VIPIR Ionosonde

Field Site Requirements

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March 2013

Vertical Incidence Pulsed Ionospheric Radar

Very high interference immunity: IP3 > 45 dBm

High Dynamic Range: 115(I) +30(V) dB

Direct RF sampling 14 bits at 80 MHz

Fully digital conversion, receiver and exciter

Waveform Agility: 2 µs to 2 ms pulse/chip width

USB-2 Data and Command/Control Interfaces

8 coherent receive channels; Frequency: 0.3 – 26 MHz

4 kW class AB pulse amplifier: 3rd harmonic < -30 dBc

Precise GPS timing possible for bi-static operation

Radar software Open Source C code; runs under Linux

16 bit FPGA version is under development: January 2013

Wallops Island VIPIR hardware

Power Conditioner

4kW RF Amplifier

KVM

Exciter

Reference

Receiver

Front End

Balun

Control Computer

Analysis Computer

UPS

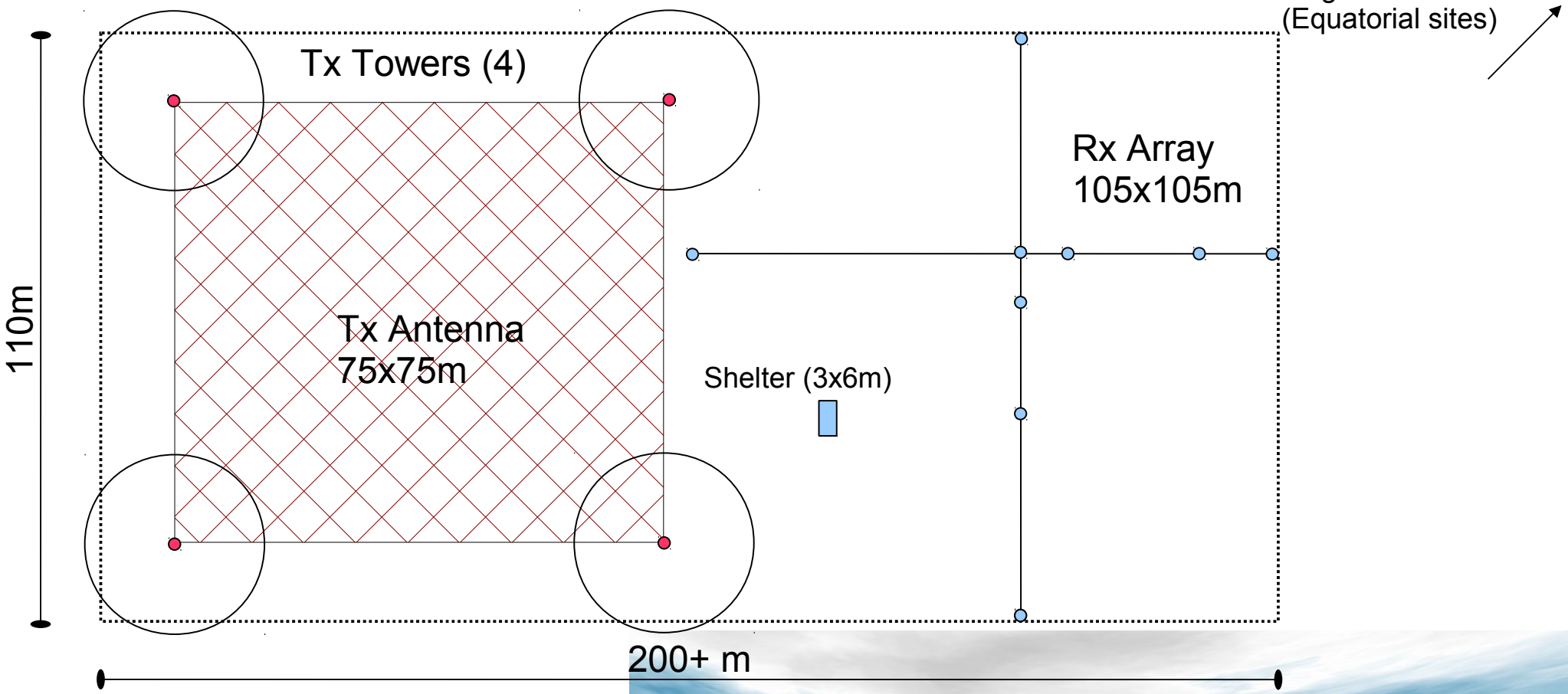
Standard 19” rack, 46” tall

Installation “classes”

- Research
  - Major research facility for plasma physics, propagation research and ionosphere discovery. Performance is primary, cost and footprint are secondary concerns.
- Average
  - Ionosphere monitoring and geophysical research. A compromise between of cost and capability.
- Small
  - Ionospheric monitoring. Cost and footprint are primary concerns and limitations.
- Transportable
  - Ionospheric measurements from various locations. Mobility is the primary concern.

There is approximately a factor of 10 in performance between these classes

World Class VIPIR Field Site



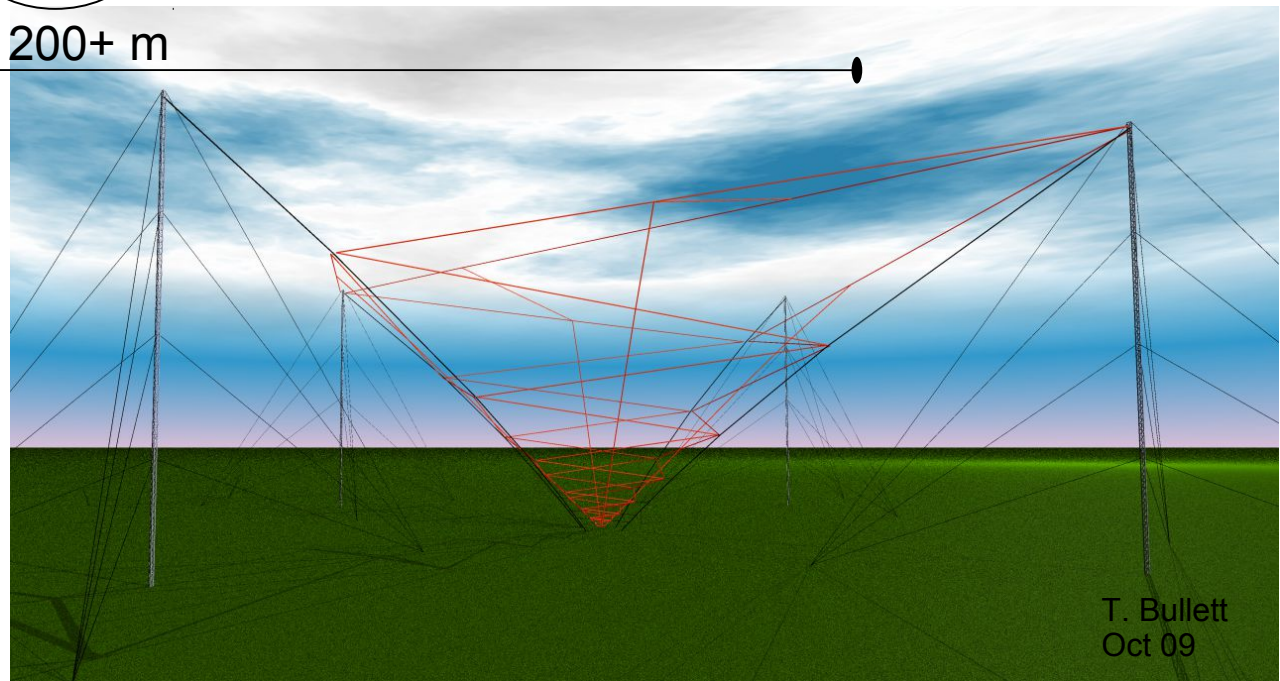
8 channel HF radar

8 or 10 element Rx array

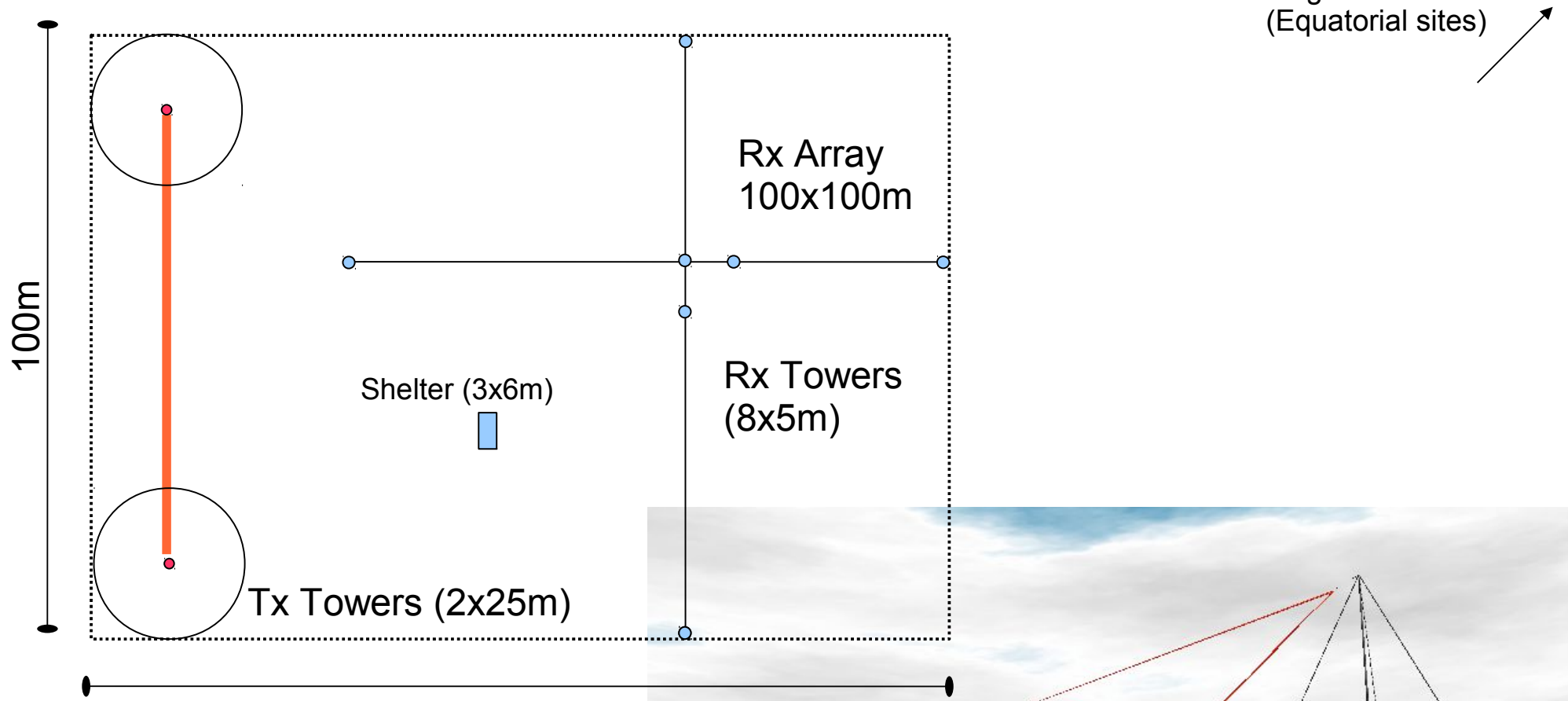
Log-periodic Tx antenna

35m steel towers (4)

