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1 **An Overview of the 2013 Las Vegas Ozone Study (LVOS): Impact of**  
2 **stratospheric intrusions and long-range transport on surface air quality**

3

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26

1 **Abstract.** The 2013 Las Vegas Ozone Study (LVOS) was conducted in the late spring  
2 and early summer of 2013 to assess the seasonal contribution of stratosphere-to-  
3 troposphere transport (STT) and long-range transport to surface ozone in Clark County,  
4 Nevada and determine if these processes directly contribute to exceedances of the  
5 National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) in this area. Secondary goals included  
6 the characterization of local ozone production, regional transport from the Los Angeles  
7 Basin, and impacts from wildfires. The LVOS measurement campaign took place at a  
8 former U.S. Air Force radar station ~45 km northwest of Las Vegas on Angel Peak (~2.7  
9 km above mean sea level, asl) in the Spring Mountains. The study consisted of two  
10 extended periods (May 19 - June 4 and June 22 - 28, 2013) with near daily 5-minute  
11 averaged lidar measurements of ozone and backscatter profiles from the surface to ~2.5  
12 km above ground level (~5.2 km asl), and continuous in situ measurements (May 20 -  
13 June 28) of O<sub>3</sub>, CO, (1-min) and meteorological parameters (5-min) at the surface. These  
14 activities were guided by forecasts and analyses from the FLEXPART particle dispersion  
15 model and the Real Time Air Quality Modeling System (RAQMS), and the GFDL AM3  
16 chemistry-climate model. In this paper, we describe the LVOS measurements and  
17 present an overview of the results. The combined measurements and model analyses  
18 show that STT directly contributed to each of the three exceedances that occurred in  
19 Clark County during LVOS, with contributions to 8-h surface ozone in excess of 30 ppbv  
20 on each of these days. Our analyses also shows that ozone exceedances would have  
21 occurred at a rate greater than 50% if the 8-h ozone NAAQS had been 65 ppbv instead of  
22 75 ppbv, making these springtime events the rule rather than the exception.

23

1 **1. Introduction**

2 Surface ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) has decreased dramatically across much of the eastern United  
3 States over the last two decades [*He et al.*, 2013; *Lefohn et al.*, 2010], largely as a result  
4 of stricter emission controls on stationary and mobile NO<sub>x</sub> sources [*Butler et al.*, 2011;  
5 *EPA*, 2012]. More than 65% of the rural eastern U.S. sites surveyed in a recent study by  
6 *Cooper et al.* [2012] showed statistically significant decreases in median ozone during the  
7 summer with 43% also exhibiting significant decreases in the spring. In contrast, only  
8 8% of the western U.S. rural sites examined showed similar summertime decreases, and  
9 more than 50% had significant springtime increases. These east-west differences have  
10 been partially attributed to increasing emissions of NO<sub>x</sub> and other ozone precursors from  
11 industrial activities and development in East Asia [*Brown-Steiner and Hess*, 2011; *Jacob*  
12 *et al.*, 1999; *Zhang et al.*, 2011] and to a higher fraction of background ozone in the  
13 western U.S. due to stratospheric influence [*Lin et al.*, 2012a]

14 Much of the pollution emitted in East Asia is carried eastward across the North  
15 Pacific Ocean by the prevailing winds. The fastest transport occurs in the mid-and upper  
16 troposphere, often associated with Asian boundary layer pollution being entrained into  
17 the warm conveyor belts (WCB) of midlatitude cyclones, and these plumes can descend  
18 to the surface of western North America [*Brown-Steiner and Hess*, 2011; *Cooper et al.*,  
19 2004b; *Liang et al.*, 2005; *Lin et al.*, 2012b; *Stohl*, 2001]. The high average elevation and  
20 deep boundary layers of the intermountain west increase the likelihood that some of this  
21 pollution may reach the surface as the plumes move inland and the transported pollution  
22 descends isentropically behind cold fronts [*Liang et al.*, 2004]. Asian pollution can also  
23 be transported to western North America at low altitude but only has a significant impact

1 in summer [*Holzer and Hall, 2007*].

2 Stratosphere-to-troposphere transport (STT) also contributes to the relatively high  
3 background ozone in boundary layer air transported ashore from the north Pacific during  
4 spring and can likewise lead to episodic increases at the surface [*Ambrose et al., 2011*;  
5 *A.O. Langford et al., 2009*; *Lefohn et al., 2011*]. Direct transport of undiluted  
6 stratospheric air to the surface is uncommon, but some exchange of air between the upper  
7 troposphere and lower stratosphere occurs with all midlatitude cyclones [*Johnson and*  
8 *Viezee, 1981*] and a fraction of the ozone-rich air descending in the dry airstream (DA)  
9 may be entrained into the deep springtime boundary layers of the intermountain west.  
10 This descending air can also become interleaved with long-range transport layers in the  
11 WCB [*Cooper et al., 2004a*; *Cooper et al., 2004b*; *Stohl and Trickl, 1999*].

12 Several climatologies [*James et al., 2003*; *Sprenger and Wernli, 2003*; *Wernli and*  
13 *Bourqui, 2002*] suggest that deep stratospheric intrusions (i.e. those penetrating to within  
14 ~3 km of the surface) are most likely to form near the exit of the east Pacific storm track  
15 above the Pacific Northwest with the deepest descent of stratospheric air near the coast of  
16 Southern California. These conclusions are consistent with measurements [*A. O.*  
17 *Langford et al., 2012*] made during the 2010 California Research at the Nexus of Air  
18 Quality and Climate Change (CalNex) field study, and with analyses from the  
19 NOAA/GFDL AM3 global-high resolution (~50 x 50 km) chemistry–climate model.  
20 **Figure 1** displays the mean contributions of (a) STT [*Lin et al., 2012a*], and (b) transport  
21 from Asia [*Lin et al., 2012b*] to the daily maximum 8-h average (MDA8) surface O<sub>3</sub> in  
22 the United States during May and June of 2010. These plots show the greatest impact of  
23 both transport processes to be in the Intermountain West with minimal contributions

1 along the Gulf Coast and in the Southeastern U.S.. The striking similarity between the  
2 two plots reflects the primary role of midlatitude cyclones in both transport processes.  
3 The AM3 model shows the stratospheric contribution to surface ozone during May and  
4 June of 2010 to be roughly 3 times that of long-range transport.

5 Since the higher background concentrations and episodic increases associated with  
6 STT and Asian pollution are unaffected by local control strategies, these processes pose a  
7 serious challenge for air quality managers tasked with meeting the National Ambient Air  
8 Quality Standard (NAAQS) in the western United States. This is especially true in late  
9 spring when the contribution from local and regional photochemistry is also rapidly  
10 increasing. The problem will be compounded if the NAAQS is reduced from the current  
11 (2008) value of 75 parts-per-billion by volume (ppbv) for the MDA8  
12 (<http://www.epa.gov/oaqps001/greenbk/hindex.html>). Although the U.S. EPA has  
13 established a provision (<http://www.epa.gov/ttn/analysis/exevents.htm>) to identify and  
14 exclude these “exceptional events”, the shrinking margin between the NAAQS and  
15 increasing springtime background concentrations means that even modest episodic  
16 additions of 5 to 10 ppbv from STT or Asian pollution can potentially lead to  
17 exceedances of the NAAQS. Exceedance events will become increasingly frequent if the  
18 NAAQS is decreased to 70 ppbv or less, and the “exceptional events” approach may no  
19 longer be viable.

20 Concern about this problem and its implications for air quality management in Clark  
21 County, NV provided the motivation for the Las Vegas Ozone Study (LVOS) conducted  
22 in May and June of 2013. The primary goal of LVOS was to assess the seasonal  
23 contribution of stratosphere-to-troposphere transport (STT) and long-range transport to

1 surface ozone in Clark County and to determine the magnitude of the direct contribution  
2 of these processes to exceedances of the National Ambient Air Quality Standard  
3 (NAAQS) in this area. Secondary goals included the characterization of local ozone  
4 production, regional transport from the Los Angeles Basin, and impacts from wildfires.  
5 The study was funded by the Clark County Department of Air Quality (CC/DAQ) and  
6 conducted by the NOAA Earth System Research Laboratory Chemical Sciences Division  
7 (ESRL/CSD). In this paper, we present an overview of the LVOS campaign and  
8 summarize the major findings and implications for air quality management in the western  
9 United States.

10

## 11 **2. Background**

12 Clark County, Nevada (**Figure 2**) is home to the Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV  
13 Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), one of the fastest growing areas in the United States.  
14 The population of this MSA, which includes the cities of Las Vegas, Henderson, North  
15 Las Vegas, Boulder City, and Paradise, was slightly under 2 million in the 2010 U.S.  
16 Census or more than 70% of the total population of Nevada. Nearly 40 million more  
17 people visit Las Vegas each year (<http://www.lvcva.com/stats-and-facts/>) and the 2011  
18 National Emissions Inventory (<http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/net/2011inventory.html>)  
19 estimates that about 75% of the NO<sub>x</sub> and 5% of the VOCs emitted in Clark County are  
20 derived from mobile sources. More than 90% of the emitted VOCs are derived from  
21 biogenic sources and about half of the remaining NO<sub>x</sub> comes from one coal-fueled, and  
22 five natural gas-fueled power plants that provide about 5 MW of electricity for the area.  
23 Most of the population and development is confined to the Las Vegas Valley (LVV), a

1 1600 km<sup>2</sup> basin that lies between 500 and 900 m above mean sea level (asl) and is  
2 bounded on the west by the Spring Mountains and to the north by the Sheep Mountains,  
3 with the Muddy Mountains to the east and Black Mountains to the south. The I-15  
4 corridor through the Mojave Desert and Cajon Pass links Las Vegas with the eastern Los  
5 Angeles Basin about 275 km to the southwest. The Cajon Pass and I-15 corridor is also a  
6 potential pathway for export of pollution from the Los Angeles Basin into the Mojave  
7 Desert and the Las Vegas Valley.

8 The Clark County Department of Air Quality maintains a network of continuous  
9 ambient monitoring stations (CAMS) that measure surface ozone along with  
10 meteorological parameters and other trace gases (cf. **Figure 2b**). **Figure 3** plots the  
11 average MDA8 ozone measured at the monitoring station in Jean over the 3-yr period  
12 from 2010 to 2012. Jean is located along the I-15 corridor in the Mojave Desert about 45  
13 km southwest of downtown Las Vegas at an elevation of 924 m asl. Since Jean is usually  
14 upwind of Las Vegas, but downwind of Los Angeles, it is the Clark County monitor least  
15 affected by local emissions, but most sensitive to transport from Southern California.  
16 **Figure 3** also plots the corresponding time series from five monitors operated by the U.S.  
17 National Parks Service [2013] at remote locations surrounding Clark County (open  
18 circles in **Figure 2a**). The ozone seasonal cycle and the synoptic scale variability is very  
19 similar at all six sites with the highest concentrations in May and June or nearly two  
20 months before the maximum surface temperatures and greatest photochemical production.  
21 This suggests that it is primarily large-scale transport that determines the mean ozone at  
22 all six sites, although the influence of the LA Basin is seen in the slightly higher (1 to 4  
23 ppbv) average concentrations at the Mojave National Reserve and at Jean during May



1 and June. The sudden drop in ozone at all six sites in early July reflects the shift in the  
2 prevailing winds from southwesterly to southerly when the North American summer  
3 monsoon develops and the background concentrations are no longer determined by  
4 inflow from the Pacific.

5 Although Clark County is currently in attainment of the NAAQS (i.e. the 3-year  
6 average of the annual 4th highest measured MDA8 ozone concentration did not exceed  
7 0.075 ppmv, parts-per-million by volume) based on data acquired between 2009 and  
8 2011, the standard will be exceeded when more recent measurement periods are  
9 considered. The 3-year average (2010-2012) of the fourth highest MDA8 concentration  
10 was 0.075 ppmv or 75 ppbv at Jean, and 77 ppbv at Joe Neal, the northernmost monitor  
11 in the Las Vegas Valley (cf. **Figure 2b**). When the 2011-2013 data are used, the fourth  
12 highest value will still be 75 ppbv at Jean, but Joe Neal, Palo Verde, and two other Clark  
13 County monitors will be in exceedance.

14

### 15 **3. LVOS Measurement Campaign**

16 The LVOS measurement campaign was conducted between May 19 and June 28,  
17 2013 at a former U.S. Air Force General Surveillance Radar station atop Angel Peak  
18 (36.32 °N, 115.57 °W, 2,682 m asl) (**Figure 4**) about 45 km northwest of Las Vegas in  
19 the Spring Mountains and Toiyabe National Forest. The summit overlooks the Kyle  
20 Canyon drainage and the primary access road to the Las Vegas Valley to the southeast.  
21 The radar station was decommissioned by the Air Force in 1969 and the property  
22 transferred to the Department of the Interior and to Clark County with the remaining  
23 operational radar system transferred to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). This

1 limited-access site currently serves as a communications relay facility for Clark County  
2 and other state and federal agencies. The former cantonment area below the summit of  
3 Angel Peak was transferred to Clark County for operation as the Spring Mountain Youth  
4 Camp (SMYC). Angel Peak is relatively isolated from major emission sources and is  
5 usually exposed to free tropospheric air during the night. However, the site is frequently  
6 subjected to air from the Las Vegas Valley during late spring and summer when  
7 thermally driven upslope flows develop during the day and the mixed layer above the  
8 valley floor can grow to more than 4 km deep.

9 The weather was mostly mild and dry with clear skies or scattered fair weather  
10 cumulus during the field campaign. The overall seasonal upward trend in temperature  
11 (**Figure 5a**) was punctuated by the passage of several cold fronts associated with deep  
12 upper level troughs or closed lows moving through the Pacific Northwest. The passage  
13 of these troughs is seen in both the Angel Peak surface pressure and in the NCEP/CDAS  
14 Reanalysis 500 hPa geopotential heights averaged over a 5° x 5° box centered at 36°N,  
15 115°W (**Figure 5b**). Strong SSW winds usually accompanied these systems (**Figure 5c**),  
16 and the descending air behind the fronts led to two extended periods (May 21-26, and  
17 June 13-18) with much drier air at the surface (**Figure 5a**). There were also two periods  
18 (June 4-9 and June 26-29) with strong ridging, warmer temperatures, and weak winds  
19 that led to regional stagnation and build up of O<sub>3</sub> from local photochemical production.  
20 These periods were accompanied by strong upslope flow at Angel Peak and afternoon  
21 fair weather cumulus (cf. **Figure 5a**). More extensive cloud cover occurred on May 21  
22 and June 25. The yellow bars highlight the three days (May 21, 25, and June 21) when

1 the 75 ppbv 2008 O<sub>3</sub> NAAQS was exceeded by one or more of the regulatory monitors in  
2 the Las Vegas Valley.

3

### 4 *3.1 TOPAZ lidar measurements*

5 The primary instrument used during LVOS was the TOPAZ (Tunable optical profiler  
6 for aerosols and ozone) 3-wavelength mobile differential absorption lidar (DIAL) system,  
7 which can profile ozone and aerosol layers from near the surface to ~2.5 km above  
8 ground level (agl). TOPAZ was reconfigured from the nadir-viewing aircraft-based  
9 version described previously [*Alvarez II et al.*, 2011; *A. O. Langford et al.*, 2010] and  
10 installed in the back of a truck for ground-based operations after the CalNex field  
11 campaign. The lidar is oriented in a zenith-viewing configuration with a large motorized  
12 vertically scanning mirror on top of the truck to permit line of sight measurements along  
13 elevation angles ranging from -6° (i.e. below the horizon) to 30° at a fixed azimuth  
14 direction. The mirror can also be moved completely out of the light path for zenith  
15 measurements. The truck was parked on the south edge of the Angel Peak summit and  
16 the azimuth angle fixed at 130° to overlook the Kyle Canyon drainage (**Figure 4b**, filled  
17 square).

