.

15



16

17 Figure S1-1. Image from Google Earth directly.



1

2 [Figure S1-2. Image from third-part software.](#)

3

4 P33 Figure3: Don't italicize.

5 [Response: Thank you for your suggestion. We modified the figure as suggested.](#)

6

7 P34 Figure4: unit ( $\text{W m}^{-1} \text{K}^{-1}$ )

8 [Response: Thank you for your suggestion. We modified the sentence as suggested.](#)

9

10 P36 Figure 6: This plot is of temperature not depth. Re-label so that it is clear to the reader  
11 that the plots shows temperature

12 [Response: Thank you for your comments. We now use "Temperature at different  
13 depth \( \$^{\circ}\text{C}\$ \).](#)

14

15 P37 Figure 7:

1 1)Why are the depths shown different than Figure 6? For comparative purposes it would be  
2 best if they were the same, no?

3 Response: Thank you for your comments. Soil moistures were measured at depths of  
4 5, 10, 20, 40, 80 and 160 cm (please see the 3rd paragraph of Section 2.1).  
5 However, we need to present the comparisons of soil temperature in the permafrost.  
6 In this site, the upper boundary of permafrost is about 3.3 m, therefore, we compare  
7 the simulated temperature down to 4 m.

8

9 2)This plot is of VWC not depth. Re-label so that it is clear to the reader that the plots  
10 shows VWC

11 Response: Thank you for your comments. We now use "VWC at different depth ( $\text{m}^3$   
12  $\text{m}^{-3}$ ).

13

14

15 P38 Figure 8: What are the white zones? Looks like an error. Please correct.

16 Response: Thank you for your comments. The white zones are caused by missing  
17 data of measured temperatures.

18 P38 Figure 8. No space between degree sign and C.

19 Response: Thank you for your comments. We plot our figures using python  
20 matplotlib. We specified "\$^oC", there is no space between o and C. However there  
21 seems a small space between them. We cannot remove the small space.

22

23 P39 Figure 9: Slope =  $10^\circ$

24 Response: Thank you for your suggestion. We modified the figure as suggested.

25

26 P41 Figure 11: Figure is clearly missing!

27 Response: Sorry for the mistake. We now add the figure in the main text.

1 | **The physical properties of coarse ~~soil~~-fragment soils and**  
2 | **their effects on permafrost dynamics: A case study on the**  
3 | **central Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau**

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31 | *Correspondence to:* Yongjian Ding (dyj@lzb.ac.cn)

32 | **Abstract.** Soils on the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau (QTP) have distinct physical properties from  
33 | agricultural soils due to weak weathering and strong erosion. These properties might affect  
34 | permafrost dynamics. However, few studies have investigated both quantitatively. In this  
35 | study, we selected a permafrost site on the central region of the QTP and excavated soil  
36 | samples down to 200 cm. We measured soil porosity, thermal conductivity, saturated  
37 | hydraulic conductivity and matric potential in the laboratory. Finally, we ran a simulation  
38 | model replacing default sand or loam parameters with different combinations of these

1 | measured parameters. ~~Results~~Our results from the soil profile showed that coarse soil  
2 | fragment content (diameter >2 mm) was ~55% on average in soil profile; ~~soil~~ porosity was  
3 | less than 0.3 ~~m<sup>3</sup> m<sup>-3</sup>~~; ~~saturated hydraulic conductivity~~ ranged from 0.004-0.03 mm s<sup>-1</sup>; ~~saturated~~  
4 | saturated matric potential ranged from -14 to -604 mm. When default sand or loam  
5 | parameters were substituted with these measured values, the model errors of soil temperature,  
6 | soil liquid water content, active layer depth and permafrost lower boundary were reduced. The  
7 | root mean squared errors of active layer depths simulated using measured parameters, ~~and~~  
8 | versus the default sand and loam parameters were about 0.28, 1.06, 1.83 m, respectively.  
9 | Among these measured parameters, porosities, which were much smaller than for soil textures  
10 | used in land surface models, played a dominant role in reducing model errors. We also  
11 | demonstrated that soil water dynamic processes should be considered, rather than using static  
12 | properties under frozen and unfrozen soil states as in most permafrost models. We ~~concludeed~~  
13 | that it is necessary to consider the distinct physical properties of soil and water dynamics on  
14 | the QTP when simulating dynamics of permafrost. It is important to develop methods for  
15 | systematic measuring physical properties of coarse soil fragment and to develop a spatial  
16 | dataset for porosity because of its importance in simulating permafrost dynamics in this  
17 | region.

18 | **Key words:** Terrestrial Ecosystem Model; Active ~~L~~layer; Sensitivity ~~Fest~~test; Soil  
19 | ~~Temperature~~temperature; Soil ~~Water-water~~ Contentcontent; Porosity; Coarse ~~soil~~-fragment  
20 | soils

## 21 | 1 Introduction

22 | Permafrost covers 25% of ~~the earth~~Earth's surface. Degradation of permafrost has been  
23 | reported extensively in Alaska, Siberia and the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau (QTP; Boike et al.,  
24 | 2013; Jorgenson et al., 2006; Wu and Zhang, 2010). ~~#~~Permafrost thaw has global impacts by  
25 | releasing large quantities of soil carbon previously preserved in a frozen state and enhancing  
26 | concentrations of atmospheric greenhouse gases, which will promote further atmospheric  
27 | warming and degradation of permafrost (Anisimov, 2007; McGuire et al., 2009). Permafrost  
28 | dynamics also have local to regional impacts on ecosystems by altering soil thermal and  
29 | hydrological regimes (Salmon et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2008; Wright et al., 2009; Ye et al.,  
30 | 2009; Yi et al., 2014a). In addition, degradation of permafrost affects infrastructure, e.g. such  
31 | as QTP railways and roads (Wu et al., 2004), ~~and or~~ the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System in

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1 Alaska (Nelson et al., 2001). Therefore, it is critical to develop mitigation and adaptation  
2 strategies in permafrost regions for ongoing climate change. Accurate projection of the degree  
3 of permafrost degradation is a prerequisite for developing these strategies.

4 Significant effort has been made to improve modeling accuracy and efficiency of  
5 permafrost dynamics along two primary lines of inquiry. One is to create suitable freezing and  
6 thawing algorithms for different applications, including land surface models (Chen et al.,  
7 2015; Oleson et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2017), permafrost models (Goodrich, 1978; Langer et  
8 al., 2013; Qin et al., 2017), and other related models (Fox, 1992; Woo et al., 2004). The other  
9 line of inquiry is focused on schemes of soil physical properties (Chen et al., 2012; Zhang et  
10 al., 2011), which play a critical role in permafrost dynamics. For example, ~~thermal diffusivity~~  
11 ~~(thermal conductivity/heat capacity) directly determines how quickly energy can be~~  
12 ~~conducted into and out of permafrost from the top and from the bottom of the permafrost~~  
13 ~~horizon. Porosity~~ porosity determines the maximum amount of water that can be contained in  
14 a soil layer, ~~thermal properties determine the heat conduction within soil layers,~~ and hydraulic  
15 properties determine the exchange of soil water between soil layers. The ~~amount of water then~~  
16 ~~affects not only soil thermal properties, but~~ soil water content also determines the large  
17 amount of latent heat ~~loss/gain~~ lost or gained for freezing/thawing by freezing or thawing,  
18 ~~respectively~~. On the QTP, soil is coarse due to weak weathering and strong erosion (Arocena  
19 et al., 2012). Soils with gravel content (particle diameter >2 mm) ~~has~~ have been reported in  
20 several studies (Wang et al., 2011; Wu et al., 2016; Yang et al., 2009; Qin et al., 2015; Chen  
21 et al., 2017; Du et al., 2017). These gravelly soil properties are likely different from those  
22 used in current modeling studies (Wang et al., 2013). For example, ~~Soil~~ soil properties in  
23 Community Land Model are calculated from fractions of sand, silt and clay based on  
24 measurements of agriculture soils (Oleson et al., 2010). However, ~~those soil properties~~ of  
25 ~~gravelly-coarse fragment~~ soil on the QTP and their effects on permafrost dynamics are under  
26 studied (Pan et al., 2017).

27 In this case study we investigated the characteristics of soil physical properties at a site on  
28 the central QTP and ~~its~~ their effects on permafrost dynamics. We first measured soil physical  
29 properties of excavated soil samples in a laboratory. We then conducted sensitivity ~~analyses~~  
30 ~~analysis~~ with an ecosystem model by substituting the default soil physical properties ~~by~~ with  
31 those that we measured. We aimed to emphasize the effects of ~~gravel-coarse fragment~~ content  
32 on soil physical properties and on permafrost dynamics. ~~It is not our purpose, rather than to~~  
33 develop general schemes of soil physical properties for using in modeling studies on the QTP.



## 1 2 Methods

### 2 2.1 Site description

3 The site (34°49'46.2" N, 92°55'56.58" E, 4,628ma.s.l.) is located in the Beiluhe basin. ~~This~~  
4 ~~basin is,~~ in the continuous permafrost region of the central QTP (Figure 1a, Zou et al. 2017).  
5 Based on the ~~soil-~~map of Li et al. (2015), ~~soils~~ of this region belongs to Gelisols and  
6 Inceptisols, which occupy 34% and 28% of the total area of permafrost region of the QTP,  
7 respectively. Land surface types include alpine meadow, alpine steppe, barren surface and  
8 thermokarst lakes (Figure 1b; Lin et al., 2011).

9 The site is on top of upland plain landforms, which are formed ~~with-from~~ fluvial and  
10 deluvial sediments. The surficial sediments are dominated by fine to gravelly sands and stones  
11 (Figure 2; Yin et al., 2017). Soil of this site belongs to Inceptisols (Dr. Li, Wangping ~~of~~  
12 ~~Lanzhou University of Technology~~, personal communication). Mudstone is common beneath  
13 soil. The plant community type is mainly alpine meadow which is dominated by  
14 monocotyledonous species, primarily Poaceae and Cyperaceae. The dominant species are  
15 *Kobresia pygmaea*, accompanied *Elymus nutans*, *Carex moorcroftii*, *Oxytropis pusilla*,  
16 *Tibetia himalaica*, *Leontopodium nanum* and *Androsace tapete* (Figure 2c-e).

17 A weather station was set up in 2002 (Figure 2a) ~~to measure Air-air~~ temperature and  
18 relative humidity (2.2m, HMP45C-L11 /L36, Campbell Scientific Inc.), solar radiation (MS-  
19 102, EKO, ~~Japan~~) ~~and~~, precipitation (QMR102, Vaisala Company) ~~were measured~~. Soil  
20 temperatures were measured at depths of 5, 10, 20, 40, 80 and 160 cm using ~~a~~ PT-100 (EKO,  
21 ~~Japan~~); soil moistures were measured at depths of 20, 40, 80 and 160 cm using ~~a~~ CS616-L50  
22 (EKO, ~~Japan~~). ~~A~~ CR3000 data logger (Campbell Scientific Inc., USA) was used to store these  
23 data at ~~an interval of 30 minutes~~ minute intervals. These ~~halfhour values~~ readings were  
24 averaged or summed (e.g. precipitation) into monthly values ~~for model driving and~~  
25 ~~validation~~ to drive and validate the model. Based on measurements, multi-year mean annual  
26 air temperature, precipitation, downward solar radiation and relative humidity were -3.61 °C,  
27 365.7 mm, 206.3 W ~~/m<sup>2</sup>-m<sup>2</sup>~~ and 51.1%, respectively (Figure 3). The multi-year mean summer  
28 (June to August) ~~winter (December to February)~~ air temperature and precipitation were 5.27/  
29 ~~12.44~~ °C and 248.3/~~5.3~~ mm, respectively. ~~The multi-year mean winter (December to February)~~  
30 ~~air temperature and precipitation were -12.44 °C and 5.3 mm, respectively.~~ The multi-year  
31 mean annual, summer, winter soil temperature at 40/~~80~~ cm were 0.17/~~0.11~~, 6.65/~~4.32~~ and -  
32 7.15/~~4.86~~ °C, respectively. Those at 80 cm were 0.11, 4.32 and -4.86 °C, respectively

1 A borehole was drilled in 2002, and Temperature thermistors made by the State Key  
2 Laboratory of Frozen Soil Engineering, Chinese Academy of Sciences were installed at 0.5 m  
3 intervals from 0.5 to 10 m, at 2 m intervals from 12 to 30 m, at 4 m intervals from 34 to 50 m,  
4 at depths between 0.5 m and 10 m with interval of 0.5 m; at depths between 12 m and 30 m  
5 with interval of 2 m; at depths between 34 m and 50 m with interval of 4 m; and at 55 and 60  
6 m. Temperature accuracy of this type of thermistor is  $\pm 0.05$  °C (Wu et al., 2016). The  
7 temperatures were recorded on the 5th and 20th days of each month using CR3000 data  
8 logger (Campbell Scientific Inc., USA). Based on measurement, active layer depth is ~3.3 m,  
9 depth of zero annual amplitude is ~6.2 m, and the lower boundary of permafrost is at a depth  
10 of ~20 m. The multi-year mean ground temperatures at 0.5, 26, and 60 m are about -0.52, -  
11 0.29-30 and 1.81 °C, respectively.

## 13 2.2 Soil sampling and measurement

14 Permafrost dynamics are affected by atmosphere, vegetation, and soil textures, therefore, we  
15 excavated soil close to the weather station and borehole (Figure 2a) down to 2 m (Figure 2b) in  
16 August 2014. We used cut rings (10 cm diameter, 6.37 cm height and 500 cm<sup>3</sup>) to take soil  
17 samples at depth ranges of 0-10, 10-20, 20-30, 40-50, 70-80, 110-120, 150-160, and 190-200  
18 cm. Three replicates were sampled from the top of each depth range and sealed for analysis in  
19 the laboratory. Above 120 cm in the soil pit, coarse soil material was small enough to be fitted  
20 in the cut rings. Below 150 cm, there exists the material is weathered mudstone, which could  
21 also be sampled with our cut rings. Based on the excavated soil pit and measured soil  
22 temperature, this site belongs to Inceptisols with suborder of Gelept (soil taxonomy, ST, Soil  
23 Survey Staff, 2014). The soil pit consists of A horizon (~20 cm), Bw horizon (~20-80 cm) and  
24 C material dominated by fractured bedrock.