5 to 10 acre footprint



Intermediate VIPIR Field Site



8 channel HF radar

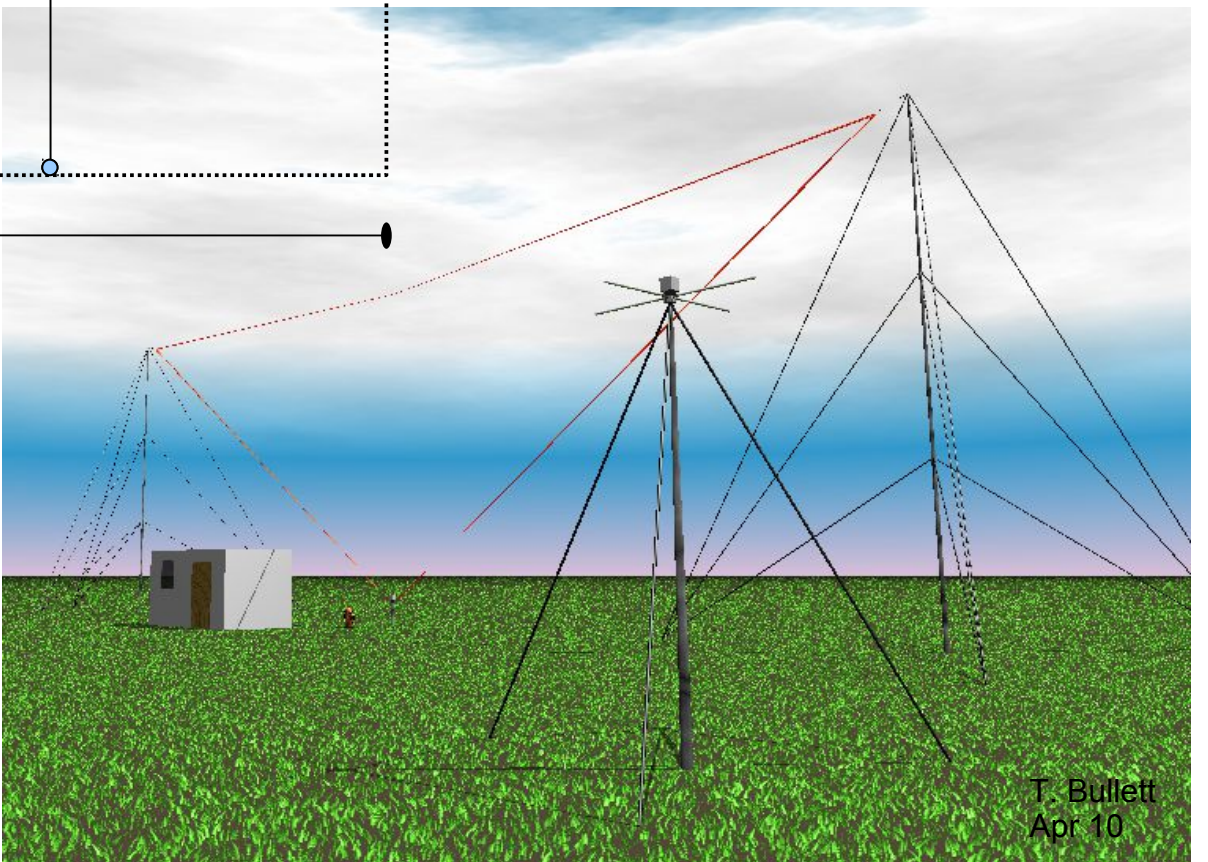
8 element Rx array

Inverted Delta Tx antenna

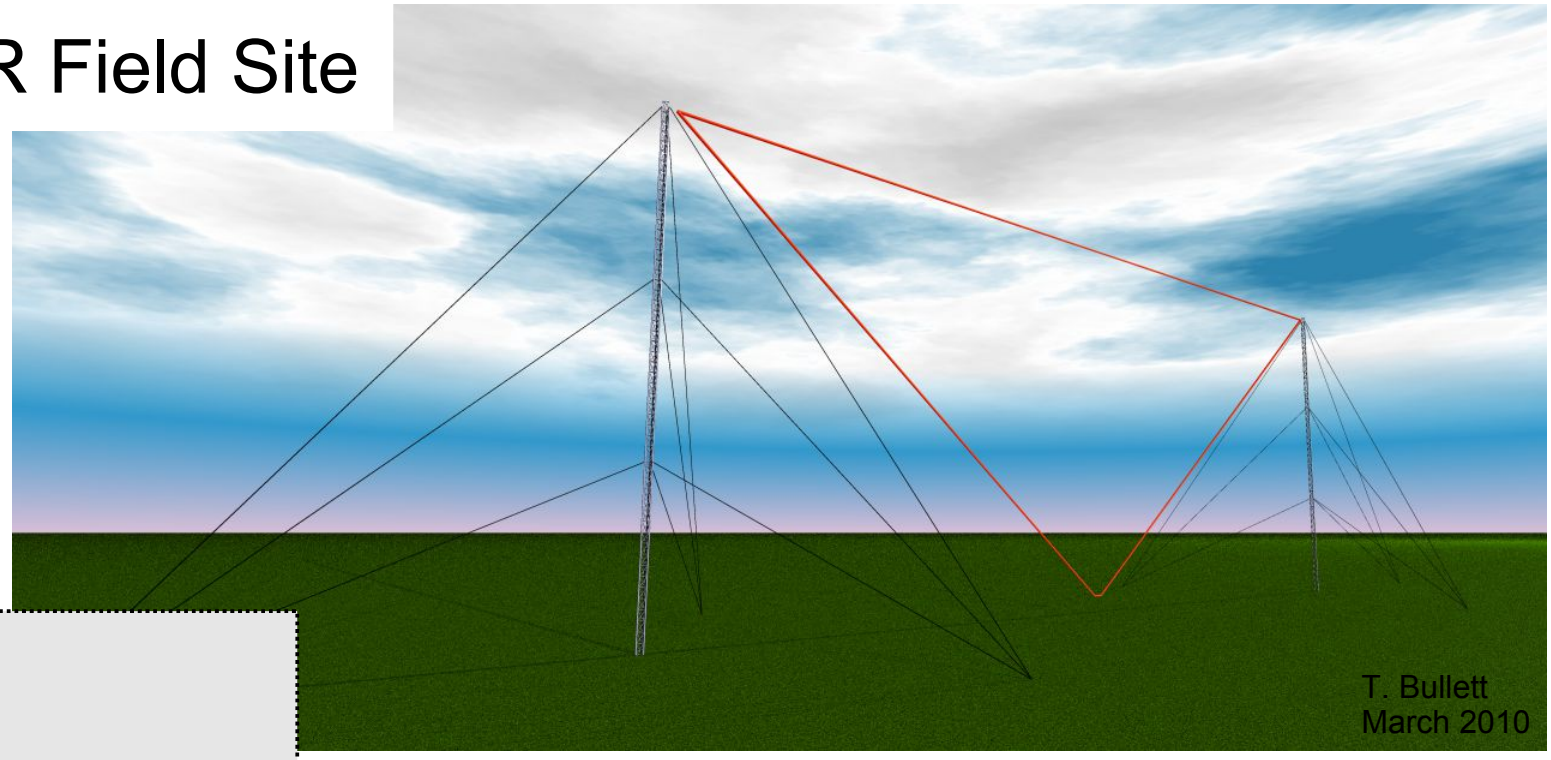
25m Tx Towers (2)

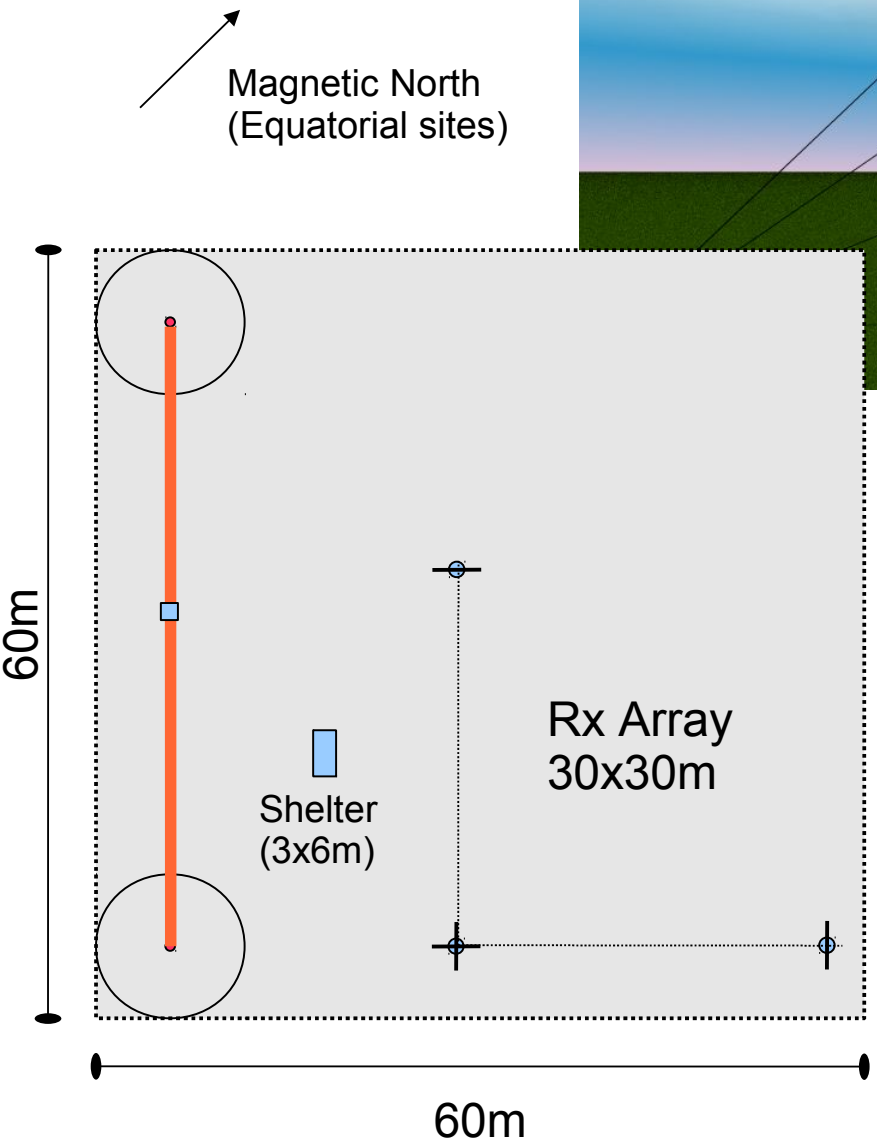
5m Rx towers (8)

3.5 acre footprint



Reduced VIPIR Field Site





4 channel HF radar

4 element Rx array

Inverted Delta Tx antenna

15m Tx poles (2)

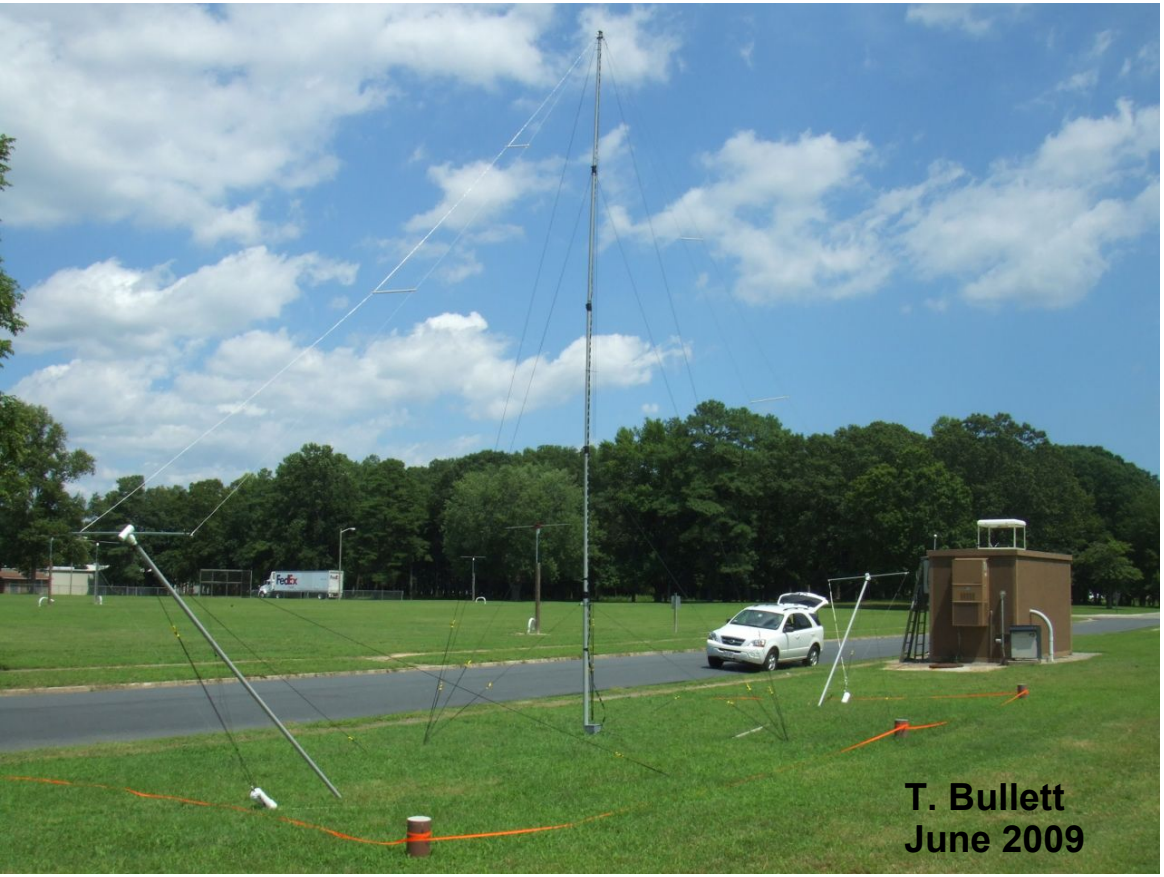
5m Rx poles (4)

< 1 acre footprint

Virtual walk-through:
http://www.ionosonde.com/images/Ionosonde_Tour.avi

Transportable VIPIR

Photographs of VIPIR prototype antennas designed for use on a 40 ft fishing boat.



