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1 **Shallow landslides and vegetation at the catchment scale: a perspective**

2 Chris Phillips^a, Tristram Hales^b, Hugh Smith^c, Les Basher^d

3 ^a Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research, Lincoln 7640, New Zealand. phillipsc@landcareresearch.co.nz

4 ^b Sustainable Places Research Institute, Cardiff University, 33 Park Place, Cardiff, Wales, UK

5 ^c Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research, Riddet Road, Massey University, Palmerston North 4472, New
6 Zealand

7 ^d EroSed Services, 47B Green Street, Nelson 7011, New Zealand.

8 **Highlights**

- 9 • Catchment-scale root reinforcement model development has a way to go before models
10 become useful for catchment and land managers wanting to target areas of shallow landslide
11 susceptibility.
- 12 • Understanding how shallow landslides contribute to river sediment loads remains a scaling and
13 connectivity challenge.
- 14 • Quantifying mass wasting (including landslide) and sediment interactions in river channels
15 presents different temporal and spatial challenges and must be assessed at the catchment scale.

16 **Abstract**

17 Shallow, rainfall-triggered landslides are an important catchment process that affect the rate and calibre
18 of sediment within river networks and create a significant hazard, particularly when shallow landslides
19 transform into rapidly moving debris flows. Forests and trees modify the magnitude and rate of shallow
20 landsliding and have been used by land managers for centuries to mitigate their effects. We understand
21 that at the tree and slope scale root reinforcement provides a significant role in stabilising slopes, but at
22 the catchment scale root reinforcement models only partially explain where shallow landslides are likely
23 to occur due to the complexity of subsurface material properties and hydrology. The challenge of scaling
24 from slopes to catchments (from 1-D to 2-D) reflects the scale gap between geomorphic process
25 understanding and modelling, and temporal evolution of material properties. Hence, our understanding
26 does not, as yet, provide the necessary tools to allow vegetation to be targeted most effectively for
27 landslide reduction. This paper aims to provide a perspective on the science underpinning the challenges
28 land and catchment managers face in trying to reduce shallow landslide hazard, manage catchment

29 sediment budgets, and develop tools for catchment targeting of vegetation. We use our understanding
30 of rainfall-triggered shallow landslides in New Zealand and how vegetation has been used as a tool to
31 reduce their incidence to demonstrate key points.

32 **Keywords**

33 shallow landslide; catchment; root reinforcement; sediment

34 **1. Introduction**

35 Shallow landslides are natural geomorphic processes that shape the landscape, are important as agents
36 of hillslope and landscape-scale sediment transfer and are also hazards to life and infrastructure (Spiker
37 and Gori, 2003; Milledge et al., 2014; Parker et al., 2016; Sidle and Bogaard, 2016). They occur in steep
38 mountainous and hilly landscapes that are covered in a mantle of regolith (e.g. Glade, 2003; Forbes and
39 Broadhead 2011; Garcia-Ruiz et al., 2017) and are commonly triggered by rainstorms (e.g. Rickli and
40 Graf, 2009) or earthquakes (e.g. Croissant et al., 2019). Such landslides transfer sediment from hillslopes
41 to channels (Benda and Dunne 1997a; Gabet and Dunne, 2003), are a disturbance mechanism for forest
42 ecosystems (Hack and Goodlett, 1960), and develop catchment topography (Stock and Dietrich 2003).
43 Additionally, shallow landslides affect humans by rapidly changing the volume of sediment in channels
44 and impacting river water quality, creating hazards to infrastructure and human lives, and loss of soil¹
45 resulting in declining productivity of grasslands (Rosser and Ross, 2011) and forests (Heaphy et al.,
46 2014).

47 Like most environmental phenomena, slope instability encompasses a complex set of processes, of
48 which a small subset is usually capable of explaining most of the observed pattern of events (Collison
49 and Griffiths, 2004). Rainfall-triggered shallow landslides commonly occur on steep slopes. They can be
50 triggered by heavy rainfall of either short duration with high rainfall intensity, or long duration with
51 lower intensity (e.g. Guzetti et al., 2004). The initiation of shallow landslides depends on the complex
52 interactions between the physical properties and availability of the regolith, climate, vegetation, land
53 use, hillslope hydrology, and below-ground ecologic processes (Wu, 1995; Rickli and Graf, 2009).

¹ We define a shallow landslide as any landslide that occurs within the material that forms above the bedrock including soil, saprolite, and colluvium. To provide a consistent nomenclature, we will define this material as regolith, noting that this includes much of the mobile component of the regolith in many cases (Anderson et al., 2012). Where we use the term soil, it is to denote the agriculturally productive component of the regolith.

54 Attempts to characterise the rainfall thresholds necessary to trigger shallow landslides also suggest high
55 variability (Caine, 1980; Guzzetti et al., 2007; Segoni et al., 2018).

56 Shallow landslides are the most common type of slope failure in many countries such as New Zealand,
57 accounting for 90% of all landslides (Crozier, 2005; Glade, 2003; Fuller et al., 2016). In general terms,
58 shallow landslides typically are complex slide-flow landslides (Hungri et al., 2014). These failures are
59 characterised by a pre-defined, planar sliding surface at a depth of up to 2.0 m, usually (but not
60 exclusively) reflecting the boundary between regolith and bedrock (Hungri et al., 2014). Many rainfall-
61 triggered landslides are also associated with both historical (Marden et al., 2014) and contemporary
62 forest clearance (e.g. timber harvesting - Phillips et al., 2012; Vergani et al., 2016) or wildfires
63 (Istanbulluoglu et al., 2004). They are both part of natural landscape response to high rainfall events, or
64 landscape evolution over long time periods (Dymond and de Rose, 2011; Cerovski-Darriau et al., 2014;
65 McCoy, 2015; Sidle and Bogaard, 2016) and a response to anthropogenic land use practices (Glade,
66 2003).



67

68 Figure 1 Shallow landslides near Whanganui, New Zealand (Photo Harley Betts)

69 Across geomorphic timescales (10^3 - 10^5 years) vegetation type and its history strongly controls the
70 potential for shallow landsliding by producing regolith through the action of roots, transporting that
71 colluvium through processes such as tree throw (Roering et al., 2010) and by adding stability to a slope
72 through root reinforcement, that provides an effective cohesion to slopes (Hubble et al., 2013). Tree

73 throw controls the rate of sediment transport by soil creep and has a strong control on local topography
74 in many places (Roering et al., 2003, Hurst et al., 2013, Gabet and Mudd 2010; Gabet et al., 2015).
75 When considered within the geomorphic framework, vegetation particularly trees and forests, can help
76 stabilise slopes reducing the incidence of shallow landslides in the short term (10^1 - 10^3 years) (Sidle et al.,
77 1985; Phillips and Marden, 2005; Greenway, 1987; Stokes et al., 2014), but in the longer term (10^3 - 10^5
78 years), trees promote a thick regolith that is landslide prone (Gabet and Dunne, 2002; Casadei and
79 Dietrich, 2003; Milledge et al., 2014).

80 At shorter timescales vegetation is an important agent for stabilising steep, regolith-mantled slopes by
81 reinforcing the regolith with roots (Phillips and Watson, 1994; Gabet and Dunne, 2002; Montgomery et
82 al., 2000) and, to a smaller extent, by modifying soil moisture and subsurface hydrology through
83 transpiration, canopy interception, redistribution of rain water, and development of preferential flow
84 paths via live and dead root systems (Hwang et al., 2015; Gonzalez-Ollauri and Mickovski 2017).
85 However, during extreme rain events, forest cover may have a reduced effect on reducing the frequency
86 of landslides whose failure plane is well below the majority of the rooted regolith (Forbes and
87 Broadhead, 2013). Natural (e.g. fire) or human driven (e.g. logging) removal of woody vegetation has
88 been shown to lead to an increase in shallow landslide activity (e.g. O'Loughlin and Pearce, 1976;
89 Montgomery et al., 2000; Roering and Gerber, 2005; Sidle, 1992).

