

**Emission Inventories  
from Natural Gas Storage Facilities  
using  
Regional Frequency Comb Laser Monitoring  
and Aircraft Flyovers**  
Project Number DE-FE0029168

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National Energy Technology Laboratory  
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Utilization, Storage, and Oil and Gas Technologies Integrated Review Meeting  
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# Key Contributors & Collaborators



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Prof. CU Boulder



**Ian Faloon**  
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Ian Faloon, Dani Caputi



**Dr. Sean Coburn**  
Field & Comb Data



**Dr. Caroline Alden**  
Algorithm Devel.



Robbie Wright, Nick Seitz, Dan Duran, David Wilson, Andy Goldstein



Steve Conley



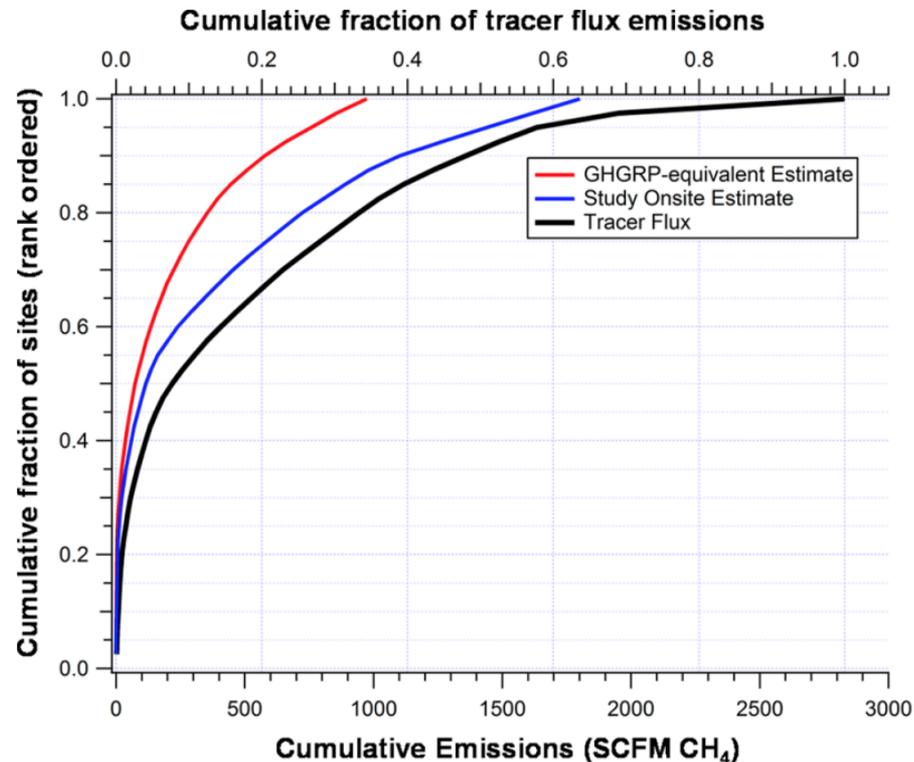
**Dani Caputi**  
Flight Interp.



**Robbie Wright**  
Comb Engineer

# Need for Gas Storage Emissions Characterization

- Methane emissions from storage not well-known
- Limited studies suggest emissions estimates are incorrect, not accounted for in EPA Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program (GHGRP)
- **Critical need for information on temporal variability of emissions**
- New regulations → new technology needs for monitoring



Subramanian et al., 2015

# Current Methods to Estimate Emissions from Natural Gas Storage Facilities

- Aircraft mass balance surveys
- Direct (bottom-up) methods: Infrared imaging, Hi-Flow samplers, calibrated bags
- Mobile point sensors: Downwind Tracer flux estimates, road-based surveys
  - \* Strong focus on compressors
  - \* Focus on isolated/catastrophic emissions events

Aircraft Mass Balance

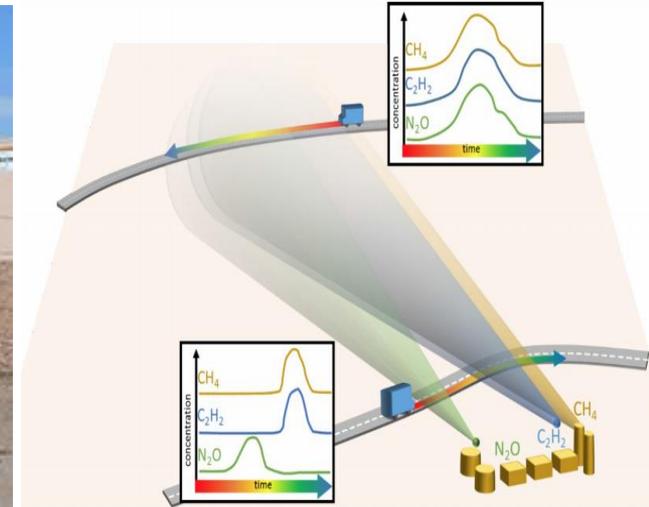


OGI Camera



olssonassociates.com

Downwind Tracer Flux

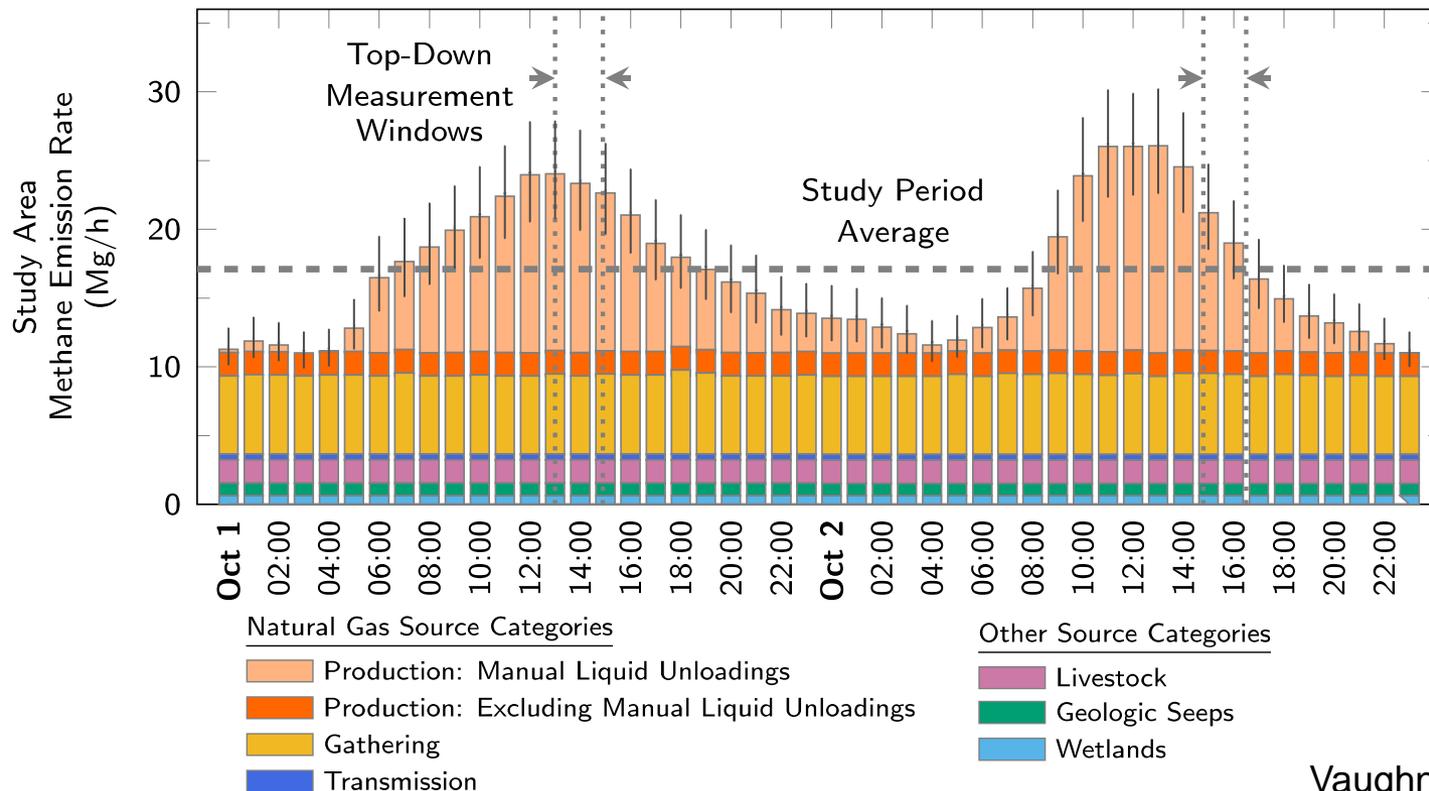


Roscioli et al., 2015 (AMT)

→ All 'snapshot-in-time' measurements

# Underground Natural Gas Storage Emissions: Temporal Variability may be Major Factor

- Limited repeat aircraft mass balance flights at underground natural gas storage sites suggest possibility of **high variability in emissions**
- Growing awareness that temporal variability in emissions can contribute to uncertainties in emissions estimates in other parts of Natural Gas supply chain



Vaughn et al., *PNAS* 2018

# What is the Ideal Emissions Measurement?

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**Broad coverage** of all potential sources

**Quantification** of emissions

**Continuous monitoring** (“snapshots” can bias intermittent sources)

**Lowest possible cost** (ideal)

# Project Objectives

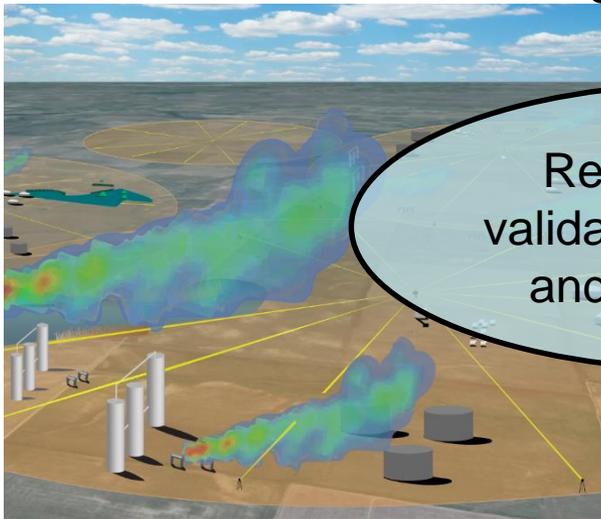
**Quantify** average methane emissions at underground storage sites

**Quantify** time variability of methane emissions at underground storage sites

**Integrate** ground- and aircraft-based observations at co-located sites

**Develop a methane emission inventory:** facility-wide quantification of average emissions and seasonal variability of emissions

