

# Preparing for Phase 7 Calibration: CalCAST Estimated Parameters

Joseph Delesantro

Watershed Modeler - Koniag Government Services

EPA, Chesapeake Bay Program Office

Gopal Bhatt, PSU, CBPO

Isabella Bertani, former UMCES-CBPO

Lew Linker, EPA, CBPO

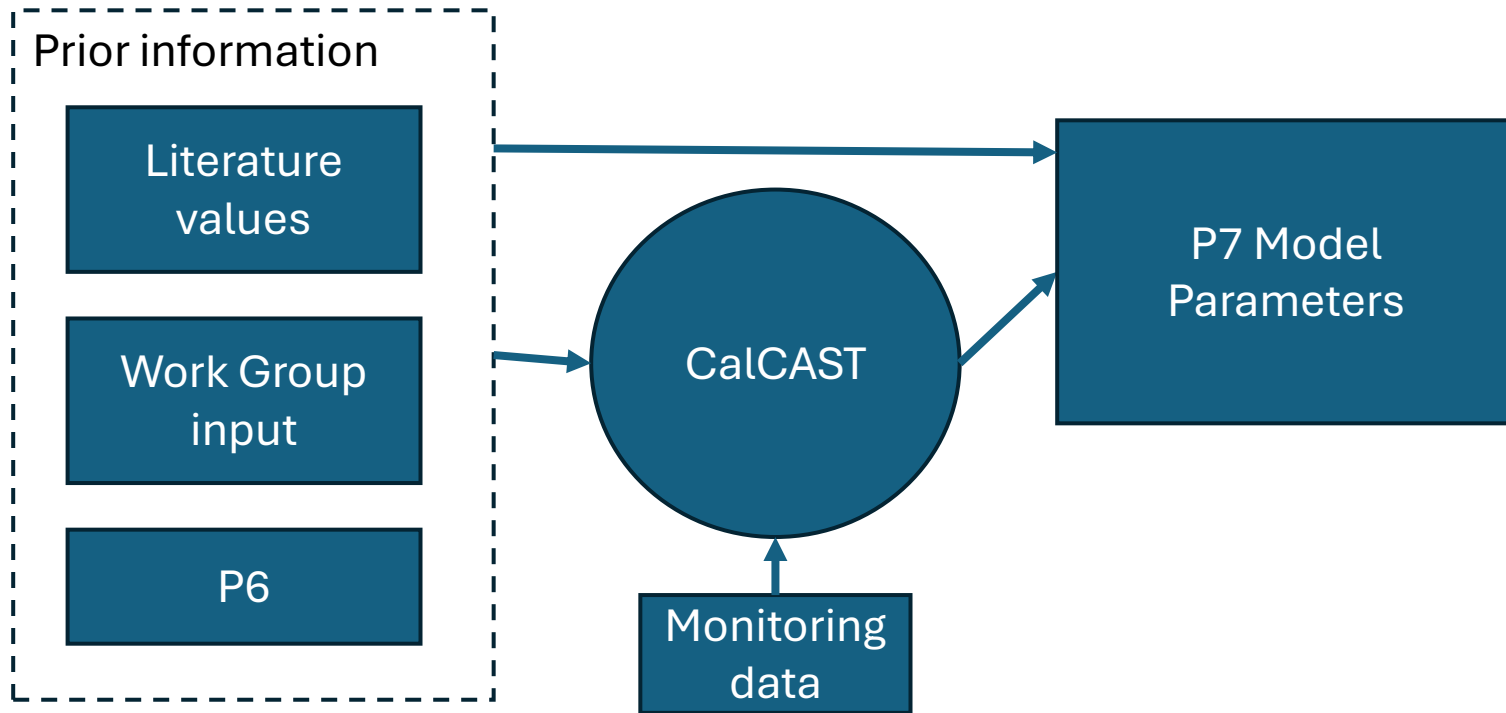
4/7/2026

# Agenda

- Review of CalCAST
- Review of all CalCAST estimated parameters for P7

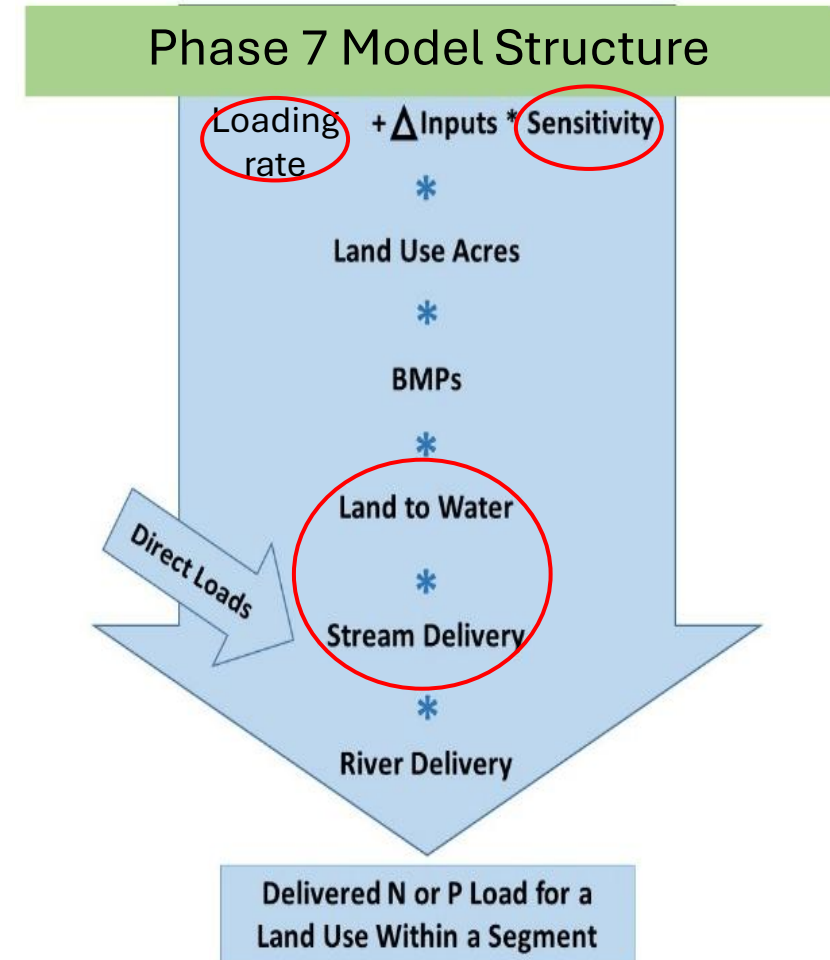
# CalCAST: Quantifying P7 model parameters