18 TOPAZ uses near and far field detection channels to extend the dynamic range and  
19 can profile ozone over distances from about 400 m to 2.5 km during the day with the  
20 limits determined by the point of full overlap between the transmitter and receiver in the  
21 near field and the useful signal-to-noise cut off in the far field. The DIAL profiles are  
22 analyzed using a range resolution of 90 m, and a 450-m running average to smooth the  
23 resulting profiles. In normal operation, the scanning mirror is stepped through a series of

1 angles to allow viewing at elevations of 2, 6, 20, and 90° above the horizon in a 5-min  
2 cycle with the backscatter returns averaged for 75 s at each angle. The resulting slant  
3 angle profiles are then projected along the zenith to create continuous vertical profiles  
4 down to about 15 m above the ground. The effective horizontal footprint of these  
5 blended profiles increases from about 11 meters near the top of the profile to about 900 m  
6 near the surface. For comparison, the horizontal sampling footprint associated with the  
7 75 s integration time ranged from about 150 to 750 m for typical background winds of 2  
8 to 10 m/s.

9 TOPAZ is partially automated, but does not run autonomously and requires 1 to 2  
10 operators. Each LVOS observing session consisted of 2 to 20 hours of nearly continuous  
11 5-minute averaged ozone and backscatter profiles from the surface to ~2.5 km above  
12 ground level (~5.2 km above mean sea level). The system operated on 25 out of 43  
13 possible days during LVOS, with a laser failure in mid-June dividing the data record into  
14 two intensive periods: May 19 to June 4, and June 22 to 28. **Figure 6** displays a series of  
15 time-height color curtain plots showing the ozone concentrations measured by the  
16 TOPAZ lidar. The superimposed solid black traces show the normalized integrated  
17 backscatter from ~15 m agl to 2000 m agl (relative to the summit of Angel Peak) and the  
18 dotted gray lines the normalized solar radiation from the SMYC. The “x” symbols  
19 represent the afternoon mixed layer depth determined from the 0000 UT (1700 Pacific  
20 Daylight Time, PDT) McCarran International Airport (VEF) soundings; “+” symbols are  
21 plotted when the mixed layer was deeper than 5 km asl and “0” is plotted when the  
22 sounding is missing. The top of the afternoon mixed layer was always at least as high as  
23 the summit of Angel Peak. The most striking features of these plots are the frequent

1 layers with more than 100 ppbv of O<sub>3</sub> detected within a few km of the Angel Peak  
2 summit in late May. These layers were observed only under clear sky conditions and the  
3 backscatter profiles (not shown) indicate very low aerosol loadings associated with these  
4 layers consistent with a UT/LS origin. The McCarran soundings show that many of these  
5 filaments descended low enough to interact with the deep afternoon mixed layers. Note  
6 that these layered structures are qualitatively different from the deep column of elevated  
7 O<sub>3</sub> and very high backscatter observed on June 2 when the plume from the 28,000 acre  
8 Powerhouse Fire burning near Los Angeles engulfed Angel Peak. Another interesting  
9 feature of **Figure 6** is the unusually low O<sub>3</sub> concentrations with relatively low backscatter  
10 seen extending well above Angel Peak on June 24-26. These low concentrations reflect a  
11 deep incursion of subtropical marine boundary layer air transported over the western U.S.  
12 by the counterclockwise circulation around an unusually large cyclone sitting over the  
13 Gulf of Alaska. More detailed descriptions of these various events will be presented  
14 elsewhere.

15

### 16 *3.2 In situ measurements*

17 Surface O<sub>3</sub> and CO concentrations were measured continuously at Angel Peak from  
18 May 20 to June 29. Ozone concentrations were determined using a commercial UV-  
19 absorbance monitor with a detection limit of 1 ppbv for a 1-min integration time and an  
20 uncertainty of 2% [Williams *et al.*, 2006]. This instrument was calibrated against a  
21 reference standard in the laboratory prior to deployment. Carbon monoxide was  
22 measured using a modified commercial vacuum ultraviolet fluorescence [Holloway *et al.*,  
23 2000] monitor with a detection limit below 1 ppbv for a 1-min integration time and an

1 accuracy of 4%. This instrument was zeroed and calibrated hourly against a reference  
2 standard. Both instruments were installed within a temperature-regulated room in the  
3 former radar building nearest TOPAZ (cf. **Figure 4b**, filled triangle), and sampled air at 1  
4 standard liter per minute through 6 mm diameter and 30 m long PFA  
5 (polytetrafluoroethylene) lines. The inlets were equipped with 47 mm TFE  
6 (tetrafluoroethylene) particulate filters and mounted ~2 m above the building roof or about  
7 12 m above ground level (agl). Data from periods influenced by NO<sub>x</sub> and CO emissions  
8 from vehicles, backup generator testing, and other local activities were identified and  
9 removed from the records.

10 **Figure 7a** plots the continuous 1-min in situ surface O<sub>3</sub> measurements from Angel  
11 Peak (blue line) together with the 15 to 2000 m agl average O<sub>3</sub> from TOPAZ (red  
12 symbols). The corresponding CO measurements are plotted in **Figure 7b**. The 8-h O<sub>3</sub>  
13 NAAQS was exceeded at Angel Peak on seven days during LVOS (May 24, 25, 30 and  
14 June 2, 17, 18). Background CO peaks in the springtime [*Kim et al.*, 2008] and the  
15 concentrations at Angel Peak accordingly declined slowly over the course of the  
16 campaign. The only large increases in CO beyond the daily 20 to 30 ppbv variations  
17 associated with the diurnal upslope flow coincided with the arrival of the Powerhouse  
18 Fire plume on June 2 when the concentrations nearly doubled, and on June 27 when  
19 polluted air from the Las Vegas Valley was transported to Angel Peak by strong upslope  
20 flow. The characteristics of the fire plume on June 2 contrast sharply with the relatively  
21 low CO and aerosol backscatter (cf. **Figure 6**) measured during the late May exceedance  
22 days. The concentrations of O<sub>3</sub> and CO decreased to as low as 22 and 69 ppbv,  
23 respectively, in the subtropical marine boundary layer air on June 24-26.

1 Surface O<sub>3</sub> and CO averaged 62±8 and 116±15 ppbv over the first 5 weeks of the  
2 campaign (May 19 to June 23). These values are similar to the free tropospheric  
3 concentrations measured by the CalNex WP-3D flights above the Los Angeles Basin  
4 during May of 2010 [Neuman *et al.*, 2011]. The overall average concentrations from  
5 those flights were 66 and 120 ppbv for O<sub>3</sub> and CO, respectively, with mean values of  
6 71±8 and 108±6 ppbv for air of upper tropospheric origin, 53±10 and 106±10 ppbv for  
7 air from the marine boundary layer, 69±6 and 136±10 ppbv for Asian transport plumes,  
8 and 65±4 and 134±7 ppbv for aged regional emissions based on FLEXPART back  
9 trajectories. The MDA8 O<sub>3</sub> at Angel Peak on the three Clark County exceedance days  
10 was 70±3, 78±1, and 77±3 ppbv, respectively, with corresponding CO concentrations of  
11 115±6, 111±6, and 121±6 ppbv. The low CO concentrations and aerosol backscatter on  
12 the first two exceedance days indicate a strong upper troposphere/lower stratosphere  
13 (UT/LS) influence; the higher concentrations during the third episode are consistent with  
14 an additional contribution from Asian pollution.

15 The O<sub>3</sub> concentrations measured aloft by TOPAZ were generally higher than those  
16 measured at the summit of Angel Peak in late May when there were frequent upper level  
17 cyclones, but lower in mid and late June when the strong high-pressure ridges developed.  
18 This shows that the surface concentrations at Angel Peak were influenced primarily by  
19 descending air in the first instances, and by upslope flow from the valley during the  
20 stagnation episodes. The simultaneous operation of TOPAZ with its horizontal viewing  
21 capabilities and the in situ O<sub>3</sub> monitor allowed regular comparisons between the two  
22 measurement techniques. **Figure 8** plots the TOPAZ O<sub>3</sub> measurements made at several  
23 altitudes against the in situ measurements from Angel Peak. The red crosses represent all

1 of the coincident measurements and the filled black circles those measurements acquired  
2 between 1400 and 1600 PDT on days (18 out of 25) when the afternoon (0000 UT or  
3 1700 PDT) soundings at McCarran Airport showed the top of the mixed layer to be at  
4 least 2000 m higher than the summit of Angel Peak (i.e. > 4.7 km asl). The black and red  
5 solid lines show the corresponding linear regression fits. The air above Angel Peak was  
6 generally too clean to allow direct determination of the local mixed layer height from  
7 aerosol gradients [*White et al.*, 1999]. **Figure 8a** shows excellent agreement between the  
8 in situ measurements and the lowest TOPAZ measurements despite the spatial  
9 differences; the first TOPAZ bin averages the concentrations over a 2° slant path ranging  
10 from 400 to 1400 m distant from the inlets horizontally, and from ~15 to 50 m above the  
11 summit, or 200 to 400 m above the southeastern flank of Angel Peak. The measurements  
12 agree to within 3% with a high degree of correlation ( $R^2 = 0.930$ ). The correlation is  
13 improved ( $R^2 = 0.967$ ), but the agreement slightly degraded (5%) when only data  
14 acquired when the McCarran soundings showed the boundary layer to be deep and well  
15 mixed is used. Not surprisingly, the agreement becomes worse when the TOPAZ  
16 concentrations from (b) 500 m, (c) 1000 m, or (d) 15 to 2000 m agl are compared to the  
17 in situ measurements. The measurement precision should be very similar in **Figures 8a**  
18 and **8c** since both sets of data were acquired at a range of ~1000 m from the lidar (at  
19 beam elevations of 2° and 90°, respectively) and the increased scatter at higher altitudes  
20 is almost entirely due to atmospheric variability and the frequent presence of high O<sub>3</sub>  
21 layers aloft. The differences between the two measurements under well-mixed conditions  
22 are well within the combined uncertainties and much smaller than the observed altitude  
23 dependences.



1

### 2 *3.3 Supporting measurements*

3       The Angel Peak chemical measurements were complemented by a GPS-enabled  
4 weather station that recorded continuous 5-min averaged winds, temperature, and relative  
5 humidity from a 3 m mast located near the southeastern edge of Angel Peak (cf. **Figure**  
6 4b, filled circle). This position provided unobstructed fetch for wind directions between  
7 45 and 270°, which occurred more than 75% of the time during the study. However, the  
8 anemometer was partially sheltered by the TOPAZ truck to the northwest and the former  
9 radome building housing the in situ instruments to the north. Additional meteorological  
10 data and solar irradiance were obtained from the Western Regional Climate Center  
11 (WRCC) weather station ([www.wrcc.dri.edu/weather/smyc.html](http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/weather/smyc.html)) situated about 125 m  
12 lower in elevation and 800 m to the west of the summit at the SMYC.

13       The routine measurements from the Clark County DAQ network of continuous  
14 ambient monitoring sites (CAMS) provide additional points of comparison for the Angel  
15 Peak ozone measurements. **Figure 4a** shows the 7 CAMS that were operational in the  
16 Las Vegas Valley (Joe Neal, Palo Verde, J.D. Smith, Walter Johnson, Jerome Mack, Paul  
17 Meyer, and Winterwood) during LVOS, with the 4 sites located in outlying areas (Jean,  
18 Boulder City, Apex, and Mesquite) shown in **Figure 2b**. Clark County provided 5-min  
19 average O<sub>3</sub> data for the duration of the LVOS campaign in addition to the standard hourly  
20 and MDA8 data available online ([www.ccaqapps5m.co.clark.nv.us](http://www.ccaqapps5m.co.clark.nv.us)). Many of the CAMS  
21 also measured meteorological parameters, particulates, or other chemical species in  
22 addition to ozone. The U.S. National Park Service also provided O<sub>3</sub> measurements with  
23 1-min integration times from Great Basin and Death Valley, (cf. **Figure 2a**), and 1-h

1 measurements from other locations were obtained from the U.S. EPA AirNow  
2 ([www.airnowtech.org](http://www.airnowtech.org)) or California Air Resources Board ([www.arb.ca.gov](http://www.arb.ca.gov)) online  
3 databases. The vertical structure of the atmosphere was profiled hourly by an upper-air  
4 monitoring station comprised of a radar wind profiler, sodar, and profiling radiometer  
5 maintained by the DAQ at the North Las Vegas Airport (VGT), and by the twice daily  
6 (0500 and 1700 PDT) radiosondes launched by the National Weather Service (NWS)  
7 from the McCarran International Airport (VEF) (cf. Figure 4a). The horizontal  
8 distribution of clouds, smoke plumes, and mid-tropospheric water vapor was obtained  
9 from hourly GOES-WEST 1 km visible, 4 km infrared, and 8 km water vapor imagery,  
10 and from the NASA MODIS products.

11 **Figure 9** plots the continuous 1-min in situ surface O<sub>3</sub> measurements from Angel  
12 Peak (black) together with the 5-min measurements from the Clark County monitoring  
13 stations at Joe Neal (blue), Jean (green), and Apex (purple) (cf. **Figure 4**). The 15 to  
14 2000 m agl TOPAZ measurements are plotted in red. Joe Neal lies to the north of Las  
15 Vegas and about 30 km ESE of Angel Peak near the mouth of the Kyle Canyon drainage,  
16 which links Angel Peak to the Las Vegas Valley. This site typically measures some of  
17 the highest O<sub>3</sub> concentrations in the LVV. Apex is situated in a rural area north of Las  
18 Vegas and on the far side of the valley about 61 km ENE of Angel Peak and Jean is  
19 located in the Mojave Desert about 65 km to the SSW (cf. **Section 2**). Whereas surface  
20 O<sub>3</sub> exhibits little diurnal variation at Angel Peak, the concentrations at all of these lower-  
21 lying sites often decrease during the late night and early morning as O<sub>3</sub> is destroyed by  
22 surface deposition or titration beneath the shallow inversions that form when the winds  
23 are calm. The five data series converge at other times, however, including the afternoons

1 and evenings of May 21, May 25, and June 21 when the Clark County exceedances  
2 occurred. The correlation coefficients from scatter plots similar to those in **Figure 8**, but  
3 comparing the afternoon (1400 to 1600 PDT) Angel Peak ozone measurements to those  
4 made by the CC/DAQ monitors in the valley range from  $R^2=0.645$  for Palo Verde, which  
5 lies on the western side of the valley and is the nearest monitor to Angel Peak, to  
6  $R^2=0.541$  at Jerome Mack, which is located near the eastern side of the valley and  
7 downtown Las Vegas. The correlation coefficients for Joe Neal and Jean are  $R^2=0.645$   
8 and  $R^2=0.565$ , respectively. As noted above, the  $O_3$  concentrations measured on or above  
9 Angel Peak were generally higher than those in the valley following cold fronts (e.g. May  
10 20-21 and 24-25), but were usually lower than or comparable to the concentrations in the  
11 northern valley during strong ridging (e.g. June 4-8 and June 27-28).

12 The regional nature of the high  $O_3$  episodes in Clark County during LVOS is  
13 apparent from **Figure 10**, which compares the surface measurements from Jean and  
14 Angel Peak plotted in **Figure 9** to the 5-min  $O_3$  measurements from the U.S. National  
15 Parks Service monitors at Death Valley and Great Basin National Parks (cf. **Figure 2a**).  
16 Ozone was relatively high in Death Valley NP on the evening of May 21 and was also  
17 elevated at Great Basin NP later that night. Ozone was also elevated on the night of May  
18 24 at Death Valley NP and at all four sites on May 25. There was another short-lived  
19 ozone peak on the afternoon of June 2 at Death Valley NP associated with the  
20 Powerhouse Fire followed by an increase later in the evening at Great Basin NP. Great  
21 Basin National Park reported only three exceedances of the NAAQS in all of 2013 with  
22 the MDA8 reaching 76 ppbv on May 5 (see below), May 25, and June 18. Although  
23 there were no exceedances of the NAAQS in Death Valley National Park during 2013,

1 the two highest ozone days of the year were May 24 and 25 where the MDA8 O<sub>3</sub> reached  
2 74 and 73 ppbv, respectively.