25 We used the KD2 Pro (Decagon, US) to measure thermal conductivity of soil samples. The  
26 steps we took to determine soil properties for each sample were as follows were: 1) soil  
27 samples were was dried in an oven and weighed (0.001g precision) to calculate bulk density;  
28 Then 2) the soil samples were was exposed to a constant temperature (20°C) over for 24 h, a  
29 certain volume of water was injected into the soil samples, and the KD2 Pro (Decagon, USA)  
30 was used to measure the thermal conductivity of the soil samples. Next 3) the samples and the  
31 KD2 probe were then put into a refrigerator (-0-26°C) at -15°C over for 12 h, and thermal



1 conductivity was ~~then~~ measured again; 4) Steps 2 and 3 were repeated at ~~different increasing~~  
2 levels of soil volumetric water content until soil samples were ~~about to be saturated~~ up to the  
3 point of saturation. ~~Finally~~ 5) ~~Finally, the soil samples were was~~ immersed into water ~~over for~~  
4 24 h and weighed to calculate porosity; ~~and~~ the saturated unfrozen and frozen thermal  
5 conductivity were then measured, accordingly. The bulk density (BD), porosity (PORO) and  
6 volumetric water content (VWC) were calculated with the following equations.

$$7 \quad BD = \frac{W_{dry} - W_{cr}}{V_{cr}} \quad (1)$$

$$8 \quad PORO = \frac{W_{sat} - W_{dry}}{V_{cr}} / \rho \quad (2)$$

$$9 \quad VWC = \frac{W_{all} - W_{dry}}{V_{cr}} / \rho \quad (3)$$

10 Where  $W_{dry}$ ,  $W_{sat}$ ,  $W_{all}$ ,  $W_{cr}$  are weight mass of over dried sample, saturated sample, sample  
11 with some water with cut ring, and empty cut ring (g), respectively.  $V_{cr}$  is the volume of cut ring  
12 ( $\text{cm}^3$ ).  $\rho$  is the density of water ( $1 \text{ g/cm}^3$ ). We used pressure membrane instruments (1500F1,  
13 Soilmoisture Equipment Corp, US) to measure the matric potential of soil samples (Azam et al.,  
14 2014; Wang et al., 2007). ~~In this study we used, using~~ both 15 bar and 5 bar pressure chambers.  
15 Pressure values were set at 0, 10, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100, 150, 200, 300, and 400 kpa. It usually  
16 took 3-4 days to finish one measurement at one pressure level. We used a soil permeability  
17 meter (TST-70, Nanjing T-Bota Sciotech Instruments & Equipment Co., Ltd. China) to measure  
18 saturated hydraulic conductivity of soil samples (Gwenzi et al., 2011). Finally, soil samples  
19 were sieved through a 2.0 mm mesh ~~meshes with diameters of 2.0 mm~~, and soil particle size  
20 distribution was determined with a ~~Malvern~~ laser diffraction analyzer (Malvern-2000,  
21 ~~Instruments Inc.~~ Worcestershire, UK).

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## 22 2.3 Model description

23 The model used in this study is a dynamic organic soil version of Terrestrial Ecosystem  
24 Model (DOS-TEM). Models ~~of from the~~ TEM family simulate the carbon and nitrogen pools  
25 of vegetation and soil, and their fluxes among atmosphere, vegetation, and soil (McGuire et  
26 al., 1992). They have been widely used in studies of cold region ecosystems (e.g. McGuire et  
27 al., 2000; Yuan et al., 2012; Zhuang et al., 2004; 2010). The DOS-TEM consists of four  
28 modules, ~~these being the~~ environmental, ecological, fire disturbance, and dynamic organic  
29 soil ~~modules~~ (Yi et al., 2010). The environmental module operates on a daily time interval

1 using mean daily air temperature, surface solar radiation, precipitation, and vapor pressure,  
2 which are downscaled from monthly input data (Yi et al., 2009b). The module takes into  
3 account radiation and water fluxes among the atmosphere, canopy, snow pack, and soil. Soil  
4 temperatures, soil liquid water content, temperature in rock layers, active layer depth (ALD)  
5 and permafrost low boundary (PLB) were simulated explicitly.

### 6 2.3.1 Implementation of soil thermal processes

7 Earlier versions of TEM did not simulate soil temperature (McGuire et al., 1992). Zhuang et  
8 al. (2001) incorporated Goodrich (1978) permafrost model into TEM. Yi et al. (2009a)  
9 incorporated a two-directional Stefan algorithm to simulate soil freezing and thawing for  
10 complex soils ~~situation~~ with changes ~~of organic soil~~ in soil organic and moisture content. ~~Soil~~  
11 ~~temperatures~~ of all soil layers in the DOS-TEM are updated daily. Phase change is  
12 calculated first before heat conduction. A two-directional Stefan algorithm is used to predict  
13 the depths of freezing or thawing fronts within the soil (Woo et al., 2004). It first simulates  
14 the depth of the front in the soil column from the top downward, using soil surface  
15 temperature as the driving temperature. It then simulates the front from the bottom upward  
16 using the soil temperature at a specified depth beneath a front as the driving temperature  
17 (bottom-up forcing). The latent heat used for phase change is recorded for each soil layer. If a  
18 layer contains  $n$  freezing or thawing fronts, this layer is then explicitly divided into  $n+1$  soil  
19 layers. All soil layers are grouped into 3 parts: 1) ~~the soil layers those~~ above the uppermost  
20 freezing or thawing front; 2) ~~the soil layers those~~ below the lowermost freezing or thawing  
21 front; and 3) ~~the soil layers those~~ between the uppermost and lowermost fronts. Soil  
22 temperatures are then updated by solving finite difference equations of each part with latent  
23 heat from phase change ~~latent heat~~ as an energy source or sink (Yi et al., 2014a). Soil surface  
24 temperature, which is used as a boundary condition, is calculated using daily air maximum,  
25 air minimum, radiation, and leaf area index (Yi et al., 2013).

26 The version of the DOS-TEM in this study uses the Côté and ~~Konard~~ Konrad (2005)  
27 scheme to calculate thermal conductivity (Yi et al., 2013; Pan et al., 2017), which is also been  
28 used by other studies on the QTP (e.g. Chen et al., 2012, Luo et al., 2009), and is as follows:-

$$29 \lambda = \begin{cases} k_e \lambda_{sat} + (1 - k_e) \lambda_{dry} & s > 10^{-5} \\ \lambda_{dry} & s \leq 10^{-5} \end{cases} \quad (4)$$

1 where  $\lambda$ ,  $\lambda_{\text{sat}}$ ,  $\lambda_{\text{dry}}$  are soil thermal conductivity, saturated soil thermal conductivity, and dry  
 2 soil thermal conductivity ( $\text{W m}^{-1} \text{K}^{-1}$ ), respectively, ~~and~~  $k_c$  is the Kersten number (Côté and  
 3 Konrad, 2005). Dry thermal conductivity varies with soil properties according to:

$$4 \quad \lambda_{\text{dry}} = \chi 10^{-\eta \phi} \quad (5)$$

5 where  $\chi$  ( $\text{W m}^{-1} \text{K}^{-1}$ ) and  $\eta$  (no unit) are parameters accounting for particle shape effects,  
 6 which are specified for gravel, fine mineral and organic soil (Côté and ~~Konrad~~ Konrad,  
 7 2005), ~~and~~  $\phi$  is porosity. Saturated thermal conductivity varies with water content and  
 8 phase state according to:

$$9 \quad \lambda_{\text{sat}} = \begin{cases} \lambda_s^{1-\phi} \lambda_{\text{liq}}^\phi & T \leq T_f \\ \lambda_s^{1-\phi} \lambda_{\text{ice}}^\phi & T > T_f \end{cases} \quad (6)$$

10 where  $\lambda_{\text{liq}}$ ,  $\lambda_{\text{ice}}$ ,  $\lambda_s$  are thermal conductivity~~s~~ of liquid water, ice, and soil solid ( $\text{W m}^{-1} \text{K}^{-1}$ ),  
 11 which are all constant values.  $T$  and  $T_f$  are temperature of soil and freezing point temperature  
 12 of soil ( $^\circ\text{C}$ ), respectively. In DOS-TEM, freezing or thawing processes are assumed to be  
 13 happened at  $T_f$ , following most of the land surface models (e.g. Oleson et al. 2010).

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### 14 2.3.2 Implementation of soil hydrological processes

15 Surface runoff, infiltration, and water redistribution among soil layers are simulated in a  
 16 similar way as Community Land Model 4 (Oleson et al., 2010). Soil matric potential ( $\Psi$ )  
 17 determines the direction of water movement. ~~A,~~ and hydraulic conductivity describes the ease  
 18 with which water can move through the soil ~~pore~~.

$$19 \quad \Psi = \Psi_{\text{sat}} \left( \frac{\theta_{\text{liq}}}{\phi} \right)^{-B} \quad (7)$$

20 where  $\Psi_{\text{sat}}$  is saturated soil matric potential (mm  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ , hereafter mm),  $\theta_{\text{liq}}$  is volumetric  
 21 liquid water content ( $\text{m}^3 \text{m}^{-3}$ ), and  $B$  is pore size distribution parameter. The soil hydraulic  
 22 conductivity ( $\text{K}$ ,  $\text{mm s}^{-1}$ ) is a function of the saturated soil hydraulic conductivity ( $\text{K}_{\text{sat}}$ ) as  
 23 follows:

$$24 \quad \text{K} = \text{K}_{\text{sat}} \left( \frac{\theta_{\text{liq}}}{\phi} \right)^{2B+3} \quad (8)$$

25 ~~where  $\text{K}$  is soil hydraulic conductivity, and  $\text{K}_{\text{sat}}$  is saturated soil hydraulic conductivity ( $\text{mm s}^{-1}$ ).~~  
 26 ~~†~~

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1 Several important features relating to permafrost have been considered in the DOS-TEM  
2 (see Yi et al., 2014b), ~~e.g. including~~ runoff from a perched saturated zone ~~and or~~ exchanges of  
3 water between the soil and a water reservoir. Runoff from ~~the a~~ perched saturated zone above  
4 ~~the~~ permafrost is implemented following Swenson et al. (2013):

$$5 \quad Q_{perch} = \alpha k_p (z_{frost} - z_{perched}) \sin\left(\frac{\theta}{180} \pi\right) \quad (9)$$

6 ~~Where where~~  $\alpha$  is an adjustable parameter ( $0.6 \text{ m}^{-1}$ ),  $K_p$  is the mean saturated hydraulic  
7 conductivity within the perched saturated zone ( $\text{mm s}^{-1}$ ),  $z_{frost}$  and  $z_{perched}$  are the depths to the  
8 permafrost table and the perched water table (m), respectively, and  ~~$\theta$~~  is slope ( $^\circ$ ).

9 The DOS-TEM has been verified against the Neumann Equation for water, mineral and  
10 organic soil under an idealized condition (Yi et al., 2014b), and validated against field  
11 measurements for various locations in Alaska, the Arctic, and the QTP (Yi et al., 2009b, Yi et  
12 al., 2013, Yi et al., 2014a).

## 13 2.4 Model inputs and initialization

14 We used the ~~measured monthly averaged~~ air temperature, downward radiation, precipitation  
15 and humidity (~~monthly~~) as input to drive the DOS-TEM. Leaf area index (LAI), ~~one-sided~~  
16 ~~green~~ leaf area per unit ground surface area, was specified to be  $0.6 \text{ m}^2 \text{ m}^{-2}$  in July and August,  
17  $0.1 \text{ m}^2 \text{ m}^{-2}$  in April and October,  $0 \text{ m}^2 \text{ m}^{-2}$  between November and March, and interpolated  
18 linearly in other months. It is used in the DOS-TEM to calculate ground surface temperature  
19 in combination with other meteorological variables (Yi et al., 2013). Its value is unchanged  
20 within each month.

21 Soil temperature and moisture were initialized at  $-1 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$  and saturation. ~~→~~ The temperature  
22 gradient at the bottom of bedrock was set to be  $0.06 \text{ }^\circ\text{C cm}^{-1}$  based on borehole observations.  
23 Volumetric unfrozen liquid water in winter was set to be 0.1 based on observations. Multi-  
24 year (2003-2012) mean (~~2003-2012~~) monthly driving data were used ~~for spunto spin up the~~  
25 model for 100 yr. In this way, ~~proper suitable~~ initial values of soil moisture, temperature and  
26 rock temperature of each layer ~~can beare~~ generated ~~for the beginning of 2003. Finally,~~  
27 ~~monthly driving data were used to drive DOS TEM before driving DOS-TEM with monthly~~  
28 data over the period of 2003-2012.

## 1 2.5 Sensitivity analyses

2 The soil textures on the QTP mainly consist of loam, sand, and ~~gravel-coarse soil fragments~~  
3 (Wu and Nan, 2016). We used ~~a uniform~~ sand ~~and-or~~ loam ~~in whole~~ soil profile ~~uniformly~~ to  
4 represent coarse and fine soil textures, respectively. ~~The parameters of coarse soil textures are~~  
5 ~~not~~ Sands are the most coarsest texture considered in most ~~of~~ the modeling studies (e.g.  
6 Oleson et al., 2010). Therefore, we used our measured parameters to substitute the parameters  
7 of sand and loam to investigate the effects of coare-fragment soil parameters on permafrost  
8 dynamics. We first ran ~~the~~ DOS-TEM using the default porosity, soil thermal conductivity  
9 (Equation 4), hydraulic conductivity (Equation 8), and matric potential schemes of these two  
10 default soil textures (Equation 7). The default parameters  $\Phi$ ,  $\Psi_{\text{sat}}$ ,  $K_{\text{sat}}$  and B were calculated  
11 based on soil texture used in Community Land Model (Equation 7 and 8; Oleson et al., 2010).  
12 We then substituted the default values of  $\Phi$ ,  $\Psi_{\text{sat}}$ ,  $K_{\text{sat}}$  and B based on our laboratory  
13 measurements and calibration. ~~Saturated-matric-potential~~ Parameters  $\Psi_{\text{sat}}$  and B were fitted  
14 with measured matric potential data using Isqucurvefit tools of Matlab. We did not calibrate  
15 soil thermal conductivity to retrieve parameters of Equation 5 and 6. Instead, we interpolated  
16 measured thermal ~~conductivity-conductivities~~ over a range of ~~the~~ degrees of saturation (0 to 1),  
17 which was used as a lookup table by the DOS-TEM. Therefore, our sensitivity analyses  
18 considered a set of 4 factors, i.e. porosity, matric potential ( $\Psi_{\text{sat}}$  and B), hydraulic conductivity  
19 ( $K_{\text{sat}}$  and B) and thermal conductivity. We also analyzed 3 different slopes (0, 5 and 10°) and  
20 3 different soil thicknesses (3.25, 4.25 and 5.25 m) above 56 m of bed rock. There ~~are-were~~  
21 11 soil layers with the top 9 layers being 0.05, 0.1, 0.1, 0.2, 0.2, 0.2, 0.3, 0.3 and 0.3 m thick.  
22 The thicknesses of the bottom 2 soil layers ~~are-were~~ 0.5 and 1 m, 0.5 and 2 m, and 1.5 and 2  
23 m for the 3.25, 4.25 and 5.25 m cases, respectively. There ~~are-were~~ 6 rock layers with  
24 thicknesses of 2, 2, 4, 8, 16 and 20 m. Since the site is on the top of upland plain landforms,  
25 we did not further test the effects of aspect on radiation on ground surface. We instead  
26 considered the effects of slope on surface runoff. In summary, our sensitivity analyses with  
27 the DOS-TEM involved 288 different combinations of parameter values.

