

RESPONSES TO REVIEWER 1

This study examined the optical and chemical properties of fresh and aged aerosols from laboratory biomass burning (BB). The effect of polarity, pH, molecular weight, biomass fuel type, and combustion conditions [flaming versus smoldering] on the aerosol optical properties were reported. The aged aerosols were produced in an oxidation flow reactor (OFR). The optical and chemical properties of the aerosols were measured using UV-Visible spectroscopy and high-resolution LC-MS, respectively. A spectrally integrated mass absorption efficiency was calculated, and Van Krevelen diagrams were used to visualize chemical information about the extent of oxidation. The study found that non-polar matter in the organic aerosols was more absorbing than the polar fraction; although, water soluble matter in the aged aerosol was more absorbing during flaming. Low pH aerosol was less absorbing than at neutral pH. The study also provided convincing evidence that the NO_x formed during flaming combustion yields organic nitrogen compounds that are strongly absorbing at shorter wavelengths. This is a useful, well-done study that is within the ACP scope. Biomass burning is an important source of organic aerosol in the atmosphere, and its optical and chemical properties are key to understanding the effects of aerosols on climate, air quality, and human health. The results presented are novel in that aerosol optical properties are measured after being fractionated in-bulk using multiple chemical methods. The investigation of fresh versus aged aerosol also produced an interesting contrast. The examination of peat is something that is in its infancy and more peat burning studies are needed owing to the increasing potential for peat mega-fires forming globally. Mostly, the chemical and optical data synched together nicely and evidence-based conclusions are given. Although, with so many variables, sometimes it was difficult to track the rationale underlying an experiment and the obtained results. The comments below are meant to produce further clarification regarding the experimental results. The paper may also benefit from a forward-looking statement that describes specifically, where some of these results may be useful or applied. Such a statement can come in the summary or at the end of the introduction. After these minor revisions, the paper merits publication.

We thank the reviewer for his/her comments and recommendations. We address comments individually below. Approximate line numbers corresponding to the edited (with markup) manuscript is provided.

Comments:

1. P1, line 10: *It sounds like BrC is the only light-absorbing component in BB aerosols. This opening sentence should be re-phrased for clarity sakes.*

The sentence was rephrased.

2. P5, line 23: *Please describe the pre-firing technique (i.e., add a temp. and time).*

The “pre-firing” conditions (temperature and time) for 47-mm quartz filters are added to the text.

3. P6, line 12: *“and” should be or.*

“and” was changed to “or”

4. P7, lines 13-14: *It would be a good idea to tell us how much time it took to complete each type of burn and provide a better idea of the sample time weighting.*

Thank you for recommendation. The following sentence was added: “The duration of smoldering combustion was 58 ± 27 min on average, whereas the average duration for flaming combustion was 22 ± 8 min.”

5. P7, lines 22-25: *It's not clear why the NO₂/m was handled this way. Is the assumption that the fuel burned the same over the entire test even though sampling time was limited?*

We agree. NO₂/m was not used in the present work (only NO₂ max values were presented, in ppb). These sentences were removed from the text.

6. P.8, Section 2.4: *Where is the extraction efficiency calculation? It would be useful to see what fraction of aerosol was removed from the filter using each solvent?*

We thank reviewer for bringing up this important point. We also feel a calculation of extraction efficiency/percent recovery would be useful as we are comparing absorbance values from water and hexane extracts. Sonication is a standard technique for extraction of water soluble aerosol components from filters for which almost 100% efficiency is assumed (Fang et al., 2015; Gao et al., 2017; Kiss et al., 2002; Samburova et al., 2005). In our study, sonication was performed twice to ensure maximum recovery. An accelerated solvent extractor (ASE) was used to recover hexane soluble fraction from the filter. The ASE uses high solvent pressure and temperature to ensure maximum recovery. A statement to this effect was added to the experimental section (section 2.4, Page 8, Line 25).

7. P10, lines 7-11: *This sentence needs to be clearer.*

The paragraph was revised.

8. P11, lines 3-9: *Same thing, this sentence requires clarification.*

The paragraph was re-written.

9. *General comment: It would be beneficial if there was some additional discussion about what is expected to happen during the aging in the OFR. Was the OFR producing new particles? Or was it changing the existing particles via heterogeneous chemistry? Or both? Which of these processes/mechanisms is likely to dominate? What are the particle loss characteristics of this specific OFR? With the knowledge that BB fuel types produced different aerosol types, is one aerosol type more susceptible to loss than another? More information that helps us assess these results should be added here.*

We appreciate reviewer's concern about more detailed description about OFR characterization and fate of organics during aging. Detailed OFR characterization and discussion of various mechanism occurring in the OFR and their timescales can be found in another manuscript associated with this work (Bhattarai et al., 2018) (under review). We have added a sentence in section 2.3, page 7, lines

10-12.

To address reviewer's questions we will briefly summarize the main outcomes of Bhattarai et al., (2018) paper. We found that a wall loss of low-volatile organic compounds (LVOC) and semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOC) is negligible (0.1%) in the OFR. However, about 25% of primary organic aerosol mass is lost due to fragmentation reactions. An approximately equal amount of secondary products condenses onto primary particles. We did observe new particle formation in the OFR.

Particle loss in the accumulation size range were found to be less than 10%. Since the aerosol mass was concentrated in this size range, we do not expect such losses to be significant for our absorbance measurements which are mass-based. Diffusional particle losses depend only on particle size and not on chemical properties. Thus, we do not expect any differences in particle losses among different aerosols tested in our study.

10. *P18, lines 3-4: Revise this sentence for clarity.*

The sentence was rephrased.

11. *P18, lines 1-2: Not 100% convinced about this. It may simply be that one is measuring less of something thus the uncertainty is a larger fraction of the measurement.*

We agree with reviewer and the sentence is removed from the text.

12. *P18, lines 14-17: The fuels could have been tested for their N content. Are those data available?*

Thank you for a valuable suggestion. We plan to measure the nitrogen content of the fuels in future. Unfortunately, these data are not available at the present time.

13. *Figure 5: Mention in the caption that this set of plots is for WSOC.*

We thank the reviewer for pointing this out. All ultrahigh resolution mass spectrometry results demonstrated in this work are from water soluble organic carbon (WSOC). We have added WSOC in the Figure 5 caption as per suggestion.

14. *P22, lines 13-15: Regarding DBEs, it sounds like that bias is built into the measurement via the ionization chamber. Should that be further addressed?*

This is a well-known bias with electrospray ionization. In the negative ion mode, only the molecules with an active H (e.g., carboxyl groups) can be deprotonated. In this case, we wanted to see which new species were formed by oxidation, so the bias is quite useful. To clarify this, the following sentence was added to page 13 line 11.

15. *P27, lines 11-12: Not sure Fig. 8 supports this observation in general for both aged and fresh aerosols. Please clarify.*

The statement on page 27 holds true only for fresh aerosols. This point is clarified in the revised manuscript as per reviewer's suggestion

16. P28, lines 17-18: Does it mean anything that smoldering biomass emits more per unit mass of fuel burned? We're getting deep into the manuscript now, and it may be good to remind the reader that everything is normalized to weight or volume or..... If it is?

In page 28, line 17-18 Our results showed that the secondary organic aerosols (SOA) produced by OFR oxidation (OFR-aged) of BB aerosols from flaming combustion type fuel have larger light absorption efficiencies. In contrast, the OFR-aged BB emission generated by smoldering combustion of peat fuels absorb less than fresh BB emissions from the same fuels. The absorption efficiency was normalized by mass of OC. The units' explanation was added (Figure 8 capture and P. 28, line 17)

17. Figure 10: Why was no attempt made to examine the hexane soluble extracts? May want to briefly raise this point in the Experimental section or while or after discussing the virtues of this result.

Oxidized (ionized) molecules were not expected to be observed in the hexane extracts. Our intention was to inform the water-soluble OM composition since it's the most likely fraction to contain the oxidized components that are amenable to ESI. In future studies, we can use APPI (Atmospheric Pressure Photoionization) to further explore the composition, however, that was deemed beyond the scope of the current project.

18. P25, lines 4-18: This discussion starts earlier at page 21 (lines 14-15), but doesn't really take off until here.

We apologize, but we are confused regarding this comment and are not sure what the reviewer is referring to.

19. Figure 11: This is a nice summarizing figure. Although, why are only select experiments from the current study shown here? Consider showing all the experiments.

Thank you! We also think that imaginary refractive indices for all fuel extracts (polar and non-polar) are important to present with the data reported from the previous works. However, when we tried to include all data sets for all fuels, the figure became too busy and hard to read. For this reason, we selected only two fuels and refractive indices for water and total extracts for the comparison. In the Supplementary Material we presented the imaginary refractive indices of water (Fig. S5) and hexane (Fig. S6) extracts from all fuels and for both fresh and aged aerosols.

Interactive comment on “Light absorption by polar and non-polar aerosol compounds from laboratory biomass combustion” by Deep Sengupta et al.

Anonymous Referee #2

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This manuscript describes the study of the absorption spectra of water- and hexane soluble components of biomass burning aerosols. Aerosols were generated from selected fuels under both flaming and smoldering conditions and these were studied nascently and after chemical aging in an oxidation flow reactor. The authors found that the solar-weighted hexane-soluble fraction was 2-3 times more absorbing (per mass of fuel consumed) than the water-soluble fraction. They also found that absorbance of the hexane-soluble fraction of all samples decreased after aging while the aged water-soluble fractions of two of the samples increased. Furthermore, the shape of the spectrum, as indicated by the absorption Ångström exponent, was found to change upon aging. Higher NO_x levels were observed from the flaming combustion, and the high-resolution mass spectra show evidence for organic-nitrogen species that may be formed during aging in the presence of NO_x.

Overall, this manuscript provides an interesting comparison between polar and nonpolar light-absorbing components of model biomass burning aerosols. The data and results are presented clearly, though some of the interpretations are confusing or not consistent with the figures. For example, it is stated that the hexane-soluble extracts were more absorbing than the water-soluble extracts for all samples except for the Siberian peat; yet, Figure 3 clearly shows that this is true for all four samples, including the Siberian peat. Such an inconsistency makes it confusing for the reader and undermines his/her confidence in the interpretation of the data, especially since this is one of the primary conclusions from the study.

Given that relatively few studies have explored the differences in optical properties of polar and non-polar aerosol extracts, this work serves to advance the understanding of brown carbon in biomass burning aerosols. However, despite the plethora of data presented, including high-resolution mass spectra and pH dependence of the absorption measurements, there are very few insights or general conclusions drawn from this work. Additionally, the absorbance data are presented as solar-weighted, i.e. weighted by the actinic solar spectrum, which makes interpretation difficult. For example, Figure 3 shows that the (solar-weighted) hexane-soluble fraction has a larger absorbance than the (solar-weighted) water-soluble fraction for all four fuels studied, but is this true for all wavelengths, or is the difference larger at some (e.g. UV) wavelengths than at others? While Figure 2 does compare the spectra from the two fractions, it is not clear how the spectral dependencies differ. Perhaps a plot of the ratio of the two spectra would be helpful.

In summary, the work presented here might be worthy of publication in ACP but only if the conclusions drawn were more clearly stated. As it stands now, it is a jumble of results riddled with typos and mistakes making it difficult for the reader to appreciate what has been learned from these experiments. The conclusions need to be generalized to provide some more fundamental insight into the nature of the differences in absorption between the polar and non-polar fractions.

We thank the reviewer for a constructive review of the manuscript. We agree that some conclusions are not clear. We revised our manuscript accordingly. Regarding the use of solar-weighted values, we chose this representation to simplify the comparison between different

experiments. Spectral dependence of measured absorbances and how it differs from experiment to experiment can be observed in Fig.11, Fig. S5, and Fig. S6 that show imaginary refractive index values.

Specific comments:

1. Page 1, lines 23-24: It should be clearly stated that the non-polar fraction is “2-3 times more absorbing” when weighted by the solar spectrum and normalized to mass of fuel consumed.

This is an important reviewer’s observation. The sentence was re-written “Results of spectrophotometric measurements (absorption weighted by the solar spectrum and normalized to mass of fuel consumed) over the 190 to 900 nm wavelength range showed that the non-polar (hexane-soluble) fraction is 2-3 times more absorbing than the polar (water-soluble) fraction.”

2. Page 1, line 26: It is stated that “an increased absorbance was observed for water extracts of oxidized/aged emissions,” but that appears to be true only for two of the four samples, FASMEE and Hawken Fire; the other two, Florida Peat and Siberian Peak, show a decrease upon aging (Figure 3).

Yes, the increased absorbance was only for FASMEE and Hawken Fire fuel which comes under flaming combustion type fuel. This condition is added as text in the revised manuscript.

3. Page 1, line 28, P2. Lines 1-3: The statement “Comparing the absorption Ångström Exponent (AAE) values, we observed changes in the light absorption properties of BB aerosols with aging that was dependent on the fuel types.” is vague. What is meant by “light absorption properties”? The only observed difference was in the AAE values themselves.

We agree, “light absorption properties” did not clearly refer to the AAE values. We changed the statement in the revised manuscript.

4. Page 3, line 11: “Just a decade ago . . .” is followed by a citation to a paper from 2001, 17 years ago. That’s not a decade.

We agree that “Just a decade ago” is not equivalent to 17 years of time as mentioned by the reviewer. We changed the beginning of the sentence to “Until recently”.