3

#### 4 **4. Model Analyses**

5 The NOAA/NESDIS RAQMS and NOAA/ESRL/CSD FLEXPART models were  
6 used to forecast STT and long-range transport events during the LVOS measurement  
7 campaign with supplemental analyses from the NOAA/ESRL/GSD Rapid Refresh Air  
8 Quality Model ([http://ruc.noaa.gov/wrf/WG11\\_RT/Welcome.cgi](http://ruc.noaa.gov/wrf/WG11_RT/Welcome.cgi)) that uses RAQMS  
9 lateral boundary conditions. The NOAA GFDL AM3 and FLEXPART models were then  
10 used to estimate the contribution of STT and long range transport to surface ozone in the  
11 western U.S. and to Clark County following the field campaign.

12

#### 13 4.1 RAQMS

14 RAQMS (Realtime Air Quality Modeling System) is a unified (stratosphere-  
15 troposphere) online global chemical and aerosol assimilation/forecasting system that has  
16 been used to support several airborne field missions [*Pierce et al.*, 2003; *Pierce et al.*,  
17 2007]. Forecasts were initialized daily at 1200 UT with real-time assimilation of OMI  
18 cloud-cleared total column ozone and MLS ozone profiles from the NASA Aura satellite,  
19 and MODIS aerosol optical depth from the NASA Terra and Aqua satellites. The O<sub>3</sub> and  
20 CO distributions over the North Pacific (10 to 72°N, -110 to -50°E) were predicted at 6-  
21 hour intervals for the next 4 days. RAQMS has been run routinely since 2010 with 2° x  
22 2° resolution analyses and forecasts prior to 2012, and 1°x1° resolution after 2012.  
23 RAQMS plots are archived online (<http://raqms-ops.ssec.wisc.edu>). **Figure 11** displays

1 the RAQMS 1°x1° analyzed ozone distributions on the 310K isentropic surfaces (~ 2 to 4  
2 km asl) at 1200 UT (0500 PDT) on the days before each of the ozone exceedances in  
3 Clark County (i.e. May 20, May 24, and June 20). Elevated O<sub>3</sub> associated with an upper  
4 level low above the Pacific Northwest can be seen above California and Nevada in each  
5 instance.

6

## 7 4.2 FLEXPART

8 Transport of stratospheric, Asian, and biomass burning tracers to the western U.S.  
9 was also followed using the FLEXPART Lagrangian particle dispersion model (version  
10 8.1) [Stohl *et al.*, 2005]. FLEXPART does not map the trajectory of an individual parcel  
11 as performed by standard trajectory models such as HYSPLIT (Hybrid Single-Particle  
12 Lagrangian Integrated Trajectory) [Draxler and Rolph, 2003], but instead calculates the  
13 evolving distribution of a multitude of “particles” transported forward in time from a  
14 specified source region or backward in time from a specific receptor location. The  
15 particles are transported both by the resolved winds and by parameterized subgrid  
16 motions including turbulence and convection. For the present study, FLEXPART was  
17 driven by the National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) Global Forecast  
18 System (GFS) model (analyses at 0000, 0600, 1200, and 1800 UT; 3-h forecasts at 0300,  
19 0900, 1500, and 2100 UT) and run at a spatial resolution of 0.5° x 0.5° with 26 vertical  
20 levels. FLEXPART parameterizes turbulence in the boundary layer using the Hanna  
21 turbulence scheme [Hanna, 1982] and uses the convection parameterization scheme of  
22 Emanuel and Zivkovic-Rothman [1999], which is implemented at each 15-minute model  
23 time step, and is intended to describe all types of convection. This scheme includes

1 entrainment and mixing, cloud microphysical processes, and large-scale control of  
2 ensemble convective activity, including the interaction between convective downdrafts  
3 and surface fluxes.

4 FLEXPART was run routinely in the source (forward) mode for forecasting during  
5 LVOS and the coincident SENEX (Southeast Nexus) field campaigns. The distributions  
6 of stratospheric O<sub>3</sub>, Asian pollution CO, and biomass burning CO tracers were calculated  
7 hourly for an output domain extending from 140 to 90°W and from 25 to 70°N.  
8 Horizontal distributions were plotted and archived online for both the boundary layer  
9 (below 1.5 km asl) and for the lower free troposphere (3 to 6 km asl). The stratospheric  
10 O<sub>3</sub> tracer was carried by particles released into the stratosphere (>2 potential vorticity  
11 units or PVU) and the mixing ratios of O<sub>3</sub> calculated using a linear relationship between  
12 O<sub>3</sub> and potential vorticity (60 ppbv/PVU) at the particle origin in the stratosphere. The  
13 O<sub>3</sub> mixing ratio is conserved and the particle distribution recalculated for up to 20 days  
14 with no chemistry. The Asian CO tracer is based on the amount of CO released into the  
15 boundary layer from anthropogenic sources in East Asia using the EDGAR 3.2 fast track  
16 inventory [Olivier *et al.*, 2005], and is followed for 20 days. Biomass burning CO  
17 emissions were calculated using the algorithm of Stohl *et al.* [2007], which incorporates  
18 MODIS fire detection data, information on land use, and published emission factors.  
19 Both CO tracers are assumed to be inert. Instead of prescribing a fixed injection height  
20 for the fire plume, a probability density function relative to the local PBL height was used  
21 [Brioude *et al.*, 2009]. The online tracer distribution plots were updated twice daily as  
22 newer GFS input data became available. **Figure 12** shows each of the FLEXPART  
23 source mode tracer distributions in the boundary layer (<1.5 km asl) corresponding to the

1 higher altitude 310K RAQMS O<sub>3</sub> analyses in **Figure 11**. FLEXPART shows a  
2 stratospheric O<sub>3</sub> influx of 10-20 ppbv in the vicinity of Clark County that often began  
3 during the afternoon or evening before each of the exceedance days, with Asian CO  
4 tracer concentrations of 10-15 ppbv also covering most of Nevada during the first event.  
5 The biomass burning contributions are negligible in each case. Note that the CO color  
6 scales differ by about a factor of three for these two tracers to approximately reflect the  
7 relative O<sub>3</sub> production efficiencies (see below).

8 FLEXPART was also run in the receptor (backward) mode to trace the origins of air  
9 transported to Clark County. In this mode, 20,000 particles were launched every hour  
10 from a 1° x 1° domain centered over Angel Peak that includes most of the Las Vegas  
11 Valley. The particle distribution was followed backwards in time for up to 10 days and  
12 the fraction originating from the boundary layer, free troposphere, and stratosphere  
13 calculated, together with the concentrations of O<sub>3</sub> originating from the stratosphere and  
14 concentrations of CO transported from Asia or originating from biomass burning. The  
15 results from these analyses are plotted as time series (see below).

16

### 17 4.3 GFDL AM3

18 The contribution of stratospheric ozone to surface concentrations in the western U.S.  
19 during the spring of 2013 was also simulated using the NOAA/GFDL AM3 chemistry-  
20 climate model, which includes interactive stratospheric and tropospheric chemistry,  
21 nudged to NCEP GFS winds [*Lin et al.*, 2012a; *Lin et al.*, 2012b]. The AM3 simulation  
22 of STT O<sub>3</sub> is entirely driven by winds, with no dependency on the tropopause definition.  
23 We implement a stratospheric ozone tracer, defined relative to the dynamically varying

1 e90 tropopause [Prather *et al.*, 2011], to quantify ozone originating from the stratosphere  
2 and account for loss processes in the troposphere. The present study applies a new  
3 version of GFDL AM3 at C90 cubed-sphere grid resolution of  $\sim 100 \times 100 \text{ km}^2$  with daily  
4 resolving fire emissions and anthropogenic emissions. Lin *et al.* [2014, this issue]  
5 describe the current version of AM3 in more detail.

6 **Figure 13** displays the AM3 median stratospheric contribution to MDA8 surface  
7 ozone during May and June of 2013. The spatial distribution appears very similar to the  
8 mean 2010 concentrations shown in **Figure 1a**, but with lower spatial resolution. As in  
9 2010 (cf. Figure 1), the calculated stratospheric contribution to surface ozone is much  
10 larger in the Intermountain West than in the Eastern U.S. and along the Gulf Coast, with  
11 median concentrations of 20 ppbv or more in many areas. The Asian pollution  
12 contribution was not explicitly calculated, but the FLEXPART analyses suggest that it  
13 was similar to that shown in **Figure 1b**.

14

## 15 **5. O<sub>3</sub> – CO – H<sub>2</sub>O correlations**

16 Both CO and O<sub>3</sub> have relatively long lifetimes in the free troposphere compared to  
17 the timescales of vertical and horizontal transport, and the relationship between the two  
18 trace gases has been used to investigate the contribution of photochemistry to  
19 tropospheric ozone [Crutzen, 1974; Fishman and Seiler, 1983], mixing between the upper  
20 troposphere and lower stratosphere [Herman *et al.*, 1999], long-range transport of ozone  
21 [Parrish *et al.*, 1993; Parrish *et al.*, 1998], and to estimate the ozone production  
22 efficiency from biomass burning [Jaffe and Wigder, 2012; Wofsy *et al.*, 1992]. Most  
23 atmospheric CO originates from the Earth's surface, either directly from natural and



1 anthropogenic combustion processes or indirectly through oxidation of CH<sub>4</sub> and other  
2 volatile organic compounds (VOCs) emitted at the surface [Warneck, 1988].  
3 Atmospheric concentrations thus generally decrease with altitude and with distance from  
4 the continents. The large contribution of anthropogenic sources to the atmospheric  
5 burden means that the atmospheric concentrations have a pronounced latitudinal gradient  
6 with a maximum at northern midlatitudes [Seiler and Fishman, 1981]. The  
7 concentrations in the lower troposphere above the North Pacific tend to be highest in  
8 springtime [Kim *et al.*, 2008]

9        Since O<sub>3</sub> is much more abundant in the stratosphere than in the troposphere, the  
10 concentrations are usually uncorrelated or negatively correlated with CO in air  
11 originating from the upper troposphere or lower stratosphere. Conversely, CO and O<sub>3</sub>  
12 tend to be positively correlated in the lower troposphere where much of the O<sub>3</sub> is formed  
13 through oxidation of CO and CH<sub>4</sub>, or through the reactions of NO<sub>x</sub> and VOCs co-emitted  
14 with CO from combustion sources. Although simple linear relationships are sometimes  
15 observed when homogeneous air parcels with different origins mix, the relationship is  
16 usually much more complex, particularly in the lower free troposphere and boundary  
17 layer. For example, since O<sub>3</sub> is a secondary product and not directly emitted from  
18 combustion sources like CO, there may be little or no correlation in urban or polluted  
19 areas where there are distributed combustion sources, and negative correlations can arise  
20 when O<sub>3</sub> is destroyed through titration by NO in fresh combustion plumes or by surface  
21 deposition, as is often the case in the nocturnal boundary layer.

22        The utility of the O<sub>3</sub>-CO correlation plots for investigating air parcel origins can be  
23 improved by including simultaneous H<sub>2</sub>O measurements. Water vapor is not a conserved

1 quantity in the troposphere on timescales longer than a few days, but the concentrations  
2 are usually much lower in the free troposphere than in the boundary layer and lower still  
3 in the lowermost stratosphere. Thus, stratospheric intrusions are usually drier than long-  
4 range transport layers, which are in turn drier than polluted boundary layer air or biomass  
5 burning plumes that usually contain large amounts of water vapor.

6 **Figure 14a** displays a scatter plot of all the 1-min in situ O<sub>3</sub> and CO data acquired  
7 during LVOS at Angel Peak between May 19 and June 29. The points are color-coded  
8 by specific humidity with the highest O<sub>3</sub> generally associated with drier air. The highest  
9 CO concentrations were associated with the plume from the Powerhouse Fire (see below)  
10 that engulfed Angel Peak on June 2. Although the measurements show an overall  
11 positive correlation, the data represent many different air parcels and are highly scattered.  
12 However, **Figure 14b** shows that simple relationships consistent with the mixing of two  
13 homogeneous air parcels can be identified, in some cases, when the measurements from  
14 much shorter intervals are isolated. This plot isolates several examples of mixing lines  
15 observed over 3 h intervals that are believed to be indicative of the mixing between free  
16 tropospheric background air and air parcels influenced by the stratosphere (ST: high O<sub>3</sub>,  
17 very low H<sub>2</sub>O, negative O<sub>3</sub>-CO correlation), transport from Asia (AS: high O<sub>3</sub>, low H<sub>2</sub>O,  
18 positive O<sub>3</sub>-CO correlation), wildfire/urban plume (LA/BB: high CO, moderate H<sub>2</sub>O,  
19 positive O<sub>3</sub>-CO correlation), the subtropical marine boundary layer air (MB: low O<sub>3</sub> and  
20 CO, relatively high H<sub>2</sub>O, positive O<sub>3</sub>-CO correlation) and finally, regional photochemical  
21 production and transport from the valley mixed with the subtropical air (MB/LV:  
22 moderate O<sub>3</sub>, CO, high H<sub>2</sub>O, positive O<sub>3</sub>-CO correlation). A wide range of slopes can  
23 result when air parcels of different origin are combined, but the mingling of air from the

1 UT/LS with air from the free troposphere or boundary layer will create mixing lines with  
2 negative or zero slopes and an gradient in H<sub>2</sub>O (**Figure 14c**) [*Brioude et al.*, 2007].

3 The simple analysis applied to the examples in **Figure 14b** was extended to the  
4 entire time series with the linear regression calculated at 15 minutes intervals for  
5 overlapping 3 h periods. **Figure 15a** plots the Angel Peak in situ O<sub>3</sub> mixing ratios color-  
6 coded by the resulting slopes with negative values in red. Only data acquired between  
7 1300 and 2200 PDT are included in the analysis to reduce the influence of surface  
8 deposition, and symbols are plotted only when the coefficient of determination (i.e. R<sup>2</sup>) is  
9 greater than 0.5. **Figures 15b** and **15c** are similar, but show the O<sub>3</sub> concentrations color-  
10 coded by the H<sub>2</sub>O and CO concentrations. This analysis shows that there were  
11 statistically significant negative correlations before each of the exceedance days, as well  
12 as on May 28 when TOPAZ detected a high O<sub>3</sub> layer aloft (**Figure 6**), but the  
13 concentrations remained relatively low in the valley (MDA8 ≤ 64 ppbv). All three  
14 exceedance days were associated with dry air and relatively low CO concentrations  
15 consistent with descending air of UT/LS origin.

16

## 17 **6. Stratospheric contribution to surface ozone during LVOS**

18 The FLEXPART back trajectories and AM3 analyses can be used together with the  
19 observations to estimate the contributions of stratospheric intrusions, transport from Asia,  
20 and wild fires to the surface ozone measured at Angel Peak and surrounding areas.

21 **Figure 16** plots the surface O<sub>3</sub> concentrations from Angel Peak color-coded by the  
22 contributions from the FLEXPART (a) stratospheric O<sub>3</sub>, (b) Asian CO, and (c) biomass  
23 burning CO tracers at 1000 m asl or just above the elevation of the Las Vegas Valley.

1 The vertical yellow bars mark the three Clark County exceedance days as before. The  
2 back trajectories show stratospheric contributions of 15 to 30 ppbv to the O<sub>3</sub> at 1000 m  
3 asl for extended periods in late May and immediately before or on each of the three  
4 exceedance days. The FLEXPART Asian CO tracer is generally much smaller, and  
5 exceeded 10 ppbv only on June 17-18 when it was 12 ppbv (cf. **Figure** 14b). The  
6 corresponding O<sub>3</sub> influx is likely smaller, but the 75 ppbv ozone NAAQS was exceeded  
7 at Angel Peak on both days and nearly equaled at Joe Neal (74 ppbv) on June 17. The  
8 2008 NAAQS was also approached (73 ppbv) at Great Basin National Park on June 17  
9 and exceeded (76 ppbv) on June 18. The Asian tracer also had significant concentrations  
10 (~8 ppbv of CO) on May 21, the first exceedance day, and during the last week of May,  
11 but always remained much smaller than the corresponding stratospheric contribution.

