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The Rational Method in Stormwater Management Modelling of Peak Flow Flood Control Systems, II: Computer Program Application

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ABSTRACT

The companion paper's development of the well-known Rational Method is used to prepare a computer program to estimate T-year return frequency peak flow rates for flood control and environmental planning purposes. When applied, the computer program results indicate the usefulness of the Rational Method for estimating peak flow rates, and perhaps explain why the method continues to be widely used in civil engineering. The computer program solves for peak flow rates by solution of the stochastic integral equation representation of the Rational Method procedure, as derived in the companion paper.

Key Words: Peak Flowrate Estimates, Rational Method, Storm Drain Design, Watershed Management Modeling, Uncertainty

INTRODUCTION

The companion paper (Hromadka [1]) presented a rigorous stochastic integral equation interpretation of the well-known Rational Method. The derived key equation provided T-year return frequency estimates of peak flow rate, by

$$Q_T = \bar{C} P_T^{\delta_c} \psi^{\delta_c} \quad (1)$$

where Q_T is the T-year return frequency estimate of peak flow rate; $\bar{P}_T^{\delta_c}$ is the T-year return frequency mean rainfall intensity corresponding to critical duration (for the peak flow rate criterion variable) δ_c , and $\psi^{\delta_c} = \max (S(t+\delta_c) - S(t))$, where $S(t)$ is the S-graph corresponding to the point of study; and C is a calibration coefficient. In this paper, Eq. (1) is implemented by use of a computer program (Hromadka [2]) designed to solve for Q_T by use of computed time-area diagrams. A time-area diagram defines the cumulative area of the watershed contributing runoff to the subbasin outlet as a function of time.

ESTIMATION OF PEAK FLOW RATES

The previous development involving the time-area diagram to estimate ψ^{δ_c} values is demonstrated by means of a computational example problem.

Computational Example Problem 1

Figure 1 depicts a conceptual watershed schematic to demonstrate the time-area diagram analysis (see Table 1).

Time-area diagram analysis can be used to illustrate the watershed response with respect to constant rainfall intensity (corresponding to local T-year return frequency depth-duration relationships) and storm duration.

Figures 2 through 4 depict time-area diagrams at three arbitrarily chosen confluence points 3, 6, and 13 as developed from the schematic of Fig. 1. Figure 5 illustrates the time area diagram for the entire watershed (Node 14). The area versus time curve can be constructed by linearly interpolating area to the time of concentration. The peak flow rate (Q) versus time curve can be estimated by the Rational Method equation (e.g., Orange County Hydrology Manual [3])

$$Q(t) = 0.9 (I(t) - \bar{F}_m) A(t) \quad (2)$$

where $Q(t)$ = peak flow rate (cfs) at time t .
 $I(t)$ = constant rainfall intensity (in/hr) of duration.
 \bar{F}_m = watershed averaged loss rate (in/hr).
 $A(t)$ = area (Acres) respect to time t .

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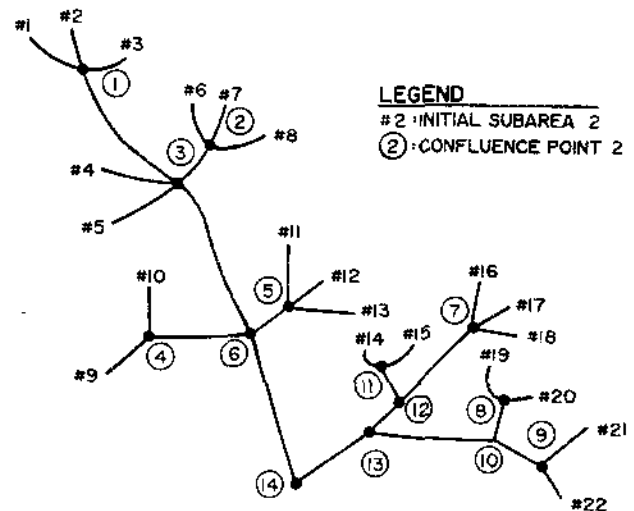


Fig. 1. Conceptual watershed schematic for time-area diagram analysis.

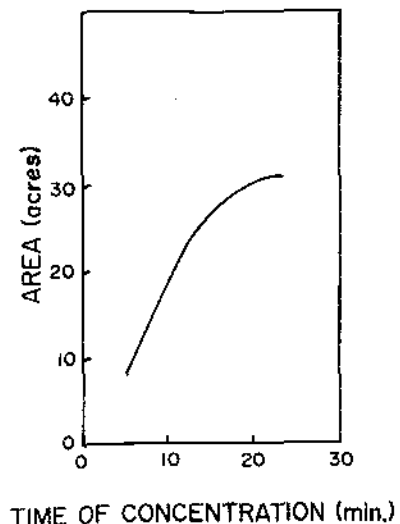


Fig. 2. Time-area diagram at confluence point 3.