5. Page 4, line 22: “muck” is not a very scientifically specific word and should be replaced.

The term ‘muck’ is replaced with “mucky peat” in the revised version of the manuscript. According to the report of natural resources and conservation service (https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs142p2_053171.pdf), Mucky peat is hemic organic material, which is characterized by decomposition that is intermediate between that of fibric material and that of sapric material

6. Page 10, line 9: “700 to 900 nm and” should read “700 to 900 nm”.

The sentence was re-written in the revised manuscript.

7. Page 10, line 11: The use of the term “AbS λ ” is confusing; why not use “Abs λ ”? Why use a capital S?

All capital ‘S’ was replaced by ‘s’ in Abs λ expressions everywhere in the text and Figures.

8. Page 11, line 4: remove “was calculated”.

“was calculated” was removed as per suggestion

9. Page 16, line 14: The results don’t “suggest”, they show/indicate/demonstrate. There is no inference in this statement.

‘suggest’ was replaced by ‘demonstrate’

10. Page 16, line 14: Figure 3 clearly shows that there is more absorbance in the hexane-soluble fraction than the water-soluble fraction for all four samples, including the Siberian peat

Thank you for pointing this out. The “except for Siberian peat” was mentioned by mistake and has been corrected.

11. Page 16, lines 16: It should be made clear here that the “total absorbance” referred to is the solar-weighted total absorbance.

“total absorbance” was changed on “TotalAbs” in order to maintain proper reference/consistency to the equations in section 2.6 (Page 10, line 22).

12. Page 20, line 18: First, the authors refer to Fig. 1, but the absorption spectra appear in Fig. 2.

Thank you! In the revised version of the manuscript we refer to Fig. 2 at this point.

Second, “FAASME” should be “FASMEE.”

“FASMEE” was corrected.

Third, the FASMEE and Florida Peat absorption spectra are shown in Fig. 2, not FASMEE and Hawken Fire samples as stated.

The ‘typo’ was corrected.

Fourth, the increase in absorption observed occurred over a wider range of wavelengths than just 380-500 nm.

Yes, we agree that the increase in absorbance was observed in wider wavelength range than 380-500 nm and hence the range was changed to 380-580 nm in the current manuscript

Fifth, are the authors referring to an increase in absorbance for the water-soluble fraction or the hexane-soluble fraction?

We thank the reviewer for pointing out this mistake. The increase is only observed for water extracts and we corrected that in the manuscript.

Sixth, an increase in absorbance over a wide range of wavelengths such as observed here most certainly does not suggest that the “primary precursors for secondary emissions . . . are mostly aromatic in nature”; this statement is highly speculative and should be removed.

We agree with the reviewer that this statement is highly speculative and it was removed from the text (P.20, Lines 19-20)

13. Page 25, line 8: how does the decrease in absorbance with decreasing pH compare to the results of (Phillips et al., 2017) mentioned? Is it similar or not, and if not why not?

Phillips et al. measured changed in absorbance for a wide range of pH in ambient aerosol samples and they showed that with the decrease of pH, the absorbance also decreased. In the present study our samples were acidified to pH=2 and we observed a similar trend – absorption decreased. The sentence is added into the text (Page 26, lines 2-4).

14. Page 26, lines 1-2: how does the protonation of functional groups explain the decrease in absorption with lower pH? This statement needs to be clarified.

The organic fraction of BB aerosols is comprised of several chromophores and identification of specific chromophores responsible for light absorbance from different fuels is challenging (Liu et al., 2014). We suspect light absorption by BB aerosols can be due to the presence nitrophenols (Mohr et al., 2013), adduct of amine and carbonyl compounds (Powelson et al., 2014), and charge transfer complexes (Phillips and Smith, 2014). These compound are pH sensitive and lose their ionic structures (responsible for color) on protonation in lower pH (e.g. pH=2).

Literature Cited:

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Light absorption by polar and non-polar aerosol compounds from laboratory biomass combustion

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Abstract. Fresh and atmospherically aged biomass-burning (BB) aerosol mass is mostly comprised of
10 strongly light-absorbing black carbon (BC) and of organic carbon (OC) with its light-absorbing fraction
– brown carbon (BrC). There is a lack of data on the physical and chemical properties of atmospheric BB
aerosols, leading to high uncertainties in estimates of the BB impact on air quality and climate, especially
for BrC. The polarity of chemical compounds influences their fate in the atmosphere including wet/dry
15 deposition and chemical and physical processing. So far, most of the attention has been given to the water-
soluble (polar) fraction of BrC, while the non-polar BrC fraction has been largely ignored. In the present
study, the light absorption properties of polar and non-polar fractions of fresh and aged BB emissions
were examined to estimate the contribution of different-polarity organic compounds to the light
absorption properties of BB aerosols.

In our experiments, four globally and regionally important fuels were burned under flaming and
20 smoldering conditions in DRI's combustion chamber. To mimic atmospheric oxidation processes (5-7
days), BB emissions were aged using an oxidation flow reactor (OFR). Fresh and OFR-aged BB aerosols
were collected on filters and extracted with water and hexane to study absorption properties of polar and
non-polar organic species. Results of spectrophotometric measurements (absorption weighted by the solar
spectrum and normalized to mass of fuel consumed) over the 190 to 900 nm wavelength range showed
25 that the non-polar (hexane-soluble) fraction is 2-3 times more absorbing than the polar (water-soluble)
fraction. However, for emissions from fuels that undergo flaming combustion, an increased absorbance
was observed for the water extracts of oxidized/aged emissions while the absorption of the hexane extracts
was lower for the aged emissions for the same type of fuels. Comparing the Absorption Ångström

Exponent (AAE) values, computed based on absorbance values from spectrophotometer measurements, we observed changes in the light absorption properties of BB aerosols changed with aging and the nature of this change was fuel dependent on the fuel types. The light absorption by Humic Like Substances (HULIS) was found to be higher in fuels characteristic of the southwestern USA. The absorption of the HULIS fraction was lower for OFR-aged BB emissions. Comparison of the light absorption properties of different polarity extracts (water, hexane, HULIS) provides insight into the chemical nature of BB BrC and its transformation during oxidation processes.

Keywords. Biomass burning, organic aerosols, brown carbon, light absorption, non-polar organic fraction, oxidation flow reactor (Potential Aerosol Mass reactor)

1 Introduction

Biomass burning (BB), including wildfires and controlled burns, can contribute significantly to the atmospheric aerosol loading (Park et al., 2007). BB emissions alter regional air quality (Liu et al., 2009), cause radiative forcing and contribute to climate change (Jacobson, 2004), reduce visibility (Lee et al., 5 2016), and cause adverse health effects (Arbex et al., 2007; Regalado et al., 2006). Biomass combustion is a major source of greenhouse gases (e.g., CO₂), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), NO_x, CO, and carbonaceous aerosols in the atmosphere (Finlayson-Pitts, B. J. and J. N. Pitts, 1999). In addition to greenhouse gases, carbonaceous particles can perturb the radiation budget of the Earth's atmosphere (Hobbs et al., 1997; Podgorny et al., 2003) due to their light scattering and absorbing properties (Corr et 10 al., 2012; Liu et al., 2016a).

~~Just a decade ago~~ **Until recently**, black carbon (BC) was considered to be the only light absorbing compound in atmospheric carbonaceous aerosols (Ramanathan et al., 2001). Based on this premise, climate model simulations used known BC mass concentrations to compute aerosol absorption optical depths, which were compared with surface and satellite-based observations (Holben et al., 1998; Torres 15 et al., 2007). Discrepancies between simulated radiative forcing estimates with known BC mass concentrations and observed absorption values were high in regions dominated by BB aerosols (Koch et al., 2009). Both laboratory-based studies (Shiraiwa et al., 2010) and field campaigns (Cappa et al., 2012; China et al., 2013; Gyawali et al., 2017; Lack and Cappa, 2010) offer compelling evidence in favor of the ubiquitous existence of non-BC light-absorbing compounds in carbonaceous aerosols. The light absorbing 20 organic compounds are known as brown carbon (BrC), mostly due to their brownish color (Formenti, 2003). They are abundant in BB aerosols and strongly absorb light in the UV and near-UV visible region of the spectrum (Bond and Bergstrom, 2006; Kirchstetter et al., 2004; Moosmüller et al., 2009).

BrC chemical composition and light absorption efficiency vary depending on the fuels, burning conditions (Akagi et al., 2011; Jaffe and Wigder, 2012), and degree of atmospheric oxidation (Andreae and 25 Gelencsér, 2006; Hoffer et al., 2006). In order to understand the global impact of BB organic aerosols (BBOA) on atmospheric processes and climate, comprehensive characterization of their BrC fraction generated during combustion of relevant fuels from different geographical locations is needed. BB

processes and the subsequent atmospheric aging (Andreae, 1997) can produce a wide range of compounds including water-soluble HULIS (Graber and Rudich, 2006) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) (Samburova et al., 2016). However, very little is known about light absorption properties of other BB organic compounds.

5 In the present study, we investigated BB emissions from several globally and regionally important fuels and characterized light absorption by BrC in BBOA extracts of different polarity. While the water-soluble fraction of BB aerosols has attracted much attention (Kiss et al., 2002; Mayol-Bracero et al., 2002), only a few studies (Chen and Bond, 2010) have reported light absorption properties of non-polar BBOA extracted with lower-polarity solvents. Characterization of light absorbing compounds extracted with
10 different polarity solvents can greatly improve our understanding of the BB aerosol chemistry, wet and dry deposition of BB constituencies, and effects of BB aerosols, in particular of their BrC fraction, on regional and global radiative forcing. Spectrophotometric characterization of different polarity BB extracts was performed to analyze their light absorption properties in both fresh and oxidized states. These results were supplemented with ultrahigh resolution Orbitrap Elite mass spectrometry observations of the
15 high molecular weight fraction of the water-soluble aerosol.

2. Experiments

2.1 Fuel Description

Several globally and regionally important BB fuels were selected for the present study; they can be divided into two categories: (1) fuels that burn mostly with smoldering combustion and (2) fuels that burn
20 mostly with flaming combustion.

Smoldering Combustion: Florida peat from southeastern USA, used for our study, is a semi-tropical fuel and consists of organic muck **mucky peat** and swamp soils (Watts, 2013; Watts and Kobziar, 2013). Wetlands in the southeastern USA are currently under tremendous stress due to urbanization and increasing demand for water resources. The resulting desiccated wetlands are considered to be fire prone
25 zones and can cause large carbon emissions during wildland fires.

Eurasian peatlands host a large part of the global carbon pool (Yu, 2012) and are also highly vulnerable to wildfires due to climatic warming, permafrost degradation, and prolonged fire seasons (Brown et al.,

2015; Turetsky et al., 2015). For this study peat samples were collected from the Pskov region of Russia. The indigenous species that are responsible for peat formation in this region are Sphagnum and cotton grass (*Eriophorum spp.*).

Flaming Combustion: For flaming combustion fuel, we collected vegetation from the Fishlake National Forest, UT, USA where the Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP) of the U.S. land management agencies is planning to conduct large prescribed burns as part of the Fire and Smoke Model Evaluation Experiment (FASMEE). Dominant species are subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*) and quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*); minor species include Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*), and common juniper (*Juniperus communis*). Another flaming combustion type fuel was collected in the immediate vicinity of a local, Reno, NV, fire event that occurred in June 2016 (Hawken Fire) on the lower eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada's Carson Range. This fuel is characteristic of vegetation of the southwestern U.S. and is dominated by grasses, shrubs, shadscale (*Atriplex confertifolia*), sagebrush (*Artemisia arbuscula*), and antelope brush (*Purshia tridentata*).

2.2 Reagents and Materials

PAH standards were acquired from Sigma-Aldrich (St. Louis, MO, USA), AccuStandard (New Haven, CT, USA), and Cambridge Isotope Laboratories, Inc. (Andover, MA, USA). High-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) grade methanol and hexane were obtained from Fisher Scientific (Fair Lawn, NJ, USA). Nano-Pure water was generated with a Barnstead Nanopure instrument (Thermo Scientific, Dubuque, IA, USA). Solid phase extraction was performed using Waters Oasis HLB cartridges (Waters, Milford, MA, USA). Three different kinds of filters were used for sampling and further chemical analyses: 1) pre-fired (900 °C for 4 hours) 47-mm diameter quartz-fiber filters (2500 Pallflex QAT-UP, Pall Life Sciences, Ann Arbor, MI, USA) for thermo-optical EC/OC analysis, 2) Teflon filters (2500 Pallflex QAT-UP, Pall Life Science, Ann Arbor, MI, USA) for gravimetric particulate matter (PM) mass analysis, and 3) Teflon-impregnated glass fiber (TIGF) 47-mm diameter filters (Fiber FilmT60A20, Pall Life Sciences, Ann Arbor, MI, USA) for organic analysis.