Incorporate data-driven lines of evidence into modeling approach



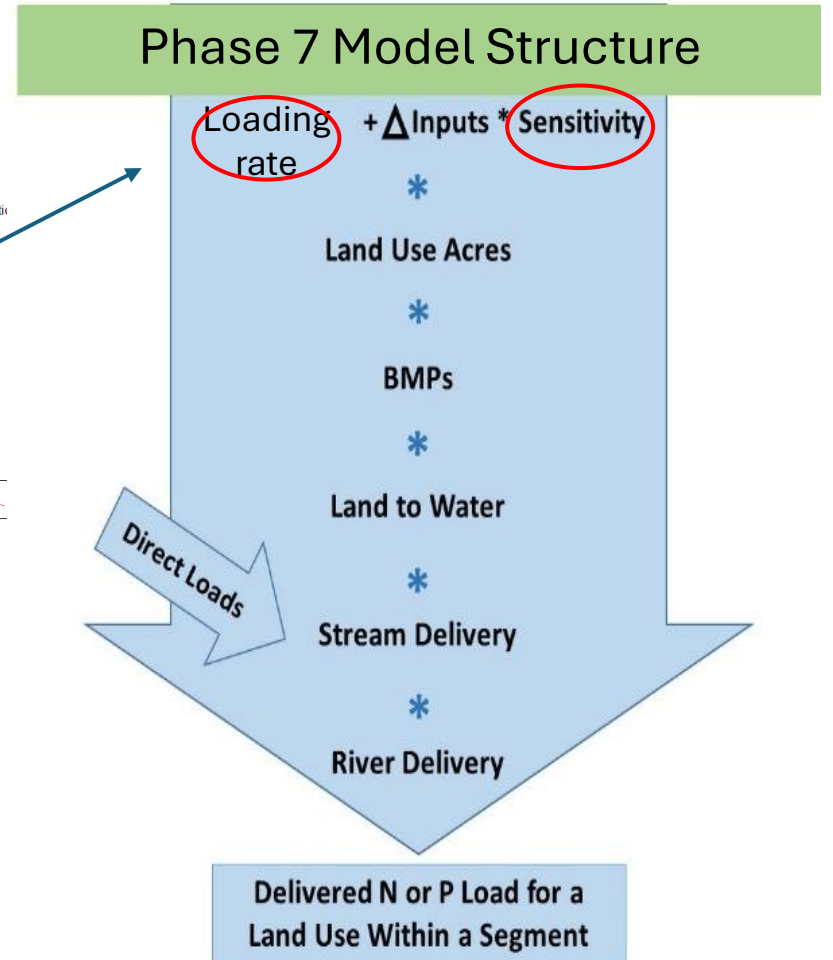
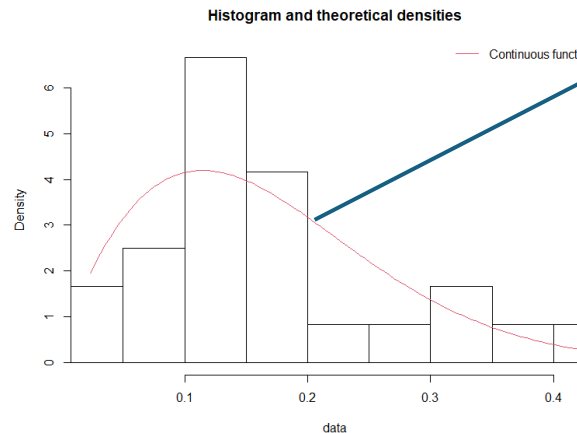
CalCAST: CAST represented in a framework for statistical calibration to monitoring data.

Calibrate loading rates, select sensitivities, and coefficients of delivery factors.



