

Depth distribution and photo-reactivity of black carbon in Survey200 soils

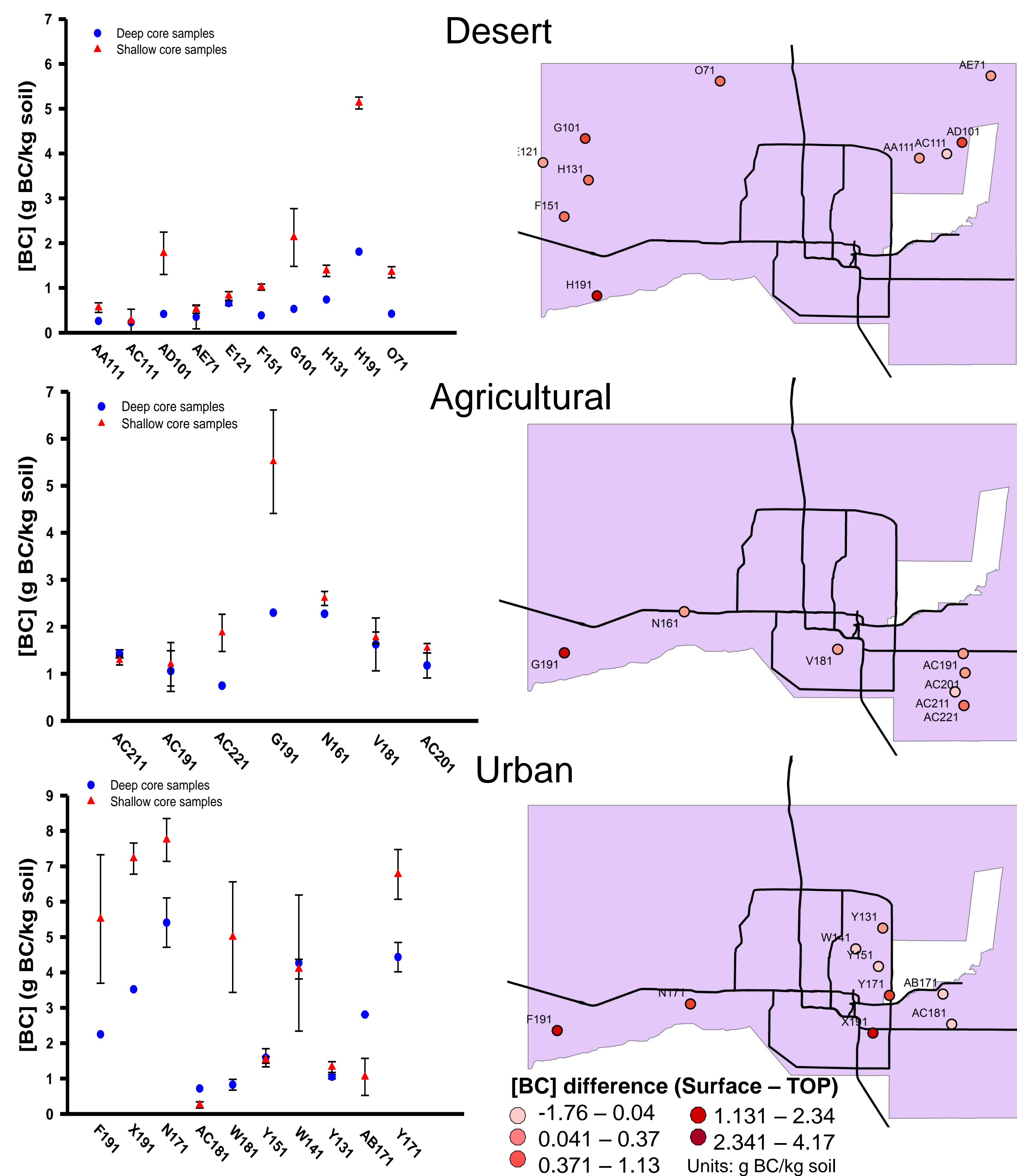
Alex Hamilton¹ and Hilairy E. Hartnett^{1,2}

¹ Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, ²School of Earth and Space Exploration, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ 85287

Black carbon (BC) is the product of incomplete combustion of fossil fuels and biomass. Little is known about BC in a terrestrial urban setting; however, BC is a significant portion of the organic carbon in central Arizona soils (31%). BC could, therefore, play a major role in organic biogeochemical processes in this area. We hypothesize that Surface soils (top 5 cm) contain a larger percentage of BC than TOP (top 15 cm) soils. Laboratory analyses show that, on average, Surface soil contains 1.2 g of BC/kg soil more than TOP soil.