2.3 Biomass-Burning Experiments

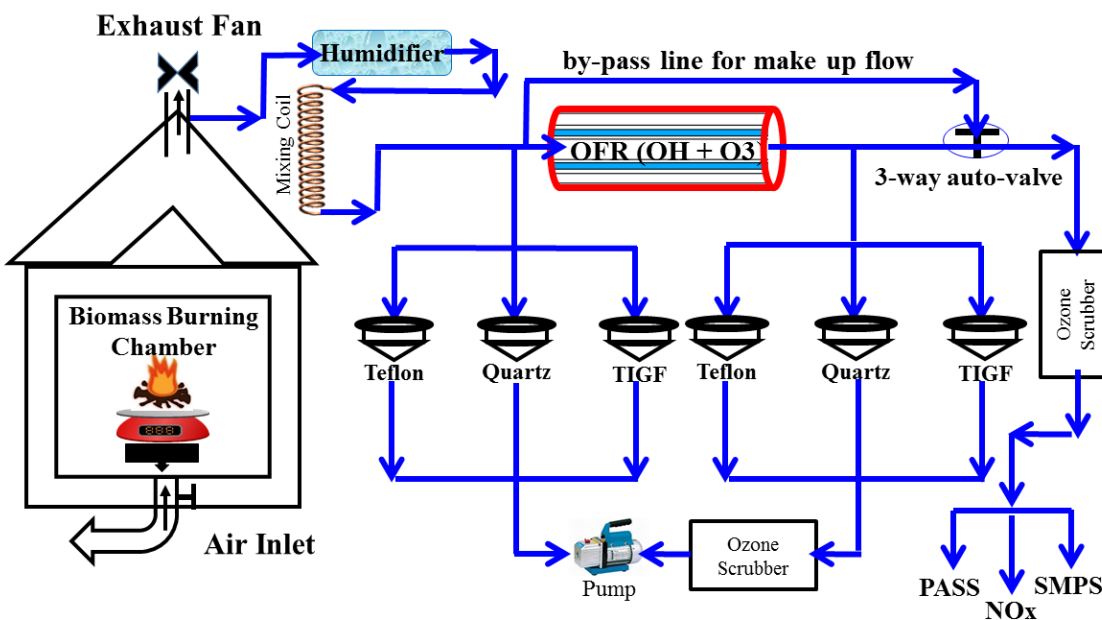


Figure 1. DRI Biomass Burning (BB) Facility with Oxidative Flow Reactor (OFR) and flow setup.

5 BB experiments were conducted using DRI's BB facility for combustion of the selected fuels under controlled conditions. A close replicate of this facility was described previously (Tian et al., 2015) and a detailed discussion of the experimental set up can be found elsewhere (Bhattarai et al., 2018). Fuels were placed on a burn platform that consists of a ceramic disk ($d = 45.7$ cm) on top of a balance (Veritas L Series Precision Balance, Hogentogler & Co. Inc., Columbia, MD, USA, 0.01 g precision). A propane
 10 burner (Worthington Cylinder Cooperation Columbus, OH, USA) was used to initiate the burns. During each burn, the mass on the burn platform was recorded every 2 seconds. A burn was considered complete when no significant change in fuel mass was observed for two ~~or~~ ~~and~~ more minutes.

Laboratory generated BB emissions were mixed with humidified zero air (Airgas Inc., Sparks, NV, USA) using a 4-m long spiral copper tubing (12.7 mm OD). Before the mixing with BB emissions, the zero air
 15 was humidified by bubbling through Nano-pure water in a glass 500-mL volume impinger. The flow rate was controlled by a mass flow controller (810C-CE-RFQ-1821, Sierra Instruments, Monterey, CA, USA).

A Potential Aerosol Mass Oxidative Flow Reactor (OFR) (Aerodyne Research Inc., Billerica, MA, USA) was used to mimic approximately seven days of atmospheric aging. The OFR consists of an alodine-coated aluminum cylinder (46 cm length and 22 cm diameter) with an internal volume of 13.3 L. Two sets of UV lamps emit UV-radiation at wavelengths of 185 and 254 nm (Atlantic Ultraviolet Corporation, Hauppauge, NY, USA; part number GPH436T5VH/4P & GPH436T5L/4P) in the OFR to produce ozone and OH radicals (Li et al., 2015). UV irradiance in the OFR was quantified with a photodiode detector with wavelength range of 225-287 nm. [TOCON_C6; Sglux GmbH, Germany]. Ultra-high purity nitrogen (Airgas Inc., Reno, NV, USA) was used to purge the UV lamp compartments to prevent the lamps from overheating. A probe that monitors relative humidity and temperature inside the OFR (from Aerodyne Inc., MA, USA) was mounted towards the outlet side of the OFR. A detailed characterization of the OFR, such as the particle loss, OH production rate, and time scales of various processes, can be found in Bhattarai et al. (2018).

The duration of smoldering combustions was 58 ± 27 min. on average, whereas the average duration for flaming combustions was 22 ± 8 min. In case of both type of laboratory combustion experiments both fresh (directly from the chamber) and aged (oxidized in the OFR) emissions were continuously collected on separate sets of Teflon and pre-fired quartz filters, as well as on a TIGF filter followed by an XAD cartridge for detailed chemical analysis. Several online instruments were used to characterize gas and particle phase pollutants (see Fig. 1). The online instruments alternated every 10 min between sampling fresh and aged emissions using a computer-controlled three-way valve system. In this study, data collected with a chemiluminescence NO_x analyzer (Thermo-Environmental Instruments Inc., Franklin, MA 02038, USA) were synchronized with filter measurements. Maximum NO_x concentrations in fresh and aged BB emissions were measured consecutively. ~~NO₂ concentrations for individual burns were normalized by consumed fuel mass (Δm) yielding fuel based emission factors for fresh and aged emissions separately. These $[\text{NO}_2]/\Delta m$ emission factors for fresh and aged emissions are subsequently averaged over the total run time for each burning session.~~

A bypass flow was used to keep the flow from the BB chamber and through the OFR constant when online instruments switch between sampling fresh and aged emissions. To protect online instruments

from high ozone produced in the OFR, ozone scrubbers were installed in front of the instruments' inlets. The ozone scrubbers were loaded with charcoal followed by Carulite 200 catalyst (Carus Corp., Peru, IL, USA).

All burning experiments, except for Siberian peat combustion, were conducted with 2.1 V of OFR voltage, which is equivalent to approximately seven days of aging (Bhattarai et al., 2018). Since no replicates were collected during Siberian peat combustion, standard deviations and mean values were not calculated for these burns. Instead, during the combustion of Siberian peat, three different OFR voltages (3, 5, and 7 V) were used to monitor the effect of enhanced oxidation with increasing OFR voltage and thus oxidants concentration.

10

2.4 Extraction Procedure

Teflon filters were extracted for 20 min under sonication in 30 mL of Nano-Pure water. The extracts were filtered with PTFE filters (0.22 μm pore size, ThermoScientific, TN, USA); 20 ml of the extract was kept for further chemical analysis. 2 mL aliquots of each extract were used for spectrophotometric analysis and 8 mL were used for the solid phase extraction (SPE) and further HULIS analysis. Prior to the SPE procedure, the pH of the aqueous aerosol extract was adjusted to 2 with 1 M HCl (Varga et al., 2001). This ensures retention of compounds with multiple polar functional groups (HULIS) in the SPE column (Kiss et al., 2002; Varga et al., 2001). At pH 2, all functional groups are expected to be protonated and less hydrophilic than at neutral pH (~6-7). To remove the residue of inorganic constituents, SPE cartridges were rinsed with water and dried for 30 min. The retained organics were eluted with 6 mL of methanol.

Hexane extracts were prepared using one half of each of the quartz filter samples. Prior to hexane extraction, the filter halves were spiked with deuterated PAH standards needed for future chemical analysis of these extracts. The spiked quartz filters were extracted using an accelerated solvent extractor (ASE; DIONEX, ASE-300, Salt Lake City, UT, USA). Based on our analysis of over 300 compounds the recovery was more than 95%. All hexane extracts were concentrated on a rotary evaporator (Rotavapor R-124, BÜCHI, New Castle, DE, USA) to 6 mL. Two mL of the concentrated hexane extract was used for spectrophotometric analysis (Lambda 1050, PerkinElmer, Waltham, MA, USA).

2.5 OC/EC Analysis

Samples collected on quartz-fiber filters were used to estimate total organic carbon (OC_{Total}) and elemental carbon (EC) mass. Punches (area = 1.5 cm^2) from the quartz filter samples were analyzed with a thermal-optical carbon analyzer (Atmoslytic Inc., Calabasas, CA, USA) following the IMPROVE protocol (Chow et al., 1993, 2004). To obtain carbon content of hexane and water extracts separately, the approach of Lowenthal et al. (2009) was adopted. $30 \mu\text{l}$ hexane extract aliquots were transferred to 7-mm diameter pre-baked quartz filter punches. The filter punches were dried for 24 hours allowing the hexane to evaporate completely. The punches were then analyzed using the thermal/optical carbon analyzer to obtain the total OC content of the hexane extracts (OC_{Hexane}). To correct for the background, five blanks were prepared by spiking pre-baked filter punches with pure hexane and analyzed in the same way. Mean OC values of the blanks ($0.7 \mu\text{g punch}^{-1}$) were subtracted from total OC_{Hexane} values (on average $2.4 \mu\text{g punch}^{-1}$ for all fuels). The OC mass of the hexane extract OC_{Hexane} (in g mL^{-1}) was subtracted from the total OC mass (OC_{Total}) yielding the OC mass of the polar OC fraction (OC_{Water}) under the assumption that compounds that are not soluble in hexane, are water soluble.

2.6 Spectrophotometer Analysis

Spectrophotometric characterization of water, hexane, and water extracts after SPE (HULIS fraction in methanol) were performed with a UV–Vis spectrophotometer (Lambda 1050, PerkinElmer, Waltham, MA, USA) in 10-mm path length quartz macro cuvettes (FireflySci Inc., NY, USA). Absorption spectra were taken over the 190 – 900 nm wavelength range. The spectrophotometer was operated with a reference cell, filled with the corresponding blanks: pure water for water extracts, hexane with PAH standards for hexane extracts, and methanol - for SPE extracts. The use of corresponding blanks in the reference cell helped to eliminate/subtract absorption caused by solvents and internal standards. Results are reported in terms of absorbance A , defined as $A = \log I_0/I$ (where I_0 is the radiant power of incident light and I is the radiant power of transmitted light) and related to the transmittance T by $A = -\log_{10} T$, to the optical depth τ by $A = \tau/\ln 10$. The relation between absorbance at each wavelength A_λ and the

fractional volume concentration of the analytes (c) is given by Eq: 1a where ϵ is absorption coefficient and l is length of cuvette (1 cm).

$$A_{\lambda} = \epsilon cl \quad (1a)$$

Extinction coefficient can be calculated rearranging Eq (1a) as

$$\epsilon = \frac{A_{\lambda}}{cl} \quad (1b)$$

The In order to account for instrumental background drift that was observed in the wavelength range of 700 and 900 nm, a baseline correction was performed using the Hecobian et al. (2010) approach. The mean absorbance $A_{Mean(700-900)}$ was calculated in the wavelength range of 700 to 900 nm and then the mean absorbance value was subtracted from the absorbance values for each individual wavelength A_{λ} to yield the baseline-corrected absorbance $AbsS_{\lambda}$ as

$$AbsS_{\lambda} = (A_{\lambda} - A_{Mean(700-900)}) \quad (1c)$$

It is important to consider how the absorbance values are contributing to solar radiative forcing estimates. Clear sky total spectral solar irradiance on a tilted receiver plane ($GTIR_{\lambda}$) was determined with the Simple Model of Atmospheric Radiative Transfer of Sunshine (SMARTS) program (Gueymard, 1995). The normalized spectral irradiance of the solar radiation was multiplied with obtained absorbance spectra for all extracts to estimate solar weighted absorbance ($[AbsS_{\lambda}]_{SW}$).

$$[AbsS_{\lambda}]_{SW} = AbsS_{\lambda} \times \frac{GTIR_{\lambda}}{\sum_{290}^{900} GTIR_{\lambda}} \quad (2)$$

The total absorbance ($TotalAbs$) was calculated by integrating solar weighted absorbance from 190 to 900 nm and normalizing it with respect to the total consumed fuel mass during each burning experiment. To compare the total absorbance between different extracts, all dilution factors were taken into account.

$$TotalAbs = \frac{\sum_{290}^{900} [AbsS_{\lambda}]_{SW}}{fuel\ mass\ consumed} \quad (3)$$

We performed two tailed pairwise t-tests on sets of fresh and photo-chemically aged (with OFR) aerosols in different extracts to evaluate the statistical implications of our results. We computed the t-statistic under the null hypothesis of “no change in absorption took place upon aging/oxidation”. All p -values from the statistic are reported in Table 2 (Supplementary Material).

In order to estimate the absorption efficiency of the extracts, measured absorption (Abs_{λ}) (Eq. 1c) was used to calculate the mass absorption coefficients (MAC) for both hexane (MAC_{Hexane}) and water extracts (MAC_{Water}):

$$MAC_{Hexane} = \{[Abs_{\lambda}]_{SW}\}_{Hexane} / OC_{Hexane} \quad (4)$$

$$MAC_{Water} = \{[Abs_{\lambda}]_{SW}\}_{Water} / OC_{Water} \quad (5)$$

where $[Abs_{\lambda}]_{SW}$ is the solar weighted absorbance, OC_{Hexane} is the organic carbon mass of the hexane-extracted fraction and OC_{Water} is the organic carbon mass from the water-extracted OC fraction.

The solar weighted MAC values (MAC_{sw}) from each individual wavelength were integrated over the entire spectral range yielding Spectrally Integrated Solar weighted Mass Absorption Efficiency or $SIMAC_{sw}$.

Absorption spectra often can be approximated by a power law with a single exponent, the so-called Absorption Ångström Exponent (AAE), quantifying the wavelength dependence of the absorbance as

$$\frac{Abs_{\lambda_2}}{Abs_{\lambda_1}} = \left[\frac{\lambda_1}{\lambda_2} \right]^{AAE} \quad (6)$$

where Abs_{λ} is the absorbance at the corresponding wavelength λ . To calculate AAE, Eq. (6) can be written as

$$AAE = - \frac{\ln(Abs_{\lambda_2}) - \ln(Abs_{\lambda_1})}{\ln(\lambda_2) - \ln(\lambda_1)} \quad (7)$$

where one can clearly see that AAE is the negative slope of absorbance plotted as function of wavelength in log-log space (Moosmüller et al., 2011). Here, we use the AAE values for three different wavelength ranges 1) 200 – 400 nm, 2) 400 – 600 nm, 3) 600 – 900 nm, each derived with linear regression in log-log space. Absorbance data in the 600 – 900 nm range were quite noisy; therefore, we averaged sets of ten data points, thereby reducing the number of data points from 300 to 30 and obtaining AAE from a linear regression of these points in log-log space. We determined AAE values for extracts of fresh and aged aerosol emission from the combustion of several different fuels.

