

1 **Gas-Phase Pyrolysis Products Emitted by Prescribed Fires in Pine Forests with a**
2 **Shrub Understory in the Southeastern United States****

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4 Nicole K. Scharko¹, Ashley M. Oeck¹, Tanya L. Myers¹, Russell G. Tonkyn¹,
5 Catherine A. Banach¹, Stephen P. Baker², Emily N. Lincoln², Joey Chong³,
6 Bonni M. Corcoran³, Gloria M. Burke³, Roger D. Ottmar⁴, Joseph C. Restaino⁵,
7 David R. Weise³, and Timothy J. Johnson^{1*}
8

9 ¹Pacific Northwest National Laboratories, Richland, WA, USA

10 ²USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Missoula, MT, USA

11 ³USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station, Riverside, CA, USA

12 ⁴USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station, Seattle WA, USA

13 ⁵School of Environmental and Forest Sciences, University of Washington, Seattle WA, USA
14

15 *To whom correspondence should be addressed: Timothy.Johnson@pnnl.gov

16 **ABSTRACT**

17 In this study we identify pyrolysis gases from prescribed burns conducted in pine forests with a
18 shrub understory captured using a manual extraction device. The device selectively sampled
19 emissions ahead of the flame front, minimizing collection of oxidized gases, with the captured
20 gases analyzed in the laboratory using infrared (IR) absorption spectroscopy. Results show that
21 emission ratios (ER) relative to CO for ethene and acetylene were significantly greater than
22 previous fire studies, suggesting that the sample device was able to collect gases predominantly
23 generated prior to ignition. Further evidence that ignition had not begun was corroborated by novel
24 IR detections of several species, in particular naphthalene. With regards to oxygenated species,
25 several aldehydes (acrolein, furaldehyde, acetaldehyde, formaldehyde) and carboxylic acids
26 (formic, acetic) were all observed; results show that ERs for acetaldehyde were noticeably greater
27 while ERs for formaldehyde and acetic acid were lower compared to other studies. The acetylene-
28 to-furan ratio also suggests that high temperature pyrolysis was the dominant process generating
29 the collected gases.

30 **1. INTRODUCTION**

31 Biomass burning contributes large quantities of trace gases into the earth's atmosphere (Crutzen
32 and Andreae, 1990; Akagi et al., 2011; Andreae and Merlet, 2001; Crutzen et al., 1979; Yokelson
33 et al., 2013; Andreae, 1991). The primary carbon-containing gases emitted during such burns are
34 CO₂, CO and CH₄, in order of decreasing concentration (Ward and Hardy, 1991). Hundreds of
35 other trace gases have also been identified in the emissions, including many non-methane volatile
36 organic compounds (NMVOCs), oxygenated volatile organic compounds (OVOCs), nitrogen-
37 containing species and sulfur compounds (Yokelson et al., 1996; Lobert et al., 1991; Talbot et al.,
38 1988). The major sources of such biomass burning emissions are wildland fire and, to a lesser
39 extent, prescribed fire. Prescribed fires are used to reduce dangerous fuel buildups and manage
40 habitats (Fernandes and Botelho, 2003). The use of prescribed fire as a preventative tool is of
41 particular importance in the western United States (U.S.) where wildland fires are increasing in
42 severity (Turetsky et al., 2011; Miller et al., 2009). In the southeastern U.S., prescribed fire is also
43 used on a routine basis for purposes such as ecosystem management (Waldrop and Goodrick,
44 2012). For these and other beneficial reasons, an estimated 3.6 million hectares of forestry land
45 are burned in the U.S. by prescribed fire each year (Melvin, 2012). Agencies that conduct such
46 burns often rely on fire-related models (Reinhardt et al., 1997; Prichard et al., 2006) to predict the
47 impacts of the prescribed burn. Models and experience are used to determine desired fire behavior
48 from fuel, weather, and topography in order to achieve the desired burn effects. The current
49 operational model to predict fire behavior uses a simplistic approach to the chemical aspects of
50 combustion and fire spread (Albini, 1976; Rothermel, 1972). Physics-based fire behavior models,
51 while not currently fast enough for operational use, have the ability to incorporate details of fire
52 behavior including heat transfer and chemical reactions (Clark et al., 2010; Mell et al., 2009).
53 These models, such as FIRETEC and FDS, often model the process of pyrolysis based only on

54 results for wood or ground foliage samples. In order to improve the modeling of pyrolysis and
55 combustion processes for such models, a study is currently underway (Weise et al., 2018) wherein
56 pyrolysis products from the same plant species are being measured 1) in oxygen-free environment
57 using intact foliage samples (Amini et al., 2019a; Amini et al., 2019b; Safdari et al., 2019; Safdari
58 et al., 2018), 2) in an atmospheric oxygen wind tunnel setting with relatively simple heterogeneous
59 fuel beds (paper in preparation), and 3) in small field burns as discussed in this paper. One of the
60 goals of the larger study is to determine the relationship between the controlled laboratory results
61 and actual fire conditions in the field as was done previously by Yokelson et al. (2013); they
62 conducted a lab-field comparison study focusing mostly on the flaming and smoldering stages.
63 The present study focuses only on early stage emissions, particularly pyrolysis, in the hope that
64 improved elucidation of the gas-phase pyrolysis products and other early-stage processes of
65 prescribed burns will ultimately improve the overall ability to model fire behavior (Ferguson et
66 al., 2013; Shotorban et al., 2018; Yashwanth et al., 2016).

67
68 In the broader community, there has also been considerable interest in identifying and quantifying
69 gas emissions from fire due to the influential role of (wildland) fire on atmospheric chemistry and
70 climate, as studied both in the laboratory and in field burns (Crutzen et al., 1979; Andreae et al.,
71 1988; Lobert et al., 1991; Andreae et al., 1994; Lindsay et al., 1996; Goode et al., 1999; Yokelson
72 et al., 1999; Yokelson et al., 1996; Chi et al., 1979). The type of gases emitted and their relative
73 abundances depend on many factors such as fuel type, fuel arrangement, land management
74 activities, burning techniques and environmental conditions (Ward et al., 1996; Ward et al., 1992).
75 In the 1990s, Griffith, Yokelson and co-workers conducted a series of laboratory studies using an
76 open-path Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectrometer to investigate how some of these factors

77 influence the concentrations of emitted gases (Goode et al., 1999; Yokelson et al., 1996; Yokelson
78 et al., 1997). There have been several follow-on laboratory studies using IR spectroscopy as well
79 as other analytical techniques to identify previously unknown fire emission products and to derive
80 emission factors from various fuel types (Burling et al., 2010; Hatch et al., 2017; Selimovic et al.,
81 2018; Stockwell et al., 2014; Yokelson et al., 2013; Gilman et al., 2015).

82
83 In addition to those laboratory studies, a number of field campaigns have also used FTIR
84 spectroscopy to identify trace gases from prescribed fires (Akagi et al., 2013; Burling et al., 2011;
85 Akagi et al., 2014; Goode et al., 2000; Yokelson et al., 1999; Wooster et al., 2011; Alves et al.,
86 2010; Hurst et al., 1994a; Hurst et al., 1994b; Paton-Walsh et al., 2010; Paton-Walsh et al., 2008;
87 Guérette et al., 2018). Studies that have the ability to measure emissions both near the fire and
88 aloft are especially useful in understanding the complex chemistries that occur during and after
89 prescribed fires, including the (oxidative) chemistry of the downwind plume. For example, Akagi
90 et al. (2013) detected limonene from a prescribed burn with a land-based FTIR and linked it to the
91 production of ozone, formaldehyde and methanol, all of which were measured downwind with an
92 airborne-based FTIR. In an earlier prescribed burn study, (Burling et al., 2011) detected enhanced
93 levels of isoprene and 1,3-butadiene in the smoke from a living tree when compared to dead stumps
94 under the same conditions. However, pre-flame pyrolysis emissions can be relatively low
95 compared to total emissions from a fire, and few investigations have studied the pre-ignition or
96 pyrolysis gases emitted prior to the flaming combustion stage. Pyrolysis, which is one of the first
97 steps in the burning process (Collard et al., 2014), leads to char formation, depolymerization and
98 species fragmentation. Volatile products are generated and, if unstable, can continue to undergo
99 secondary (non-combustion) reactions such as cracking or recombination (Collard and Blin, 2014).

100 Pyrolytic reactions produce fuel gases that, if sufficient in quantity and in the presence of oxygen,
101 will maintain the flame via combustion pathways (Ward and Hardy, 1991; Di Blasi, 1993).

102
103 While there are few field studies of pyrolysis, there have been many laboratory studies carried out
104 in controlled environments: In one of the earliest investigations, DeGroot et al. (1988) detected
105 H₂O, CO₂, CH₃OH, HCOOH and CH₃COOH from the pyrolysis of wood. More recent studies
106 have observed several other compounds, such as CO, CH₄, lightweight hydrocarbons (C₂–C₅) and
107 light tar compounds (e.g. benzene and its derivatives and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) from
108 the slow pyrolysis of Birch wood (Fagernäs et al., 2012). Oxygenated compounds (e.g. furan-
109 related compounds) have been observed from the fast pyrolysis of levoglucosan, a known
110 pyrolyzate of cellulose (Bai et al., 2013). Laboratory experiments that have investigated the
111 condensed and/or gas phase compounds generated by pyrolysis under controlled conditions have
112 revealed that the speciation and distribution of the products are dependent on a number of factors
113 such as heating rate, temperature, fuel composition, live vs. dead fuels and amount of available
114 oxygen (Azeez et al., 2011; Lu et al., 2011; Shen et al., 2010; Safdari et al., 2018; Ren and Zhao,
115 2012, 2013b, a). For instance, Ren and coworkers (2013a) found that the amount and speciation
116 of nitrogen containing pyrolyzates is complicated and influenced by the content of mineral matter,
117 the presence of oxygen (Ren and Zhao, 2012), as well as the structure (e.g. aliphatic vs.
118 heterocyclic) of the amino acids and the amount of cellulose, hemicellulose and lignin in the
119 sample. Similarly, the release of oxygenated compounds (e.g. phenolic compounds) from the
120 pyrolysis of lignin is sensitive to the presence of oxygen (Kibet et al., 2012).