12 The contributions from the FLEXPART biomass-burning tracer to surface CO in  
13 Clark County exceeded 8 ppbv only on June 2, when the plume from the Powerhouse  
14 Fire passed through. The CO tracer concentrations reached ~25 ppbv or about 25% of  
15 the measured enhancement of 100 ppbv (cf. Figure 7b). The maximum CO and O<sub>3</sub>  
16 concentrations measured in this plume were 210 ppb CO and 85 ppb O<sub>3</sub>. Assuming the  
17 baseline values are 100 ppbv of CO and 50 ppbv of O<sub>3</sub>, the plume enhancements are 35  
18 ppbv O<sub>3</sub> and 110 ppbv CO, with a ratio of 0.32. This implies that the Powerhouse fire  
19 plume contributed less than 3 ppbv of O<sub>3</sub> to the surface concentrations on June 2, and  
20 suggests that the impact of biomass burning on surface ozone during the three  
21 exceedance days during LVOS negligible. However, FLEXPART analyses from before  
22 and after the LVOS campaign (not shown) suggest that the emission plumes from the  
23 24,251 acre Springs Fire in Ventura County, CA, and the 27,881 acre Carpenter 1 Fire in

1 Clark County and 5,400 acre Dean Peak Fire in NW Arizona were most likely  
2 responsible for the ozone exceedances that occurred in Clark County on May 4, July 3  
3 and July 20, 2013. The latter fire, which started the day after the record high temperature  
4 (47°C or 117°F) in Las Vegas was tied, forced evacuation of the area surrounding Angel  
5 Peak and burned a chaparral and juniper mix similar to that consumed in the Powerhouse  
6 Fire. Interestingly, both the Springs and Powerhouse Fires started soon after the passage  
7 of upper level troughs, supporting the suggestion (Paul Schultz, NOAA ESRL, personal  
8 communication) that high winds and descending dry air associated with stratospheric  
9 intrusions may exacerbate wildfires in the western U.S. during the late spring and early  
10 summer.

11 The stratospheric contribution to surface ozone at Angel Peak and surrounding areas  
12 was calculated using the AM3 model [Lin et al. this issue]. **Figure 17** displays time  
13 series comparing the calculated May to July MDA8 O<sub>3</sub> concentrations for Death Valley  
14 NP, Angel Peak (LVOS only), Jean, and Joe Neal to the observations. Here, the black  
15 lines represent the measured MDA8 concentrations and the red traces the modeled  
16 concentrations; the blue traces isolate the stratospheric contribution to the model total  
17 concentrations. The modeled ozone includes contributions from North American  
18 pollution and wildfires in addition to the stratosphere and long-range transport from Asia.  
19 As before, the horizontal dashed line represents the 2008 NAAQS of 75 ppbv. The AM3  
20 modeled concentrations are generally in excellent agreement with the observations,  
21 capturing most of the day-to-day variability and ozone peaks as well as the unusually low  
22 ozone concentrations associated with the large-scale incursion of subtropical air in late  
23 June. The model does particularly well at Jean, where linear regression between the

1 calculated and observed MDA8 ozone during LVOS gives AM3 =  
2  $(0.86 \pm 0.08) * \text{OBS} + 11 \pm 5$  ppbv with  $R^2 = 0.77$ . The mean ratio is  $1.03 \pm 0.01$ . The worst  
3 agreement (AM3 =  $(0.73 \pm 0.13) * \text{OBS} + 16 \pm 8$  ppbv  $R^2 = 0.46$  and a mean ratio of  
4  $0.98 \pm 0.02$ ) is found for Joe Neal, which is the site most impacted by local urban sources.  
5 Indeed, the greatest divergence between the model results and the Joe Neal observations  
6 was immediately after the subtropical incursion when locally formed ozone was a large  
7 fraction of the total (cf. **Figures 6 and 9**); the coefficient of determination increases from  
8  $R^2 = 0.46$  to  $R^2 = 0.57$  if the measurements from June 28 are omitted.

9 The mean MDA8 surface ozone calculated for Angel Peak by AM3 averaged  
10  $64 \pm 10$  ppbv over the course of LVOS, nearly identical to the measured value of  $65 \pm 10$   
11 ppbv. The stratospheric component averaged  $18 \pm 10$  ppbv over this period. The  
12 corresponding values for the period from May 19 to May 31 when TOPAZ detected  
13 frequent ozone layers aloft were  $69 \pm 9$  ppbv (AM3) and  $71 \pm 7$  ppbv (observed), with an  
14 AM3 stratospheric component of  $27 \pm 9$  ppbv. The largest single day AM3 STT  
15 contribution was 45 ppbv on May 23 (and 33 ppbv on May 24), one day before the  
16 highest observed values and two days before the second Clark County exceedance event  
17 on May 25. The AM3 calculated stratospheric contribution was at least 25 ppbv on each  
18 of the three LVOS exceedance days, with contributions in excess of 30 ppbv occurring on  
19 May 1, 19, and 30, and on June 13 and 20.

20 Comparisons between surface concentrations and those calculated using a previous  
21 version of AM3 found that the AM3 stratospheric contribution was sometimes biased too  
22 high [*Lin et al.*, 2012a]. However, the excellent agreement between AM3 and the  
23 observations seen in **Figure 17** suggests that this is not the case for the present results,

1 which are derived from a significantly improved model [Lin et al., this issue]. **Figure**  
2 18a compares the AM3 results for surface ozone at Angel Peak during LVOS with the  
3 concentrations derived from the FLEXPART back trajectories. The correlation between  
4 the two time series is excellent ( $R^2=0.64$ ), but the stratospheric contributions calculated  
5 by FLEXPART are about a factor of two smaller than those derived using AM3. **Figure**  
6 18b shows that the agreement between the AM3 results and the measured concentrations  
7 is severely degraded if the AM3 stratospheric contribution is increased by 50%, or  
8 decreased by 50% to agree with the FLEXPART results. This implies that the AM3  
9 concentrations are the more accurate. One possible explanation for the systematic  
10 differences is that the spatial and temporal boundaries assumed for the FLEXPART  
11 source domain excludes a significant contribution from aged stratospheric air. Another  
12 possibility is that the assumed 2 PVU definition of the tropopause may have been too  
13 restrictive. Note that neither of these possibilities will change the biomass burning and  
14 Asian tracer results. In any event, the excellent correlation shows that both models  
15 capture the important transport processes.

16

## 17 **7. Summary and Conclusions**

18 The LVOS measurement and model results provide compelling evidence that STT,  
19 and to a lesser extent, transported Asian pollution significantly increased surface  $O_3$   
20 concentrations in Clark County, NV during the late spring and early summer of 2013.  
21 Both measurements and model analyses suggest that these transport processes directly  
22 contributed to the exceedances of the 2008 ozone NAAQS reported at one or more of the  
23 Clark County monitors on May 21, May 25, and June 21. The AM3 model results

1 suggest that the stratospheric contribution to the surface MDA8 O<sub>3</sub> was at least 30 ppbv  
2 during each of these events, which were characterized by the entrainment of ozone-rich  
3 air that had descended from the UT/LS to the lower free troposphere over a large area  
4 during the preceding 1-2 days. There were more exceedance days at Angel Peak than in  
5 the Las Vegas Valley, consistent with the downward transport of O<sub>3</sub> into Clark County  
6 from aloft. These findings are consistent with earlier work, including the 50 km AM3  
7 model results, which showed Clark County to be a major receptor of transported ozone  
8 from STT and Asian pollution sources in the spring of 2010.

9 The Angel Peak measurements and FLEXPART tracer distributions also show that  
10 emissions from the Powerhouse Fire in southern California contributed to elevated  
11 MDA8 O<sub>3</sub> (73 ppbv) in Clark County on June 2. The FLEXPART tracer distributions  
12 also suggest that regional wildfires contributed to exceedances of the NAAQS before or  
13 after the LVOS campaign on May 4, July 3, and July 20, 2013, and that STT also  
14 contributed to the May 4 event. These findings imply that all 6 of the O<sub>3</sub> exceedance  
15 days in Clark County during 2013 were largely due to outside influences.

16 The mean surface MDA8 ozone at Jean, NV in rural Clark County was 67 ppbv  
17 during May and June of 2013, which is only 8 ppbv less than the current 2008 NAAQS  
18 and greater than some values that are currently being considered  
19 ([www.epa.gov/oaqps001/greenbk/hindex.html](http://www.epa.gov/oaqps001/greenbk/hindex.html)). The number of exceedance days in  
20 Clark County during the 43-day LVOS field campaign would have increased from 3 to 14  
21 if the NAAQS had been 70 ppbv instead of 75 ppbv, and from 3 to 25 if the NAAQS had  
22 been 65 ppbv. In other words, exceedances of the NAAQS generated by natural sources



1 (i.e. stratospheric intrusions) would have occurred on 60% of the days during LVOS,  
2 making these events the rule rather than the exception.

3

#### 4 **Acknowledgements**

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13 The views, opinions, and findings contained in this report are those of the author(s) and  
14 should not be construed as an official National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
15 or U.S. Government position, policy, or decision.

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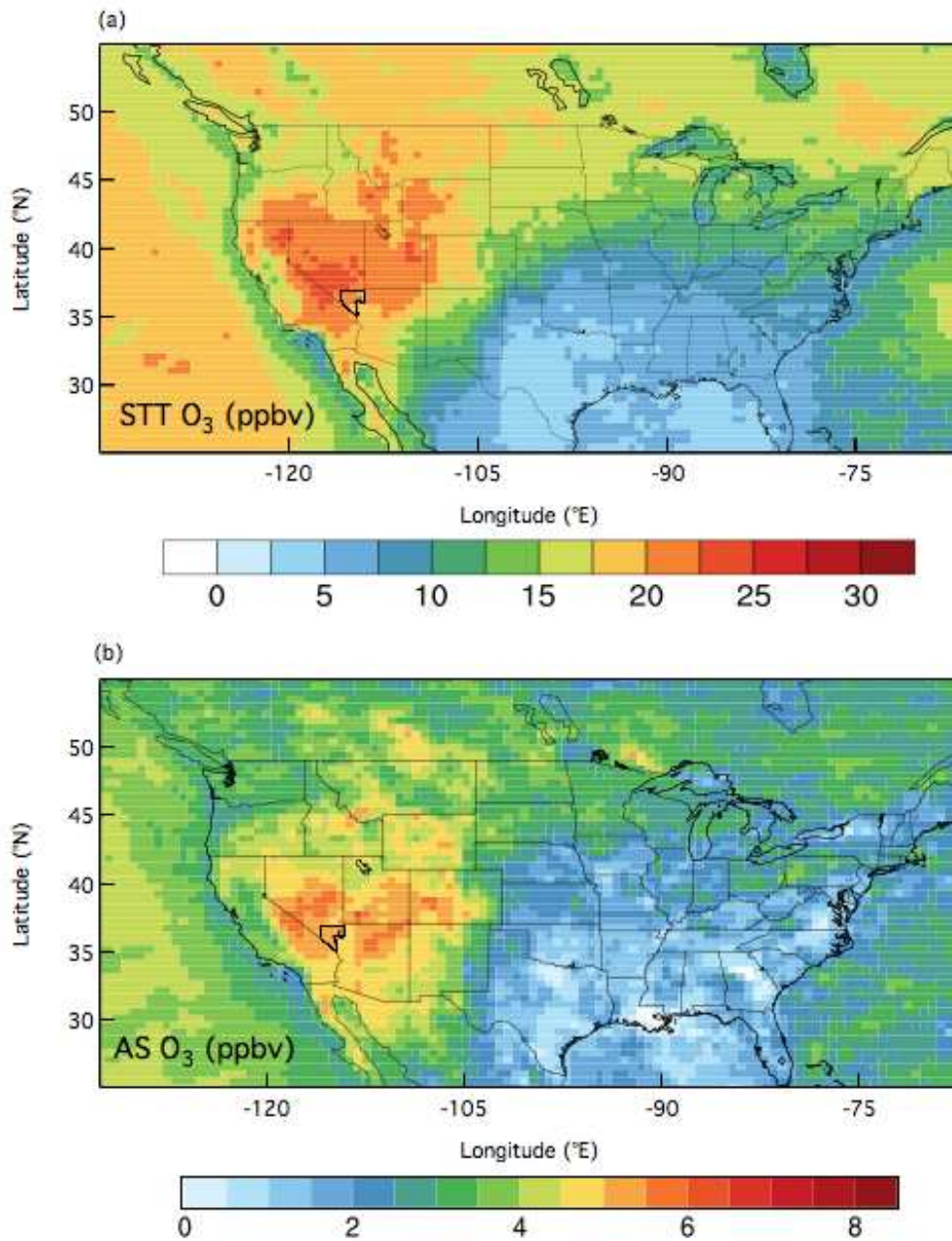
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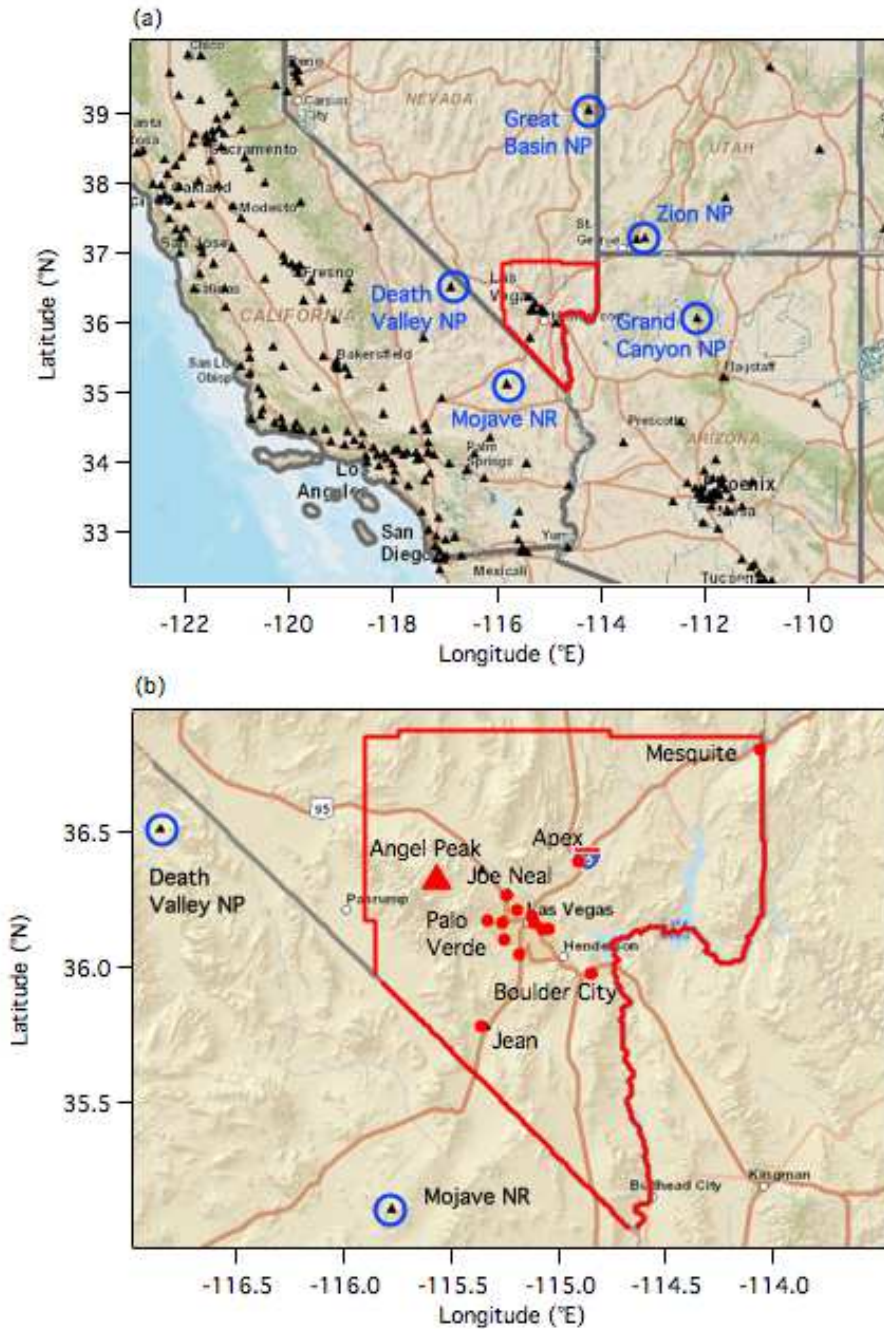
1 **Figures**  
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Figure 1. NOAA GFDL AM3 model mean contributions of (a) STT, and (b) Asian pollution, to MDA8 surface O<sub>3</sub> during May and June of 2010. The resolution is 50 km x 50 km. Note the different color scales. Clark County, NV is outlined in black. Adapted from *Lin et al.* [2012a, 2012b].

