

<i>Title:</i> NEON Algorithm Theoretical Basis Document – Secondary Precipitation (Tipping Bucket)	<i>Author:</i> D. Smith	<i>Date:</i> 31 Oct 2013
<i>NEON Doc. #:</i> NEON.DOC.000816		<i>Revision:</i> B

Algorithm Theoretical Basis Document Precipitation (Tipping Bucket)

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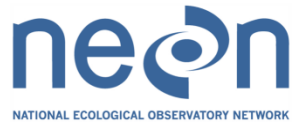
Change Record

REVISION	DATE	ECO #	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE
A	Feb 2013		Initial Release
B	Mar. 2014		Altered variable nomenclature; Revised <i>Algorithm Implementation</i> , <i>Uncertainty</i> , and <i>Future Plans/</i> <i>Modifications</i> Sections

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1 DESCRIPTION

1.1 Purpose

Across NEON sites two methods will be used to determine bulk precipitation, a double fence inter-comparison reference (DFIR) and a tipping bucket. Core tower sites will use a weighing gauge sensor with a DFIR to determine bulk precipitation, while relocatable sites will use a tipping bucket. Bulk precipitation measured using a DFIR is known to provide improved results over a tipping bucket. Thus, the DFIR will be considered the “primary” method, while the tipping bucket will be considered the “secondary” method. This document will provide the details for secondary precipitation, i.e., measurements made by the tipping buckets. Specifically, this document details the algorithms used for creating NEON L1 DP from L0 DP, and ancillary data as defined in this document (such as calibration data), obtained via instrumental measurements made by Met One 372 (non-heated; NEON P/N: 0308070001) and 379 (heated; NEON P/N: 0308070003) tipping buckets. Domains 1, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 17, 18, and 19 will use the heated 379 model, while all other domains will use the non-heated 372 model. It includes a detailed discussion of measurement theory and implementation, appropriate theoretical background, data product provenance, quality assurance and control methods used, approximations and/or assumptions made, and a detailed exposition of uncertainty resulting in a cumulative reported uncertainty for this product.

1.2 Scope

The theoretical background and entire algorithmic process used to derive Level 1 data from Level 0 data for secondary precipitation are described in this document. It is expected that the Met One 372 or 379 tipping bucket will be used to measure precipitation at all relocatable tower sites. It does not provide computational implementation details, except for cases where these stem directly from algorithmic choices explained here.

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2 RELATED DOCUMENTS, ACRONYMS AND VARIABLE NOMENCLATURE

2.1 Applicable Documents

AD[01]	NEON. DOC. 000001	NEON Observatory Design
AD[02]	NEON. DOC. 005003	NEON Scientific Data Products Catalog
AD[03]	NEON. DOC. 005004	NEON Level 1-3 Data Products Catalog
AD[04]	NEON. DOC. 005005	NEON Level 0 Data Products Catalog
AD[05]	NEON. DOC. 000782	ATBD QA/QC Data Consistency
AD[06]	NEON. DOC. 011081	ATBD QA/QC plausibility tests
AD[07]	NEON. DOC. 000783	ATBD QA/QC Time Series Signal Despiking for TIS Level 1 Data Products
AD[08]	NEON. DOC. 000897	C ³ Primary Precipitation Gauge
AD[09]	NEON. DOC. 000898	ATBD Primary Precipitation Gauge
AD[10]	NEON. DOC. 000367	C ³ Secondary Precipitation Gauge
AD[11]	NEON. DOC. *****	CVAL Secondary Precipitation – Tipping Bucket Calibration (TBW)
AD[12]	NEON. DOC. 000927	NEON Calibration and Sensor Uncertainty Values
AD[13]	NEON. DOC. 000785	TIS Level 1 Data Products Uncertainty Budget Estimation Plan
AD[14]	NEON. DOC. 000751	CVAL Transfer of standard procedure
AD[15]	NEON. DOC. 000746	Evaluating Uncertainty (CVAL)
AD[16]	NEON.DOC.001113	Quality Flags and Quality Metrics for TIS Data Products