90 The need to place trees and forests strategically within catchments or watersheds to limit shallow
91 landslides and their impacts while continuing to remain a challenge, has sparked several approaches
92 over the last half century to understand:

- 93 1. shallow landslide susceptibility (e.g. Schmidt et al., 2001; van Westen et al., 2008; Reichenbach et
94 al., 2018),
- 95 2. landslide triggering thresholds (e.g. Guzzetti et al., 2004, 2008; Segoni et al., 2018),
- 96 3. effects of both trees and forests on landslide frequency and severity (e.g. Phillips and Marden 2005;
97 Schmaltz et al., 2017; Guo et al., 2019),
- 98 4. models including spatially-explicit landslide and sediment budget models (e.g. von Ruetten et al.,
99 2011, 2013; Cislighi and Bischetti, 2019), and
- 100 5. management guidelines (e.g. Swanston, 1985; Chatwin et al., 1994; Jordan, 2002) or tools (e.g.
101 Dymond et al., 2006; Schwab and Geertsema, 2010; Dorren and Schwarz, 2016).

102 In this article, we examine how vegetation management can affect the frequency and magnitude of
103 shallow landslides at a catchment scale. Where appropriate, we use our understanding of shallow
104 landslides in New Zealand to demonstrate key points; this being more familiar to the authors. We
105 organise the paper into three parts. The first reviews the now classical model of how vegetation
106 provides stability to catchments through hydrologic and root reinforcement effects (e.g. O’Loughlin
107 1974, 2005; Greenway, 1987; Sidle and Ochiai, 2006; Schwarz et al., 2010, 2013; Stokes et al., 2014) and
108 consider the challenges of uncertainties and land use histories on catchment slope stability. Secondly,
109 we consider landslide susceptibility and hazard under differing vegetation conditions (Guzzetti et al.
110 2005). We note progress towards landslide hazard predictions that allow spatially explicit calculations of
111 individual landslide probabilities and the challenges of how and where planting vegetation might change
112 these probabilities and understanding how the frequency and magnitude of rainstorms and landslide
113 events might be changing through time. Finally, we consider vegetation and the management of
114 catchments, including the difficulty of obtaining reliable measurements of subsurface properties that
115 reflect their spatial variability at a catchment scale. This remains a significant challenge when trying to
116 integrate geomorphic processes to produce effective management tools.

117 2. Vegetation and landslide triggering at the catchment scale

118 Rainfall-triggered shallow landslides are episodic events that can impact catchments in various ways
119 depending on their magnitude, extent, and timing. Understanding the factors that control rates of
120 landsliding and sediment delivery is important for assessing the environmental risks associated with
121 such events and for predicting the impacts of land use on erosion (Benda and Dunne, 1997a, 1997b;
122 Gabet and Dunne, 2003; Rengers et al., 2016; McGuire et al., 2016). Landslides cause a stochastic
123 delivery of sediment to the upper parts of mountain catchments, with the frequency of landsliding being
124 directly related to the types of vegetation and their potential losses due to natural (e.g. wildfires) or
125 anthropogenic activities (e.g. logging) (e.g. Sidle et al., 1985). Catastrophic landslide events are often
126 linked to extreme rainfall events together with vegetation disturbance. There is a strong causal link
127 between the relative rates of root decay and regeneration and the timing of landsliding activity via a
128 mechanical reinforcement that has been observed in many places (e.g. Wu et al., 1979; O’Loughlin and
129 Watson, 1979; Schmidt et al., 2001).

130 Vegetation plays an additional role in affecting the hydrology that governs shallow landslide triggering.
131 Landslides are triggered by the development of pore pressures from vertically directed infiltration from
132 intense rainfall, convergent throughflow and/or exfiltration from shallow groundwater systems (Iverson,

133 2000; Montgomery et al., 1997). The result of complex hillslope hydrology is that while most shallow
134 landslides trigger within convergent topography, where throughflow is important (Dietrich et al., 2007),
135 they are not exclusively triggered in these areas (Fig. 1). Additionally, there are local effects on stability
136 caused by the additional mass of the vegetation (called the surcharge) and through perturbations of
137 hydrology caused by interception, transpiration, and changes to the structure of the regolith by the
138 addition of leaf litter and through roots creating macropores (Ghestem et al., 2011; Keim and Skaugset,
139 2003).

140 Numerous approaches have been taken to model landslide initiation at a catchment scale, including
141 empirical models based solely on rainfall characteristics to more physically-based landslide models in
142 which stability is assessed using the limit equilibrium method and expressed in terms of factor of safety
143 analysis (FoS) (e.g. Sidle, 1992; Collison and Griffiths, 2004). Distributed, physically-based landslide
144 models have become more prevalent with improvements in advanced GIS and DEM technology which is
145 allowing the prediction of landslides at the catchment or regional scale (Montgomery and Dietrich,
146 1994). These sometimes couple ecohydrologic models to estimate subsurface vegetation parameters
147 like rooting depth (Sivandran and Bras, 2013). However, the limiting factor for most of these models is
148 the sparse data available for the input parameters, many of which are not available at the scales at
149 which the models can now be applied. This is starting to be addressed with probabilistic models that use
150 dynamic parameters to deal with the lack of data and uncertainty (e.g. van Zadelhoff et al., 2021).

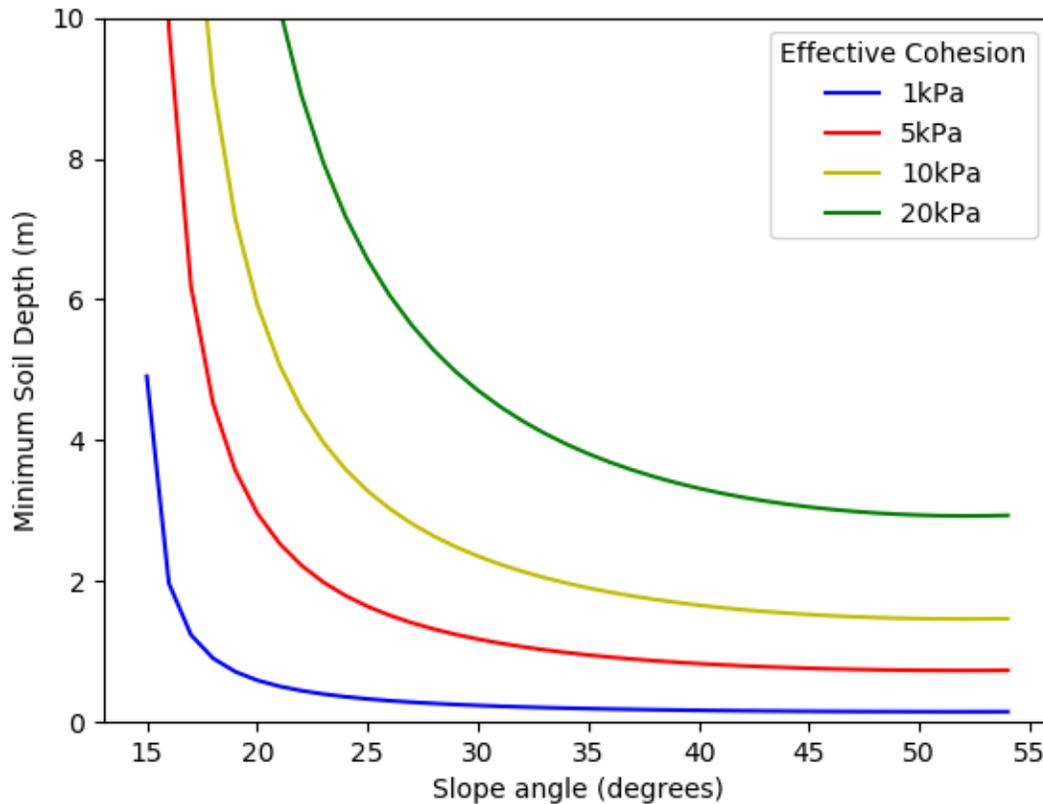
151 Physically-based modelling of shallow landslide potential, regardless of model complexity, relies on the
152 limit equilibrium method introduced by Mohr-Coulomb. The most common application of this method
153 assumes an infinite slope (e.g. Montgomery and Dietrich, 1994; Pack et al., 2001; Baum et al., 2008). The
154 limit equilibrium method considers the landslide potential to reflect the balance of colluvium shear force
155 and strength. In its simplest, 1-dimensional form this balance is reflected as a factor of safety (FoS)