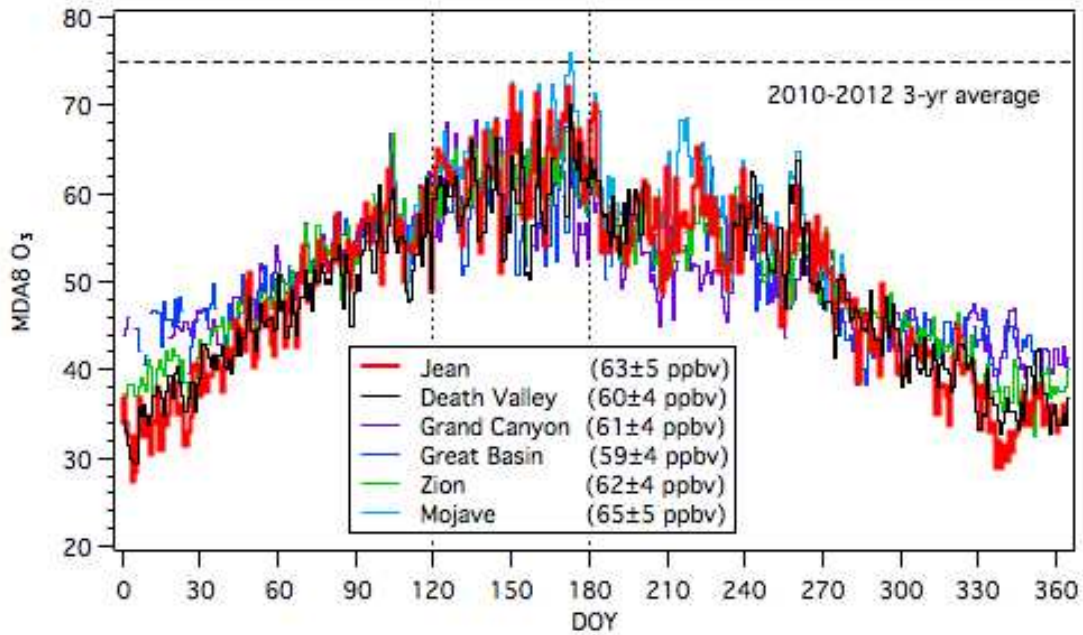
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Figure 2. (a) Map of the southwestern United States showing the regulatory ozone monitors reporting to the U.S. EPA AirNow network (filled triangles). Clark County, NV is outlined in red. The monitors within the blue open circles are maintained by the U.S. National Park Service. (b) Expanded view of Clark County with the monitors maintained by the Clark County Department of Air Quality shown as filled red circles.

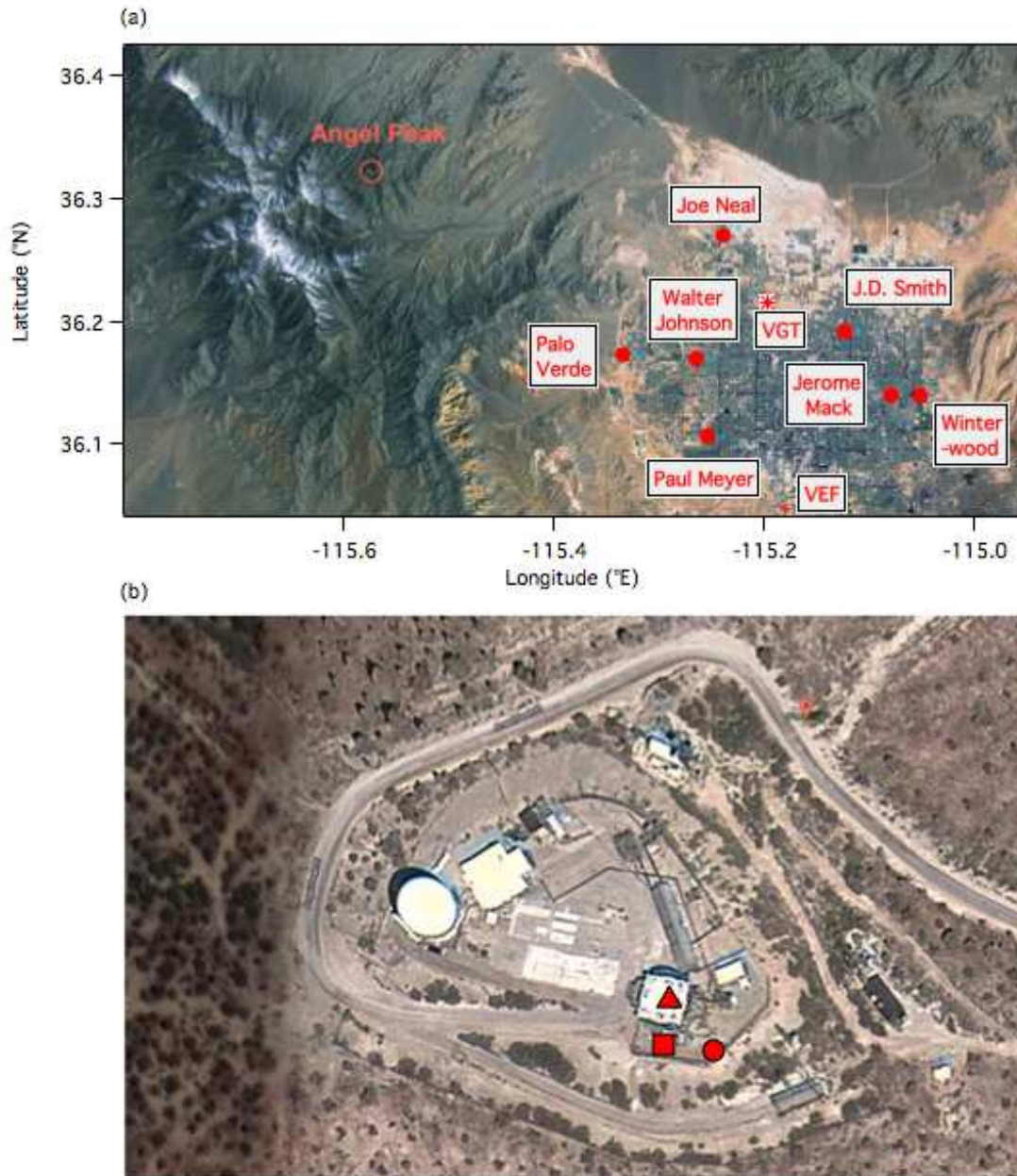
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Figure 3. Mean MDA8 ozone measured by the CC/DAQ monitor at Jean, NV, Death Valley National Park, Great Basin National Park, Zion National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, and the Mojave National Reserve (seasonal) from 2010 to 2012. The mean values from each site during May and June (vertical dotted lines) are shown in the box. The horizontal dashed line indicates the 2008 8-h NAAQS of 75 ppbv.

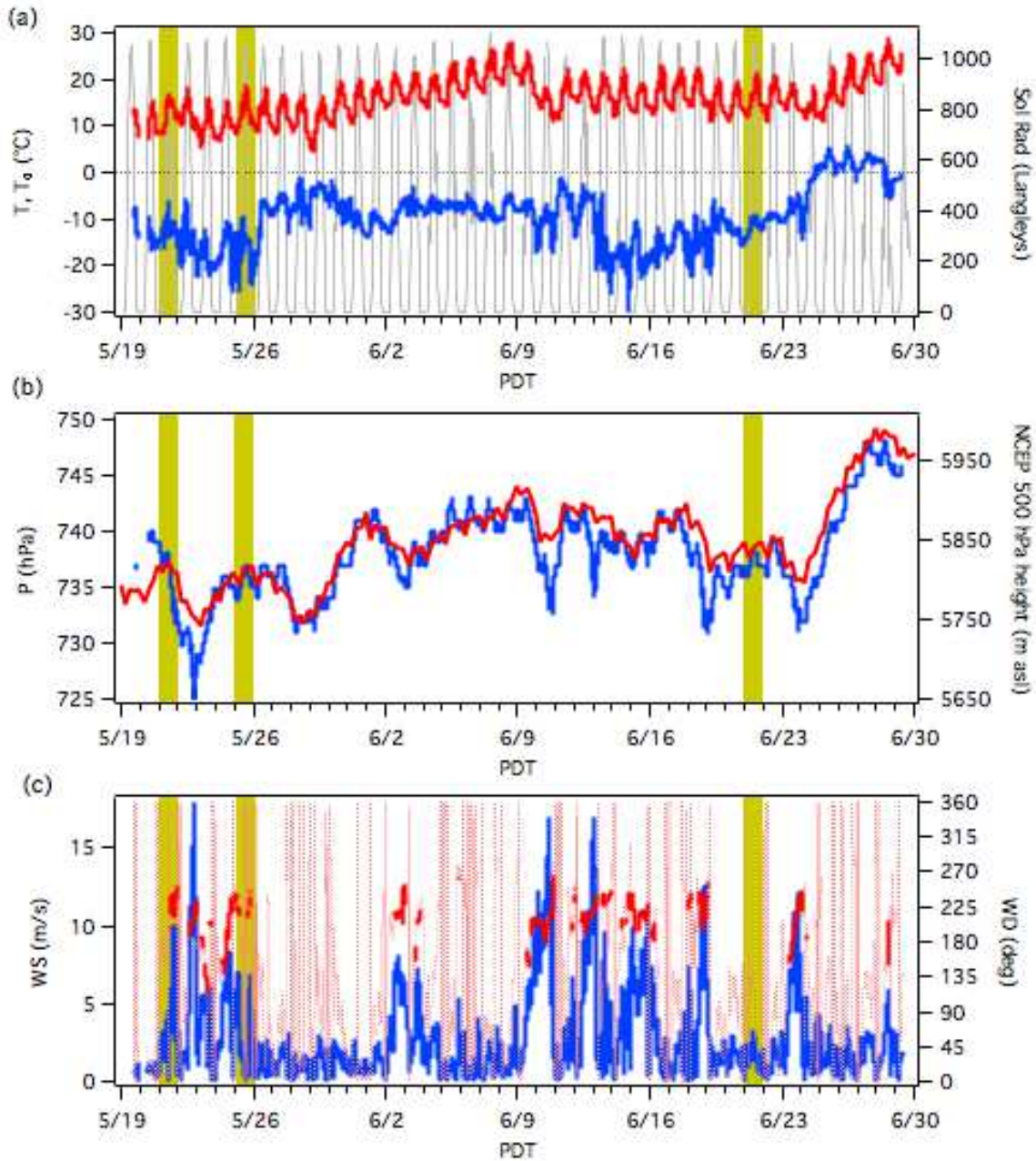
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5 Figure 4. Satellite photographs from the U.S. EPA AirNow navigator showing (a) the  
6 location of Angel Peak relative to the Las Vegas Valley, and the CC/DAQ ozone  
7 monitors (filled circles) and airports (VEF, McCarran International Airport and VGT,  
8 North Las Vegas Airport). (b) Locations of TOPAZ (filled square), the in situ monitors  
9 (filled triangle), and the met station (filled circle) on the Angel Peak summit.

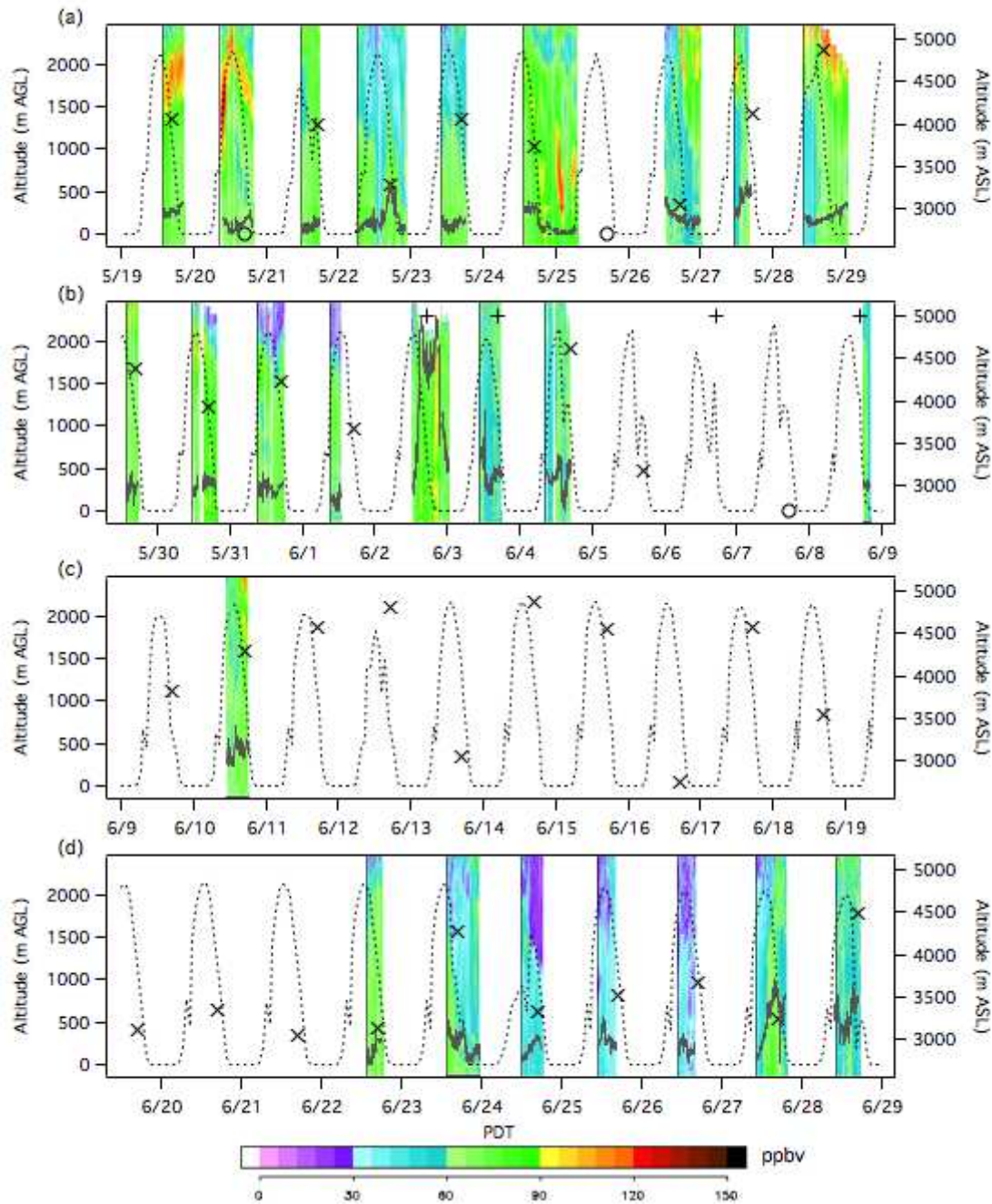
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5 Figure 5. Time series of (a) solar radiation (gray) with surface temperature (red) and dew  
6 point (blue), (b) surface pressure (blue) and NCEP Reanalysis 500 hPa geopotential  
7 height (red), and (c) surface wind speed (blue) and direction (dotted red) from Angel  
8 Peak. The solid red lines in (c) highlight the wind direction when the speeds were greater  
9 than 5 m/s. The gray bands mark the O<sub>3</sub> exceedance days in Clark County.