28 We did not measure the heat capacity. The maximum and minimum heat capacities of mineral  
29 soil types considered in land surface model are 2.355 and 2.136 MJ m<sup>-3</sup>, respectively. ~~The,~~  
30 giving a relative difference ~~is~~ less than 10%. Therefore, in this study, we did not make  
31 sensitivity tests using thermal diffusivity (the ratio between thermal conductivity and heat  
32 capacity).

## 1 3 Results

### 2 3.1 Soil physical properties

#### 3 3.1.1 Soil porosity, particle size and bulk density

4 Results from laboratory analysis of the soil samples are shown in Table 1 and 2. The mean  
5 weight ~~fraction of gravel of the coarse soil fraction~~ (particle size diameter > 2 mm) of different  
6 soil layers ranged from 0.38 to 0.65 with a mean of 0.55 ~~(Table 1)~~. According to the USDA  
7 classification system (clay (<2 μ m), silt (2–50 μ m, in this study 2–63 μ m) and sand (50 μ  
8 m–2.0 mm, in this study 63 μ m–2.0 mm)), the major soil texture of this site was loamy sand,  
9 with the exception of sandy loam at depth of 20–30 cm ~~(Table 1)~~. The default porosities of  
10 sand and loam were 37.3% and 43.5%, respectively. The ~~measured mean~~ porosity of samples  
11 ~~in down to~~ 2 m depth ranged from 21% to 30% with a mean of 27%. ~~The, and the~~ mean bulk  
12 density ranged from 1.61 to 1.86 g cm<sup>-3</sup> with a mean of 1.74 g cm<sup>-3</sup>. The porosity calculated  
13 from bulk density (= 1- bulk density/2.65 g cm<sup>-3</sup>) ranged from 29.8% to 39.2%. No significant  
14 relationships were found among soil porosity, bulk density and the ~~fraction of gravel coarse~~  
15 soil fraction (p>0.05).

#### 16 3.1.2 Thermal conductivity

17 The results of the thermal conductivity determinations are shown in Table 3. The ~~mean~~  
18 unfrozen dry soil thermal conductivity of different soil layers ranged from 0.24 to 0.40 W m<sup>-1</sup>  
19 K<sup>-1</sup> with a mean of 0.36 W m<sup>-1</sup> K<sup>-1</sup> ~~(Table 2)~~, and ~~The the mean~~ frozen dry soil thermal  
20 conductivity ranged from 0.25 to 0.41 W m<sup>-1</sup> K<sup>-1</sup> with a mean of 0.35 W m<sup>-1</sup> K<sup>-1</sup>. The  
21 difference of dry thermal conductivity between frozen and unfrozen states was small. The  
22 ~~mean~~ unfrozen saturated soil thermal conductivity of different soil layers ranged from 2.15 to  
23 2.74 W m<sup>-1</sup> K<sup>-1</sup> with a mean of 2.48 W m<sup>-1</sup> K<sup>-1</sup> ~~(Table 2)~~. The ~~mean~~ frozen saturated soil  
24 thermal conductivity ranged from 3.06 to 3.72 W m<sup>-1</sup> K<sup>-1</sup> with a mean of 3.33 W m<sup>-1</sup> K<sup>-1</sup>. The  
25 difference of saturated thermal conductivity between frozen and unfrozen states was about  
26 0.85 W m<sup>-1</sup> K<sup>-1</sup>. There existed a threshold of soil wetness (i.e. ~0.28 m<sup>3</sup> m<sup>-3</sup>), below which  
27 frozen soil thermal conductivity was slightly smaller than unfrozen soil (Figure 4a).

28 Results from determining thermal conductivities using the Côté and Konrad (2005) scheme  
29 are shown in Figure 4b. The default dry frozen and unfrozen thermal conductivities ~~using~~

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1 | ~~Côté and Konard (2005) scheme~~ for sand and loam were about 0.42 and 0.24 W m<sup>-1</sup> K<sup>-1</sup>,  
2 | respectively. The saturated frozen and unfrozen thermal conductivities of sand were 3.11 and  
3 | 1.90 W m<sup>-1</sup> K<sup>-1</sup>, respectively. Those of loam were about 2.36 and 1.33 W m<sup>-1</sup> K<sup>-1</sup>, respectively  
4 | ~~(Figure 4b)~~. Results from determining thermal conductivities using the Farouki (1986)  
5 | scheme are shown in Figure 4c. The default dry frozen and unfrozen thermal conductivities  
6 | using Farouki scheme for sand and loam were about 0.97 and 0.63 W m<sup>-1</sup> K<sup>-1</sup>, respectively.  
7 | The saturated frozen and unfrozen thermal conductivities of sand were 5.21 and 3.18 W m<sup>-1</sup>  
8 | K<sup>-1</sup>, respectively. Those of loam were about 4.49 and 2.52 W m<sup>-1</sup> K<sup>-1</sup>, respectively ~~(Figure 4e)~~.

### 9 | 3.1.3 Saturated hydraulic conductivity

10 | The mean saturated hydraulic conductivity of soil layers, shown in Table 4, ranged from  
11 | 0.0036 to 0.0315 mm s<sup>-1</sup>. The maximum saturated hydraulic conductivity was about 8.7 times  
12 | larger than the minimum ~~(Table 3)~~. The saturated hydraulic conductivity tended to be larger  
13 | with increasing proportion of coarse fragment in the soil samples (Figure 5a), and was about  
14 | 0.03-0.06 mm s<sup>-1</sup> for some samples with coarse fragment greater than 70%. The default  
15 | saturated hydraulic conductivities of sand and loam were 0.024 and 0.0042 mm s<sup>-1</sup>,  
16 | respectively.

### 17 | 3.1.4 Matric potential

18 | The correlation coefficients between calculated and fitted matric potential, shown in Table 4,  
19 | were all greater than 0.96. The mean absolute value of saturated matric potential of soil layers  
20 | ranged from ~~27.02~~ 14.47 to 603.7 mm, and those of B ranged from 1.89 to 5.22 ~~to 1.89~~ (Table  
21 | 3-4 and Figure 5b). The default absolute value of saturated matric potential of sand and loam  
22 | were 47.29 and 207.34 mm, respectively, and the B values 3.39 and 5.77, respectively.

## 23 | 3.2 Comparisons between simulations using default vs. measured parameters

### 24 | 3.2.1 Soil temperature

25 | The mean root mean squared errors (RMSEs) between monthly measured soil temperatures  
26 | and model runs with measured parameters using different combination of soil thicknesses  
27 | (3.25, 4.25 and 5.25 m) and slopes (0, 5 and 10°) were about -1.07 °C at 20 cm (Figure 6c).  
28 | The mean RMSEs for all model runs with default sand and loam parameters were about 0.97  
29 | and 1.18 °C, respectively. For other soil layers, the RMSEs of model runs with measured

1 | parameters were much smaller than those with default sand and loam parameters (Figures 6d-  
2 | l). The simulated soil temperatures using default sand and loam parameters were all lower  
3 | than measured ones in summer at 100 and 200 cm; and in winter at 400 cm. The RMSEs can  
4 | be as large as 2.53 °C (Figure 6e).

5 | The standard deviations of soil temperatures among different slopes and soil thicknesses  
6 | using measured parameters were larger than those using the default parameters (Figure 6); and  
7 | they increased from 0.40 °C at 100 cm to 0.61 °C at 200 cm (Figure 6f and i). The standard  
8 | deviations using default loam parameters were smaller (<0.15 °C at all depths) than those  
9 | using default sand parameters.

### 10 | **3.2.2 Soil liquid water**

11 | The mean RMSEs between monthly measured liquid soil volumetric water content (VWC)  
12 | and model simulations with measured parameters ranged from 0.03 to 0.09, which were  
13 | smaller than RMSEs for sand and loam parameters (Figure 7). The model simulations for  
14 | loam parameters have larger RMSEs than those for sand parameters. VWCs were always  
15 | overestimated in warm seasons at depths of 10, 40 and 80 cm. VWCs were underestimated at  
16 | a depth of 160 cm, where the simulated soil was frozen. All model simulations overestimated  
17 | VWC at 40 cm, where the maximum measured VWCs were about 0.1 (Figure 7d-f).

18 | The standard deviations of VWC among different slopes and soil thicknesses using sand  
19 | parameters were about 0.077, which were larger than those using measured parameters  
20 | (~0.062). The standard deviations of VWC using loam parameters (<0.032) were less than  
21 | those using measured parameters.

### 22 | **3.2.3 Active layer depth (ALD)**

23 | The mean RMSEs between measured ALDs (derived from linear interpolation of soil  
24 | temperatures) and modelled ALDs (simulated explicitly) were about 1.06, 1.72 and 0.28 m for  
25 | model runs with sand, loam and measured parameters (Figure 8a). The mean standard  
26 | deviations were about 0.088, 0.026 and 0.28 m. All simulations using sand and loam  
27 | parameters underestimated ALDs.



### 1 **3.2.4 Permafrost lower boundary (PLB)**

2 The mean RMSEs between measured PLBs (derived from linear interpolation of temperatures)  
3 and modelled PLBs (derived from linear interpolation of simulated bed rock temperatures)  
4 were about 10.25, 10.23 and 6.71 m for model runs with sand, loam and measured parameters  
5 (Figure 6b). The mean standard deviations were about 1.89, 1.51 and 6.62 m. All simulations  
6 using sand and loam parameters overestimated PLBs.

### 7 **3.3 Model sensitivity analyses**

8 Deep soil layers used in models are usually specified as being thick. For example, a 1 m thick  
9 soil layer was used in our simulations starting around 3 m soil depth. Soil temperatures at this  
10 depth are usually close to 0°C. Therefore, the RMSEs of deep soil layers were small and did  
11 not facilitate evaluation of model sensitivities. In the following subsections, we used 20 and  
12 100 cm soil temperatures, ALDs and PLBs for sensitivity analysis.

#### 13 **3.3.1 Effects of single parameter sensitivity analyses**

##### 14 **Porosity**

15 Replacing default sand or loam porosity with measured porosities changed mean RMSEs of  
16 soil temperatures (model runs with 3 different slopes and 3 different soil thicknesses at 2  
17 different soil depths) from 1.18 or 1.84 °C to 1.25 or 1.09 °C, respectively (Figure 9 and 10).  
18 Mean RMSEs of ALD were reduced from 1.06 or 1.72 m to 0.22 or 0.85 m, respectively.  
19 Mean RMSEs of PLB were changed from 10.26 or 10.24 m to 6.61 or 10.97 m. Mean  
20 RMSEs of VWC were reduced from 0.074 or 0.14 to 0.06 or 0.062 when measured porosities  
21 were used for replacing default sand or loam porosity, respectively (Figure 11 and 12).

##### 22 **Thermal conductivity**

23 Replacing default sand or loam thermal conductivity with measured thermal conductivity  
24 reduced mean RMSEs of soil temperatures from 1.18 or 1.84°C to 1.02 or 1.15°C,  
25 respectively (Figure 9 and 10). Mean RMSEs of ALD were reduced from 1.06 or 1.72 m to  
26 0.56 or 1.04 m, respectively. Mean RMSEs of PLB were changed from 10.26 or 10.24 m to  
27 4.18 or 1.27 m, respectively. Mean RMSEs of VWC changed very slightly (Figure 11 and 12).

##### 28 **Hydraulic conductivity ~~A4~~ and matric potential**

1 Replacing default sand or loam hydraulic conductivity with measured parameters had very  
2 small effects on mean RMSEs of soil temperatures and ALDs (Figure 9 and 10). The same  
3 was true for matric potential. When hydraulic conductivity of default sand or loam was  
4 substituted, mean RMSEs of PLB ~~were~~ decreased or increased, respectively. ~~h~~However,  
5 when matric potential was substituted, mean RMSEs of PLBs ~~were~~ increased or decreased,  
6 respectively. When hydraulic conductivity or matric potential parameters were substituted in  
7 default sand or loam parameters, mean RMSEs of VWC changed slightly (Figure 11 and 12).

### 8 **3.3.2 Effects of combined parameters**

9 We compared model simulations with different combinations of measured parameters  
10 (porosity, thermal conductivity, hydraulic conductivity and matric potential) ~~with to~~ those  
11 with one substituted measured parameter. We ranked those model runs with less RMSEs than  
12 ~~any of the best of the~~ model runs with ~~one substituted measured parameter one parameter~~  
13 substituted with a measurement-derived value (Table 4-5 and 56). We didn't consider the 10  
14 cm soil temperature, which were similar among all model runs.

15 For sand, model simulations with porosity and thermal conductivity or hydraulic  
16 conductivity substituted had 4 outcomes with lower RMSEs (Table 4-5 and Figures 9 and 11).  
17 Only 2 out of 7 outcomes had lower RMSEs with all 4 parameters ~~were~~ substituted. Among  
18 all the 18 cases with RMSEs less than the individual "best" RMSE, porosity was included 18  
19 times, followed by thermal conductivity and hydraulic conductivity both with 10 times.

20 For loam, model simulations with porosity and thermal conductivity substituted had 5  
21 outcomes with lower RMSEs (Table 5-6 and Figures 10 and 12). Among all the 27 cases with  
22 RMSEs less than the individual "best" RMSE, porosity was included 27 times, followed by  
23 thermal conductivity with 16 times, and matric potential with 14 times.