2.2 Reference Documents

RD[01]	NEON. DOC. 000008	NEON Acronym List
RD[02]	NEON. DOC. 000243	NEON Glossary of Terms

2.3 Acronyms

Acronym	Explanation
ATBD	Algorithm Theoretical Basis Document
CVAL	NEON Calibration, Validation, and Audit Laboratory
DP	Data Product
L0	Level 0
L1	Level 1

2.4 Variable Nomenclature

The symbols used to display the various inputs in the ATBD, e.g., calibration coefficients and uncertainty estimates, were chosen so that the equations can be easily interpreted by the reader. However, the symbols provided will not always reflect NEON’s internal notation, which is relevant for CI’s use, and or

the notation that is used to present variables on NEON’s data portal. Therefore a lookup table is provided in order to distinguish what symbols specific variables can be tied to in the following document.

Symbol	Internal/Portal Notation	Description
P_{B_1}	????	One-minute bulk precipitation
$P_{B_{30}}$????	Thirty-minute bulk precipitation
u_{A1}	U_CVALA1	Combined, relative uncertainty of PRT sensor (%)
$V_{eff_{A1}}$	U_CVALD1	Effective degrees of freedom relating to U_CVALA1 (unitless)

2.5 Verb Convention

"Shall" is used whenever a specification expresses a provision that is binding. The verbs "should" and "may" express non-mandatory provisions. "Will" is used to express a declaration of purpose on the part of the design activity.

3 DATA PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

3.1 Variables Reported

Table 1 details the secondary precipitation related L1 DPs provided by the algorithms documented in this ATBD.

Table 1. List of secondary precipitation related L1 DPs that are produced in this ATBD.

Data product	Collection Period	Units	Data stream ID
1-minute Bulk Precipitation (Bulk_ P_1)	1-min	mm	NEON.DXX.XXX.DP1.00006.001.001.001.001
1-minute Bulk Precipitation QA/QC Summary (Qsum_ P_1)	1-min	Text	NEON.DXX.XXX.DP1.00006.001.002.001.001
1-minute Bulk Precipitation QA/QC Report (Qrpt_ P_1)	1-min	Text	NEON.DXX.XXX.DP1.00006.001.003.001.001
30-minute Bulk Precipitation (Bulk_ P_{30})	30-min	mm	NEON.DXX.XXX.DP1.00006.001.001.001.002
30-minute Bulk Precipitation QA/QC Summary (Qsum_ P_{30})	30-min	Text	NEON.DXX.XXX.DP1.00006.001.002.001.002

3.2 Input Dependencies

Table 2 details the secondary precipitation related L0 DPs used to produce L1 DPs in this ATBD.

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Table 2. List of secondary precipitation related L0 DPs that are used to produce L1 DPs via this ATBD.

Data product	Sample Frequency	Units	Data stream ID
Tip (reed closure)	NA	NA	NEON.DXX.XXX.DP0.00006.001.001.001.001
Heater	1 Hz	V	NEON.DXX.XXX.DP0.00006.001.002.001.001.001

3.3 Product Instances

Secondary precipitation will be measured by tipping buckets at all relocatable tower sites.

3.4 Temporal Resolution and Extent

The L0 DPs for secondary precipitation will be recorded as the number of tips, which will be used to determine one- and thirty minute bulk precipitation values to form the L1 DPs.

3.5 Spatial Resolution and Extent

The secondary precipitation gauge (i.e., tipping bucket) will be located tower top at all relocatable tower sites. Therefore, its spatial resolution will reflect the point in space where the precipitation gauge is located.

4 SCIENTIFIC CONTEXT

Precipitation records are fundamental to meteorological and hydrological studies. As such, precipitation data is often used as ancillary data for more detailed investigations. For instance, precipitation records help inform storm surge statistics and abate social, economic, and environmental losses from floods.

4.1 Theory of Measurement

Recording precipitation via a tipping bucket is fairly simplistic. Essentially, a collection funnel channels precipitation down to a tipping lever. The tipping lever is calibrated to tip for a defined amount of weight and the number of times that the lever tips over time is recorded, often by a reed switch. The weight of a tip is generally set in terms of *mm* of water to simplify subsequent calculations. Thus, the rate and quantity of precipitation for a given time period can be determined.

