THESIS

A LOW-COST MONITOR FOR SIMULTANEOUS MEASUREMENT OF FINE PARTICULATE MATTER AND AEROSOL OPTICAL DEPTH

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Science

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Spring 2018

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ABSTRACT

A LOW-COST MONITOR FOR SIMULTANEOUS MEASUREMENT OF FINE PARTICULATE MATTER AND AEROSOL OPTICAL DEPTH

Exposure to airborne particulate matter with diameters less than 2.5 μ m (PM_{2.5}) is a leading cause of death and disease globally. In addition to affecting health, $PM_{2.5}$ affects climate and atmospheric visibility. NASA currently uses satellite imaging technology to measure particulate matter air pollution across the world. Satellite image data are used to derive aerosol optical depth (AOD), which is the extinction of light in the atmospheric column. Although AOD data are often used to estimate surface $PM_{2.5}$ concentration, there is considerable uncertainty associated with the relationship between satellitederived AOD and ground-level PM_{2.5}. Instruments known as Sun photometers can measure AOD from the Earth's surface and are often used for validation and calibration of satellite data. Reference-grade Sun photometers generally do not have co-located PM2.5 measurements and are too expensive to deploy in large numbers. The objective of this work was to develop an inexpensive and compact integrated PM_{2.5} mass and AOD sampler known as the Solar-Powered Aerosol Reference Calibrator (SPARC). PM $_{2.5}$ is sampled using an ultrasonic pumping system, a size-selective cyclone separator, and a filter. Filter measurements can be used to correct the output from a low-cost direct-reading $PM_{2.5}$ sensor housed within the SPARC. AOD is measured using optically filtered photodiodes at four discrete wavelengths. A suite of integrated sensors enable time-resolved measurement of key metadata including location, altitude, temperature, barometric pressure, relative humidity, solar incidence angle and spatial orientation. The AOD sensors were calibrated relative to a reference monitor in the Aerosol Robotics Network (AERONET). Field validation studies revealed close agreement for AOD values measured between colocated SPARC and AERONET monitors and for PM_{2.5} mass measured between co-located SPARC and EPA Federal Reference Method (FRM) monitors. These field validation results for this novel monitor demonstrate that AOD and PM2.5 can be accurately measured for the evaluation of AOD:PM $_{2.5}$ ratios.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor John Volckens for his vision, guidance and support through this project. I would also like to thank Casey Quinn, Dan Miller-Lionberg and Todd Hochwitz. This technology would not have come into being without their previous efforts and continual support. I am grateful for the efforts of my fellow members of the Citizen Enabled Aerosol Measurements for Satellites (CEAMS) team including Jessica Tryner, Bonne Hotmann, Christian L'Orange, John Mehaffy, David Brooks, Marilee Long and Lizette van Zyl. A special thanks is due to my sister Caroline Wendt for her selfless contributions to graphic design and data collection for this project. I also thank Michele Kuester of Digital Globe and Janae Csavina of NEON for allowing me to take measurements at their AERONET sites.

I thank professors John Volckens, Jeff Pierce, Shantanu Jathar and Azer Yalin for being a part of my committee and for their individual contributions to the CEAMS effort.

This work was supported by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration under Agreement No. NNX17AF94A.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Particulate matter, health, and the environment

Particulate matter less than 2.5 μ m in diameter (PM_{2.5}) is a leading cause of premature death and disease globally $[1]$. When inhaled, $PM_{2.5}$ can penetrate deep into the lungs, which can cause long and short term health problems $[2, 3]$. Exposure to ambient air pollution is currently ranked as the $6th$ leading risk factor for premature death and disease globally [1]. In 2013, 2.9 million deaths were attributed to PM2.5 from both anthropogenic and biogenic sources [1].

In addition to public health decrements, particulate matter contributes to the visual degradation of the atmosphere, and also impacts the climate [4]. The presence of haze due to particulate matter reduces visibility and diminishes natural color. This is of concern in National Parks and other tourist destinations where visibility degradation may diminish the local economy and aesthetic. Ambient particulate matter also affects the radiative budget of Earth's atmosphere. Particles scatter and absorb Solar radiation and infrared thermal radiation from the Earth's surface [4]. These phenomena lead to both cooling and warming effects that are not completely understood [4].

1.2 Measurement of PM_{2.5} using satellites

Satellites equipped with imaging instruments can measure a quantity known as aerosol optical depth (AOD): a dimensionless measure of light extinction by aerosols in the atmospheric column. Measurements of AOD are used to estimate surface-level $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations [5-7]. Such satellite-based estimates of PM_{2.5} have made considerable impact in helping quantify air pollution levels in areas where no surface monitoring occurs. There is growing interest in defining the precise relationship between AOD and PM_{2.5} concentration, which has been modeled as follows [8]:

$$
PM_{2.5} = \eta * AOD \quad (1)
$$

where η is a conversion factor between PM_{2.5} and AOD. If η is known, satellite AOD measurements can be used to infer surface particulate matter concentration. However, this conversion is not well characterized [8]. Additionally, satellite measurements are suspect to measurement error [4, 8-12]. Instruments known as Sun photometers are used to validate satellite measurements. When used alongside PM_{2.5} samplers, Sun photometers aid in deriving empirical relations between AOD and PM_{2.5} concentration [8].

1.3 Sun photometry

Sun photometers utilize photodetectors to measure incident sunlight directly. In conjunction with the Beer-Lambert-Bouger, aerosol optical depth, τ_a , may be calculated from this measurement per the following equation:

$$
\tau_a(\lambda) = \frac{1}{m} \left(\ln \left(\frac{V_0}{R^2} \right) - \ln(V) \right) - \tau_R(\lambda, p) - \tau_{03} \quad (2)
$$

where, m is the relative optical air mass factor that accounts for deviations from overhead sunlight, R is the earth-sun distance in astronomical units (AU), V is the voltage read by the light detector, τ_R accounts for Rayleigh scattering by air molecules, p is the pressure, λ is the wavelength, τ_{03} accounts for ozone absorbtion, and V_0 is the voltage produced by light at the top of the atmosphere and is referred to as the extraterrestrial constant [4, 9]. The most common method to find V_0 is the Langley plot method [13]. By combining the aerosol and Rayleigh components into total optical depth and rearranging Eq. 2, the following equation (used for a Langley plot) is derived:

$$
ln(V) = ln \frac{V_0}{R^2} - \tau_a(\lambda) * m \quad (3)
$$

During a Langley calibration, voltage measurements are taken as the air mass factor changes over the course of a day. The slope of the line gives total optical depth and the intercept at $m = 0$ gives the constant V_0 .

