Response to Editor’s request for “Moderate Revision” of manuscript HYDROL20966, “Contributions of human activities to suspended sediment yield during storm events from a small, steep, tropical watershed”

1) Please don't use abbreviations (e.g., SSY) in the highlights, please expand in full.  As you have 2 highlights spare this should be OK.

Done.

Common abbreviations were used to keep under the limit of 85 characters, including spaces. They have been rewritten.  
  
2) L38 (and elsewhere), can you please number all heading, sub-headings etc.?  This will enable reviewers to more easily navigate your manuscript when they are reviewing it.

Done.

My mistake leaving these out.  
  
3) L128, rather than have 'questions addressed' it would be preferable to have specific objectives or aims for your study. In the last paragraph of your Introduction can you please explicitly state what your 'aim(s)' or 'objective(s)' or 'hypothesis (hypotheses)' is (are)?  That is, specifically use one of these words.  While you have a purpose, this is a little broader than having specific aims or objectives.  Consider using a bulleted sentence structure to list these.  Note the word 'question' is used in the following to generically mean aim / objective / hypothesis.  It is common practice to list the aims/objectives at the very end of the last paragraph of the Introduction section.  
  
Note the grammar of such a sentence follows (please pay careful attention to the use of colons and semi-colons):  
(i)     question 1 is interesting;  
(ii)    question 2 is really interesting; and  
(iii)   my Mum thought I should write something about question 3.  
  
Implementing this point makes it much easier for scientists from all language backgrounds to easily understand what you aim to do.  This dove-tails into the comment directly below.

Done.

The word “Objectives” has been inserted to describe the numbered items in the last paragraph of the Introduction that summarize the two main objectives of the study.

We feel it is critical to explicitly state the research questions that the paper seeks to answer, as questions ending with a question mark. These questions are explicitly answered later in Results and Discussion, demonstrating that we have learned something about this hydrological system and our hypotheses were confirmed or not. We state the objectives of the data analysis (to quantify and model sediment yield) but more importantly we pose the questions that motivate this analysis, and structure key take-away messages of the paper.

4) Improved structure: once you've explicitly used one the following words to state what your 'aim(s)' or 'objective(s)' or 'hypothesis (hypotheses)' is (are), then, assuming you have objectives, use these objectives to provide structure to your revised MS. For example, let's assume you have three objectives, then use them to structure your Methods section, Results section and Discussion sections, as follows.  
1 Introduction  
2 Study Site and Materials (have as many sub-headings as needed to introduce all the datasets used, their pre-processing - or maybe this needs to be 2 main headings, noting you might also need a "2 Theoretical Background" section too, in which case this would heading #3, and all others would increment by 1)  
3 Methods  
            3.1 Objective 1 (4-8 words to summarise objective 1)  
            3.2 Objective 2 (4-8 words to summarise objective 2)  
            3.3 Objective 3 (and so on)  
4 Results  
            4.1 Objective 1 (same words as 3.1)  
            4.2 Objective 2 (same words as 3.2 and so on)  
            4.3 Objective 3  
5 Discussion  
            5.1 Objective 1  
            5.2 Objective 2  
            5.3 Objective 3  
6 Conclusion  
  
Currently I'm up to page 16 and given your structure and possible lack of numbered heading, I'm finding it very challenging to know what section of the (rather long) manuscript I'm reading.  
  
Using the aims/objectives at end of your Introduction section to structure the rest of the paper makes it easy to read (and review).

Done.

The manuscript has been significantly shortened, and reorganized following the above template

5) L178, units of annual potential evapotranspiration need to be mm/yr, as you have correctly provided for the mean annual precipitation a few lines earlier.

Done.  
  
6) As the JoH Guide for Authors is currently being updated and does not state the following can you please implement? Can you please provide all Figures in a WORD document with the figure captions directly following each figure? This means a reviewer only has to flick back-n-forth between 2 pages (text and figure).

Done.

The JoH and Elsevier Guide for Authors specifically calls for Figures and Tables to be submitted as separate files, with Figure Captions in separate document. This procedure required a fair bit of time to accomplish using the online submission system.

However, in the interest of making the review process as easy as possible, we have also compiled a new document including all figures, followed by the caption.  
  
7) Plus you may wish to embed your figures and tables (and their captions) into the text directly following the paragraph where they are first mentioned. This will make it even easier for a reviewer.  If you don't do this please put  
< Figure 1 here please >  
< Table 1 here please >  
on new lines to highlight to reviewers (and the layout people) where the non-text elements should be located.

Done.

We added these tags in the appropriate places in the manuscript text, in addition to compiling a document with figures and captions, and uploading separately. We did not choose to embed figures in the text.  
  
8) L749, what discharge metrics?  It seems there is at least 1 word missing from this sentence.

Revised text:

Similar to other studies the highest correlations with SSYEV at Faga'alu were observed for discharge metrics Qsum and Qmax (Basher et al., 2011; Duvert et al., 2012; Fahey et al., 2003; Hicks, 1990; Rankl, 2004; Rodrigues et al., 2013).  
  
9) The submitted manuscript is long, very long.  The PDF I see has 87 pages - that is big bordering on huge. As I've noticed that long manuscripts usually suffer harsh reviews I strongly urge you to seek to reduce the length of the submitted manuscript.

Can you move the Appendices into the Supplementary Material? If you can reduce the PDF that reviewers download to be 45 to 55 pages your manuscript will be much less likely to put reviewers offside from the start.

Appendices have been moved to Supplementary Material. We wanted to include these additional materials for an interested reviewer but they can be moved wherever you think is best. The manuscript text has also been shortened significantly.

This, and EC4, are the reasons I'm requesting moderate revision, as opposed to minor revision, as positively implementing these will take some time, however, it will be worth it as your manuscript will be clearer and much more likely to be viewed favourably by JoH reviewers.