The greatest difference among tipping bucket models is their housing design. Variations in housing design stem from efforts to minimize measurement uncertainties (e.g., wind errors and splash-out). Additionally, heater elements may be employed when records in freezing areas are desired.

4.2 Theory of Algorithm

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Level 0 Data simply represent the number of tips recorded by the tipping bucket. To quantify precipitation *recorded* by the tipping bucket, an individual tip is multiplied by the tipping threshold:

$$P_i = (T_i * T_H) \quad (1)$$

Where:

- P_i = Recorded precipitation for individual tip (mm)
- T_i = Individual tip
- T_H = Tipping threshold (0.5 mm; Met One, 2010)

Bulk precipitation will then be determined every one- and thirty-minutes accordingly:

$$P_{B_1} = \sum_{i=1}^n P_i \quad (2)$$

where, for each 1-minute average, n is the number of measurements during the averaging period and P_i is a precipitation measurement obtained during the 60-second averaging period [0, 60).

and

$$P_{B_{30}} = \sum_{i=1}^n P_i \quad (3)$$

where, for each 30-minute average, n is the number of measurements during the averaging period and P_i is a precipitation measurement obtained during the 1800-second averaging period [0, 1800).

Note: The beginning of the first period in a series shall be the nearest whole minute less than or equal to the first timestamp in the series. If no precipitation occurs over a time interval, the resulting L1 data product will zero.

5 ALGORITHM IMPLEMENTATION

Data flow for signal processing of L1 DPs will be treated in the following order.

1. One- and thirty-minute values for bulk precipitation will be calculated using Eq. (2) and (3).
2. QA/QC Plausibility tests will be applied to the data stream in accordance with AD[06], details are provided below.
3. QA/QC Summary (Q_{sum}) will be produced for one- and thirty-minute averages according to AD[16].

QA/QC Procedure:

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- 1. Plausibility Tests AD[06]** – With the exception of the Range Test, plausibility tests will not be completed for bulk precipitation. The range test will be run on the bulk precipitation outputs, i.e. the one- and thirty-minute bulk precipitation values. In addition, the one- and thirty-minute bulk precipitation DPs will have separate maximum values for the range test, which will be provided by FIU and maintained in the CI data store. The minimum for the range test will not be computed for bulk secondary precipitation.
- 2. Sensor Flags** – The heated tipping buckets, Model 379, has two heaters. One heater is located at the base to prevent the buildup of ice around tipping bucket mechanism. The second heater is located under the collection funnel to melt solid precipitation and prevent the funnel from icing up. Heater flags, derived from voltage measurements of the heater relay, will be applied to represent the states of the heaters. These thresholds will be located in the CI data store.

$$QF_H = \begin{cases} 3 & \text{if } H > V_3 ; \text{ Both heaters are active} \\ 2 & \text{if } V_3 \geq H > V_2 ; \text{ The funnel heater is active} \\ 1 & \text{if } V_2 \geq H > V_1 ; \text{ The base heater is active} \\ 0 & \text{if } H \leq V_1 ; \text{ The heaters are inactive} \end{cases}$$

Where:

- H = Heater voltage (V)
- V_1 = Maximum voltage when the heaters are inactive (V)
- V_2 = Maximum voltage when the base heater is operational (V)
- V_3 = Maximum voltage when the funnel heater is operational (V)

- 3. Signal De-spiking and Time Series Analysis** – Currently, there is no plan to run signal de-spiking and time series analysis for secondary precipitation. However, signal de-spiking and time series analysis may be explored in the future.
- 4. Consistency Analysis** – Currently, there is no plan to run consistency analysis on the L1 DP for secondary precipitation. However, time series consistency analysis may be explored in the future.
- 5. Quality Flags (QFs) and Quality Metrics (QMs) AD[16]** – Currently, the only QM associated with a secondary precipitation L1 data product is the heater QM (QM_H). All L1 DPs will have an associated final quality flag, QF_FINAL, and quality summary, Qsum, as detailed in AD[16]. For secondary precipitation QF_FINAL will be set to 1 if the L1 DP has failed the hard range test and remain 0 otherwise. Associated flags, as well as measurement information maintained in the CI data store can be found below in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Flags associated with secondary precipitation measurements.