Sun photometers equipped to measure at multiple wavelengths can provide data useful for evaluating aerosol size distributions [14]. When AOD is measured at multiple wavelengths, AOD for non-measured wavelengths may be inferred using the following relation [15]:

$$
\tau_a(\lambda) = \tau_{a0} * (\lambda_0) * (\frac{\lambda}{\lambda_0})^{-\alpha} \quad (4)
$$

where α is the Ångström coefficient, λ_0 is a wavelength measured by photometer, λ is the new wavelength land τ_{a0} is the measured AOD from the photometer. The Ångström coefficient varies depending on the

aerosol size distribution; larger aerosols generally give rise to lower values for α compared with smaller aerosols [4].

Equation 2 was developed under the assumption that the photometer measures the intensity of monochromatic incident light [9]. Because the Sun is a polychromatic emitter, Sun photometers feature light detectors of narrow spectral bandwidth [16]. Light detectors with full-width half-maximum (FWHM) spectral bandwidths of 15 nm or less can be approximated as monochromatic [9]. This requirement precludes the use of inexpensive photodiodes as light detectors because of their wide spectral bandpass. Standard reference instruments, such as the CE318 (Cimel Electronique SAS, Paris, France) used in the Aerosol Robotics Network (AERONET), often include photodiodes fitted with optical interference filters to achieve monochromatic detection [11]. However, these filters can be cost prohibitive at \sim \$100 per device and tend to degrade over time, requiring frequent recalibration [10, 11]. The high cost and high maintenance requirements has often disqualified the use of expensive interference filter Sun photometers in large-scale validation studies and in locations where adequate capital and trained operators are lacking.

A durable and cost-effective hand-held Sun photometer was presented by Mims (1992) that utilized light emitting diodes (LEDs) as inexpensive, sturdy, and spectrally selective photodetectors in a handheld device [17]. Although LEDs are significantly cheaper than optical interference filters, they are not as spectrally selective and they are also sensitive to changes in temperature [9]. LED Sun photometers have been operated, for satellite validation work, by secondary school students as part of the Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) program [9, 12].

1.4 Measurement of PM2.5 Mass at the Earth's Surface

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regulates ambient concentrations of $PM_{2.5}$ mass [18]. The EPA has designated a list of Federal Reference Methods (FRMs) and Federal Equivalent Methods (FEMs) that are used to monitor $PM_{2.5}$ [19]. FRMs adhere to a set of design and performance characteristics specified by the EPA [18]. Designation as an FRM requires that there be no significant deviations between the FRM design specifications and the monitor in question [18]. If there are significant design deviations, a monitor may qualify to be an FEM based on a series of rigorous comparison testing with FRMs [18]. The deployment prospects of FRM and FEM monitors are limited by their high cost (\$10,000-\$30,000) and the need for trained operators [20].

1.5 Objectives

The objective of this work was to develop a user-friendly and low-cost aerosol sampler capable of reference quality PM_{2.5} and AOD measurements. This work leveraged new, low-cost electronics technology to address cost, performance, and usability issues associated with the prior art of AOD and PM2.5 measurement. AOD measurement technology was integrated with a gravimetric Ultrasonic Personal Aerosol Sampler (UPAS) developed at Colorado State University [21]. The resultant device, Solar-Powered Aerosol Reference Calibrator (SPARC), is capable of simultaneous sunlight and mass-based particulate matter measurement. SPARC measurements were independently validated against reference monitors. The unique combination of AOD, gravimetric filter $PM_{2.5}$, and real-time $PM_{2.5}$ sampling on a compact, low-cost, and user-friendly platform, make the SPARC amenable to large-scale deployment in spatially dense sampling networks. The long-term aim of this work is to establish several of these networks to monitor pollution exposure within metropolitan areas and provide a high-resolution data set for evaluating the relationship between AOD and $PM_{2.5}$.

CHAPTER 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Instrument Design

SPARC development was based on the existing hardware and software architecture of the UPAS sampler, which was developed and validated previously [21, 22]. The wearable UPAS was designed primarily to measure personal exposure in indoor and work environments [21]. The scientific goals of the SPARC development dictated the UPAS be modified for outdoor and primarily stationary sampling of both PM_{2.5} and AOD. Notable modifications include: a) Additional hardware to support AOD measurement capability; b) A new weather-resistant housing; c) A larger battery and a solar panel for extended battery life; d) Software updates for simultaneous $PM_{2.5}$ and AOD sampling.

The first step in the design process was light detector selection. Sensing options from previous studies that were explored include filtered photodiodes (Intor Inc., Socorro, NM, USA) and light emitting diodes (LEDs) (Lighthouse LED A-FSMUBC12, WA, USA) [17, 23]. Novel technology considered included vertical cavity surface emitting lasers (VCSELs) (Vixar Inc. I0-0680M-0000-KP01, Plymouth, MN, USA) acting as detectors [24]. These detector options were evaluated according to cost, variety of available center wavelengths, and spectral bandwidths FWHM. Filtered photodiode and VCSEL FWHM bandwidths were tested using a tunable dye laser (Sirah Lasertechnik Allegro, Grevenbroich, Germany). LED response spectra extended outside the scanning range of the tunable dye laser and were tested using a tunable light source (Optometrics TLS-25M, Littleton, MA, USA). For each test, the laser was scanned across a preselected wavelength range. The laser beam was directed to the active area of the light detectors via a series of lenses. Four specimens were tested for each detector type. Typical spectral response plots for VCSELs, LEDs, and filtered photodiodes are depicted in Figure 2-1.

Figure 2-1. Spectral response curves for (a) 680 nm VCSEL, (b) 620 nm LED and (c) 680 nm filtered photodiode. The vertical axis gives the detector response normalized with respect to dye laser power and maximum detector signal output.