Continuous frequency  
comb laser monitoring



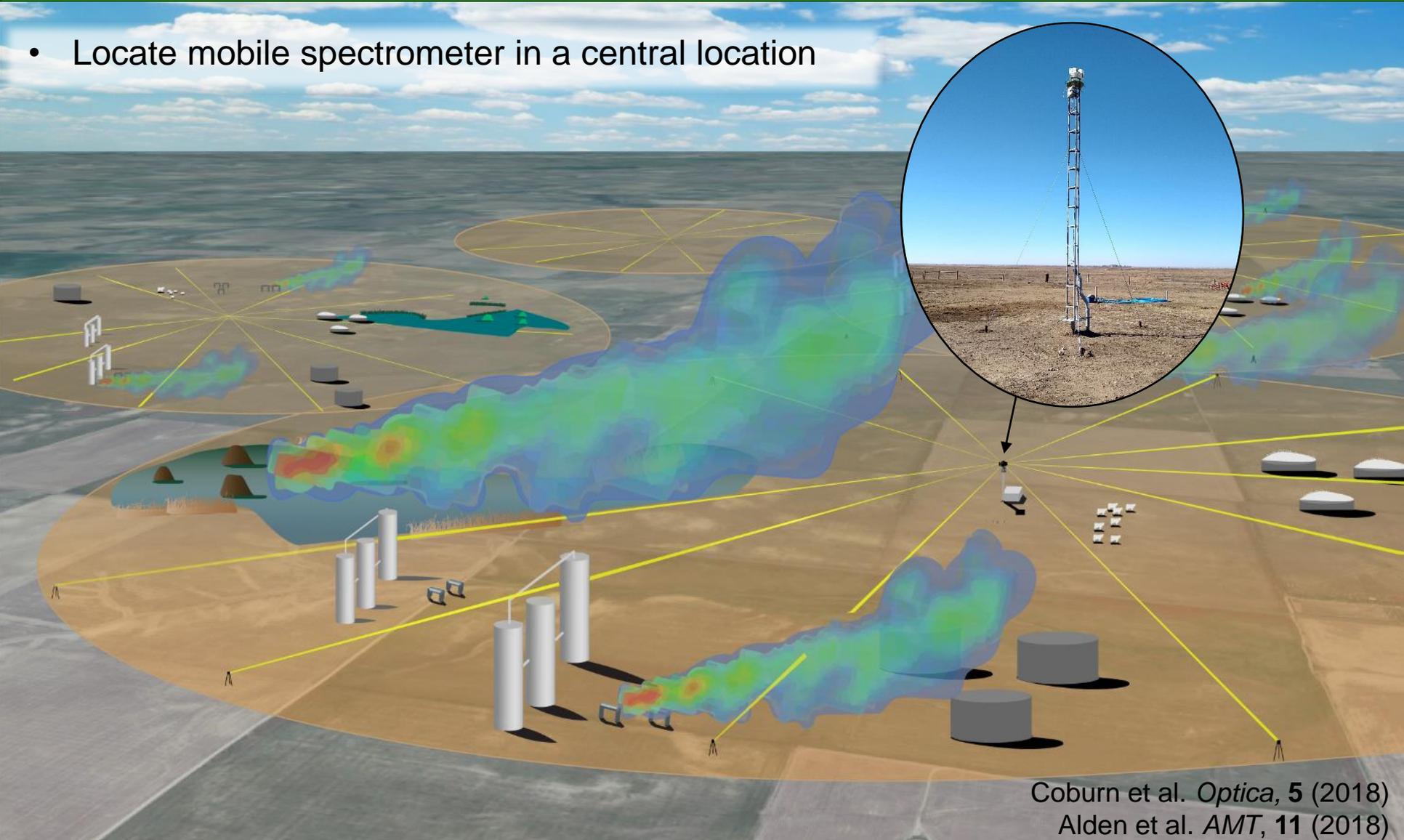
Regular aircraft  
mass balance flights



Reconciliation &  
validation across time  
and space scales

# Continuous frequency comb laser monitoring

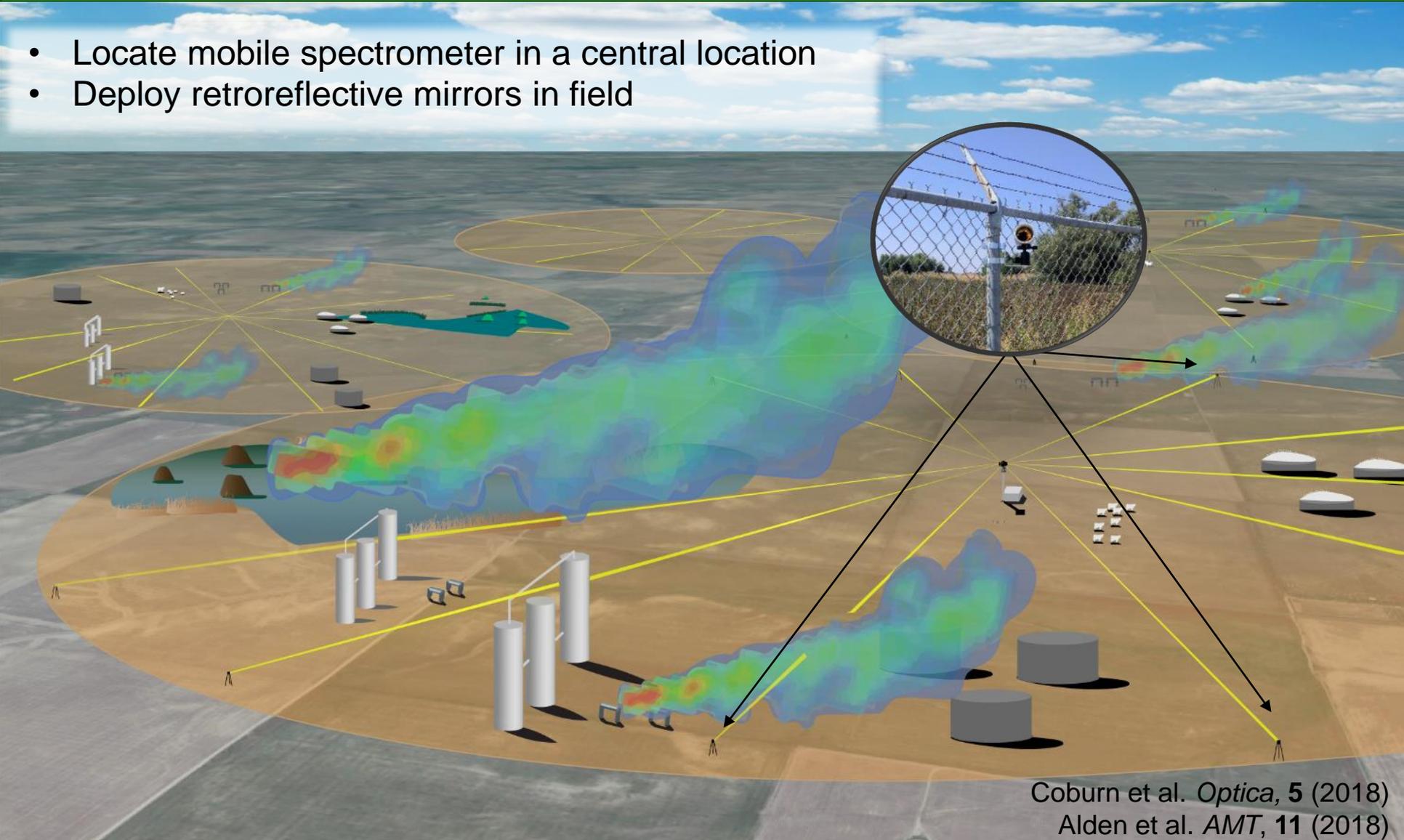
- Locate mobile spectrometer in a central location



Coburn et al. *Optica*, 5 (2018)  
Alden et al. *AMT*, 11 (2018)

# Continuous frequency comb laser monitoring

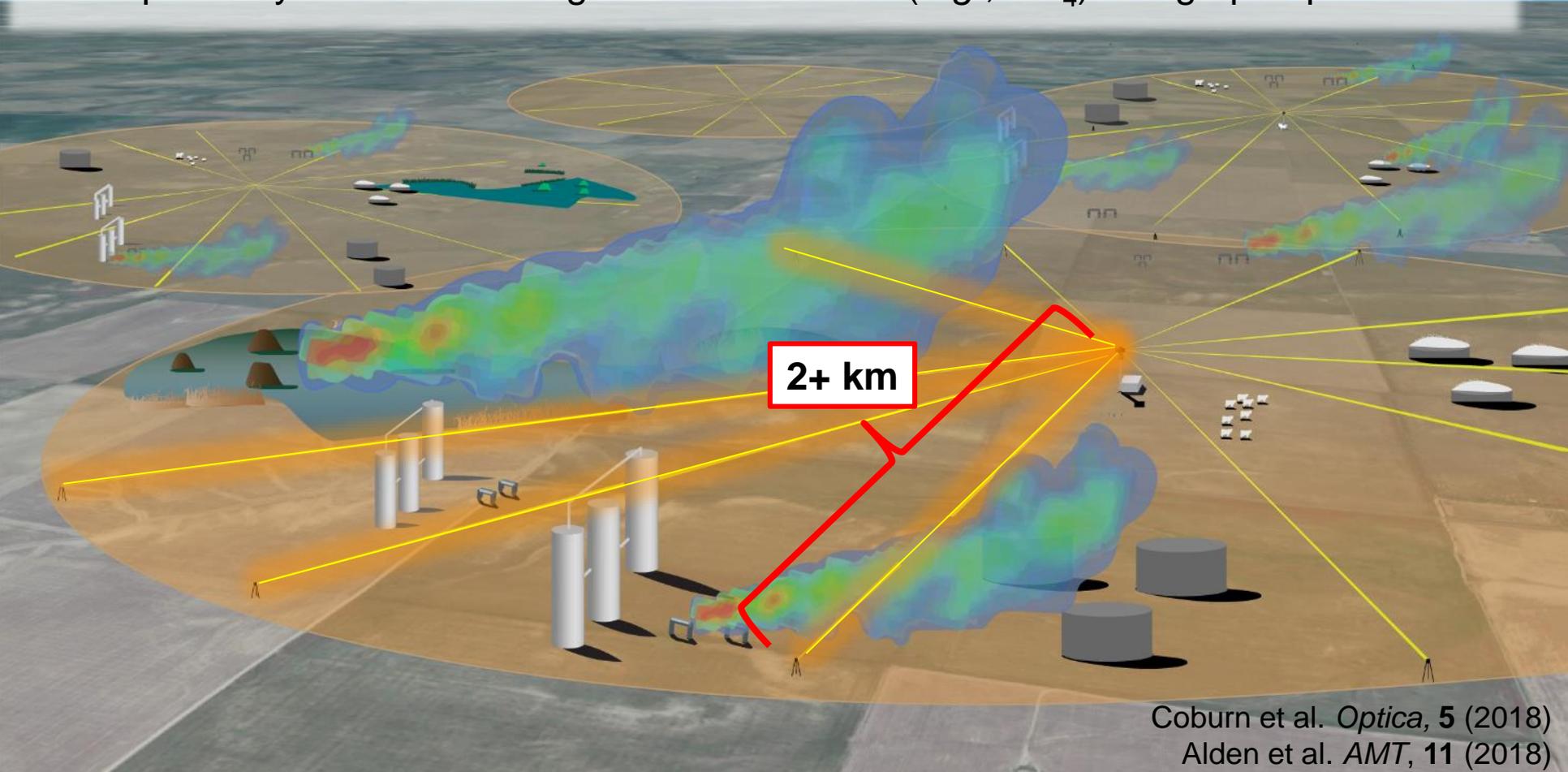
- Locate mobile spectrometer in a central location
- Deploy retroreflective mirrors in field



Coburn et al. *Optica*, 5 (2018)  
Alden et al. *AMT*, 11 (2018)

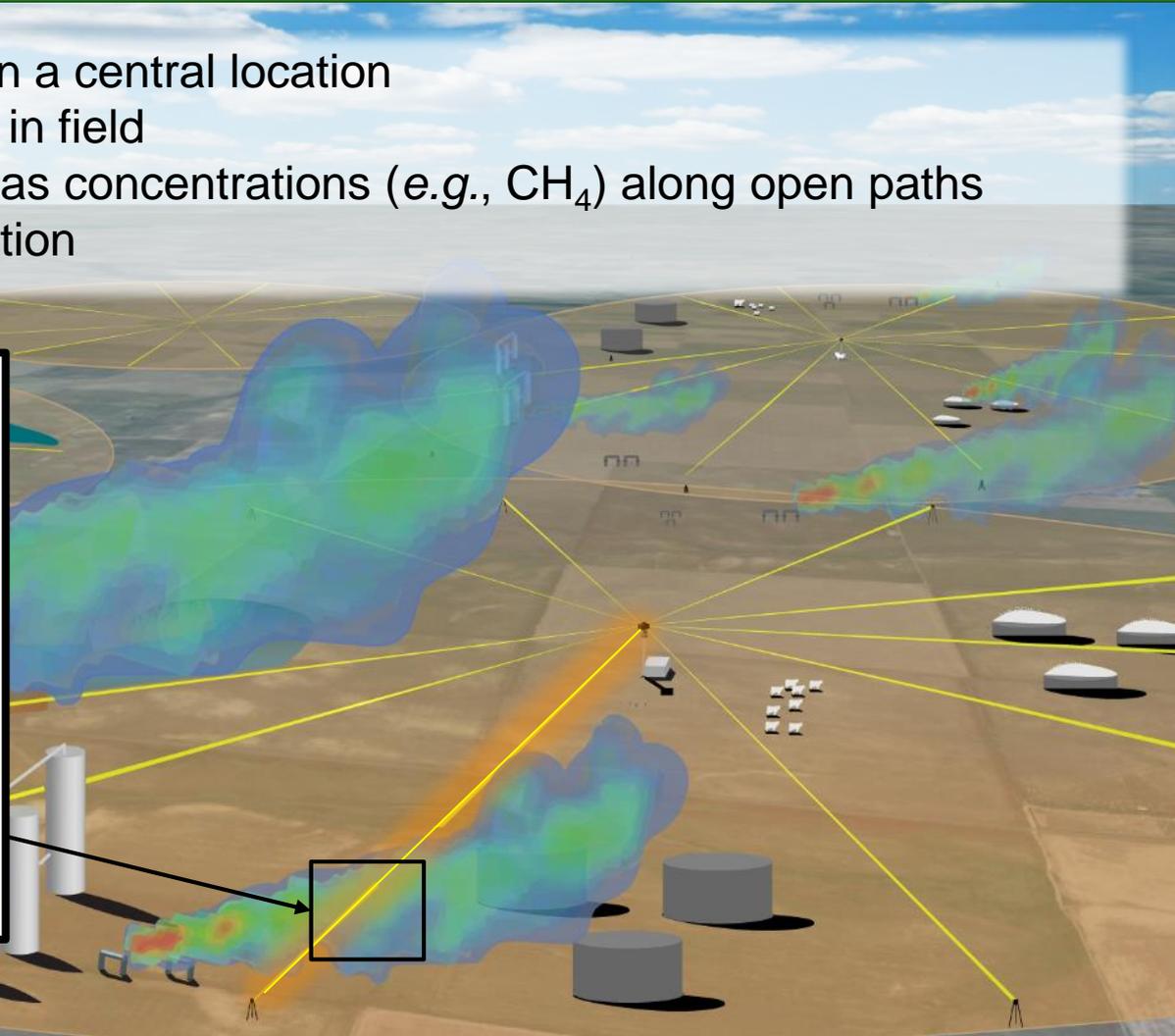
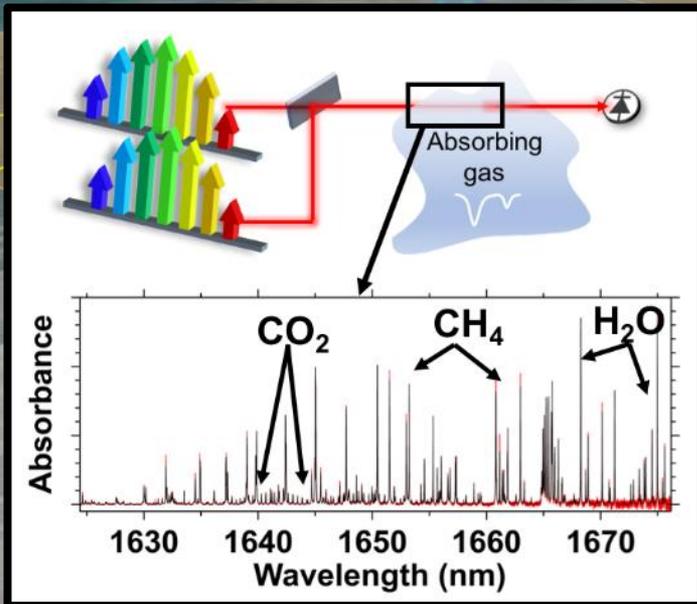
# Continuous frequency comb laser monitoring

- Locate mobile spectrometer in a central location
- Deploy retroreflective mirrors in field
- Sequentially measure trace gas concentrations (e.g., CH<sub>4</sub>) along open paths