Tests	Flags
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Range	QF_RH
	QF_RS
Sensor (i.e., Heater Flag)	QF_H

Table 4. Information maintained in the CI data store for the secondary precipitation.

Tests/Values	CI Data Store Contents
Range	Maximum value
Uncertainty	AD[12]

6 UNCERTAINTY

Uncertainty of measurement is inevitable; therefore, measurements should be accompanied by a statement of their uncertainty for completeness (JCGM 2008; Taylor 1997). To do so, it is imperative to identify all sources of measurement uncertainty related to the quantity being measured. Quantifying the uncertainty of TIS measurements will provide a measure of the reliability and applicability of individual measurements and TIS data products. This portion of the document serves to identify, evaluate, and quantify sources of uncertainty relating to individual, calibrated OAR measurements as well as L1 mean PAR data products. It is a reflection of the information described in AD[13], and is explicitly described for the radiation assembly in the following sections.

6.1 Uncertainty of Precipitation Measurements (using tipping buckets)

Uncertainty of the tipping bucket assembly is discussed in this section. Sources of identifiable uncertainties include those arising from the sensor, calibration procedure, and relationships between the sensor and i) heater (i.e., evaporative losses), ii) heavy precipitation events (i.e., undercatchment and splash-out), iii) wind, iv) wetting, and v) representativeness (Nemec 1969; Humphrey *et al.* 1997; Brock and Richardson 2001; WMO 2008). Nearly every type of uncertainty results in an underestimation of precipitation; however, there are specific instances when overestimations can occur. All types of identified uncertainties are detailed in the following sections.