Since the BC global budget is unbalanced with respect to sources and sinks, we hypothesize that BC is undergoing bio-, chemical-, or photo-degradation in soil. Photo-degradation of black and organic carbon in a desert and urban soil was monitored in a solar simulator and under a mercury (Hg) lamp. The solar simulator experiment showed no statistical change in BC or OC concentration. Hg lamp experiment showed a statistical decrease in organic and black carbon for both desert and urban soils. These results indicate that BC can be photo-oxidized and that BC in a desert/urban ecosystem might be more reactive than previously thought.

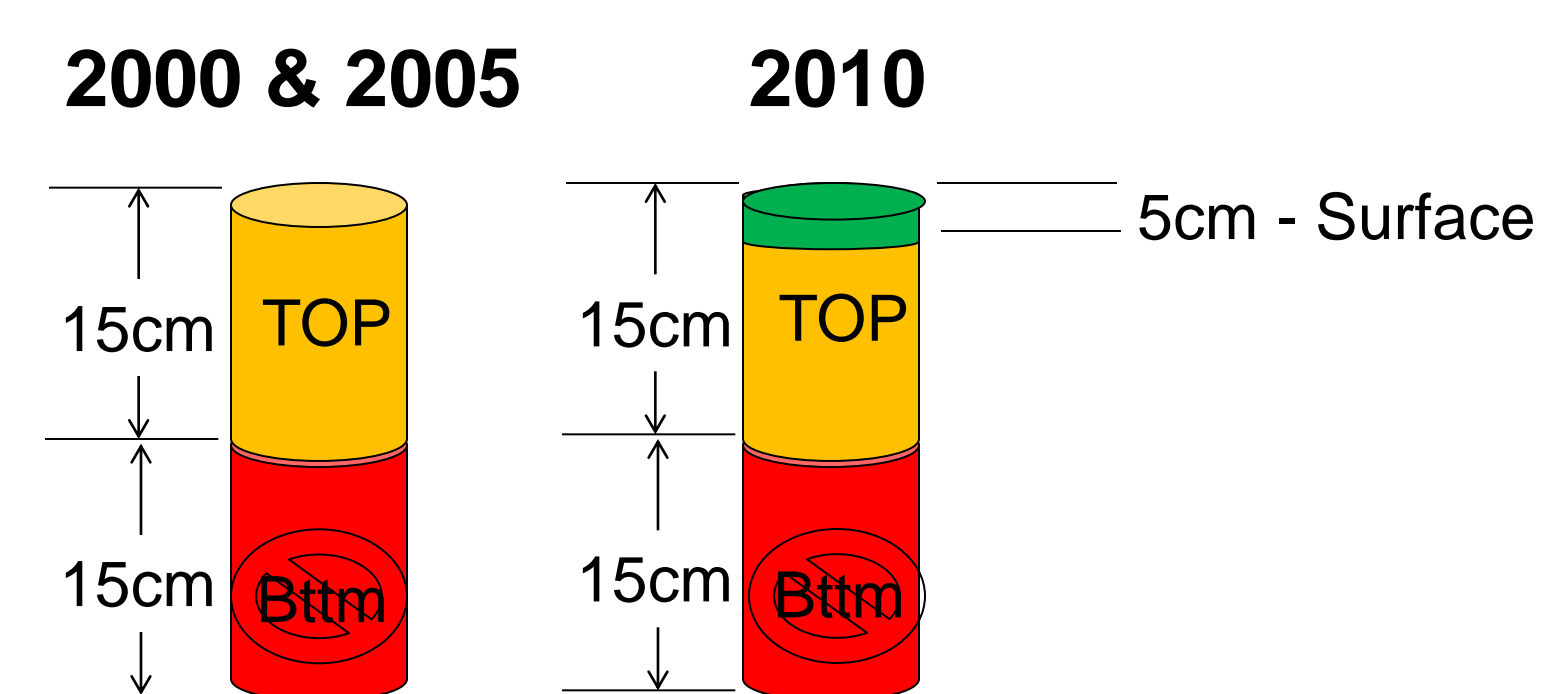
BC concentrations: Surface vs. TOP soil



Fifteen of 27 sites contained more BC in the Surface sample. A statistically significant difference in avg [BC] between Surface and TOP soils was only seen at desert sites ($p > 0.05$).

Method

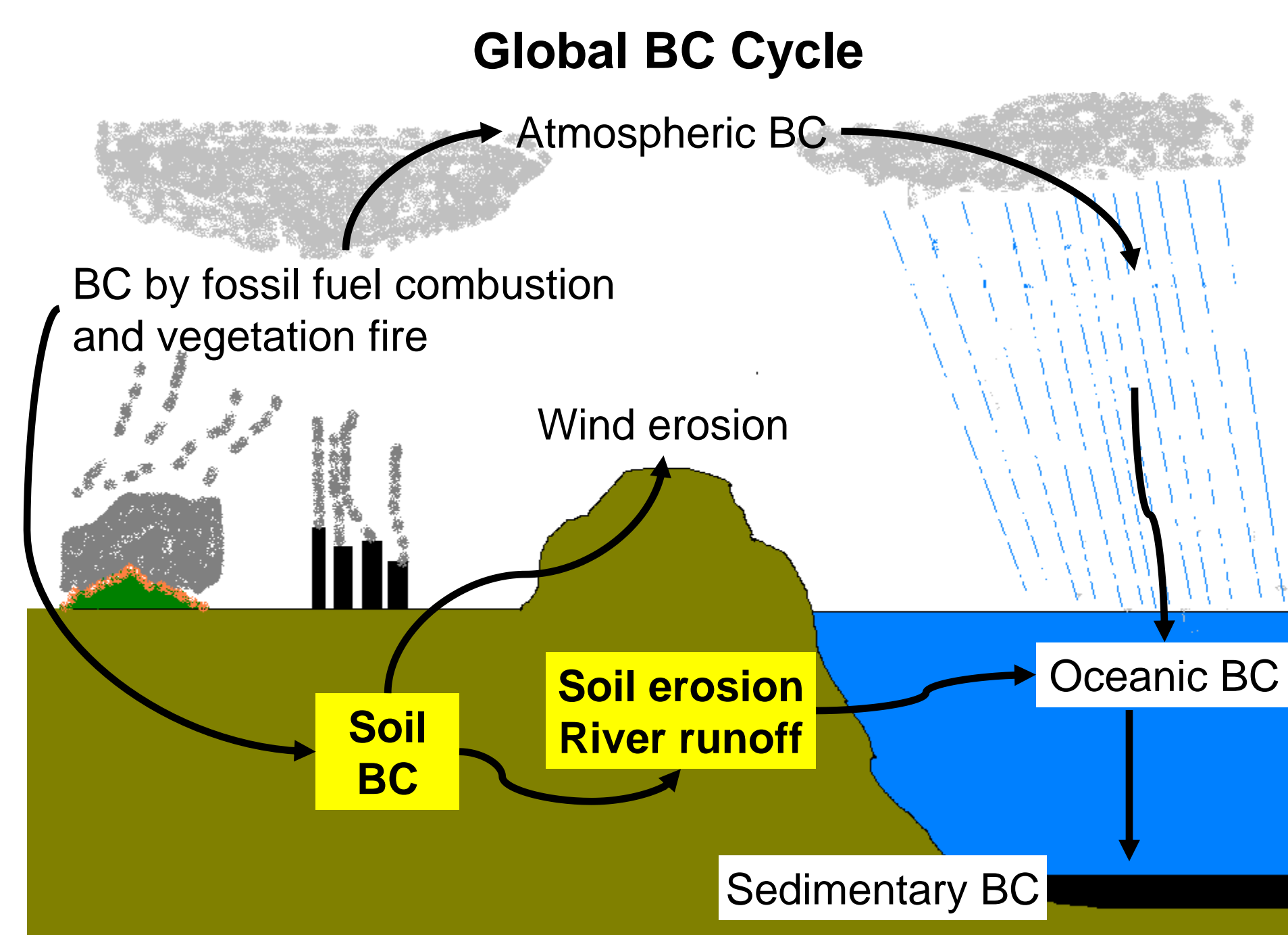
- 27 Survey200 samples
- TOP sample: top 15cm
- Surface soil is top 5 cm.