$$156 \quad FoS = \frac{c' + (\gamma z \cos^2 \beta - u) \tan \phi'}{\gamma z \sin \beta \cos \beta},$$

157 with c' representing the effective cohesion, γ is the unit weight of colluvium, z is colluvium depth, β is
158 the slope angle, u is the pore pressure, and ϕ' is the effective friction angle. The addition of plant roots,
159 which reinforce the regolith mostly via the friction between the root's surface and the regolith (e.g.
160 Schwarz et al., 2010; Vergani et al., 2017; Cohen and Schwarz, 2017), provides additional shear strength
161 in excess of that provided by the internal friction of the colluvium, hence is considered as a component
162 of the effective cohesion. Vegetation affects all of the terms in this equation (even slope angle, e.g.

163 Roering et al., 2003, 2010; Hurst et al., 2013) at geomorphic timescales, such that we would expect a
164 system that has not been perturbed by land use or climate change, to reach an equilibrium in terms of
165 the rate of sediment discharged from hillslopes by shallow landslides and creep processes and that
166 generated by soil production mechanisms such as tree throw (Dietrich and Dunne, 1978). At shorter,
167 management timescales, the three terms that are most influential on catchment-scale slope stability are
168 the effective cohesion, regolith thickness, and pore pressure (D’Odorico and Fagherazzi, 2003). Possibly
169 the most important, and poorly understood relationship is that between the effective cohesion and the
170 regolith thickness that can be maintained. The magnitude of this additional effective cohesion has been
171 discussed with models evolving over many decades from relatively simple approaches (Wu et al., 1979)
172 to more complex models where root reinforcement is assessed across scales from a single root to a tree
173 root system to a stand of trees (Schwarz et al., 2010; Schwarz et al., 2013, 2014; Hales, 2018), to
174 physically based distributed models as outlined above (e.g. Hwang et al., 2015) and those that are
175 designed to assist practitioners (Dhakal and Sidle, 2003; Schwarz et al., 2014, 2016; Dazio et al., 2018;
176 Bischetti and Chiaradia, 2010; Chiaradia et al., 2012; Cislighi and Bishchetti, 2019).

177 The addition of effective cohesion, such as that provided by plant roots, creates a regolith depth
178 dependence on failure that is higher than that provided by earth pressure in cohesionless regolith
179 (Milledge et al., 2014). The importance of this dependence can be illustrated by plotting the minimum
180 regolith depth and slope angle under hydrostatic pore pressure conditions (Crozier et al., 1990;
181 D’Odorico and Fagherazzi, 2003; Parker et al., 2016) (Figure 2). Locally, tree roots generate effective
182 cohesion values of up to 50 kPA (Schmidt et al., 2001), such that a landscape occupied by forest will
183 contain stable colluvium with thicknesses of >1 m, under most pore pressure conditions. However, rapid
184 changes in vegetation type, particularly the conversion of forest to other land use types, can
185 dramatically lower the effective cohesion and make slopes considerably more unstable. Additionally, the
186 relationship between cohesion, and colluvium depth may affect the catchment response to long-term
187 climate-driven changes in precipitation, such that the relatively slow recovery of regolith thickness after
188 a shallow landslide provides a stronger constraint on landslide potential than changes in landslide
189 frequency (Parker et al., 2016.) This work demonstrates a stronger need for effective methods for
190 understanding the subsurface structure of catchments to improve their management (Brantley et al.,
191 2017).



192

193 Figure 2 Analytical solutions of the maximum stable regolith depth for hydrostatic pore pressures under
 194 different effective cohesion values. These solutions show the striking role that cohesion, which in
 195 hillslope regolith is often dominated by root reinforcement, has on stabilising slopes. Similarly, it
 196 highlights how even small losses and gains in effective cohesion could cause dramatic changes to the
 197 stability of a slope. In this example, friction angle is 30 degrees, unit weight of soil is 17,600 N/m³.

198 Recent advances in our process-based understanding of the role of vegetation and physical constraints
 199 such as earth pressure has improved our understanding of the controls on shallow landslide size and
 200 depth (Milledge et al, 2014). Better process understanding, combined with efficient methods for
 201 analysing clusters of unstable cells that can estimate landslide size (Bellugi et al, 2015). Prediction of
 202 locations of landslides within a particular rainstorm event remains challenging, highlighting issues of
 203 parameterisation, calibration, and verification, and computation intensity. Parameterising subsurface
 204 mechanical and hydraulic properties in mountainous terrain remains a significant challenge, particularly
 205 because of the heterogeneity of these properties across these landscapes, the lack of systematic
 206 empirical measurement of these parameters for slopes, and poor understanding of the statistical

207 distribution of properties at this scale (Burton and Bathurst 1998). These issues of parameterisation
208 mean that calibration of models is often best done using the historical landslide record. The quality of
209 the parameterisation (and verification) of these models depends on the completeness and length of the
210 record.

211 Stochastic modelling of shallow landslides at a catchment scale has provided an opportunity to test our
212 understanding of how landslide frequency and magnitude and resulting sediment fluxes respond to
213 naturally variable rainfall and disturbance. The competition between the recovery of soil depths at
214 millennial timescales and the stochastic rainfall and fire events that recur at decadal to centennial
215 timescale sets the spatial pattern and magnitude of shallow landslide events (Parker et al., 2016; Benda
216 and Dunne, 1997a). These studies show that the number of potential failure sites, and thus the long-
217 term frequency of landsliding was set by the rate of soil depth recovery. The relationship between the
218 antecedent effects of fire, which reduces root strength, and rainfall governed the magnitude and
219 location of individual landsliding events (Benda and Dunne, 1997a). When the sediment generated by
220 these events was routed through catchments by stochastic flooding events, large changes to bed
221 topography (on a scale of metres) were created in lower order channels but were barely detectable in
222 5th order catchments (Benda and Dunne, 1997b). Istanbuloglu et al., (2004) modelled how changes in
223 forest stand density and productivity conditions (manifested by different root cohesion values) influence
224 the magnitude and frequency of sediment delivery from gully erosion, shallow landsliding and debris
225 flows. Their simulation results reproduced long-term (10,000 year) average sediment yields. When the
226 model was perturbed by wildfires, rapid reduction in root cohesion caused a more intense sedimentary
227 response than forest harvesting. Sediment fluxes were dominated by episodic events whose timing was
228 controlled by vegetation root cohesion and density (Istanbuloglu et al., 2004). This work demonstrated
229 the stochastic nature of the extreme precipitation and deforestation events that drive landslide events,
230 while also noting that there is an averaging effect of both the sediment signal of landsliding downstream
231 and through time. Hence, reconciling long-term average sediment yields versus short-term stream
232 sediment fluxes is difficult due to the relatively short nature of the observational record, and the
233 unreliable nature of the sedimentary records of the upper parts of catchments.