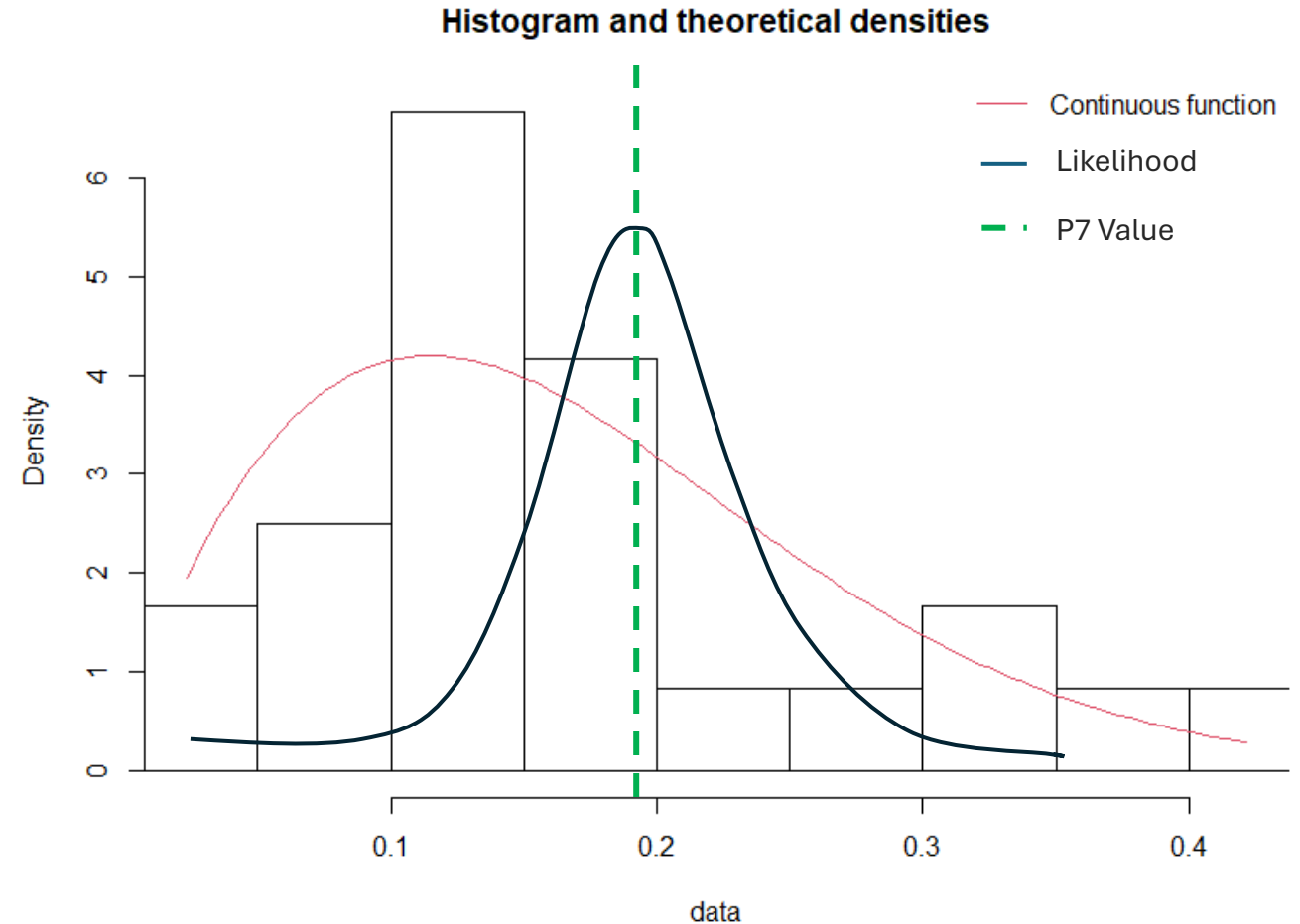
# CalCAST: Utilizing prior information

- Literature and modeled parameter values are summarized as a probability distribution.
- This distribution of values is randomly sampled hundreds of times to select values to run through CAST.
- Values are perturbed iteratively across multiple parameters hundreds of times within conditional bounds.



# CalCAST: Utilizing prior information

- Literature and modeled parameter values are summarized as a probability distribution.
- This distribution of values is randomly sampled thousands of times to select values to run through CAST.
- Values are perturbed iteratively across multiple parameters hundreds of times within conditional bounds.
- How well each of these sets of values describes the observed monitoring data is defined and final parameter values are selected.



# CalCAST: Utilizing prior information

- Relationships between parameters are defined or constrained by work groups (conditional data).

Example conditional data:

Loading ratios (e.g., grain w/ manure is 1.4\* grain w/o manure)

$$S_{(\text{harvested forest})} = \min(7 * S_{(\text{forest})}, S_{(\text{construction})})$$

# Example: Test for total nitrogen

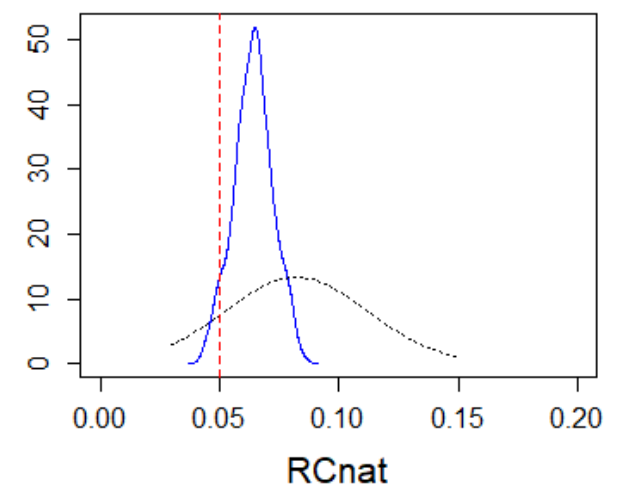
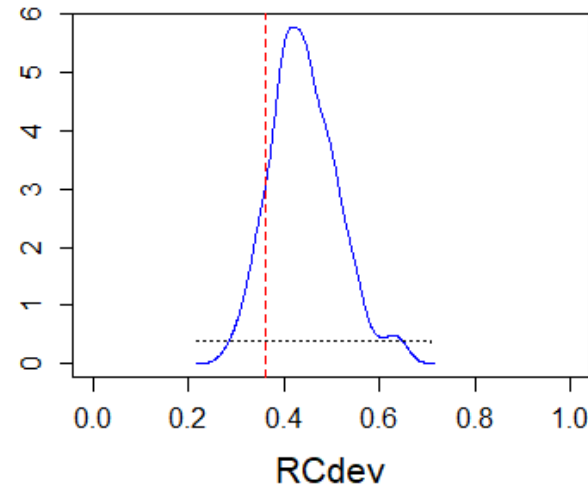
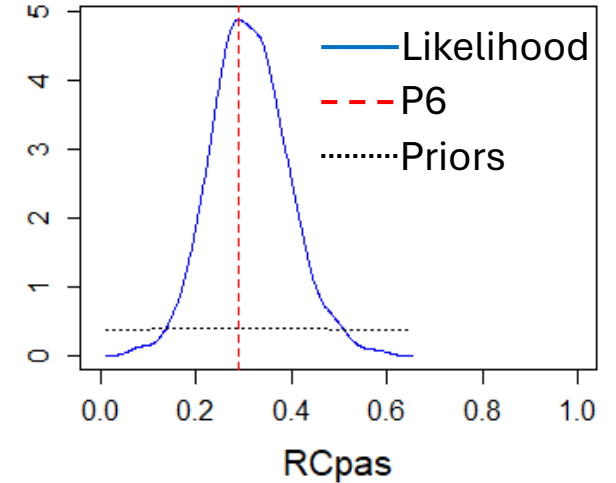
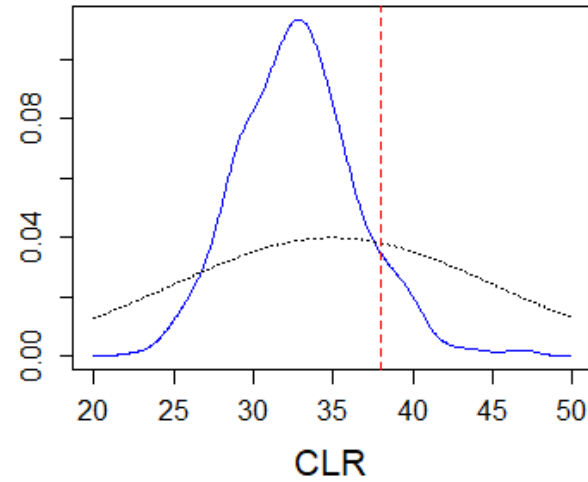
**CLR** = Average CROP loading rate (lbs/ac)