The imaginary part of the bulk refractive index was calculated for water extracts. MAC values computed from spectrophotometer analysis were multiplied by mass density (ρ) of the aerosols (see Eq. 8) to obtain absorption coefficients (β) such as used in Mie theory (Sun et al., 2007).

$$5 \quad \beta = \rho MAC_{water} \quad (8)$$

The mass density of bulk aerosol depends on fuel type and burning condition. In this work, instead of making an attempt to measure aerosol density for all fuel types (and both fresh and aged aerosols), we assumed a general BrC aerosol mass density of 1569 kg m^{-3} (Hoffer et al., 2006) for all BB aerosols from
 10 our experiments. The bulk absorption coefficient β is related to the imaginary part of the refractive index (k) (Moosmüller et al., 2009) as

$$\beta = \frac{4\pi k}{\lambda} \quad (9)$$

and the imaginary part of the refractive index k can be written as

$$k = \frac{\beta \lambda}{4\pi} \quad (10)$$

15 Total imaginary refractive index k_{total} was computed by using a simple volume mixing rule as

$$Hexane \text{ Fraction}(HF) = \frac{OC_{Hexane}}{OC_{Hexane} + OC_{Water}} \quad (11.a)$$

$$Water \text{ Fraction}(WF) = \frac{OC_{Water}}{OC_{Hexane} + OC_{Water}} \quad (11.b)$$

$$k_{total} = HF * k_{Hexane} + WF * k_{Water} \quad (11.c)$$

20 under the assumption that OC_{Hexane} and OC_{Water} have the same mass density.

2.7. Ultrahigh Resolution Mass Spectrometry

Water-soluble organic carbon (WSOC) was extracted from quartz fibre filter punches in 5 ml of HPLC grade water using 1.5 h low-speed orbital shaking. The extracts were filtered using $0.2\text{-}\mu\text{m}$ pore-size
 25 PTFE syringe filters (Puradisc 25, Whatman plc, Maidstone, UK) and acidified to pH 2 using 1 M HCl. 30 mg Strata-X cartridges (Phenomenex Inc., Torrance, CA, USA) were used to isolate high molecular

weight water-soluble organic carbon from the aqueous extracts. The retained WSOC was eluted twice from the Strata-X cartridges: first, with 1 ml of methanol and water (90/10 v/v); second, with 1 ml of methanol containing 0.3% of aqueous ammonia. Both extracts were combined and the volume was reduced to 1 ml under a gentle stream of nitrogen. The WSOC described in this paper is operationally defined as the WSOC that is both retained and recovered from the SPE cartridges (SPE-recovered), thus it is not equivalent with the total WSOC. Samples were analyzed using an ultrahigh resolution Orbitrap Elite mass spectrometer (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA, USA) equipped with a heated electrospray ionization (HESI) source. Mass spectrometer settings for negative HESI included heater temperature of 100°C, spray voltage of 2.75 V, and capillary temperature of 270°C. Mass spectra were recorded for m/z 100 to 700 with the resolving power 240,000 at m/z 400. The observed negative ions are expected to have formed by a deprotonation reaction. This implies that only structures with polar functional groups (e.g., carboxyl, hydroxyl) can be observed. The molecular formulas for singly charged ions were assigned using an empirical formula calculator (Sierra Analytics Composer64, Modesto, CA, USA). The calculator uses the Kendrick mass defect to sort homologous ion series (species with a given double bond equivalents (DBE) and heteroatom content but differing by increments of -CH₂). The calculator was set to allow up to 200 carbon, 1000 hydrogen, 30 oxygen, 3 nitrogen, and 1 sulfur atoms per elemental composition. Additional method details were described in Mazzoleni et al. (2010) and Putman et al. (2012).

20 3. Results and Discussion

There are two common problems associated with estimation of light absorbing properties of BrC. First, in BB emissions, OC containing BrC is generally mixed with BC, except for pure smoldering combustion such as encountered for combustion of peat fuels that emits nearly exclusively OC. Therefore, it is often challenging to distinguish between light absorption by BC and by BrC, especially if the BC concentrations are high (e.g., for flaming combustion). Second, most online instruments use 1-7 fixed wavelengths for light absorption measurements (Drinovec et al., 2015, 2017; Lewis et al., 2008; Virkkula et al., 2005), which may not be sufficient to fully characterize spectral absorption properties of BB BrC emissions (Andreae and Gelencsér, 2006).

In contrast to online instruments, the approach used in this study – measurements of BrC light absorption in extracts – eliminates the interference of BC absorption and allows recording high-resolution (i.e., ~ 1 nm) absorption spectra over a large wavelength range (i.e., 190 – 900 nm, for this work).

5 3.1 Comparison of Absorbance

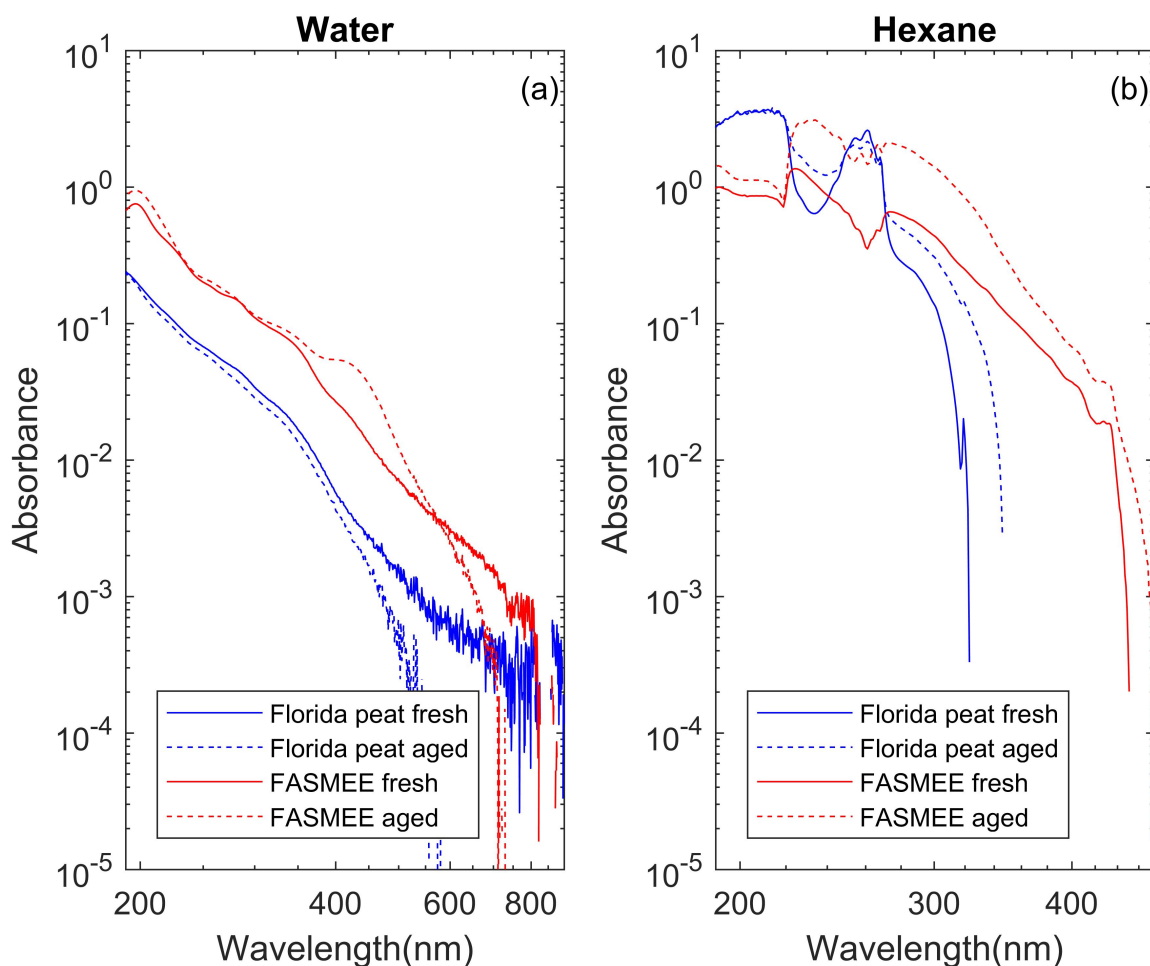


Figure 2. Light absorbance spectra of water (2a) and hexane (2b) extracts from representative samples of biomass-burning emissions from two representative fuels. Solid and dashed lines correspond to fresh and aged BB emissions, respectively.

Figure 2 shows absorbance spectra measured for water (Fig. 2a) and hexane (Fig. 2b) extracts of fresh and aged BB emissions of two fuels (Florida Peat, FASMEE). Absorbance data measured with the spectrophotometer were plotted on a log-log scale for easier visualization of AAE (Eq. 6), directly displaying AAE as negative slope and curvature representing deviations from the power law.

5 Absorbance of fresh and aged emissions varied between fuels and the spectrophotometer signal was noisy above a wavelength of 600 nm. For peat samples (e.g., Florida peat), absorbance of both fresh and aged water extracts decreased steadily towards longer wavelengths but we did not observe such steady decrease in the hexane extract, instead fluctuations were observed even in the shorter wavelengths. The absorbance of aged BBOA is less than fresh BBOA for water extracts but for the aged BBOA hexane extract, the
10 absorbance was higher than that of the fresh hexane extract close to 250 nm. In the case of the fuels that undergo flaming combustions (e.g., FASMEE), the absorbance from aged BBOA water extracts were lower than that of the fresh BBOA water extracts at longer wavelengths (>600); in addition, an increase in the absorbance was observed in the 450 – 500 nm wavelength range. Absorbance values for aged BBBOA hexane extract of FASMEE fuel were higher than fresh BBOA in all wavelengths. The increase
15 of absorbance for FASMEE aged BBOA can be attributed to the type of combustion (See Supplement 1). For better quantitative comparison, total solar weighted absorbance and MAC values are compared in section 3.2, 3.4 and 3.6.

3.2. Absorbance of Polar and Non-Polar Fractions

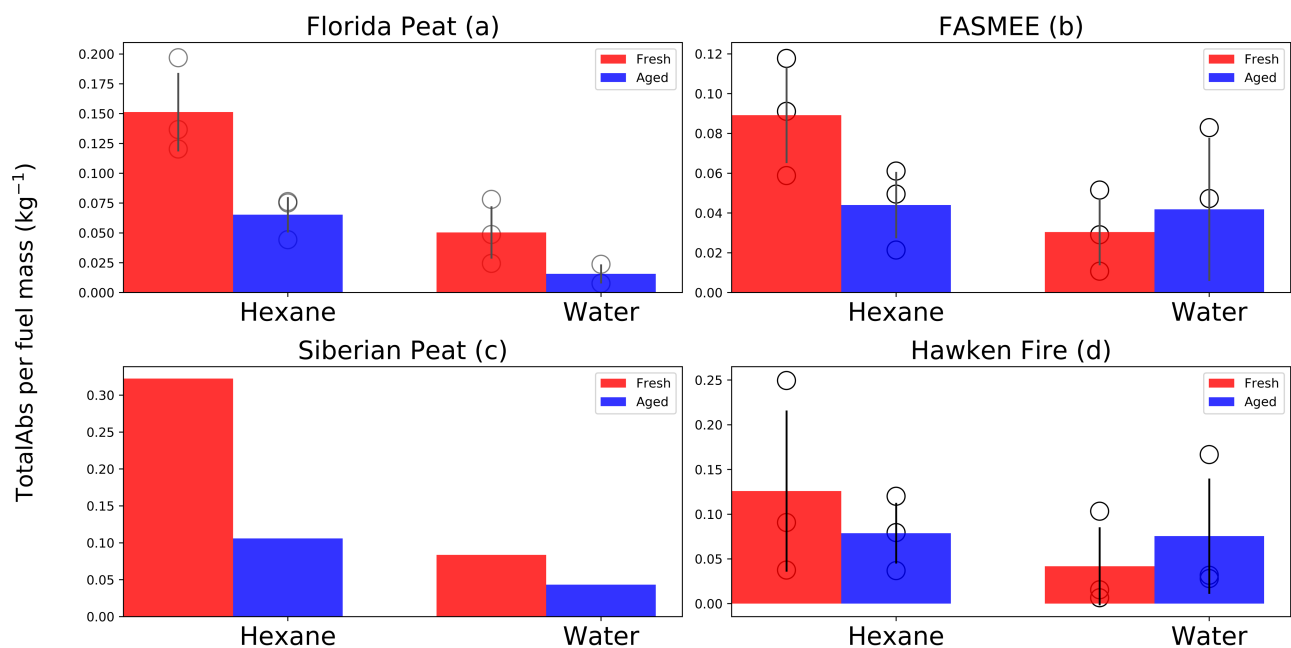


Figure 3. Comparison of total absorbance (Eq. 3) per fuel mass consumed for fresh and aged aerosols in water and hexane extracts, normalized to 1-ml extraction volumes. Bars, circles, and error bars represent the mean values, individual observations, and standard deviations, respectively. No error bars are given for Siberian peat, because only one experiment was performed with this fuel.