Conclusions: Surface vs. Deep soils.

- Black carbon concentrations are higher on average in surface soil than in deep core soil.
- Differences in average BC concentrations are only seen in desert sites. This is because desert soils are less well mixed than urban or agricultural sites.
- Physical and chemical processes that occur at atmosphere/lithosphere interface (weathering, photo-oxidation, microbial degradation) can play a role in BC reactivity.

Background information



Sources (Biomass burning and Fossil Fuel) 62 to 284 Tg yr⁻¹

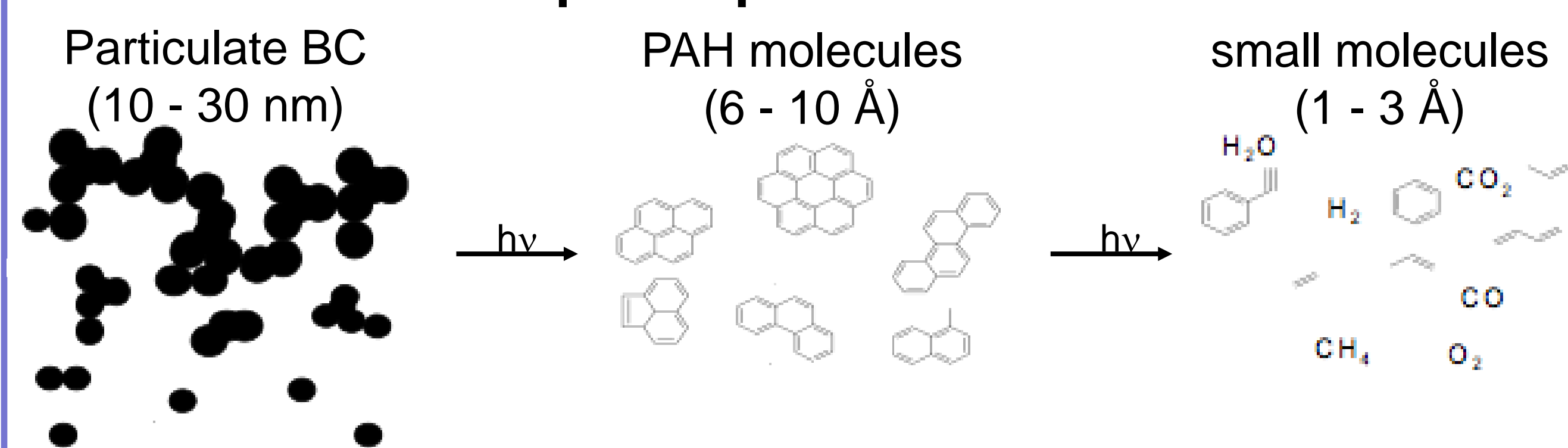
Sinks (Sedimentary BC) 10 Tg yr⁻¹

Imbalance: 52 to 274 Tg yr⁻¹

Inputs do not equal outputs!