**RCpas** = Ratio of PASTURE loading rate to CROP loading Rate

**RCdev** = Ratio of DEVELOPED loading rate to CROP loading Rate

**RCnat** = Ratio of NATURAL loading rate to CROP loading Rate

**Red dashed line** = P6  
**Black dashed lines** = P532, SPARROW, CEAP

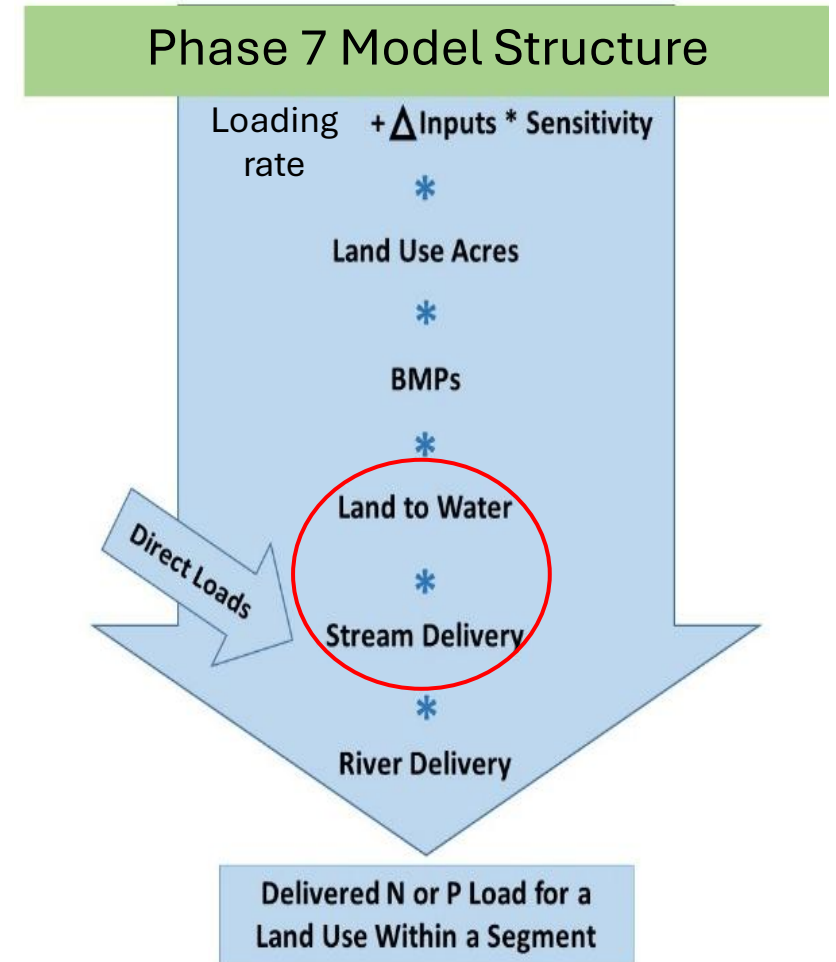


These values will change as CAST and inputs are updated.

# CalCAST: Delivery factors

Delivery factors describe the transport and attenuation of nutrients and sediment from the edge of field to rivers and the Bay.

- P6 delivery factors were largely selected and parameterized by other models (SPARROW)
- In P7, CalCAST will allow us to directly test and parameterize delivery factors in CAST.
- This will allow more comprehensive representation of transport and attenuation.
- We have incorporated inputs from work groups, model review, STAC, and the literature to establish an expansive set of factors to test.
- **Includes two stages: feature selection and calibration**