To compare the contribution of polar and non-polar fractions to the light absorbance, the following steps were taken. Wavelength-dependent absorbance of each extract was recalculated using the Beer-Lambert law to that of a solution that would have been obtained if the collected aerosol was extracted in 1 ml of solvent. This was necessary to account for variations in solvent volumes used for aerosol extraction (Section 2.4). Fig. 3 shows the normalized absorbance for polar and non-polar extracts of fresh and aged BB aerosols. While most previous studies have focused on light absorption by the water-soluble fraction of BB aerosols (Hecobian et al., 2010; Xie et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2013b), very little attention was given to the light absorption by the water-insoluble part of BB aerosols (Chen and Bond, 2010). Our results suggest demonstrate that for fresh aerosols from all fuels except for Siberian peat, non-polar (hexane) extracts absorb more than polar (water) extracts (Fig. 3). For fresh aerosols, the ratios of total absorbance $TotalAbs$ in the hexane extract to the water extract are 3.00 (Florida peat), 2.92 (FASMEE),

and 3.01 (Hawken Fire). This ~3-fold higher light absorption of the non-polar fraction (hexane extract) necessitates a detailed chemical speciation analysis to yield further insight into the light absorbing compounds that can be found in non-polar fraction.

Figure 3 shows the absorbance of fresh samples with red bars and aged samples with blue bars. Aging in the OFR changed light absorption properties for BB aerosol extracts for all four fuels, even though there is a significant variability among replicate measurements (shown as points in Fig. 3). For Florida peat combustion, the total absorbance per consumed fuel mass of aerosol hexane extracts decreased from 0.15 kg⁻¹ for fresh aerosol to 0.065 kg⁻¹ for aged aerosol. Absorbance of Florida peat combustion water extracts decreased by an even larger factor due to aging (from 0.05 to 0.015 kg⁻¹). A similar trend was observed for Siberian peat combustion extracts, where absorbance in the hexane extracts decreased due to aging from 0.058 to 0.032 kg⁻¹, while for the water extracts its decrease was from 0.084 to 0.043 kg⁻¹. In contrast, light absorbance in water extracts of aged BBOA from FASMEE and Hawken Fire fuels increased due to aging from 0.03 to 0.042 kg⁻¹ and from 0.042 to 0.079 kg⁻¹, respectively. No increase in absorbance due to aging was observed for hexane extracts of FASMEE and Hawken Fire fuel combustion aerosols, where absorbance decreased from 0.089 to 0.044 kg⁻¹ (FASMEE) and from 0.13 to 0.079 kg⁻¹ (Hawken Fire).

To estimate if the difference in absorbance values between fresh and aged aerosol extracts is statistically significant how significantly the absorbance values changed upon aging, the statistical significance of the effect of aging on absorbance values, the Student pairwise t-statistics was used at $p=0.05$. The p-values from the pairwise t-test for hexane extracts showed statistical significance for Florida peat ($p=0.04$), and FASMEE fuel ($p=0.016$). No statistically significant difference was observed in the case of the Hawken Fire ($p=0.442$). For Siberian peat we could not perform a statistical significance test since no replicates were collected. The p-values computed for all water extracts showed no statistical difference in absorbance between fresh and aged aerosol extracts ($p>0.16$). Given the high variability in the observed absorbance values among individual burns, it is possible that a larger number of experiments would have better constrained the effect of aging on absorbance. However, given the resources available for this study, it was not possible to collect more replicate samples. Moreover, the p-values are higher for the emissions from the flaming fuels (e.g., 0.442 for Hawken Fire fuel combustion emissions in hexane extract) compared to the smoldering fuels (e.g., 0.04 for Florida peat combustion emissions in hexane extract).

These higher p-values associated with the flaming fuels can be attributed to the more chaotic nature of flaming combustion.

The light absorption properties of polar extracts are different for OFR-aged emissions from peat and forest fuels (Fig. 3). The difference in the effect of aging on light absorption by polar extracts between peat and

5 forest fuels is remarkable. While aging decreased the total absorbance of the polar fraction for peat fuels, the opposite was observed for forest fuels. The increase in light absorption of forest fuels is mainly due to the increase in absorption in the 380-500 nm range (Fig. 2). This suggests the formation of new organic substances that absorb light in this range. Flaming fuels typically had emissions with higher NO_x concentration than smoldering fuels (Supplementary Material, Fig. 2). The presence of NO_x may lead to
10 the formation of nitrogen-containing aromatic compounds during aerosol aging (Kahnt et al., 2013; Kitanovski et al., 2012). These compounds can absorb in the 450 - 550 nm range (Liu et al., 2016b) and therefore, can cause an absorbance increase in this spectral range. High NO_x emissions observed during the combustion of FASMEE and Hawken fire fuels may be explained by two phenomena: elemental composition of fuel and high temperature burning conditions. Both the FASMEE and Hawken fire fuels
15 had leaves and branches, which may result in greater nitrogen content compared to peats where most of the nitrogenous compounds are bacterially decomposed during peat formation (Reddy, K. Ramesh; DeLaune, 2008) leaving only carbon and oxygen in the refractory fraction of peat.

3.3. Effect of NO_x on Aged Aerosol

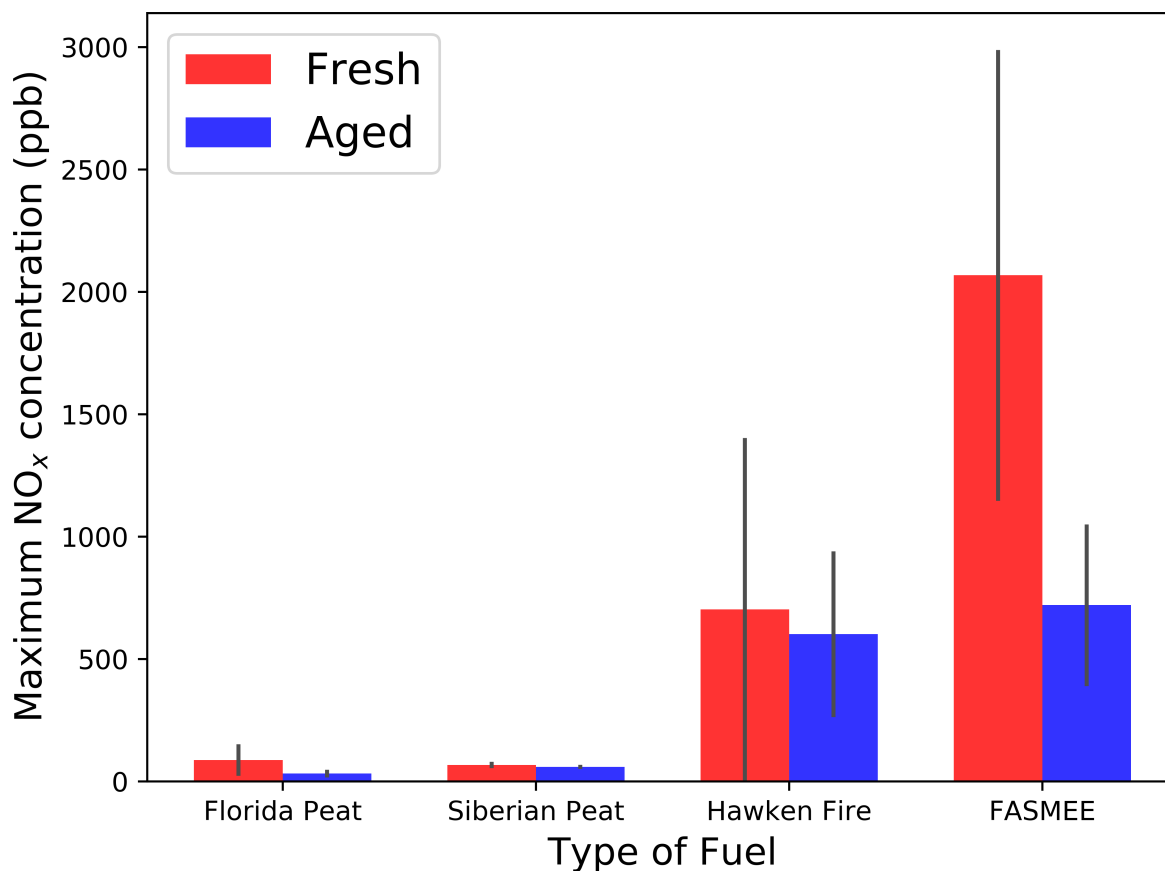


Figure 4. Maximum NO_x concentration for emissions from the combustion of different fuels. Average values plotted from replicates as bar and error bars are standard deviations of the mean from three replicate 5 burnings for each fuel.

NO_x concentrations reach their maximum in the beginning of each burn (Supplementary Material, Fig. S2). Figure 4 shows maximum NO_x concentrations for the combustion of each fuel. In the case of flaming fuels (Hawken Fire and FASMEE), the maximum NO_x concentrations were up to 800 ppb and 2000 ppb, 10 respectively. In the case of peat fuels (Florida and Siberian), NO_x concentrations did not exceed 100 ppb. This difference is probably due to a much faster fuel consumption rate in higher temperature during flaming combustion ($\sim 5.33 \text{ g min}^{-1}$) than smoldering combustion of peats ($\sim 0.83 \text{ g min}^{-1}$) (Supplementary

Material, Fig. S1).

We suspect that high NO_x concentrations affect formation of nitrogen-containing Secondary Organic Aerosols (SOA) (Laskin et al., 2009; Lin et al., 2015, 2017). The effect of NO_x on the formation of SOA has been highly debated and not sufficiently explored to date. However, experimental chamber studies with representative precursors (Kleindienst et al., 2004; Liu et al., 2016) and model estimates based on ambient measurements (Henze et al., 2007) provide compelling evidence in favor of increasing SOA yields in the presence of NO_x. The mechanism for SOA formation varies with organic precursor type and the amount of NO_x present (Ng et al., 2007a, 2007b, 2008). Nitro-organic compounds, especially the nitro-aromatic compounds, are abundant in the atmosphere and can be used as a tracer for biomass-burning emissions (Iinuma et al., 2010). Previous studies on the evolution of SOA in the presence of NO_x was mostly focused on total SOA yields, without investigating light absorption properties and compositional variability. Recently, (Liu et al., 2016b) estimated the effect of photochemical aging in the presence of NO_x on light absorption properties of aerosols produced from different primary OA precursors. They reported a large increase in the MAC values in the 300 to 500 nm wavelength range for SOA derived from aromatic precursors in a NO_x-rich environment compared to NO_x-free conditions. Interestingly, there was no distinct change in the MAC values for SOA derived from aliphatic precursors under high NO_x conditions. We observed an increase in absorbance values in the range of 380 to 500-580 nm for the FAASME FASMEE fuel's and Hawken fire aerosol water extract (Fig. 42), which is in agreement with Liu et al. (2016) results. This suggests that the primary precursors for secondary emissions from the combustion of FASMEE and Hawken Fire emissions are mostly aromatic in nature.

Negative Ion Difference Spectra

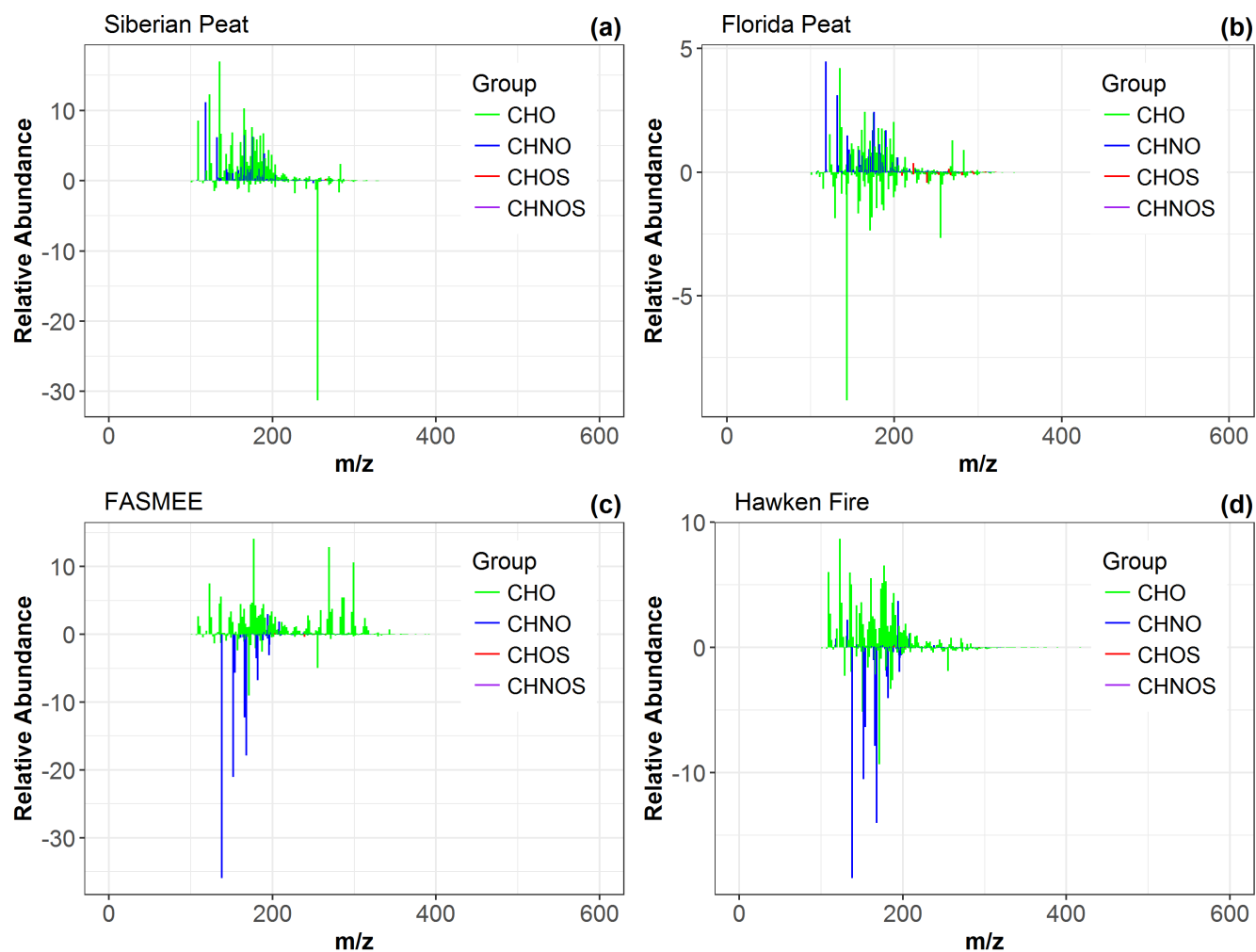


Figure 5. Ultrahigh resolution mass spectrometry difference mass spectra for WSOC from the combustion emissions from the combustion of the representative fuels: a, b - smoldering fuels (peats), and c, d - flaming fuels.

