

# Underwater Noise Level Study during Impact Pile Driving

FDOT Project No. BDV34 985-03, Katasha Cornwell, Office of Environmental Management, Project Manager

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# Presentation Outline

- Background Information
- Objectives
- Research Tasks
- Summary of Research Conclusions
- Recommendations
- Project Benefits
- Implementation Items
- Publications
- Equipment
- Closing Slide/Page

# Background Information

- Pile driving may make enough noise to kill/injure fish and other marine animals
- Florida does not have reliable local guidelines to predict anthropogenic noise during pile driving and it has been using CalTrans' "Technical Guidance for Assessment and Mitigation of the Hydroacoustic Effects of Pile Driving on Fish" (Buehler et al. 2015)
- California guidelines were based mostly upon percussion driving steel piles. On Florida bridges, most drives are percussion drives with concrete piles or vibratory drives with steel piles.

# Project Objectives

- Main Objective – Characterize underwater noise levels during impact pile driving throughout the State of Florida using Florida-specific conditions. In particular:
  - Florida geotechnical conditions
  - Understand the difference between concrete percussion drives, steel percussion pile drives, and steel vibratory drives

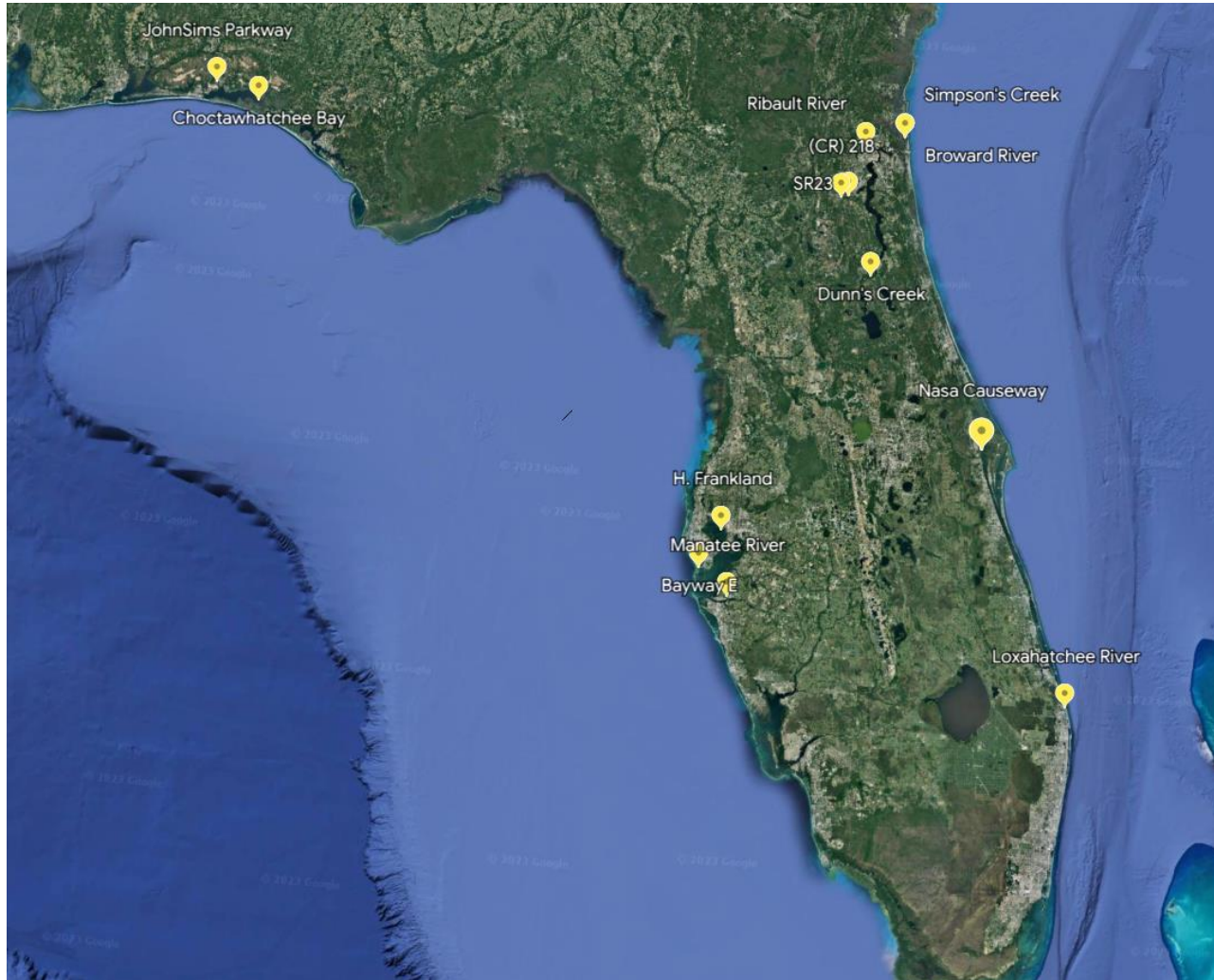
# Task 1 – Kickoff Teleconference

- Completed in May 2018

# Tasks 2 – Field Data Collection

- Completed May 2018 through February 2023
- Data consisted of 91 drives from 13 sites
  - 70 square precast concrete piles ranging from 18 inches to 36 inches
  - 5 vibratory drives w/ 18-inch sheet pile and 36-inch steel pipe
  - 16 steel impact drives on H-piles

# Site Locations





# Data Collection – Buoy System



Data Collection Buoy



Deploying the Data Collection System



# Task 3 – Data Analysis

- Decibels

- $dB = 10 \log_{10} \left[ \left( \frac{P}{P_{ref}} \right)^2 \right]$
- $P$  = sound pressure (Pa)
- $P_{ref} = 1 \mu\text{Pa}$

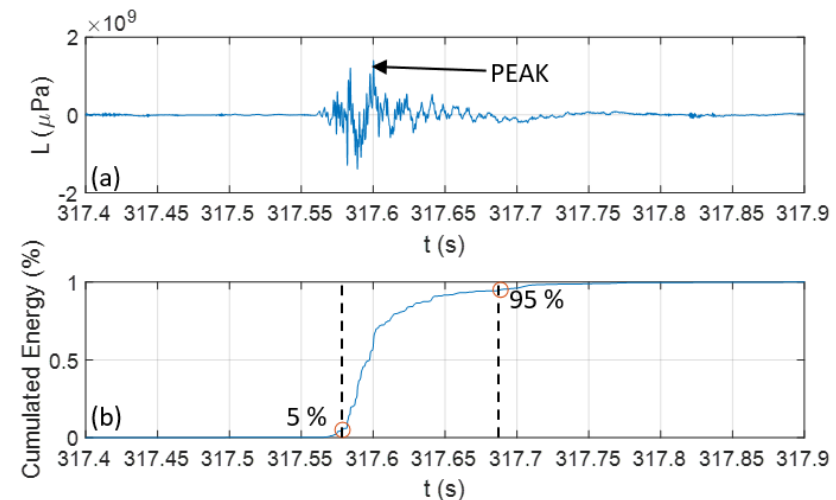
- Sound Attenuation Coefficient

- $TL = F \log_{10} \frac{R}{R_0}$
- $R$  = Range from sound source
- $R_0$  = Reference range
- $F$  = Transmission loss coefficient. According to NMFS,  $F = 15$
- $TL$  = Transmission loss (in dB)