### 24 **3.3.3 Effects of slope and soil thickness**

25 Changes of slope alone had small effects on simulated soil temperatures and ALDs (Figures 9  
26 and 10). An increase of slope generally reduced RMSEs of VWCs (Figures 11 and 12). Model  
27 simulations with porosity substituted had smaller differences ~~of in~~ VWC RMSE between  
28 different cases of slopes. For example, the mean RMSEs of model simulations with slopes of  
29 0° or 5° and ~~porosity substituted in default~~ sand parameters substituted with measured  
30 porosity were 0.078 or 0.048, respectively. While those with porosity not substituted were

1 0.141 or 0.055, respectively. Similarly, the mean RMSEs of model simulations using default  
2 loam parameters with porosity substituted were 0.08 or 0.05 for slope of 0° or 5°, respectively.  
3 The mean RMSEs were 0.18 or 0.1 with porosity not substituted, respectively. For a further  
4 increase of slope to 10°, changes of RMSEs of VWCs at depths of 10-160 cm were small.

5 Soil thickness had small effects on 20 and 100 cm soil temperatures and 10-160 cm VWCs,  
6 and it had prominent effects on PLB for a few cases only with a slope of 10° (Figures 9 and  
7 10).

## 8 **4 Discussion**

### 9 **4.1 Characteristics of soil physical properties**

10 Although the effects of coarse fragment soil on permafrost dynamics have been considered in  
11 a few modelling studies, the thermal and hydraulic properties of coarse fragment soil were  
12 calculated without validation or calibration (Pan et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2018). To our  
13 knowledge, this is the first study measuring physical properties of coarse fragment soil  
14 samples from permafrost region of the QTP.

15 The weight fraction of coarse fragment (diameter > 2mm, including gravel) in the soil  
16 samples we analysed was greater than 55% on average. While the typical soil types  
17 considered in land surface models and other models usually have much smaller diameter. For  
18 comparison, the fractions of gravel considered in Pan et al. (2017) ranges from 5% to 33%  
19 and from 10% to 28% for the Madoi and Naqu sites, respectively. The Beiluhe site and the  
20 aforementioned sites are located in regions with Gelisols and Inceptisols, which occupy ~62%  
21 of the permafrost regions of the QTP (Li et al., 2015). It is possible that coarse fragment soil  
22 commonly exists on the QTP. The dataset of Wu and Nan (2016) indicated that gravel content  
23 widely exists on the middle and western part of the QTP. The saturated hydraulic conductivity  
24 and matric potential of soil samples measured in this study were more similar to sand than to  
25 loam (see Section 3.1). It is consistent with the study of Wang et al. (2013) that coarse soil  
26 material has poor water holding capability.

27 The measured thermal conductivities of saturated soil samples were relatively close to  
28 those estimated by the Côté and Konrad (2005) scheme. But they were much less than  
29 those estimated by the Farouki scheme (Figure 4). Several other studies also found that  
30 Farouki scheme overestimated soil thermal conductivity (Chen et al. 2012; Luo et al., 2009).

1 One important finding of this study is the relatively small value of porosity. The measured  
2 porosity ranged from 0.206 to 0.302, which is less than those of soil types considered in land  
3 surface models. For example, the porosities of mineral soil types considered in Community  
4 Land Model range from 0.37 to 0.48 (Oleson et al., 2010). Porosity determines the maximum  
5 water stored in a soil layer, and affects soil thermal conductivity, hydraulic conductivity and  
6 matric potential (Equation 5-8). It plays a more important role than other parameters in  
7 simulated soil thermal and hydrological dynamics (Table 4-5 and 56; Figure 9-12). It is  
8 noteworthy that it is easy and efficient to measure porosity.

#### 9 4.2 Effects of soil water on permafrost dynamics

10 Soil water not only affects soil thermal properties, (e.g. thermal conductivity and heat  
11 capacity), but also affects the amount of latent heat lost or gained, for freezing or thawing,  
12 respectively (Goodrich, 1978; Farouki, 1986). Soil water is determined by infiltration,  
13 evapotranspiration, water movement among soil layers, subsurface runoff and exchange with  
14 a water reservoir. Therefore, processes or parameters that affect soil water dynamics will also  
15 affect permafrost dynamics. This study quantitatively assessed the effects of soil water on  
16 permafrost dynamics. For example, when default loam parameters with high porosity and low  
17 saturated hydraulic conductivity were used, soil layers were almost saturated (Figure 7). The  
18 simulated ALDs were about 1.58 m, which was less than half of measured ALDs (Figure 8a).  
19 When the slope was 0°, subsurface runoff didn't ~~happen-occur~~ in the saturated zone above the  
20 bottom of the active layer. The simulated soil water content was generally higher in the active  
21 layer. However, when the slope was 5°, the simulated soil water content was less and the  
22 RMSE was smaller (Figure 11 and 12). These patterns were especially obvious when both  
23 porosity and saturated hydraulic conductivity were large (Equation 9; Figure 11 and 12).  
24 Other studies have also emphasized the importance of subsurface runoff above the bottom of  
25 the active layer (Frey and McClelland, 2009; Walvoord and Striegl, 2007). The effects of soil  
26 water content on soil thermal dynamics increased with soil and rock depth (Figure 9 and 10).  
27 The biggest effects were on PLB, which became manifest during long-term spinup procedures.

28 Land surface models generally represent soil water dynamics (e.g. Chen et al., 2015;  
29 Oleson et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2017). However, the thermal processes in permafrost models  
30 usually use specified thermal properties, which were static during model simulations (Li et al.,  
31 2009; Nan et al., 2005; Qin et al., 2017; Zou et al., 2017). As shown in this study, soil thermal

1 ~~and hydrological properties depend largely on soil water content. when permafrost degraded,~~  
2 ~~the thermal and hydrological regimes of soil also changed.~~ It is critical to simulate soil water  
3 dynamics to properly project permafrost dynamics in the future.

#### 4 4.3 Limitations and Outlook

##### 5 4.3.1 Sampling and laboratory measurement

6 We used cut rings with 10 cm diameter to ~~take soil samples. There are~~ sample soil and  
7 weathered mudstones ~~in our study site, which can be sampled in cut rings.~~ However, it is very  
8 likely that there ~~are soil samples with~~ could have been much bigger coarse soil fragment.  
9 Therefore, larger containers should be used to take samples for further laboratory analysis in  
10 the future.

11 During our laboratory work, we found two phenomena. First, we originally used the QL-  
12 30 thermophysical instrument to measure thermal conductivity. It worked properly under  
13 unfrozen condition. However, when frozen, the surface of the soil samples was usually  
14 uneven due to frost heave. ~~The, which reduces the~~ contact between the QL-30 plate ~~of QL-30~~  
15 and the soil sample surface ~~was not ideal~~. The measured frozen thermal conductivities were  
16 smaller than unfrozen thermal conductivity even for the case of saturation, which were  
17 definitely wrong-, thus we used the KD2 pro to determine thermal conductivities. The second  
18 phenomenon was that there seems to be a threshold of soil wetness, below which unfrozen  
19 soil thermal conductivity is greater than frozen soil thermal conductivity (Figure 4a). This  
20 pattern was somewhat exhibited in estimates of the Côté and ~~Konard~~ Konrad (2005) scheme  
21 (Figure 4b), but not in the estimates of the Farouki scheme (Figure 4c). More measurements  
22 using instruments with higher accuracy should be made in the future.

23 It is ideal to draw water in soil samples under a vacuum condition before weighing dry  
24 soil sample. Unfortunately, we do not have such instrument. We dried soil samples in an oven  
25 at 65 °C for over 48 h, which is commonly used in ecological studies, e.g. Qin et al. (2018).  
26 The measured porosities are generally smaller than those calculated from bulk density. We  
27 made additional model simulations using porosities calculated from bulk density in  
28 combination with other measured parameters. Results showed that the RMSEs of ALD and  
29 PLB were 0.55 m and 4.78 m, respectively (Figures not shown). While those used measured  
30 porosities were 0.28 m and 6.71 m. Considering the importance of porosity on simulated

1 permafrost dynamics, it is important to draw water out of soil samples in a vacuum condition  
2 before weighing dry soil samples in the future.

### 3 **4.3.2 Model simulation**

4 Although the DOS-TEM using measured parameters provided satisfactory results, there are  
5 some aspects requiring further improvement in the future. For example, the measured soil  
6 moistures at 40 cm depth were less than  $0.1 \text{ m}^3/\text{m}^3$ . However, the simulated soil moistures  
7 were always much greater (Figure 7f). There were also spikes of in measured soil moistures at  
8 80 and 160 cm depths, which were not presented in the simulation (Figure 7 i and l). In the  
9 DOS-TEM, the unfrozen soil water content, or supercold water, was prescribed to be  $0.1$   
10  $\text{m}^3/\text{m}^3$ . When soil is freezing, if soil liquid water content is less than this value, no phase  
11 change will happen (Figure 7k). ~~It is ideal to~~ Therefore, model results would improve with the  
12 capability to simulate the dynamics of unfrozen soil water content (Romanovsky and  
13 Osterkamp, 2000).

14 ~~Field studies have shown that coarse soil fragment content in root zone affects vegetation~~  
15 ~~growth (Qin et al., 2015), which affects ground surface temperature (Yi et al., 2013). In the~~  
16 ~~current study, we used specified leaf area index. The fractions of coarse fragment content in~~  
17 ~~soil are also dynamic. For example, Chen et al. (2017) found that plateau pika excavated~~  
18 ~~subsurface soil with gravel on to surface. Fine soil particles were carried away by wind and~~  
19 ~~water erosion, which resulted in gravel remaining at the surface. Our ongoing research is~~  
20 ~~working towards representing the coupling of vegetation growth, small mammal disturbances,~~  
21 ~~and soil erosion on permafrost dynamics of the QTP in the future.~~

### 22 **4.3.3 Regional applications**

23 Soil texture plays an important role in permafrost dynamics (Figure 8). However, the  
24 dominant soil texture on the QTP from Wu and Nan (2016) ~~is-are~~ loam, sand, and gravel. The  
25 specification of loam in simulations results in estimates of ALD that are much smaller than  
26 measurements (Yi et al., 2014a). To properly simulate the distribution and dynamics of  
27 permafrost on the QTP under climate change scenarios, it is important to develop proper  
28 schemes of soil physical properties in relation to coarse fragment content (including gravel)  
29 and to develop regional datasets of soil texture for input.

1 Coarse fragment content affects soil physical properties. For example, soil porosity and  
2 saturated hydraulic conductivity are determined by the fraction of gravel, diameter and degree  
3 of mixture (Zhang et al., 2011).

4 Organic soil carbon content in mineral soil on the QTP affects soil porosity and thermal  
5 conductivity (Chen et al., 2012). In the site considered in this study, the amount of organic  
6 soil carbon in soil was small (Figure 2), and we did not consider the effects of organic soil  
7 carbon on soil properties explicitly. Alpine swamp meadow, alpine meadow, alpine steppe  
8 and alpine desert are the major vegetation types on the QTP (Wang et al., 2016; see also  
9 Figure 1b). Alpine swamp meadow and alpine meadow usually contain fine soil particles and  
10 high organic carbon density; while the other two types usually contain coarse soil particle and  
11 low organic carbon density (Qin et al., 2015). More laboratory work is needed to develop  
12 proper schemes for representing mixed soil with fine mineral, coarse fragment (including  
13 gravel) and organic carbon in permafrost models. It is the first priority to develop schemes  
14 that make use of porosity data sets, due to its importance and simplicity of measurement.

15 The development of a spatially explicit dataset of soil texture is also required for regional  
16 applications of projecting permafrost changes on the QTP. One way is to collect relevant data  
17 through extensive field campaigns (e.g., Li et al., 2015). Currently, gravelly soil has only been  
18 mentioned in scientific literature on the QTP (Chen et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2011; Yang et al.,  
19 2009). Only recently, ~~a~~ preliminary dataset considering gravel has been created (Wu and  
20 Nan, 2016). Ground penetrating radar is a feasible tool to retrieve soil thickness above the  
21 coarse soil fragment layer (Han et al., 2016). Aerial photos taken with Unmanned-unmanned  
22 aerial vehicles has-have been used recently (Yi, 2017), and to identify coarse soil fragment ~~on~~  
23 ~~the ground surface can be identified easily in aerial photos~~ (Chen et al., 2017; Yi 2017). In  
24 combination with ancillary datasets, ~~—~~ (e.g. geomorphology, topography, vegetation), it is  
25 possible to improve the accuracy of spatial datasets of soil texture on the QTP (Li et al., 2015;  
26 Wu et al., 2016). Another way is to retrieve soil physical properties using data assimilation  
27 technology, e.g. such as Yang et al. (2016) who assimilated porosity using a land surface  
28 model and microwave data.

## 1 5 Conclusions

2 In this study, we excavated soil samples from a permafrost site on the central QTP and  
3 measured soil physical properties in laboratory. Coarse soil fragment content was common in  
4 the soil profile and porosity was much smaller than the typical soil types used in land surface  
5 models. We then performed sensitivity analysis of these parameters on soil thermal and  
6 hydrological processes within a terrestrial ecosystem model. When default sand or loam  
7 parameters were substituted with measured soil properties, the model errors of soil  
8 temperature, soil liquid water content, active layer depth and permafrost low boundary were  
9 generally reduced. Sensitivity analyses showed that porosity played a more important role in  
10 reducing model errors than other soil properties examined. Though it is unclear how  
11 representative this soil is in the QTP, it is clear that soil physical properties specific to the  
12 QTP should be used to properly project permafrost dynamics into the future.