The FWHM bandwidth of VCSELs acting in reverse was less than 1 nm centered at 680nm. However, the VCSELs exhibited several response peaks at wavelengths below 680 nm. The average FWHM bandwidth for LEDs was approximately 100 nm centered at 600 nm. Previous studies have reported LED detection FWHM bandwidths of between 25 nm and 75 nm [9, 25]. The relatively broad spectral bandwidths of LEDs has prompted the development of compensation algorithms to mitigate errors [9]. The measured filtered photodiode behavior approximated that reported by the manufacturer. The datasheet specified a FWHM bandwidth of 10 nm and a center wavelength of 680 nm. The measured values were within 5 nm of the expected values, measured at FWHM. Cost was also considered during the evaluation of light detectors. VCSELs were the most expensive per unit at \$75.00, followed by filtered photodiodes at \$28.50, and LEDs at \$0.21.

Filtered photodiodes were selected for use in the SPARC due to their sufficiently narrow spectral response bandwidth and relatively low cost. Filtered photodiodes are also commercially available at center wavelength from 400 nm to 1000 nm in increments of approximately 10 nm. No other detector option offered as broad of a selection. VCSELs were cost prohibitive and exhibited multiple undesirable response peaks. LEDs were the most inexpensive option to be evaluated but were not selected due to their broad spectral response bandwidth.

The AOD measurement system was developed independently and iteratively prior to integration with the UPAS as shown in Figure 2-2. Initial prototyping was carried out using low-cost electronics interfaced with an open-sourced, Arduino[®] development board. This circuit included an LED standing in as the sunlight detector. The output signal of the LED was amplified using a transimpedence amplifier circuit and interfaced with the Arduino® using a 16-bit analog to digital converter.

Figure 2-2. (a) Arduino breadboard LED photometer circuit (b) Custom AOD circuit board with filtered photodiodes wired to a UPAS unit (c) Fully integrated SPARC housing containing all AOD and PM_{2.5} mass sampling hardware.

The next phase in the development process was the integration of Sun photometer technology with the UPAS gravimetric sampler. A preliminary printed circuit board containing AOD measurement instrumentation was designed using Autodesk® EAGLE (Figure 2-2b). This board contained pads for 4 filtered photodiodes (Intor), a quad operational amplifier with low leakage current (Linear Technology LTC 6242) and a 16-bit analog to digital converter (Texas Instruments ADS1115, Dallas, Texas, USA). Photodiode wavelengths of 440 nm, 520 nm, 680 nm, and 870 nm were selected to avoid molecular absorption bands, match those used by AERONET, and to facilitate aerosol size distribution evaluation [14]. A final iteration of the board design added a solar incidence sensor (Solar MEMS NANO-ISS5,

Seville, Spain) and a Wi-Fi module (Espressif Systems ESP8266, Shanghai, China). The board is interfaced with the primary UPAS motherboard via I2C and UART communication. The AOD sensor firmware was adjusted to be compatible with the integrated microcontroller (mbedTM ARM[®] Ltd., Cambridge, UK) that controls the gravimetric sampling. The housing was designed using computer-aided design software (SolidWorks® ANSYS, Inc., Canonsburg, PA, USA) and built using stereolithographic printing (Figure 2- 2c). A CAD rendering highlighting key internal and structural components of the SPARC is provided in Figure 2-3. A direct-reading particulate matter sensor (Plantower PMS5003, Beijing, China) is integrated into the sampler housing (Figure 2-3). The PMS5003 includes a fan that draws aerosol through the path of a laser diode and a photodetector. Particulate matter concentrations are evaluated, by a microprocessor embedded in the PMS5003 using Mie theory, and accessed via serial communication [26]. The SPARC housing includes a sealed inlet and outlet for flow through the sensor.

Figure 2-3. CAD rendering of key internal SPARC components used for PM_{2.5} and AOD sampling.

The housing design includes 4 tubes that limit the field of view of the light detectors. A CAD rendering highlighting this portion of the housing is provided in Figure 2-4.

Figure 2-4. CAD rendering of SPARC AOD measurement system including the light apertures and electronic hardware components. Light blue shading indicates a hollow region for light transmission; black and green shading indicate the housing and AOD circuit board, respectively.

Light enters through 5mm diameter apertures on the top surface of the housing and subsequently passes through 112mm long tubes to the active area the filtered photodiodes. These proportions yield a viewing angle of 2.56 degrees per sensor. A narrow viewing angle is required to mitigate errors caused by forward scattered sunlight entering the field of view of the detector [27]. The housing includes two sockets with $\frac{1}{4}$ - 20 Unified National Coarse (UNC) threads, which allow the SPARC to be easily mounted to standard camera tripods. The SPARC battery is charged via a barrel plug port on the side of the housing; this plug also accepts power from the solar panel. The plug is water tight when the panel cable is attached to the barrel port. This port can be interfaced with an external battery, wall charger or solar panel (Voltaic® 3.5W). The internal SPARC battery is a 3.6, 20.1Ah custom battery pack comprised of six 18650 lithium ion cells (Panasonic NCR18650B). The solar panel is mounted to the exterior housing using magnets adhered to opposing surfaces on the panel and SPARC housing. The panel easily can be attached and detached from the housing. A SPARC with a solar panel attached is shown in Figure 2-5.

Figure 2-5. SPARC with a solar panel magnetically attached.

The sampler measures 9.0 cm W x 14.1 cm H x 6.7 cm L and is 0.64 kg. The housing is weatherresistant when mounted in its intended orientation—with the PM2.5 inlet facing the ground and the AOD apertures pointed toward the Sun (Figure 2-5). An O-ring seal prevents leakage through the seam of the housing halves and float glass windows sealed with foam adhesive protect the optical apertures. In a durability study, five SPARC units were mounted and activated for two days, which included intermittent rain and snow. At the end of the test, no units showed evidence of damage or intrusion from either ice or water.

A cost of goods summary for notable components is provided in Table 2. The total cost of goods of the SPARC is less than \$1,100. This tabulation is based on the preliminary production run of 24 units. Costs of these goods—particularly circuit boards and mechanical components—are reduced at higher quantities. The costs of electronic components not explicitly mentioned in Table 2 are included in the costs of the Printed Circuit Boards (PCBs).