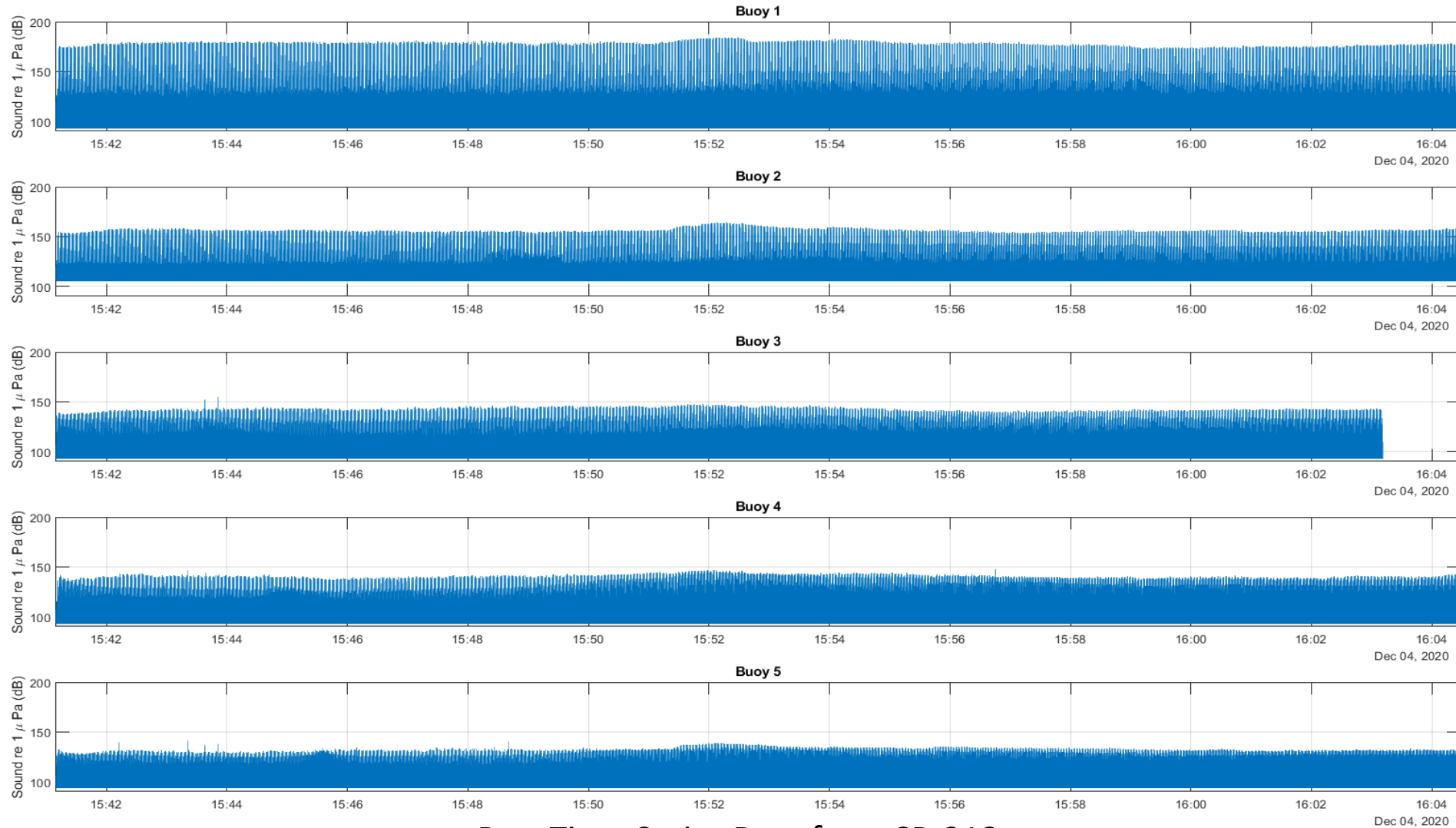
- Sound Statistics

- *Peak* = maximum sound-level
- *RMS* = root-mean-square sound-level
- *SEL* = sound exposure level