# Continuous frequency comb laser monitoring

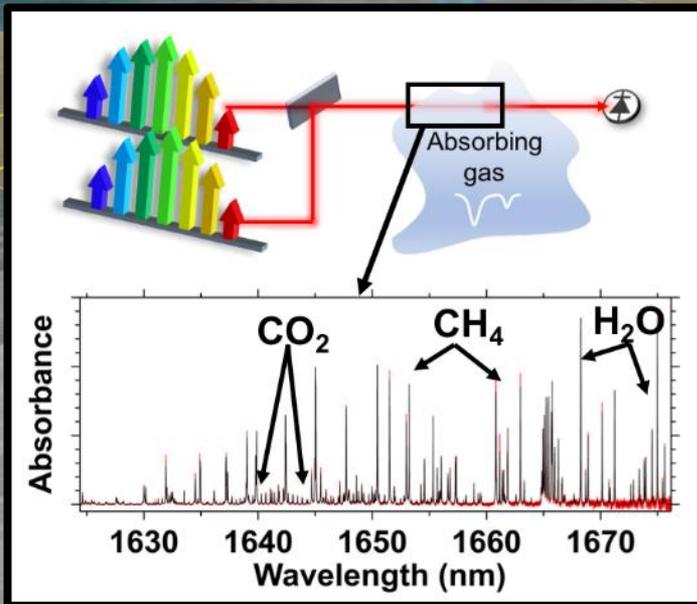
- Locate mobile spectrometer in a central location
- Deploy retroreflective mirrors in field
- Sequentially measure trace gas concentrations (e.g., CH<sub>4</sub>) along open paths
- Determine species concentration



Coburn et al. *Optica*, **5** (2018)  
Alden et al. *AMT*, **11** (2018)

# Continuous frequency comb laser monitoring

- Locate mobile spectrometer in a central location
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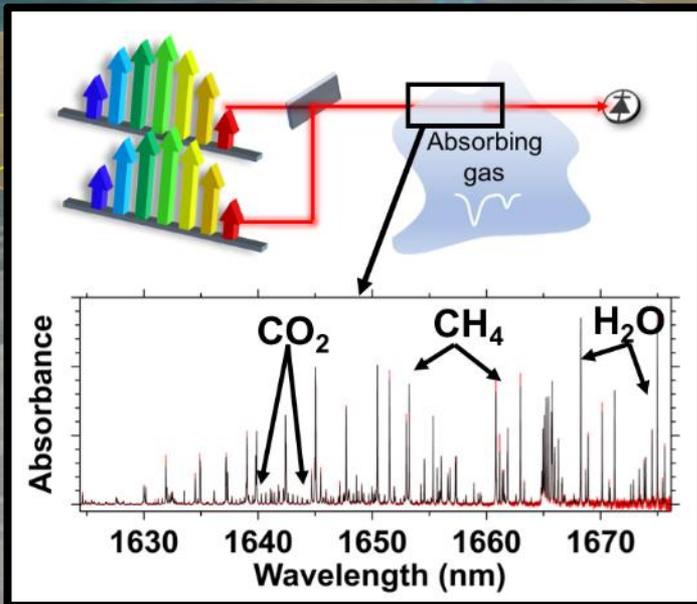


- < 5 ppb CH<sub>4</sub> precision over 1+ km paths
- Handles multi-species absorption interference
- Water measured directly → dry-air mole fractions
- High stability over time, no instrument drift

Coburn et al. *Optica*, **5** (2018)  
Alden et al. *AMT*, **11** (2018)

# Continuous frequency comb laser monitoring

- Locate mobile spectrometer in a central location
- Deploy retroreflective mirrors in field
- Sequentially measure trace gas concentrations (e.g.,  $\text{CH}_4$ ) along open paths
- Determine species concentration



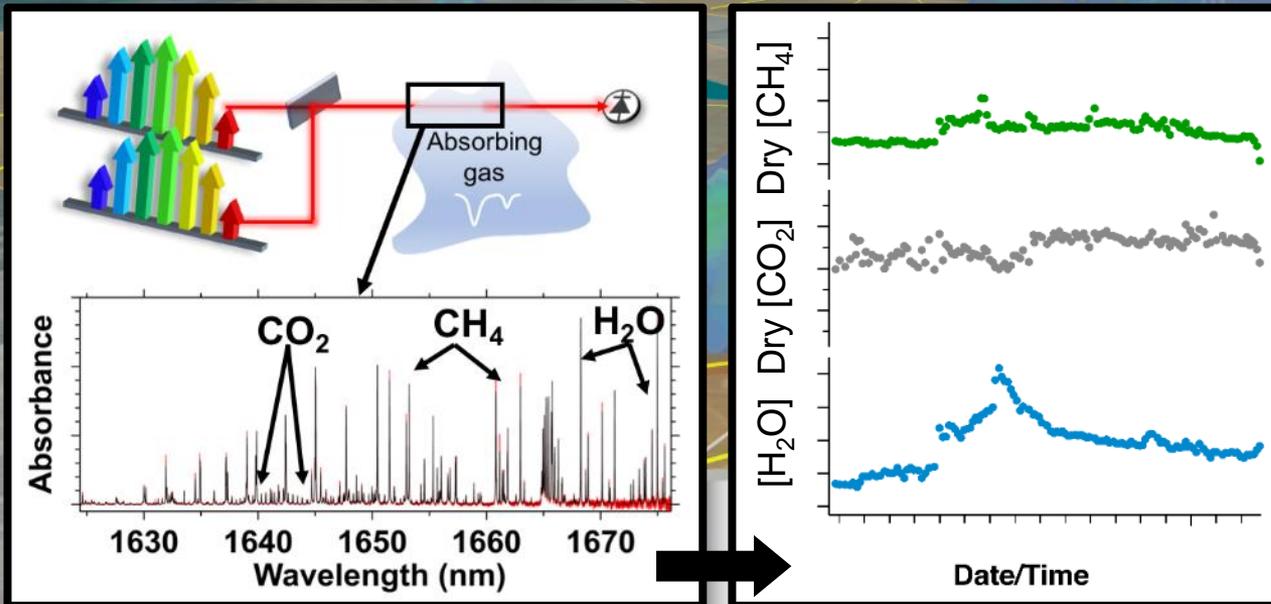
Don't need to point beam directly at source;  
only need to catch a plume downwind

Beams can be placed wherever you can get  
line of sight

Coburn et al. *Optica*, **5** (2018)  
Alden et al. *AMT*, **11** (2018)

# Continuous frequency comb laser monitoring

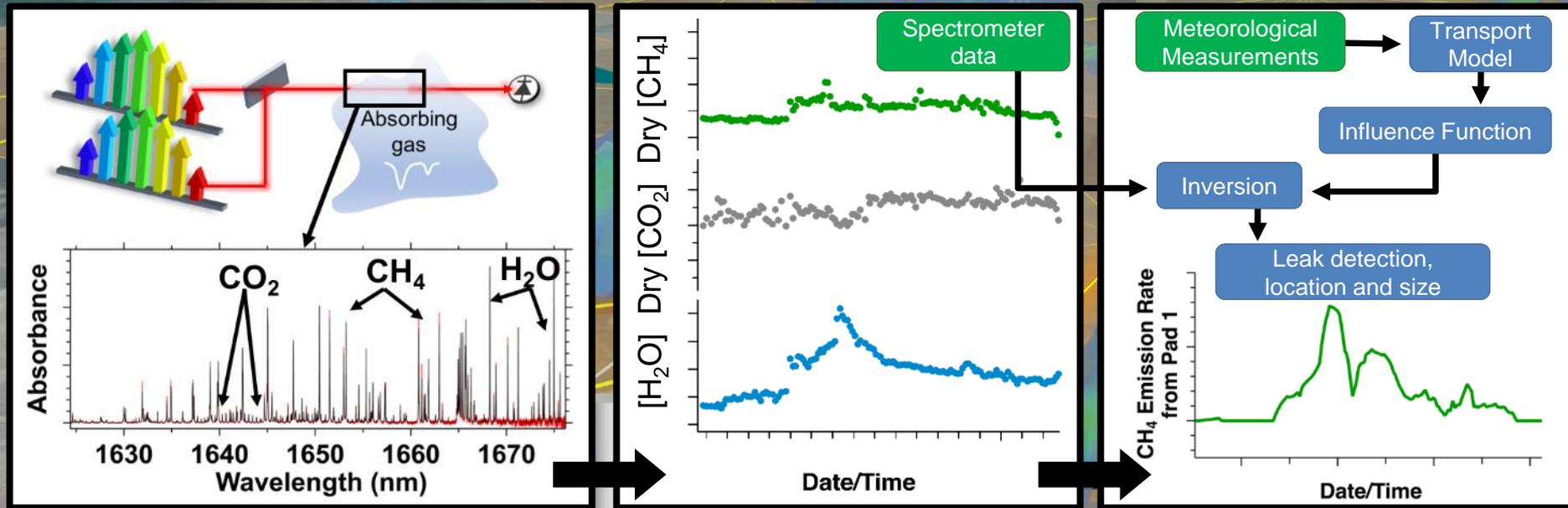
- Locate mobile spectrometer in a central location
- Deploy retroreflective mirrors in field
- Sequentially measure trace gas concentrations (e.g.,  $\text{CH}_4$ ) along open paths
- Determine species concentration, track variability through time



Coburn et al. *Optica*, 5 (2018)  
Alden et al. *AMT*, 11 (2018)

# Continuous frequency comb laser monitoring

- Locate mobile spectrometer in a central location
- Deploy retroreflective mirrors in field
- Sequentially measure trace gas concentrations (e.g.,  $\text{CH}_4$ ) along open paths
- Determine species concentration, track variability through time, couple with atmospheric modeling and inversions



Coburn et al. *Optica*, 5 (2018)  
Alden et al. *AMT*, 11 (2018)

# Blinded Demonstration of Capabilities

## ARPA-E Methane Emissions Technology Evaluation Center

### “Hollywood” production pads

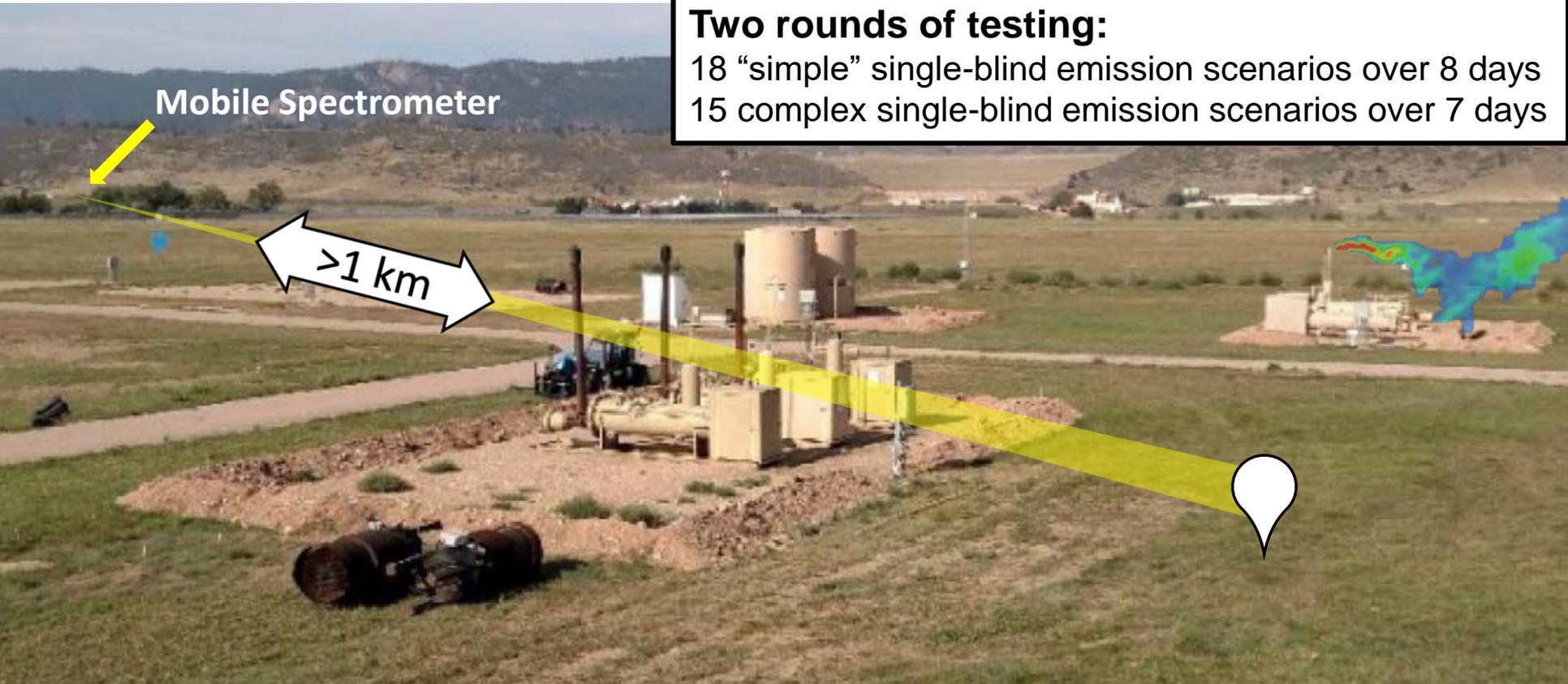
#### Two rounds of testing:

18 “simple” single-blind emission scenarios over 8 days

15 complex single-blind emission scenarios over 7 days

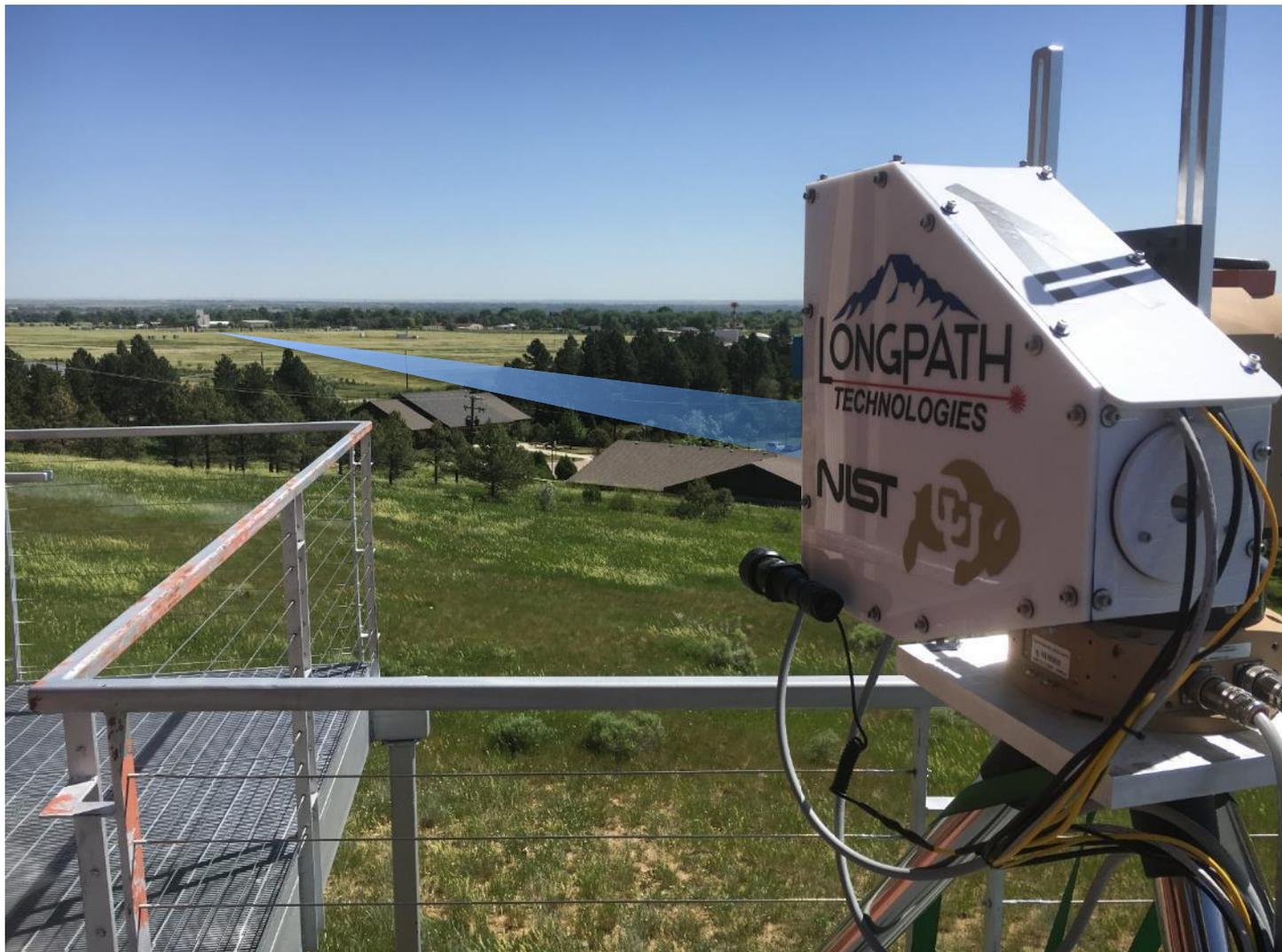
Mobile Spectrometer

>1 km



Coburn, et al., *in prep*  
Alden, et al., *Env. Sci. & Technol.* (2019)

# View from Laser System



# Single-Blind Complex Emissions Tests (R2)

Aerial view of Methane Emissions  
Technology Evaluation Center (METEC)



Pad D

Test method: Continuous Monitoring

Single steady emission

Multiple steady emissions

Operational emissions

**Detection:** is there a leak?

- Detected 90% of all leaks
- Detected 100% of leaks  $> 2.4 \text{ m}^3/\text{day}$
- 6 false positives  $< 3.4 \text{ m}^3/\text{day}$

**Attribution:** where is the leak?

- 100% for groups of equipment
- 82% for correct or neighboring equipment

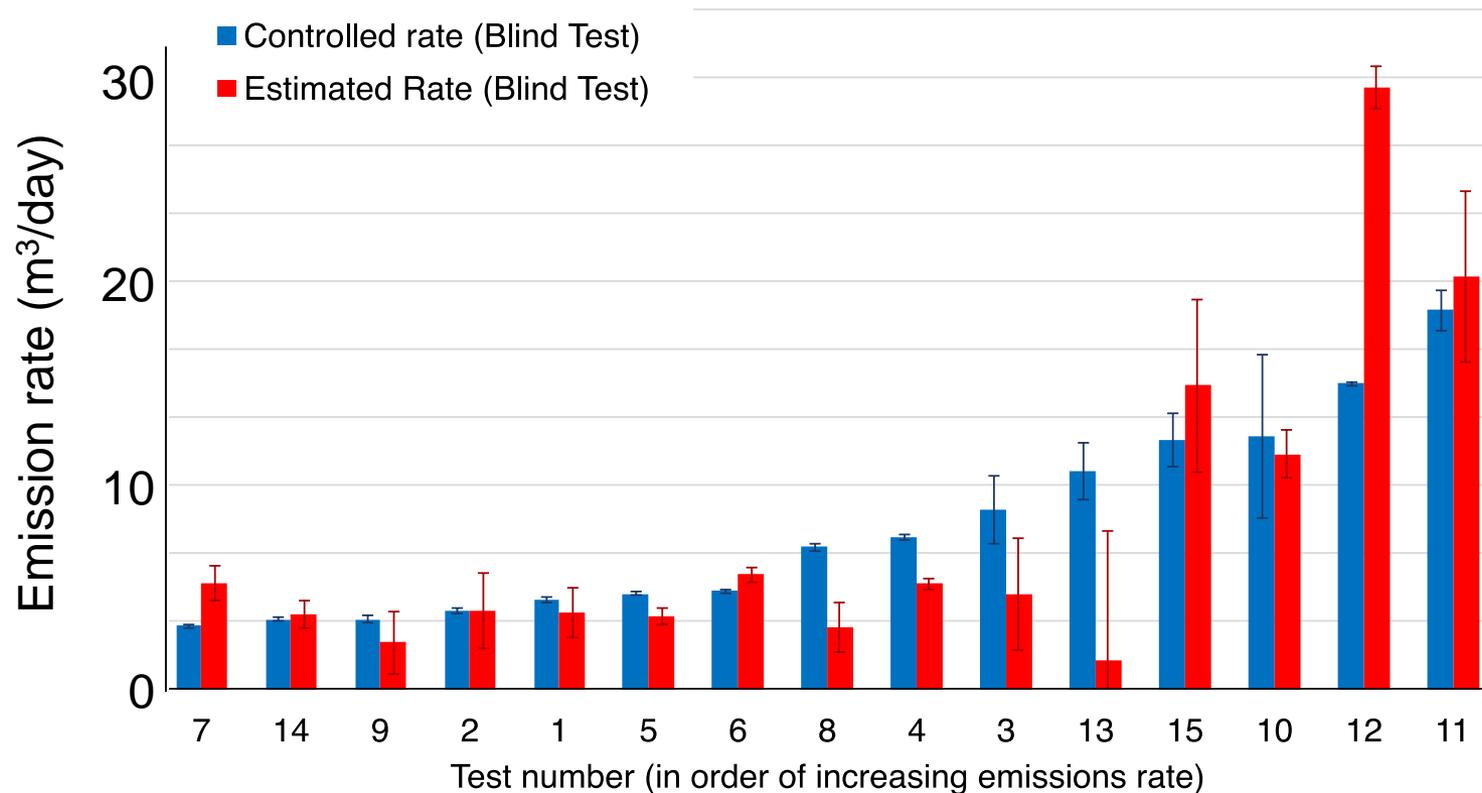
**Quantification:** how big is the leak?

- Battery-scale controlled leaks 3 - 19  $\text{m}^3/\text{day}$

Coburn, et al., *in prep*

# Round 2 Single-Blind Test: Quantification

87% of all battery-level leaks estimated to within  $< 4 \text{ m}^3/\text{day}$



Coburn, et al., *in prep*

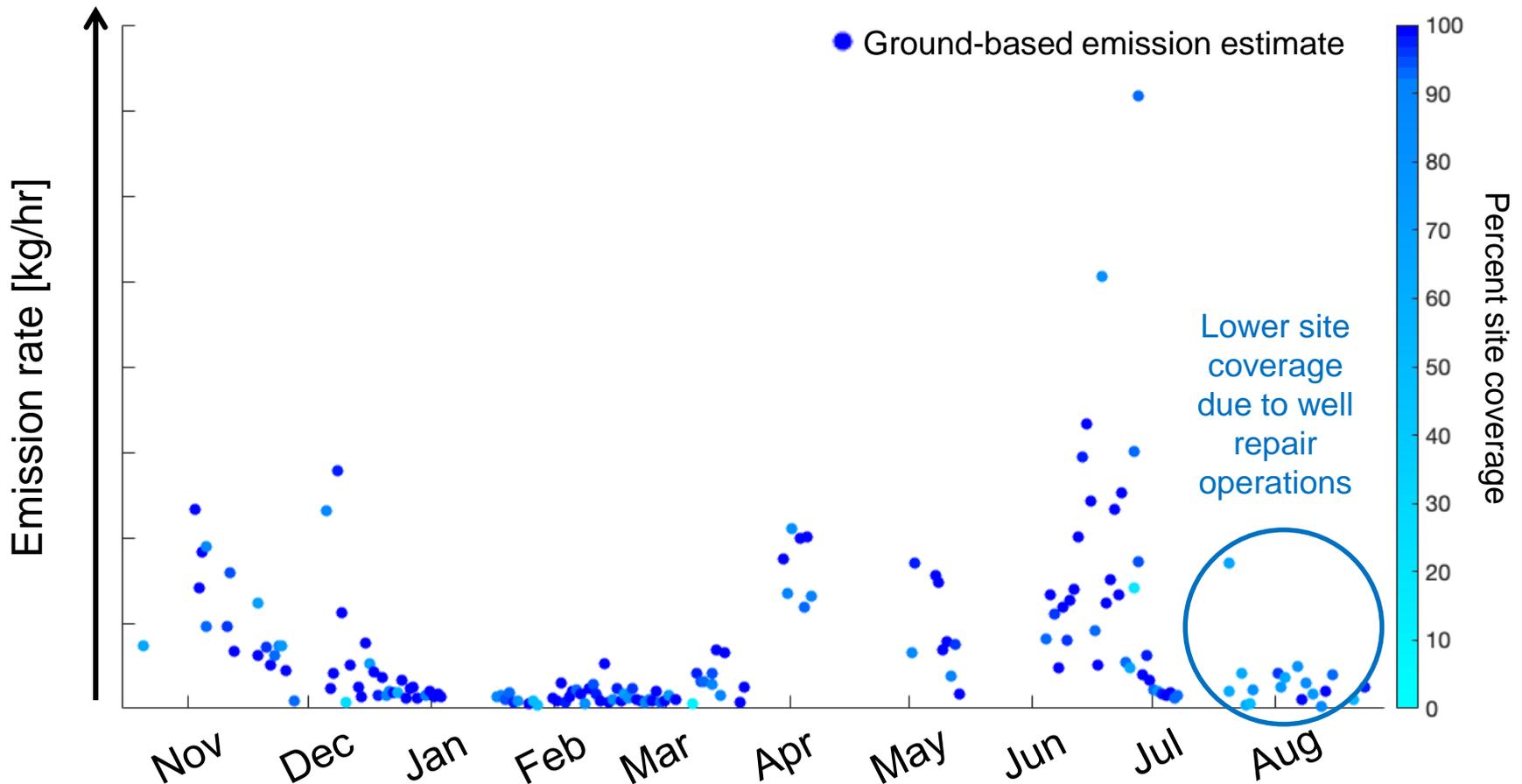
# Continuous frequency comb laser monitoring

