

Referee #1

I thank the authors for their careful and complete response to my comments, which have been addressed. In particular, the revised title and reframing now accurately reflect that the study delivers a validated baseline model of drained conditions and a basis for future rewetting scenarios rather than simulations of rewetting itself, and the clarified explanation of the 2018 evapotranspiration overestimation. One minor point remains for consistency: since missing ditch water levels are now described as linearly interpolated, the Results should be adjusted so that the 2018/2021 groundwater deviations are attributed to interpolated (and therefore less reliable) rather than "missing" boundary data. With this small correction I consider the manuscript suitable for publication.

We thank the reviewer for pointing this out. We have revised Section 3.2 and 4.3 to clarify that, although direct ditch-water-level observations were unavailable partially during 2018 and 2021, the corresponding boundary conditions were not missing from the model but were obtained through linear interpolation between the nearest observations.

Here are the changes we made:

Section 3.2: we replaced "in summers where ditch water level data were missing" with "in summers where ditch water level data were unavailable and the boundary values were linearly interpolated". We changed "without ditch data" to "interpolated ditch data".

Section 4.3: we replaced "However, the sensitivity of simulations to ditch boundary conditions (e.g., data gaps in 2018 and 2021) underscores the importance of reliable monitoring networks." with "However, the sensitivity of simulations to ditch boundary conditions (e.g., during periods with interpolated ditch water level data in 2018 and 2021) underscores the importance of reliable monitoring networks."