$$SEL = 10 \log_{10} \int (P/P_{ref})^2 dt$$

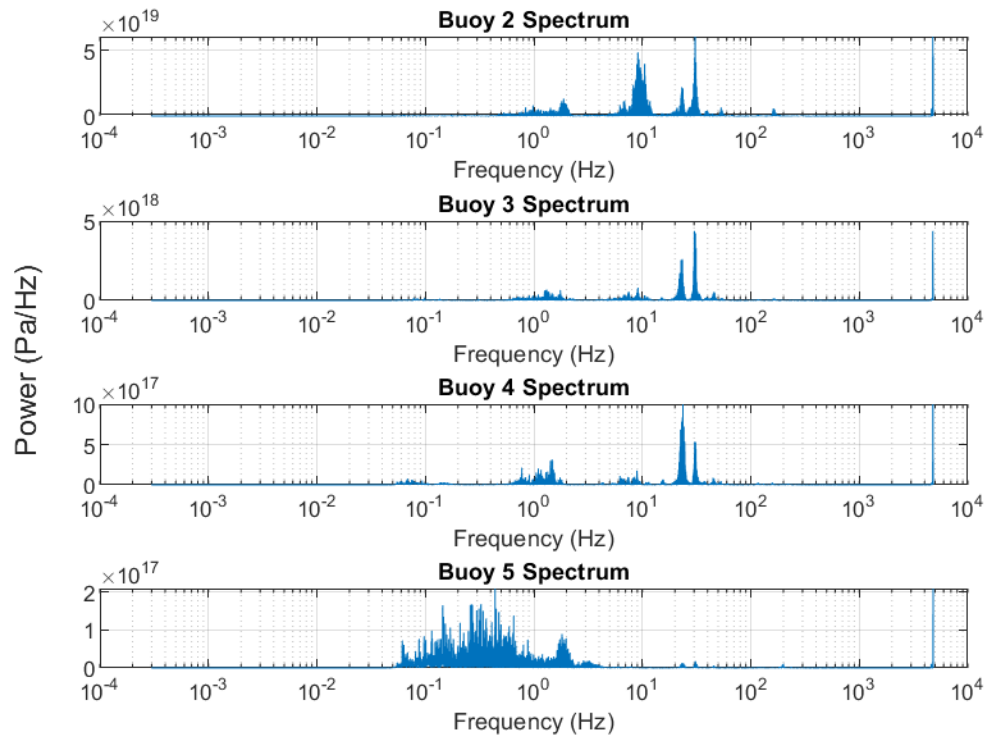


# Task 3 – Data Analysis

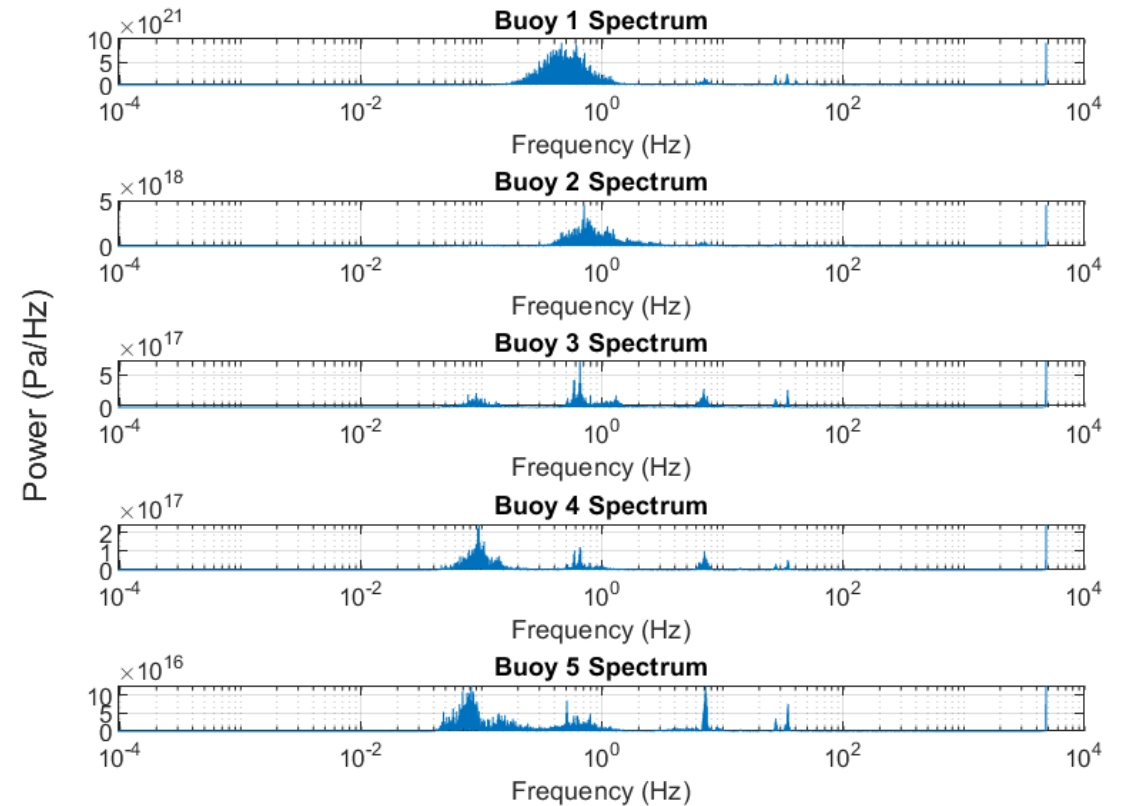


Raw Time-Series Data from CR-218

# Sample Frequency Data – Howard Frankland