234 Where sediment yields have been compared across timescales, we have observed both an increase and
235 decrease in short-term sediment yield relative to the long term. For example, Kirchner et al., (2001)
236 found that long-term erosion rates over 10,000-year time scales when compared to short-term
237 measurements (10–84 years) produced sediment yields on average 17 times higher than the short-term

238 stream sediment fluxes. The authors concluded that this significant difference suggests that sediment
239 delivery from mountain watersheds is extremely episodic, and that long-term sediment delivery is
240 dominated by catastrophic rare events (Kirchner et al., 2001). Hence, lower order streams that are
241 prone to landsliding can expect large, rapid changes in bed elevation at the annual to decadal timescale
242 over which catchment managers are interested. Where catchment-scale landscape evolutions models
243 have included short-term disturbances to vegetation, there is a commensurate, short-term increase in
244 sediment yields (Istanbulluoglu et al., 2004, Guthrie, 2009). These studies highlight that land use change
245 such as due to forest harvesting may have a greater impact on catchment sediment budgets than
246 climate change. At small catchment and storm event scales, comparisons of sediment yield under
247 different vegetation cover, and studies of the impact of deforestation, show that forested catchments
248 yield 50–80% less sediment than pasture catchments (e.g. Hicks, 1990; Fahey et al., 2003) and can have
249 a mean annual sediment yield up to 95% less than pasture catchments (Hicks, 1990).

250 Historical sediment records within the well-studied Waipaoa River catchment in New Zealand have
251 provided important observational evidence of the role of reforestation on landsliding driven sediment
252 yields. Reid and Page (2002) analysed the effectiveness of reforestation in reducing landslide
253 contribution to sediment load of the Waipaoa River catchment. They suggested that shallow landslides
254 contribute about 15+/-5% of the suspended sediment load in the river and that 75% of the sediment
255 production from the landslides occurs during storms with recurrence intervals of less than 27 years.
256 They also suggested reforestation between 1960 and 1995 had produced a 10% decrease in sediment
257 from landslides but had only reduced total sediment load by 2%. If the most susceptible areas in the
258 catchment were targeted, the sediment generation rate from landsliding could be reduced by 40% but it
259 would result in only a 6% reduction in the sediment load of the Waipaoa because of the importance of
260 gully and streambank erosion in this catchment (Hicks et al., 2000). Marden (2012) argued that
261 reforestation with exotic pines in the erosion-prone East Coast region of New Zealand successfully
262 stabilised existing erosion forms and prevented the initiation of new ones. Using modelled reforestation
263 scenarios, he indicated that sediment generation from earthflows and shallow landslides would be
264 negligible within 8-10 years of planting. Marden et al., (2014) quantified the effectiveness of exotic
265 reforestation as an erosion control strategy on both sediment generation in the headwaters of the
266 Waipaoa River in New Zealand and on downstream sediment yield over the period 1939–1988.
267 Additionally, studies of landslides during large storm events in New Zealand show the effect of localised
268 erosion control by vegetation on the sediment delivery ratio (SDR) in a whole farm context is typically
269 low, i.e., the amount of sediment delivered to the rivers and transported to the catchment outlet is a

270 small proportion of the total mass that failed (e.g. Page et al., 1994, 1999; Preston 2008) and even lower
271 when multiple landslide events are considered (Jones and Preston, 2012). This implies that the impacts
272 of vegetation on landslide contribution to sediment yield are likely to be buffered by temporary
273 sediment storage in the landscape resulting in less direct influence on sediment yield than on hillslope
274 erosion rates. By contrast, erosion from gully processes is often well connected to the stream
275 network and most sediment eroded is delivered to the stream network (SDR is close to 1).

276 The improvements of physical understanding of shallow landslide processes across temporal and spatial
277 scales, has improved our ability to predict the magnitudes and frequencies of potential landslide events,
278 yet reliably predicting the location of individual landslides remains elusive. Increasingly complex and
279 dynamic models of shallow landslide susceptibility have moved beyond the static approach by applying
280 spatially and temporally varying distributions of vegetation, colluvium, and hydrologic properties. Yet
281 computational complexity remains a challenge, as does parameterisation. Additionally, we do not have a
282 strong theoretical or practical basis for including temporal changes in vegetation properties due to
283 disturbances such as fire and disease, or how to account for different stages in vegetation growth or
284 density (e.g. Flepp et al. 2021). Similarly, our understanding of the spatial distribution of regolith depth
285 is extremely limited, with our best estimates coming from manual excavation and soil tile probe
286 methods (Reneau et al., 1990; de Rose et al., 1991; Hales et al., 2009; Parker et al., 2016; Gabet et al.,
287 2015). Despite advances in shallow geophysical methods for estimating colluvium depths associated
288 with Critical Zone Observatories, there remain practical issues of their application in steep catchments
289 (Befus et al., 2011; Pazzi et al., 2017). In landscapes with frequent rainfall, the temporal distribution of
290 colluvium thickness may limit the rates of shallow landslide triggering (Benda and Dunne 1997a; Gabet
291 and Dunne, 2003; Parker et al., 2016), although few studies have attempted to understand these
292 dynamics. In particular, landslide events themselves can change the susceptibility of the terrain to future
293 events, commonly by removing susceptible material and thereby increasing the resistance of the terrain
294 (Crozier and Preston, 1999).

295 3. Landslide modelling to estimate susceptibility and hazard

296 Calculating landslide susceptibility and hazard at the catchment scale under varying vegetation
297 conditions has been a core challenge for many decades. Given the complexity of the processes
298 governing the frequency and magnitude of shallow landsliding and aleatoric and epistemic uncertainties
299 in parameters, a range of different approaches have been implemented to this challenge. Landslide
300 susceptibility is the likelihood of a landslide occurring in an area depending on local terrain conditions

301 i.e., estimating where landslides are likely to occur (Guzzetti et al., 2005). By definition, landslide
302 susceptibility is a non-temporal concept that refers to locations where landslides preferentially occur
303 based on an understanding of the topographic, hydrologic, and material properties that act as
304 contributory factors. The factors that control landslide susceptibility are topographic (slope steepness,
305 elevation/relative relief, aspect, slope shape/curvature), geologic (lithology, strength of bedrock and
306 regolith), vegetation cover or land use, climate (annual rainfall, rainfall intensity and duration) and
307 presence of roads and infrastructure. Of these factors slope, geology/lithology and rainfall are the most
308 important and different combinations of these factors are used in the various assessments of
309 susceptibility (e.g. Minder et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2021). In both the literature and common usage,
310 confusion exists between landslide susceptibility and landslide hazard and the terms are often used as
311 synonyms despite the words expressing different concepts (Reichenbach et al., 2018). Landslide hazard
312 is the probability that a landslide of a given magnitude will occur in a given period and in a given area. In
313 addition to predicting where a slope failure will occur, landslide hazard predicts how frequently it will
314 occur, and how large it will be (Guzzetti et al., 2005).