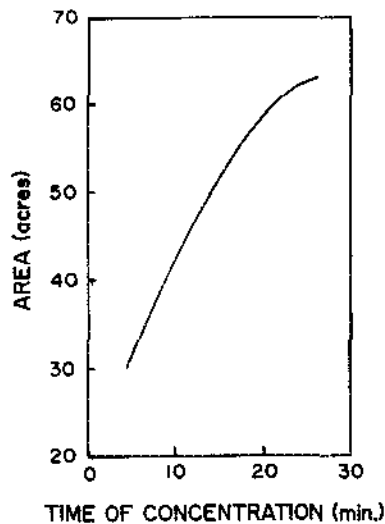


Fig. 3. Time-area diagram at confluence point 6.

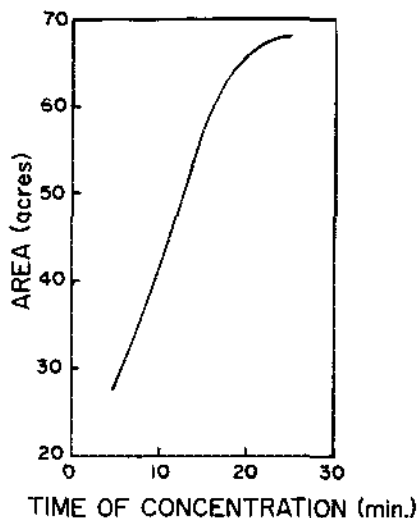


Fig. 4. Time-area diagram at confluence point 13.

Equation (2) is analogous to Eq. (1), if we consider $c = 0.9$, $P_{TC}^0 = I(t) - \bar{F}_m$, and $\psi_{TC}^0 = A(t)$.

Figure 5 clearly indicates that the peak flow rate ($Q = 318.4$ cfs) of the catchment occurs at time-of-concentration equals to 21.5 minutes and contributing catchment area equals to 145.39 Acres. That is, the rate of increase in contributory area versus the rate of decrease in effective rainfall rate maximizes the runoff peak flow rate at 318.4 cfs.

For every watershed, a time-area diagram can be developed for each point where the engineer desires, and the corresponding peak duration can be determined. For example, if a new storm drain is needed from Node 14 to Node 15 (see Fig. 4), the peak duration at Node 14 is 25.16 minutes for a 25-year return frequency storm, and the corresponding peak flow rate is 65.5 cfs (see Appendix A). Thus, a storm drain of diameter equal to 45 inches is adequate to carry this peak flow rate. All the above procedures have been implemented into a user-friendly computer program by Hromadka [2].

Computational Example Problem 2

A 25-year return frequency peak flow rate estimate study was conducted on a small watershed as shown in Fig. 6. Three streams are confluenced (i.e., added) at Node 14, then routed to the watershed outlet point (Node 16). The total study area is 73.6 acres. The peak flow rate is 92.7 cfs with a contributing area of 64.97 acres

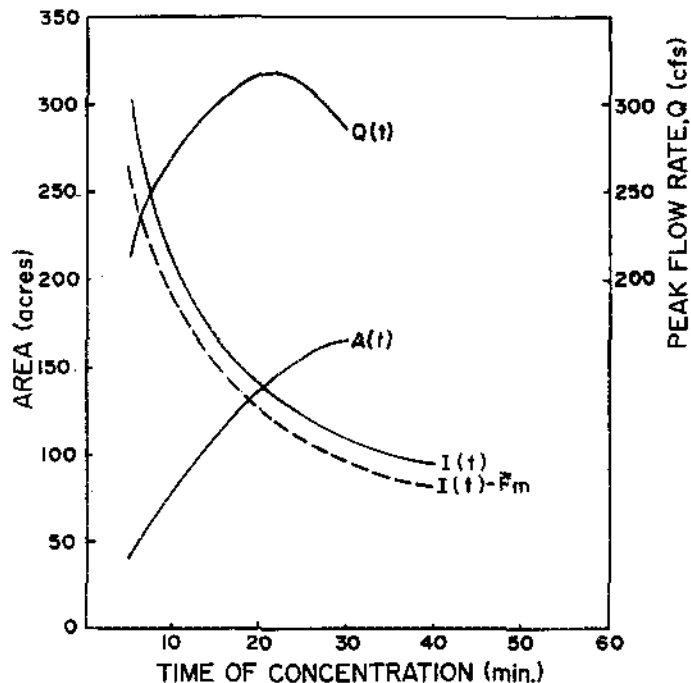


Fig. 5. Time-area diagram at confluence point 14.