2.2 AOD Calculation Algorithm

Proper alignment of the Sun photometer and determination of the relative optical air mass factor (m) require accurate calculations (or measurements) the Sun location relative to magnetic north and the horizon. The angular location of the Sun relative to magnetic north is defined by the azimuth angle, which is measured between 0 and 360 degrees eastward from north. The angular location of the Sun relative to the horizon is defined by the elevation angle, which is measured vertically from the horizon. The zenith angle defines the position of the Sun relative to the axis normal to the Earth's surface and is related to the elevation angle by the following relationship:

$$
\theta = 90^{\circ} - e \quad (5)
$$

where θ is the zenith angle and e is the elevation angle (both in degree units). The zenith angle quantifies the deviation in measurement from direct overhead sunlight and is particularly relevant to Sun photometry. As the zenith angle increases, incident sunlight passes through a greater distance of atmosphere, leading to increased attenuation by aerosols [4].

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) published a solar position algorithm to calculate azimuth, elevation and zenith angles at uncertainties equal to ± 0.0003 as a function of location, time and for years between 2000 and 6000 [28]. The algorithm described in the NREL publication was implemented as a C++ microcontroller code to automate solar calculations for the SPARC. This code was verified against results from the online solar position calculator developed by NREL.

Prior to applying Equation 1 to calculate AOD, the relative optical air mass factor (m) , the Rayleigh optical depth (τ_R) and the Earth-Sun distance (R) must be determined in accordance with the measurement location, time, pressure and temperature. Software was written to automate calculations and minimize user input during the process.

The AOD calculation software includes the Sun position algorithm previously described. The Earth-Sun distance is calculated directly by the solar position algorithm and stored for later use by the AOD software. The relative optical air mass factor is then calculated in terms of the solar zenith angle, θ , as follows [29]:

$$
m = \frac{1.002432 \cdot \cos^2(\theta) + 0.148386 \cdot \cos(\theta) + 0.0096467}{\cos^3(\theta) + 0.149864 \cdot \cos^2(\theta) + 0.0102963 \cdot \cos(\theta) + 0.000303978} \tag{6}
$$

The contributions of Rayleigh scattering and Ozone absorption to total optical depth are often substantial and must be subtracted from total optical depth for accurate AOD measurements [30]. Rayleigh optical depth is inversely proportional to the fourth power of wavelength, making accurate quantification especially important for the 440 nm and 520 nm channels on the SPARC. When aerosol concentrations are low, the Rayleigh component of total optical depth can exceed AOD by an order of magnitude [30]. The SPARC algorithm incorporates absorption due to $CO₂$ —in addition to the more abundant constituents of air—for greater accuracy at wavelength in or near the UV spectrum [30]. Rayleigh optical depth is calculated based on wavelength and ambient pressure measured by an on-board pressure sensor (Bosch Sensortec BMP 280, Kusterdingen, Germany). For example, at standard pressure (1013.25 mbar) and a CO₂ concentration of 360 ppm, the algorithm predicts Rayleigh optical depths of 0.24, 0.12, 0.041 and 0.015 at 440 nm, 520 nm, 680 nm and 870 nm, respectively [30].

The SPARC's 520 nm and 680 nm channels lay within the Chappuis ozone absorption band (450 nm – 850 nm). The effect of ozone absorption on total optical depth can become significant when AOD is low, dictating compensation as expressed in Equation 2. A temporal and spatial sinusoidal model presented by van Heuklon (1978) is used to estimate ozone concentrations in Dobson Units (DU) based on the location and time of the measurement [31]. This value is then converted into atm-cm by dividing by 1000 and multiplied by the wavelength-dependent absorption coefficient for ozone to determine the ozone optical depth [32].

Equation 1 is then applied to calculate the total optical depth using sensor inputs and the calculations described above. AOD, temperature, pressure, relative humidity, time, location, and battery status are then stored on an accessible MicroSD card (Molex 5031821852, Lisle, IL, USA). All calculation software was developed on an online, open-source platform (mbedTM; ARM[®] Ltd.) and is executed by the on-board microcontroller (STMicroelectronics STM32L152RE, Geneva, Switzerland).

2.3 User Operation and Measurement Procedure

The SPARC was designed to be operated by individuals without a background in aerosol sampling but have an interest in air pollution and citizen science. Care was taken to minimize the complexity of the measurement process. For this reason, a smartphone application was developed that guides the user through the measurement process in a series of steps as illustrated in Figure 2-6. The application was developed as part of a preliminary citizen science study called Citizen Enabled Aerosol Measurements for Satellites (CEAMS) at Colorado State University.

Figure 2-6. Smartphone app screen shots summarizing the key steps in the SPARC setup process: (a) Information and website link; (b) Quality assurance check; (c) Data download and alignment check; (d) file upload using standard file transfer protocol.

 Items needed to complete a SPARC measurement include a SPARC unit, a filter cartridge loaded with a pre-weighed air-sampling filter, a smartphone with the setup app, and a commercial tripod or alternative mount. The application opens to an informational page that links to the CEAMS project website (Figure 2- 6a). From this page, the operator selects "Setup" and connects their smartphone or tablet to the SPARC sampler over Bluetooth®. Once connection is achieved, a quality assurance page opens that displays the unit number, sample ID, and battery State of Charge (SOC) (Figure 2-6b). If the battery SOC is above 80%, the operator may proceed to the next stage in the setup by pressing the "next" button at the bottom of the page. If the SOC is below 80%, the app will prompt the operator to charge the unit before proceeding. The application then accesses the operator's phone camera and scans for a QR code adhered to the bottom of the filter cartridge (step not pictured). Once the unique cartridge ID number is recognized and saved, the operator loads the cartridge into the sampler and screws the cyclone inlet into place. The application then prompts the user to download any previous log files over Bluetooth® on to the phone (Figure 2-6c). While the files are being downloaded, the operator is encouraged to fix the SPARC to a tripod and align the AOD sensors with the sun. The alignment process is aided by an integrated pinhole and target apparatus, which

is geometrically aligned with the filtered photodiodes. The 1mm diameter pinhole projects a sunspot onto a surface on the side of the housing opposite the inlet. The operator adjusts the sampler orientation on the tripod until the sunspot is projected onto a small target, which is axially aligned with the pinhole. The alignment apparatus is illustrated in Figure 2-7.

Figure 2-7. Graphical illustration of the SPARC solar alignment apparatus. The internal surface of the alignment cone, the pinhole aperture, and the sunspot target are highlighted in light blue.