121

122 All the above pyrolysis studies, however, were conducted in controlled settings or on smaller
123 scales. There remains a paucity of data that identify and quantify gas-phase pyrolysis species
124 emitted from actual prescribed burns at the field scale. The present study differs from these earlier
125 works in that we exclusively attempt to investigate gas-phase pyrolysis species generated during
126 prescribed burns. To the best of our knowledge, this is one of the first field studies that
127 discriminatively measures pyrolysis and early-phase gases for southeastern U.S. fuels. Isolating
128 such species is indeed challenging as they often blend with the background atmosphere and are
129 rapidly mixed with other gases from the onset of combustion. One must thus isolate “the pyrolysis
130 molecules” either optically, mechanically or temporally. In this study, we selectively probe the
131 pyrolysis gases by using a simple manually-operated spatial collection device that attempts to
132 collect only gases in front of the flame. While not a perfect solution, the information gathered in
133 this study adds important insights into the primary products generated during pyrolysis and other
134 early-stage processes for prescribed fires.

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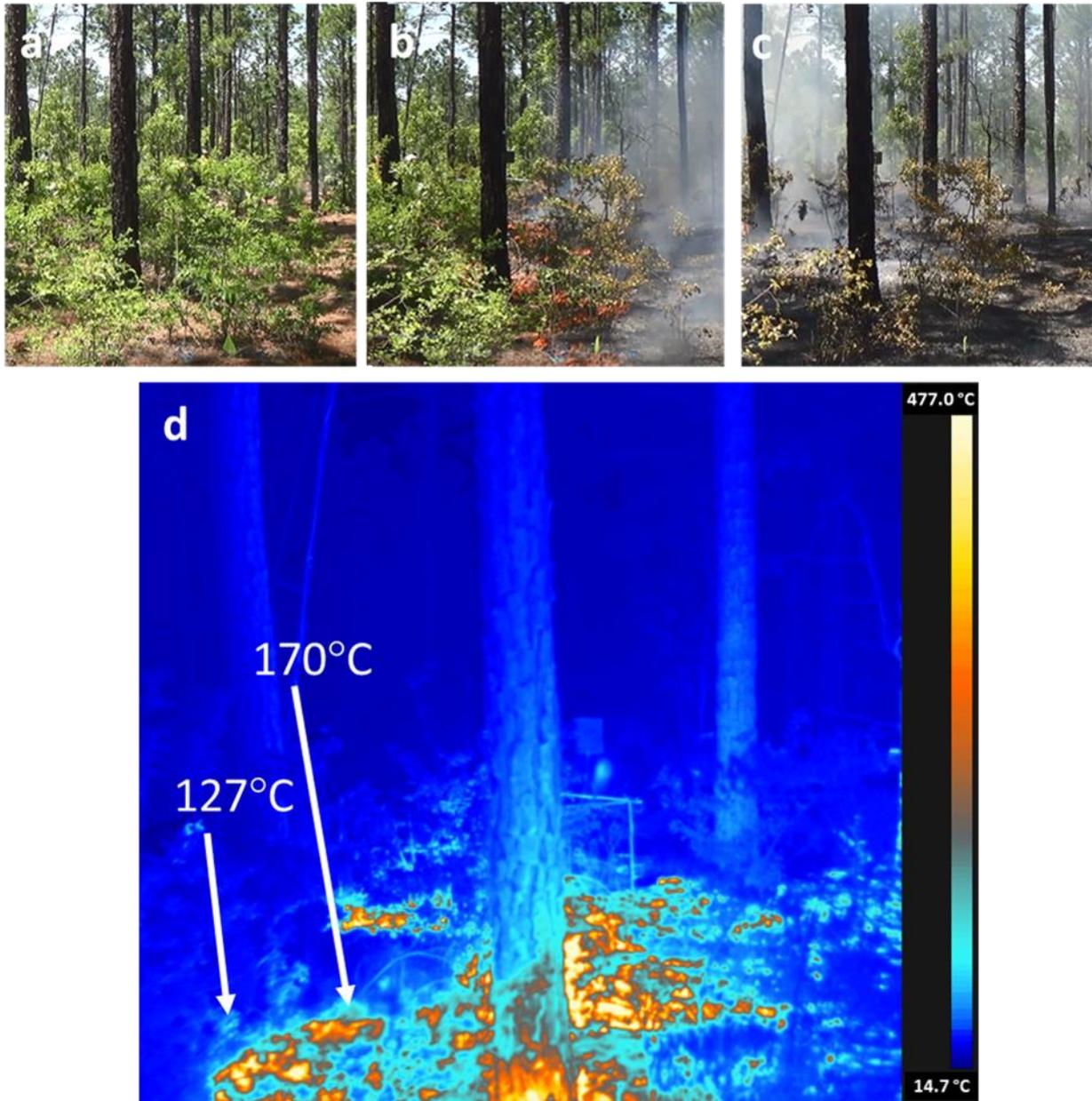
137 **2. EXPERIMENTAL**

138 **2.1 Site description**

139 During the week of 29 April 2018, a total of seven small plots (450 to 900 m²) were burned using
140 prescribed fire at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina (SC), 34.05° N 80.83° W, approximately 10 km east
141 of Columbia, SC. The fort lies entirely within the Sandhills ecosystem in the SC coastal plain,
142 which runs approximately parallel to the Atlantic Ocean coast, 175 km inland. The Sandhills
143 region thus forms a belt that tracks southwest – northeast across sands of varying depth with a high
144 content of pure silica (Porcher and Rayner, 2001). The deep sands support an overstory vegetation

145 that has significant amounts of turkey oak (*Quercus laevis* Walter) and two native pine species
146 relatively unique to the southeastern U.S.: longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris* Mill.) and slash pine
147 (*Pinus elliottii* Engelm.). The understory has substantial quantities of immature turkey oak,
148 longleaf and slash pine, along with sparkleberry (*Vaccinium arboreum* Marshall) and a
149 heterogeneous organic layer of woody material, litter, duff and cones atop the mineral soil. The
150 longleaf ecosystem depends on fire for maintenance (Cary, 1932). Site details for the seven burn
151 plots, all with a 2 year rough (i.e. burned 2 years prior), are summarized in Table 1. Eight pre- and
152 post-fire 1.0 meter square biomass clipped plots were established at each 160 m² research block
153 within the larger burn plots where organic vegetative material was collected before and after each
154 fire. Shrub, grasses/forbs, down woody material (0-0.6, 0.6-2.5, 2.5-7.6, 7.6-22.9 cm in diameter),
155 litter and duff are the major fuel bed components that were targeted. Fuel moisture samples for
156 each major component were collected before ignition to determine fuel moisture content for each
157 fuel bed component. Figure 1 shows photographs of site 16, plot 1 before, during and after the
158 burn as well as a thermal image of the flame interacting with the fuel.

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Figure 1. Photographs of site 16, plot 1 on 3 May 2018 between 14:00 and 14:40 local time. The plot (a) before the flame, (b) while the flame interacted with the fuel at 14:33 and (c) smoldering combustion of the fuel. The primary species seen in the understory for this burn plot are sparkleberry and a litter layer of pine needles. (d) Thermal image of the flame interacting with the fuel at time of 14:33.

168 **Table 1.** Plot name, date/time, fuel description, atmospheric conditions (all clear sky days), and
 169 area for the prescribed burns.

Burn plot	Date (2018)	Local start time (EDT)	Local finish time (EDT)	Dominant overstory	Understory fuels	Ambient temperature (°C)	Relative humidity (%)	Surface winds (m s ⁻¹) and wind direction	Mixing height (m)	Area burned (m ²)
24B-triangle	1-May	12:11	12:37	slash pine	sparkleberry/ logs	24	26	2.7 SW	975	450
24B-north diamond	1-May	13:53	14:43	slash pine	sparkleberry/ logs	28	18	2.7 SW	1310	900
24A-square	2-May	9:37	10:22	longleaf pine	sparkleberry/ duff	21	53	2.7 SW	792	900
24A-triangle	2-May	12:08	12:43	longleaf pine	sparkleberry/ duff	27	34	2.7 SW	1189	450
16 plot 5	3-May	9:39	10:21	longleaf pine	sparkleberry/ bracken fern	22	59	2.7 SW	579	900
16 plot 6	3-May	11:44	12:13	longleaf pine	sparkleberry/ turkey oak	26	43	3.1 SW	1067	900
16 plot 1	3-May	13:56	14:41	longleaf pine	sparkleberry/ turkey oak	29	30	3.1 SW	1494	900

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173 2.2 Collection device

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175 Our approach to sampling used an extractive collection device whose tube inlet sampled air and

176 emissions directly ahead of the flame. This simple solution is similar to other canister methods

177 often used with gas chromatographic analysis (Young et al., 1997) and also conceptually similar

178 to the land-based FTIR used to sample emissions as described by Akagi et al. (2013, 2014) and

179 Burling et al. (2011). The canister sampling package, mounted on a metal frame, contained a set

180 of evacuated canisters which were carried to the individual burn plots. The sampling package

181 consisted of a 12-Volt Swing Piston KNF Neuberger Pump (NPK09DC) plumbed with stainless

182 steel tubing and a pressure relief valve to regulate the pressure of the system and ultimately the fill

183 pressure of the canisters. The flow rate to fill the canisters was 15 liters min⁻¹. A sampling probe

184 (2.5 m of 6 mm stainless steel tubing plus 2 m of flexible stainless-steel line) was attached to the

185 inlet of the package to collect pyrolysis gases from point sources of vegetation within the burning

186 plots. The device had an in-line two-way valve to control the sampling interval. To capture a

187 pyrolysis sample, the probe was placed near the base of the flame, immediately above the fuel

188 where the pyrolysis gases should be emitted at maximal levels. Seven to ten aliquots of gas sample
189 were added to a single canister as the device was moved in front of the flame to capture pyrolysis
190 gases. Each 3-liter Summa canister was filled to approximately 138 kPa (20 psia) for the FTIR
191 analysis.