Portability is key

Antennas engineered for temporary install & transport

4 or 8 channel HF radar

2-8 element Rx array

Mini-Delta Tx antenna or custom

Facilities

- Climate Controlled Shelter
  - 3mx3m minimum
  - Larger space enhances research
- 25,000 BTU Air Conditioner (Large window model)
- 220v x 15A or 110Vx30A power
- Internet connection
  - 128kbps minimum ; 1Mbps recommended
- Absence of:
  - High Voltage Power Lines
  - Industrial electrical noise
  - Other HF users (receive and transmit)
  - MF transmitters (AM Broadcast or NDB)

Local Construction

Shelter

Receive anchors

Receive poles

Transmit anchors

Transmit towers

RF Cable conduit

Cable Vault

Local Parts (Optional)

19” equipment rack

Rack Slides

Power Conditioner

UPS

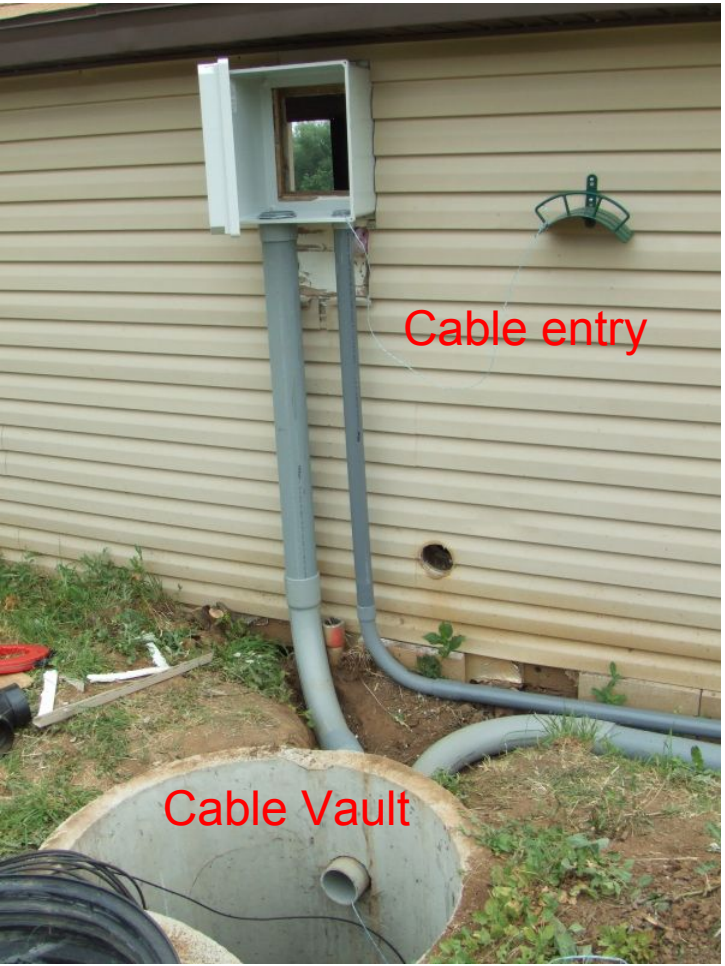
Keyboard

Mouse

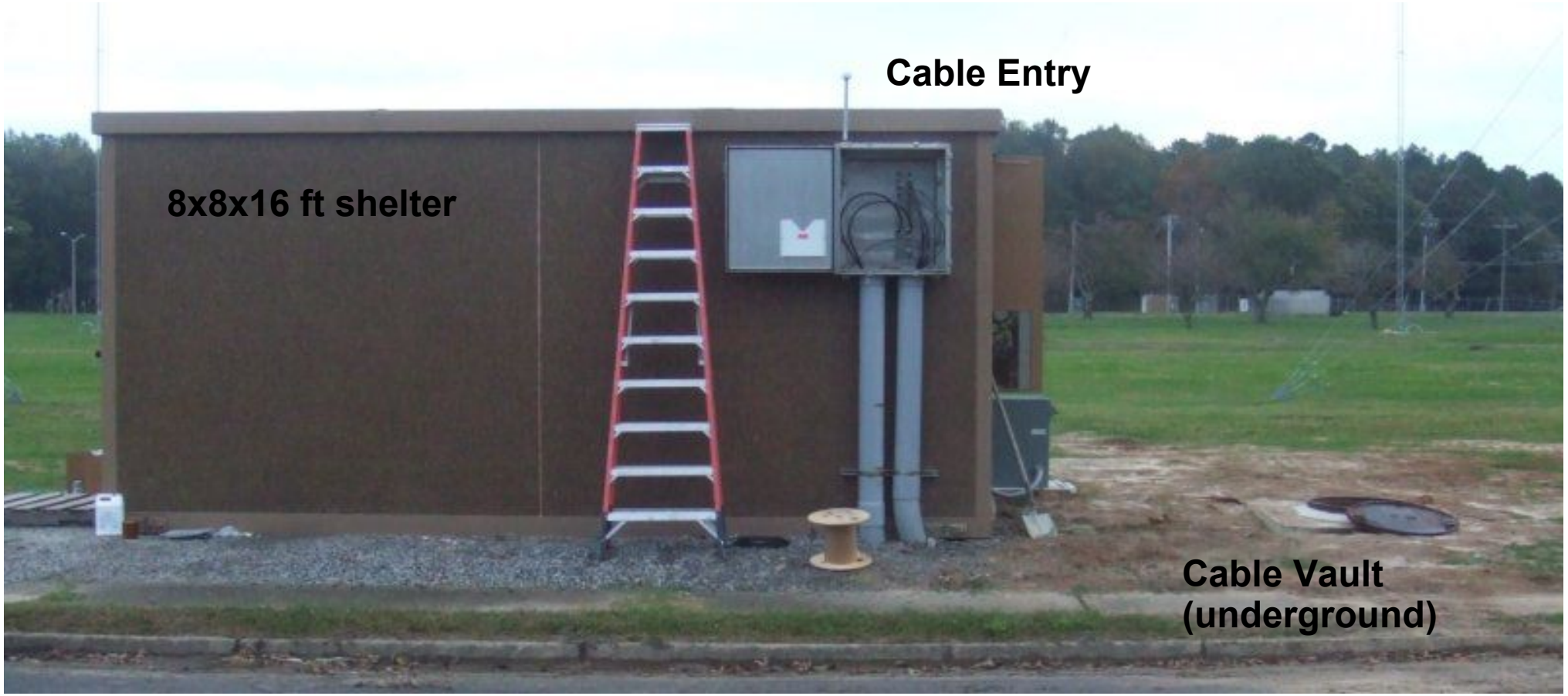
Monitor

KVM switch

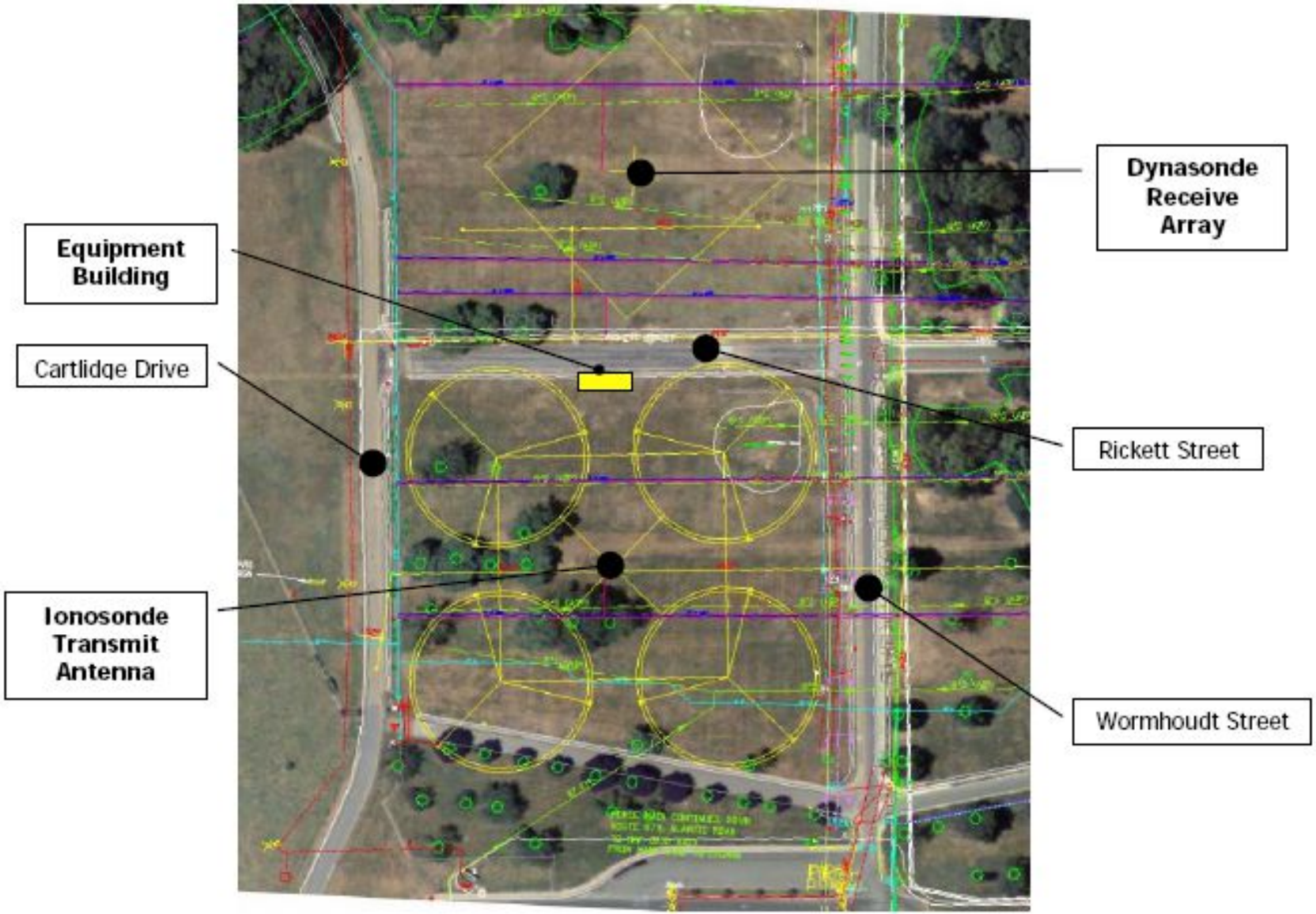
Boulder Site Photos



Wallops Shelter



Wallops VIPIR Field Site



Long Term "World Class Observatory" being provided by NASA for continued research and routine observations

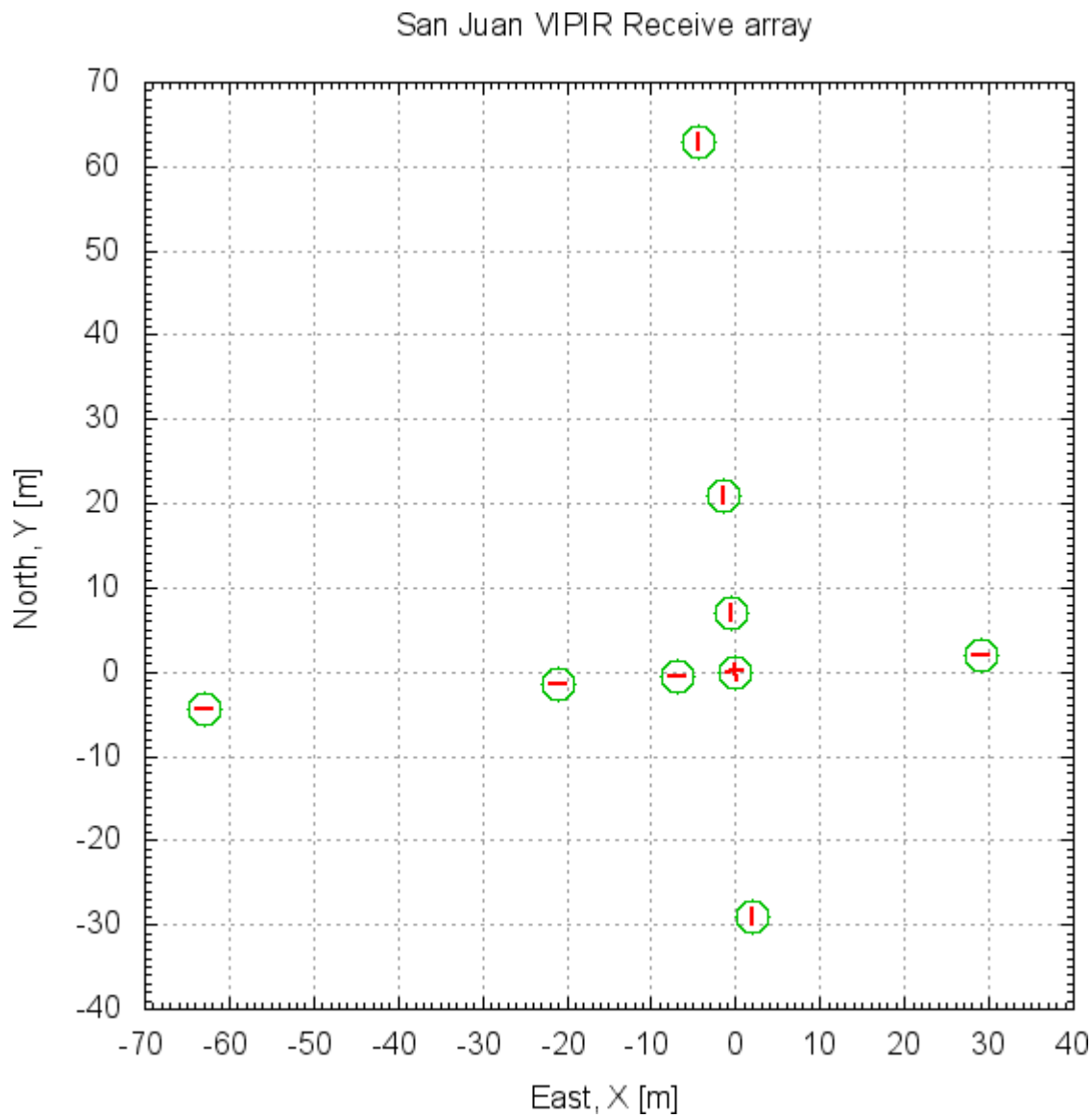
Wallops Island: September 2006

Inverted Delta Transmit Antenna

San Juan Observatory
“Small” : 15m tall x 45m long

Receive Antennas

2m crossed dipoles



Antennas at locations -9 -3 -1 0 +4
Gives separations of 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 13
Units of 7m

Transmitter Technical Data

Frequency Range: 0.5 to 26 MHz

4 kW peak power, 2% duty cycle max. 80W average.