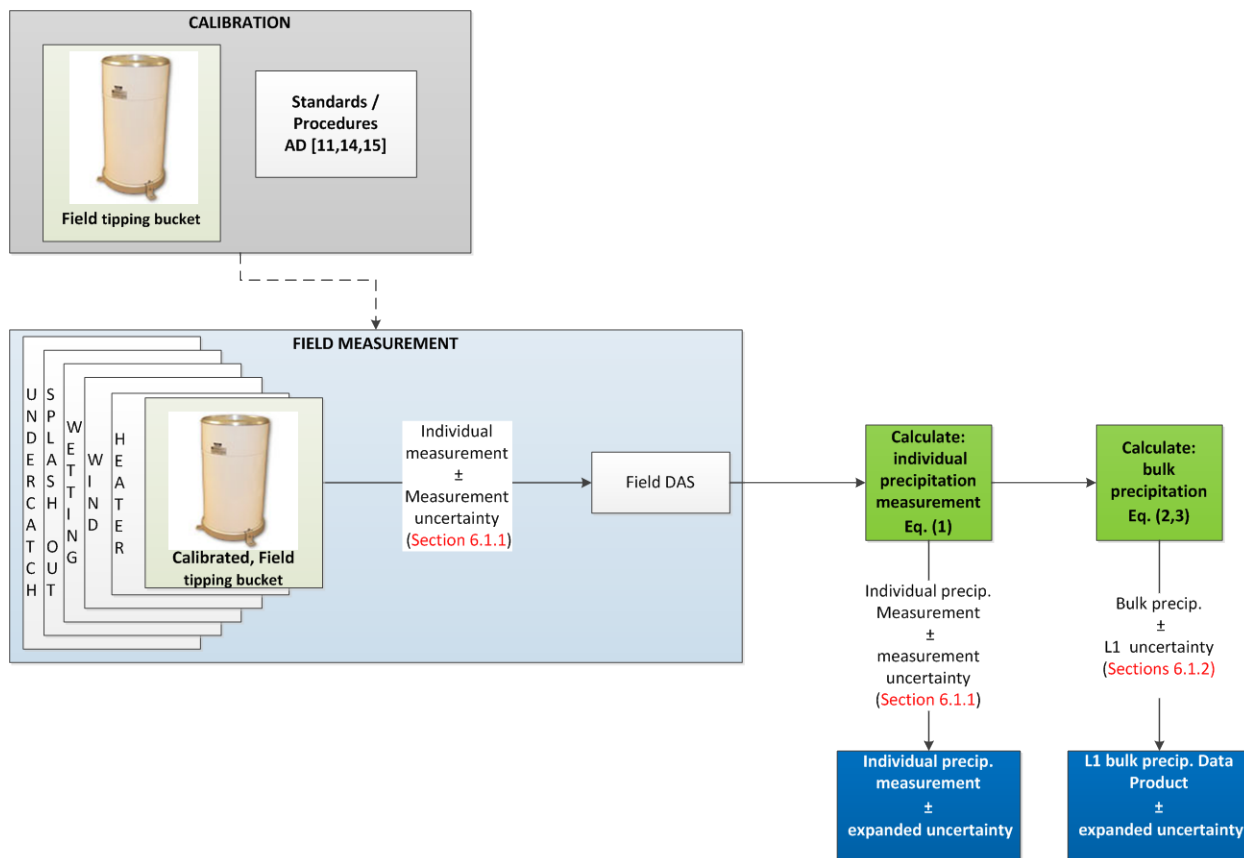


Figure 1: Displays the data flow and associated uncertainties of individual precipitation measurements and L1 bulk precipitation DPs. For more information regarding the methods by which the net radiometer is calibrated, please refer to AD[11,14,15].

6.1.1 Measurement Uncertainty

The following subsections present the uncertainties associated with *individual observations*. It is important to note that the uncertainties presented in the following subsections are *measurement uncertainties*, that is, they reflect the uncertainty of an *individual* measurement. These uncertainties should not be confused with those presented in Section 6.1.2. We urge the reader to refer to AD[13] for further details concerning the discrepancies between quantification of measurement uncertainties and L1 uncertainties.

NEON calculates measurement uncertainties according to recommendations of the Joint Committee for Guides in Metrology (JCGM) 2008. In essence, if a measurand y is a function of n input quantities x_i ($i = 1, \dots, n$), *i.e.*, $y = f(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n)$, the combined measurement uncertainty of y , assuming the inputs are independent, can be calculated as follows:

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$$u_c(y) = \left(\sum_{i=1}^N \left(\frac{\partial f}{\partial x_i} \right)^2 u^2(x_i) \right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \quad (4)$$

where

$\frac{\partial f}{\partial x_i}$ = partial derivative of y with respect to x_i
 $u(x_i)$ = combined standard uncertainty of x_i .

Thus, the uncertainty of the measurand can be found by summing the *quantifiable* input uncertainties in quadrature. The calculation of these *quantifiable* input uncertainties is discussed below.

6.1.1.1 Calibration

Uncertainties associated with tipping buckets and their calibration processes are combined into an individual, relative uncertainty u_{A1} by CVAL. This value represents i) the variation of an individual sensor from the mean of a sensor population, and ii) uncertainty of the calibration procedure. It is a relative value that will be provided by CVAL (AD[12]), stored in the CI data store, and applied to all secondary precipitation measurements after it is converted to measurement units (that is, it does not vary with any specific sensor, DAS component, etc.).

$$u(P_{Bi}) = u_{A1} * P_i \quad (5)$$

Where,

u_{A1} = relative uncertainty of individual tip (%)

6.1.1.2 DAS

That tipping buckets quantify precipitation via reed closure, and data are output in binary form. Because of this DAS noise is considered negligible.

6.1.1.3 Evaporative Losses

Exposure to direct sunlight or use of heaters (see below paragraph) can cause the sensor's funnel and buckets to be warmer than the ambient environment. If this occurs for prolonged periods before or during precipitation events, evaporative losses can occur – amplifying measurement uncertainty. This is especially true at the onset of precipitation (Brock and Richardson 2001), and during *light* precipitation events (WMO 2008). Additionally, because of the relatively large tipping threshold (0.5 mm) of Met One's 372 and 379 tipping buckets, *light* precipitation events (i.e., <0.5 mm/hr) may go completely undetected.