315 Landslide susceptibility assessment emerged in the mid-1970s and there have been many papers
316 published since using a variety of approaches and methods in different geological and climatic settings
317 (see Reichenbach et al., 2018). All approaches are based upon a few assumptions: (1) that landslides can
318 be recognised, classified, and mapped in the field or by analysing remotely-sensed imagery; (2)
319 landslides and their occurrence are controlled by physical laws that can be analysed empirically,
320 statistically, or deterministically; (3) for statistical landslide susceptibility modelling, the past and present
321 distribution of landslides reflects the future distribution of landslides; (4) spatial landslide occurrence
322 can be inferred from heuristic knowledge, computed through the analysis of environmental information,
323 or predicted using physical models. Many of the parameters that form the basis of our understanding of
324 slope stability, such as friction or cohesion, have an aleatoric uncertainty. However, it is the epistemic
325 uncertainty associated with the history of landsliding, past changes to boundary conditions through land
326 use or climate changes, and parameters such as regolith thickness and pore pressure distributions that
327 provide the greatest limitation on our ability to develop predictive tools that might be useful for land
328 managers. Landslide susceptibility model performance is often assessed using a receiver operating
329 characteristic (ROC) curve, which plots the true positive rate against the false positive rate. Measuring
330 the area under a ROC is commonly used as an estimate of model performance. High ROC values of up to
331 90% (e.g. Smith et al., 2021) highlight the efficiency of many landslide susceptibility methods.

332 Approaches and methods for assigning landslide susceptibility can be qualitative or quantitative, and
333 direct or indirect. Qualitative approaches are subjective, ascertain susceptibility heuristically, and
334 portray susceptibility levels using descriptive (qualitative) terms. Quantitative methods produce
335 numerical estimates; in other words, probabilities of occurrence of landslide phenomena in any
336 susceptibility zone (Guzzetti et al., 1999). These include geomorphological mapping (Cardinali et al.,
337 2002), analysis of landslide inventories, heuristic terrain and stability zoning (van Westen et al., 1997;
338 Guzzetti et al., 1999), physically-based models (Montgomery and Dietrich, 1994; van Asch et al., 2007;
339 Alvioli and Baum, 2016) and statistically-based classification methods (Guzzetti et al., 1999; van Westen
340 et al., 2008). The development of satellite technologies to develop better landslide inventories has
341 proven to be an essential tool to improve the quality of the empirical basis required for better modelling
342 of catchment landsliding. Data from such inventories is necessary to help develop, calibrate and validate
343 both aspatial and spatially-distributed conceptual, physical and statistical models (e.g. Casadei et al.,
344 2003; Blahut et al., 2010; Van den Eeckhaut et al., 2011, 2012; Guzzetti et al., 2006; Marc et al., 2015).

345 3.1 Landslide inventories

346 The collection of data following a shallow-landslide event serves several purposes including:

- 347 1. determining the geographic extent of “damage”, i.e., which catchments are most affected (Page et
348 al., 1999; Dymond et al., 2006),
- 349 2. understanding the triggering mechanisms and factors that contributed to slope failure (Petschko et
350 al., 2013; Zieher et al., 2016),
- 351 3. assessing connectivity to stream networks and delivery of sediment and the contribution of
352 landslides to catchment sediment loads/budgets (Trustrum et al., 1999), and
- 353 4. assessment of the on-site and downstream impacts (including economic costs) (Phillips and Marden,
354 2005; Dominati et al., 2014).

355 Until the rapid expansion of high-quality satellite imagery over the past decade, our understanding of
356 the spatial distribution of shallow landsliding was largely limited to a few meticulously collected datasets
357 or inventories of landslides and rainfall often focused on catchments or sub-regions of interest obtained
358 from aerial imagery (e.g. Marden and Rowan, 1993; Malamud et al., 2004). Multi-temporal inventories
359 generally of smaller areas, were also created from repeated historic aerial imagery (Betts et al., 2017).
360 However, the increase in the frequency of satellite imagery has complemented these efforts by largely
361 improving the capture of where landslides occur, particularly for shallow landslides that are too small to
362 accurately map from lower-resolution imagery.

363 Landslide inventories have allowed an understanding of both the size and frequency of individual
364 landslides, as well as the size and frequency of landslide events where a single rainstorm may trigger
365 hundreds or thousands of shallow landslides (e.g. Cyclone Bola, New Zealand (Hicks, 1991; Marden and
366 Rowan, 1993); Hurricanes Francis and Ivan, North Carolina (Wooten et al., 2016)). Multi-temporal
367 landslide inventories have also been extremely important for understanding post-earthquake landsliding
368 (Fan et al., 2019; Marc et al., 2015) and increasingly for understanding the patterns of rainfall-triggered
369 shallow landsliding (Chen et al., 2016). Increasingly frequent landslide inventories allow a better
370 understanding of the controls on event magnitude and frequency, and path dependencies (Samia et al.,
371 2017). However, multi-temporal landslide inventories in forested terrain, unlike for non-forested
372 landscapes, are scarce (Schmaltz et al., 2017). This results in difficulties in establishing empirical
373 relationships between shallow landslides and forest/tree cover (density, age, species, etc), especially at
374 the landscape and catchment scale. Forests have variations in vegetation species and age which
375 influences the variability of root cohesion which can then dominate the local stability of landslide-
376 initiation sites (Schmidt et al., 2001).

377 Aerial photo interpretation, and many remote sensing approaches have difficulty in detecting small
378 landslides under or within vegetation and the portion of visually non-detected landslides in rugged
379 forested areas can sum up to 85% of the total number of landslides (Brardinoni et al., 2003). In many
380 inventories of rainfall triggered landslides that compare landscape response for different land covers or
381 land uses, forests or woodlands generally have much lower landslide densities. For example, in New
382 Zealand following several regional landslide events, forested landscapes have been reported as having
383 fewer landslides and lower landslide densities compared to grass covered slopes (Phillips et al., 1991;
384 Marden and Rowan, 1993; Bergin et al., 1995; Rosser et al., 2019). In many places the occurrence of
385 significant landslide events is well known with observations and data relating to these events built up
386 over decades (Rosser et al., 2017; Zieher et al., 2016; Chen et al., 2015). In other areas however,
387 particularly those more remote or less densely populated, records do not exist, though the impacts may
388 be no less severe. Many landslide events can also affect relatively small areas (<10 km²) within larger
389 catchments being triggered by cells of high or intense rainfall while others are more regional in extent
390 (often related to extensive flooding) affecting much larger areas and producing thousands of landslides.
391 These have been called multiple-occurrence regional landslide events (MORLEs – Crozier, 2005, 2017).

392 3.2 Modelling landslide susceptibility and hazard under differing vegetation

393 As technology and computing power have progressed, so have advances in how landslide susceptibility
394 is assessed. Reichenbach et al. (2018) reviewed statistically-based approaches for landslide susceptibility
395 modelling and associated terrain zonation and suggested that physically- and statistically-based
396 methods are preferred to determine landslide susceptibility in quantitative terms. One of the earliest
397 investigations analysed published data from 73 worldwide examples where rainfall intensity and
398 duration had been measured in association with the triggering of shallow landslides to develop a
399 minimum rainfall intensity-duration threshold for debris flows (Caine, 1980). The concept of rainfall
400 thresholds as presented by Caine (1980) built upon earlier recognition by Campbell (1975) of the
401 relationship of high intensity rainfall in the triggering of shallow landslides and by Starkel (1979) who
402 theorized a critical rainfall which was a combination of rainfall intensity and duration.