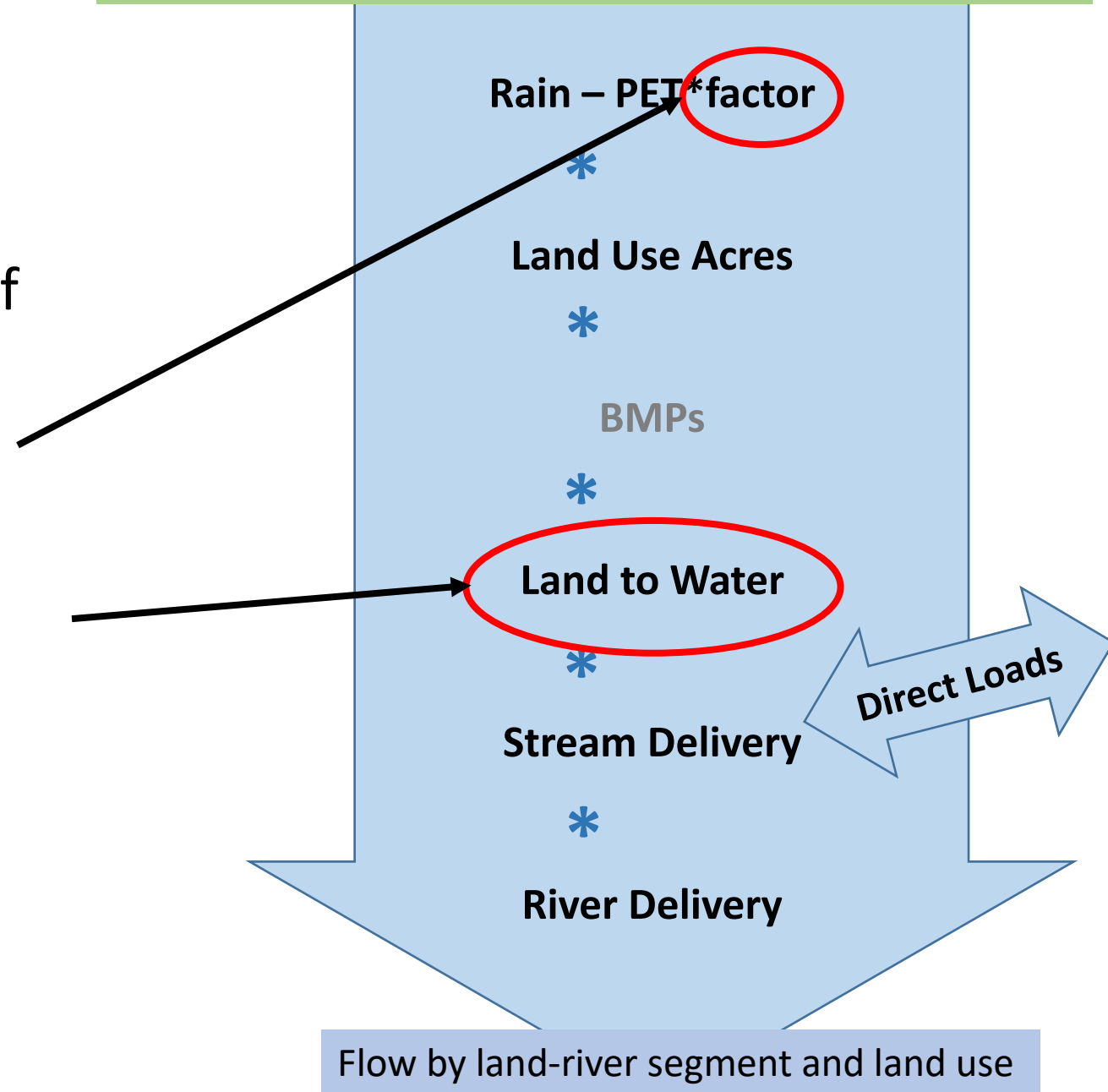


# Phase 7 Model Structure

## Hydrology: Total Flow

Total long-term flow

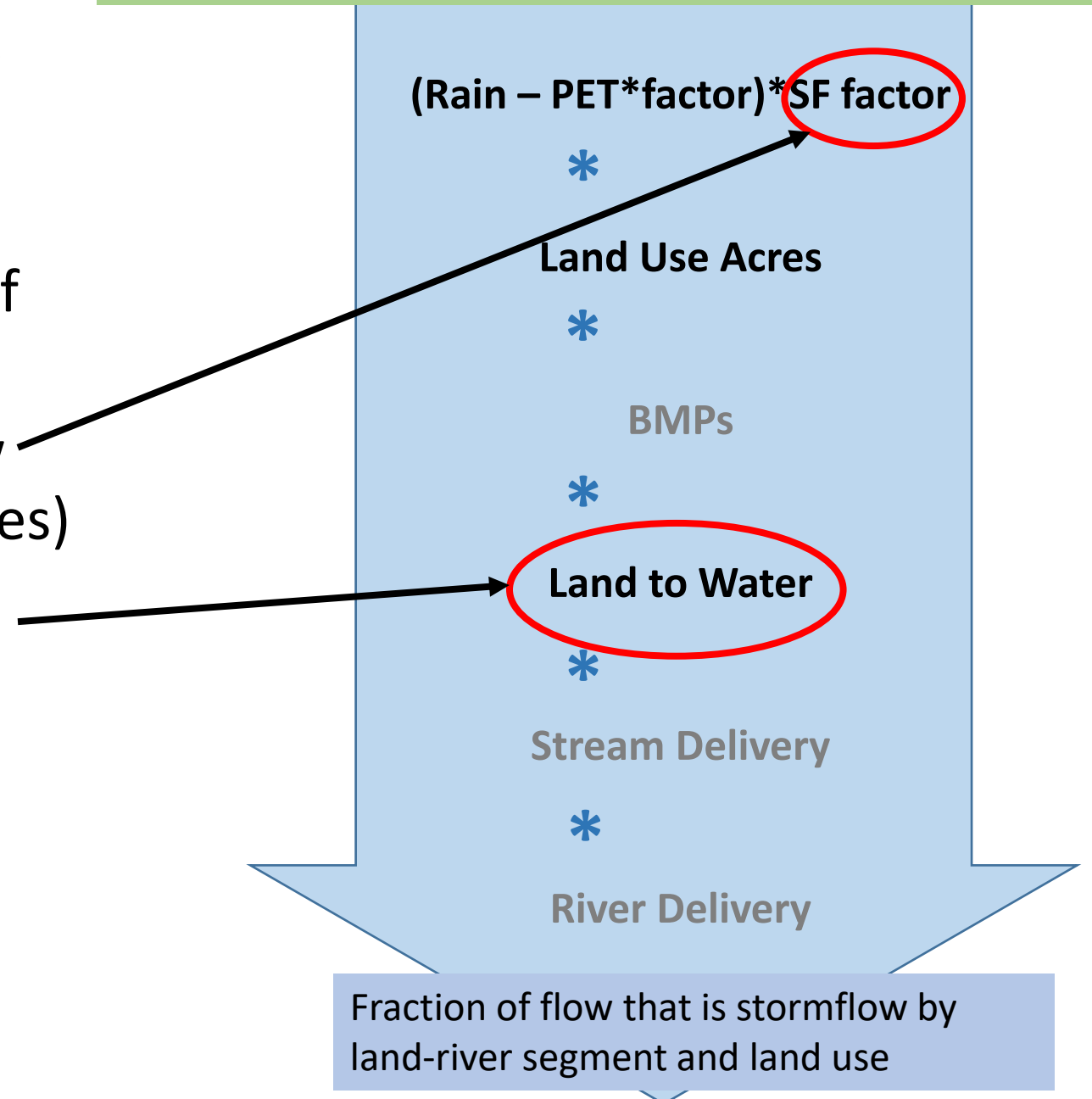
- Calibrated to 446 stations of 584 candidate stations
- Land use specific factor (by summary land uses)
- Delivery variance factor by model unit