In order to confirm the presence of newly formed nitrogen-containing SOA during OFR oxidation, the high molecular weight fraction of aqueous extracts of fresh and aged BB samples were analyzed using ultrahigh resolution Orbitrap Elite mass spectrometry. We assigned CHO, CHNO, CHOS, and CHNOS

molecular formulas to the ions detected in the electrospray negative ion mode. Figure 5 shows the difference mass spectra of the assigned molecular formulas for the fresh and aged BB emissions of the analyzed fuels. For each fuel sample, the normalized relative abundances of the aged emissions were subtracted from the normalized relative abundances of fresh BB emissions. Thus, the signals with positive relative abundances represent the prominent molecular formulas of fresh BB emissions, while signals with negative relative abundances represent the prominent molecular formulas for the aged emissions. No prominent CHNO molecular formulas were detected in the OFR aged aerosol from the combustion of Siberian and Florida peat fuels (Fig. 5a, b). However, a large number of CHNO species were detected in the OFR aged aerosol from the combustion of the FASMEE and Hawken fire fuels (Fig. 5c, d). This result suggests that CHNO organic compounds were formed during the aging/oxidation process of flaming combustion emissions from FASMEE and Hawken fire fuels. These observations are consistent with the hypothesis that organic nitrogen compound formation occurs during the oxidative aging of flaming combustion fuels when the concentration of nitrogen oxides was high (Fig. 5). DBEs can increase with aging because non-polar aromatic species may become partially oxidized facilitating their ionization in the aged samples. Although CHNO species were formed in the peat fire combustion experiments, in contrast to the flaming fuel experiments, we did not observe high relative abundances of them nor a large number of uniquely formed species in the aged extracts.

3.4. Light Absorption by Humic Like Substances (HULIS)

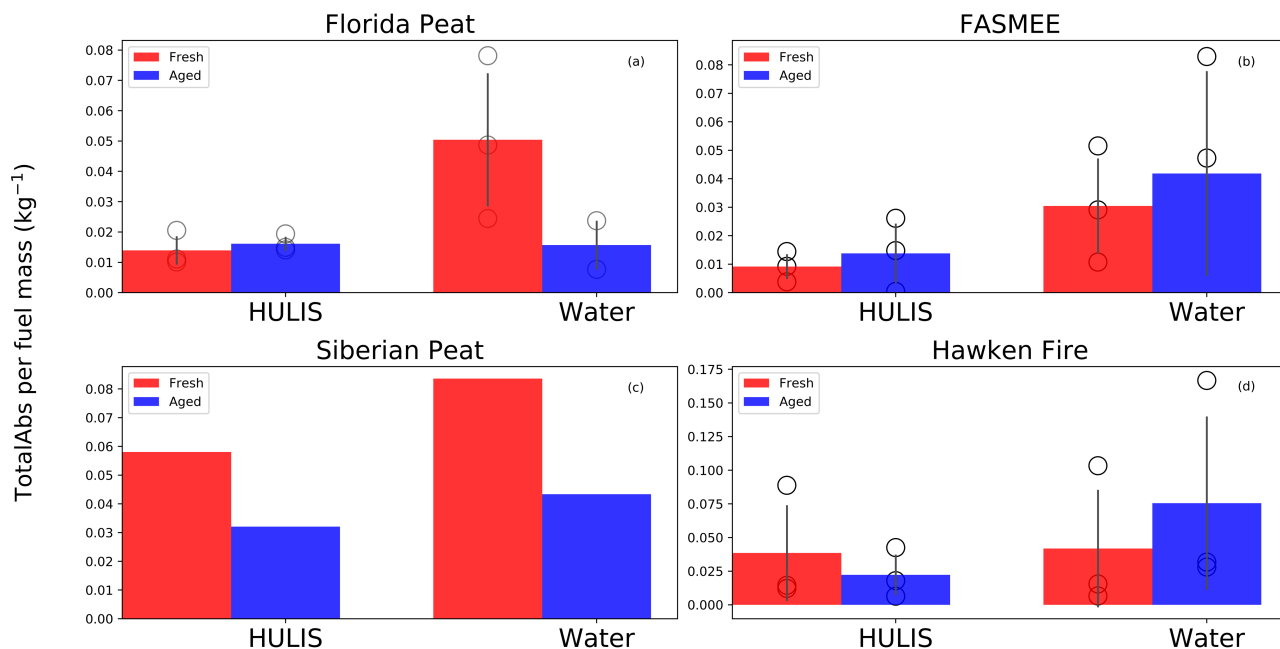


Figure 6. Comparison of total absorbance per fuel mass consumed for fresh and aged aerosols in water and HULIS extracts, normalized to 1-ml extraction volumes. Bars, circles, and error bars represent the mean values, individual observations, and standard deviations, respectively. No error bars are given for Siberian peat, because only one experiment was performed with this fuel.

It has been reported that high molecular weight organic species (or HULIS) comprise a substantial fraction of water-soluble organic aerosols (Graber and Rudich, 2006). HULIS can originate in the atmosphere either from primary emissions (Lin et al., 2010) or via oligomerization of primary precursors during SOA formation (Samburova et al., 2005). HULIS can play a significant role in hygroscopic growth and cloud condensation nuclei activity of ambient aerosols (Dinar et al., 2006; Gysel et al., 2004). In addition, solar light absorption by HULIS is of special interest with respect to its impact on direct aerosol radiative forcing and climate change (Hoffer et al., 2006). We isolated the HULIS fraction from water extracts using the SPE approach. In this study, HULIS fractions isolated from water extracts of fresh and aged BB emissions were characterized with UV-Vis spectrophotometry and compared with the spectra of the total

water-soluble extracts (Fig. 6). The total solar weighted absorbance per fuel mass consumed for HULIS (e.g., for Florida peat (fresh): 0.14 kg^{-1}) is mostly lower compared to the total absorbance per fuel mass consumed for water extracts (e.g., for Florida peat (fresh): 0.5 kg^{-1}), except for Hawken fire fuel.

Hawken fire fuel was mostly comprised of cheatgrass and shrubs, characteristic of the semi-arid lower slopes of the Carson Range of the Sierra Nevada, USA. For the fresh Hawken fire BBOA, the total absorbance per fuel mass consumed of the HULIS fraction isolated from the water extract was 0.038 kg^{-1} where that of water extract was 0.041 kg^{-1} (Fig. 6). This shows that light absorption by water soluble compounds emitted from the Hawken fire was dominated ($\sim 92\%$) by high molecular weight organic species (HULIS). We also noticed that the total solar weighted absorbance for water extract of fresh Hawken fire BBOA (0.041 kg^{-1}) (Fig. 6d) increased by $\sim 83\%$ (0.075 kg^{-1}) (Fig. 6d) after aging. At the same time, a distinct decrease in the absorbance of the HULIS fraction ($\sim 42\%$) was observed upon aging (from 0.038 kg^{-1} to 0.022 kg^{-1}). Although the points are variable ($p > 0.4$), the decreased absorbance of the HULIS fraction indicates that there may be a greater contribution from lower molecular weight species after oxidation of the Hawken fire BBOA.

Both fresh and aged BBOA from the FASMEE fuel show the HULIS fraction absorbance is 30 to 40 % of the total water-soluble fraction of aerosol (Fig. 6b). For Siberian peat, the HULIS fraction absorbance was 50 to 55% of the total water-soluble fraction (Fig. 6c), for both the fresh and aged BBOA. The large fraction of HULIS absorption compared to the total water soluble BBOA from all fuels necessitates detailed chemical characterization. For Florida peat, the total absorbance of the HULIS fraction increased by only $\sim 16\%$ (from 0.139 kg^{-1} to 0.161 kg^{-1}) and this was not statistically significant ($p = 0.676$). For the FASMEE fuel, the increase in the total absorbance of “fresh” HULIS (0.091 kg^{-1}) after OFR oxidation (0.138 kg^{-1}) was also not statistically significant ($p = 0.536$).

3.5 Effect of pH

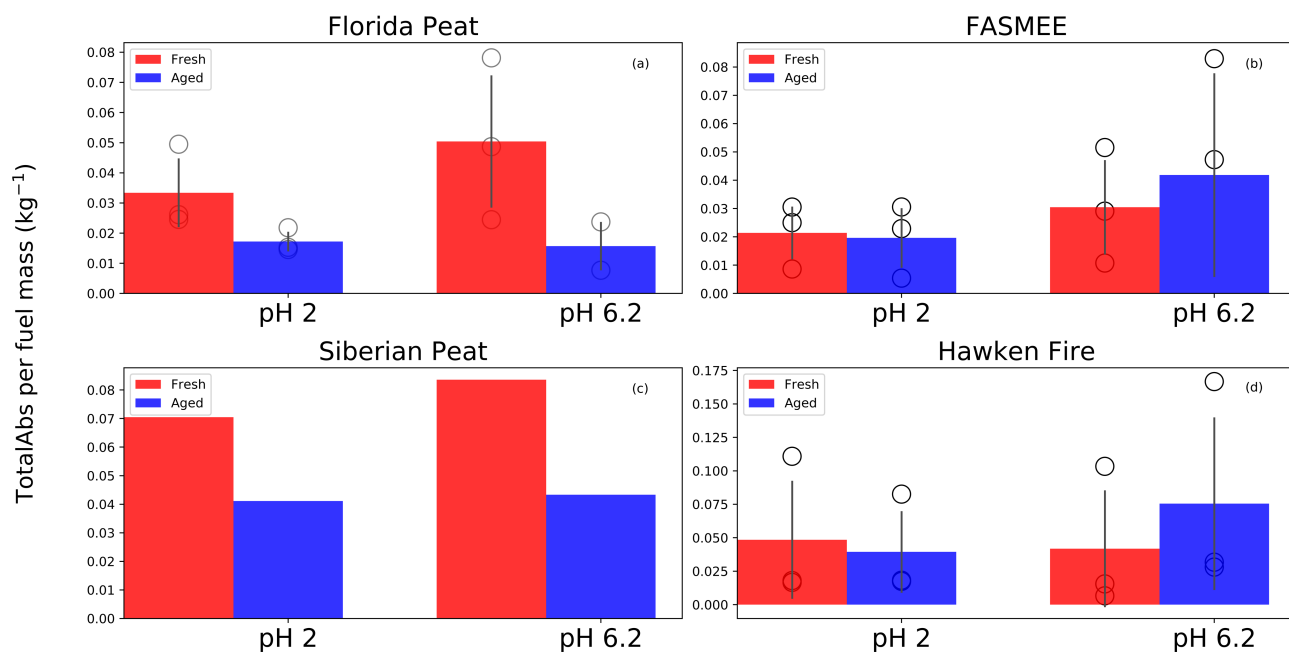


Figure 7. Comparison of total absorbance per fuel mass consumed for the fresh and aged aerosols in water (pH = 6.2) and water extracts (pH = 2), normalized to 1-ml extraction volumes. Bars, circles, and error bars represent the mean values, individual observations, and standard deviations, respectively. No error bars are given for Siberian peat, because only one experiment was performed with this fuel.

Light absorption by water-soluble ambient BrC was shown to depend on pH (Phillips et al., 2017). In our experiments, the pH of biomass-burning water extracts ranged from 6.2 to 6.4. However, atmospheric aerosol pH often ranges from 0.5 to 3 (Bougiatioti et al., 2016; Weber et al., 2016). Atmospheric processing and mixing with acidic aerosols could decrease the pH of BB aerosols and thus affect their light absorption properties. To investigate the effect of pH on light absorption for our BBOA water extracts, we performed a series of experiments in which these extracts were acidified to pH=2.

As pH was decreased from ~6.3 to 2, a decrease in absorbance was observed for BBOA water extracts from all fuels, and this decrease was more distinguishable towards longer wavelengths (>500 nm) (see Supplementary Material, Fig. S4). It was reported in the literature (Teich et al., 2017; Zhao et al., 2015)

that BB aerosols contain organic compounds with aromatic functional groups. At lower pH, protonation of functional groups occurs and can be the potential reason for the decrease in absorbance. The decrease in absorption with decrease of pH was also observed by Phillips et al. (2017) for atmospheric ambient aerosols. A similar absorption reduction in the ultraviolet and visible region of the spectrum was reported for soil humic acid (Tsutsuki and Kuwatsuka, 1979) and fulvic acid (Baes and Bloom, 1990) extracts.