Two installations at Western US methane storage facilities



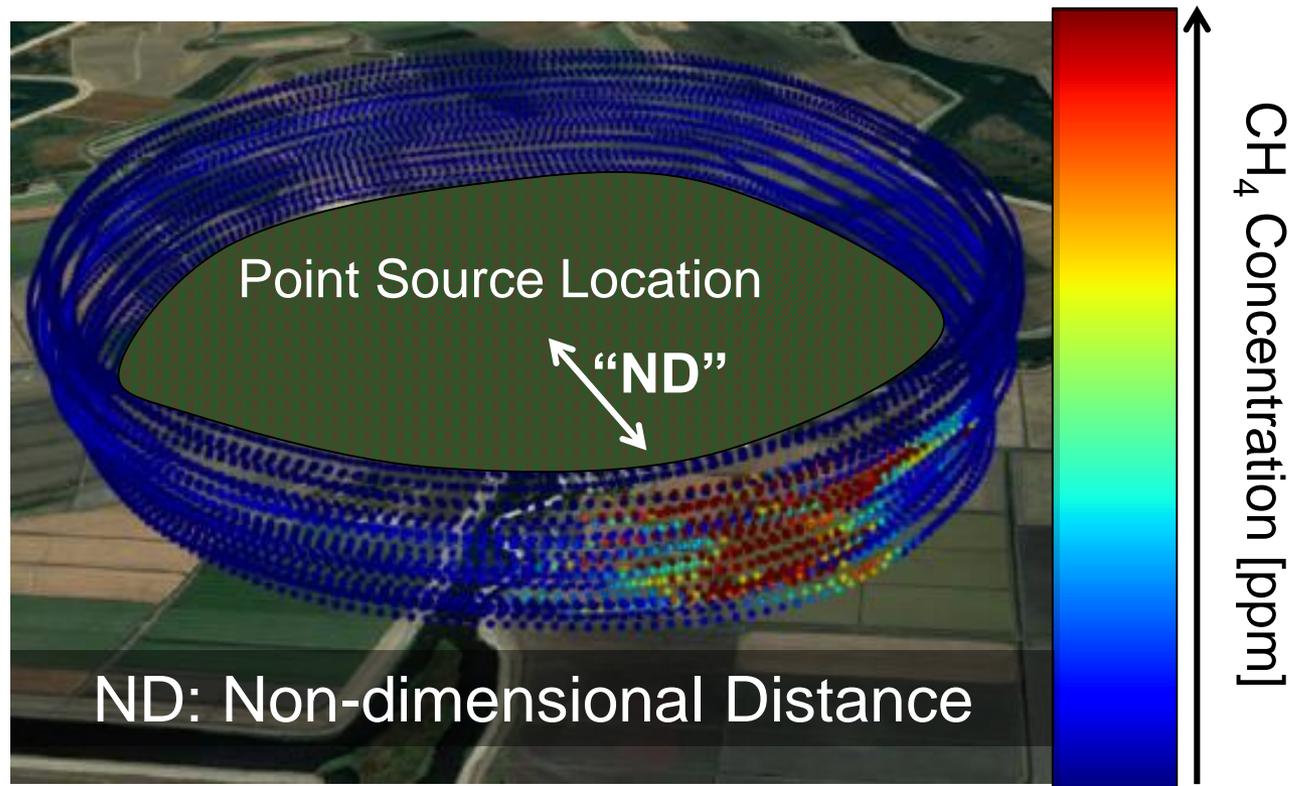
# Observed Emissions Variability

Obtained one full year of data at one site...  
More to come, plus other site



# Aircraft-based emission estimation & innovations

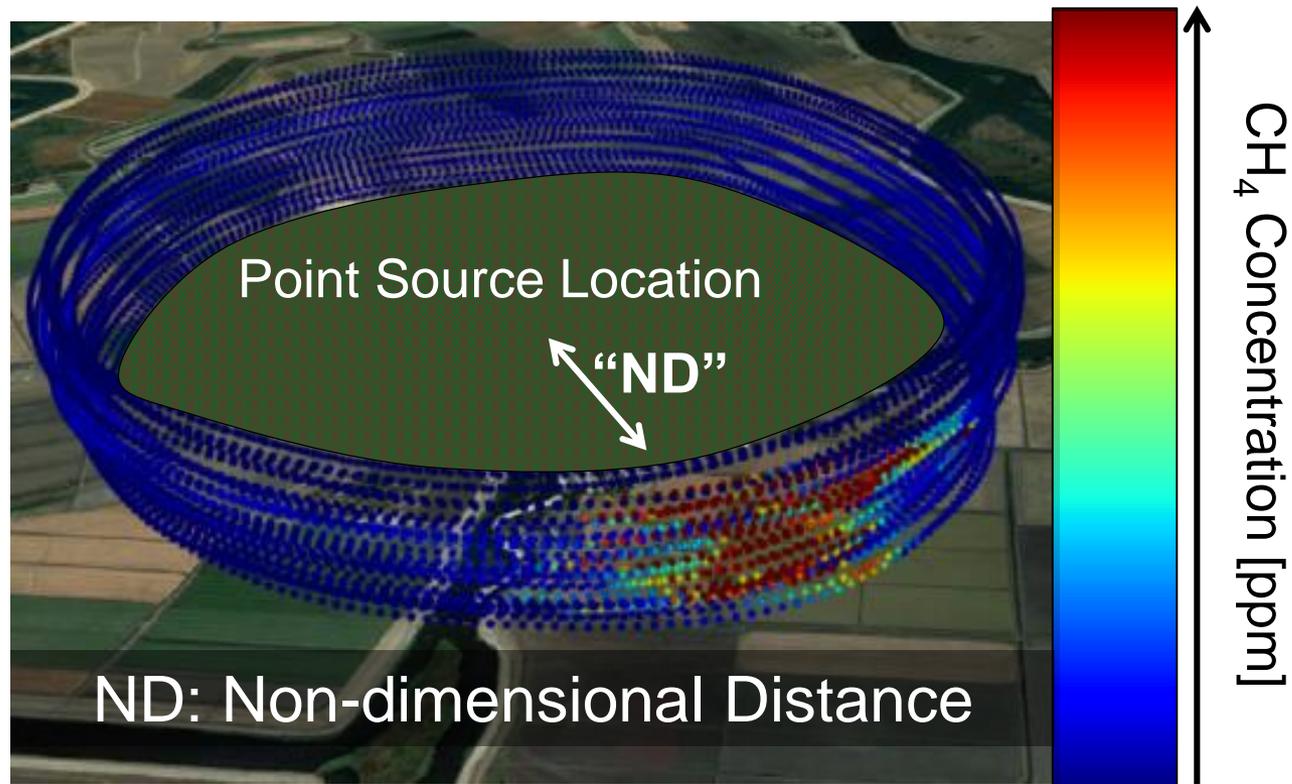
- “Cylinder” flown around point source; rings of 100-200 m altitude increments
- Concentration enhancements quantified on downwind pass
- Total emission rate estimated with Gauss’ theorem within closed flight path



Example flight path

# Aircraft-based emission estimation & innovations

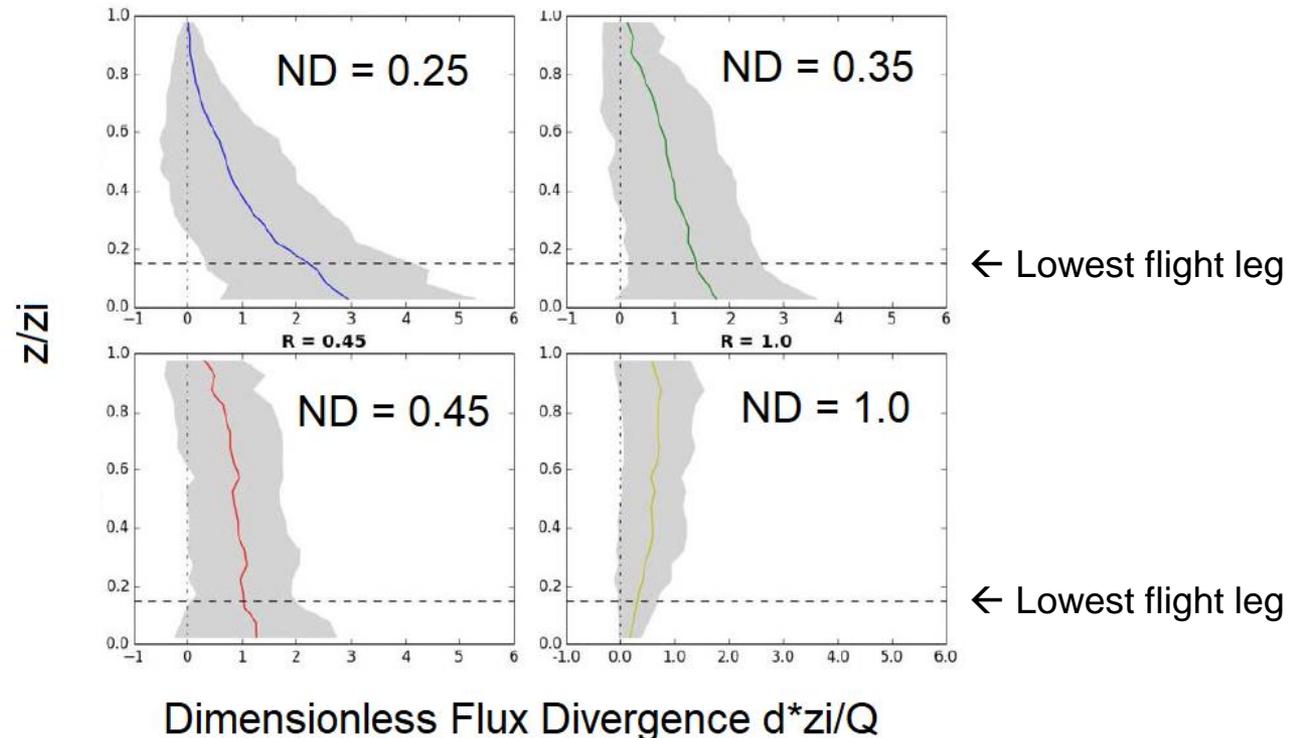
Non-dimensional distance from the emission source is ratio of advection time ( $d/U$ ) to eddy-turnover time ( $z_i/w_*$ ) }  $ND = \frac{d w_*}{U z_i}$



Example flight path

# Aircraft-based emission estimation & innovations

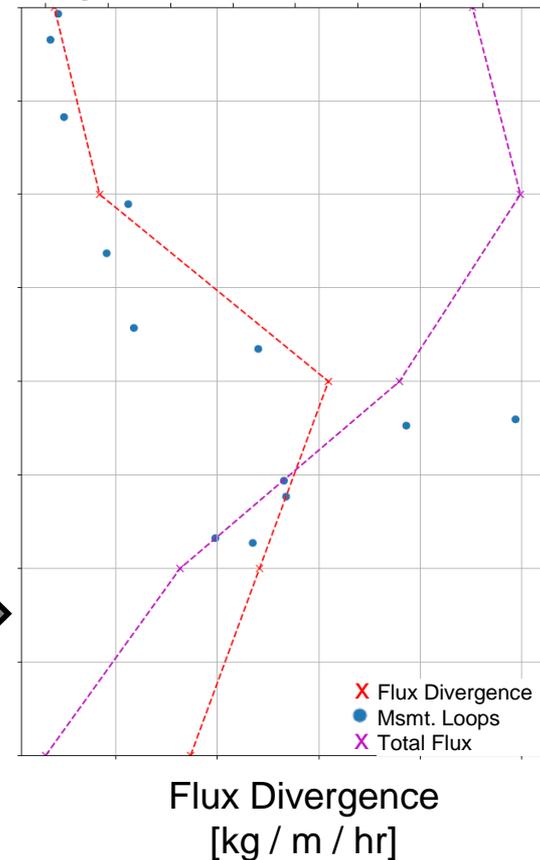
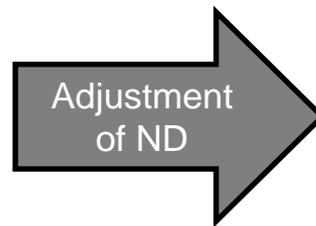
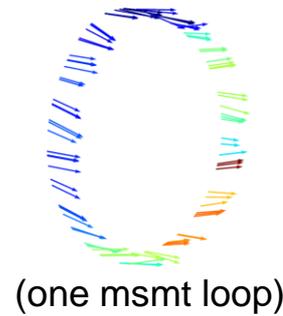
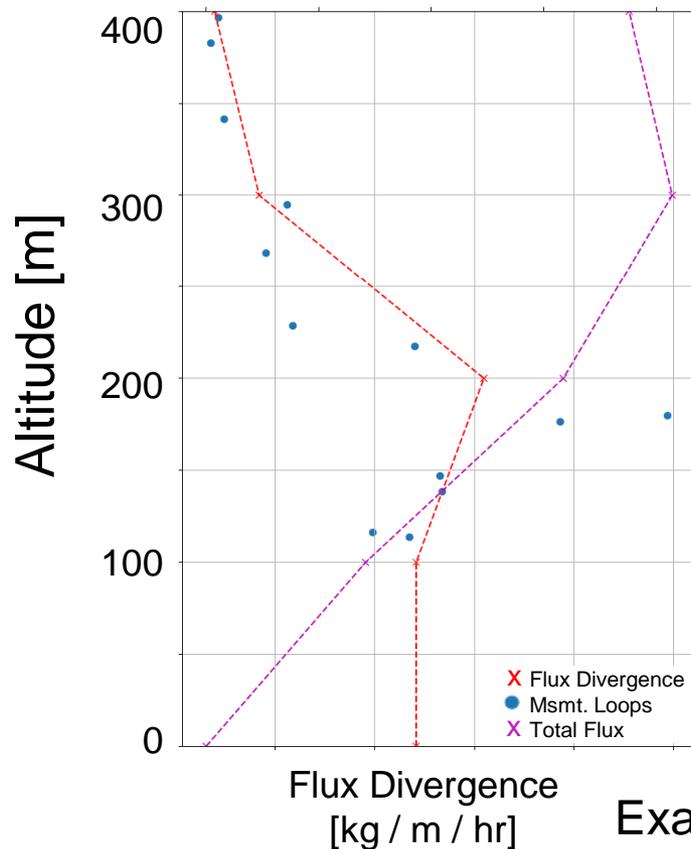
- Optimal Non-dimensional Distance (ND): **0.4**
- At this distance the horizontal flux divergence is ~constant from lowest flight leg to ground (from LES simulations)
- Measuring convective velocity scale ( $w_*$ ) is critical, but *requires many assumptions without direct measurements of turbulence*