## Hydrology: Stormflow

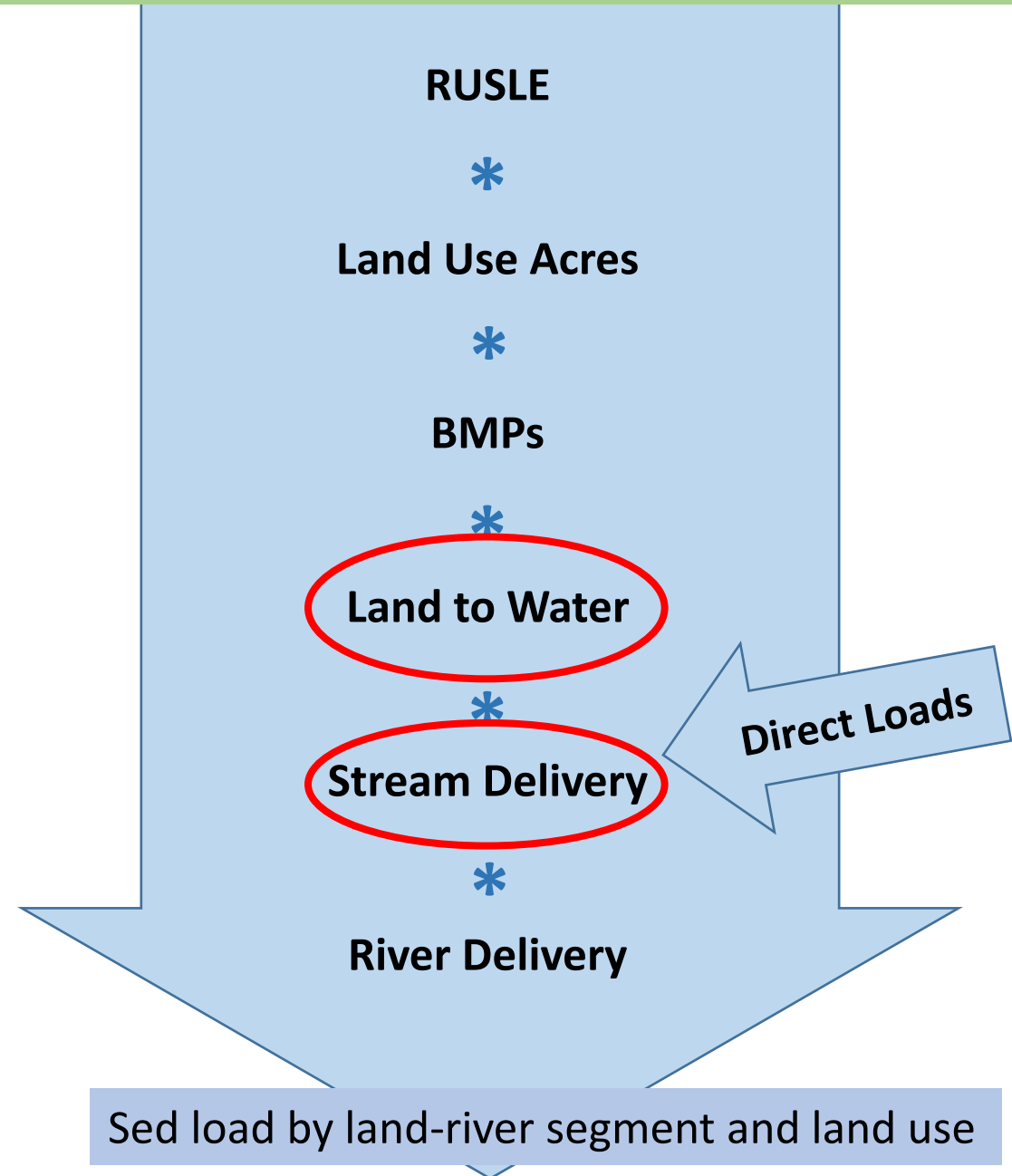
### Stormflow fraction

- Calibrated to 446 stations of 584 candidate stations
- Land use specific stormflow factor (by summary land uses)
- Delivery variance factor by model unit



## Sediment

- RUSLE recalculation (to new land uses)
- There are six RUSLE land uses, and these are cross walked to summary land use categories (WG provided)
- Calibrated to 144 stations of 263 candidates
- Land to water
  - Index of Connectivity  
 $EOS_{lu} = EOF_{lu} * (\alpha * IC_{lu} + \gamma)$
  - Other factors, e.g., influence of ponds
- Stream delivery
  - E.g., Noe et al stream erosion and deposition estimates