Logarithmically spaced frequencies (typical 0.5% spacing)

4 to 16 pulses per frequency, 100 Hz rate

70 microsecond (15 kHz bandwidth) pulses

Raised cosine pulse: Low out-of-band emission

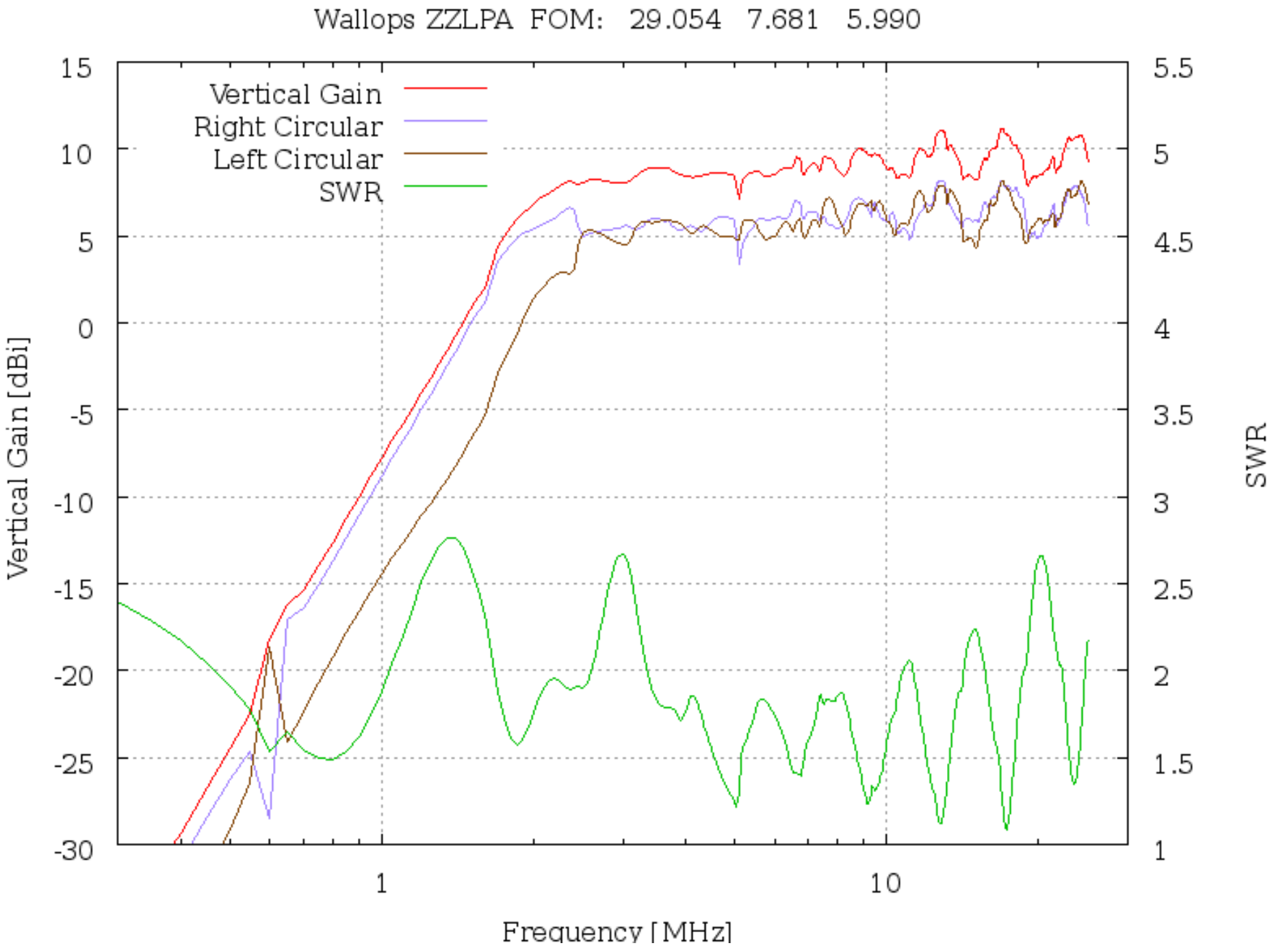
Very low harmonics

Typical 0.1 second channel use per frequency

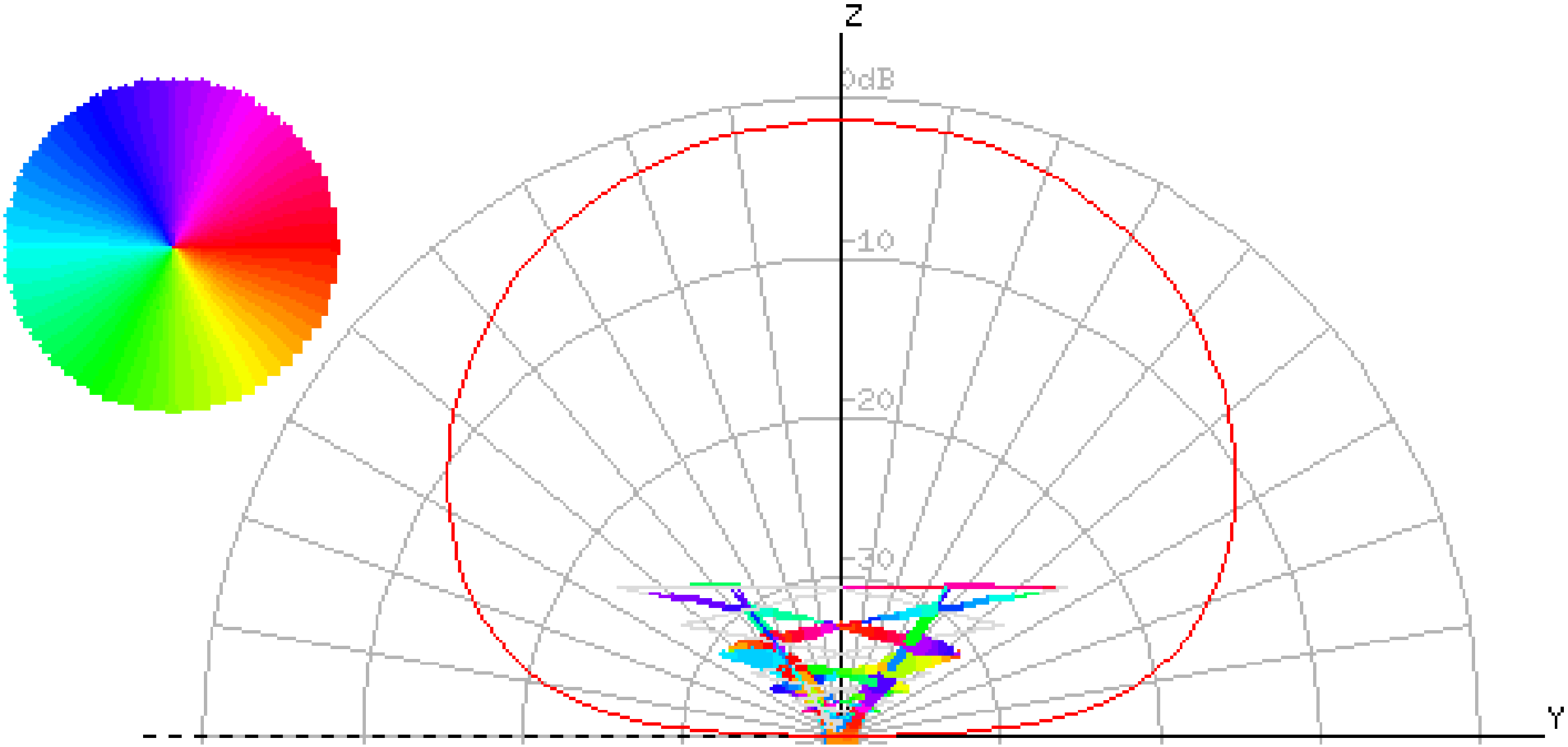
1 to 5 minute repeat rate

Total channel use: 0.1%: Low probability of RFI

Transmit Antenna Performance

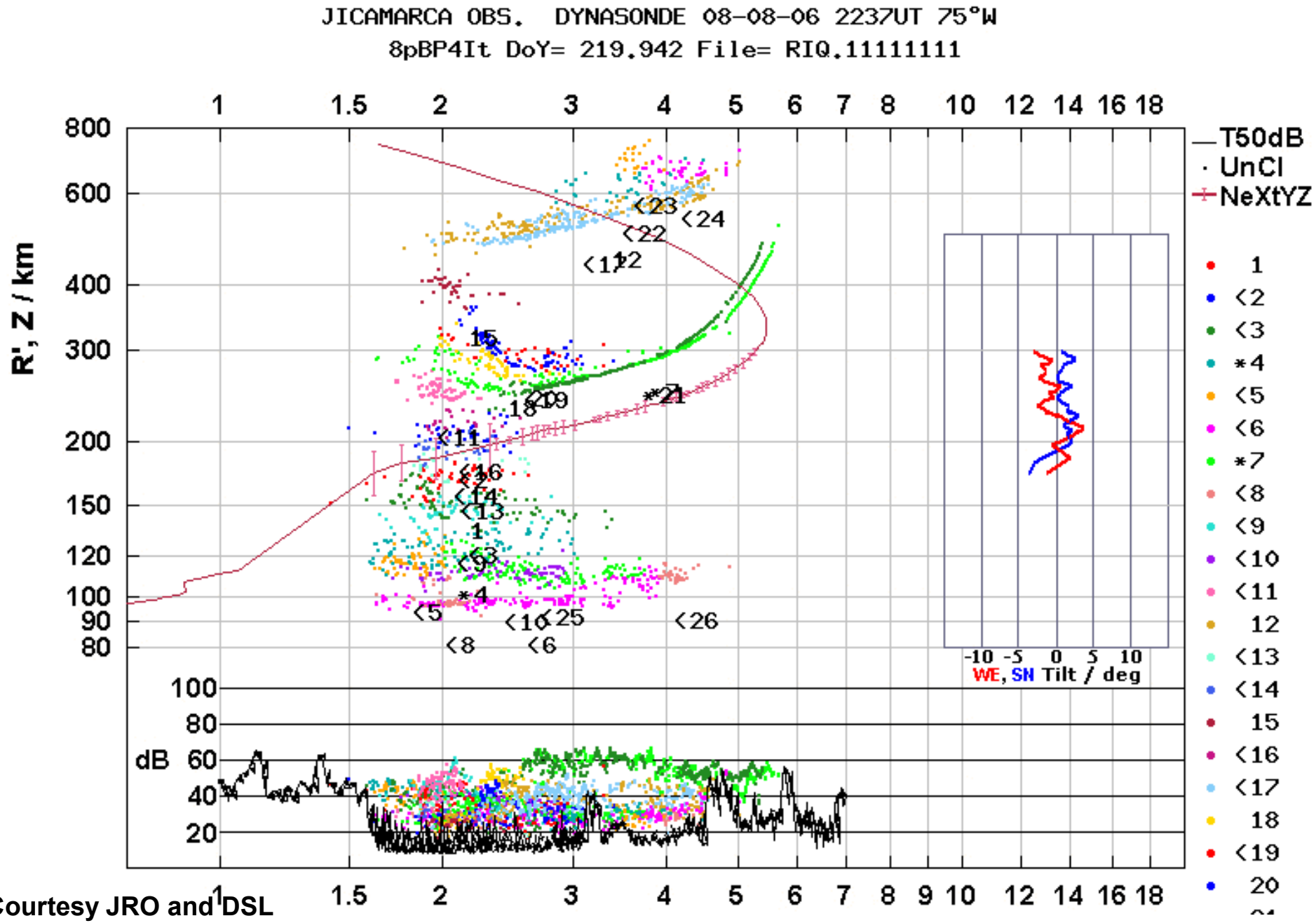


Typical ZZLPA Pattern



Ionogram Analysis: Dynasonde21

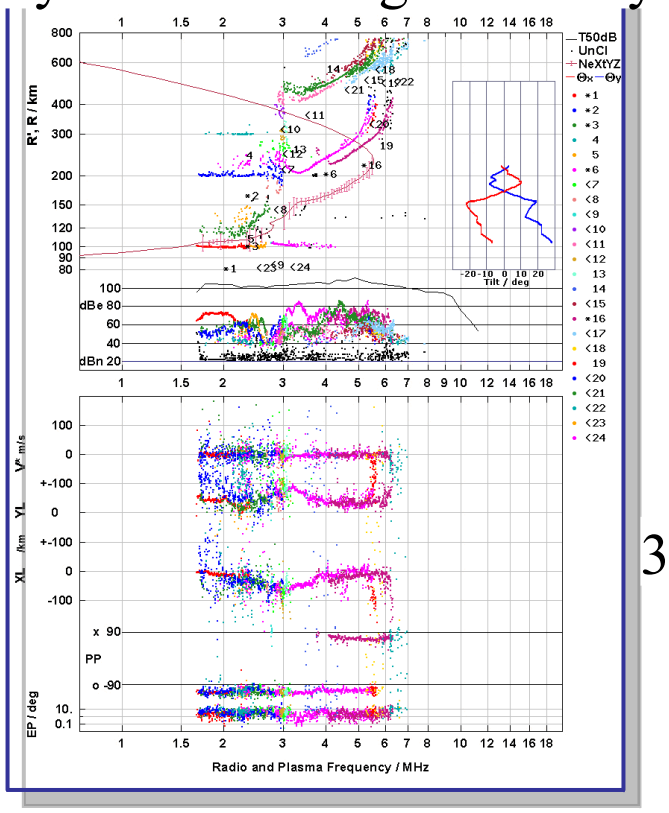
Jicamarca, Peru : VIPIR ionogram : Dynasonde21 Analysis