Once the filter cartridge is loaded and the SPARC is aligned with the sun, the operator presses a "start" button below the alignment check icon on the application page. The SPARC then records an instantaneous AOD measurement and begins sampling air at 2L/min. Flow-controlled air sampling continues for 48.25 hours before the SPARC automatically shuts off. The SPARC maintains a fixed orientation on a tripod for the entire sampling duration—barring any unintended movements. The SPARC samples AOD 3 times over the specified 48-hr sampling period: immediately after the sample starts, 24 hours into the sample, and 48 hours into the sample. To partially mitigate errors caused by day-to-day changes in the Sun's position, the SPARC begins measuring AOD 15 minutes prior to the 24-hour mark and logs AOD values every 30 seconds until 15 minutes after the 24-hour mark. The operator may use this 30-minute window to correct the SPARC's orientation if prior unintended movements took place. The lowest AOD values from the respective measurement sets are taken as the second and third AOD measurements. The flowrate and sampling period may be adjusted depending on the application by changing to a cyclone designed for the desired flowrate and some minor adjustments to the control software.

2.4 Calibration Procedure

One SPARC master unit was calibrated relative to a Cimel CE318 at the Digital Globe AERONET site in Longmont, Colorado [11]. AERONET instruments are either calibrated using the Langely plot technique at Mauna Loa observatory—or relative to other AERONET instruments that have been so calibrated—to AOD uncertainties between 0.002 and 0.005 [33]. The master calibration consisted of colocated and concurrent measurements taken over the course of several hours. The extraterrestrial constant, V_0 , was determined for each measurement by solving Equation 2, using the AERONET value for AOD. The extraterrestrial constants for the master unit were then determined by averaging the results of the individual calculations. The extraterrestrial constants with uncertainties (standard error of the mean) for each wavelength of the master unit are given in Table 2.

Wavelength (nm)	V_0 (Volts)
440	0.947 ± 0.004
520	1.368 ± 0.003
680	1.645 ± 0.003
870	1.200 ± 0.001

Table 2. Extraterrestrial constants and uncertainties for the master SPARC unit

All other SPARC units were calibrated relative to the to the SPARC master unit by taking a series of simultaneous measurements under variable illumination [12]. The extraterrestrial constant for all nonmaster units, $V_{0,i}$, was determined as follows [12]:

$$
V_{0,i} = V_{0,maxter} * \rho_i \quad (7)
$$

where $V_{0,master}$ is the extraterrestrial constant of the master unit and ρ_i is the average ratio of voltages from uncalibrated unit *i* to the master unit.

2.5 Co-Location Validation Studies

SPARC AOD measurements were validated in a series of co-location studies using AERONET monitors as the reference method [11]. AERONET monitors were available at two sites along the Colorado Front Range: NEON-CVALLA (N 40º09'39", W 105º10'01") and Digital Globe (N 40º08'20", W 105º08'13"). These tests took place between 3 September and 25 November of 2017 on days with minimal cloud cover. Between two and four calibrated SPARC units were randomly selected on each testing day at set up within 50m of the AERONET monitor. Four-wavelength SPARC AOD measurements were taken manually at five-minute intervals over the course of several hours on each measurement day. These data were then compared with the data published on the online AERONET database [11]. SPARC measurements concurrent within 2 minutes of an AERONET measurement were included in the comparison data set of 130 measurements. The 500 nm and 675 nm AOD values, were adjusted—using Equation 4 and Ångström coefficients from the AERONET data set—to match the 520 nm and 680 nm channels on the SPARC, respectively. The 440 nm and 870 nm channels required no adjustment because both instruments measure at those wavelengths.

To validate the SPARC for gravimetric sampling of $PM_{2.5}$, a series of 48-hr co-locations were conducted using FRM monitors. The FRM consisted of an EPA-certified Louvered Inlet (PM10 – Mesa Labs SSI2.5, Lakewood, CO USA) with an inline PM_{2.5} cyclone (URG Corp 2163, Chapel Hill, NC USA) operating at 16.7 L/min. Co-locations occurred in multiple locations over a 10-week period including downtown Fort Collins, the Colorado State University main campus, and at several personal residences across the city. A custom mount was constructed to support the reference monitors and hold SPARC samplers close to the FRM inlet. A total of 39 paired (48-hr) measurements were collected. A photograph of two SPARC samplers mounted for a PM2.5 FRM comparison test is provided in Figure 2-8.

Figure 2-7. Two SPARC samplers mounted with an FRM for a co-location test.

The PMS5003 included in the SPARC was evaluated against a co-located direct-reading FEM monitor (EDM 180, GRIMM, Ainring, Germany) at the main campus of Colorado State University. Two 48-hour tests comprised of hourly readings were conducted for a total of 96 paired measurements. Time-resolved readings from the SPARC PMS5003 were corrected *post hoc*, relative to the SPARC filter, by multiplying each time-resolved reading by a scaling factor equal the ratio of the filter measurement to the 48-hr average of the direct-reading sensor.

CHAPTER 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 AOD Sensor Evaluation

Close agreement was observed between the SPARC AOD sensors and AERONET monitors. A comparison plot for all wavelengths and all AERONET co-location testing data is provided in Figure 3-1. A Bland-Altman plot for all data is provided in Figure 3-2.

Figure 3-1. AERONET vs SPARC AOD comparison plot. This plot includes all measurements taken across all wavelengths as part of the 2017 co-location campaign.

Figure 3-2. AERONET and SPARC AOD Bland-Altman plot. This plot includes all measurements taken across all wavelengths as part of the 2017 co-location campaign. The top and bottom dashed lines represent the upper and lower limits of agreement, respectively, evaluated at 95% confidence. The solid line in between the limits of agreement is the mean difference between the two measurement techniques.

The mean absolute error between the SPARC and AERONET instruments was 0.0079 AOD units (across all wavelengths), yielding a mean relative error of 10%. These deviations are nearly within the published uncertainties of the AERONET monitors [33]. The mean difference calculated from the Bland-Altman plot data was 0.00063 AOD units with upper and lower limits of agreement of 0.026 and -0.024 AOD units, respectively. The Bland-Altman results indicate a low systemic bias between the two instruments in AOD units. These results are encouraging given the relatively low AOD during sampling days, which will tend to magnify error percentages.