192

193 **2.3 FTIR spectrometer and spectral analysis**

194 Experimental details regarding FTIR measurement and ensuing spectral analysis procedures have
195 been previously reported (Scharko et al., 2019), but are briefly summarized as follows: Gases in
196 the canisters were returned from the field to the laboratory and analyzed the same day or the
197 following day using an 8 meter White cell (Bruker A136/2-L) and FTIR; canisters were connected
198 to the gas cell via 3/8" stainless steel tubing with both the tubing and gas cell heated to 70 °C to
199 prevent analyte adhesion. The cell was coupled to a purged FTIR spectrometer (Bruker Tensor 37)
200 equipped with a glow bar source, KBr beamsplitter and liquid-N₂-cooled mercury cadmium
201 telluride detector. Spectra were collected from 4000 to 500 cm⁻¹ at 0.6 cm⁻¹ resolution. Spectral
202 analysis was carried out using the MALT5 program (Griffith, 2016) and 50 °C reference spectra
203 from the PNNL database (Sharpe et al., 2004; Johnson et al., 2010) as well as absorption lines
204 from HITRAN (Gordon et al., 2017). MALT5 fits the assigned reference spectral lines to the
205 measured spectrum by optimizing the fit of all gases ascribed to the spectral window and
206 minimizing the residual. The calculation involves input parameters such as path length, resolution
207 and apodization accompanied by reference absorption cross-sections and the measured spectrum
208 with its associated temperature/pressure values. Both H₂O and CO₂ had peaks that were saturated;
209 these regions were eliminated from analysis. In some instances, peaks for the gases of interest were
210 also saturated in which case the pressure in the gas cell was reduced and the measurement repeated.

211 **2.4 Calculation of emission ratios and emission factors**

212 A convenient quantity to compare emissions is the emission ratio (ER). This ratio is calculated by
213 computing the change in the concentration of analyte of interest relative to that of a co-emitted,
214 long-lived gas, typically CO or CO₂. For the present study, the long-lived gas chosen is CO:

$$ER = \left(\frac{\Delta \text{analyte}}{\Delta \text{CO}} \right). \quad (1)$$

215 It is important to note that these are the changes in analyte and CO relative to background
216 atmosphere (i.e. relative to ambient “clean air” conditions). The background levels of CO and CO₂
217 were measured using an open path gas analyzer (OPAG 22) prior to the series of burns. The initial
218 CO₂ level was measured to be 409 ppm (this value agrees with the global averaged CO₂ for May
219 2018 of 408.7 ppm (Dlugokencky and Tans)) whereas the CO level was often below the OPAG
220 detection limit. [Due to challenging experimental conditions and moderate CO band intensities,
221 the OPAG detection limit was poor for these CO measurements and could not achieve 200 ppb.]
222 Without an instrument to measure ambient CO with sufficient sensitivity we chose 200 ppb for an
223 estimated background level which is within the range for a typical CO mixing ratio (Seinfeld and
224 Pandis, 2012). We note that the 200 ppb value is sufficiently small that it has negligible effect on
225 the calculated $\Delta \text{analyte}/\Delta \text{CO}$ ratios. Emission ratios can be calculated for a single point in time
226 during the fire or they can incorporate the full length of the fire. The present ERs were calculated
227 based on the contents of the individual canisters which represent multiple aliquots, all from the
228 early fire stages. Other studies have obtained fire-integrated ERs, which integrate over the entire
229 duration of the fire (Koss et al., 2018) or fire-averaged ERs determined from the slope of the
230 regression with the intercept set to zero (Yokelson et al., 1999).
231

232 Another useful quantity is the emission factor (EF), defined as the number of grams emitted of a
 233 given analyte per kilogram of dry fuel consumed and estimated using the following equation
 234 (Yokelson et al., 1999; Ward and Radke, 1993):

$$EF \text{ (g kg}^{-1}\text{)} = F_{\text{carbon}} \times 1000 \times \frac{MW_{\text{analyte}}}{MW_{\text{carbon}}} \times \frac{\frac{\Delta_{\text{analyte}}}{\Delta_{\text{CO}_2}}}{\sum_{j=1}^n \left(NC_j \times \frac{\Delta C_j}{\Delta_{\text{CO}_2}} \right)} \quad (2)$$

236 where F_{carbon} is the mass fraction of carbon in the fuel, MW_{analyte} and MW_{carbon} are the molar masses
 237 of the analyte and carbon, respectively, $\frac{\Delta_{\text{analyte}}}{\Delta_{\text{CO}_2}}$ is the emission ratio of the analyte relative to CO_2 ,
 238 $\frac{\Delta C_j}{\Delta_{\text{CO}_2}}$ is the emission ratio of species j relative to CO_2 and NC_j is the number of carbons in species
 239 j . Note that Δ_{CO_2} cancels out in equation 2. Elemental analysis of similar southeastern fuels was
 240 reported in a previous study (Safdari et al., 2018), and the average carbon content by mass for
 241 longleaf pine foliage and litter as well as sparkleberry was 0.52 which was the value used for
 242 F_{carbon} . One assumption in equation 2 is that all of the carbon in the fuel is released and accounted
 243 for in the measurements of the j carbon species. Most carbon emissions are in the chemical form
 244 of CO_2 , CO or CH_4 . It should be noted that the EF quantities reported here include only compounds
 245 measured by the FTIR, and EF values may be overestimated by 1-2% for most fuels due to
 246 undetected carbon species (Akagi et al., 2011).

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249 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

250 3.1 Estimating the contribution from high and low temperature processes

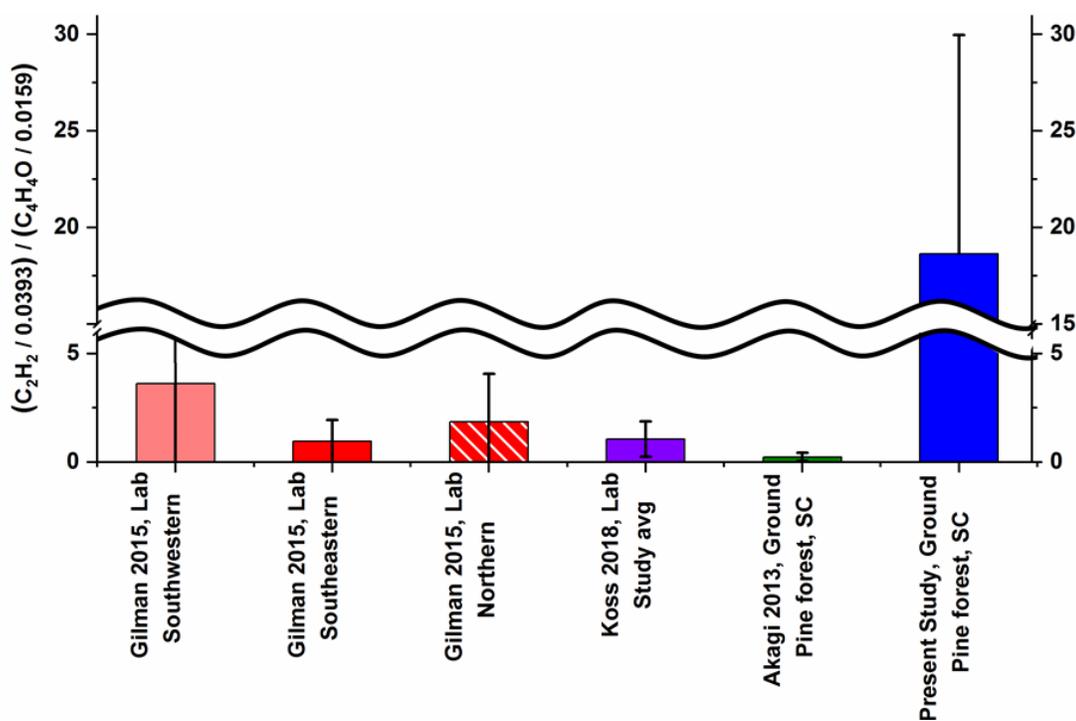
251 Modified combustion efficiency (MCE) uses the excess CO and CO_2 values to quantify the degree
 252 of combustion that has occurred in a given smoke plume and the MCE will be discussed below.
 253 However, in a recent study Sekimoto et al. (2018) suggested that MCE may not be the best quantity