403 Subsequent work has continued to refine thresholds for differing geological settings using a mix of
404 approaches (e.g. Wilson and Wieczorek, 1995; Glade 1998; Wieczorek and Guzzetti, 2000; Guzzetti et al.,
405 2007; Frattini et al., 2009; Salciarini et al., 2012; Nikolopoulos et al., 2014; Palladino et al., 2018;
406 Peruccacci et al., 2017; Segoni et al., 2018). Many of these approaches are now focussed on providing
407 support for the development of regional landslide early warning systems (e.g. Gariano et al., 2018).
408 Choice of parameter inputs is a key challenge for landslide susceptibility analysis, particularly geological
409 inputs which may be more accurate when lithology is combined with other geological information
410 (Segoni et al., 2020). There is also some general agreement that whatever approach is used to
411 determine susceptibility, fewer classes seem to perform better than having many, i.e., adding additional
412 parameters to susceptibility models often doesn't improve their predictive performance. A particularly
413 challenging assumption that has only been tested in a small number of cases is the issue of path
414 dependency, i.e., if a landslide fails in one location, is the probability of a similar failure in the same
415 location changed (Parker et al., 2016; Samia et al., 2017). While there are observations of repeated
416 landslide triggering, the thinning of regolith associated with shallow landslides will certainly change the
417 probability distribution of failure at that location, creating an epistemic uncertainty leading to what has
418 been termed terrain resistance (Crozier and Preston 1999) or exhaustion.

419 Statistical landslide hazard models are developed by analysing the distribution of landslides with respect
420 to topographic, geologic and hydrologic parameters. These models develop a probability of a landslide
421 event anywhere within a spatial area (e.g. a catchment), for a given rainfall event that is usually
422 expressed as a combined intensity (maximum rainfall rate) and duration (a time) (e.g. Malamud et al.,

423 2004; Guzzetti et al., 2006). These models are used globally and represent the simplest method for
424 determining an estimate of landslide hazard and are particularly useful where the hazard estimate does
425 not depend on spatial parameters. For example, when estimating debris flow hazard at the mouth of a
426 catchment, it may not matter where in the catchment the debris flow is sourced, just the probability
427 that it will reach the mouth. Including the distributions of triggering and non-triggering rainfall events in
428 a Bayesian methodology allows the development of failure probabilities that better reflect uncertainties
429 inherent in shallow landslide systems (Berti et al., 2012). Recently, the use of machine learning has
430 provided a new tool for developing these statistical methods that is versatile, improves through time as
431 more data is added, and may have some promise as a predictive tool (Huang et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2021;
432 Smith et al., 2021).

433 Spatially-distributed models of landslide triggering are an important process-based tool for estimating
434 landslide susceptibility. These models are typically digital topography-based estimates of landslide
435 susceptibility, with a factor of safety calculated for each individual pixel. These models include a
436 topography-based hydrological model that varies in its form. Such models include SHALSTAB
437 (Montgomery et al., 1994), dSLAM (Wu and Sidle 1995), TRIGRS (Baum et al., 2008), SINMAP (Pack et al.,
438 2001), HIRES (Rossi et al., 2013; Salvatici et al., 2018) as well as many others (e.g. Chang and Chiang,
439 2009). However, the ability of physically-based models for shallow landslide hazard analysis has been
440 questioned (Zieher et al., 2017) but the approach is considered feasible for computing a regional
441 overview of slope stability and may oversimplify at the local scale, where slope-based geotechnical
442 modelling may prove more fruitful. Increasingly the quality of the hydrological and geomorphic
443 modelling underpinning these models has improved considerably (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2015;
444 Lehmann and Or, 2012; Tang et al., 2019; Thomas et al., 2021; Von Ruetten et al., 2013).

445 Process-based shallow landslide hazard models are less common. While slope scale landslide hazard
446 analysis is a common geotechnical method that is applied to numerous slopes globally (a summary of
447 these methods is outside the scope of this article), there are few examples of the application of slope-
448 scale analysis to the shallow landslide problem. In particular, simplified slope-scale analysis of shallow
449 landsliding has been applied effectively as a tool for disaster relief and mitigation particularly to support
450 the risk assessment of infrastructure (CHASM; Thiebes et al., 2014). The applications of these models
451 can be made increasingly flexible through the use of search algorithms to determine the most likely
452 failure planes which makes them important tools for decision support at the slope scale (Bozzolan et al.,
453 2020).

454 4. Vegetation for managing catchments

455 Vegetation, particularly trees and forests, is widely used as a catchment management tool. It can:
456 regulate water quality and quantity; the amount of carbon sequestration; provide an alternative income
457 source for poor/marginal agricultural land; assist with managing biodiversity and other ecological goals;
458 and can change catchment sediment yields based on the characteristics and extent of forest cover
459 (Phillips and Marden, 2005; Hicks et al., 2000; Marden et al., 2014).

460 In many catchments, a wide range of topographic conditions and land uses occur, and tools are required
461 by land or catchment managers to target mitigation of soil erosion, including that caused by shallow
462 landslides, to reduce sediment loads in rivers to meet regulatory standards (Dymond et al., 2010;
463 Dymond et al., 2016; Betts et al., 2017; EU water framework directive, 2000; Bathurst et al., 2005; Elliott
464 and Basher, 2011). Given that forests are a multi-functional tool for catchment management, the lack of
465 clarity on the trade-offs associated with the management of forest catchments for different purposes
466 (Beland Lindahl et al., 2013) has as yet poorly understood consequences for mitigating landslides and
467 other hazards.

468 Management of landscape susceptibility to rainfall triggered landslides with vegetation is typically
469 applied at two broad geographic scales: 1) individual slopes within a sub-catchment, and 2) upland
470 landscapes ranging in size from sub-catchments to entire river basins (Forbes and Broadhead, 2011;
471 Bathurst et al., 2010). At the individual slope level, the focus of most investigations to date has been on
472 either small-scale hydro-mechanical contribution of vegetation to stabilising the regolith or assessing
473 failures once they occur to determine details of triggering mechanism. At the landscape level, forest
474 related options include retention, rehabilitation or restoration of forests. However, at the catchment
475 scale, the issues are more complex particularly in relation to the interaction between hillslope stability
476 and channel stability (e.g. Benda 1990; Benda and Dunne, 1997a). For example, determining where in a
477 catchment and how much forest or many trees are needed to reduce future landslide occurrence and
478 thus reduce catchment sediment loads is a problem that has largely not been addressed other than via
479 modelling (e.g. Bathurst et al., 2010; Bovolo and Bathurst, 2012). Because landslides do not normally
480 occur uniformly across a catchment, it has been suggested that careful targeting of forests and trees
481 could produce a disproportionately large reduction in landslide occurrence and sediment yield (e.g. Reid
482 and Page, 2002). In countries such as New Zealand where the susceptibility to shallow landslides is high
483 in many places, the management response has been to blanket afforest or reforest whole catchments
484 (e.g. Phillips and Marden, 2005; Phillips et al., 2013) rather than consider and target the specific parts of

485 catchments that need treating. The exception has been where retention of pastoral agriculture in
486 landslide susceptible areas has required space-planted trees to reduce future landslide occurrence
487 (McIvor et al., 2011; Schwarz et al., 2016), though the scale of planting and lack of targeting to the most
488 susceptible areas is inadequate to significantly reduce landslide erosion (Spiekermann et al., 2021).

489 Our ability to apply simple models across the landscape for practical management purposes at a range
490 of scales is limited, especially in terms of defining/predicting where vegetation could have the most
491 beneficial effect, i.e. targeting to reduce landslide hazard (Gonzalez-Ollauri and Mickovski, 2017). Many
492 tools are based on simplified models that do not satisfactorily represent the main underlying mechanical
493 and hydrological processes involved in the reinforcement of slope stability by vegetation, despite
494 progress in this area (e.g. Tordesillas et al., 2018). For example, most models cannot describe the three
495 dimensional (3D) spatial heterogeneity of vegetation. Nor can these models describe realistic slope
496 geometry as they are two dimensional (2D) (Stokes et al., 2014). And lastly, although several commercial
497 and freely available tools for calculating slope stability exist (e.g. SLOPE/W, PLAXIS, SHALSTAB, TRIGRS)
498 they are generally not able to accurately predict the likelihood of a landslide within a given landscape.
499 Hence, achieving an appropriate scale of modelling for the practitioner remains a balance between
500 parameter heavy spatially-distributed models and simple, but poorly constrained modelling. A focus on
501 simple field-based measures, such as regolith depth mapping (e.g. Parker et al., 2016), may provide
502 important constraints at the management scale.