# Aircraft-based emission estimation & innovations

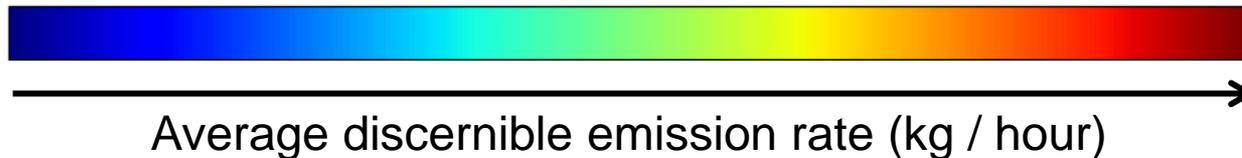
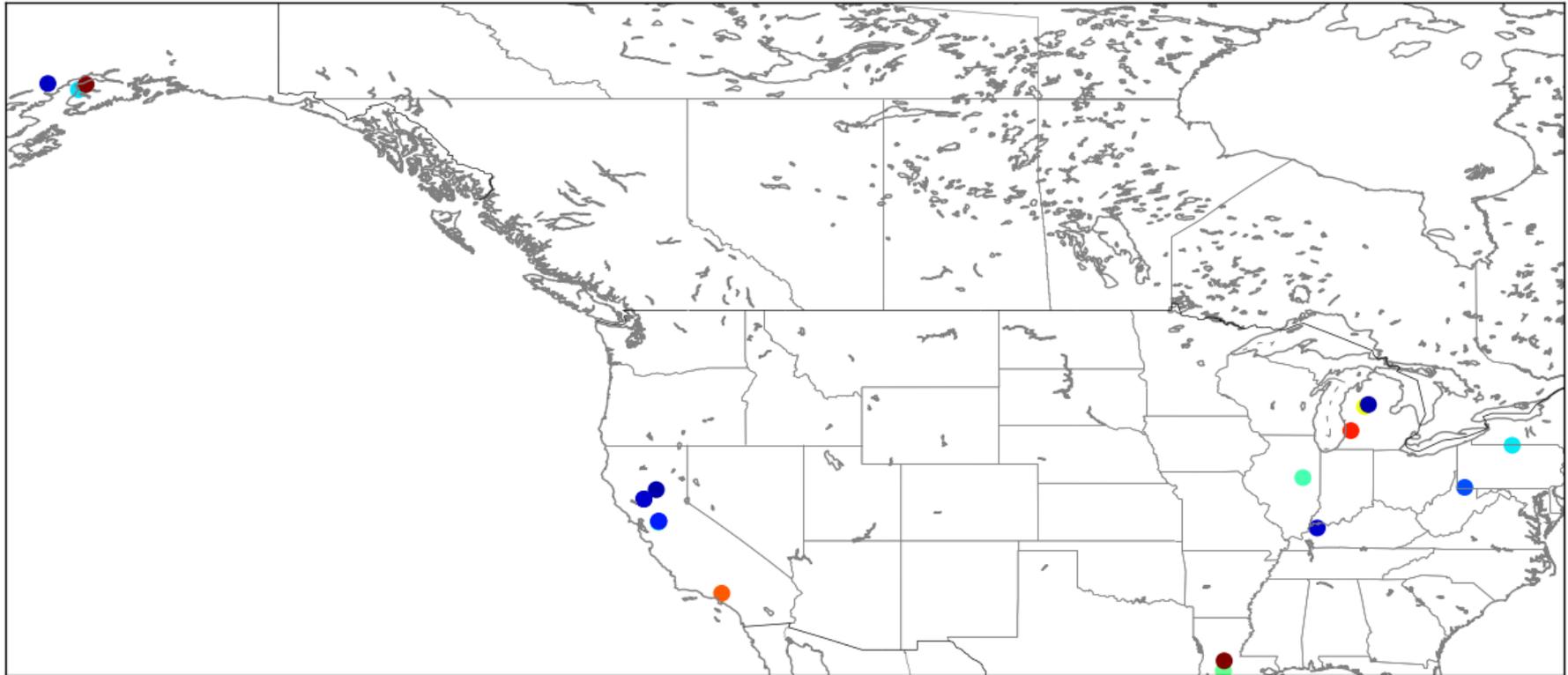
By estimating and adjusting for non-dimensional distance, emission estimation can be improved

*Can result in improvements up to 40%*



# Aircraft-based emission estimation & innovations

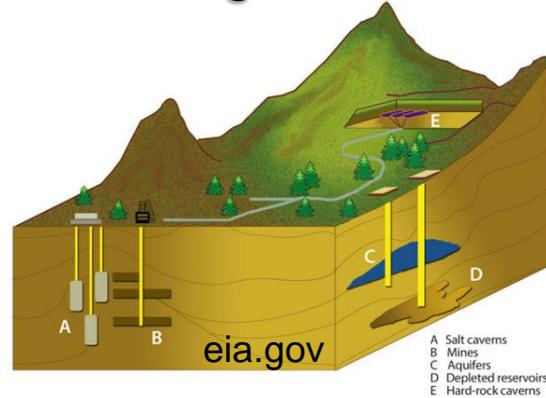
- Natural Gas storage facility sites flown to date



# Cross-scale Emissions Estimates at Storage Sites

MIDSTREAM

## Mountain Region NG Storage

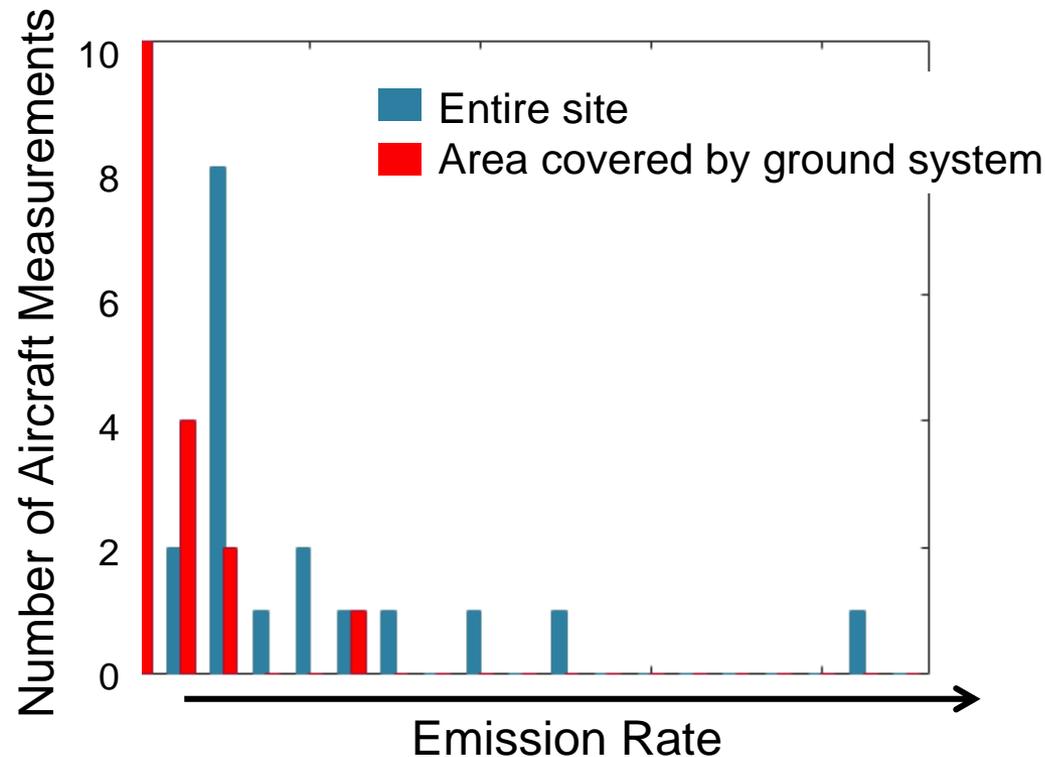


## Pacific Region NG Storage



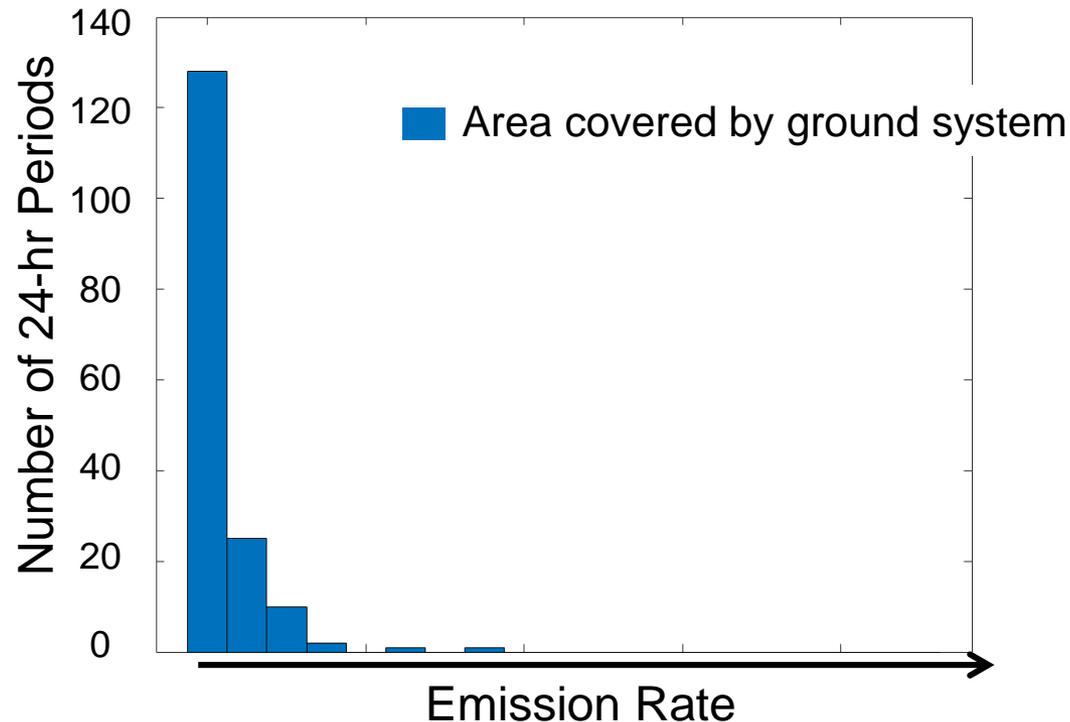
# Observed Emissions Variability: Aircraft Mass Balance

- **One Facility:** standard deviation of emissions from repeat aircraft mass balance is 90% of mean emissions
- **Portion of facility covered by the regional laser comb system:** standard deviation is 150% of mean emissions



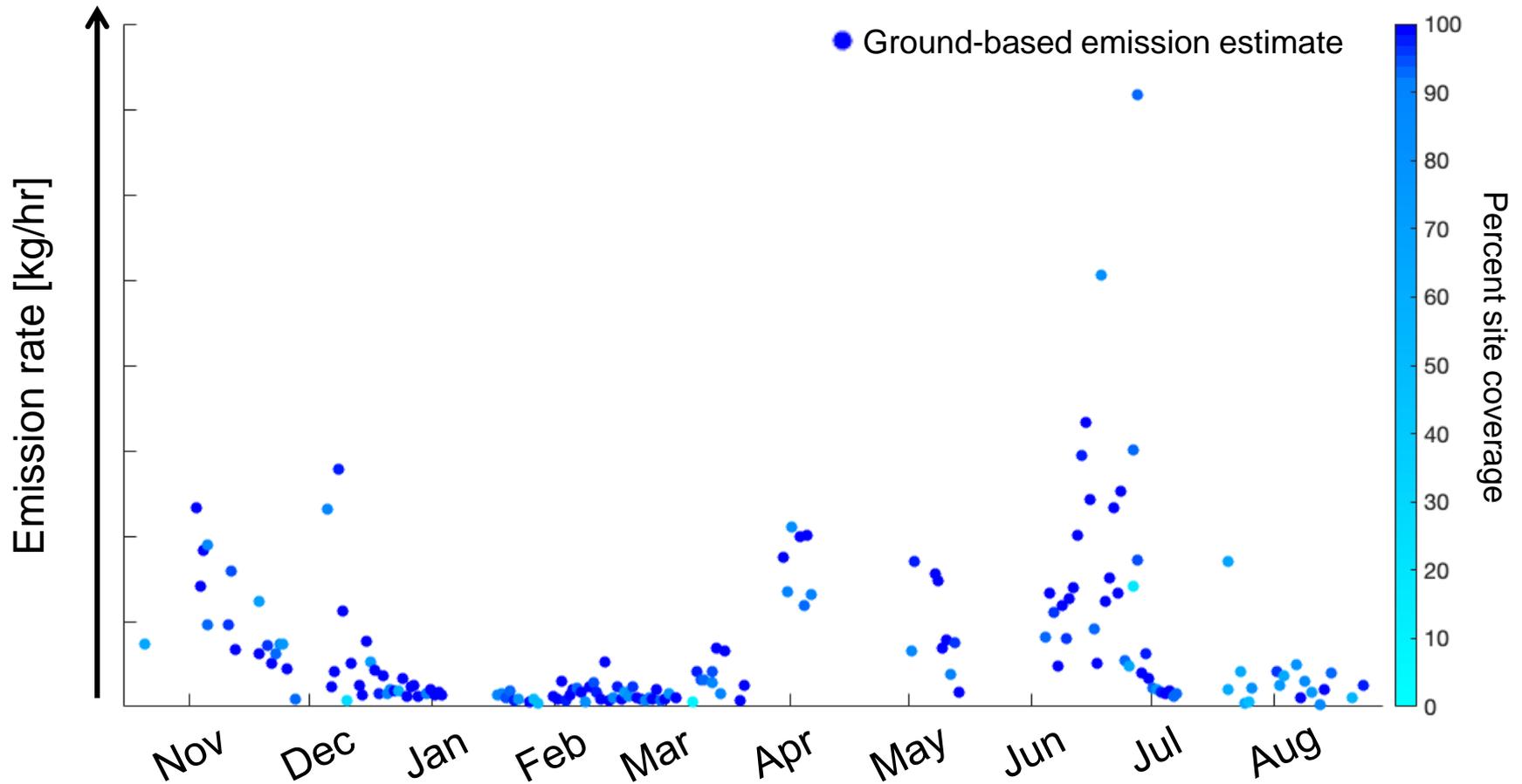
# Observed Emissions Variability: Continuous Dual Comb