254 to adequately describe pyrolysis, but rather that emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
255 from biomass burning may be correlated with high and low temperature pyrolysis factors obtained
256 by carrying out positive matrix factorization (PMF) analysis on the emission profiles. The authors
257 further suggested that the ratio of acetylene (C₂H₂) to furan (C₄H₄O) could be used to estimate the
258 high and low temperature pyrolysis factors. They used the emission profiles from the analysis of
259 15 different fuels to calculate the following ratio that estimates the high and low temperature VOC
260 emissions:

$$\frac{(\text{Total VOC})_{\text{High T}}}{(\text{Total VOC})_{\text{Low T}}} = \frac{\text{C}_2\text{H}_2 / 0.0393}{\text{C}_4\text{H}_4\text{O} / 0.0159} \quad (3)$$

261 We have adopted this estimation approach and have used the acetylene-to-furan ratio to assess the
262 relative contributions from high and low temperature processes. The average results are displayed
263 in Figure 2 alongside the results from Koss et al. (2018), Gilman et al. (2015) and Akagi et al.
264 (2013). For comparison purposes, the values displayed in Figure 2 were determined using average
265 ERs for acetylene and furan. The present results (right-most bar) are approximately an order of
266 magnitude greater than all previous studies, likely due to the timing of collection and the sampling
267 probe's proximity to the flame. The juxtaposed values from the previous studies were obtained
268 using either a) fire-integrated ERs, b) discrete ERs sampled every 20 to 300 sec or c) fire-averaged
269 ERs, all of which incorporate several different phases of the fire as compared to the present flame-
270 front measurements. Using the Sekimoto et al. (2018) estimation approach, higher acetylene-to-
271 furan ratios indicate a greater contribution from the high temperature process. The markedly high
272 ratio observed in this study suggests that samples were collected when high temperature pyrolysis
273 was indeed the dominant process. This observation is consistent with the time profile for the
274 contribution of the high temperature pyrolysis factor presented by Sekimoto et al. (2018), which

275 demonstrates that the contribution from high temperature pyrolysis [$\text{High-T} / (\text{High-T} + \text{Low-T})$]
 276 can easily exceed 0.95 in the early stages of fire, but reduces to smaller fractions (≤ 0.3) in the
 277 latter stages. Another key difference is that the sampling probe used at Ft. Jackson was positioned
 278 so as to extract gases directly before the flame front, yet in close proximity to it, in order to limit
 279 further reactions. In particular, if the highly flammable acetylene molecules were captured prior to
 280 subsequent oxidation reactions, this would explain the enhanced ratio of high-to-low-temperature
 281 VOC emissions as seen in Figure 2.



282
 283 **Figure 2.** Ratio of acetylene (C_2H_2)/0.0393 to furan ($\text{C}_4\text{H}_4\text{O}$)/0.0159 to predict the ratio of high to low temperature
 284 VOC emissions as outlined by Sekimoto et al. (2018). Error bars represent 1σ . For the present study average results
 285 were determined from the 10 collected samples preceding the flame front for acetylene and furan. Koss et al. (2018)
 286 values were fire integrated while Gilman et al. (2015) used 20-300 sec integrations. Akagi et al. (2013) reported EFs
 287 which were used to calculate ERs for acetylene and furan.

288 **3.2 CO₂ and CO emissions and MCE values**

289 As expected, other than H₂O vapor, CO and CO₂ were the predominant gases observed as
290 emissions. Table 2 displays the EF (g kg⁻¹) and ER (ppb/ppm_{CO}) values averaged for the ten field
291 measurements. Most prescribed burn studies have focused only on the flaming and smoldering
292 stages. The flaming stage is characterized by more oxidized products and a higher modified
293 combustion efficiency (e.g. 0.85 - 0.97, even 0.99 for pure flaming) (Ward and Hao, 1991), where
294 the MCE is defined as:

$$\text{MCE} = \left(\frac{\Delta\text{CO}_2}{\Delta\text{CO}_2 + \Delta\text{CO}} \right). \quad (4)$$

295 The smoldering phase with lower MCE values (typically ranging from 0.65–0.85) (Urbanski,
296 2013) displays more non-oxidized (or less-oxidized) species but with a greater fraction of OVOCs
297 observed. The arithmetic mean MCE and standard deviation for all ten measurements at Ft.
298 Jackson was 0.83 ± 0.04 . Such MCE values would normally characterize data gathered during
299 smoldering combustion where a combination of processes such as pyrolysis along with glowing
300 combustion of char take place (Yokelson et al., 1997). Since the present study was aimed at
301 collection of pyrolysis gases preceding the flame front, characterizing the results in terms of MCE
302 values may not be appropriate: The lower MCE values do not represent the fire being in the
303 smoldering stage, but rather suggest that pyrolysis and other early-phase process gases were
304 captured (at least in part) prior to the onset of combustion. As noted, the methodology used with
305 this collection device ideally extracts the pyrolysis gases before they are combusted. Due to the
306 proximity of these gases to the flame, some entrainment of ambient air and air from the flame
307 region was likely unavoidable. As we were sampling a moving zone, some combustion products
308 were also likely to be sampled.

309 **Table 2.** Study averages of EF (g kg^{-1}) and ER (ppb/ppm_{CO}) for the ten pyrolysis measurements along
 310 with standard deviation (SD). The SD represent the variation for the ten non-identical measurements. For
 311 the study averages, the arithmetic mean MCE was found to be 0.83 ± 0.04 .

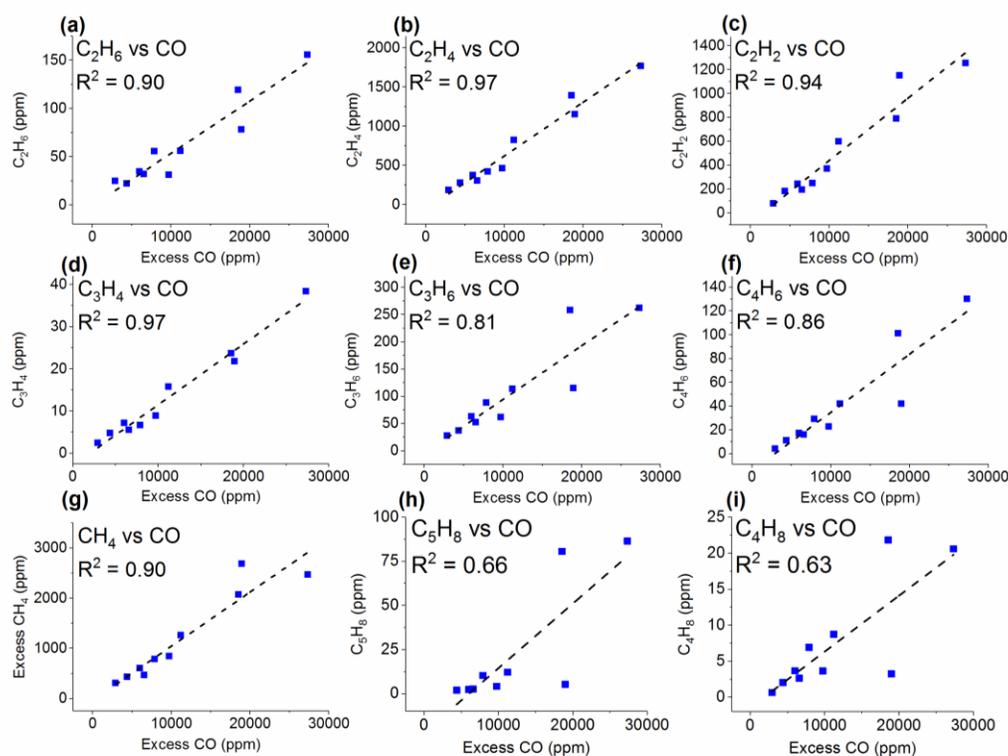
Species	Formula	EF Study Average (g kg^{-1})	SD	ER Study Average (ppb/ppm _{CO})	SD
Carbon dioxide	CO ₂	1469	113	5190	1450
Carbon monoxide	CO	191	45	1000	n/a
Methane	CH ₄	11.2	3.9	101.3	18.7
Ethane	C ₂ H ₆	1.14	0.42	5.54	1.48
Ethene	C ₂ H ₄	11.8	3.8	61.1	9.6
Acetylene	C ₂ H ₂	7.4	3.1	40.9	10.4
Propene	C ₃ H ₆	2.69	1.04	9.32	2.34
Allene	C ₃ H ₄	0.30	0.12	1.09	0.23
1,3-Butadiene	C ₄ H ₆	1.20	0.72	3.13	1.25
Isobutene	C ₄ H ₈	0.23	0.15	0.58	0.31
Isoprene	C ₅ H ₈	0.63	0.90	1.18	1.43
Naphthalene	C ₁₀ H ₈	0.65	0.36	0.77	0.47
Formaldehyde	HCHO	0.76	0.98	3.63	4.57
Methanol	CH ₃ OH	1.39	1.40	6.11	5.56
Formic acid	HCOOH	0.23	0.14	0.74	0.42
Acetaldehyde	CH ₃ CHO	2.84	1.41	9.35	3.59
Acetone	(CH ₃) ₂ CO	1.15	0.77	2.92	1.78
Acetic acid	CH ₃ COOH	1.45	2.66	3.46	6.15
Acrolein	C ₃ H ₄ O	1.59	1.01	4.10	2.15
Furan	C ₄ H ₄ O	0.41	0.25	0.89	0.49
Furaldehyde	C ₄ H ₃ OCHO	1.01	1.01	1.45	1.31
Hydrogen cyanide	HCN	1.34	0.31	7.34	1.25
Nitrous acid	HONO	0.10	0.16	0.30	0.46
Methyl nitrite	CH ₃ ONO	0.41	0.32	1.06	0.90