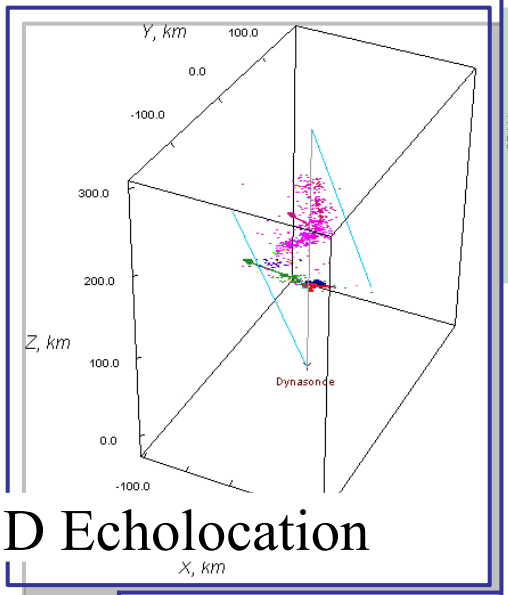
Courtesy JRO and DSL

Dynasonde21

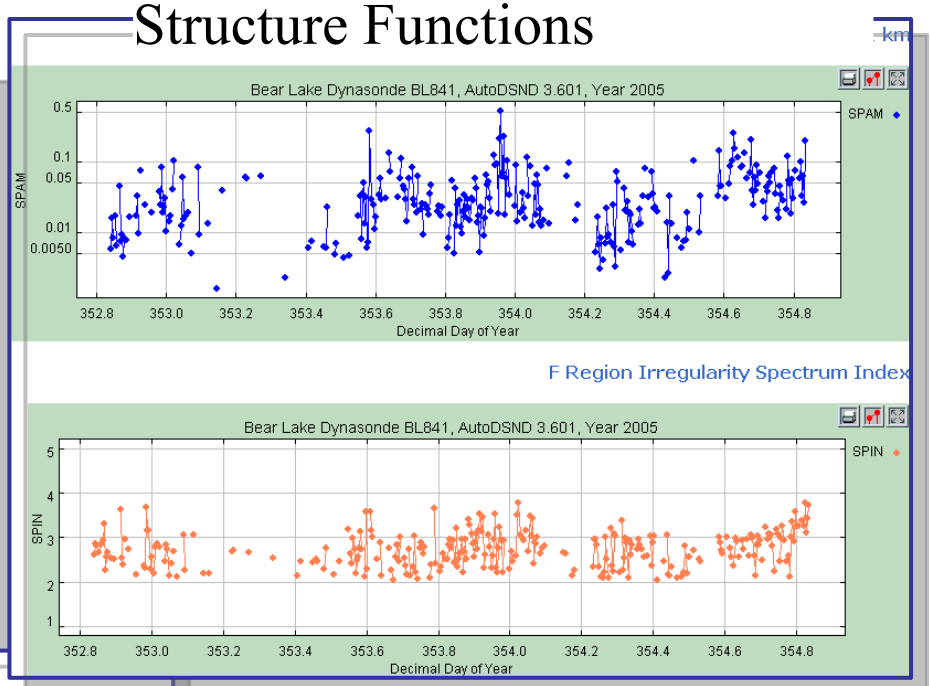
Dynasonde Ionogram Analysis



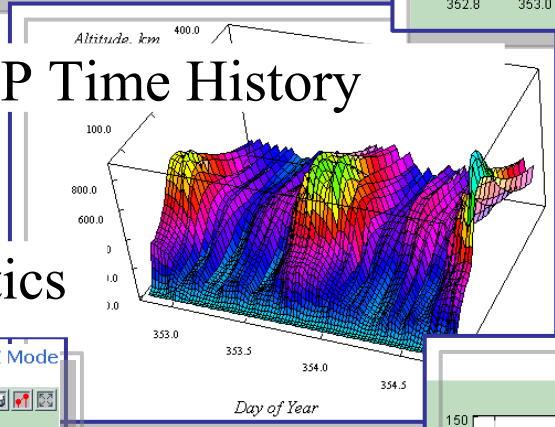
3D Echolocation



Structure Functions

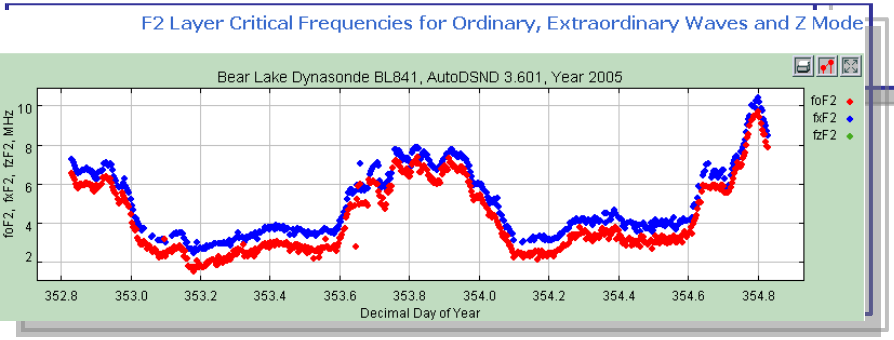


EDP Time History

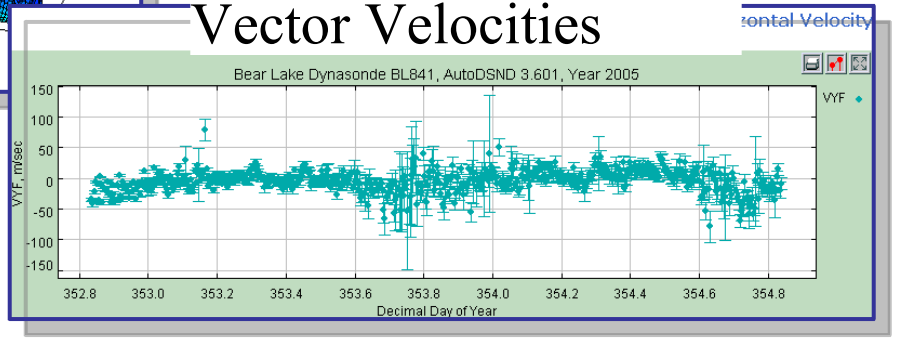


Dynasonde21 ©

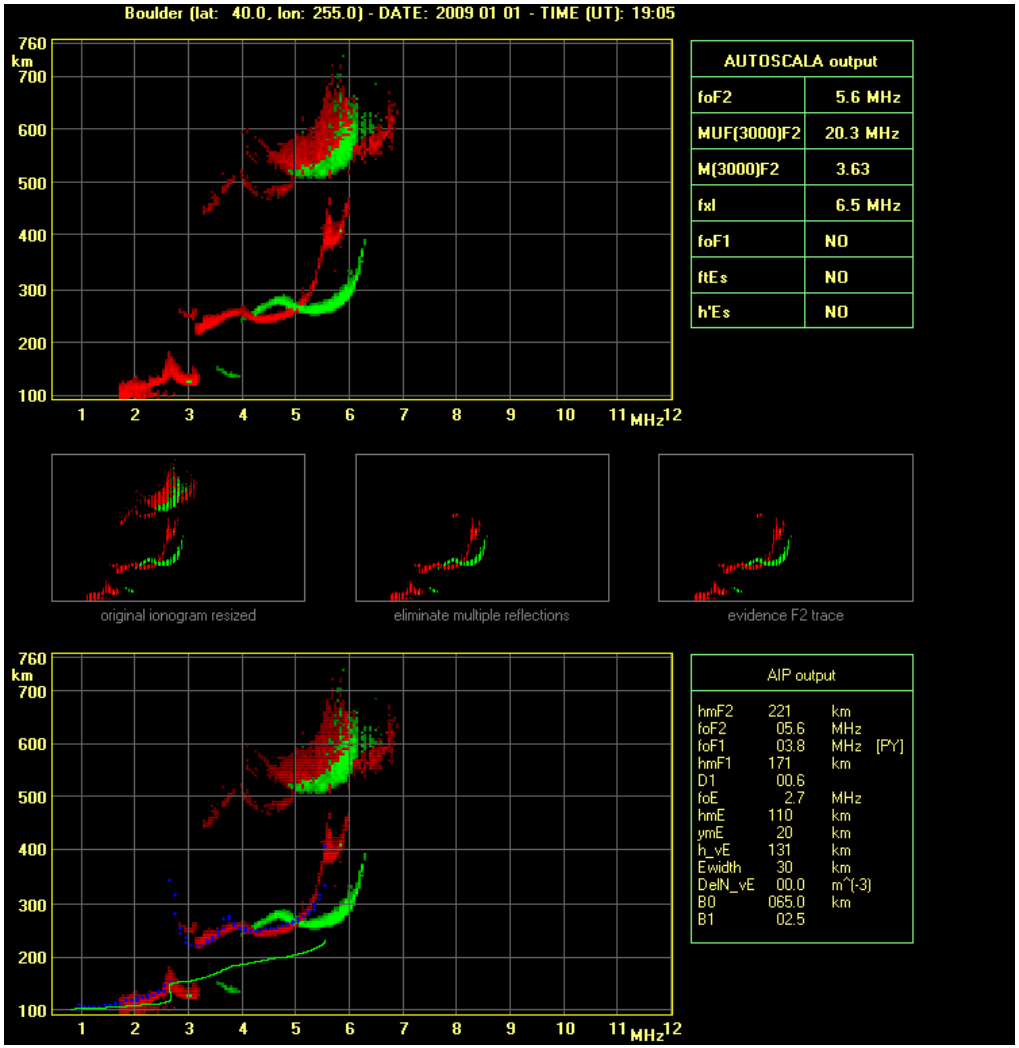
Classical URSI scaled characteristics



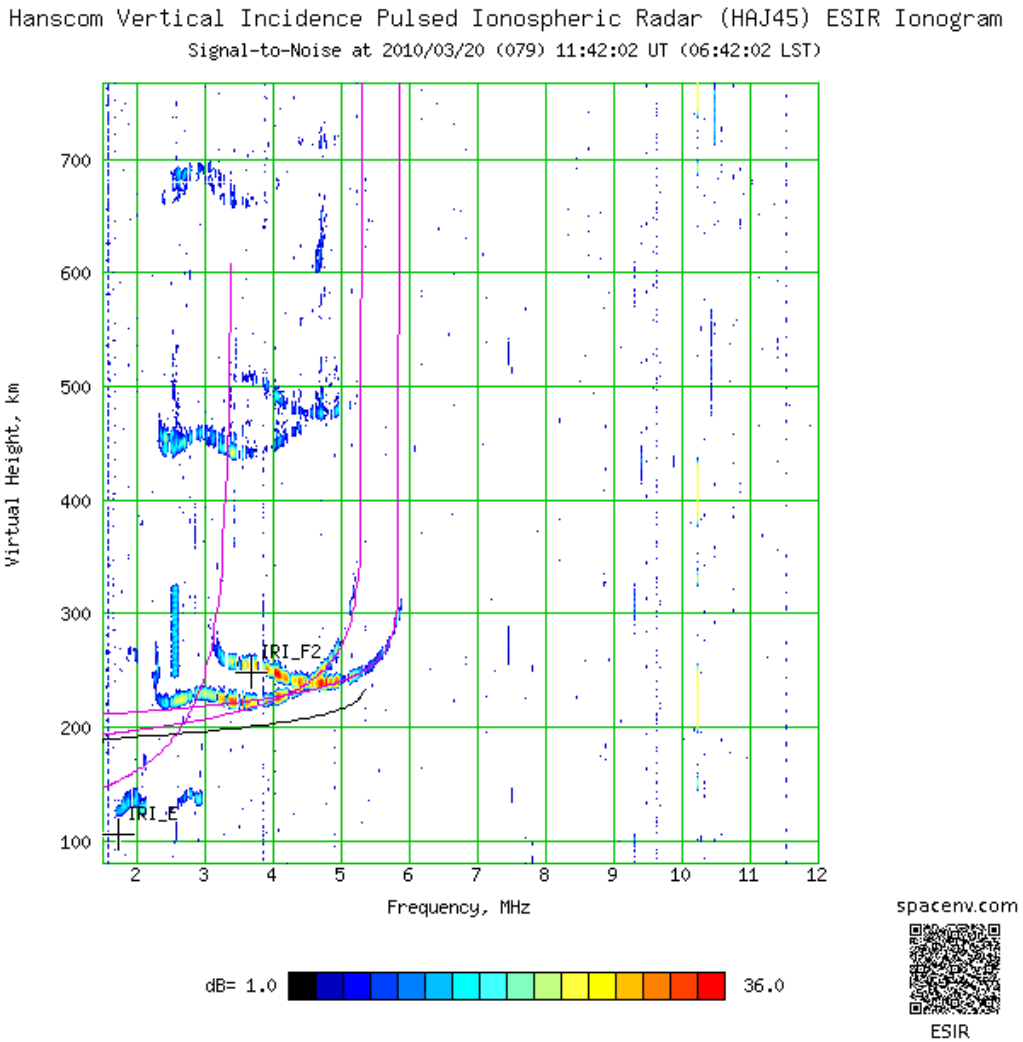
Vector Velocities



Automatic Scaling Options



Autoscala from INGV



ESIR from SEC

Contact these vendors for terms and conditions of use for this software

Frequency Allocation

- Ionosonde is an active transmitting system
  - RF License needed
- Ionosonde frequency use is non-standard
  - Regulatory agencies used to HF comms allocations
  - Exclusive use of narrow band channels
- Antenna radiation pattern is Vertical Incidence
  - Little RFI beyond a few km
- Some 200 ionosondes have operated since 1930
  - Precedents exist