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As mentioned in Section 1.1, Met One’s heated tipping bucket (model 379) will be used at a handful of NEON’s domains. Through use of the two heaters (one to heat the base, the other to heat the funnel), freezing and frozen precipitation can be melted, thus allowing quantification of precipitation when temperatures are near or below freezing. Although beneficial, use of the heaters can cause precipitation loss due to evaporation (Brock and Richardson 2001). In the attempt to quantify this uncertainty, the heaters’ voltage output will be monitored. As NEON’s bulk precipitation data are analyzed, it is NEON’s goal to quantify measurement uncertainty as a direct result of evaporative losses induced by the heater. However, at current time, we cannot confidently quantify the extent of this uncertainty.

6.1.1.4 Undercatchment (improper bucket repositioning)

Undercatchment refers to the process by which the two buckets of the gauge cannot reposition themselves fast enough to collect incoming rainfall after a single tip has occurred (Humphreys *et al.* 1997). This process is common during heavy rain events and can result in underestimations of bulk precipitation amounts by 10% to 30% for rainfall intensities $> 25 \text{ mm h}^{-1}$ (Marselek 1981; Alena *et al.* 1990). Humphreys *et al.* (1997) show that for tipping buckets with tipping thresholds of 1.0 mm, undercatchment does not become problematic until rainfall rates are $> 50 \text{ mm h}^{-1}$. Thus it can be stated that undercatchment is a function of the tipping threshold and frequency of tips. Tipping buckets with larger tip thresholds (e.g., 0.5 to 1.0 mm) will result in fewer tips during heavy rain events than those with smaller tipping thresholds, (e.g., 0.1 to 0.2 mm). That Met One’s tipping bucket threshold is 0.5 mm, undercatchment will result in a smaller uncertainty than those sensors with small tipping thresholds. This type of uncertainty will be indirectly quantified during CVAL’s calibration

6.1.1.5 Splash-out

Splash-out occurs when large raindrops hit the funnel, and because of impact, fragment, causing portions of the drops to “splash-out” of the funnel; this causes an underestimation of precipitation (Brock and Richardson 2001). Proper quantification of splash-out and related uncertainty are most likely beyond the limits of measurements made throughout the NEON Observatory. For one to confidently acknowledge the presence of large raindrops, a sensor capable of measuring drop size distribution (e.g., a disdrometer) must be used. However, it is possible that future installation of dual polarization radars will aid in the recognition of drop size distribution (Rinehart 2004), thus making it possible to quantify potential splash-out. Until then, we cannot confidently quantify the extent of splash-out and its effect on precipitation measurements made by tipping buckets.

6.1.1.6 Wind

The measurement of precipitation is particularly sensitive to wind (WMO 2008). Laminar and turbulent flows can result in a reduction of catch at the tipping buckets funnel, thus resulting in underestimations of precipitation measurements. Brock and Richardson (2001) note that catch reductions can be up to

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20% with winds ranging from 5 to 10 m s⁻¹ and nearly 80% for winds >10 m s⁻¹ during light rainfall and most snowfall events. Wind speeds near the tipping bucket can be reduced and catch reduction can be partially mitigated by shielding the rain gauge with shields such as fencing (WMO 2008). Unfortunately, NEON’s tipping buckets will be located on tower-tops, rendering the use of fencing implausible. Currently, we cannot quantify the extent of wind related uncertainties. However, as bulk precipitation data are collected and analyzed, these uncertainties may become quantifiable through the aid of wind measurements from the nearby CSAT3 anemometer and radar imagery.

6.1.1.7 Wetting

A type of uncertainty that results in an overestimate of precipitation is known as *wetting*. The WMO (2008) states that this situation can occur when precipitation does not completely empty out of the bucket during the previous tip; this is likely the result of contaminants (e.g., hygroscopic particles) within the precipitation. It is hypothesized that this type of uncertainty is more likely to occur in coastal and desert regions, as hygroscopic particles are more prevalent in these areas. With the aid of data collected by our dust analyzers, uncertainties due to wetting may be better estimated.