312
313

314 3.3 Emissions of lightweight hydrocarbons

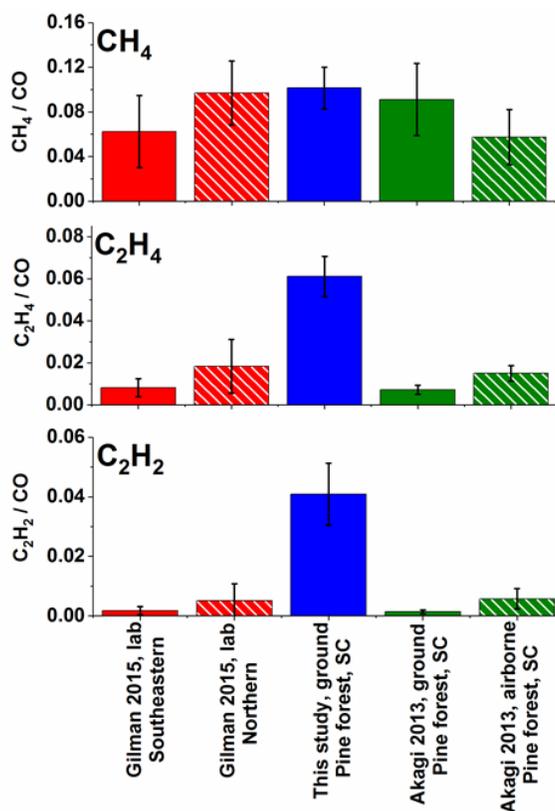
315 Besides CO and CO₂, the second most abundant class of gases generated during the prescribed
 316 burns was lightweight hydrocarbons (HCs). The lightweight HCs detected by the FTIR include
 317 methane, ethane, ethene, acetylene, propene, allene, 1,3-butadiene, isoprene and isobutene. Most

318 have been previously identified in fire emissions using FTIR either in laboratory experiments
 319 (Burling et al., 2010; Christian et al., 2003; Christian et al., 2004; Gilman et al., 2015; Goode et
 320 al., 1999; Hatch et al., 2017; Selimovic et al., 2018; Stockwell et al., 2014; Yokelson et al., 1996;
 321 Yokelson et al., 1997) or field settings (Akagi et al., 2013; Akagi et al., 2014; Alves et al., 2010;
 322 Burling et al., 2011; Goode et al., 2000; Hurst et al., 1994a; Hurst et al., 1994b; Karl et al., 2007;
 323 Paton-Walsh et al., 2010), but the present experiment reports the first IR detection of allene
 324 (Scharko et al., 2019). Figure 3 shows the individual correlations between these lightweight HCs
 325 and excess CO mixing ratios. The analyte vs. Δ CO correlation coefficients range from 0.97 (ethene
 326 and allene) to 0.66 (isoprene and isobutene). In all cases, the correlation coefficients were larger
 327 with CO than with CO₂. Positive relationships have been observed for CO correlations in previous
 328 burning studies (Hurst et al., 1994a; Hurst et al., 1994b).



329
 330 **Figure 3.** Mixing ratios (ppm) for the 10 measurements as a function of excess CO (ppm) for (a) ethane (C₂H₆), (b)
 331 ethene (C₂H₄), (c) acetylene (C₂H₂), (d) allene (C₃H₄), (e) propene (C₃H₆), (f) 1,3-butadiene (C₄H₆), (g) excess methane
 332 (CH₄), (h) isoprene (C₅H₈) and (i) isobutene (C₄H₈). The dashed lines are a linear fit to the data.

333 While the observed ER for excess methane was comparable, ERs for ethene and acetylene were
334 considerably greater than previously reported values. Specifically, Figure 4 shows a comparison
335 of emission ratios for methane, ethene and acetylene to previously reported values of Gilman et al.
336 (2015) and Akagi et al. (2013). As noted, different sampling methods complicate the comparison.
337 The present data represent a collection of instantaneous grab samples extracted directly before the
338 flame front, whereas the other data represent time averaged values. Ethene and acetylene have both
339 been observed as pyrolysis products in prior laboratory work (Palma, 2013), but may react further.
340 For example, the addition reaction of acetylene to benzene or naphthalene can produce styrene or
341 cyclopenta-fused polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (Ledesma et al., 2002). Alternatively ethene
342 and acetylene can undergo combustion (Simmie, 2003). Nevertheless, the high ER values for
343 ethene and especially for acetylene in the present study further suggest that the samples were
344 collected when high temperature pyrolysis process was dominant; Sekimoto et al. (2018) also
345 observed that high temperature pyrolysis profiles are often associated with unsaturated
346 hydrocarbons.



347
 348
 349 **Figure 4.** Average ERs (ppm/ppm_{CO}) for excess methane (top), ethene (middle) and acetylene (bottom) for this study
 350 and for previously published laboratory and field (ground and air based) investigations. Error bars represent 1σ.
 351 Gilman et al. (2015) present discrete ERs with sample acquisition of 20 to 300 sec. Akagi et al. (2013) present fire-
 352 averaged EFs calculated using ERs derived by the regression method. The ERs for Akagi et al. shown above were
 353 derived from the ratio of the EFs for the gas of interest and CO multiplied by the molar mass of CO/molar mass of
 354 analyte.

355
 356 **3.4 Emissions of lightweight oxygenated hydrocarbons**

357 The noncyclic oxygenated hydrocarbons detected via FTIR analysis include formaldehyde,
 358 methanol, formic acid, acetaldehyde, acetone, acetic acid and acrolein. On average, acetaldehyde
 359 and methanol had the highest ER values in this group, with ERs relative to CO of 0.009 and 0.006,
 360 respectively, as seen both in Table 2 and Figure S2 in the supplemental material. For all
 361 measurements collected at sites 16 and 24A, acetaldehyde was consistently the highest with ER
 362 values ranging from 0.005 to 0.014. Site 24B followed a different trend with highest ER values for
 363 acetic acid, followed by methanol, acetaldehyde and formaldehyde in decreasing order. The ERs
 364 for acetic acid and formaldehyde at site 24B are at least 7.9 and 2.5 times greater, respectively,

365 than the other burn sites: One key difference observed for site 24B was fuel composition, namely
366 the presence and partial consumption of larger logs (i.e. 7.6–20.3 cm diameter woody material).
367 Other differences include the presence of live pine seedlings and fewer turkey oak as compared to
368 other plots. This particular plot had the highest herbaceous and forb pre-fire loading and
369 consumption with a higher fuel moisture content (205% as compared to next highest value of
370 144%). This high fuel moisture content was reflected in the ER for water, which was at least 4.7
371 times greater than the other plots. The pyrolysis of cellulose (one of the three primary components
372 of biomass as discussed below) forms levoglucosan. Shen et al. (2009) outline secondary
373 decomposition pathways for levoglucosan, in which the initial step is the rehydration to generate
374 glucopyranose. They demonstrate how glucopyranose can then form formaldehyde, methanol and
375 acetic acid via secondary decomposition routes. This pathway (or a similar one) may have been
376 favored at site 24B: the greater ERs for acetic acid and formaldehyde observed at plot 24B may
377 have thus been influenced by the greater fraction of woody material and presence of herbaceous
378 and forb fuels, all with higher moisture contents. This hypothesis warrants further investigation,
379 and could be studied in the laboratory.

380 Table 3 compares the present ER values with values from Akagi et al. (2013), Stockwell et al.
381 (2014), Gilman et al. (2015) and Koss et al. (2018). The present ERs are comparable to other burn
382 studies except for acetaldehyde, which appears to be marginally greater, and formaldehyde and
383 acetic acid, which both appear to be lower. The higher ratio for acetaldehyde may be due to
384 differences in the sampling approach, i.e. samples collected in the present study may contain
385 species that were generated during an earlier period in the thermal decomposition process. In a
386 controlled laboratory study by Stein et al (1983), acetaldehyde was observed as one of the initial
387 products emitted from the pyrolysis of glycerol, a product pyrolyzed from levoglucosan. This same

388 study also observed that acetaldehyde would continue to decompose (under pyrolysis conditions)
 389 to smaller molecules such as ethene, methane, H₂ and CO (Stein et al., 1983). The greater average
 390 ER for acetaldehyde observed in the present study may be due to gases being captured (via the
 391 collection device) and removed from heat either in-between decomposition steps or before
 392 combustion. It is also possible that the trends seen for the OVOCs in Table 3, in particular the
 393 higher values for acetaldehyde arise due to (a) differing vapor pressures, (b) differing degrees of
 394 onset of combustion, (c) differing degrees of pyrolysis emissivity as suggested by Stein et al.
 395 (1983), (d) differing degrees of IR-spectroscopic sensitivity (i.e. certain other species with limited
 396 or no detectivity), or (e) some combination of all these effects. Further analysis is warranted.

Table 3. Average emission ratios (ppb/ppm_{CO}) for this study and for previously published fire studies.

Analyte	This study- Pine forest SC ground-based	Gilman et al., 2015 Southeastern fuels	Koss et al., 2018 Study average for all fuels	Stockwell et al., 2014 Sawgrass SC	Stockwell et al., 2014 Ponderosa pine MT	Akagi et al., 2013 Pine forest SC ground-based	Akagi et al., 2013 Pine forest SC air-based
Formic acid	0.7	1.6	2.2	0.7	5.1	n/a	0.6
Furan	0.9	0.7	1.9	0.8	1.2	2.4	1.1
Furaldehyde	1.5	1.5	2.1	n/a	n/a	0.1	0.2
Acetone	2.9	1.6	2.3	n/a	n/a	3.8	3.6
Formaldehyde	3.6	12	20	7.8	29	12	23
Acetic acid	3.5	13	n/a	5.2	22	6.6	11
Acrolein	4.1	1.3	5.4	n/a	n/a	1.2	1.8
Methanol	6.1	7.8	12	3.4	24	21	13
Acetaldehyde	9.3	2.8	7.4	n/a	n/a	5.1	4.8

Koss et al. (2018) present the fire-integrated ERs. Gilman et al. (2015) present discrete ERs with sample acquisition of 20 to 300 sec. Stockwell et al. (2014) present the fire-integrated ERs. Akagi et al. (2013) present fire-averaged EFs calculated using ERs derived by the regression method. The emission ratios for Akagi et al. (2013) were obtained from the ratio of the emission factors for the analyte and CO multiplied by the molar mass of CO/molar mass of the analyte.