A bad frequency allocation can cripple the instrument

Frequency Allocation Issues

Ionosondes do not fit into standard frequency allocations

- 20 kHz bandwidth vs 5 kHz allocations

Exclusive Use vs Temporary Access

- Occupies any 5 kHz channel 1 second every minute

Complete MF-HF Spectrum coverage required

- At least 1-16 MHz

A few specific narrowband channels can be excluded

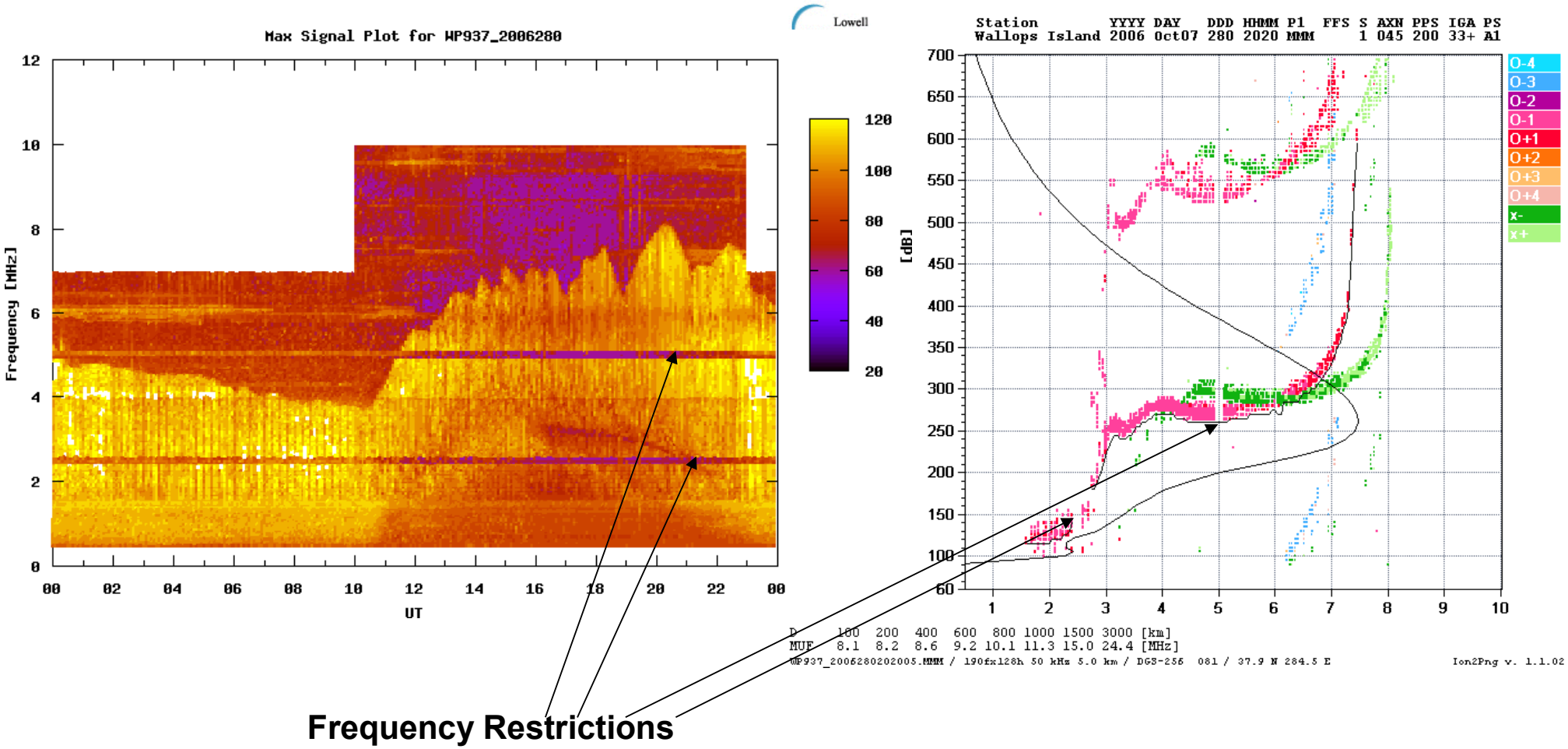
- Standard time frequencies (2.5, 5.0, 10.0, 15.0, 25.0 MHz)

Exclusion of whole bands is disastrous

- Aeronautical, Marine, Land Mobile, Fixed Terrestrial

Site-Specific allocations that address specific RFI issues are required!