 The AOD measurement capabilities of the SPARC expand upon those of lower-cost LED Sun photometers. The integrated filtered photodiodes used in the SPARC provide narrower spectral bandwidth readings compared with LEDs. Integrated filtered photodiodes are also available at a greater number of center wavelengths, providing broad wavelength selection over the visible and near-IR spectra. This, coupled with the 4-channel capability of the SPARC, facilitate the evaluation of size distributions from

SPARC data [14]. Computational software make the SPARC AOD calculation process more automated then previous LED photometers. Automation is advantageous because it reduces operator effort and the potential for operator error. LED photometers are advantageous when cost considerations are paramount as material costs saving can be up to 20x over the SPARC [10]. Compared with AERONET monitors, the main advantages of the SPARC are its low cost and portability. The SPARC (including time-resolved and integrated PM2.5 monitoring) has a cost of goods 50x lower than the cost of an AERONET CE318 monitor. CE318 monitors are advantageous with respect to measurement automation, the number AOD wavelengths, and the potential for additional sky radiation measurements beyond AOD [11].

AERONET co-location results indicate the SPARC can be used to measure AOD with high accuracy when measurements are prompted and overseen by an operator. However, it remains difficult to assess the reliability of unsupervised measurements taken at 24 and 48-hour intervals after the original measurement. Wind and other disturbances can cause slight misalignment to occur between the first and second measurements. Any software adjustments made to compensate for the day-to-day variation Sun's path assume stability of the instrument throughout the sampling period. Without automated self-correction or operator intervention, misalignment manifests itself with erroneously high AOD measures, which are difficult to discriminate from cloud contaminated measurements. Automated cloud screening requires active solar tracking and relatively high frequency measurements [34]. Manual screening requires operator attention, which cannot be expected for a 48+ hour sampling period. Ongoing work includes the development of an alignment screening method based on measurement from the SPARC solar incidence angle sensor. This sensor is capable of high resolution $(<0.05^{\circ}$) incidence angle measurements and can be calibrated relative to the pinhole and target system. Accurate incidence angle calculations will inform the selection of representative AOD measurements taken 24 and 48 hours into the sampling period. The development of a low-cost solar tracking mount is also the subject of ongoing work. Active tracking would eliminate the need for algorithmic adjustments to account for daily solar position, enable measurement of daily AOD trends, increase solar power output, and enable robust cloud screening algorithms.

3.2 Gravimetric PM2.5 Sampler Evaluation

Strong agreement was found between the SPARC gravimetric PM_{2.5} and FRM samplers in a co-located study. A comparison plot of SPARC and FRM measurements is provided in Figure 3-3. All fit statistics were evaluated via Deming regression. A Bland-Altman plot for all data is provided in Figure 3-4.

Figure 3-3. FRM PM_{2.5} measurements vs SPARC PM_{2.5} measurements in μ g/m³. Each data point represents a single 48-hr time-weighted average.

Figure 3-4. FRM and SPARC PM_{2.5} concentration Bland-Altman plot. The top and bottom dashed lines represent the upper and lower limits of agreement, respectively, evaluated at 95% confidence. The solid line in between the limits of agreement is the mean difference between the two measurement techniques.

The Pearson correlation was 0.93 and the mean absolute error was 0.83 μ g/m³ corresponding with a mean relative error of 8%. The relative precision of the SPARC gravimetric PM_{2.5} measurements was 4.9%, expressed as a coefficient of variation among duplicate samplers at the same location. The mean difference calculated from the Bland-Altman plot data was $-0.00367 \mu g/m^3$ units with upper and lower limits of agreement of 1.84 and $-1.85 \mu g/m^3$ units respectively. The Bland-Altman results indicate a low systemic bias between the two instruments in μ g/m³. These results are encouraging given the low 48-hour average $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations in Fort Collins during this period (ranging from 3.9 to 12.4 μ g/m³). These FRM colocation results are consistent with the agreement observed in previous work [21].

The performance of the SPARC PM_{2.5} sampler is promising in the context of its low cost and compact form factor relative to the FRM. SPARC cost of goods is less than the purchase price of the FRM used in the co-location studies by a factor of 12. The SPARC is also more compact and portable than the FRM. The SPARC is 28 kg lighter, 90 cm shorter, 33 cm narrower and 46 cm shallower than the FRM when both are

in their stowed configuration. Size comparisons when deployed depend on the apparatus used to mount the SPARC (e.g. camera tripod).

3.3 Direct-Reading Sensor Evaluation

Preliminary results for the Plantower direct-reading sensor have been limited but promising. Co-located PM2.5 hourly average concentration measurements taken over a 48-hour period are shown in Figure 3-5. A Bland-Altman plot for all data is provided in Figure 3-6.

Figure 3-5. Hourly FEM vs Hourly SPARC direct-reading measurements in μg/m³. The SPARC hourly data were normalized to match the 48-hr gravimetric filter concentration using a mass-scattering coefficient determined in situ.

Figure 3-6. GRIMM FEM and SPARC direct-reading $PM_{2.5}$ concentration Bland-Altman plot. The top and bottom dashed lines represent the upper and lower limits of agreement, respectively, evaluated at 95% confidence. The solid line in between the limits of agreement is the mean difference between the two measurement techniques.

An advantage of the SPARC is that gravimetric PM_{2.5} data (i.e., filter mass) can be used to calibrate, in situ, the direct-reading sensor by calculation of a mass-scattering coefficient. This method of calibration may improve the accuracy and precision of measurements from low-cost aerosol nephelometers (such as the Plantower PM5003 used in the SPARC). After normalizing the time-resolved measurements to the filter, the mean absolute error was 1.98 μ g/m³. Concentrations reported by the FEM ranged from 0 to 17 μ g/m³. The mean difference calculated from the Bland-Altman plot data was $-0.040 \mu g/m³$ units with upper and lower limits of agreement of 5.02 and -4.94 μ g/m³ units respectively. These data indicate the SPARC was biased low at low concentrations and biased high at high concentrations.

More data are required to fully evaluate the performance of the direct-reading sensor measurements and the filter normalization technique. One limitation associated the FEM and the PMS5003 is the low resolution. Both monitors report integer values (PMS5003 before filter normalization), which can magnify

or obscure relative errors at low concentrations. Readings of 0 μ g/m³ are especially problematic because they cannot be corrected to the filter via scaling factor multiplication. This leaves zero readings uncorrected and tends to magnify the scaling of non-zero readings. More testing will be conducted at higher concentrations to limit the effect of resolution on the co-located comparisons.