In the present study, we found that for the fresh BBOA, the total absorbance (per fuel mass) decreases with the decrease in pH for all fuels (e.g., Florida peat (fresh): from 0.05 kg⁻¹ to 0.033 kg⁻¹), except for the Hawken fire fresh BBOA, where a small increase in total absorbance values (from 0.042 kg⁻¹ to 0.049 kg⁻¹) was observed (Fig. 7). However, the *p*-values (0.213 for Florida peat, 0.270 for FASMEE, 0.094 for Hawken fire) from a pairwise t-test do not permit any definitive conclusions about the effect of pH on light absorption. The total absorbance values also decreased (e.g., FASMEE: from 0.042 kg⁻¹ to 0.019 kg⁻¹) for all of the aged BBOA, but these changes were also not statistically significant (*p*>0.3).

As was discussed above, we have observed the increase in absorbance between fresh and aged neutral water extracts (pH = 6.2-6.4) for flaming fuels (e.g., Hawken fire: from 0.042 kg⁻¹ to 0.076 kg⁻¹, *p*-value = 0.158). However, for the acidified water extracts (pH=2) of BBOA from flaming fuels, a decrease in the absorbance between fresh and aged BBOA was observed (e.g., Hawken fire: from 0.049 kg⁻¹ to 0.039 kg⁻¹), though this change was not statistically significant (*p*=0.444).

3.6. Light Absorption Efficiency of Polar and Non-Polar Extracts

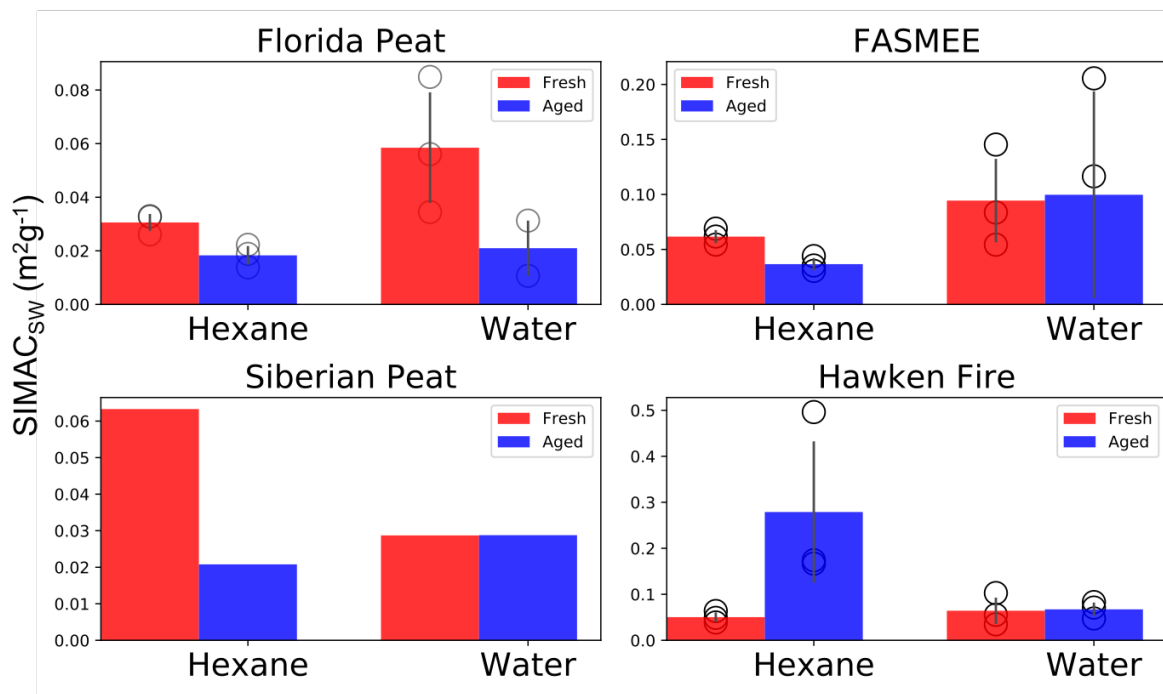


Figure 8. Comparison of the total solar-weighted spectrally integrated mass absorption coefficient (SIMAC_{sw}, units: m² per g of OC) for the fresh and aged aerosols in water and hexane extracts, normalized to 1-ml extraction volumes. Bars, circles, and error bars represent the mean values, individual observations, and standard deviations, respectively. No error bars are given for Siberian peat, because only one experiment was performed with this fuel.

Figure 8 shows the SIMAC_{sw} values of hexane and water extracts of fresh and aged aerosols produced by combustion of the four fuels. SIMAC_{sw} values, which describe mass-based light absorption efficiency, were calculated using the equations provided in section 2.6. In general, SIMAC_{sw} values for fresh emission from all fuels were greater for the water extracts than for the hexane extracts, except for the Siberian peat BBOA. The highest SIMAC_{sw} values (~2.8 m² g⁻¹) were found for hexane extracts of Hawken fire aged aerosols, whereas the lowest value (~0.02 m² g⁻¹) was observed for hexane extracts of aged Florida aerosols. For example, the SIMAC_{sw} of the Florida peat BBOA hexane extracts was reduced from ~0.03 m² g⁻¹ to ~0.018 m² g⁻¹ upon oxidation in the OFR, which is almost a 40% reduction. This

change is statistically significant ($p=0.007$). An approximately 65% reduction in the $SIMAC_{sw}$ of the water extracts upon oxidation was observed for the Florida peat BBOA, but the result has a low statistical significance ($p=0.184$). Also, the $SIMAC_{sw}$ values for the hexane extracts of aged Siberian Peat BBOA was about three times lower than that of fresh BBOA, while for the water extracts, the $SIMAC_{sw}$ did not change significantly ($< 4\%$) upon oxidation.

For the fuels with a dominant flaming combustion phase, the $SIMAC_{sw}$ values of aged BBOA water extracts were higher than those of fresh BBOA water extracts. For example, $SIMAC_{sw}$ values for the aged FASMEE BBOA water extracts were $\sim 5\%$ higher than those for the fresh BBOA extracts. This is mostly due to the increase in the absorbance in the 380 - 550 nm wavelength range for the aged samples (see Fig. 2), but this increase was not supported by the statistical significance test ($p=0.911$). For hexane extracts with the same FAASME fuel, Figure 8 shows that the $SIMAC_{sw}$ values of aged BBOA particles decreased compared to those of the fresh ones. This change is statistically significant ($p=0.019$). *TotalAbs* values for the FAASME BBOA hexane extracts are also in agreement with the general trend found for $SIMAC_{sw}$ values (see Fig. 3) that decreased $\sim 42\%$ due to aging

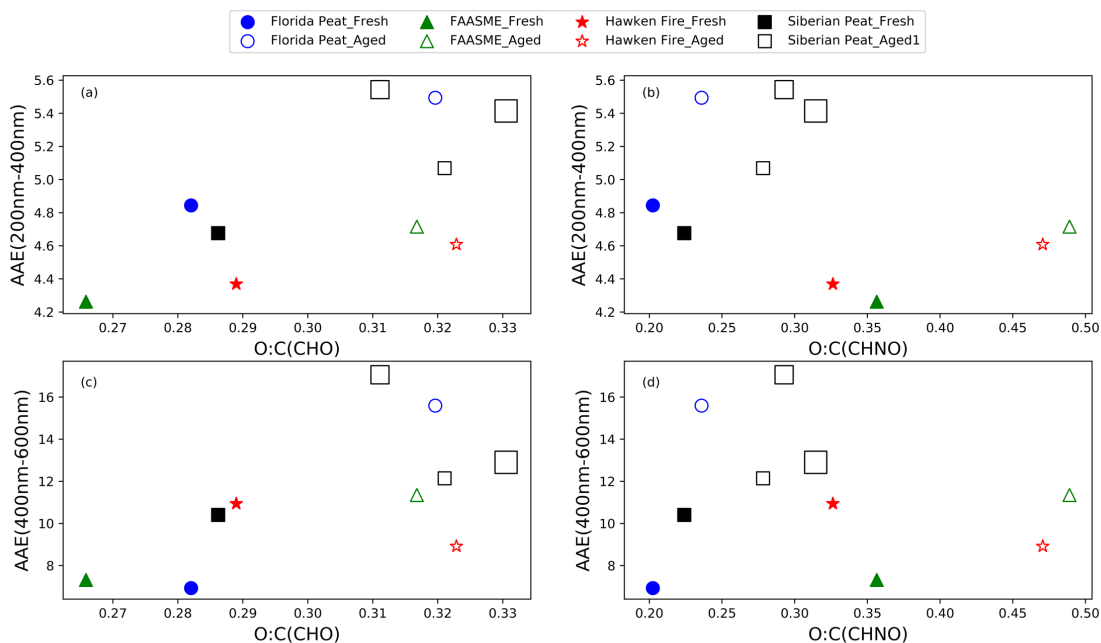
In summary, we conclude that the light absorbing BrC compounds present in SOA derived from open flaming combustion of our samples from alpine or boreal forests have higher light absorption efficiencies (normalized with respect to organic carbon, units: m^2 per g of OC) compared to the compounds emitted from smoldering combustion of peat fuels. Most of the previous research has considered MAC_{365} as a proxy for light absorbing properties of biomass burning aerosols (e.g., Liu et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2013a). We compared our reported $SIMAC_{sw}$ values with MAC_{365} values computed from the same experiments (in Table 1). The Fresh/Aged ratios of either $SIMAC_{sw}$ or MAC_{365} are supposed to be larger than one if the absorbance of BBOA decreases after aging and smaller than one when absorbance of BBOA increases upon aging. We observed an underestimation of the MAC_{365} , while predicting a decrease in light absorption upon oxidation (e.g., Florida peat BBOA water extract: Fresh/Aged ratio with MAC_{365} is 2.09 where $SIMAC_{sw}$ ratio is 6.04). Also, an overestimation of MAC_{365} was found for the Hawken fire fuel BBOA, while predicting the increase in light absorption after aging ($MAC_{365}=0.159$ where $SIMAC_{sw} = 0.956$ for Hawken fire)

Table 1

Fuels	Water		Hexane	
	SIMAC _{sw} Ratio	MAC ₃₆₅ Ratio	SIMAC _{sw} Ratio	MAC ₃₆₅ Ratio
Florida Peat	6.04	2.09	1.67	1.38
FAASME	0.95	1.04	1.68	1.69
Hawken fire	0.96	0.16	0.18	0.18
Siberian peat	1.15	0.81	3.63	3.59

5

3.7. Change in Absorption Ångström Exponent (AAE) with Aging/Oxidation



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Figure 9. Absorption Ångström Exponent (AAE) for the water extracts as a function of oxidation. Solid symbols represent fresh aerosols for a fuel type and open symbols of the same shape represent the aged

aerosols for the same fuel. For the Siberian peat, the size of the symbol increases with the oxidation voltage in the OFR reactor.

AAE is a key parameter characterizing the spectral dependence of aerosol and bulk (e.g., extracts) light absorption (Moosmüller et al., 2011). BC aerosol from fossil fuel burning typically has AAE values close to one, which signifies a wavelength-independent refractive index (Lack et al., 2014). Aerosol AAE values slightly greater than one indicate the presence of BC coatings or of some BrC mixed with BC (Gyawali et al., 2009; Pokhrel et al., 2016). High AAE values have been reported for OC emitted by mostly smoldering combustion. Examples include bulk AAE values of up to ~7 for HULIS extracts (Hoffer et al., 2006) and aerosol AAE values of up to ~10 for aerosols from peat combustion (Chakrabarty et al., 2016).

The molecular O:C ratio is an important indicator of oxidation in aerosol samples (Aiken et al., 2008). The relative intensity weighted O:C ratios, calculated from the negative ion ultrahigh resolution mass spectra of SPE-recovered WSOC ranged from 0.27 to 0.33 for the CHO molecular formulas and 0.20 to 0.48 for the CHNO molecular formulas. The bulk AAE values for the water extracts have been calculated (see section 2.5) and are plotted in Fig. 9 as a function of the O:C ratios. AAE determined by linear regression from 200 to 400 nm [$AAE_{(200-400)}$] and from 400 to 600 nm [$AAE_{(400-600)}$] are shown in panels a, b and c, d, respectively, as function of the O:C ratios for the CHO (on left) and the CHNO (on right) molecular formulas. The solid symbols correspond to fresh emissions from combustion of a particular fuel and the void symbols represent the aged samples for the same fuels. For Siberian peat, the size of the symbols increases with the oxidation voltage applied in the OFR reactor.

The $AAE_{(200-400)}$ values ranged from 4-5.5 and increased with oxidation. For all aged emissions, the $AAE_{(200-400)}$ values were larger than those for fresh emissions indicating a stronger wavelength dependence of absorption in the 200 – 400 nm wavelength range for aged emissions. We observed a similar trend for $AAE_{(400-600)}$ with a single exception for the emissions from the Hawken fire, where the $AAE_{(400-600)}$ values decreased after aging. However, the $AAE_{(400-600)}$ values were much higher (i.e., 7 - 17) than the $AAE_{(200-400)}$ values and their changes during aging/oxidation were also more pronounced (e.g., for Florida peat smoke from 6.93 to 15.59). In conclusion, the aging of BB emissions generally (but not always)

increases the AAE values for the water extracts and these AAE values can be unusually large in the 400 to 600 nm wavelength range; this is mostly due to the enhanced absorption around 450 nm as can be seen in Fig. 2. Overall, the aged BBOA from both flaming (e.g., FASMEE fuel) and smoldering (e.g., Florida peat fuels) combustion, showed an increase in the peak relative intensity weighted O:C ratios with a larger increase for the flaming combustion experiments (e.g., from 0.33 to 0.47 for Hawken fire fuel). In conclusion, it can be inferred that more oxygenated compounds were found in CHNO molecular formulas from aged samples. This supports our hypothesis regarding organic nitrogen compound formation from the flaming emissions. To investigate the nature of the BBOA, we analyzed the ultrahigh resolution MS data for our samples. The elemental ratios of O:C and H:C are used to visualize the molecular nature of BBOA (Van Krevelen, 1950). The elemental ratios do not give exact structural compositions but they provide insight regarding the extent of oxidation and saturation. The comparison of fresh to aged FASMEE fuel aerosol indicates that species uniquely observed in the aged FASMEE fuel are more oxidized than the unique species of the fresh FASMEE fuel (Fig. 10).