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10 |

1 **Table 1.** The mean (standard deviation in brackets) of measured soil bulk density, calculated  
 2 porosity from bulk density, measured porosity of different layers based on soil samples in this  
 3 study, and particle size diameter fractions ( $>2$  mm means the weight fraction between soil  
 4 particles greater than 2 mm and total soil sample; while other fraction means the ratio  
 5 between soil sample weight of a size range and the weight of particles  $<2$  mm) and soil  
 6 texture (based on USDA classification) of different layers based on soil samples in this study.  
 7

Layer (cm)	Bulk density (g cm <sup>-3</sup> )	<u>Calculated</u> <u>Porosity</u> (%)	<u>Measured</u> <u>Porosity</u> (%)
0—10	1.74 (0.21)	<u>34.4 (0.08)</u>	28.4 (0.03)
10—20	1.81 (0.11)	<u>31.8 (0.04)</u>	27.7 (0.02)
20—30	1.86 (0.32)	<u>29.7 (0.12)</u>	30.2 (0.05)
40—50	1.61 (0.23)	<u>39.4 (0.09)</u>	29.6 (0.02)
70—80	1.62 (0.20)	<u>38.8 (0.08)</u>	20.6 (0.11)
110—120	1.75 (0.09)	<u>33.9 (0.04)</u>	27.7 (0.01)
150—160	1.70 (0.15)	<u>36.0 (0.06)</u>	26.3 (0.02)
190—200	1.81 (0.09)	<u>31.6 (0.03)</u>	27.1 (0.02)

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1 **Table 2.** The particle size diameter fractions (for >2 mm this is the mass ratio between soil  
 2 particles greater than 2 mm and total soil sample, while for the other fractions this is the ratio  
 3 between mass of the soil in the size range and the mass of all particles < 2mm) and soil  
 4 texture (based on USDA classification) of different layers based on soil samples in this study.  
 5

<u>Layer</u> <u>(cm)</u>	<u>&gt;2 mm</u>	<u>&gt;63 μ m</u>	<u>2-63 μ m</u>	<u>&lt;2 μ m</u>	<u>Texture</u>
<u>0—10</u>	<u>0.38</u> <u>(0.07)</u>	<u>0.77</u> <u>(0.07)</u>	<u>0.18</u> <u>(0.04)</u>	<u>0.05</u> <u>(0.02)</u>	<u>Loamy</u> <u>sand</u>
<u>10—20</u>	<u>0.52</u> <u>(0.14)</u>	<u>0.72</u> <u>(0.11)</u>	<u>0.20</u> <u>(0.05)</u>	<u>0.07</u> <u>(0.05)</u>	<u>Loamy</u> <u>sand</u>
<u>20—30</u>	<u>0.55</u> <u>(0.17)</u>	<u>0.69</u> <u>(0.09)</u>	<u>0.24</u> <u>(0.08)</u>	<u>0.07</u> <u>(0.01)</u>	<u>Sandy</u> <u>loam</u>
<u>40—50</u>	<u>0.55</u> <u>(0.19)</u>	<u>0.70</u> <u>(0.13)</u>	<u>0.26</u> <u>(0.11)</u>	<u>0.04</u> <u>(0.02)</u>	<u>Loamy</u> <u>sand</u>
<u>70—80</u>	<u>0.65</u> <u>(0.16)</u>	<u>0.71</u> <u>(0.09)</u>	<u>0.25</u> <u>(0.07)</u>	<u>0.04</u> <u>(0.02)</u>	<u>Loamy</u> <u>sand</u>
<u>110—120</u>	<u>0.63</u> <u>(0.05)</u>	<u>0.79</u> <u>(0.09)</u>	<u>0.19</u> <u>(0.08)</u>	<u>0.03</u> <u>(0.02)</u>	<u>Loamy</u> <u>sand</u>
<u>150—160</u>	<u>0.63</u> <u>(0.09)</u>	<u>0.85</u> <u>(0.04)</u>	<u>0.13</u> <u>(0.03)</u>	<u>0.02</u> <u>(0.01)</u>	<u>Loamy</u> <u>sand</u>
<u>190—200</u>	<u>0.50</u> <u>(0.19)</u>	<u>0.71</u> <u>(0.19)</u>	<u>0.24</u> <u>(0.14)</u>	<u>0.05</u> <u>(0.05)</u>	<u>Loam</u> <u>y sand</u>

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1 | **Table 23.** The mean (standard deviation in brackets) of the measured frozen and unfrozen dry  
 2 | and saturated soil thermal conductivity ( $\text{W m}^{-1} \text{K}^{-1}$ ) of different soil layers.  
 3 |

Layer (cm)	Dry		Saturated	
	Unfrozen	Frozen	Unfrozen	Frozen
0-10	0.238 (0.09)	0.414 (0.09)	2.322 (0.17)	3.122 (0.48)
10~20	0.340 (0.04)	0.365 (0.23)	2.147 (0.47)	3.193 (0.55)
20-30	0.395 (0.07)	0.420 (0.11)	2.743 (0.38)	3.059 (0.29)
40-50	0.346 (0.00)	0.388 (0.14)	2.539 (0.30)	3.184 (0.33)
70-80	0.340 (0.03)	0.289 (0.12)	2.589 (0.16)	3.362 (0.38)
110-120	0.400 (0.06)	0.271 (0.07)	2.616 (0.11)	3.721 (0.05)
150-160	0.401 (0.01)	0.248 (0.07)	2.246 (0.19)	3.647 (0.48)
190-200	0.399 (0.26)	0.392 (0.14)	2.609 (0.12)	3.329 (0.19)

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1 | **Table 34.** The mean (standard deviation) of measured saturated hydraulic conductivity ( $K_{sat}$ ;  
2 |  $\text{mm s}^{-1}$ ) and fitted absolute value of saturated matric potential ( $\Psi_{sat}$ ; mm), fitted pore size  
3 | distribution parameter (B) and the correlation coefficients ( $R^2$ ) between calculated matric  
4 | potential using fitted equations and measured.

5

Layer (cm)	$K_{sat}$	Matric potential		
		$\Psi_{sat}$	B	$R^2$
0-10	0.0285 (0.0274)	49.14	4.03	0.991
10~20	0.0056 (0.0036)	70.66	4.49	0.996
20-30	0.0047 (0.0027)	27.02	5.22	0.994
40-50	0.0078 (0.0043)	143.4	3.59	0.994
70-80	0.0072 (0.0054)	179.6	3.22	0.993
110-120	0.0315 (0.0054)	603.7	1.89	0.969
150-160	0.0053 (0.0028)	49.17	2.97	0.993
190-200	0.0036 (0.0023)	14.47	4.565	0.989

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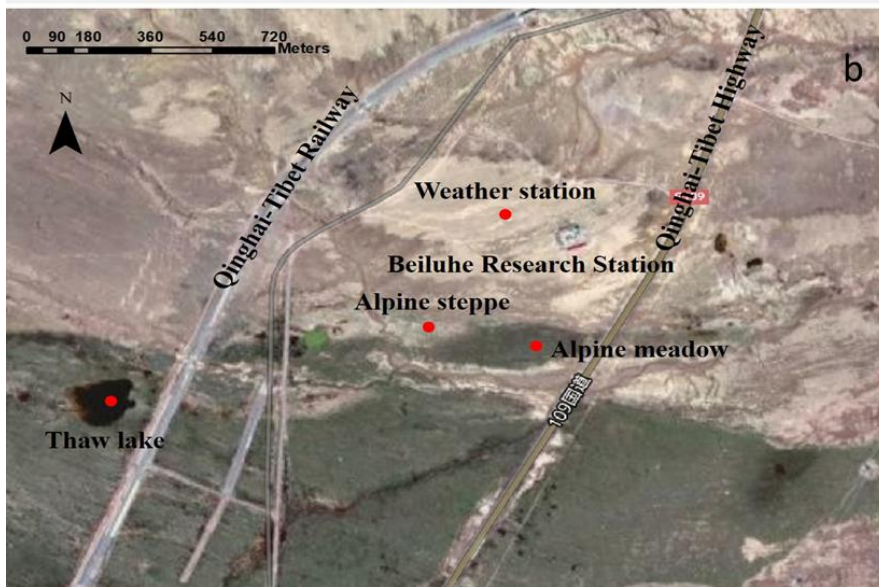
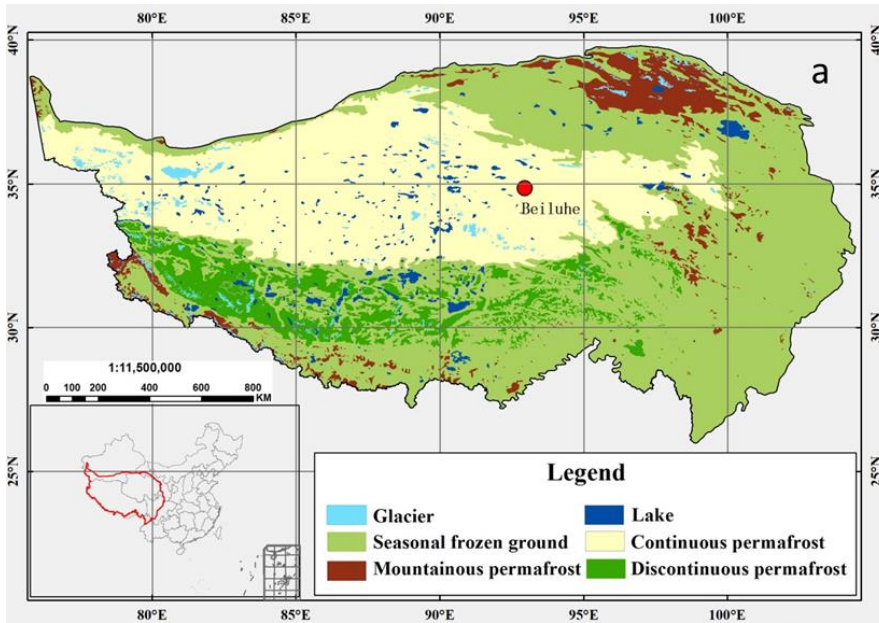
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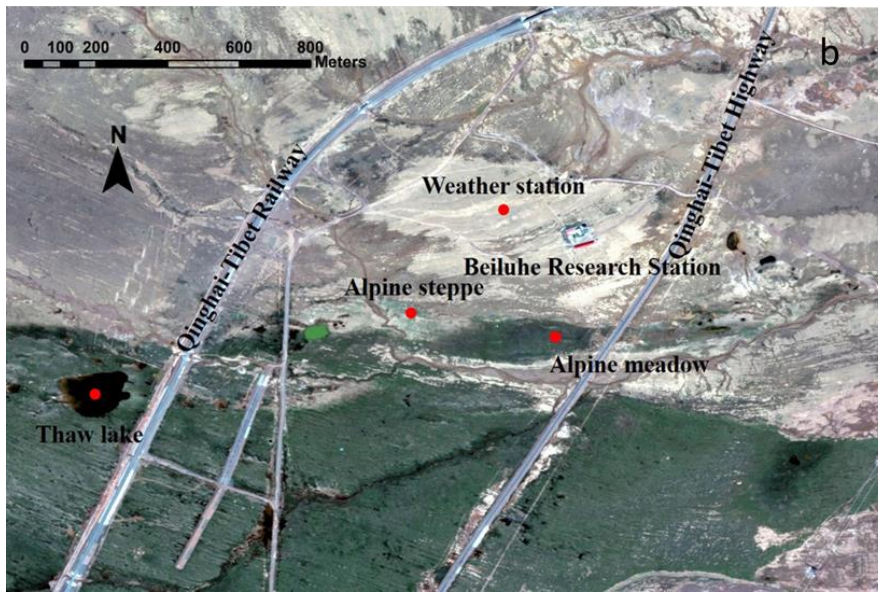
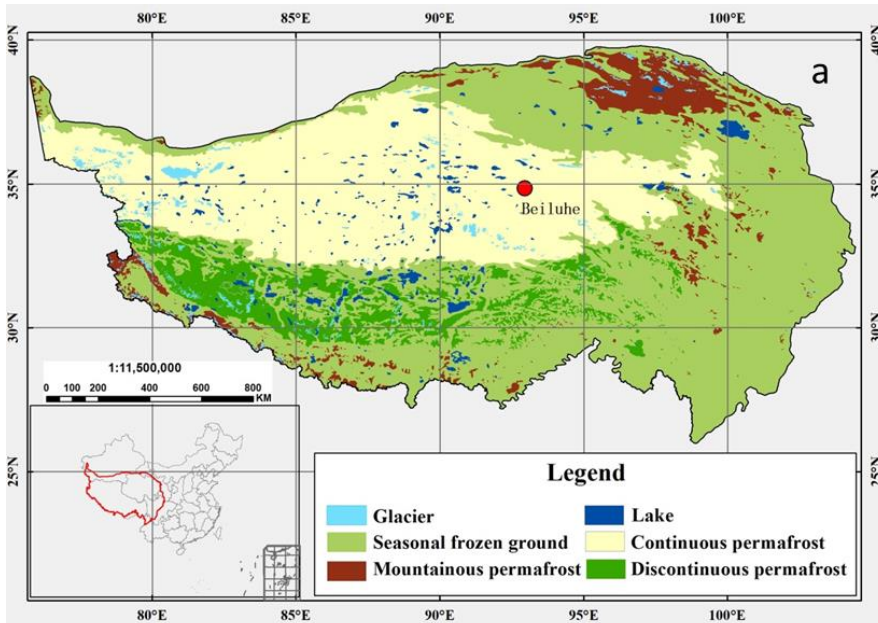


- 1 | **Figure 1. a) ~~The location~~Locations of **a)** Beiluhe permafrost station on the Qinghai-Tibetan**
- 2 | **Plateau, ~~and~~ b) the googlemap of the weather station and the surrounding environment.**

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1 **Figure 2. Images of site conditions:** **a)** the aerial view of the weather station and the  
2 excavated soil pit; **(the borehole is located in the lower left corner of white fence);** **b)** the  
3 detailed view of the excavated soil pit; and **c)-e)** examples of vegetation, gravel and stones  
4 (iron frame is about 0.5 m×0.5 m).