6.1.1.8 Representativeness

It is argued that any type of rain gauge (e.g., weighing gauge, tipping bucket, optical rain gauge) is unrepresentative of precipitation over large areas – caution should be executed when spatially inter- and extrapolating precipitation measurements. It is considered poor sampling when one rain gauge is used to represent precipitation characteristics of a surrounding, larger area (e.g., 200 km²); this is especially true during thunderstorms (Rinehart 2004; WMO 2008). Passing of a localized rainstorm can grossly overestimate (if directly over the rain gauge) or underestimate (if storm misses gauge completely) precipitation characteristics for a mesoscale sized region (Brock and Richardson 2001). With the aid of radar imagery, representativeness can be better understood.

6.1.1.9 Combined Measurement Uncertainty

The only quantifiable uncertainty for secondary precipitation is that provided by CVAL. Because of this, the combined uncertainty is simple equal to $u(P_{Bi})$.

6.1.1.10 Expanded Measurement Uncertainty

The effective degrees of freedom of a single tip are equal to $V_{eff A1}$, i.e., the effective degrees of freedom provided by CVAL. The expanded uncertainty is then as:

$$U_{95}(P_{Bi}) = k_{95} V_{eff A1} * u_{A1} \quad (6)$$

Where k_{95} is the coverage factor obtained with the aid of:

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- Table 5 from AD[13]
- $V_{eff_{A1}}$

6.1.2 Uncertainty of Bulk Precipitation

The following subsections discuss uncertainties associated with temporally averaged, i.e., L1 mean, data products. As stated previously, it is important to note the differences between the *measurement uncertainties* presented in Section 6.1.1 and the uncertainties presented in the following subsections. The uncertainties presented in the following subsections reflect the uncertainty of sum, that is, they reflect the uncertainty of a collection of measurements observed under non-controlled conditions (i.e., those found in the field).

6.1.2.1 Combined Uncertainty

A relative uncertainty value, u_{A1} , will be provided by CVAL (AD[13]), and stored in the CI data store. It will be converted to units of *mm* to provide a standard, combined uncertainty value for bulk precipitation:

$$u(P_B) = u_{A1} * \sum_{i=1}^n P_i \quad (7)$$

Where,

u_{A1} = relative uncertainty of individual tip (%)

6.1.2.2 Expanded Uncertainty

The effective degrees of freedom for bulk precipitation are equal to $V_{eff_{A1}}$, i.e., the effective degrees of freedom associated with the quantification of u_{A1} .

6.2 Uncertainty Budget

The uncertainty budget is a visual aid detailing i) quantifiable sources of uncertainty, ii) means by which they are derived, and iii) the order of their propagation. Individual uncertainty values denoted in this budget are either provided here (within this document) or will be provided by other NEON teams (e.g., CVAL) and stored in the CI data store.

Table 5. Uncertainty budget for individual precipitation measurements. Shaded rows (lightest to darkest) denote propagation of uncertainties.

Source of measurement	measurement uncertainty	measurement uncertainty			Degrees of Freedom
-----------------------	-------------------------	-------------------------	--	--	--------------------

uncertainty	component $u(x_i)$	value	$\frac{\partial f}{\partial x_i}$	$u_{x_i}(Y) \equiv \left \frac{\partial f}{\partial x_i} \right u(x_i)$ (mm)	
individual tip	$u(P_{B_i})$	Eq. (5)	n/a	n/a	$V_{eff_{A1}}$

Table 5. Uncertainty budget for individual precipitation measurements. Shaded rows (lightest to darkest) denote propagation of uncertainties.

Source of measurement uncertainty	measurement uncertainty component $u(x_i)$	measurement uncertainty value	$\frac{\partial f}{\partial x_i}$	$u_{x_i}(Y) \equiv \left \frac{\partial f}{\partial x_i} \right u(x_i)$ (mm)	Degrees of Freedom
Bulk precipitation	$u(P_B)$	Eq. (7)	n/a	n/a	$V_{eff_{A1}}$

7 FUTURE PLANS AND MODIFICATIONS

Future system flags may be incorporated into the data stream and included in the QA/QC summary DP ($Qsum_{1min}$ and $Qsum_{30min}$) that summarizes any flagged data that went into the computation of the L1 DP.

Details concerning the evaluation and quantification of Sensor and Field DAS drift will be added to the uncertainty section.

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