TABLE 1
PEAK FLOW RATE DATA FOR EXAMPLE PROBLEM 1

Peak Flow Rate Q (cfs)	Time-of-Concentration T_c (min.)	Effective Area (Acres)
316.28	19.80	136.90
318.43	21.50	145.39
309.01	25.44	157.44
296.83	28.02	160.86
280.81	30.97	162.00*
318.13	20.96	142.83
318.31	22.00	147.67
310.84	24.93	156.41
318.04	20.73	141.75
308.47	25.58	157.69
316.02	23.43	152.70
315.70	23.57	153.11
298.23	27.73	160.63
314.65	19.23	133.54
313.58	24.23	154.80
300.33	27.32	160.22
285.80	30.03	161.86
285.30	30.13	161.89
317.87	22.30	148.91
315.25	23.73	155.53
306.11	26.13	158.59
297.60	27.86	160.74

* indicates total watershed area

at a time-of-concentration of 28.4 minutes. That is, the maximum flow rate occurs when only 64.97 acres of the total 73.6 acres contributes to the peak flow rate. This corresponds to a critical storm duration of 28.4 minutes. Figure 7 depicts the time-area diagram for the entire watershed.

Computer Program

The above examples demonstrate the dependency between contributory area and the corresponding storm critical duration, I_c , in maximizing the criterion variable of peak flow rate in free flowing catchment drainage systems. Obviously, the above diagram procedures are time-consuming and a computer program is advantageous. The software developed provides the above described detailed computations.

APPENDIX D: MASTER PLAN OF DRAINAGE FACILITY SUMMARY

MASTER PLAN OF DRAINAGE FACILITY SUMMARY					
FILENAME: RATEDOC.DAT	FACILITY SUMMARY				PAGE 1
UPSTREAM NODE	DOWNSTREAM NODE	EFFECTIVE AREA (ACRES)	RUNOFF (CFS)	LENGTH (FT)	SLOPE (FT/FT)
13.00	14.00	18.4	11.1	650.0	.0031
=> PIPE FLOW SECTION: NUMBER OF PIPE = 1 @ 36.-INCH. n = .013 <==					
22.00	14.00	1.5	2.2	850.0	.0024
=> OPEN CHANNEL SECTION: B = 1.5, H = 2.0, Z = 1.00, n = .030 <==					
23.00	14.00	18.3	19.3	700.0	.0014
=> PIPE FLOW SECTION: NUMBER OF PIPE = 1 @ 36.-INCH. n = .013 <==					
24.00	15.00	44.0	65.5	550.0	.0036
=> PIPE FLOW SECTION: NUMBER OF PIPE = 1 @ 48.-INCH. n = .013 <==					
25.00	16.00	54.0	79.2	700.0	.0029
=> OPEN CHANNEL SECTION: B = 2.0, H = 3.0, Z = 2.00, n = .025 <==					

NOTE: 1. EFFECTIVE AREA AND RUNOFF VALUES ARE GIVEN AT THE UPSTREAM NODE.
 2. B = BASEWIDTH(FT), H = HEIGHT(FT), Z = CHANNEL SIDE SLOPE

MASTER PLAN OF DRAINAGE FACILITY SUMMARY						
FILENAME: RATEDOC.DAT	FACILITY SUMMARY				PAGE 2	
* COST ESTIMATION FOR CHANNEL SECTIONS:						
BASEWIDTH (FT)	HEIGHT (FT)	STDS SLOPE (FT/FT)	MANNING'S FACTOR	UNIT PRICE (\$/FT)	LENGTH (FT)	COST
.5	2.0	1.00	.030	10.00	950.0	9500.
3.0	3.0	2.00	.015	10.00	700.0	7000.
					CHANNEL TOTAL :	\$ 15500.
* COST ESTIMATION FOR PIPE FLOW SECTIONS:						
DIAMETER (INCH)	MANNING'S FACTOR	UNIT PRICE (\$/FT)	LENGTH (FT)	COST		
36.0	.013	10.00	1350.0	13500.		
48.0	.013	20.00	550.0	5500.		
					PIPE TOTAL :	\$ 19000.
* TOTAL ESTIMATED COST FOR CHANNEL AND PIPE FLOW SECTIONS IS \$					34500.	
***** END OF FACILITY SUMMARY *****						