- Daily mean emissions demonstrate standard deviation of 133% of mean emissions



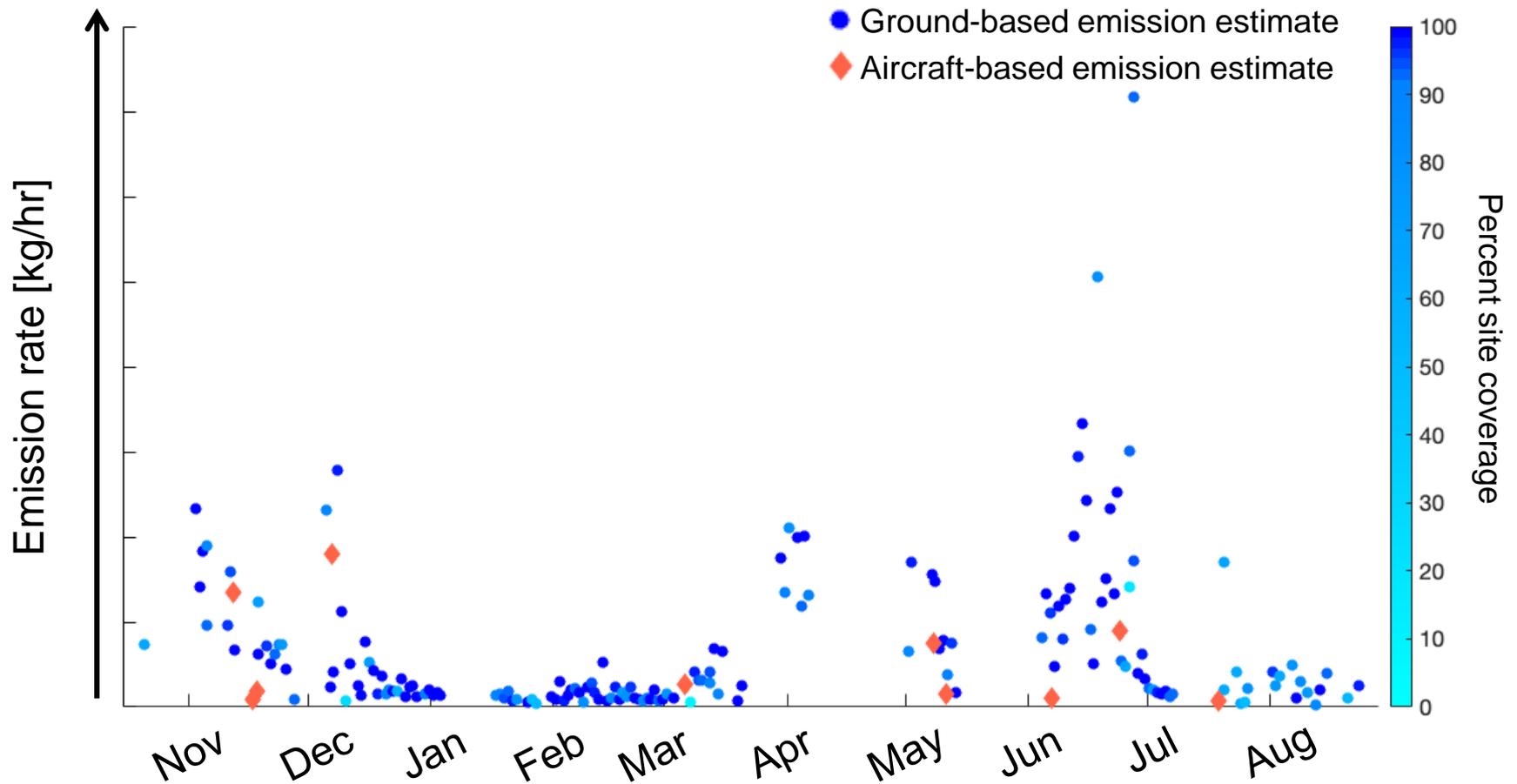
# Observed Emissions Variability: Seasonal Variability

One year of data reveals potential seasonal cycle



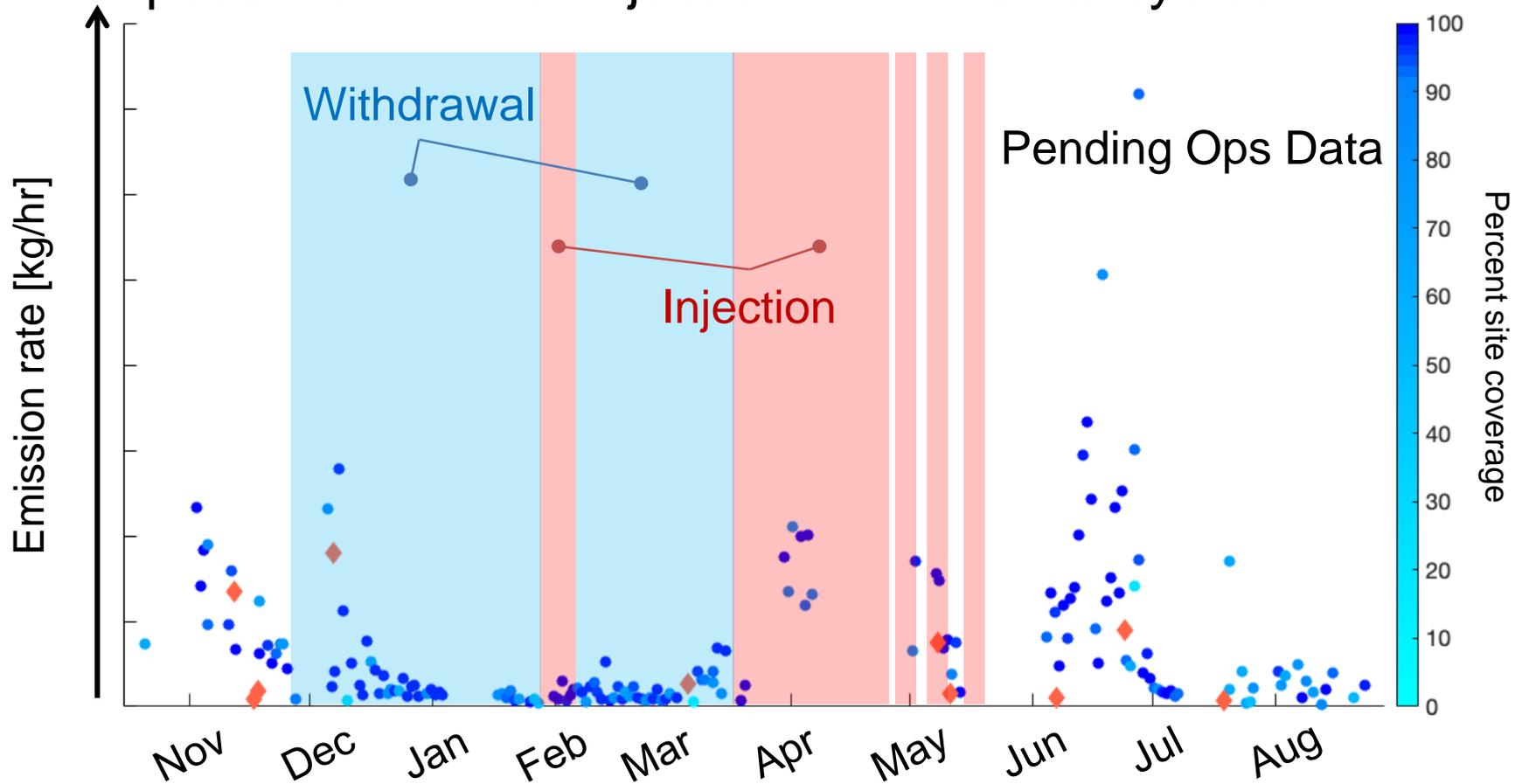
# Observed Emissions Variability: Seasonal Variability

Aircraft data corroborate flux magnitudes and variability



# Observed Emissions Variability: Seasonal Variability

Overlap with available operations data suggests possible link with injection / withdrawal cycles?



# Toward an Updated Emissions Inventory

The devil is in the details...determining what the data tells us is complex

Added infrared imaging to aircraft to determine compressor status



Obtaining operations data to correlate with continuous data



# Toward an Updated Emissions Inventory

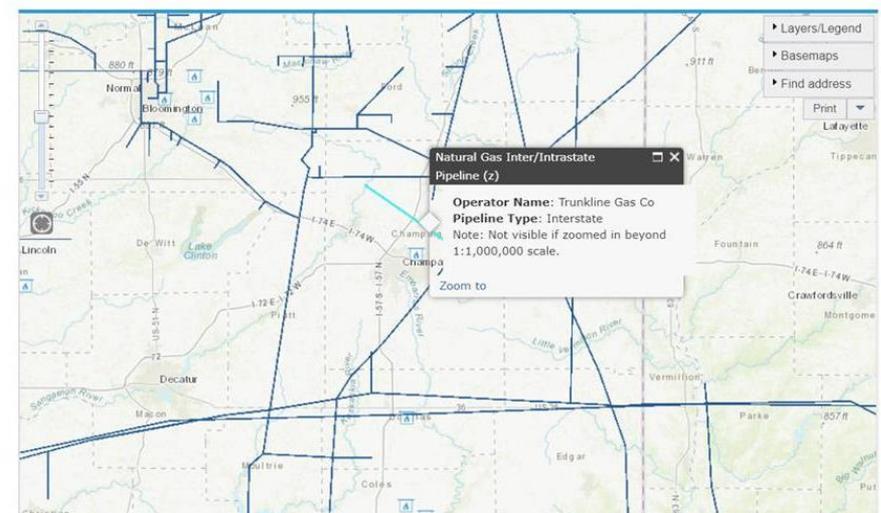
From an inventory perspective, this is not going to be a one size fits all situation

We are searching for a correlation with 'obtainable' data about a site that we can use to extrapolate to other facilities

Nominations as proxy for injections / withdrawals

- New data added to EIA website gives us pipeline locations
- Combine with our new maps of storage site locations
- Track down nominations data for sites we have measured

U.S. Energy Mapping System



# Accomplishments to Date

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- First field deployed regional dual-comb monitoring system
- First daily time-resolved emissions data from methane storage facilities
- To our knowledge, first repeated comparisons of simultaneous ground and aircraft measurements
- To our knowledge, largest number of aircraft flyovers and repeat flyovers of methane storage facilities
- Significant improvements to aircraft emissions rate calculations
- Significant progress toward more complete picture of methane storage facility emissions

# Lessons Learned

- Getting permission and siting for ground-based systems takes significant time
- Finding the location and physical boundaries of underground storage facilities is difficult
- Wasps and birds seem strangely attracted to electronics and optics enclosures



# Synergy Opportunities

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- **Clear synergy exists between our technology and the two mobile approaches presented here today**
  - The technologies give snapshots in time, but can presumably cover more facilities with greater detail than our current flyovers
  - The combination of the time-resolved ground system and the extension to more facilities would generate the most complete picture of emissions

# Project Summary

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- **Take Home Message:** Emissions from underground natural gas storage facilities demonstrate substantial temporal variability.
- Emissions variability is evident at scales from day-to-day to seasonal, and likely even hour-to-hour (Next Steps will confirm this finding).
- Repeat aircraft mass balance measurements corroborate the mean emissions rates and the presence and magnitude of seasonal variability in emissions at underground natural gas storage sites.
- New methods for aircraft mass balance improve analysis.
- Analysis of similarities and differences in mean emissions and emissions variability will provide input to the GHGI.
- **Next steps include:**
  - Completing final measurements for remainder of program and under a no-cost extension
  - Completing analysis of spatiotemporal variability in emissions
  - Completing interface with EPA GHGI for inclusion of updated mean and variability numbers into the inventory

# Appendix

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# Benefit to the Program

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Technology or approach being developed or studied:

- Dual frequency comb spectrometer and aircraft measurements deployed with regular frequency and at numerous underground natural gas storage sites to provide time-resolved measurements of emissions from underground natural gas storage sites

Summary of how the project supports one or more of the programmatic goals

- See following slide

# Benefit to the Program

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- Program Goals Addressed
  - Improve data for methane emission quantification to support the EPA GHGI; specifically, to better quantify methane emissions from the natural gas value chain
  - Develop time series of leak frequency from natural gas storage wells in order to develop an understanding of the relatively large leaks that have occurred
  - Collect measurements to quantify the frequency of leaks at storage wells to improve the quantification of this source in the GHGI
- Project Benefits Statement
  - The research project is deploying continuous measurements with dual frequency comb spectroscopy based estimation of emissions, and repeat aircraft mass balance estimation of emissions. These measurements provide new understanding of the spatiotemporal nature of methane emissions from the underground storage sector of the natural gas value chain. This work contributes to the Midstream Program's goals of better<sup>46</sup> quantifying methane emissions from the natural gas value chain.