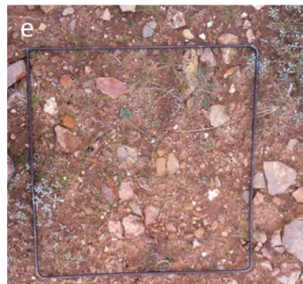
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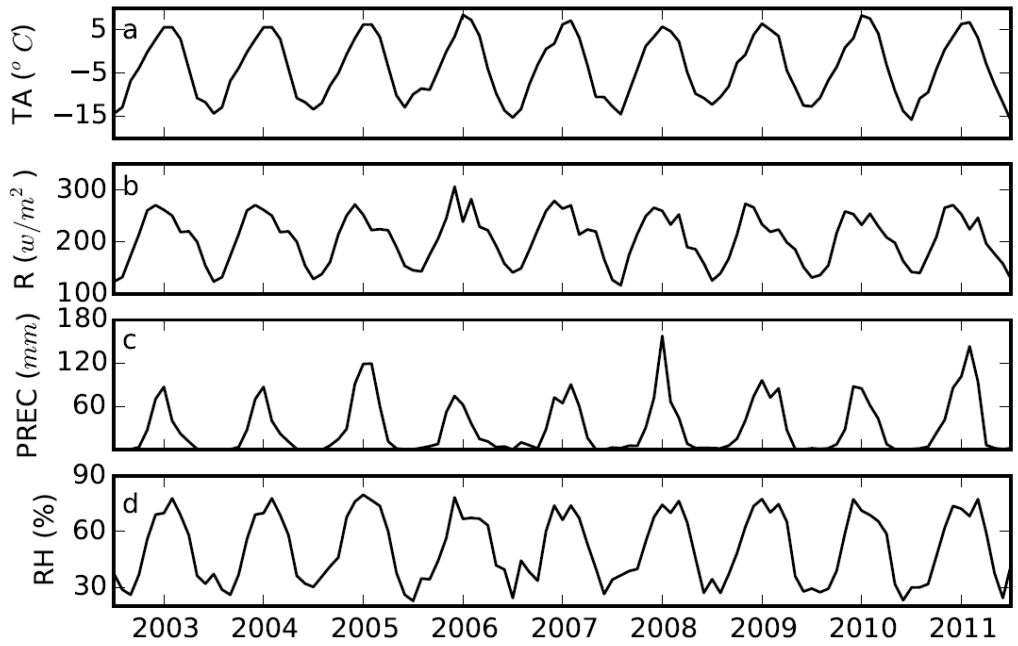
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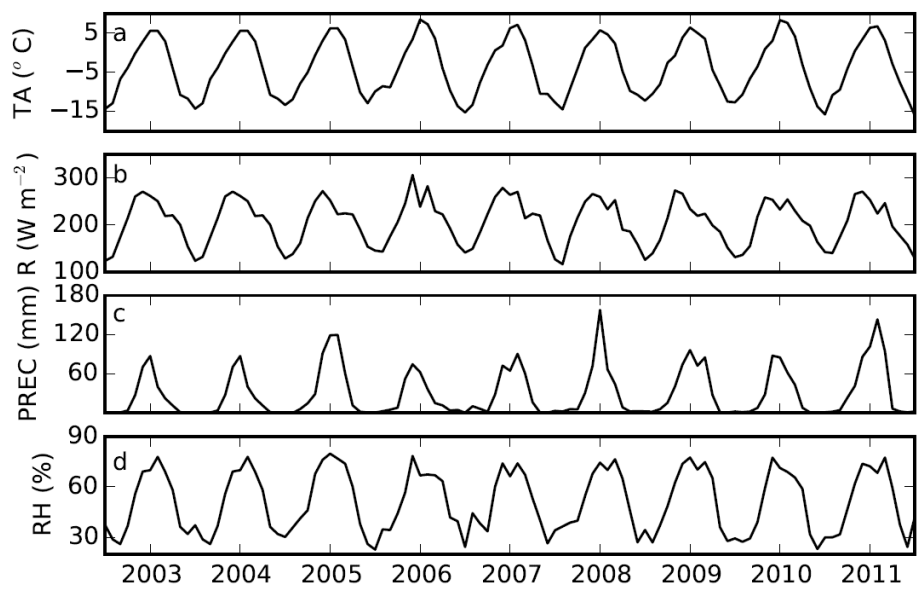
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1 **Figure 3. Time series of data measured at the Beiluhe weather station, Qinghai-Tibetan**  
 2 **Plateau, 2003 to 2011: a) air temperature (TA, °C); b) downward solar radiation (R,  $W m^{-2}$**   
 3  **$w/m^2$ ); c) precipitation (PREC, mm) and d) relative humidity (RH, %)-measured on Beiluhe**  
 4 **weather station on the Qinghai Tibet Plateau from 2003 to 2011.**

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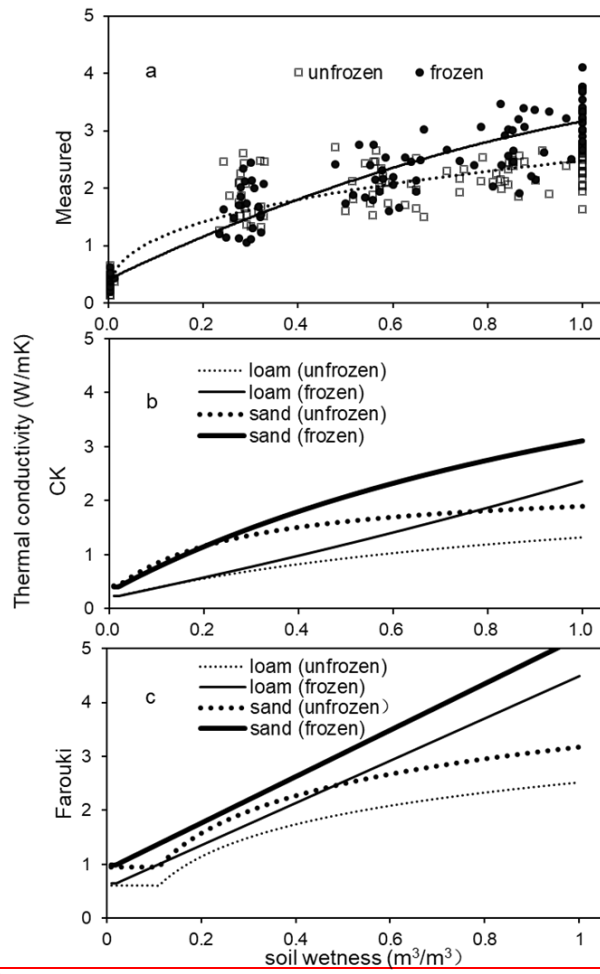
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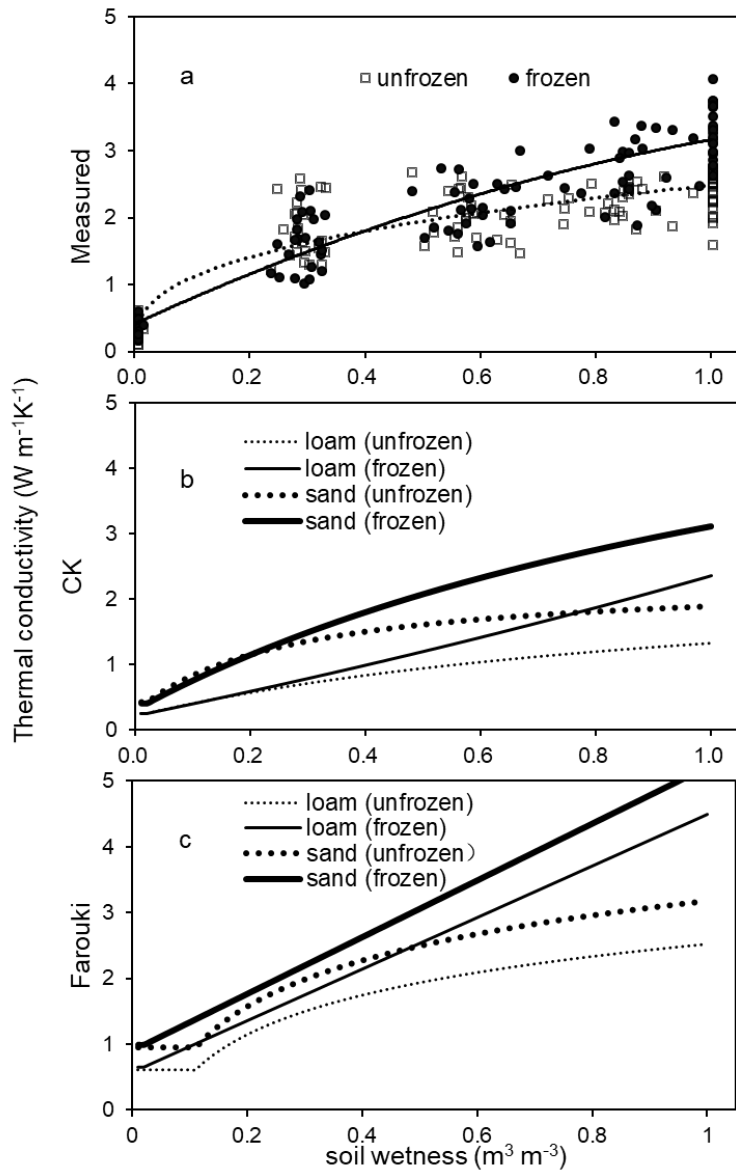
1 **Figure 4.** The relationship between soil wetness (solid and dotted lines represent frozen and  
2 unfrozen cases) and soil thermal conductivity ( $W/m \cdot K$ ) from: **a)** measured values  
3 (Measured; dots and empty diamonds represent measured frozen and unfrozen soil thermal  
4 conductivities, respectively), **b)** using the Côté and Konrad (2005) scheme (CK); and  
5 **c)** using the Farouki (1986) scheme (Farouki). Thick and thin lines represent relationships for  
6 sand and loam, respectively.

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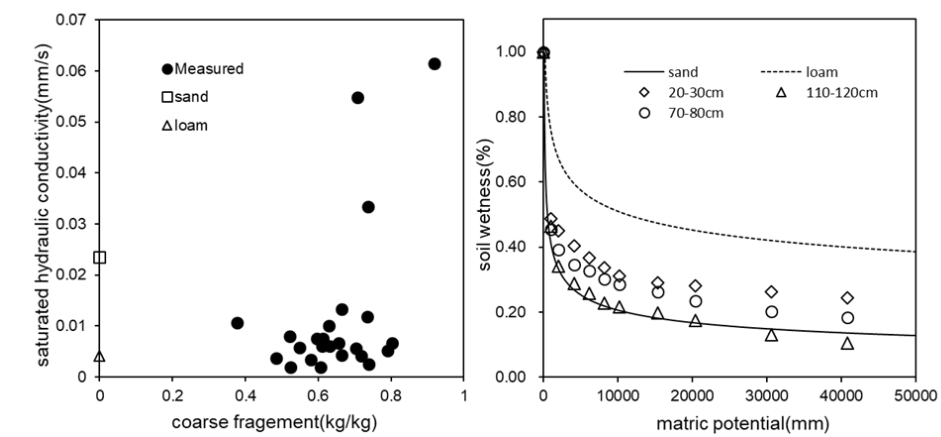
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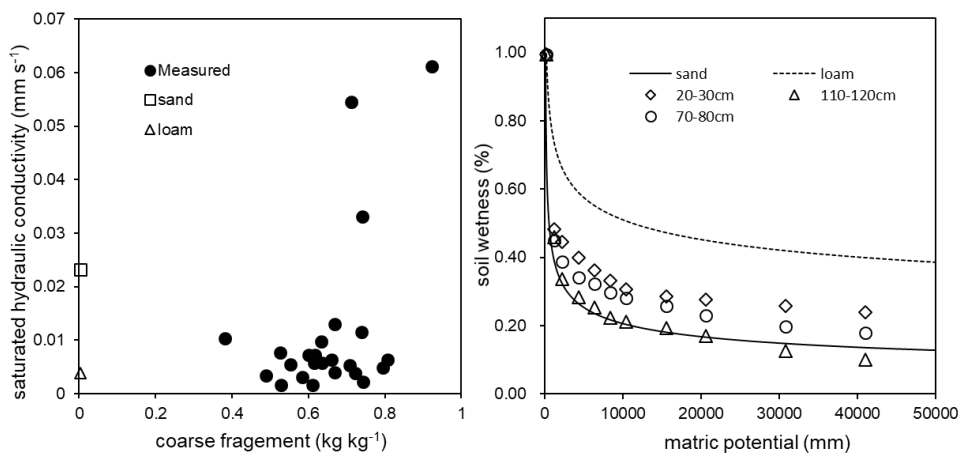


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1 **Figure 5.** The relations between a) the relationship between saturated hydraulic conductivity  
 2 ( $\text{mm s}^{-1}$ ) and coarse fragment fraction (Solid dots represent measured value; empty circle and  
 3 empty triangle represent the corresponding values of sand and loam used in Community Land  
 4 Model, respectively) ; and b) the relationship between soil wetness (lines) and absolute value  
 5 of matric potential ( $\text{mm H}_2\text{O}$ ) at three representative depths (; Solid-solid and dashed lines  
 6 represent default values (Oleson et al., 2010) of sand and loam, respectively (Oleson et al.,  
 7 2010).