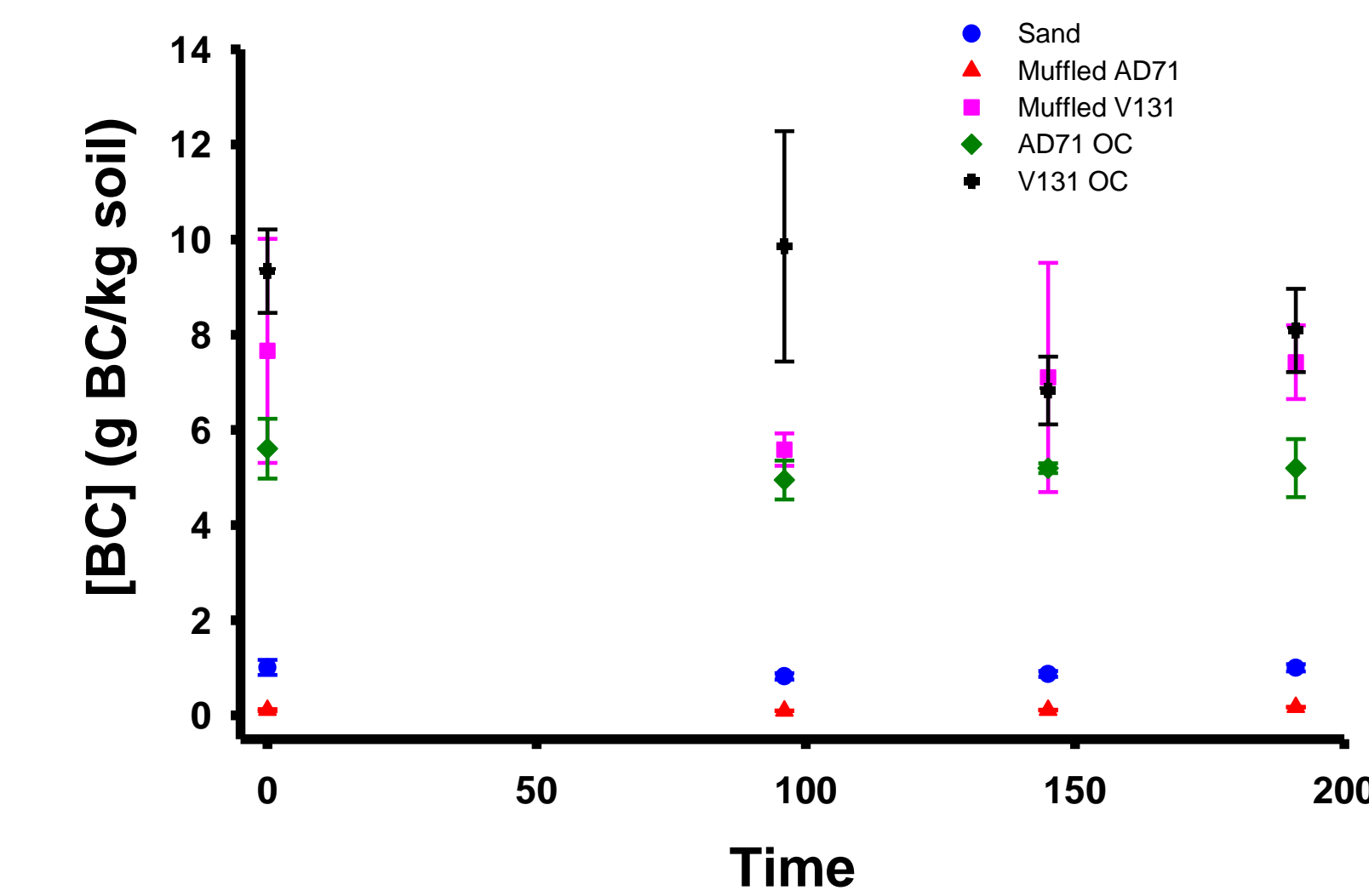
Where do the 52 to 274 Tg of BC go? One possibility is that it is photo-oxidized in soil.

Proposed photo-oxidation of BC



Modified from www.chech.kt.dtu.dk/upload/institutter/kt/chech/.../soot_formation.pdf