The SPARC direct-reading sensor represents cost savings over reference-quality direct-reading monitors and performance improvements over low-cost sensors. The cost of goods of the SPARC is 20x less than the purchase prices of two reference quality monitors: the ThermoFisher Tapered Element Oscillating Microbalance (TEOMTM) and the GRIMM monitor used in the co-location studies. Filter correction and weatherproof hardware integration may increase the accuracy and durability of the SPARC direct-reading measurement system compared with stand-alone low-cost sensors.

3.4 Wireless Capability

Smartphone connectivity and control is an advantage of the SPARC. The custom SPARC smartphone application serves as a wireless control platform, condensed user manual, and data transfer tool. Wireless control allows the user to start the sampler without the risk of altering an established alignment. Step-bystep instructions reduce the potential for operator error and omission. Wireless data transfer is less labor intensive than hardware alternatives (e.g. SD^{TM} card) and can be directly interfaced with a web server. The present BluetoothTM smartphone application cannot connect to the SPARC while running, cannot display run data in the app, and downloads data at unsatisfactorily slow speeds (often in excess of five minutes). Expanding the web connectivity of the SPARC using the ESP8266 included on the present version of the device is the subject of ongoing work. Basic data transfer and real-time visualization capabilities have been developed using free Internet of Things (IoT) services and the ESP8266. Further development could enable faster data transfer and immediate feedback for participants in SPARC deployments. These capabilities would bolster the scientific potential of SPARC data and facilitate citizen operator engagement.

3.5 Conclusions

The SPARC is a lightweight and compact alternative to the instruments typically used to sample AOD and PM2.5. The SPARC represents a substantial cost saving compared with alternative AOD and PM2.5 mass concentration sampling equipment. The small size, durability, increased sampling capabilities and relatively low cost of the SPARC make it a viable option for large scale and spatially dense deployments. Such data sets have the potential facilitate the calibration and validation of satellite-based sensors as they progress toward higher spatial resolution measurement capabilities.

CHAPTER 4. REFERENCES

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APPENDICES

4.1 Additional CAD Images

Figure 5-2. Top view of SPARC housing with solar panel connected.

Figure 5-3. Transparent view of SPARC housing.

Figure 5-4. Section view of PM_{2.5} cyclone.

Figure 5-5. CAD design for first generation SPARC.

4.2 Langley Calibration

A Langley calibration was performed during the early stages of device testing to evaluate the extraterrestrial constant according to Equation 3 and to explore the relative behavior of the measurement channel wavelengths. The resulting Langely plot is provided in Figure 5-6.

Figure 5-6. Langely calibration results presented for all wavelengths.

The resulting calibration constants were relatively inaccurate compared to those derived from the relative calibration technique and were not used in any device. However, the Langley analysis was instructive for evaluating the AOD measurements from the four channels. According to Equation 3, the optical depth is equal to the slope of the Langley curves. The slope of the Langley curves varied inversely with wavelength, indicating the lower wavelength channels measured higher AOD on this day. This is consistent with established theory regarding wavelength and light attenuation [15].

4.3 Raw Co-Location Data

Date	FRM	CEAMS	Average	Difference	Difference	ABS
	$(ug/m-3)$	$(ug/m-3)$		(abs)	(%)	Diff $(\%)$
10/13/2017	7.85202	8.21208	8.03205	0.36006	4.482790819	4.482791
10/13/2017	7.85202	8.23964	8.04583	0.38762	4.817650883	4.817651
10/13/2017	7.77754	8.40498	8.09126	0.62744	7.754540084	7.75454
10/13/2017	7.77754	7.99162	7.88458	0.21408	2.715173161	2.715173
10/17/2017	4.49301	4.36047	4.42674	-0.13254		2.994077
					2.994076905	
10/17/2017	4.49301	5.12566	4.809335	0.63265	13.15462533	13.15463
10/17/2017	4.49301	5.01543	4.75422	0.52242	10.98855333	10.98855
10/17/2017	4.49301	5.04299	4.768	0.54998	11.53481544	11.53482
10/23/2017	6.45623	6.42361	6.43992	-0.03262		0.506528
					0.506528031	
10/23/2017	6.01097	7.03125	6.52111	1.02028	15.64580263	15.6458
10/23/2017	6.01097	7.17593	6.59345	1.16496	17.66844368	17.66844
11/10/2017	7.28183	6.71296	6.997395	-0.56887	-8.12973971	8.12974
11/10/2017	6.84106	6.30787	6.574465	-0.53319		8.110014
					8.110013514	
11/10/2017	6.84106	6.19213	6.516595	-0.64893	9.958114629	9.958115
11/13/2017	4.47052	4.97685	4.723685	0.50633	10.718962	10.71896
11/13/2017	4.47052	4.34028	4.4054	-0.13024		2.956372
					2.956371726	
11/13/2017	3.95623	3.64583	3.80103	-0.3104		8.166208
					8.166207581	
11/20/2017	5.34895	5.54395	5.44645	0.195	3.580313782	3.580314
11/20/2017	5.34895	5.16661	5.25778	-0.18234		3.468004
11/27/2017	7.96852	8.95722	8.46287	0.9887	3.468003606 11.68279792	11.6828
11/27/2017	7.96852	9.16156	8.56504	1.19304	13.92918188	13.92918
11/27/2017	8.21756	9.08851	8.653035	0.87095	10.06525456	10.06525
11/29/2017	10.4615	9.83654	10.14902	-0.62496	6.157835929	6.157836
11/29/2017	12.3365	11.52153	11.929015	-0.81497		6.83183
					6.831829786	
11/29/2017	11.8415	11.35658	11.59904	-0.48492		4.180691
					4.180690816	
11/29/2017	9.69321	10.02309	9.85815	0.32988	3.346266794	3.346267
12/1/2017	7.75104	10.73141	9.241225	2.98037	32.2508109	32.25081
12/1/2017	7.84284	6.79332	7.31808	-1.04952		14.34147
12/1/2017	7.84284	8.33333	8.088085	0.49049	14.34146661	6.064353
					6.064352687	

Table 5-1. Raw Data from SPARC vs. FRM PM_{2.5} filter mass concentration studies.