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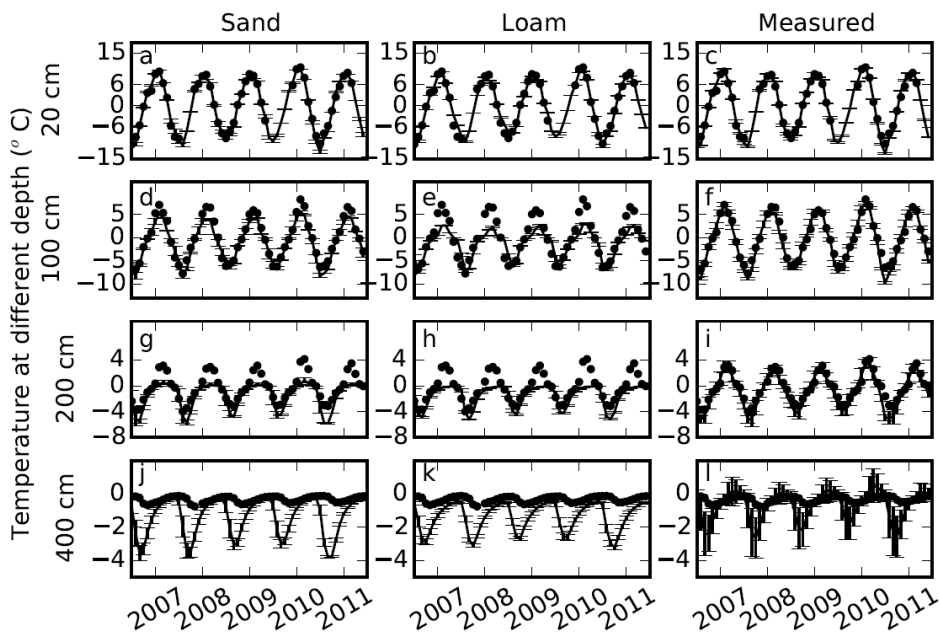
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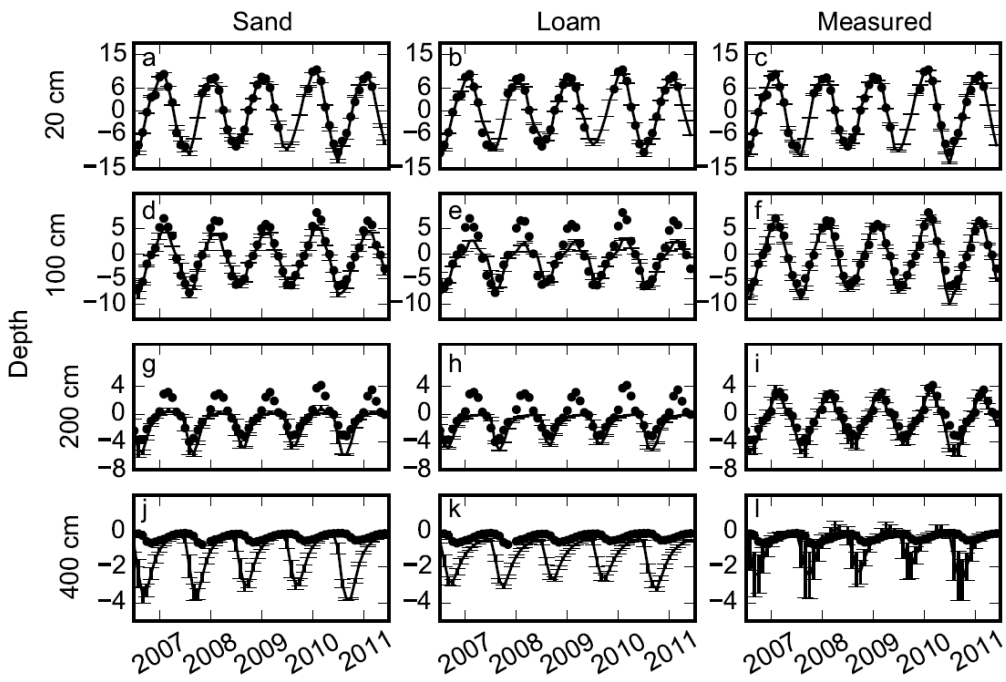
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1 | **Figure 6.** Comparisons of soil temperatures simulated using default parameters ~~of~~for sand,  
2 | loam, and our measured parameters (lines) with measured soil temperatures (dots) at 20, 100,  
3 | 200 and 400 cm depths. Error bars show~~ed~~ the standard deviations calculated based on 9  
4 | simulations with 3 different slopes and 3 different soil thicknesses.

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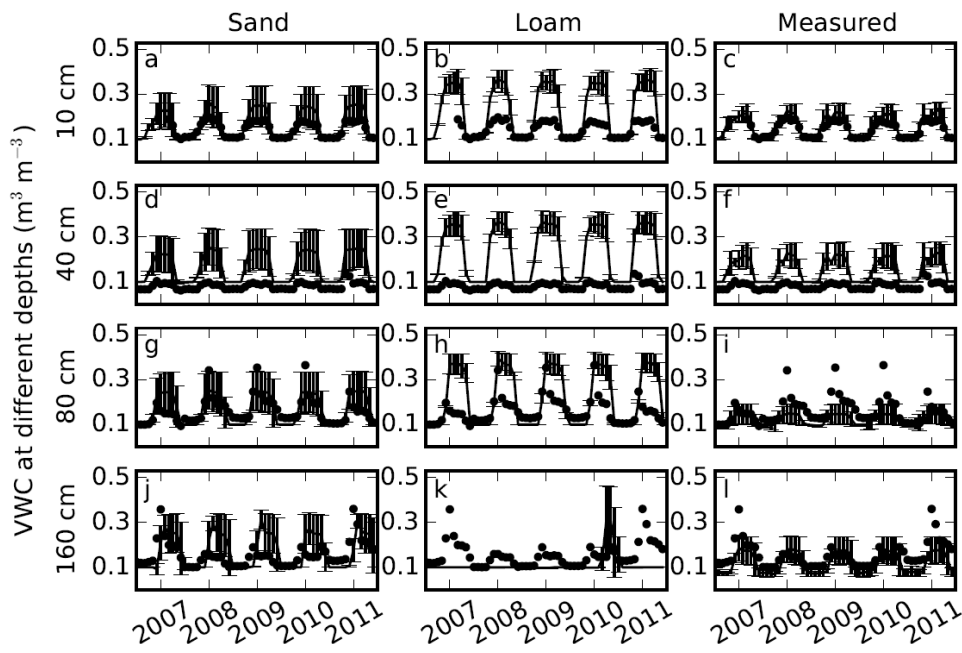
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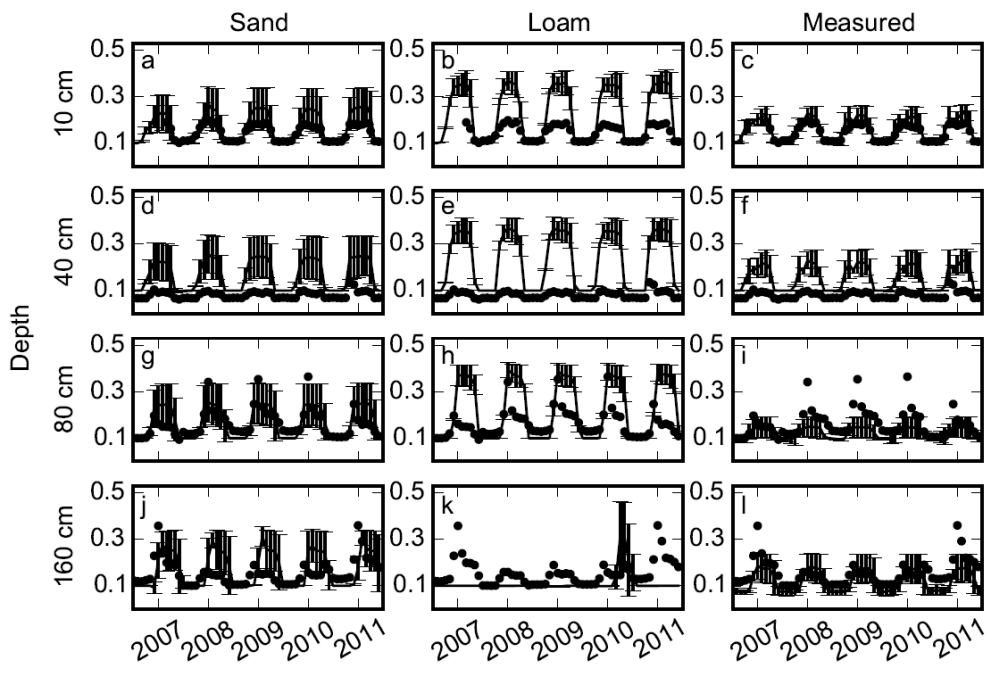


1 | **Figure 7.** Comparisons of soil volumetric liquid water content (VWC) simulated using  
2 default parameters sand, default loam, and measured parameters (lines) with measured soil  
3 moistures (dots) at 10, 40, 80 and 160 cm depths. Error bars showed the standard deviation  
4 calculated based on 9 simulations with 3 different slopes and 3 different soil thicknesses.



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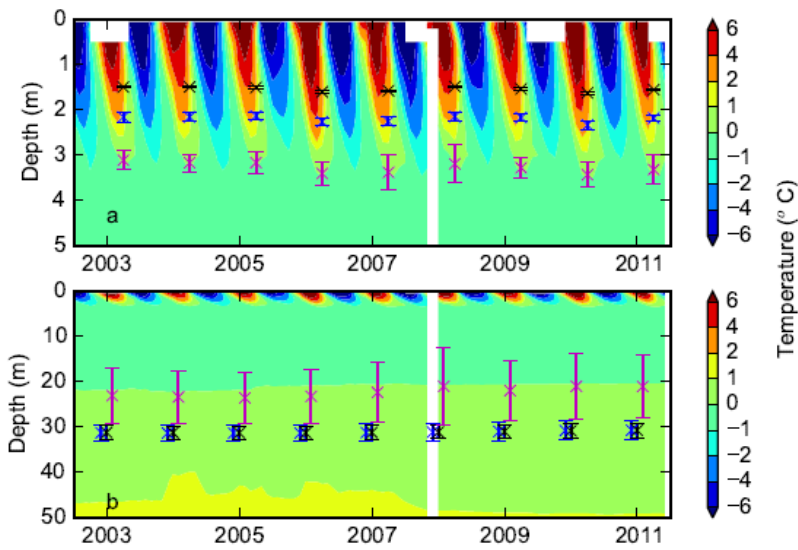


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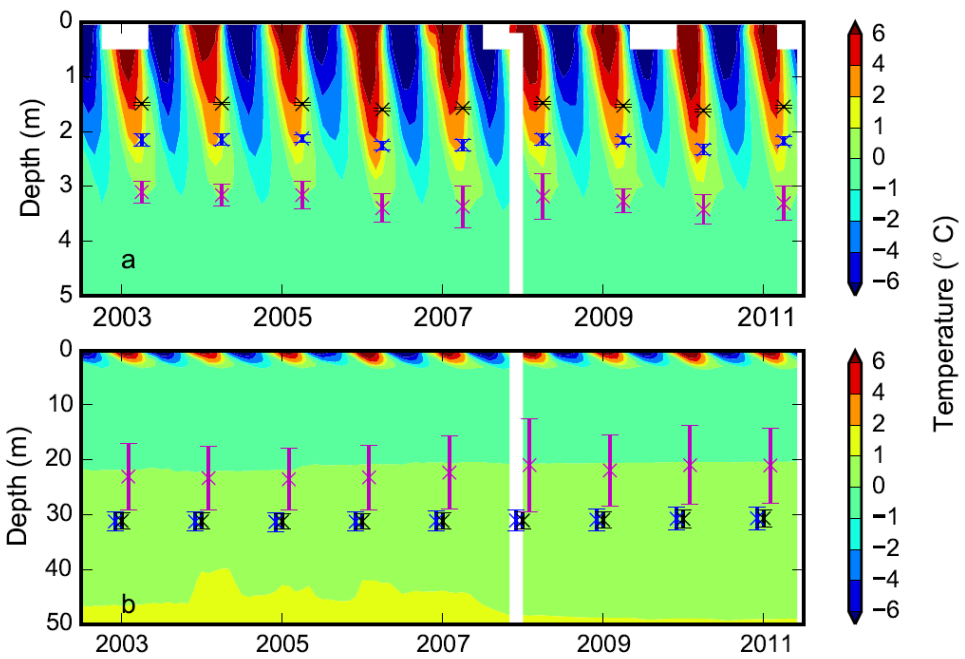
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1 **Figure 8.** Contour plots showing a) Contours of measured soil temperature ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) from  
2 borehole measurements down to 5 m and superimposed with simulated active layer depths  
3 over the period of 2003-2011; and b) same as a) but ground temperature down to 50 m and  
4 for superimposed with the simulated permafrost low boundary. Black, blue and magenta  
5 represent simulations with loam, sand and measured parameters, respectively. Error bars show  
6 the standard deviation calculated based on 9 simulations with 3 different slopes and 3  
7 different soil thicknesses.



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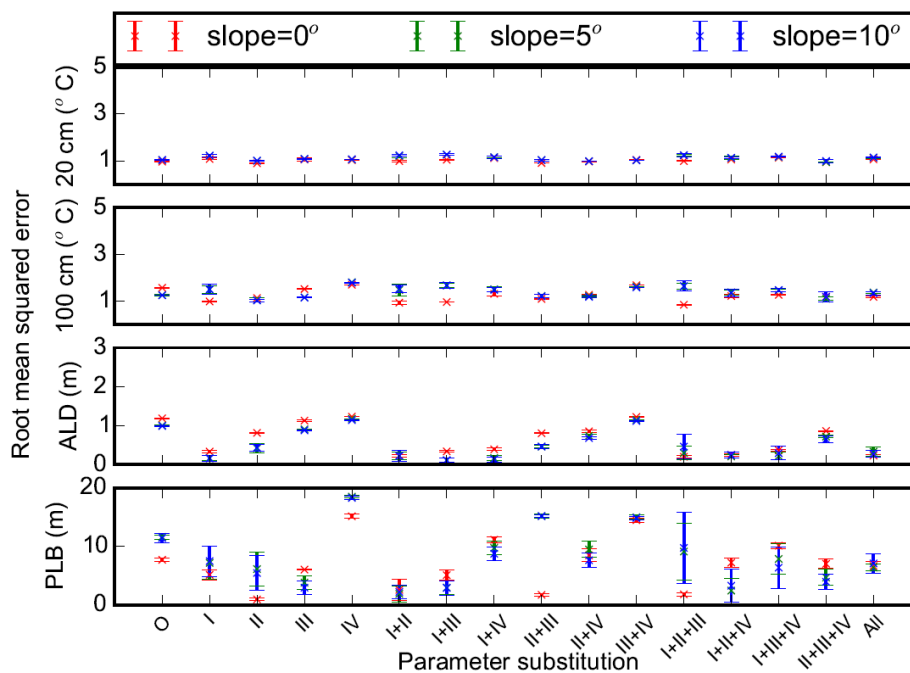
1 **Figure 9.** -Root mean squared errors between measurements and model simulations (with  
 2 different combinations of measured porosity (I), thermal conductivity (II), hydraulic  
 3 conductivity (III) and matric potential (IV) of default sand parameters) for **a)** 20 and **b)** 100  
 4 cm soil temperatures ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ ), **c)** active layer depth (ALD, m) and **d)** permafrost low boundary  
 5 (PLB, m). O and All represent model runs without substitution of default parameters and with  
 6 all 4 parameters substituted, respectively. Mean and standard deviation of model simulations  
 7 with 3 different soil thicknesses at each slope (**slope 0:**  $0^{\circ}$ ; **slope 5:**  $5^{\circ}$ ; **slope 10:**  $10^{\circ}$ ) are  
 8 shown.