397

398 The slightly lower ERs for formaldehyde and acetic acid may in part be explained by secondary
 399 decomposition pathways. Proposed pathways that generate formaldehyde and acetic acid proceed

400 through intermediates formed by the decomposition of levoglucosan (Shen and Gu, 2009).
401 Formaldehyde is generated from a number of intermediates such as hydroxyacetone (acetol)
402 (Lindenmaier et al., 2016) and 5-hydroxymethyl-furfural. While the formation mechanism for
403 acetic acid is via the decomposition of the intermediate hydroxyacetaldehyde (glycolaldehyde)
404 (Johnson et al., 2013), which undergoes a dehydration reaction to a ketene, and then a rehydration
405 to acetic acid (Shen and Gu, 2009), it is possible that the present conditions and fuels (save for site
406 24B) were not favorable for the above chemical pathways.

407 **3.5 Emissions of aromatic compounds**

408 In the present study, furan, furaldehyde and naphthalene were all detected via FTIR. Previous fire
409 studies have used FTIR to detect phenol and/or furan (Burling et al., 2011; Akagi et al., 2014;
410 Hatch et al., 2017; Christian et al., 2003; Christian et al., 2004; Stockwell et al., 2014; Karl et al.,
411 2007; Selimovic et al., 2018; Yokelson et al., 2013; Burling et al., 2010; Akagi et al., 2013). One
412 of these studies also detected furaldehyde (Selimovic et al., 2018). To the best of our knowledge,
413 however, this is the first burning study that has used IR spectroscopy to identify naphthalene vapor,
414 though it has previously been detected in biomass burning emissions via other methods (Koss et
415 al., 2018; Gilman et al., 2015). Naphthalene has also been detected in tar samples generated from
416 the controlled pyrolysis of similar fuels (Safdari et al., 2018).

417

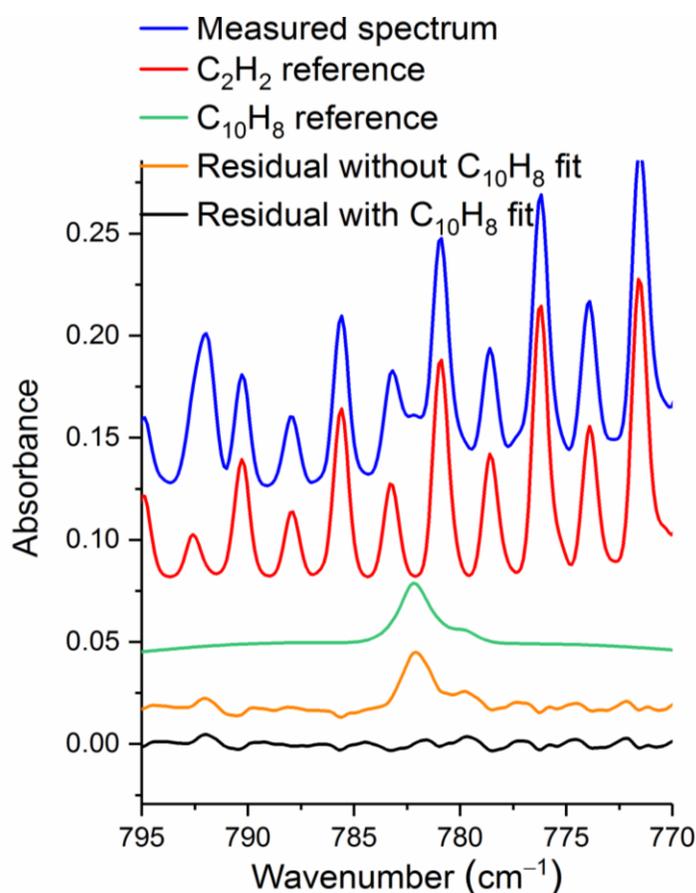
418 Phenol and phenolic compounds were not definitively observed in this study due to their IR bands
419 being somewhat weak and obscured by a number of other species, namely acetic acid, carbon
420 dioxide, acetylene and hydrogen cyanide. However, phenolic compounds have been identified in
421 products generated from the pyrolysis of lignin in controlled laboratory experiments by Kibet et
422 al. (2012). Lignin, one of the three main components of biomass, can account for 10–35% of the

423 biomass, and its chemical structure consists of polymers of various phenolic alkyl side chain
424 subunits (Shen et al., 2015). When undergoing thermal decomposition, lignin will release volatiles
425 at temperatures between 200 and 400 °C. The proposed mechanism can generate intermediates
426 such as phenoxy radicals that ultimately lead to the formation of phenols (Kibet et al., 2012). In
427 the present study, spectral evidence of phenol was in fact observed in some measurements, but the
428 IR bands at 1176 and 752 cm⁻¹ were weak and were masked by other compound signatures,
429 hindering spectral quantification. Mixing ratios of phenol above the detection limit might have
430 been anticipated since prior controlled pyrolysis investigations of sparkleberry and longleaf pine
431 have detected phenol as a component in the tar (Safdari et al., 2018; Amini et al., 2019a; Safdari
432 et al., 2019). While the phenol signal was weak, furan and furaldehyde, however, were clearly
433 detected, and their formation likely stemmed from thermal degradation of the other main
434 constituents of biomass. Besides lignin, the other primary macromolecular components are
435 cellulose and hemicellulose, which account for approximately 50% and 15–35% by weight,
436 respectively (Shen et al., 2015). The pyrolysis of cellulose is known to produce furaldehyde, furan
437 and other low weight oxygenated compounds (e.g. acetic acid) via the intermediate levoglucosan
438 (Bai et al., 2013). Moreover, furaldehyde and methanol have both been observed as volatile
439 products from the pyrolysis of methyl β-D-xylopyranoside, a model compound for xylan-based
440 hemicellulose (Shafizadeh et al., 1972).

441

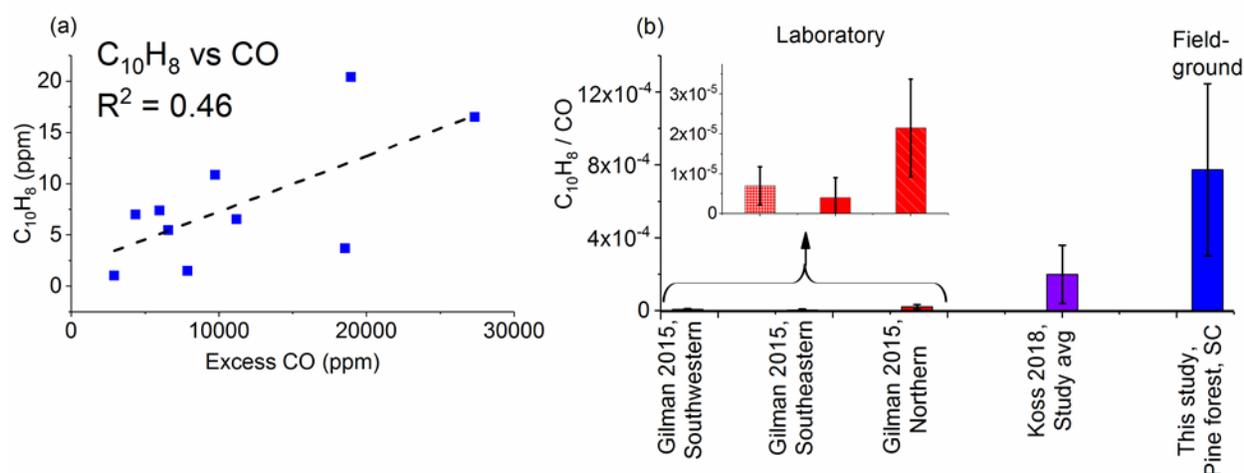
442 Naphthalene is a polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon with several sources including as a biomass
443 burning emission product. It was detected using FTIR for the first time in these studies (Scharko
444 et al., 2019). Its IR detection was not unexpected given that it has been observed in collected tar
445 samples generated by the laboratory pyrolysis of similar fuel types (Safdari et al., 2018) but its

446 identification in an experimental IR spectrum can be challenging as depicted in Figure 5. Most of
447 its IR bands have only moderate cross-sections with the exception of the ν_{46} band, which has a
448 strong Q-branch at 782.3 cm^{-1} (green trace in Figure 5). For this band to be observed, however, it
449 needs to be deconvoluted from the acetylene rotational-vibrational lines also present in this spectral
450 domain (red trace in Figure 5). Better retrievals for naphthalene were obtained using a higher
451 spectral resolution (0.6 cm^{-1}) since the Q-branch of the ν_{46} band is quite sharp (FWHM $\sim 1\text{ cm}^{-1}$),
452 even at atmospheric pressure (Scharko et al., 2019).



453
454 **Figure 5.** Measured and scaled reference spectra for acetylene (C_2H_2) and naphthalene (C_{10}H_8) as well as residual
455 with and without C_{10}H_8 . The measurement is from site 16 plot 6 msmt. 2, and the detected mixing ratio for naphthalene
456 is 7.37 ppm. Spectra are offset for clarity. Reference absorption lines for acetylene are from HITRAN, and the
457 reference spectrum for naphthalene is from PNNL.