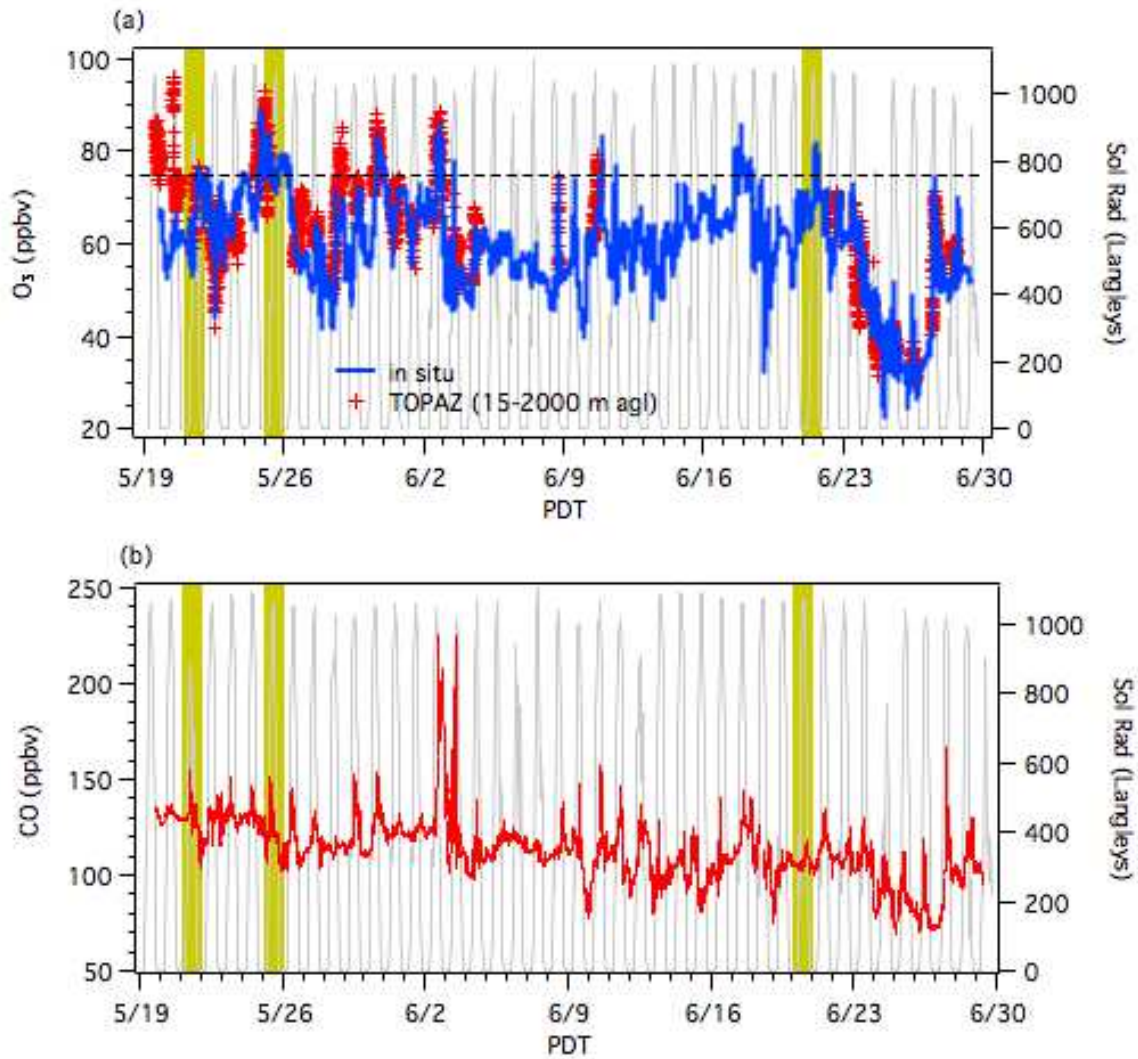
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Figure 6. Time-height curtain plots of the ozone concentrations measured by TOPAZ during LVOS. The left axis shows the altitude above the surface of Angel Peak (2.68 km asl) and the right axis the corresponding altitude above mean sea level. The solid black lines show the normalized integrated backscatter from 15 to 2000 m agl. The “X” symbols show the mixing heights from the 0000 UT (1700 PDT) McCarran International Airport (VEF) soundings. Mixing heights greater than 5000 m asl are represented by “+” symbols and missing soundings by “0”. The dotted gray curves show the normalized solar radiation measured at the nearby Spring Mountain Youth Camp (SMYC).

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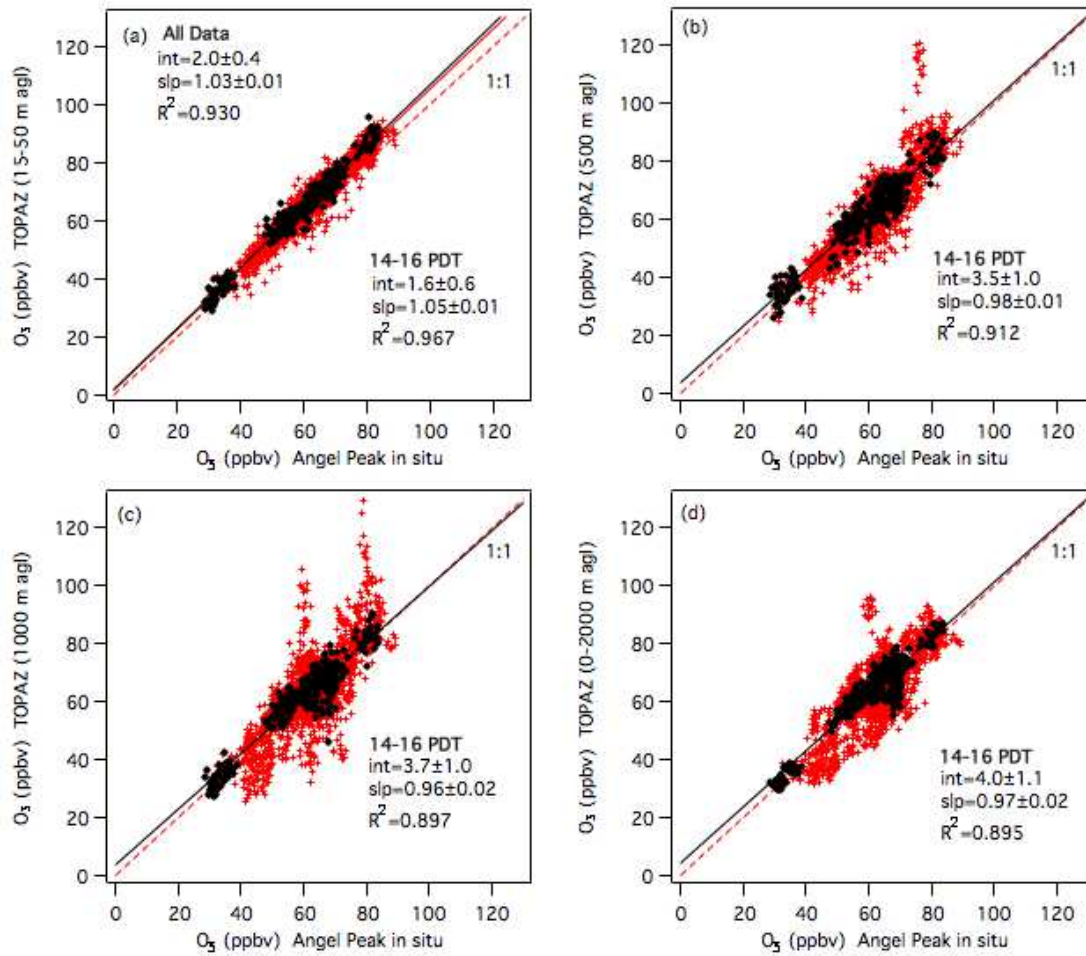


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Figure 7. Time series of 1-min: (a) O<sub>3</sub> (blue) and (b) CO from Angel Peak. The red symbols in (a) show the average 15 to 2000 m agl O<sub>3</sub> from TOPAZ and the horizontal dashed line marks the 75 ppbv 8-h NAAQS. The gray lines in both plots show the solar radiation measured at the SMYC, and the gray bands mark the O<sub>3</sub> exceedance days in Clark County.



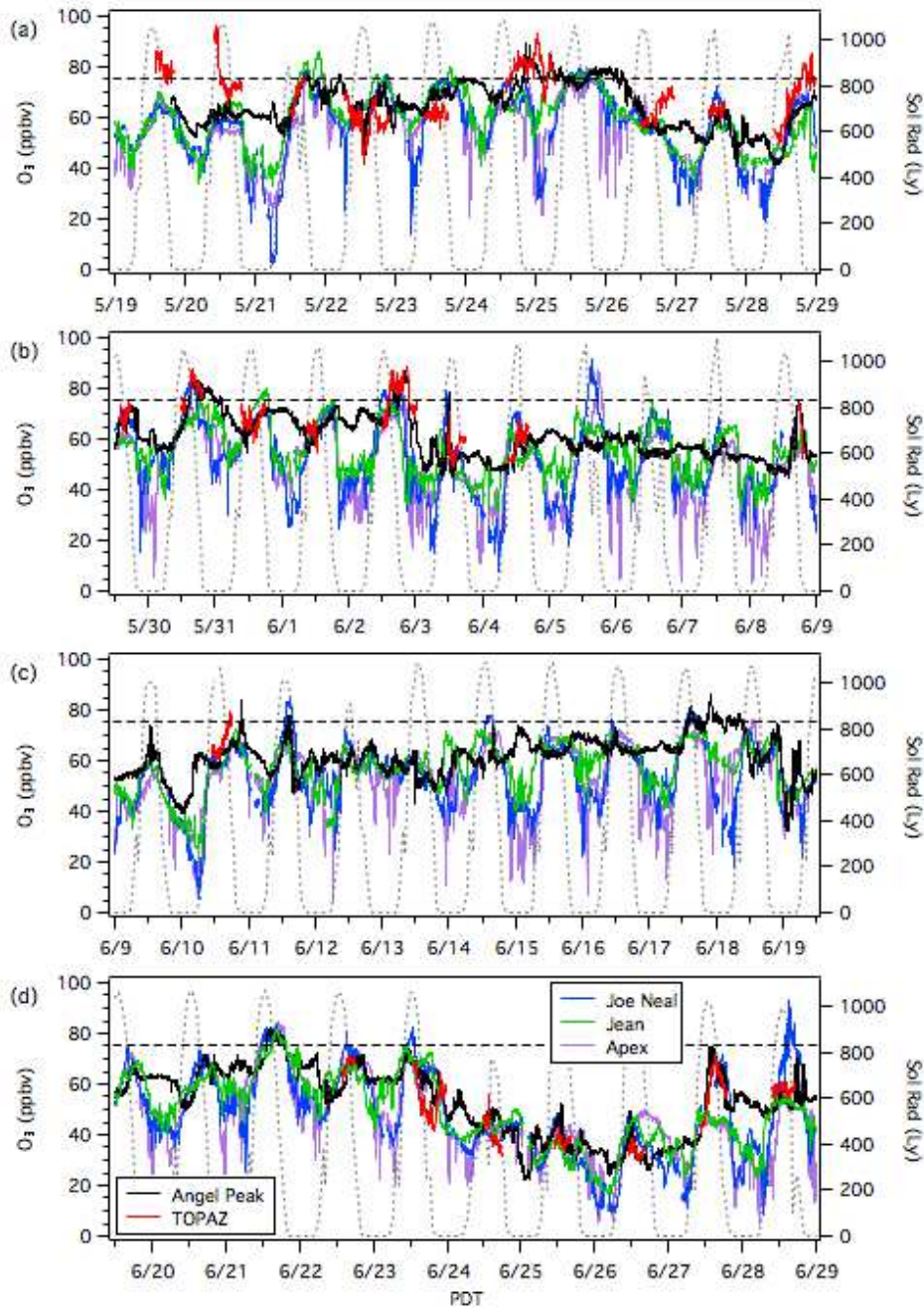
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Figure 8. Scatter plots showing the correlation between the Angel Peak in situ  $O_3$  measurements and the concentrations measured by TOPAZ at (a) 15-50 m agl, (b) 500 m agl, (c) 1000 m agl, and (d) 15-2000 m agl. The filled black circles show the measurements made when the VEF afternoon soundings show the top of the mixed layer to be at least 2000 m above the summit of Angel Peak (cf. Figure 6). The 1:1 line is dashed.

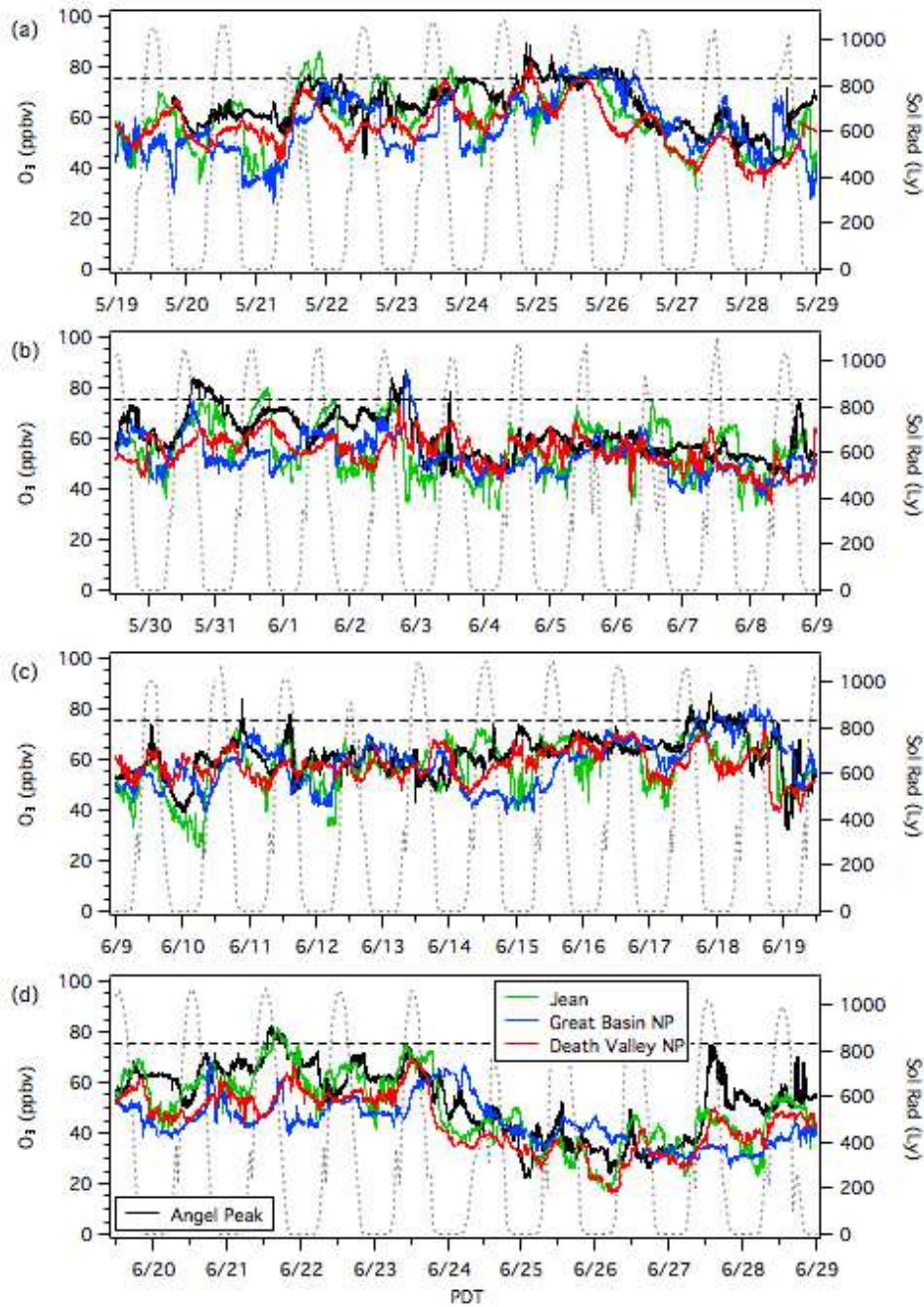
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Figure 9. Time series plots of ozone measurements made during LVOS. 1-min in situ measurements from Angel Peak (black), 15-2000 m agl mean from TOPAZ (red), and 5-min measurements from the Clark County monitors at Jean (green), Joe Neal (blue), and Apex (purple). The horizontal dashed line marks the current  $O_3$  NAAQS and the dotted curves show the solar radiation measured at the SMYC.