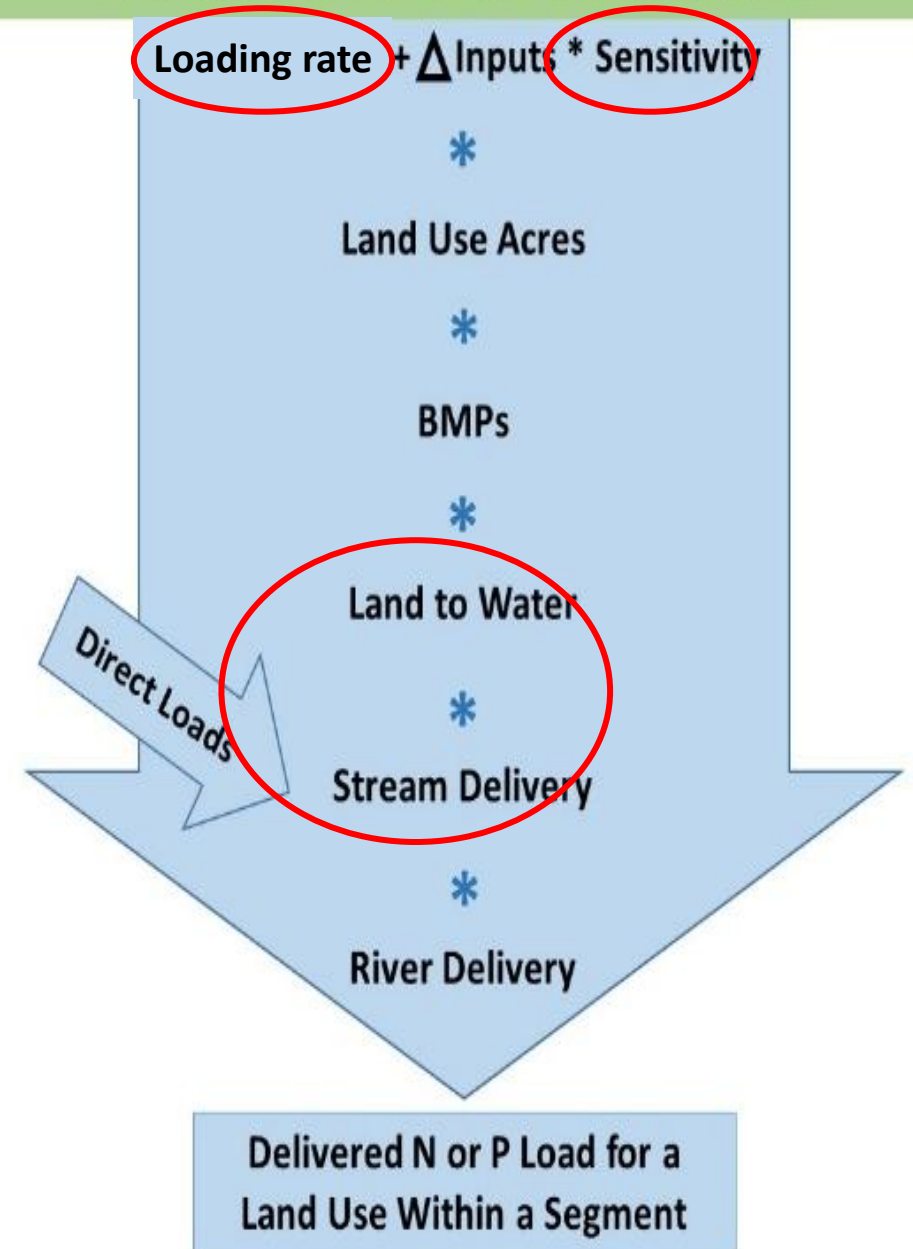
# Notes on Hydrology and Sediment

- The hydrology and sediment models are inputs to the soil P workflow and nutrient models.
- These will need to be finalized quickly to provide ample time for subsequent steps.

# Nutrient Models

- “Global” loading rates
  - Cropland
  - Pasture
  - Developed
  - Natural
- TN Calibrated to 212 stations of 269 candidates
- TP Calibrated to 192 stations of 267 candidates
- Select loading sensitivities to inputs
- Delivery factors
  - Land to water
  - Stream delivery

## Phase 7 Model Structure

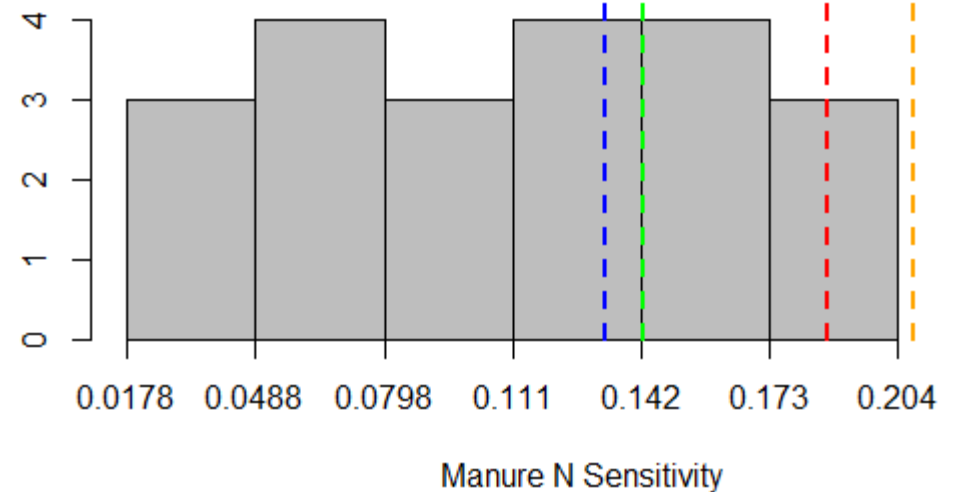
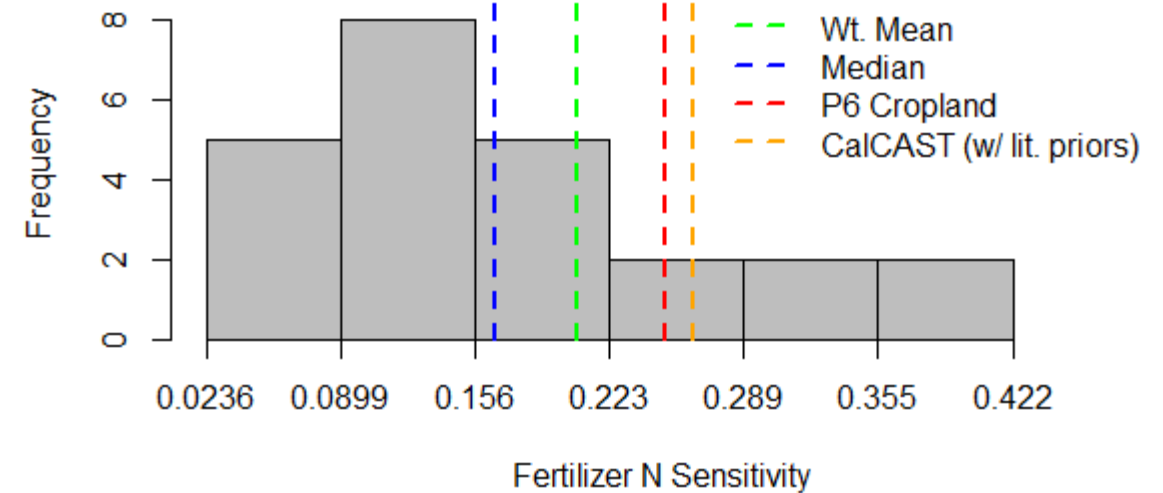


# Select Loading Sensitivities: Total Nitrogen

- Atm. deposition to forest:
  - Calibrated with CalCAST and extensive priors, not to exceed the field literature value and imposing the Forestry Work Group's proposed conditional relationships on other values.
  - In testing it has generated a significant improvement in temporal trend prediction.

# Select Loading Sensitivities: Total Nitrogen

- Fertilizer and manure application to cropland
  - Calibrate in CalCAST with extensive priors, but default to literature value if calibrated value does not provide clear model performance benefit.