458 Figure 6a plots the mixing ratios (ppm) for naphthalene as a function of excess CO (ppm) while
459 Figure 6b displays the ERs for naphthalene for this study and previous studies.



460
 461 **Figure 6.** (a) Mixing ratios (ppm) for naphthalene (C₁₀H₈) as a function of excess CO (ppm) measured by FTIR for
 462 each of the 10 canisters. The dashed line is a linear fit. (b) Average emission ratios (ppm_{C₁₀H₈}/ppm_{CO}) for this study
 463 and for previous laboratory studies. Error bars represent 1σ. Koss et al. (2018) present the fire-integrated ERs. Gilman
 464 et al. (2015) present discrete ERs with sample acquisition of 20 to 300 sec.
 465

466 The average naphthalene ER for this study is substantially greater than both the values from
 467 Gilman et al. (2015) and Koss et al. (2018). The average for Koss et al. (2018), however, is in turn
 468 an order of magnitude greater than the highest average for Gilman et al. (2015). The higher ER
 469 for naphthalene in this study (shown in Figure 6) clearly suggests that the method to capture
 470 pyrolysis gases was (at least in part) quite successful, i.e. we were able to collect naphthalene gas
 471 prior to it undergoing further reactions. Besides oxidation, under the right conditions naphthalene
 472 can also continue to react in a Diels-Alder type reaction to form still larger polyaromatics (Fairburn
 473 et al., 1990; Richter and Howard, 2000). Sekimoto et al. (2018) also linked naphthalene with the
 474 high temperature profile, and it appears that the samples in the present study were indeed collected
 475 when the high temperature process was dominant. The detection of naphthalene suggests that
 476 benzene and/or styrene, which are the main precursors to polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, may
 477 also be present. Styrene was not detected via FTIR methods, and benzene is challenging for IR

478 analysis since its one strong band (ν_{11} mode at 673 cm^{-1}) is obfuscated by the CO_2 ν_2 bending
479 mode under such polluted atmospheric conditions.

480

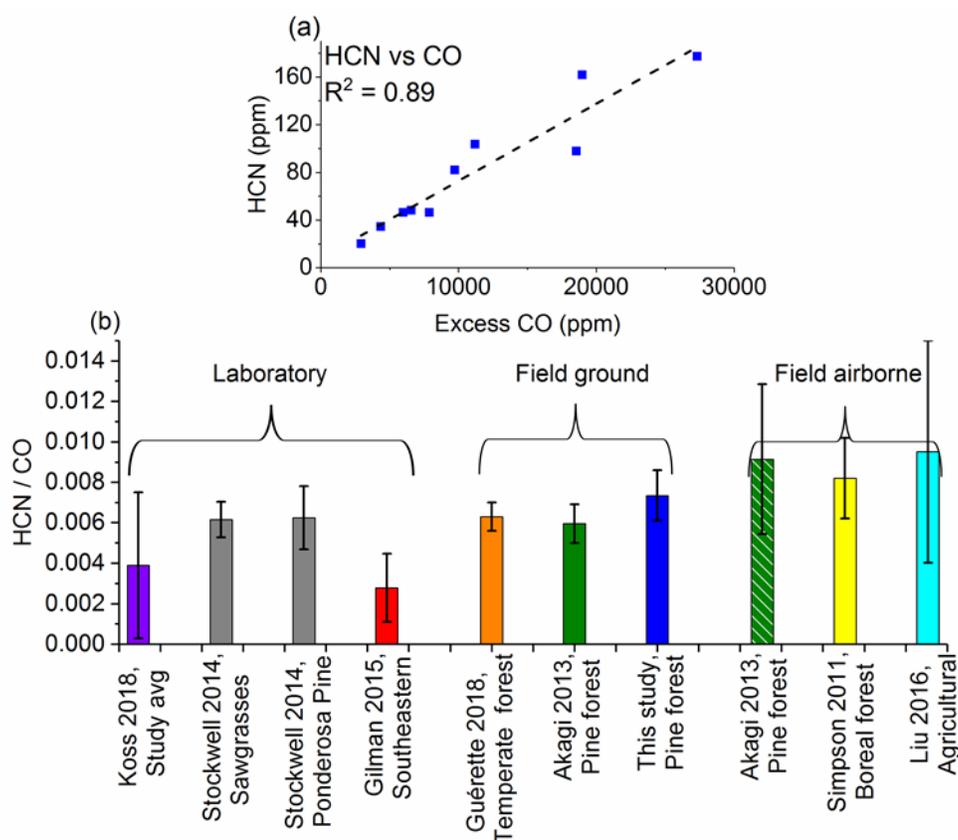
481 **3.6 Emissions of nitrogen-containing species**

482 Gases such as NH_3 , NO_2 , NO , HCN and HONO have been identified using FTIR spectroscopy in
483 fire laboratory experiments multiple times (Selimovic et al., 2018; Gilman et al., 2015; Christian
484 et al., 2003; Christian et al., 2004; Goode et al., 1999; Yokelson et al., 1996; Yokelson et al., 1997;
485 Stockwell et al., 2014; Hatch et al., 2017; Burling et al., 2010; Karl et al., 2007) as well as in field
486 studies (Yokelson et al., 1999; Burling et al., 2011; Goode et al., 2000; Akagi et al., 2013; Karl et
487 al., 2007; Akagi et al., 2014). Multiple other methods have also been used to detect N-containing
488 gases, such as HNCO and CH_3CN (Gilman et al., 2015; Christian et al., 2003; Christian et al.,
489 2004; Yokelson et al., 2009; Akagi et al., 2013; Karl et al., 2007; Roberts et al., 2010). The amount
490 and speciation of N-containing compounds emitted is dependent on fuel type and nitrogen content
491 (Stockwell et al., 2014; Burling et al., 2010; Coggon et al., 2016). Moreover, emissions can usually
492 be linked to a stage of combustion: NO , NO_2 , HNCO and HONO are all associated with the
493 flaming stage, while NH_3 and HCN are primarily associated with smoldering combustion but have
494 also been suggested as pyrolysis gases (Goode et al., 1999; Yokelson et al., 1996; Roberts et al.,
495 2010; Burling et al., 2010; Hansson et al., 2004; Di Blasi, 2008). Biomass pyrolysis experiments
496 carried out in an inert (i.e. oxygen free) atmosphere have revealed that NH_3 , HCN and HNCO are
497 all generated (Hansson et al., 2004). These compounds are all considered to be NO_x ($\text{NO} + \text{NO}_2$)
498 and N_2O precursors because they are oxidized via combustion (Hansson et al., 2004).

499 It is important to note that ammonia and related amine compounds are often best sampled via open-
500 path techniques such as an open White Cell, as these compounds are notorious for adhering to

501 walls of sampling or analysis devices, including those made from steel, glass or Teflon (Stockwell
502 et al., 2014; Yokelson et al., 2003). Sampling and passivation techniques have been discussed
503 extensively (Neuman et al., 1999; Roscioli et al., 2015) for these “sticky” molecules, and the
504 present method may thus not be optimal for these compounds. This caveat in mind, the major N-
505 containing compound that was identified in the present pyrolysis study was HCN. This is
506 consistent with previous small-scale and controlled laboratory studies that have shown HCN as
507 the primary N-product resulting from the pyrolysis of amino acids (Haidar et al., 1981; Johnson
508 and Kan, 1971). This observation is further evidence that the gas samples were extracted when
509 high temperature was the dominant process; Sekimoto et al. (2018) have associated HCN with the
510 high temperature pyrolysis profile. Figure 7a shows the correlation between HCN and excess CO
511 ($R^2 = 0.89$). Previous field fire studies have observed similar trends (Simpson et al., 2011;
512 Stockwell et al., 2016). Figure 7b shows a comparison between the ERs for HCN for this study as
513 well as from previous laboratory and field (both ground and airborne) studies. The present values
514 are comparable to other ground-based measurements (Guérette et al., 2018; Akagi et al., 2013) but
515 differ significantly from a couple of the laboratory studies. It should be noted that although
516 conducted at a different time of the year (late Oct./early Nov. 2011), the studies by Akagi et al.
517 (2013) took place near the same location as the current study (i.e. the same military base), and the
518 ERs for HCN they report are not significantly different from the present measurements. This
519 suggests that the ratio of initial gases released of HCN to CO is consistent with the ratio of these
520 gases over the duration of the fire, or at least the fire-averaged ratio. With regards to ERs for HCN,
521 the major factor that appears to influence these values is fuel type, particularly the fuel’s peat
522 content. Both laboratory (Stockwell et al., 2014) and field (Stockwell et al., 2016) studies of
523 Indonesian peat have shown greatly enhanced ERs for HCN compared to the studies represented

524 in Figure 7b, which consist mostly of pine, grasses and fuels of non-peat origin. The range in the
 525 averages of ERs for HCN shown in Figure 7b is 0.0028–0.0095; the averages for the Indonesian
 526 peat in laboratory and field studies were 0.015 and 0.021, respectively (Stockwell et al., 2014;
 527 Stockwell et al., 2016), and interestingly are ~an order of magnitude greater than the range of
 528 values seen in Figure 7b.