503 Catchment-scale modelling tools that link shallow landslide initiation to sediment yield and sediment
504 within rivers are becoming increasingly important for catchment managers who are often responsible
505 for reducing sediment loads in rivers to meet water quality targets and/or reduce the impacts of natural
506 hazards on downstream communities and infrastructure, and on natural habitat including in-stream
507 habitat. Such models aim to represent and include the contribution from all erosion processes and
508 operate at scales useful to management (e.g. Wilkinson et al., 2005, 2008; Betts et al., 2017). They aim
509 to provide long-term (decadal or longer) average sediment contribution from shallow landslides (and
510 other processes) as well as understanding the implications of catchment management on sediment
511 yields (e.g. Dymond et al., 2016).

512 Burton and Bathurst (1998) developed one of the earliest approaches to assess the contribution of
513 shallow landslide erosion to catchment sediment yield using the model SHETRAN (Ewen, 1995). The
514 approach determines when and where landslides occur in a catchment in response to time-varying
515 rainfall and snowmelt, the volume of material eroded, and the impact on catchment sediment yield.

516 Using SHETRAN, Bovolo and Bathurst (2011) modelled the contribution of rainfall-triggered shallow
517 landslides to catchment sediment yield as a function of rainfall return periods. The SHETRAN model has
518 also been used to assess the impacts of major landsliding events on basin scale erosion and sediment
519 yield in Spain (Bathurst et al., 2006) and in Italy (Bathurst et al., 2005). Bathurst et al., (2010) explored
520 the potential for reducing the occurrence of shallow landslides through targeted reforestation of critical
521 parts of a river basin using the SHETRAN model and demonstrated that increasing root cohesion from
522 300 to 1500 Pa caused a two-thirds reduction in the number of landslides and suggested such
523 approaches provide useful information even on the basis of imperfect data availability but cautioned
524 that model output should be interpreted carefully in the light of parameter uncertainty.

525 Recent advances using LiDAR and remote sensing have improved the spatial resolution at which
526 landslide susceptibility can now be determined and this coupled with high resolution event information
527 from rain radar offers potential to resolving where to target trees within a catchment to achieve the
528 range of outcomes land managers are seeking (e.g. Jacobs et al., 2020; Vandromme et al., 2020). An
529 increasing number of geospatial technologies (e.g. Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) (Burrows et al.,
530 2019); optical satellite imagery (Heleno et al., 2016; Bunn et al., 2019; Hölbling et al., 2016) have been
531 applied to map landslides and produce inventories that are needed to develop susceptibility models and
532 for testing/validating prediction models. New satellites and sensor types have increased the spatial
533 (<0.5 m GSD: e.g. Worldview series, GeoEye-1, Pleiades-1a, etc.) and temporal (2-30 m GSD: e.g.
534 PlanetScope, RapidEye, Sentinel-2, Landsat series, etc.) resolution of available imagery at coarser spatial
535 resolutions. High-resolution data is necessary when considering the size of an individual landslide
536 relative to an individual pixel in places such as New Zealand (Smith et al., 2021). Additionally, satellite-
537 based precipitation data and local radar is becoming increasingly more precise for developing hydrologic
538 parameters (e.g. Pan et al., 2010).

539 Resolving how many trees at what density and their placement in a catchment, together with
540 determining when they become effective for limiting rainfall-triggered shallow landslides, will we
541 suspect, remain a challenge for some time. Advances in modelling the triggering of shallow landsliding
542 under differing vegetations types described above have yet to be readily translated or applied at the
543 catchment scale in management tools. Broadly, there is a lack of detailed information across a wide
544 range of conditions (regolith depth and texture, slope, climate, etc.) and on triggering thresholds for
545 landslides required to underpin hazard assessment and to enable forecasting or scenario modelling at
546 larger catchment scales, though the latter has received some attention (Guzzetti et al., 2007; Segoni et

547 al. 2018). Consequently, many landslide events are treated as broad random occurrences (i.e., a purely
548 stochastic phenomenon (e.g. Vargas-Cuervo et al., 2019) rather than something that can be managed in
549 any targeted way.

550 4.1 Management of forest cover and space planted trees

551 Managing catchment forest cover is seen as a major nature-based solution for the reduction of landslide
552 hazards. Hence accurately understanding and describing patterns in landslide occurrence across
553 landscapes and how this is mediated by vegetation is essential for improving our predictive ability for
554 management across a range of scales. There are several articles that summarise and review the effects
555 of woody vegetation and forests on slope stability and how forests and trees are used to provide erosion
556 control (e.g. Greenway, 1987; Sidle and Ochiai, 2006; Norris et al., 2008; Stokes et al., 2014; Phillips et
557 al., 2017). There is also a sizeable literature on the effects of different forest management practices,
558 particularly forest removal, on landslide initiation (e.g. Dhakal and Sidle, 2003; Montgomery et al., 2000;
559 Imaizumi et al., 2008; Imaizumi and Sidle, 2012; Preti, 2012; Goetz et al., 2015). Assessments of such
560 effects have been included in landslide inventories and/or are analysed using physically-based slope
561 stability models at the catchment scale.

562 The observation of larger shallow landslide events coinciding with forest removal highlights the role of
563 root reinforcement in limiting landsliding rates. These events generally correspond to minima in rooting
564 strength following initial root decay and prior to the regeneration or replanting of trees. This has been
565 referred by several authors as the “window of vulnerability” (Sidle and Ochiai, 2006; Phillips et al.,
566 2017). This window of approximately 3 to 20 years after forest clearing coincides with an increase in
567 landslide rate of about 2 to 10-fold compared to undisturbed forests (Sidle and Bogaard, 2016). While
568 there is strong interest in ways to minimize the increased landslide occurrence particularly following
569 forest removal, the re-introduction or maintenance of forest cover is also seen as a possible solution (Lu
570 et al., 2001; Vanacker et al., 2007). For small catchments (up to a few square kilometres), it makes
571 sense to reforest entire basins to reduce shallow landslides and limit other erosion processes, however
572 it may be unreasonable to expect this for large catchments (100s to 1000s of km²) where people rely on
573 the land for other purposes such as farming. The practice of reforesting entire catchments, even
574 relatively large ones, has been a primary mechanism for treating highly erodible land in New Zealand’s
575 East Coast (Phillips and Marden, 2005; Marden, 2012; Phillips et al., 2013).

576 In New Zealand, space-planted trees are also used in silvopastoral systems to provide a degree of
577 protection from rainfall-triggered shallow landslides on pastoral hillcountry (e.g. McIvor et al., 2011;

578 Douglas et al., 2011; Spiekermann et al., 2020). Poplars (*Populus spp.*) and willows (*Salix spp.*) are the
579 main species used and they are typically planted between 20 and 200 trees ha⁻¹. Their use is balanced
580 between providing enough benefits (reducing extreme temperatures and evapotranspiration, improve
581 regolith properties, reduce erosion) and reducing pasture productivity through competition for soil
582 resources (nutrients and water) (Benavides et al., 2009). There is little information on the effects of
583 space-planted trees on reducing shallow landslides at the catchment scale, i.e., for catchment sediment
584 budgets and landslide hazard reduction. However, space-planted trees are used as part of silvo-pastoral
585 land use systems and as a soil conservation measure in many countries to reduce erosion (Wilkinson,
586 1999; McIvor et al., 2008, 2011). For example, empirical measurement at slope scales and modelling
587 using detailed root distribution datasets from root-system excavations, suggest that the triggering of
588 shallow landslides on hill country in New Zealand is prevented when 20-30 cm DBH poplar trees are
589 spaced around 13-15 m (Douglas et al., 2011; Schwarz et al., 2016).