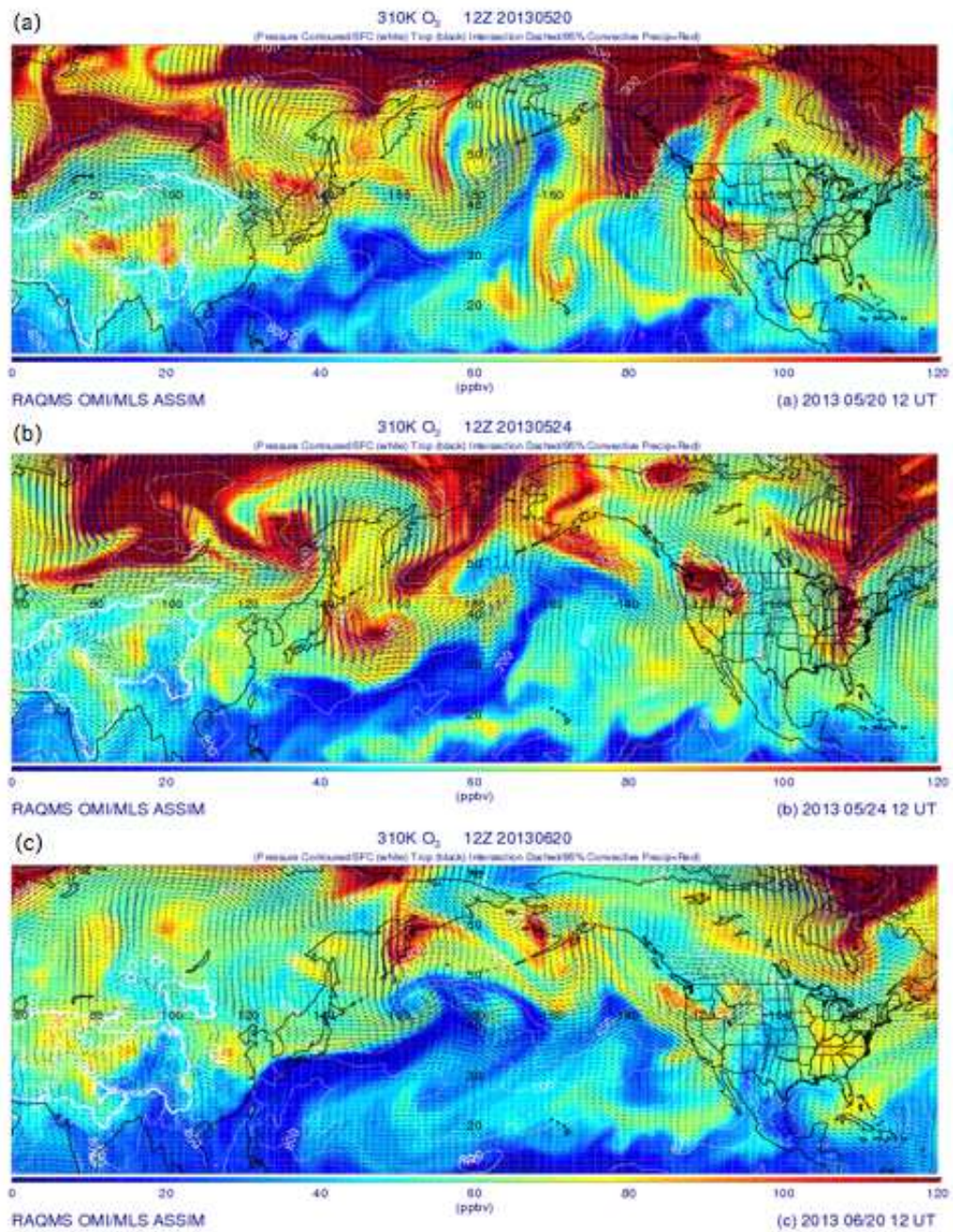
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Figure 10. Time series plots of ozone measurements made during LVOS. 1-min in situ measurements from Angel Peak (black), and 5-min measurements from the Clark County monitor at Jean (green), and the U.S. National Park Service monitors at Great Basin NP (blue) and Death Valley NP (red). The horizontal dashed line marks the 2008  $O_3$  NAAQS and the dotted curves show the solar radiation measured at the SMYC.

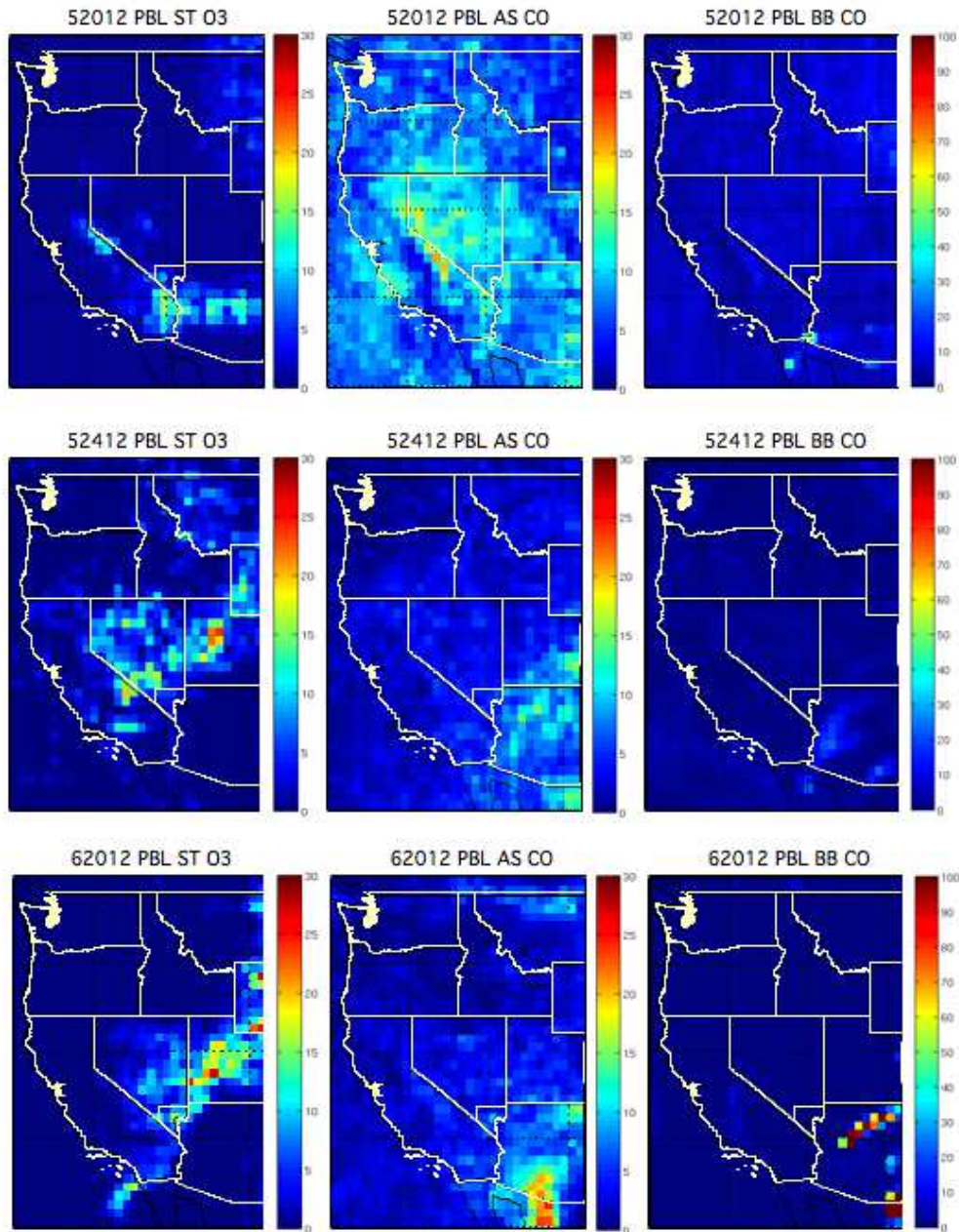
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Figure 11. RAQMS O<sub>3</sub> analyses for the 310K isentropic surfaces at 1200 UT on: (a) May 20, (b) May 24, and (c) June 20, 2013 showing the midlatitude cyclones over the Pacific Northwest responsible for the stratospheric intrusions detected above Angel Peak.

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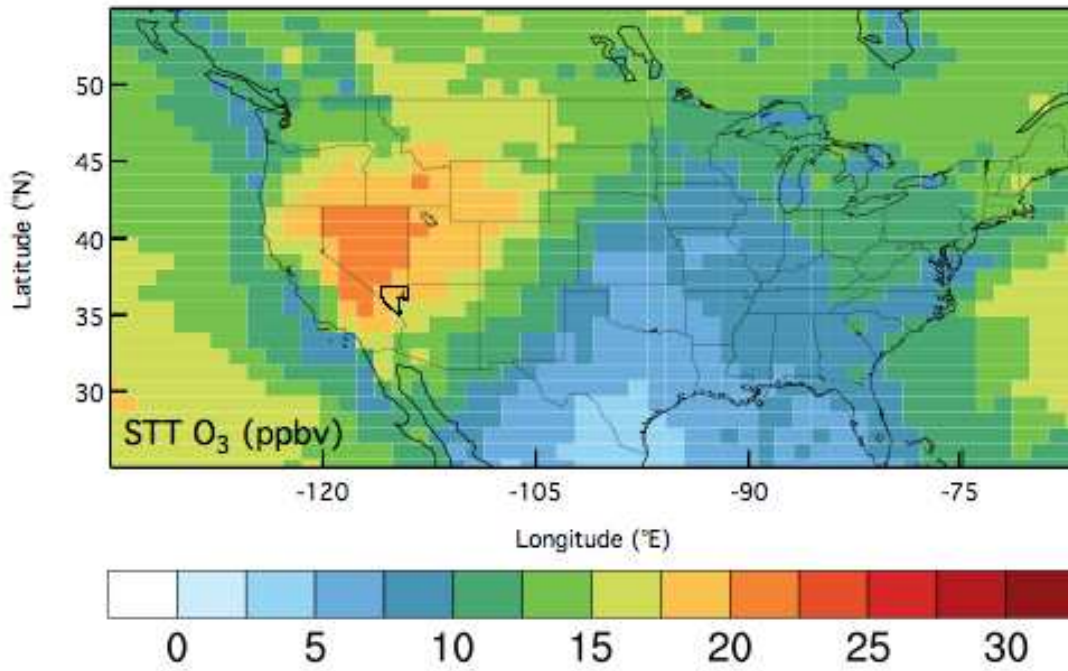
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Figure 12. FLEXPART source mode distributions of the stratospheric O<sub>3</sub> (left), Asian pollution CO (center), and biomass burning CO (right) tracers below 1.5 km asl at 1200 UT on May 20 (top), May 24 (middle), and June 20 (bottom) 2013. The color bars show the tracer concentrations in ppbv.

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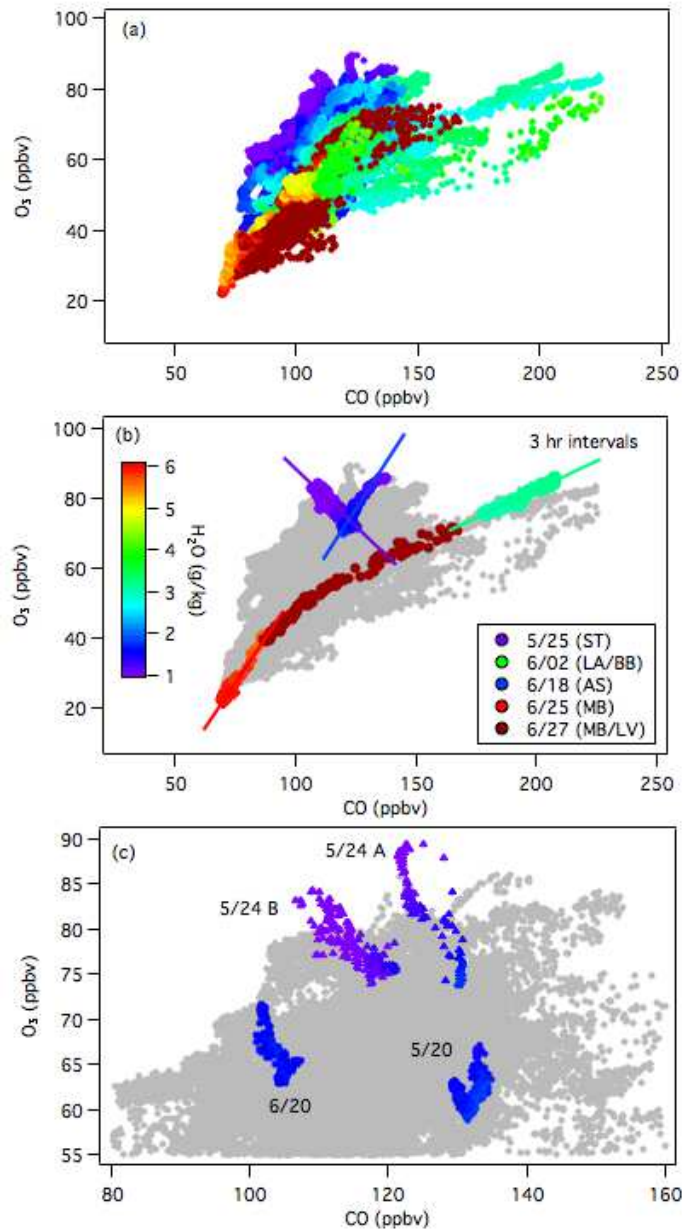
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Figure 13. NOAA GFDL AM3 model median contribution of STT to MDA8 surface O<sub>3</sub> during May and June of 2013. The resolution is 100 km x 100 km. Clark County, NV is outlined in black.