529 **Figure 7.** (a) Mixing ratios (ppm) for HCN as a function of excess CO (ppm) measured by FTIR. The dashed line is
 530 a linear fit. (b) Average emission ratios ($\text{ppm}_{\text{HCN}}/\text{ppm}_{\text{CO}}$) for this study and previous laboratory and field
 531 investigations. Error bars represent 1σ . Koss et al. (2018) and Stockwell et al. (2014) present fire-integrated ERs.
 532 Gilman et al. (2015) present discrete ERs with sample acquisition of 20–300 s. Simpson et al. (2011) present fire-
 533 averaged ERs derived by regression. Guérette et al. (2018) present a single ER from all fires and derived by regression.
 534 Akagi et al. (2013) and Liu et al. (2016) present fire-averaged EFs calculated using ERs derived by regression. The
 535 ERs for Akagi et al. (2013) and Liu et al. (2016) were derived from the ratio of the EFs for HCN and CO multiplied
 536 by the molar mass CO/molar mass HCN.
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 538

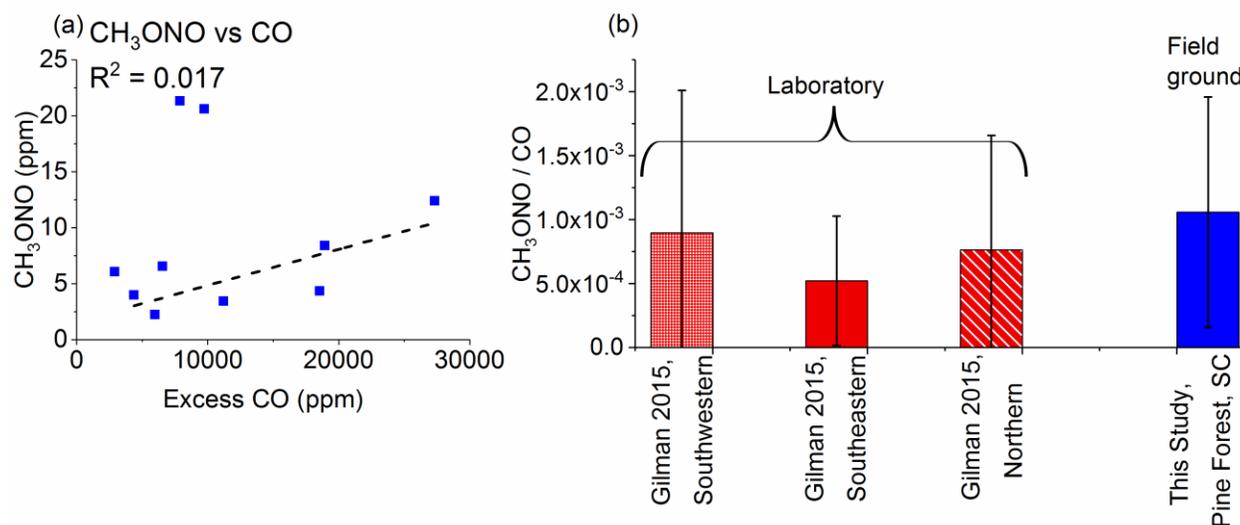
539 In the present study, trace amounts of HONO were detected, but NH_3 was not observed. The
 540 absence of NH_3 was somewhat unexpected since, similar to HCN, it is a known product from the

541 pyrolysis of amino acids (Haidar et al., 1981) and has been observed in prior prescribed fires
542 conducted at Ft. Jackson (Akagi et al., 2014; Akagi et al., 2013). There are several possible
543 explanations for the lack of NH_3 in the measurements. First and foremost, experimentally NH_3 is
544 well known to adhere to certain surfaces (e.g. steel), and in this study it may have adhered to the
545 canisters or tubing walls and was thus not detected (Neuman et al., 1999; Roscioli et al., 2015;
546 Stockwell et al., 2014; Yokelson et al., 2003). Second, Sekimoto et al. (2018) observed that NH_3
547 is more often associated with a low temperature pyrolysis profile, and it appears that the present
548 samples were extracted during a period when high temperature pyrolysis was the main process.
549 Third, NH_3 is strongly linked with the smoldering phase (Goode et al., 1999; Yokelson et al.,
550 1996), and samples were not collected during this phase. Fourth, the speciation of the N-species
551 emitted is dependent on the fuel composition and amount of oxygen (Ren and Zhao, 2013b, a,
552 2012), so it is possible that in the present study the conditions favored HCN instead of NH_3 .

553

554 The IR quantification of other N-species, such as NO , NO_2 , CH_3NO_2 and HNCO was obstructed
555 due to interferences from H_2O , CO and CO_2 as well as the low emission values for some of these
556 N-species. Specifically, NO and NO_2 were likely not observed as these species are usually
557 associated with flaming combustion. HNCO has been linked with pyrolysis processes, and its main
558 formation pathway is the cracking of cyclic amides along with HCN which is also a product of
559 pyrolysis (Hansson et al. 2004). After accounting for the challenges in measuring NO , NO_2 and
560 HNCO , the second most prevalent N-containing species observed in this work was methyl nitrite
561 (CH_3ONO). Methyl nitrite has previously been detected in emissions from biomass burning using
562 other methods (Gilman et al., 2015). Figure 8a shows the plot of mixing ratios for methyl nitrite
563 as a function of excess CO . Unlike HCN (Figure 7a), methyl nitrite exhibits only minimal

564 correlation with excess CO. As one possible alternative explanation, methyl nitrite is known to be
565 associated with rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), but the Ft. Jackson military base records did
566 not indicate RPG usage for these burn plots (Scharko et al., 2019). While few fire studies have
567 observed methyl nitrite, Gilman et al. (2015) have detected it using GC-MS. Figure 8b shows a
568 comparison of the results from Gilman et al. (2015), separated by U.S. region, with the present
569 results. It is worthy to note that both studies observed similar ERs and that in the Gilman study,
570 methyl nitrite had the second highest mean ER after HCN for N-bearing species in southwestern
571 fuels. Our observation of methyl nitrite is thus not unprecedented, but this was its first reported
572 detection via FTIR (Scharko et al., 2019) . In the present study, three measurements (Site 16, plot
573 1, msmt 1; Plot 24A, msmt 3; and Plot 24B) had higher ERs for methyl nitrite than the others, and
574 it is unclear why this is the case. Other measurements collected at the same location reported lower
575 ER values. If the three highest ER measurements in question are not included in the regression
576 then the correlation between methyl nitrite and CO is stronger, and the average ER is closer to
577 values reported by Gilman et al. (2015) for southeastern fuels. One possible explanation for the
578 three greater ER values is that the fuels may have contained more components such as nitrate esters
579 and isopropyl nitrate, both of which are known to release minor amounts of methyl nitrite under
580 controlled pyrolysis conditions (Boschan et al., 1955; Griffiths et al., 1975).



581 **Figure 8.** (a) Mixing ratios (ppm) for methyl nitrite (CH₃ONO) as a function of excess CO (ppm) as measured by
 582 FTIR. The dashed line is a linear fit. (b) Average emission ratios (ppm_{CH₃ONO}/ppm_{CO}) for this study and a previously
 583 published study carried out in the laboratory using different fuels representative of three U.S. regions. Error bars
 584 represent 1σ. Gilman et al. (2015) present discrete ERs with sample acquisition of 20 to 300 s.
 585
 586

587 4. CONCLUSIONS

588 While it is clearly important to sample fires as was done in this prescribed fire study, it is also
 589 important to recall that significant differences may exist in the emissions between wildfire and
 590 prescribed fire. As pointed out by Liu et al. (2017), there is far more particulate matter emitted
 591 from a wildfire than for a controlled prescribed fire. Other differences in emissions from
 592 prescribed fires and wildfires must surely exist, e.g. fuel consumption, fire meteorology, etc. This
 593 paper only explores gas-phase emissions of the early stages of prescribe fires in the southeastern
 594 U.S.

595 The main objective of this study was to collect and quantify gas-phase compounds emitted ahead
 596 of the flame front (prior to the onset of combustion) in prescribed burns conducted in a pine forest.
 597 Primary and secondary decomposition pathways generate volatile products, which in turn can act
 598 as fuel gases that undergo combustion and contribute to sustaining the fire. The main observations

599 are that the estimated ratio of high-to-low temperature VOC emissions suggest that the samples
600 were indeed extracted when the high temperature pyrolysis process was dominant. The
601 acetylene/furan ratio suggested by Sekimoto et al. (2018) was nearly 10x higher than previous
602 studies; this is in fact consistent as previous works all had longer collection times, and in some
603 cases fire-averaged values. The significantly greater ERs observed for specific compounds, e.g.
604 lightweight HCs such as ethene and acetylene as well as unoxidized aromatics such as naphthalene
605 all support the hypothesis that the grab samples were collected prior to onset of decomposition,
606 recombination or combustion reactions, and that such gases represent pyrolytic processes. For the
607 oxidized organics, acetaldehyde and methanol consistently had the highest ER values relative to
608 CO for this collection of pyrolysis gases. The ERs for acetic acid and formaldehyde were found to
609 be high in some instances, but this appeared to be related to fuel composition of the individual
610 burn site. The major N-component released was HCN, while NH₃ was not observed. This is
611 consistent with the collected gases representing species associated with the high temperature
612 pyrolysis process, but the collection of NH₃ and amines in such systems is always problematic due
613 to wall adhesion. It would be interesting to study the effects of initial pyrolysis gas composition
614 ratios on the composition of the downwind plume (Johnson et al., 2006; Johnson et al., 2009).

615

616

617 **ASSOCIATED CONTENT**

618 **Author contribution**

619 NKS, TLM, and TJJ contributed to the writing of this manuscript. AMO and RGT set up laboratory
620 and recorded infrared data. NKS, AMO and CAB provided data processing and analysis. SPB,
621 ENL, JC, BMC and GMB aided in collection of field samples. JC provided thermal imaging and

622 videography. RDO and JRC contributed to fuel characterization. DRW and TJJ were the project
623 managers.

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