590 In terms of the strategic placement of forests, woodlands, or widely spaced trees to reduce the
591 incidence of landslides, the literature is particularly scant of tools (models, DSS, guidelines) aimed at
592 catchment-scale targeting. While advances in modelling offer a potential solution, they are often limited
593 by availability of parameter data or are designed to work only at limited scales (e.g. Temgoua et al.,
594 2016, 2017). Resolving the question of how many trees are needed, where to place them and their
595 spacing, and determining when they become effective in terms of limiting the incidence of shallow
596 landslides remains a challenge for catchment managers (Stokes et al., 2014). Additionally, the
597 introduction of the concept of nature-based solutions for ecological disaster risk management (Renaud
598 et al., 2016) and changes to land management strategies, such as through rewilding and abandonment
599 (Moreno-de-las-Heras et al., 2019) suggest that there are multiple management pathways to stabilising
600 catchment hillslopes. However, as indicated above, modelling is likely to provide a pathway, particularly
601 as technology allows improved access to data.

602 To reduce sediment load in rivers (i.e., improve catchment management), the overall ability to predict
603 the impact of landslide events and consequently the development of effective mitigation measures such
604 as targeted tree planting, is limited not only by knowing where the most susceptible areas are but also
605 by the ability to characterise and then predict the travel path, storm centre, and intensity range within
606 the cell structure of extreme weather systems (Crozier, 2017). Technological advances in radar and
607 improvements in forecasting and storm tracking may help in the future (Brunetti et al., 2018). A further
608 issue in understanding landslide risk in many places has been the lack of standardised data from

609 inventories of past landslide events including their triggering rainfalls resulting in a poor understanding
610 of the frequency and magnitude of landslides and their impacts (Glade and Crozier 1996). This is now
611 being addressed by improvements in technology and availability of semi-automated collection of data
612 from post-storm satellite imagery at appropriate scales (e.g. Bellugi et al., 2015; Bunn et al., 2019; Smith
613 et al., 2021) and availability of rain radar data to characterise rainfall patterns (e.g. Chiang and Chang,
614 2009; Nyman et al., 2015; Destro et al., 2017).

615 5. Challenges for future research

616 Catchment management of shallow landslides and the role of vegetation in that management remains a
617 significant future challenge. Within this context, organisations and governments have largely embraced
618 nature-based solutions as a low-cost approach to manage hazardous catchments (e.g. UNDRR 2020).
619 Here we have outlined the current state of science for managing catchments with vegetation, yet there
620 are several outstanding challenges for researchers if they are to meet the current and future needs of
621 catchment managers. Many are not just confined to understanding the role of vegetation on rainfall-
622 triggered shallow landslides. These are not limited to but include:

- 623 • Improving the spatial and temporal frequency of landslide inventories, including producing
624 'multi-event' inventories when event landslide densities are high. Landslide inventories remain
625 our most useful tool for estimating and modelling landslide susceptibility and hazard. Shallow
626 landslide events are relatively rare and often occur in remote locations, hence development of
627 better and more frequent landslide inventories, particularly ones that are openly available will
628 improve our ability to understand controls on landslide triggering. The New Zealand setting is
629 well suited to this approach (Smith et al., 2021),
- 630 • Understanding the influence of different management approaches, forest types, and tree
631 spacing on landslide susceptibility (Moos et al., 2016). Increasingly new and different
632 approaches to the management of catchments have been proposed, including land
633 abandonment and rewilding, alongside traditional forestry approaches. Each approach will
634 change landslide frequency and magnitude in a different way through time.
- 635 • Building models and approaches that can bridge issues of scale in modelling, particularly in data-
636 poor environments (Peeters et al., 2008). The issues of aleatoric and epistemic uncertainty in
637 our current modelling approaches remain a significant limitation to bridging between detailed
638 process modelling approaches and the simplified statistical modelling approaches commonly
639 used in management. This includes developing ways to include the 3D spatial distribution of root

640 and regolith properties in models with appropriate computation times (Temgoua et al., 2016)
641 and development of realistic root growth models that provide spatial patterns of root
642 distribution or density over time (Tobin et al., 2007; Danjon et al., 2008; Saint Cast et al., 2019),
643 • Improving understanding of how shallow landslides contribute to river sediment loads. These
644 challenges have been referred to in terms of scale (i.e. how much) and connectivity (i.e. by what
645 pathway) (Sidle et al., 2017). Better understanding of the stochasticity of both the landsliding
646 and fluvial processes are important to tackling this challenge.
647 • Resolving at what scales and situations (e.g. storm rainfalls) does the “forest effect” on reducing
648 landslide incidence disappear i.e., a magnitude-frequency-scale question. This problem reflects
649 the integration of historical land management and long-term geomorphic processes, in
650 particular estimating the spatio-temporal patterns of root strength, pore pressure, regolith
651 depth and hydraulic properties across the landscape (e.g. Cislighi et al., 2017; Schmaltz and
652 Mergili, 2018; Hales, 2018; Giadrossich et al., 2020; Masi et al., 2021). These represent the key
653 epistemic uncertainties driven by vegetation and require better understanding how much field
654 data (and generating them) are needed to calibrate and validate existing and future models
655 across a range of realistic management situations, and
656 • Identifying and meeting the concerns of practitioners/land managers via co-production of
657 guidelines, models, and management tools (Stokes et al., 2014).

658 6. Concluding remarks

659 In this paper we outlined the role of vegetation for managing shallow landslide occurrence, with a focus
660 on how vegetation is used at the catchment scale and presented a summary of the approaches used to
661 address this issue. While there have been significant improvements, particularly in the development of
662 models and tools to help catchment managers manage both the incidence of rainfall triggered shallow
663 landslides and their impacts on catchment sediment yields, there are still major challenges ahead.
664 Developing appropriate tools to aid specific catchment targeting of vegetation to “treat” the most
665 susceptible parts of the landscape to rainfall-triggered landslides is a pressing need for catchment and
666 land managers. A further need is the availability of field data at the range of scales that are required for
667 parameterising many of the models currently available, particularly at the landscape to regional scales.
668 In part, this limits usefulness of many models for practitioners who are required to manage such
669 catchment hazards or improve catchment water quality to meet regulatory targets.

670 Thus, in many applied situations, the benefit of modelling greater process complexity is offset by the
671 punitive costs of data collection and by the uncertainty attached to the associated data, often resulting
672 in the application of simple models driven primarily by slope and basic regolith or rock properties or by
673 average values of root cohesion. However, some types of data collection are becoming increasingly
674 affordable (e.g. remote sensing (including LiDAR) can provide cost-effective data collection for landslide
675 inventories and for generating DEMs from which slope information can be obtained), but others remain
676 difficult and expensive particularly where manual methods must still be used (e.g. obtaining tree root
677 distribution and regolith physical properties).

678 As advances in remote sensing and other sensing technologies improve, there is hope that the paucity of
679 field data needed to improve the development, accuracy and utility of models will cease to be a limiting
680 issue and that practitioners and catchment managers will eventually have simple and robust tools to
681 enable them to manage for, and respond to, rainfall-triggered landslide events. Lastly, they need to be
682 confident that when they target vegetation within catchments to reduce the impacts of such events it
683 will be successful.

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693 Competing interests

694 The authors declare there are no competing interests.

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