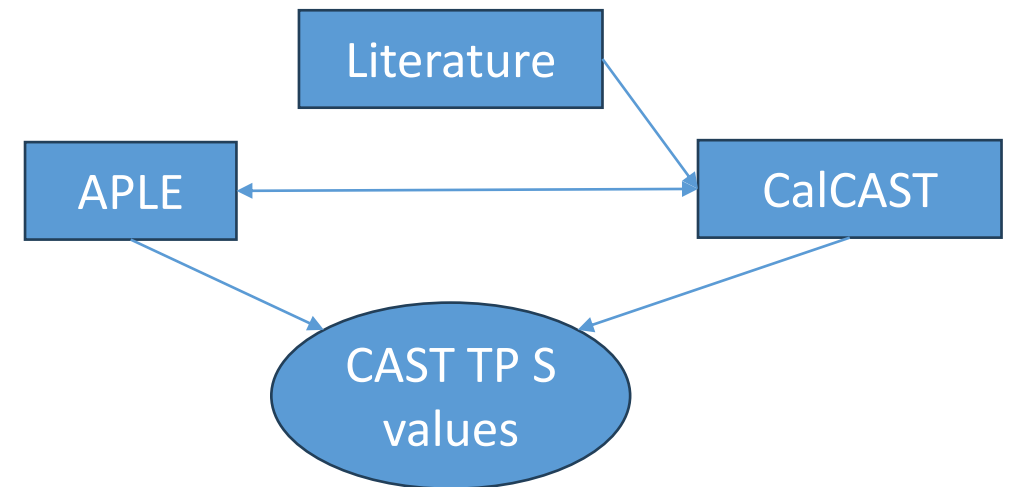
# Select Loading Sensitivities: Total Nitrogen

- Crop uptake
  - Limited literature suggests P6 values were low, however an extensive literature review was not possible.
  - Calibrate in CalCAST with weak literature priors and P6 priors. Default to P6 values unless there is significant model performance benefit.

# Select Loading Sensitivities: Total Phosphorus

*Coef* \* (WEP, Soil P, Sediment, Stormwater)

- APLE defines the relative contribution from each pathway
- CalCAST calibrates the magnitude of the S values (*Coef*)
- The literature provides priors to CalCAST



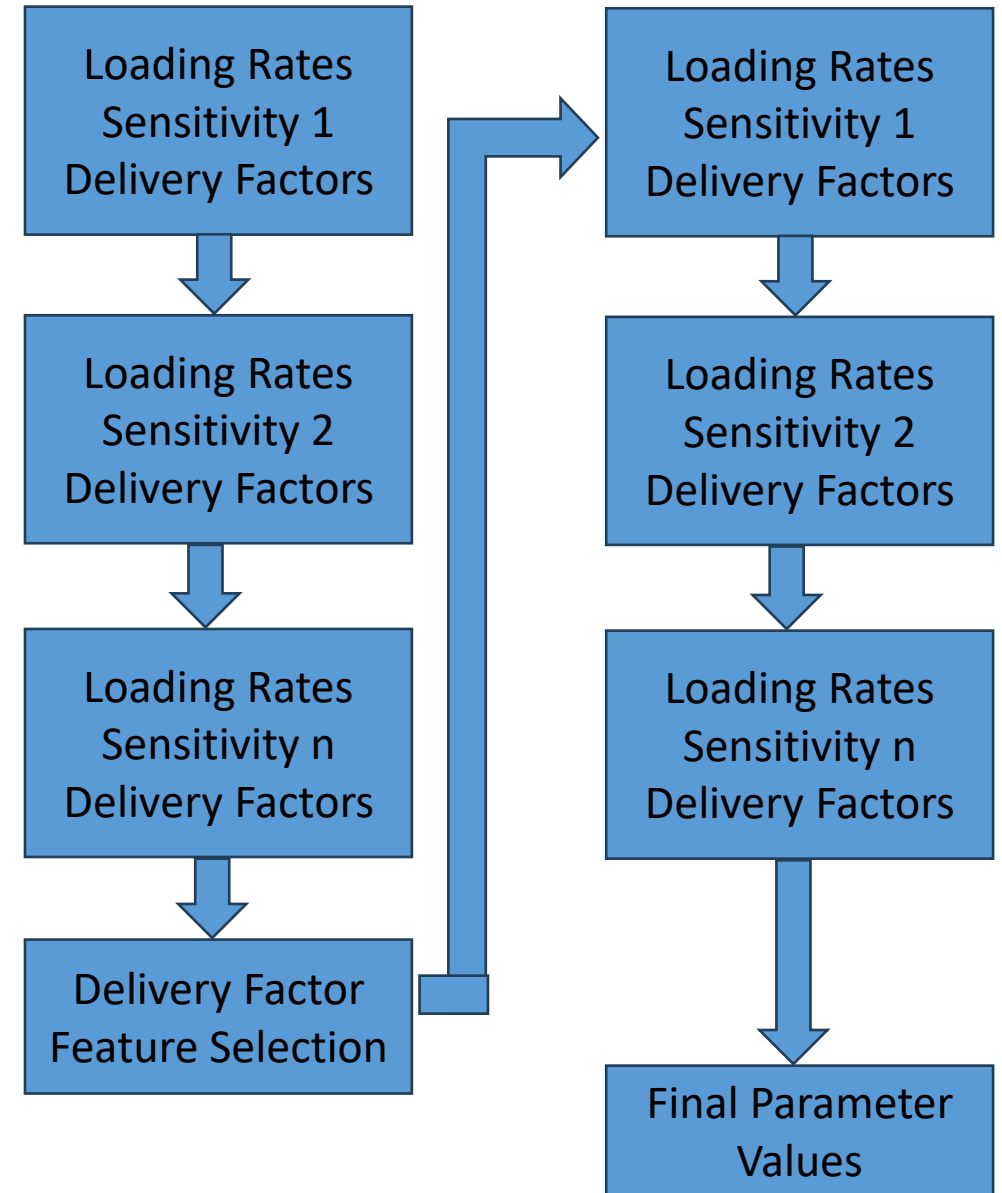
# Basic Workflow

Currently not all components and parameters can be calibrated together.

- Model components will be calibrated sequentially.
- Model parameters within each component will be calibrated iteratively through a step wise process which isolates sensitivities.

1. Total Flow
2. Stormflow
3. Sediment
4. Total Nitrogen
5. Total Phosphorus

Starting with the highest loading input for sensitivities and a minimal set of delivery factors



# Discussion

[jdelesantro@chesapeakebay.net](mailto:jdelesantro@chesapeakebay.net)