Photo-oxidation of organic and black carbon

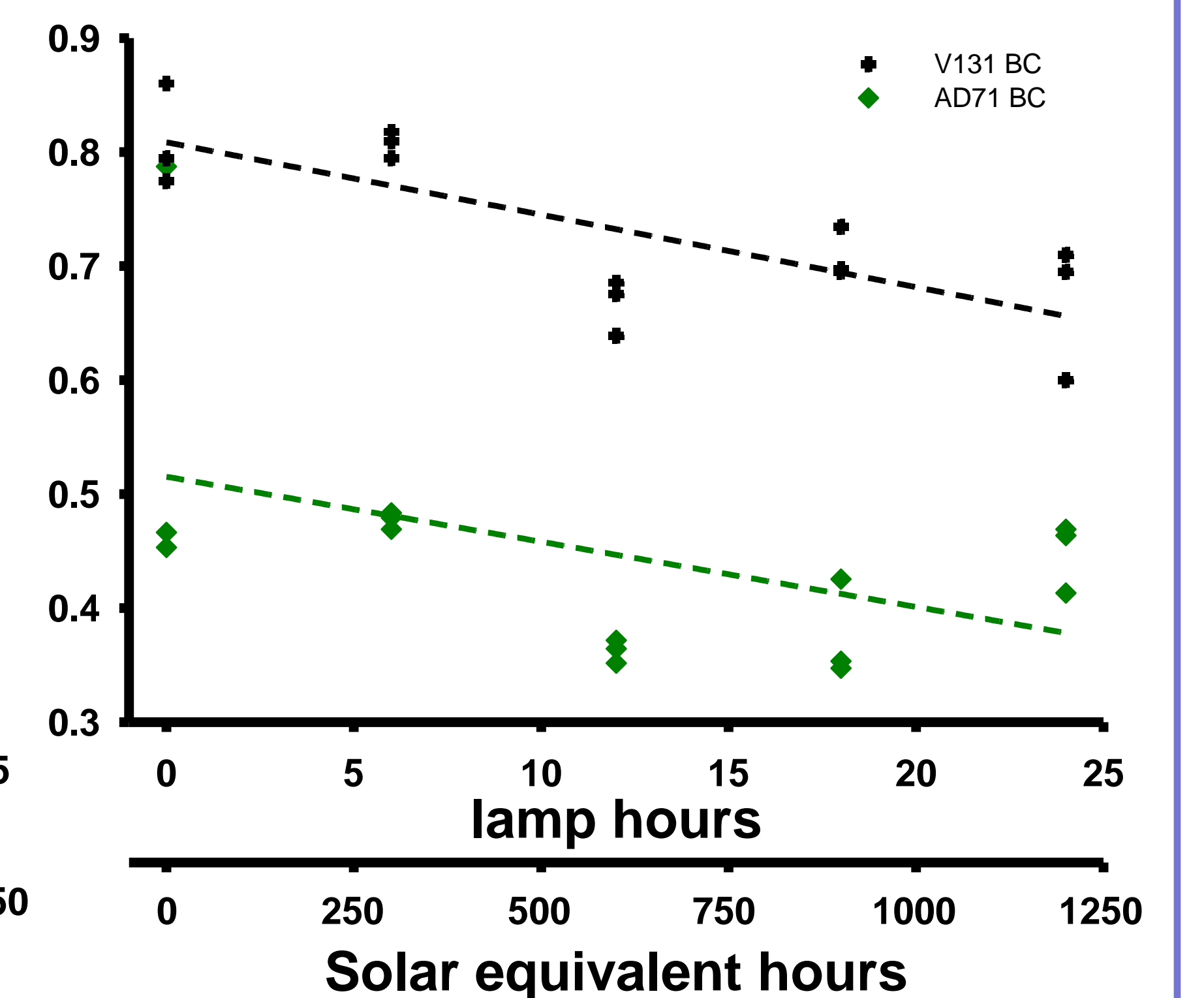
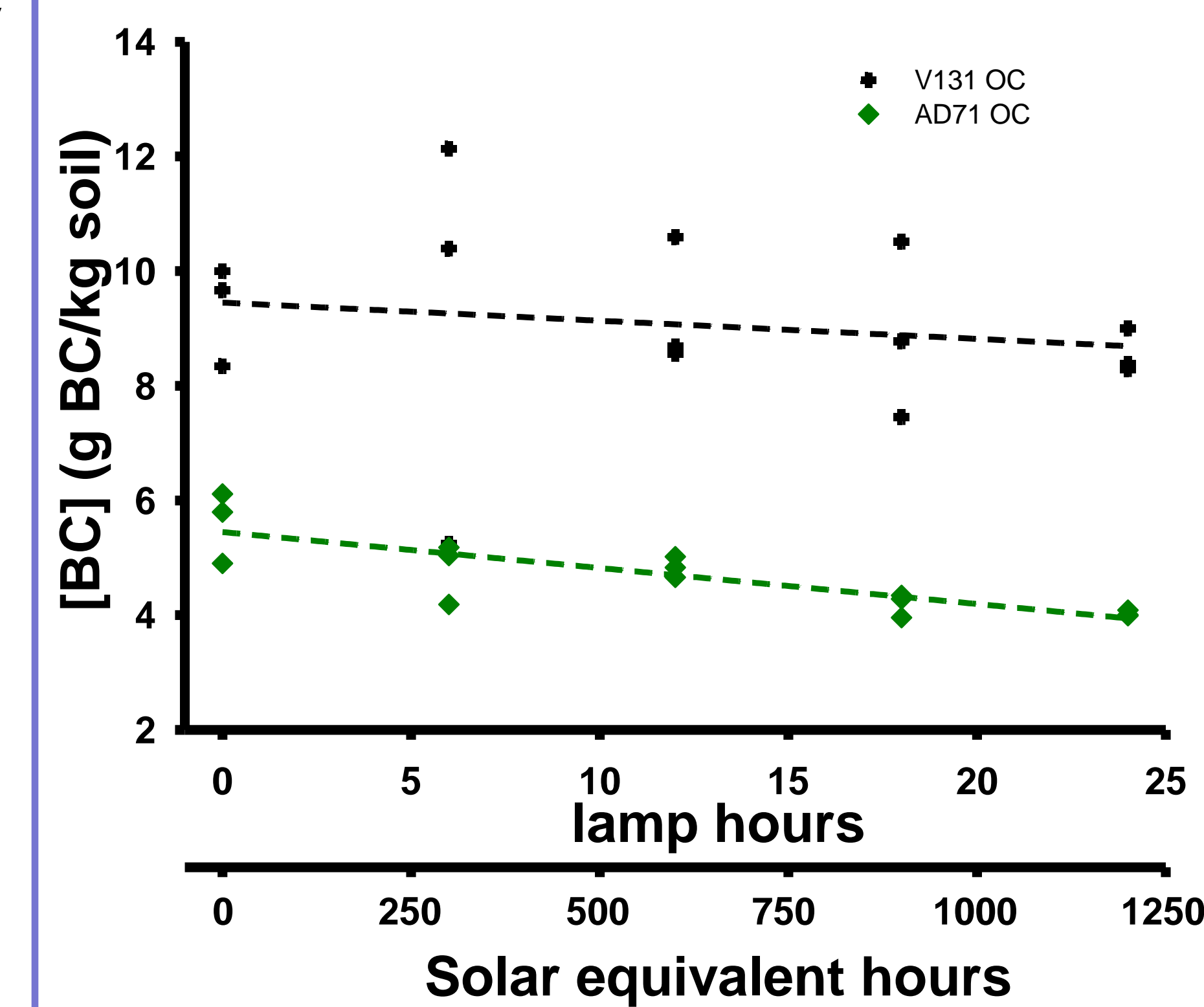


Solar simulator Experiment

- AD71 – Desert; V131 – Urban
- 200hrs
- Blank measurements are as expected.
- No statistical change in OC conc.

Hg Lamp oxidation Experiment

- 24 lamp hours
- Irradiance energy for Hg lamp is ~50 times stronger than solar simulator
- Decrease in both OC and BC seen over monthly time scales



Degradation rate constant (g C/kg soil · h, k)

	%Δ	(g C/kg soil · h, k)
OC AD71	29	6.3×10^{-2}
V131	6	3.2×10^{-2}
BC AD71	13	5.7×10^{-3}
V131	25	6.4×10^{-3}

Conclusions: Photo-oxidation.

- Black and organic carbon can be removed via photo-oxidation over monthly timescales.
- Black carbon is degraded at a slower rate than organic carbon.
- Future work will include organic and black carbon microbial degradation experiments

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