

Dear Editors,

Please find attached a (hopefully) final version of our paper, esurf-2020-59.

The request for this revision was to reduce or minimize the references to the work by Schildgen and van der Beek. We have thought hard about how to do this, but do not see a way to do this fully. Our paper is part of a debate and is in fact designed to counter a paper (Schildgen et al., 2018) that was very detailed in its criticism of our earlier work. To not respond with equal specificity would greatly weaken our paper. The logic and the structure of paper are built around the points of criticism, so to show the response without explaining why we are doing this, and without making a direct comparison between approaches would only confuse readers.

We can however see the point that direct conflict and criticism can be reduced, so we have done two things:

(1) we have gone back through the paper and removed several lines or even paragraphs that were direct referrals to something in the Schildgen et al. paper. There were a number of places where this cleaned up the content.

(2) The section “6.3 Problems with Schildgen et al. “, we assume was the most problematic in the view of the AE, and we assume that it was this section that he recommended to move to a Supplement. We have considered the options and have opted to simply delete the entire section. Although a summary in a discussion is often useful, one in a Supplement is just repetitive, so we will trust that the interested reader can make the connections based on the content of the main body of the paper and we will forego the summary. Some important references were moved elsewhere.

We agree that this makes the tone of the paper less confrontational, and hope this will satisfy the concerns of the editors.

Regards,

Sean Willett (and co-authors)