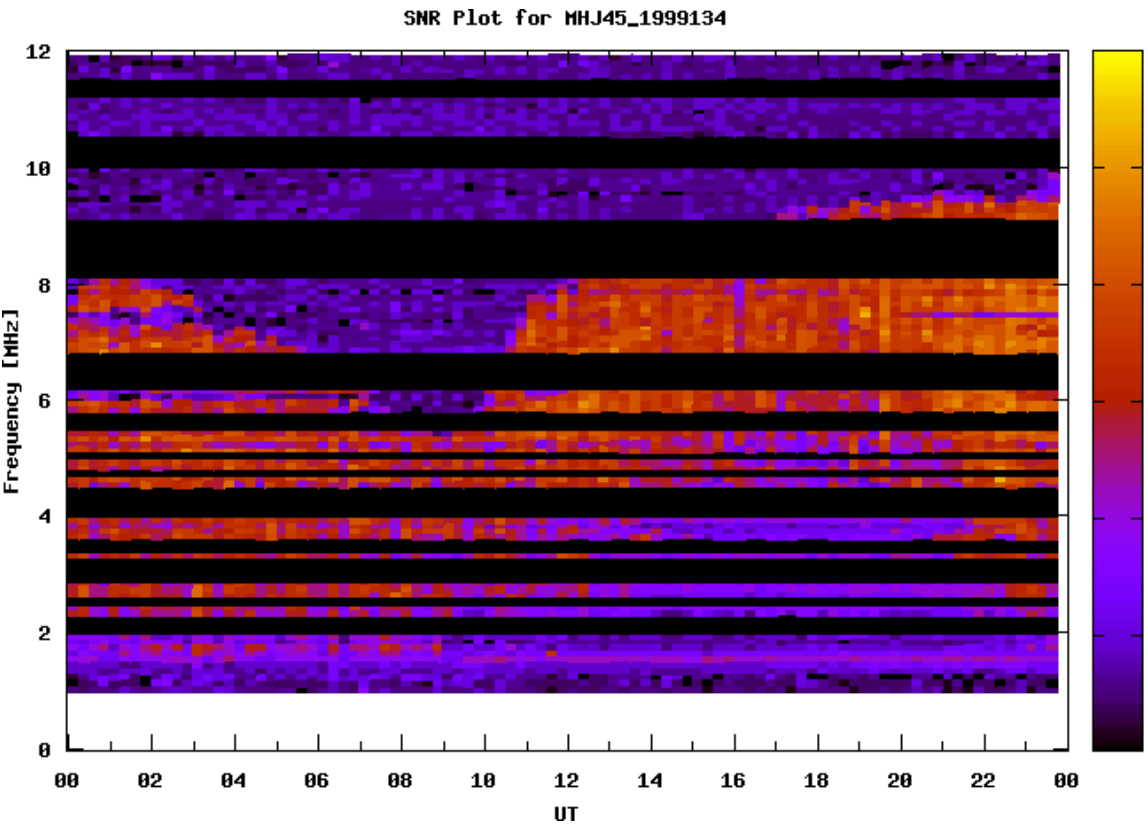
Success: Wallops Island

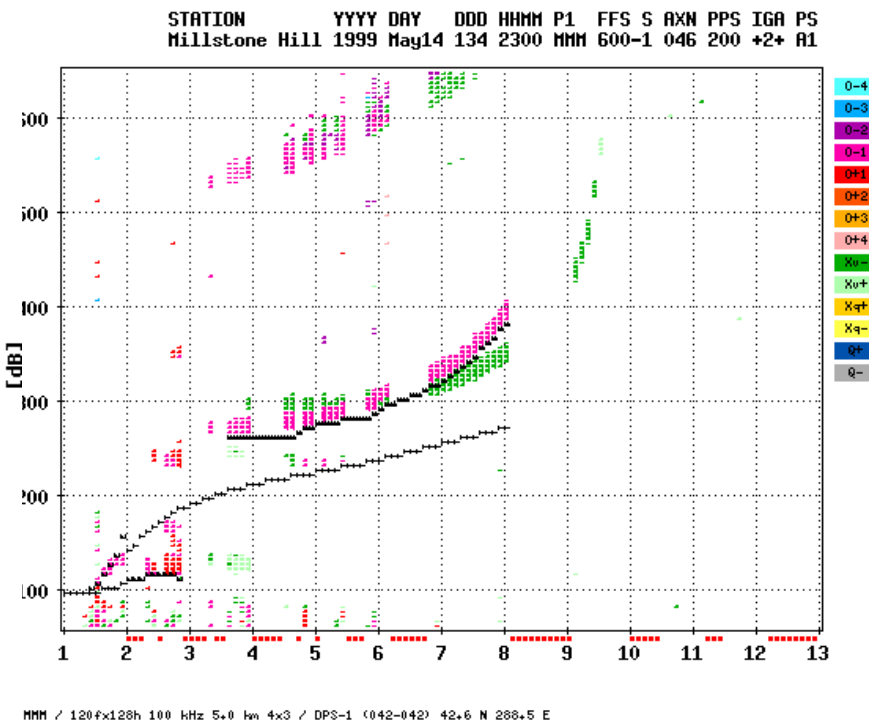


Frequency Restrictions

Minor restrictions mitigate RFI while maintaining data integrity

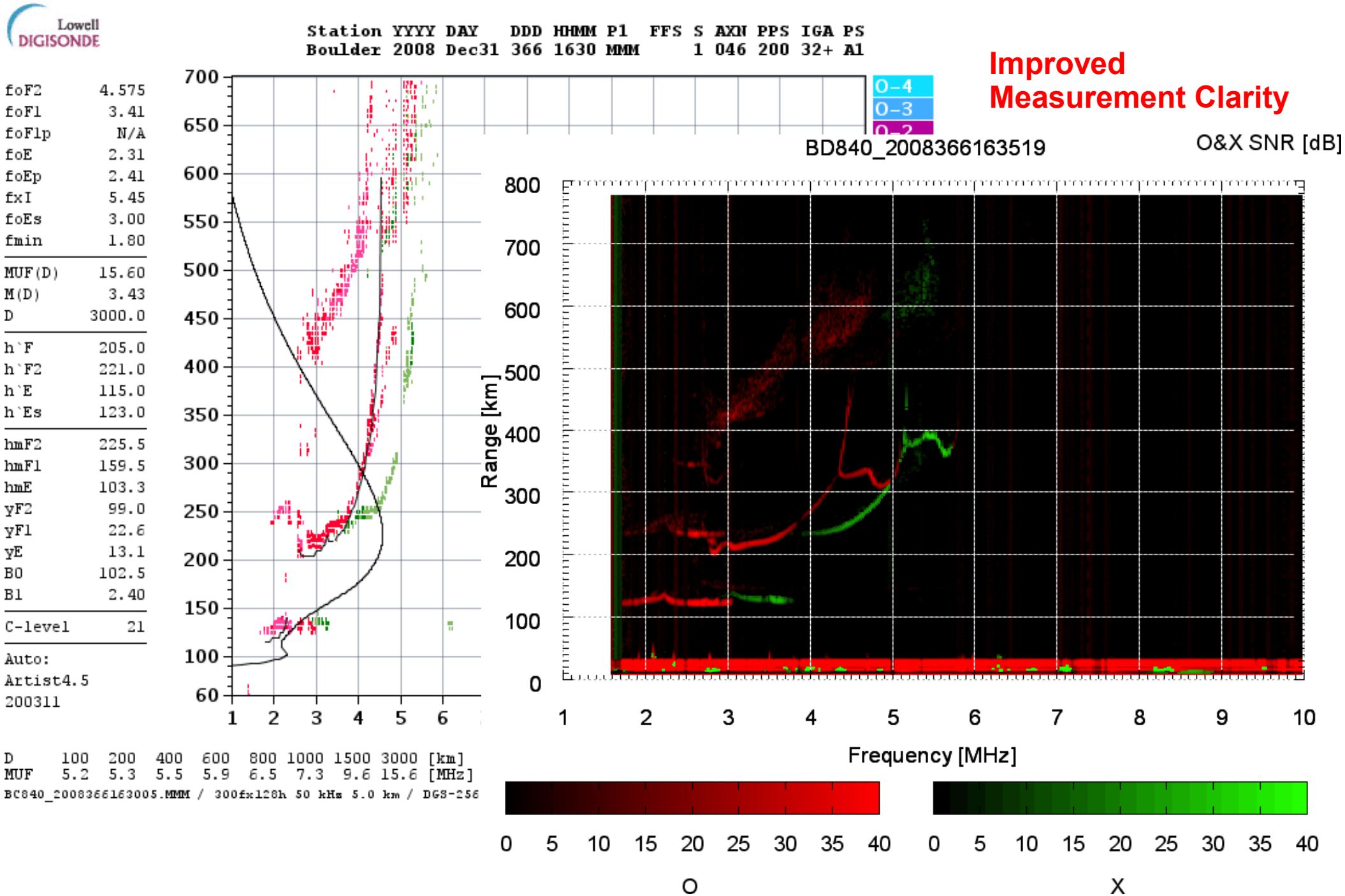
Failure: Millstone Hill





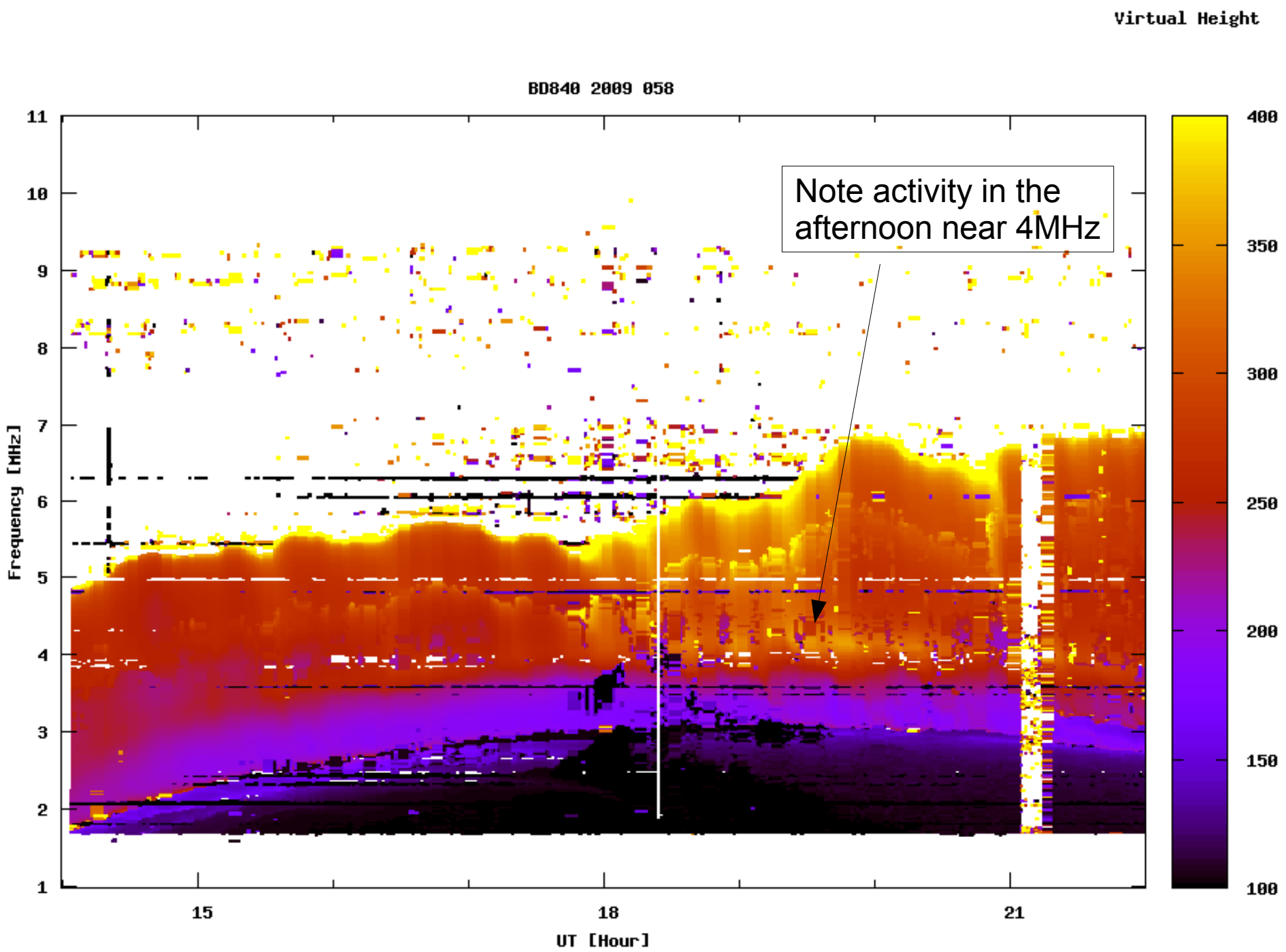
Major restrictions destroy the integrity of the data

Results: Boulder Digisonde vs VIPIR



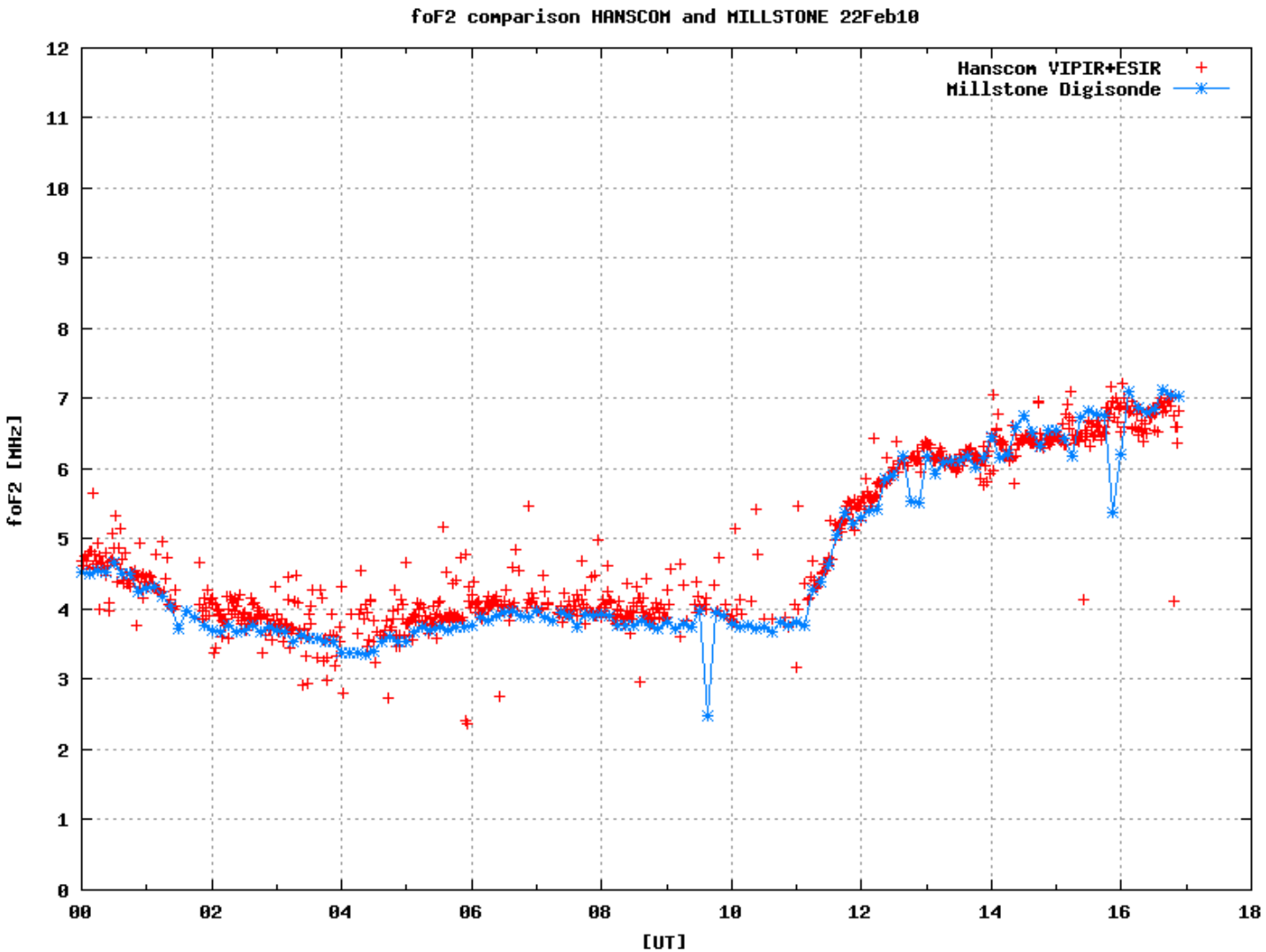
Improved Measurement Clarity

Boulder 1-minute Data



High Time Resolution Data

VIPIR can comfortably make 1 ionogram per min



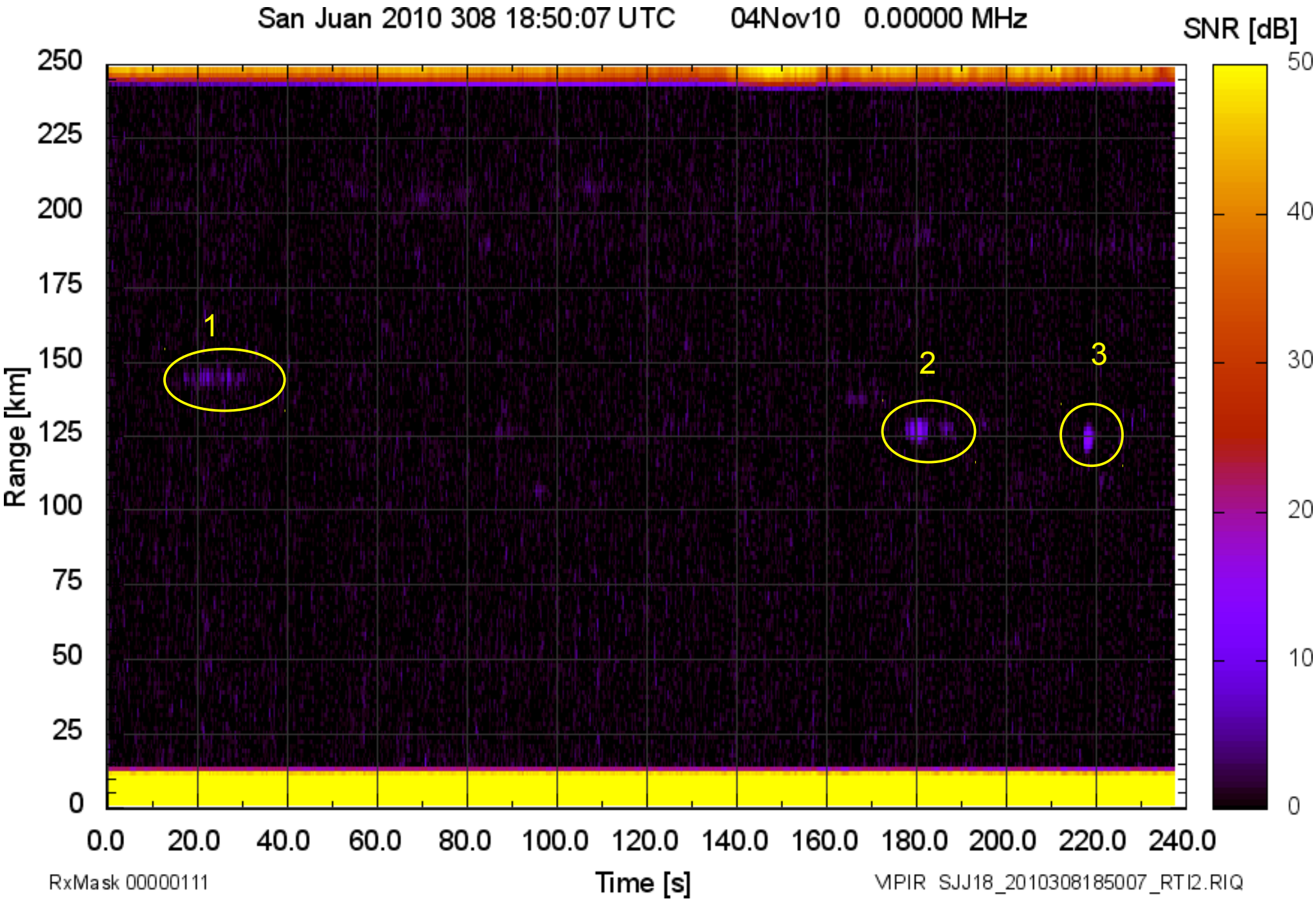
arly

Plot of foF2 for 17 hours from the Millstone Hill Digisonde (Blue) and Hanscom VIPIR (Red)

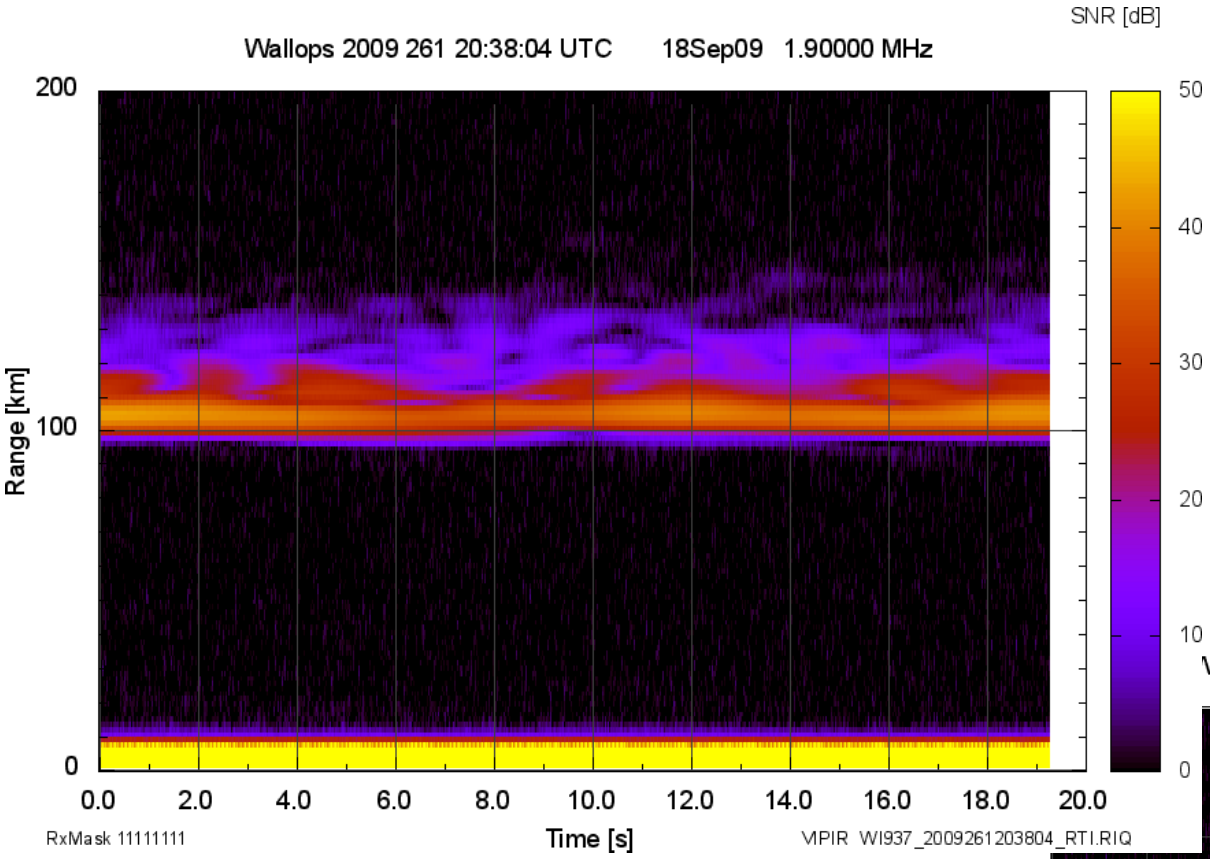
Data courtesy of U.Mass Lowell and Boston College

How to optimally use these data?