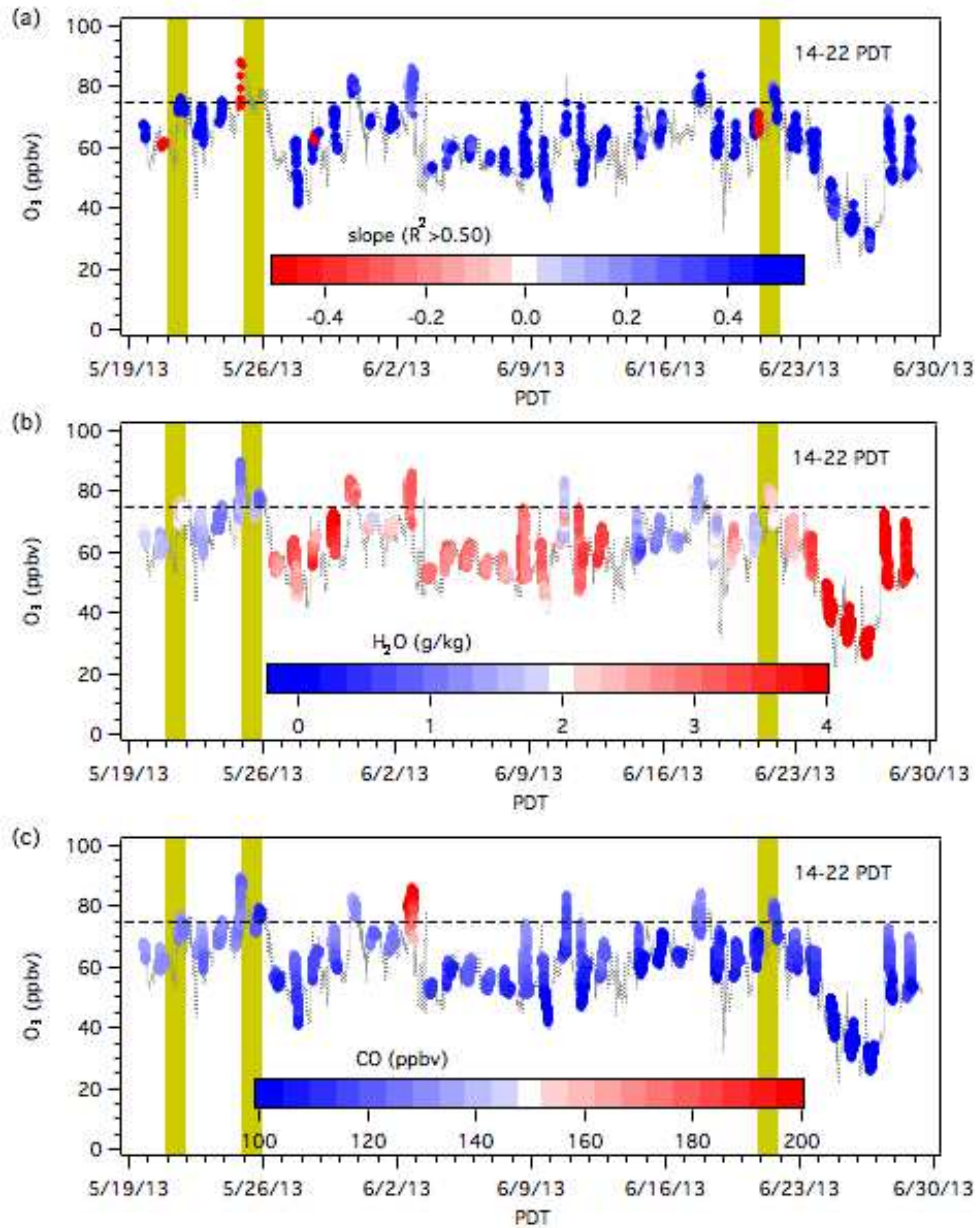
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Figure 14. Scatter plots of the 1-min in situ O<sub>3</sub> and CO measurements from Angel Peak during LVOS color-coded by specific humidity. (a) All data from the campaign. (b) Isolated measurements from five different 3-hour intervals showing mixing lines attributed to the influence of stratospheric air (ST), biomass burning and urban pollution from the LA Basin, (LA/BB), transport from Asia (AS), subtropical marine boundary layer air (MB), and local pollution from the Las Vegas Valley (LV). (c) Characteristic mixing lines associated with the mixing of boundary layer and UT/LS air.

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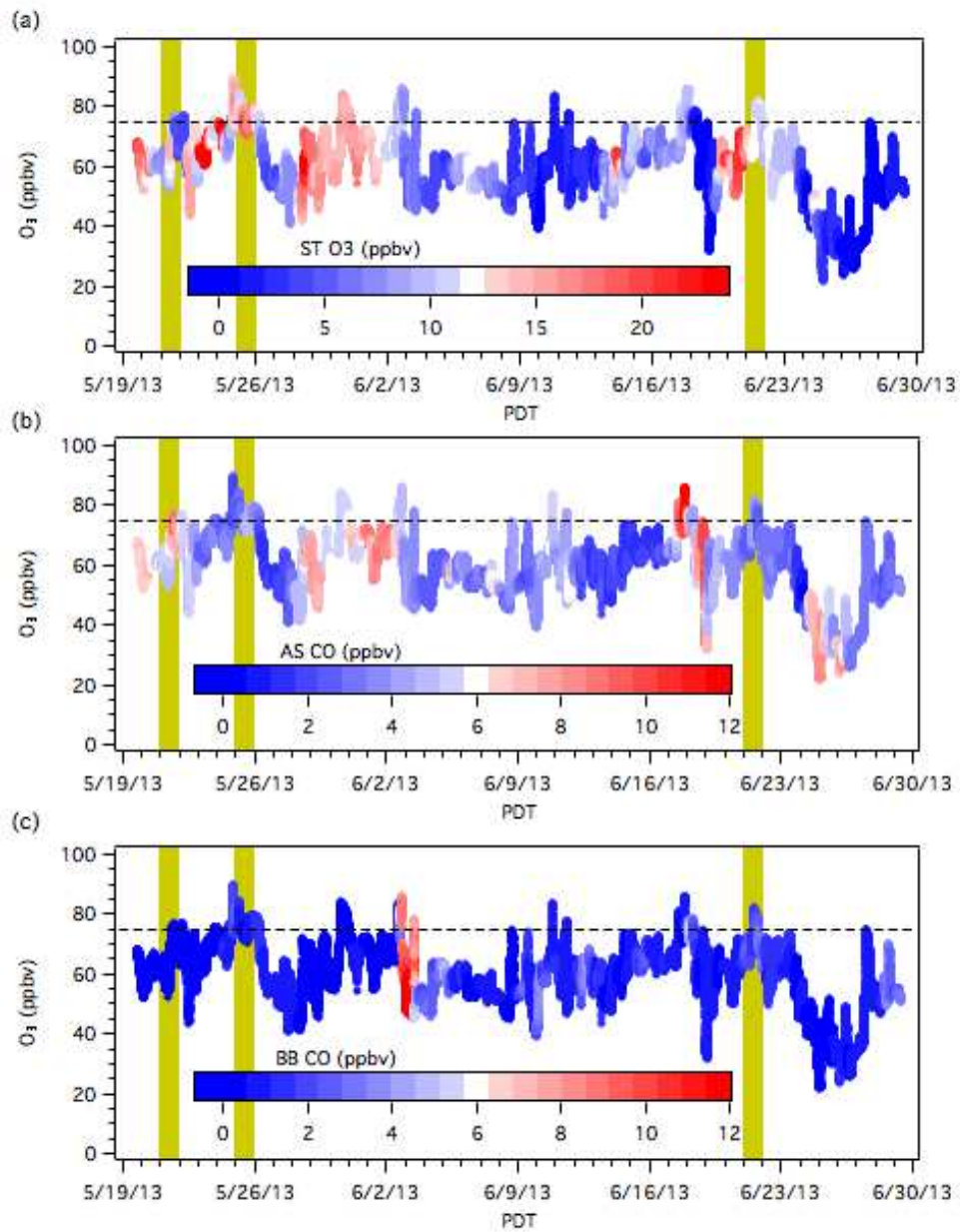


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Figure 15. Time series of the in situ O<sub>3</sub> at Angel Peak color-coded by (a) the slope of the regression with CO ( $R^2 > 0.50$  only), (b) specific humidity, and (c) CO concentrations. The horizontal dashed line indicates the 75 ppbv 8-h NAAQS. The yellow bands mark the three exceedance days in Clark County.



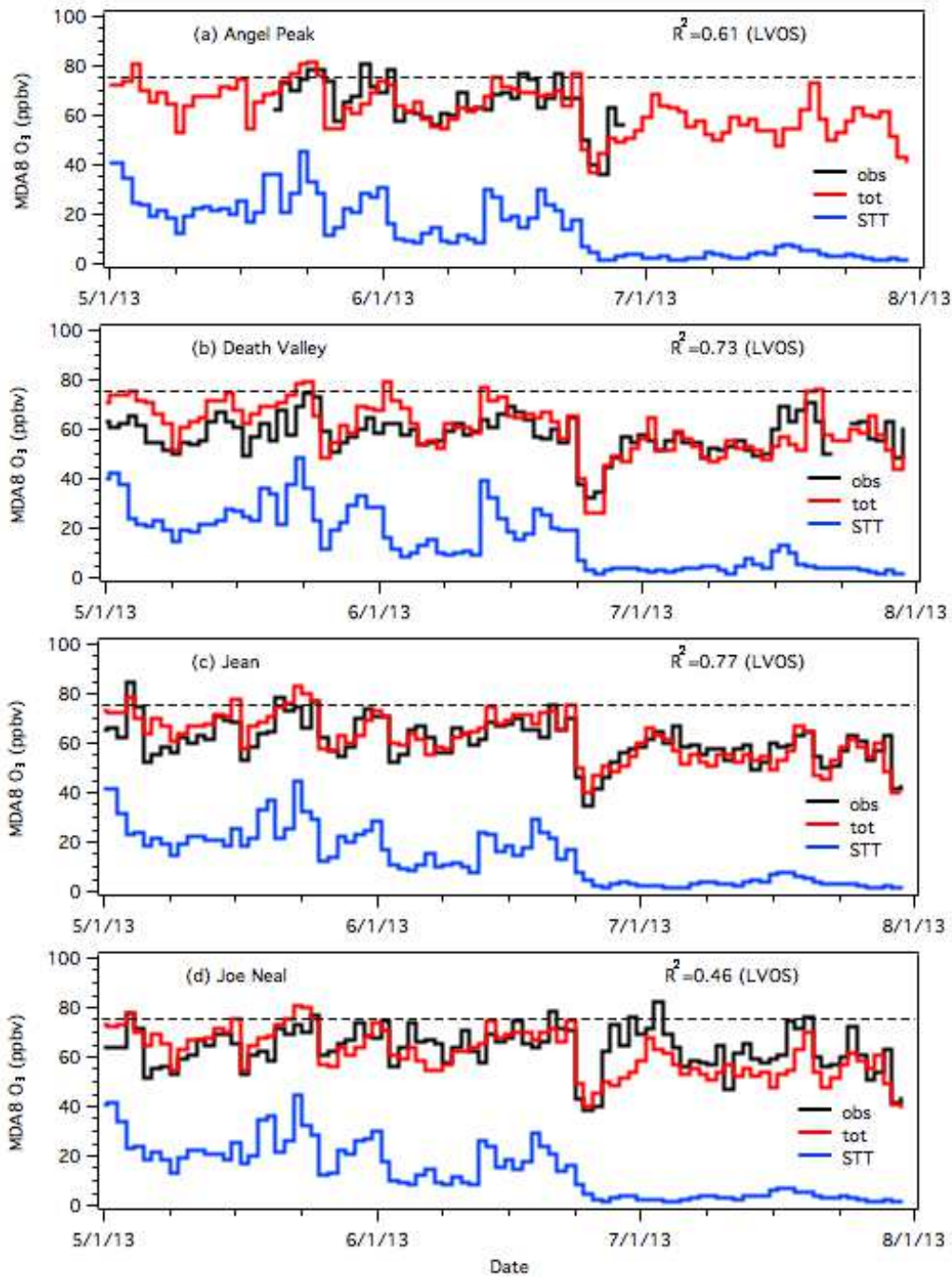
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Figure 16. In situ O<sub>3</sub> and CO measurements from Angel Peak color-coded by (a) stratospheric O<sub>3</sub>, (b) Asian transport CO, and (c) biomass burning CO tracers from the FLEXPART back trajectories originating from 1000 m asl. The horizontal dashed line indicates the 75 ppbv 8-h NAAQS. The yellow bands mark the three exceedance days in Clark County.

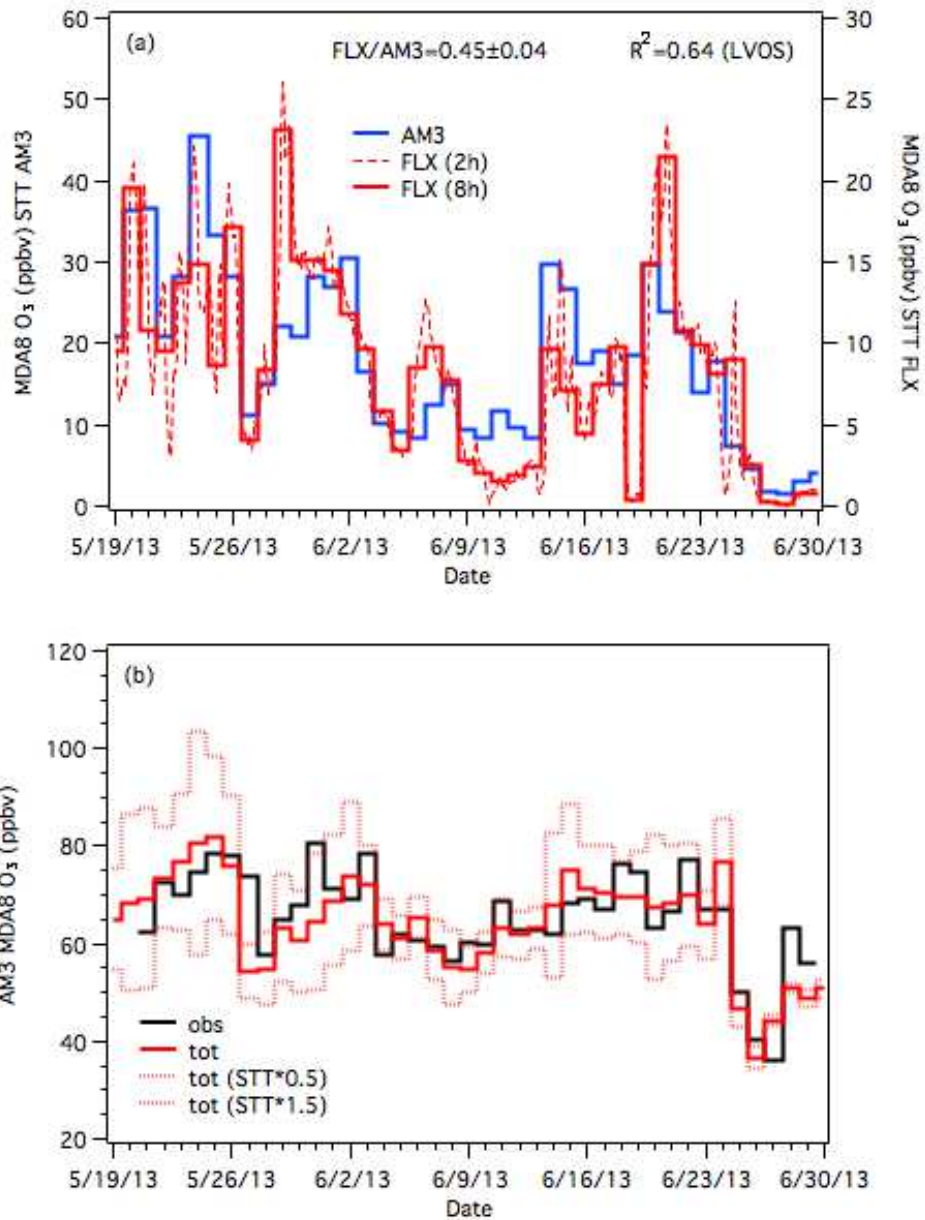
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5 Figure 17. Time series comparing the AM3 total MDA8 ozone (red) calculated for (a)  
6 Angel Peak, (b) Death Valley, (c) Jean, and (d) Joe Neal to the measured values (black).  
7 The blue traces isolate the STT contribution to the calculated totals. The correlation  
8 coefficients are derived from linear regression fits using the data from May 19 to June 28  
9 (LVOS) only.

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Figure 18. (a) Time series comparing the AM3 (blue) and FLEXPART (red) STT ozone calculated for Angel Peak during LVOS. The model results are well correlated but differ by about a factor of two (note the different vertical scales). (b) Angel Peak MDA8 observations with the calculated AM3 STT contribution (solid red line) and the AM3 STT contribution scaled by  $\pm 50\%$  (dotted red lines).