Day	Wavelength	SPARC	AERONET	Mean	Difference
	(nm)	AOD	AOD	(AOD)	(AOD)
3-Sep	440	0.2192	0.2161	0.218	0.0031
3-Sep	440	0.2232	0.2178	0.221	0.0054
3-Sep	440	0.2275	0.2245	0.226	0.003
3-Sep	440	0.2344	0.2229	0.229	0.0115
3-Sep	440	0.2331	0.2365	0.235	-0.0034
3-Sep	440	0.2277	0.2298	0.229	-0.0021
3-Sep	440	0.2395	0.2302	0.235	0.0093
3-Sep	440	0.2311	0.2359	0.234	-0.0048
3-Sep	440	0.2302	0.2341	0.232	-0.0039
3-Sep	440	0.2296	0.2316	0.231	-0.002
3-Sep	440	0.2341	0.23	0.232	0.0041
3-Sep	440	0.2242	0.2308	0.228	-0.0066
3-Sep	440	0.2284	0.2252	0.227	0.0032
3-Sep	440	0.2186	0.2184	0.219	0.0002
3-Sep	440	0.2177	0.2261	0.222	-0.0084
3-Sep	440	0.2139	0.218	0.216	-0.0041
3-Sep	440	0.2184	0.2205	0.219	-0.0021
3-Sep	440	0.2124	0.2142	0.213	-0.0018
3-Sep	440	0.1897	0.2088	0.199	-0.0191
3-Sep	440	0.2112	0.2137	0.212	-0.0025
3-Sep	440	0.213	0.2214	0.217	-0.0084
3-Sep	440	0.2133	0.2317	0.223	-0.0184
3-Sep	440	0.2278	0.238	0.233	-0.0102
3-Sep	440	0.2186	0.2381	0.228	-0.0195
3-Sep	440	0.2192	0.2379	0.229	-0.0187
3-Sep	440	0.2269	0.236	0.231	-0.0091
3-Sep	440	0.2303	0.2418	0.236	-0.0115
3-Sep	440	0.2251	0.238	0.232	-0.0129
$3-Sep$	440	0.2379	0.248	0.243	-0.0101
$3-Sep$	440	0.227	0.2161	0.222	0.0109
3-Sep	440	0.2325	0.2178	0.225	0.0147
$3-Sep$	440	0.2336	0.2245	0.229	0.0091
$3-Sep$	440	0.2389	0.2229	0.231	0.016
3-Sep	440	0.2545	0.2365	0.246	0.018
$3-Sep$	440	0.2441	0.2298	0.237	0.0143
$3-Sep$	440	0.2544	0.2302	0.242	0.0242
$3-Sep$	440	0.2487	0.2359	0.242	0.0128
$3-Sep$	440	0.2431	0.2341	0.239	0.009

Table 5-1. Raw Data from SPARC vs. AERONET co-located AOD studies.

Date and Time	GRIMM	SPARC $(\mu g/m^3)$	Average	Difference
(MST)	$(\mu g/m^3)$		$(\mu g/m^3)$	$(\mu g/m^3)$
11/20/2017 13:00	$\overline{2}$	θ	1	-2
11/20/2017 14:00	$\overline{2}$	0.648247431	1.324123716	-1.351752569
11/20/2017 15:00	$\overline{4}$	0.664453617	2.332226809	-3.335546383
11/20/2017 16:00	$\overline{4}$	0.858927847	2.429463924	-3.141072153
11/20/2017 17:00	3	0.437567016	1.718783508	-2.562432984
11/20/2017 18:00	3	0.367703375	1.683851688	-2.632296625
11/20/2017 19:00	3	1.969051573	2.484525787	-1.030948427
11/20/2017 20:00	3	0.356536087	1.678268044	-2.643463913
11/20/2017 21:00	3	0.42136083	1.710680415	-2.57863917
11/20/2017 22:00	$\mathbf{1}$	θ	0.5	-1
11/20/2017 23:00	$\mathbf{1}$	θ	0.5	-1
11/21/2017 0:00	$\mathbf{1}$	$\overline{0}$	0.5	-1
11/21/2017 1:00	$\mathbf{1}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	0.5	-1
11/21/2017 2:00	$\mathbf{1}$	0	0.5	-1
11/21/2017 3:00	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$
11/21/2017 4:00	$\boldsymbol{0}$	0	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$
11/21/2017 5:00	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\overline{0}$	$\overline{0}$	$\overline{0}$
11/21/2017 6:00	$\boldsymbol{0}$	0	$\boldsymbol{0}$	$\boldsymbol{0}$
11/21/2017 7:00	$\mathbf{1}$	Ω	0.5	-1
11/21/2017 8:00	$\mathbf{1}$	0.228793211	0.614396606	-0.771206789
11/21/2017 9:00	$\overline{2}$	0.678208447	1.339104224	-1.321791553
11/21/2017 10:00	$\overline{2}$	1.442350535	1.721175268	-0.557649465
11/21/2017 11:00	$\overline{2}$	1.523381464	1.761690732	-0.476618536
11/21/2017 12:00	3	2.582094811	2.791047406	-0.417905189
11/21/2017 13:00	$\overline{4}$	3.562637144	3.781318572	-0.437362856
11/21/2017 14:00	$\overline{4}$	4.09206191	4.046030955	0.09206191
11/21/2017 15:00	5	4.878061921	4.939030961	-0.121938079
11/21/2017 16:00	5	5.599237188	5.299618594	0.599237188
11/21/2017 17:00	6	7.471051646	6.735525823	1.471051646
11/21/2017 18:00	9	11.34433005	10.17216503	2.34433005
11/21/2017 19:00	10	10.32334034	10.16167017	0.32334034
11/21/2017 20:00	11	13.80767029	12.40383515	2.80767029
11/21/2017 21:00	14	16.85443321	15.42721661	2.85443321
11/21/2017 22:00	16	19.1205755	17.56028775	3.1205755
11/21/2017 23:00	17	19.66350542	18.33175271	2.66350542
11/22/2017 0:00	17	16.96338236	16.98169118	-0.03661764
11/22/2017 1:00	15	14.88538164	14.94269082	-0.11461836

Table 5-2. Raw Data from SPARC vs. FEM direct-reading PM_{2.5} co-location studies

4.4 AOD Sensor Circuit Schematic

Figure 5-6. Schematic for AOD sensor circuitry. A transimpedence circuit was implemented for each channel with a 100k gain resistor.