Meteor Trails at 5.8 MHz

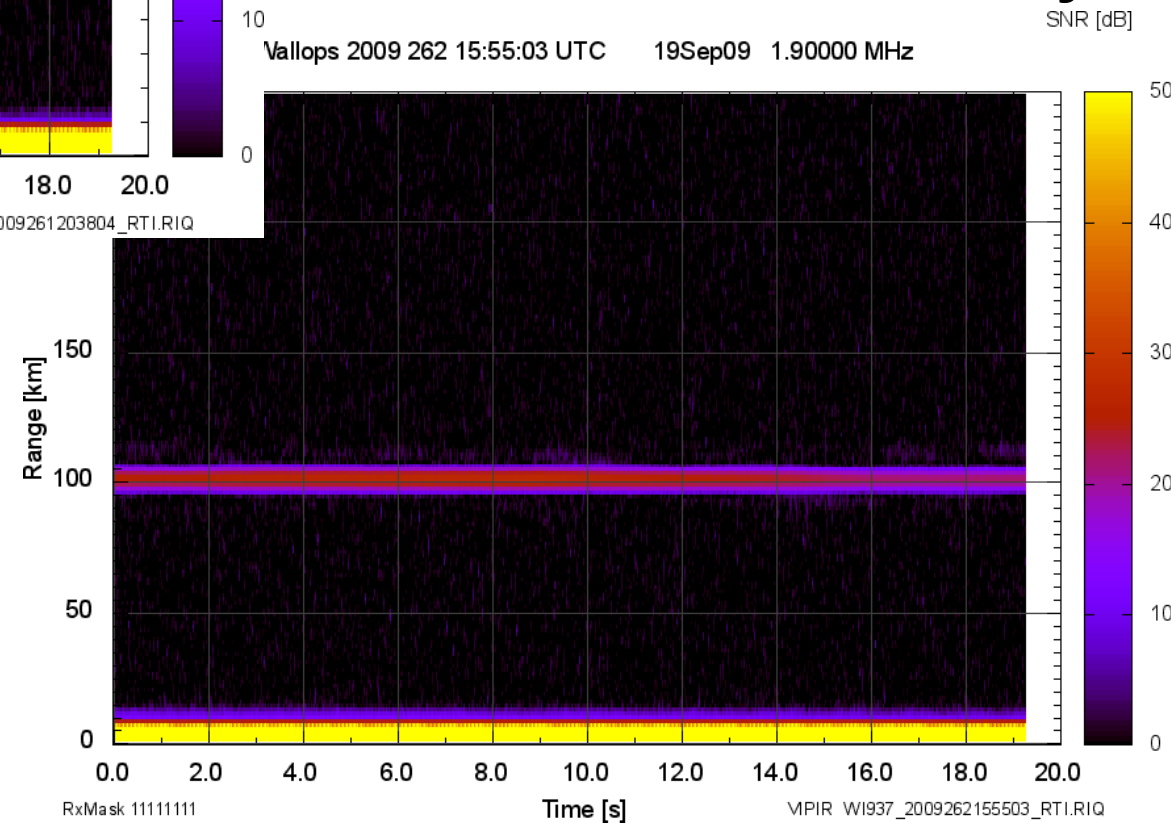


Plasma Turbulence



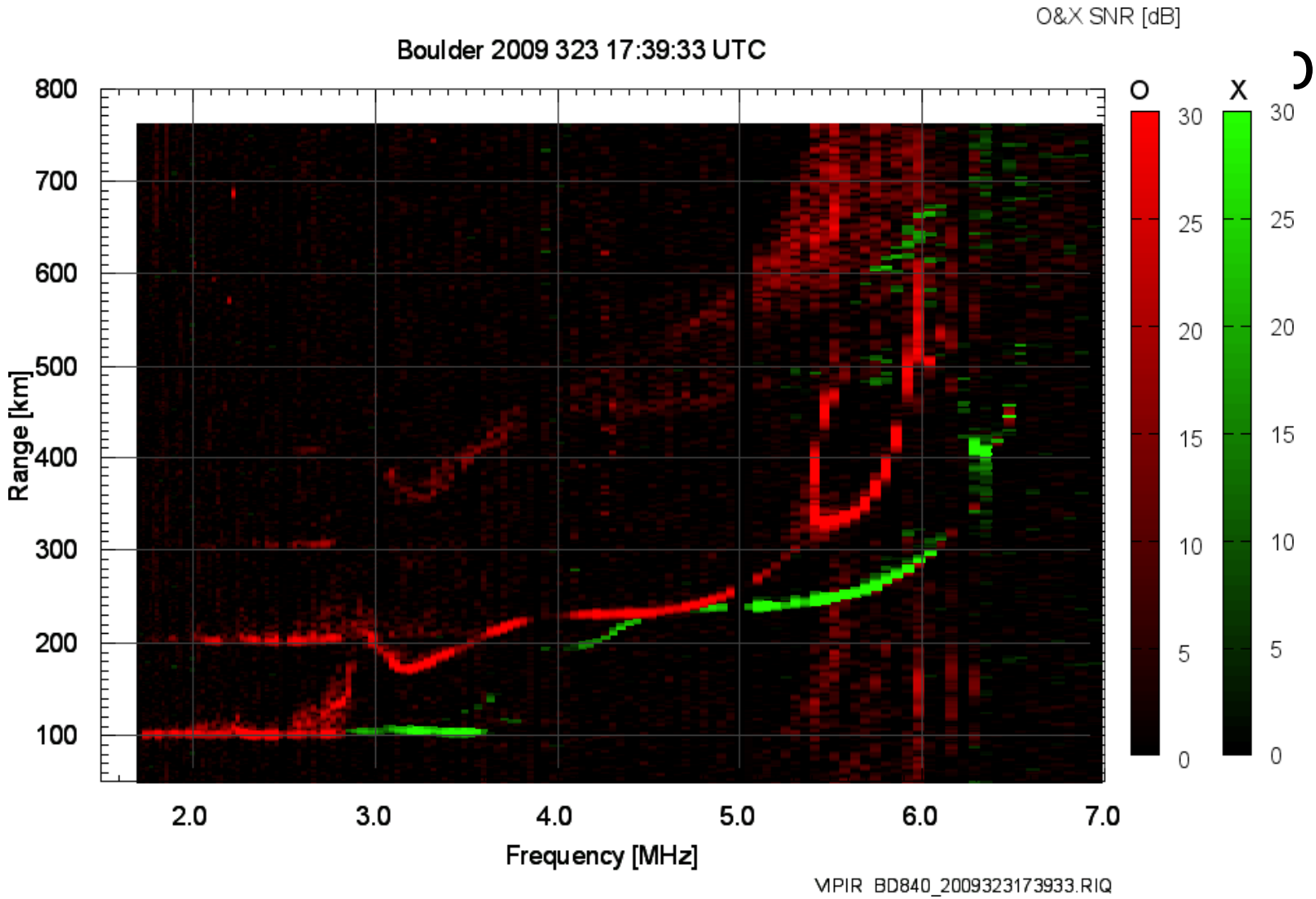
Structured E- layer

Smooth E- layer

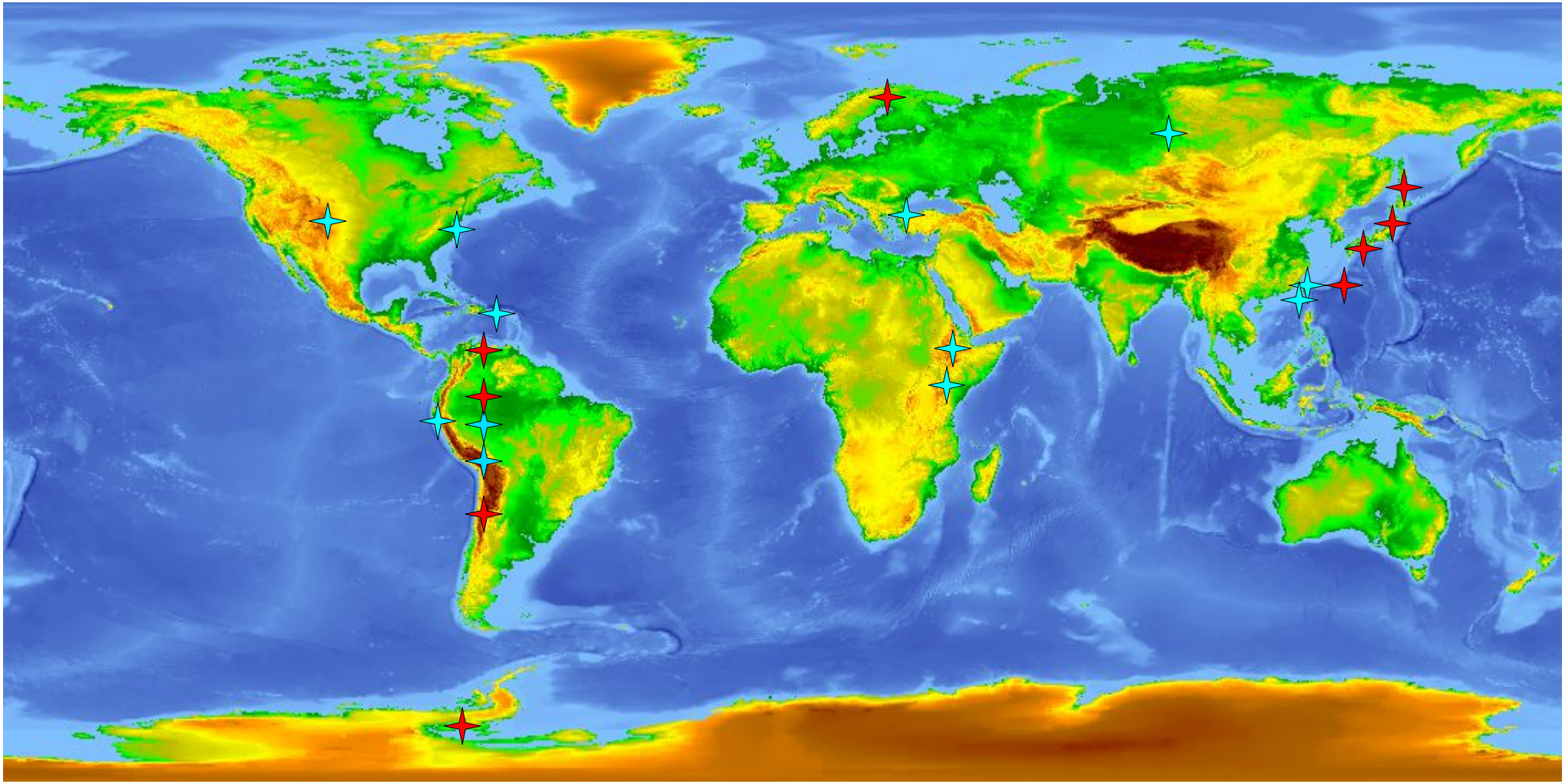


Very Fast Sweeps

Ionogram sweeps < 10 seconds long possible



VIPIR Facilities



Current (13)

Planned (9)

Updated March 2013

Internet Resources

- World Data Center A, Boulder:
  http://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/stp/IONO/ionohome.html
- Digisondes and ARTIST : http://ulcar.uml.edu/ http://www.digisonde.com/
- Autoscala: http://roma2.rm.ingv.it/en/facilities/software/18/autoscala
- ESIR : http://www.spacenv.com/
- Low-latitude Ionospheric Sensing System: http://jro.igp.gob.pe/lisn/
- Vertical Incidence Pulsed Ionosphere Radar (VIPIR): Terry.Bullett@noaa.gov
- Canadian Advanced Digital Ionosonde (CADI): http://cadiweb.physics.uwo.ca/
- Ionospheric Prediction Services (IPS): http://www.ips.gov.au/
- Ionosonde Network Advisory Group (INAG)
  http://www.ips.gov.au/IPSHosted/INAG/
- SPIDR: http://spidr.ngdc.noaa.gov/spidr/index.jsp