Van Krevelen Diagrams

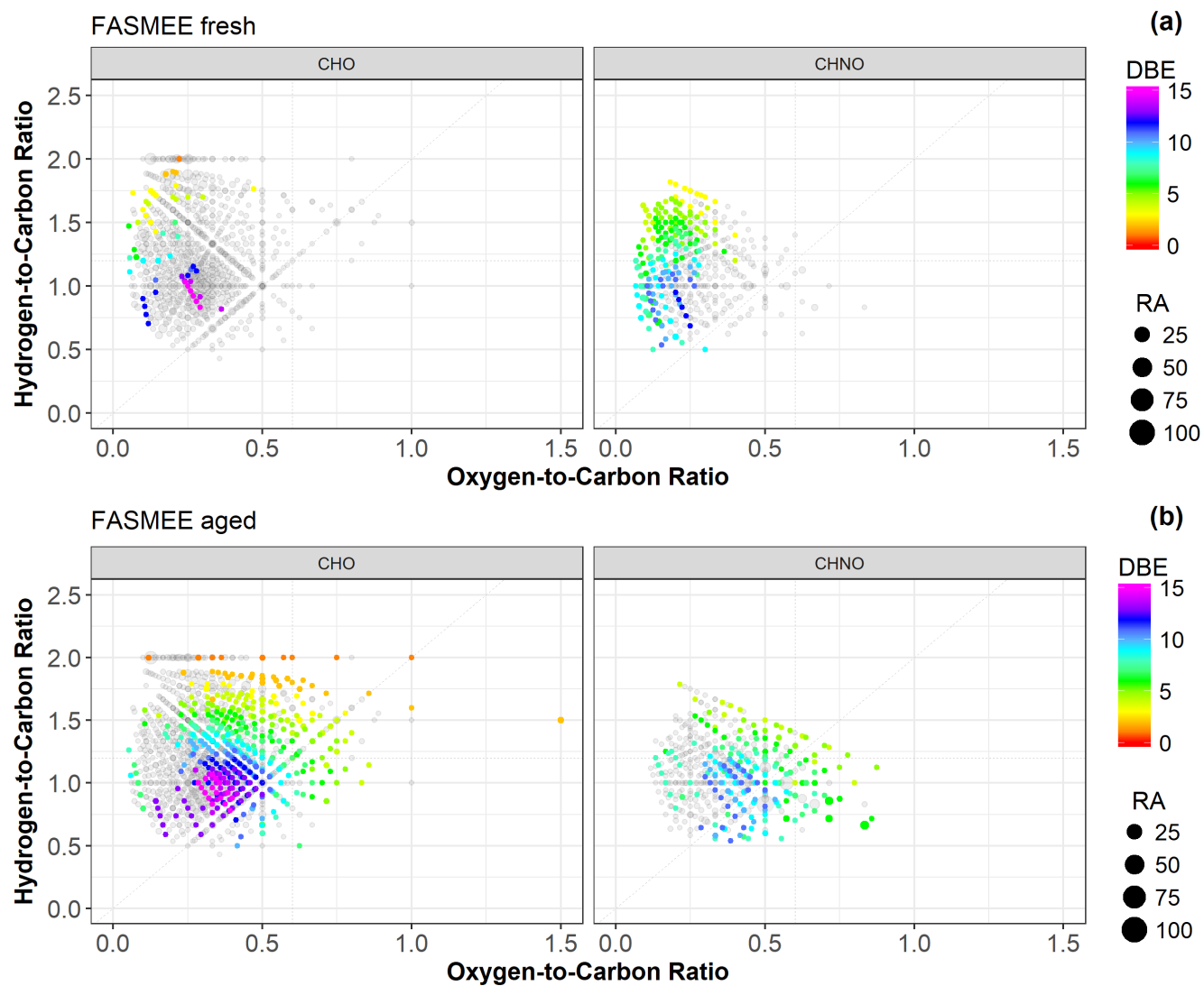


Figure 10. Van Krevelen plots of H:C and O:C ratios for the negative ion ultrahigh resolution mass spectra of fresh (a) and aged (b) FASMEE water-soluble aerosol. CHO and CHNO molecular formulas are shown separately. Grey circles indicate common molecular formulas observed in both the fresh and aged samples, colored circles indicate the unique molecular formulas for the fresh or aged water-soluble

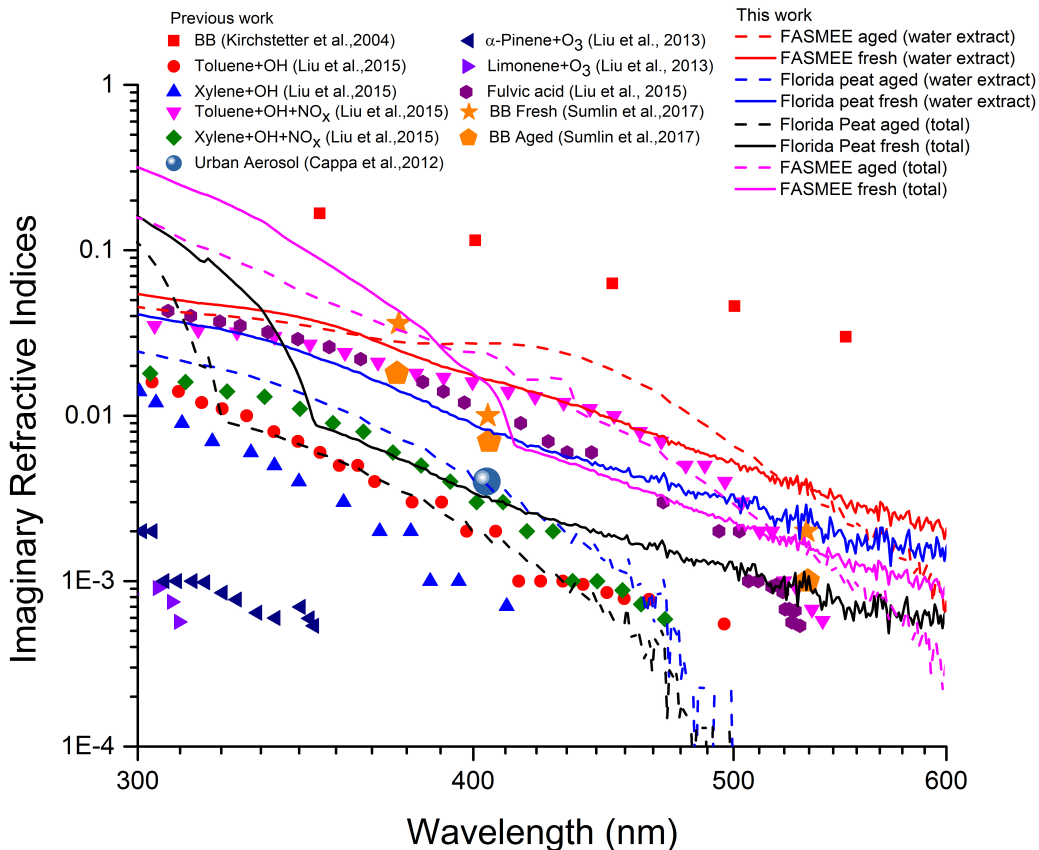
aerosol. The color represents the number of double bond equivalents (DBE) and the size of the circles indicates the normalized relative abundance of the peaks in the mass spectra.

Figure 10 shows a loss/transformation of some of the water-soluble organic ions with O:C ratio <0.3 observed in fresh water-soluble aerosol (colored circles in Fig. 10a) and a formation of mostly more oxidized, with O:C >0.25 compounds (colored circles in Fig. 10b) during the aging of FASMEE aerosol. Several uniquely observed CHO molecular formulas appear to have formed during the oxidation of FASMEE fuel emissions. Double bond equivalents (DBE) are used for the characterisation of the degree of unsaturation in a molecular formula and represents the sum of rings and double bonds. Both CHO and CHNO molecular formulas formed during the aging process, including a large number of compounds with a high degree of unsaturation (DBE 10-15). The highly unsaturated compounds may contribute to the light absorption of the aged FASMEE aerosol water extract. Aiken et al. (2008) performed high resolution TOF AMS analysis on aerosols collected from laboratory combustion of lodgepole pine and sagebrush separately. The O:C ratios of their laboratory experiments were 0.3 and 0.4, which are lower than that of ambient samples (>0.5) collected in northern New Mexico during wildfires. Ambient samples, supposedly photochemically aged and thus were more oxidized which was reflected in the increase of the O:C ratio. In our study, we observed a similar increase in the oxidation for the OFR-aged water-soluble aerosol collected from combustion experiments of the FASMEE fuel.

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3.8. Imaginary Part of the Bulk Refractive Index of Water Extracts



5 **Figure 11.** Comparison of the imaginary part of the bulk refractive indices from previous work with water extracts and total (hexane + water) extracts of the fresh BBOA (solid lines) and aged BBOA (dotted lines) as a function of wavelength.

Figure 11 shows a comparison of the bulk imaginary refractive indices retrieved for water extracts and the total (hexane + water) extract of BBOA measured in this study with the imaginary refractive indexes reported in the literature. The previously reported data include those from early work by Kirchstetter et al. (2004) on BB aerosols, biogenic SOA (Liu et al., 2013b), anthropogenic SOA (Liu et al., 2015)

generated from laboratory precursor oxidation experiments, urban BrC (Cappa et al., 2013) and Mie theory retrieved imaginary refractive indices from a similar campaign conducted at Washington University of St. Louis (Sumlin et al., 2017). The imaginary part of the bulk refractive indices was retrieved separately for water (Fig. S5) and hexane extracts (Fig. S6) and then simple mass mixing rules were used to compute the total contribution (Eq. 11 a, b, c). In Fig. 11, the bulk refractive indices for both the water and the total were plotted for comparison. Bulk refractive indices for all fuels (both fresh and aged) are higher at shorter wavelengths and decrease gradually toward longer wavelengths, which is typical for BrC aerosols. The total bulk imaginary refractive indices were higher than water extract only at shorter wavelengths, because the hexane (non-polar) fraction absorbs mostly in the blue and the near-UV part of the spectrum. For fuels that undergo smoldering combustion (e.g., Florida peat), the bulk imaginary refractive indices were smaller for aged BBOA compared to fresh BBOA. On the contrary, a flaming fuel, FASMEE, has very different properties, with the imaginary refractive index of the aged BBOA being smaller than that of fresh BBOA below 400 nm and above 550 nm, while between 400 and 550 nm the imaginary refractive index of aged BBOA was higher than that of the fresh BBOA as indicated by the obvious “hump” in Fig. 11. An enhancement of the imaginary refractive indices was also overserved by Liu et al., (2015) when an anthropogenic precursor was oxidized in the presence of NO_x to generate SOA. This is consistent with our hypothesis regarding the role of NO_x in the absorption enhancement for flaming fuels.

20 **Summary and conclusions**

In this study, we analysed the absorption properties of biomass-burning aerosols from four different globally and regionally important fuels that represent both smoldering and flaming combustion processes. Our goal was to understand how the light absorbing properties of these combustion experiments was affected by aging (OFR aging) and what compounds (polar or non-polar) contribute to the light absorption of BB aerosols. We found that the non-polar fraction absorbs more than the polar fraction. However, most of the light absorption by the non-polar fraction was attributed to UV and the shorter part of the visible wavelength range. Light absorption by the HULIS fraction was also compared with the light absorption properties of the total water extracts and we found that for the Hawken fire fuel emissions, the light

absorbing compounds were most likely high molecular weight organic species. As the pH of the freshly emitted BBOA can decrease due to atmospheric processing and mixing with more acidic inorganic aerosols, we also compared the light absorption properties of acidified and non-acidified water extracts. We found that the *TotalAbs* decreased with the decrease in pH, which can be explained by potential
5 protonation of functional groups at lower pH (pH=2). Light absorbing properties do change upon aging/oxidation and we were able to distinguish the change in the light absorption characteristics of flaming and smoldering combustion emissions. For flaming fuel combustion samples, the absorbance values decreased for non-polar hexane extracts upon the oxidation/aging but in the case of the polar extracts an increase in the absorbance values was observed, especially in the 450-500 nm wavelength
10 range. We also observed significantly higher NO_x levels during flaming fuel combustion (e.g., [NO_x]_{max} = 2068 ppb) comparing to smoldering combustion (e.g., [NO_x]_{max} = 88 ppb for Florida peat). Results from the ultrahigh resolution mass spectrometry analysis showed unique organic-nitrogen species that likely formed during aerosol aging/oxidation in the presence of NO_x. However, the reason behind this high NO_x emission is still unknown and whether NO_x emission is related to the fuel nitrogen content or the burning
15 conditions is a matter of future investigation.

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