# Project Overview

## Goals and Objectives

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- To achieve a comprehensive quantification of methane emissions from storage facilities through ground-based and aircraft-based measurements.
- Data analysis of similarities between storage wells and fields will be used for assessing emissions at different types of facilities so that a comprehensive understanding of the storage sector can be gained.
- Integrate all data gathered during ground- and aircraft-based measurement campaigns into a comprehensive and detailed inventory of methane emissions from underground natural gas storage wells and fields, providing temporal detail of emissions from the natural gas storage sector.
- **Each of the above project goals directly support the stated** <sup>47</sup>  
**Midstream Program goals and objectives**

# Success Criteria

Objective 1: quantify average emissions at a variety of sites

- BP1: co-deployment of ground and aircraft instrumentation
- BP2: have data for cross-comparison and cross-validation of the two techniques
- BP3: complete emissions quantification

Objective 2: quantify time variability of emissions

- BP1: Quantify instrument “up-time” and continuity of autonomous data collection possible
- BP2: establish timeframe needed for detailed characterization of a storage site
- BP2-3: establish time variability of emissions

Objective 3: develop and publish methane emissions inventory

- BP1: advances toward this objective not expected in BP1
- BP2: perform aircraft and ground-based data cross-comparisons to establish uncertainties and identify relationships between emissions at different storage sites
- BP3: complete data comparison and inventories with complete dataset

Objective 4: collect new micrometeorological measurements and improve atmospheric transport models

- BP1: LES model validation and/or confirmation with aircraft-based observations
- BP2: apply improved models and micrometeorological observations to emissions estimates
- BP3: apply improved models and micrometeorological observations to emissions estimates

Objective 5: integrate ground- and aircraft-based observations at co-located measurement sites

- BP1: begin data collection at co-located measurement site
- BP2: demonstrate model ability to incorporate data from one or all data platforms into a single inversion and determine posterior uncertainties and comparisons with data withheld from the inversion
- BP3: use integrated data approaches to perform analysis and complete emissions inventory

# Organization Chart

## Task 2.0: Preparation for deployment

**Task 2.1**  
Build field-ready phase-locked dual-comb spectrometer

**Task 2.3**  
Prepare site modeling and system configuration

**Task 2.2**  
Prepare micro-meteorological instrument package

## Task 3.0: Detailed Emissions Quantification at McDonald Island

**Task 3.1**  
Deploy Spectrometer for Continuous Measurements

**Task 3.2**  
Conduct twice-monthly mass balance flights at McDonald Island

## Task 4.0: Aircraft Monitoring of Other Storage Facilities

**Task 4.1**  
Conduct aircraft mass balance flights at 6 *like* facilities

**Task 4.3**  
Conduct aircraft mass balance flights at 6 *different* facilities

**Task 4.2**  
Analyze and compare data for *like* storage wells and fields

**Task 4.4**  
Analyze and compare data for *different* storage wells and fields

## Task 5.0: Detailed emissions quantification at Princeton Gas, Honor Rancho and/or Aliso Canyon

**Task 5.1**  
Deploy spectrometer at Princeton Gas

**Task 5.2**  
Conduct twice-monthly mass balance flights at Princeton Gas

**Task 5.3**  
Deploy spectrometer at Honor Rancho and/or Aliso Canyon

**Task 5.4**  
Conduct twice-monthly mass balance flights at HR and/or AC

## Task 6.0: Development of emissions inventories

**Task 6.1**  
Consult with EPA, DOE, and/or Stakeholder on Enhancements

**Task 6.2**  
Develop and Deliver Emissions Inventory

**Task 6.3**  
Develop and Deliver Emissions Time Series

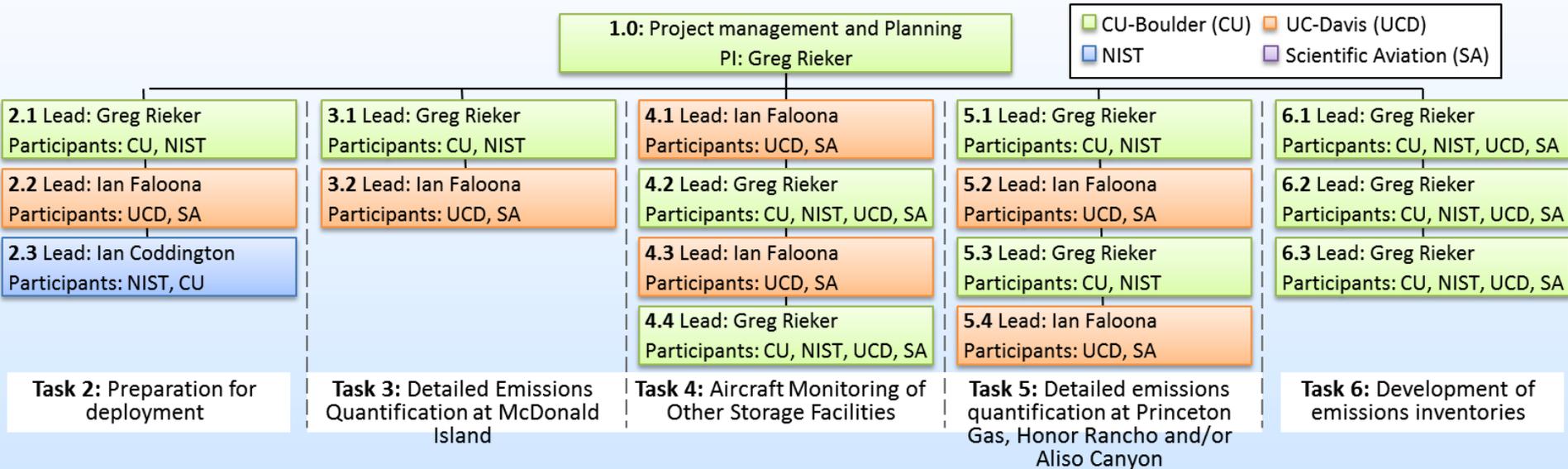
### Lead Organization

■ CU-Boulder

■ NIST

■ UC-Davis

# Organization Chart

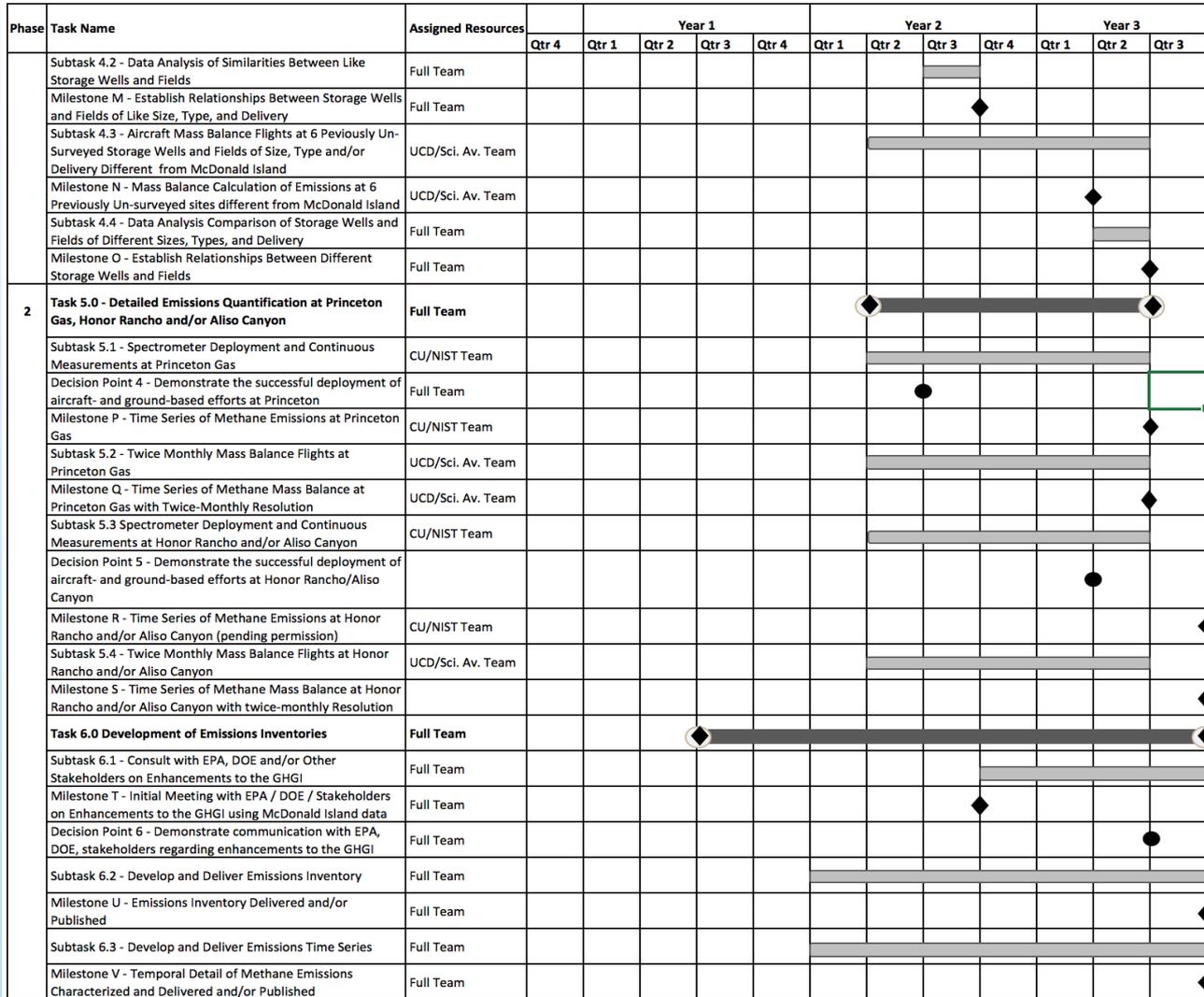


**Roles of Participants Chart: task-by-task identification of lead and participating organization for proposed project. Tasks are shaded by organization of technical and management lead participant.**

# Gantt Chart (zoom to view)

| Phase | Task Name   | Assigned Resources | Year 1                              |       |       |       | Year 2                              |       |       |       | Year 3 |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|-------|---|--------------------|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|--|--|--|
|       |   |                    | Qtr 4                               | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr 4                               | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr 4  | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 |  |  |  |
| 1     | <b>Task 1.0 - Project Management and Planning</b>   | CU/NIST Team       | [Gantt bar from Q1 2021 to Q3 2023] |       |       |       |                                     |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | <b>Task 2.0 - Preparation for Deployment</b>  | Full Team          | [Gantt bar from Q1 2021 to Q3 2021] |       |       |       |                                     |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | Subtask 2.1 - Build, Lock and Field Ready Dual Frequency-Comb Spectrometer  | CU/NIST Team       | [Gantt bar from Q1 2021 to Q3 2021] |       |       |       |                                     |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | Milestone A - Transmission spectrum from phase-locked dual frequency-comb spectrometer  | CU/NIST Team       |                                     | ◆     |       |       |                                     |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | Milestone B - Deployment-Ready Frequency-Comb System  | CU/NIST Team       |                                     |       | ◆     |       |                                     |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | Subtask 2.2 Develop Micrometeorological Instrument Package  | UCD/Sci. Av. Team  | [Gantt bar from Q1 2021 to Q3 2021] |       |       |       |                                     |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | Milestone C - Micrometeorological Package Operational   | UCD/Sci. Av. Team  |                                     | ◆     |       |       |                                     |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | Milestone D - Micrometeorological Package Integrated on Aircraft  | UCD/Sci. Av. Team  |                                     |       | ◆     |       |                                     |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | Subtask 2.3 Prepare Site Modeling and Configure of Ground-based Observational System  | CU/NIST Team       | [Gantt bar from Q1 2021 to Q3 2021] |       |       |       |                                     |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | Milestone E - Site visit to McDonald Island   | CU/NIST Team       |                                     | ◆     |       |       |                                     |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | Milestone F - High resolution Transport Model and Inversion Parameters established for McDonald Island facility   | CU/NIST Team       |                                     | ◆     |       |       |                                     |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | Milestone G - Optimal Configuration for McDonald Island Ground- and Aircraft-based Observations Determined from Synthetic Data Inversions                 | CU/NIST Team       |                                     |       | ◆     |       |                                     |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | Decision Point 1 - Ground- and aircraft-based systems ready for field deployment at McDonald Island   | Full Team          |                                     |       | ●     |       |                                     |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | <b>Task 3.0 - Detailed Emissions Quantification at McDonald Island</b>  | Full Team          | [Gantt bar from Q1 2021 to Q3 2021] |       |       |       | [Gantt bar from Q1 2022 to Q3 2022] |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | Subtask 3.1 - Spectrometer Deployment and Continuous Measurements at McDonald Island  | CU/NIST Team       | [Gantt bar from Q1 2021 to Q3 2021] |       |       |       | [Gantt bar from Q1 2022 to Q3 2022] |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | Decision Point 2 - Demonstrate the successful deployment of aircraft- and ground-based efforts at McDonald Island   | Full Team          |                                     |       |       | ●     |                                     |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | Milestone H - Demonstrate Continuous Measurements of Methane Emissions at McDonald Island with 80% Uptime   | CU/NIST Team       |                                     |       |       |       | ◆                                   |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | Milestone I - Time Series of Methane Emissions at McDonald Island from Measurements and Inversions  |                    |                                     |       |       |       |                                     | ◆     |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | Subtask 3.2 Twice-monthly mass balance flights at McDonald Island   | UCD/Sci. Av. Team  | [Gantt bar from Q1 2021 to Q3 2021] |       |       |       | [Gantt bar from Q1 2022 to Q3 2022] |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | Milestone J - Demonstrate initial Mass Balance Flights at McDonald Island   | UCD/Sci. Av. Team  |                                     |       |       | ◆     |                                     |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | Milestone K - Time Series of Methane Mass Balance at McDonald Island with Twice-Monthly Resolution  | UCD/Sci. Av. Team  |                                     |       |       |       | ◆                                   |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | Decision Point 3 - Time-resolved Aircraft- and Ground-based Data from McDonald Island   | Full Team          |                                     |       |       |       |                                     |       | ●     |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | <b>Task 4.0 Aircraft Monitoring of Other Storage Facilities</b>   | UCD/Sci. Av. Team  | [Gantt bar from Q1 2021 to Q3 2021] |       |       |       | [Gantt bar from Q1 2022 to Q3 2023] |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | Subtask 4.1 - Aircraft Mass Balance Flights at 6 Previously Un-Surveyed Storage Wells and Fields of Size, Type and/or Delivery Similar to McDonald Island | UCD/Sci. Av. Team  | [Gantt bar from Q1 2021 to Q3 2021] |       |       |       | [Gantt bar from Q1 2022 to Q3 2023] |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |
|       | Milestone L - Mass Balance Calculation of Emissions at 6 Previously Un-Surveyed Sites   | UCD/Sci. Av. Team  |                                     |       |       |       |                                     |       |       | ◆     |        |       |       |       |  |  |  |

# Gantt Chart (zoom to view)



# Gantt Chart Summary



- Build dual-comb spectrometer
  - Develop micrometeorological package for aircraft
  - Begin ground-based emissions quantification at storage site 1
  - Begin aircraft-based emissions quantification at storage site 1 and other storage facilities
- Continue detailed emissions quantification at storage site 1
  - Begin ground- and air-based emissions quantification at storage site 2
  - Continue aircraft-based emissions quantification at other storage facilities
  - Consult EPA/DOE/other stakeholders to develop inventory and time series
- Complete detailed emissions quantification at all storage sites
  - Complete aircraft-based emissions quantification at other storage facilities
  - Finalize and publish inventory and emissions time series in consultation with EPA/DOE/stakeholders and deliver

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