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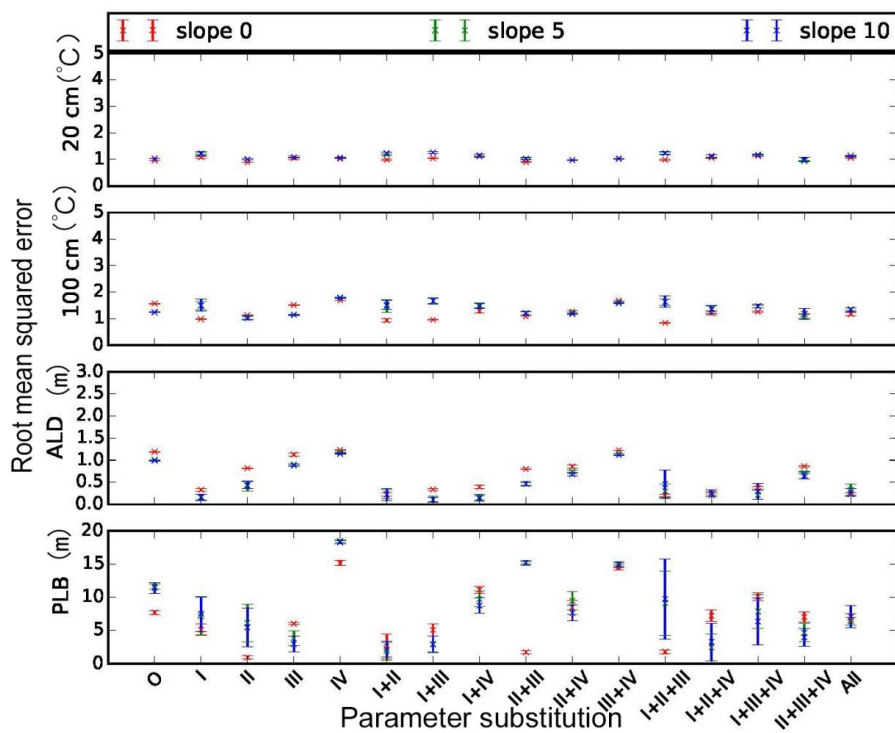
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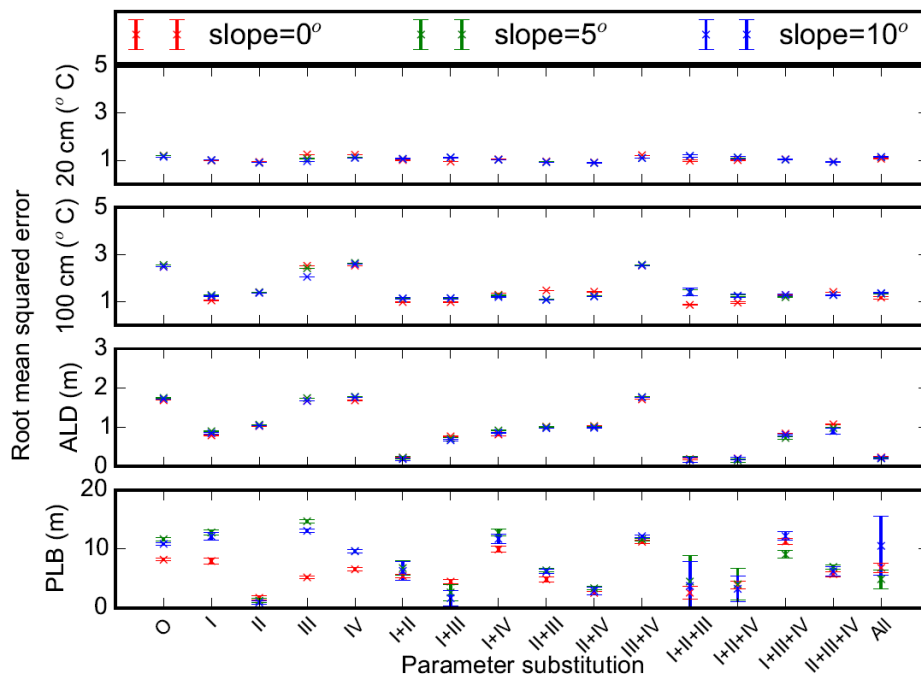
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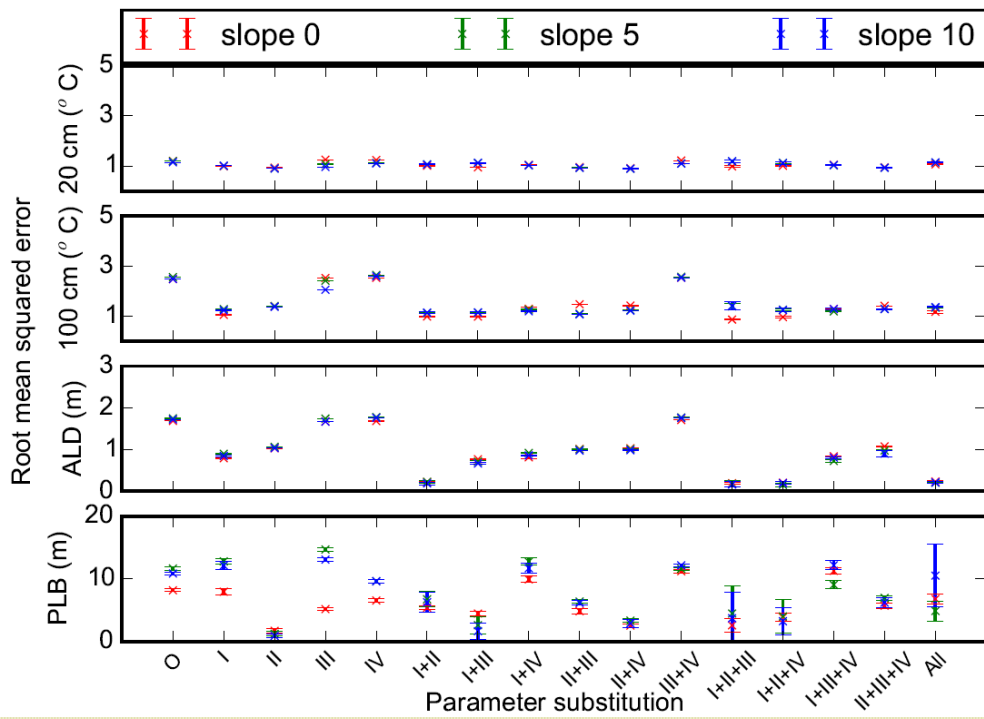
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1 **Figure 10.** Root mean squared errors between measurements and model simulations (with  
 2 different combinations of measured porosity (I), thermal conductivity (II), hydraulic  
 3 conductivity (III) and matric potential (IV) of default loam parameters) for **a)** 20 and **b)** 100  
 4 cm soil temperatures ( $^{\circ}\text{C}$ ), **c)** active layer depth (ALD, m) and **d)** permafrost low boundary  
 5 (PLB, m). O and All represent model runs without substitution of default parameters and with  
 6 all 4 parameters substituted, respectively. Mean and standard deviation of model simulations  
 7 with 3 different soil thicknesses at each slope (slope 0: 0 $^{\circ}$ ; slope 5: 5 $^{\circ}$ ; andslope 10: 10 $^{\circ}$ )  
 8 are shown.

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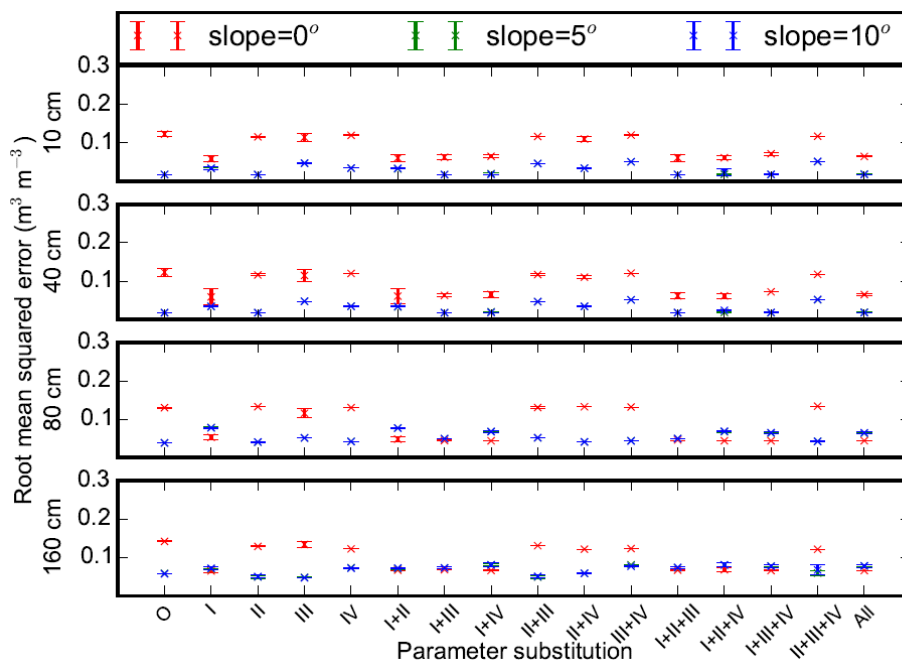
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1 **Figure 11.** Root mean squared errors between measurements and model simulations (with  
 2 different combinations of measured porosity (I), thermal conductivity (II), hydraulic  
 3 conductivity (III) and matric potential (IV) of default sand parameters) for **a)** 10 cm, **b)** 40 cm,  
 4 **c)** 80 cm and **d)** 160 cm soil volumetric liquid water content. O and All represent model runs  
 5 without substitution of default parameters and with all 4 parameters substituted, respectively.  
 6 Mean and standard deviation of model simulations with 3 different soil thicknesses at each  
 7 slope (**slope 0:** 0°, **slope 5:** 5°, **slope 10:** 10°) are shown.

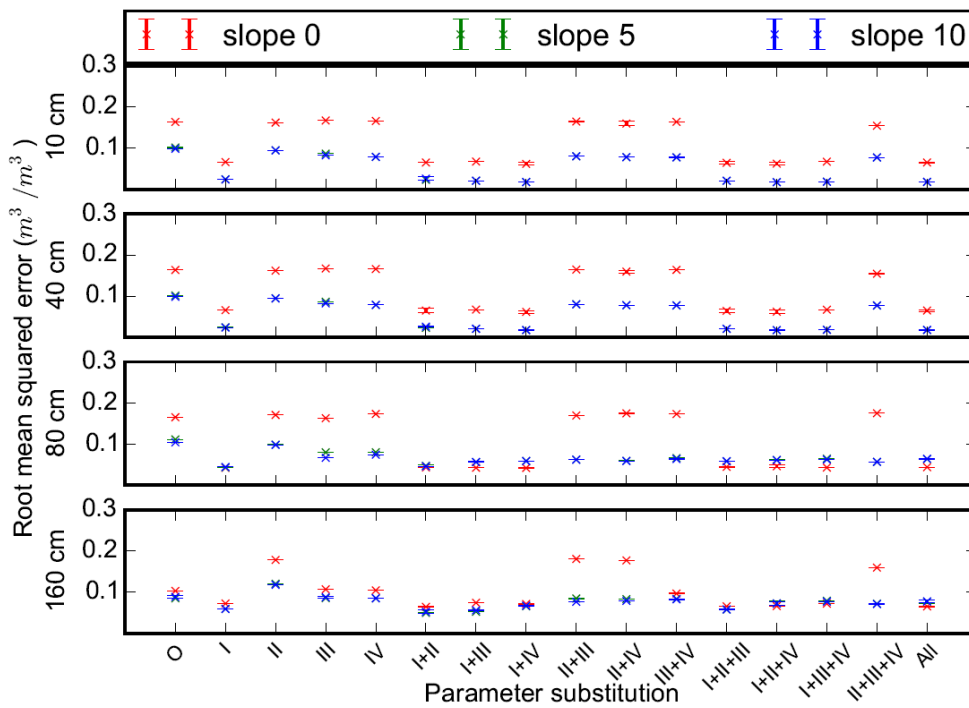
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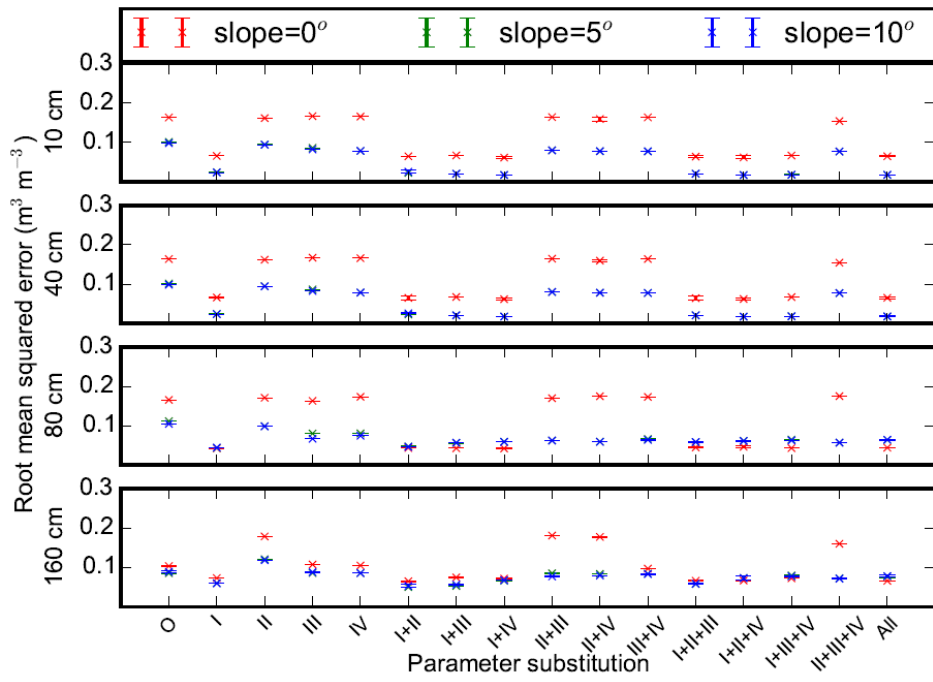
1 **Figure 12.** Root mean squared errors between measurements and model simulations (with  
 2 different combinations of measured porosity (I), thermal conductivity (II), hydraulic  
 3 conductivity (III) and matric potential (IV) of default loam parameters) for **a)** 10 cm, **b)** 40  
 4 cm, **c)** 80 cm and **d)** 160 cm soil volumetric liquid water content. O and All represent model  
 5 runs without substitution of default parameters and with all 4 parameters substituted,  
 6 respectively. Mean and standard deviation of model simulations with 3 different soil  
 7 thicknesses at each slope (**slope 0**-0°, **slope 5**-5°, **slope 10**-10°) are shown.

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