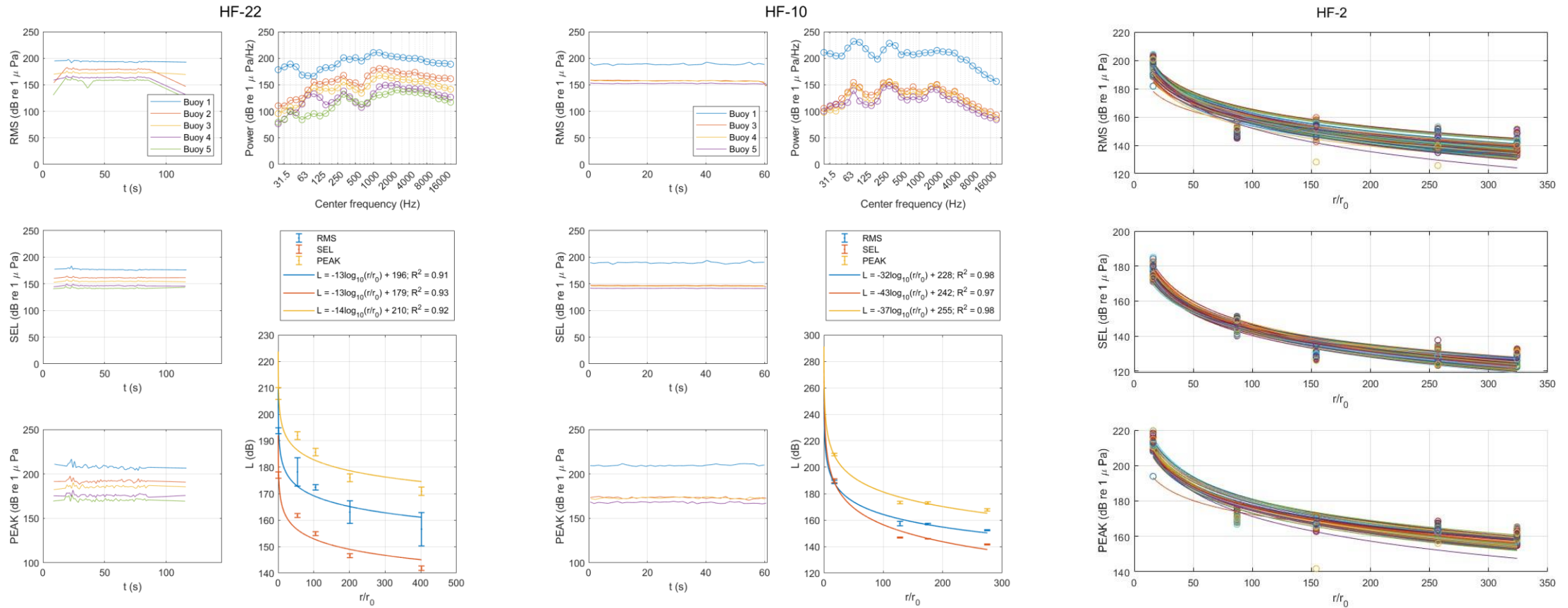
Spectral data from Howard Frankland East  
(Steel King Piles)



Spectral data from Howard Frankland West  
(Concrete Piles)

Examples of Spectral Data from the Howard Frankland Bridge

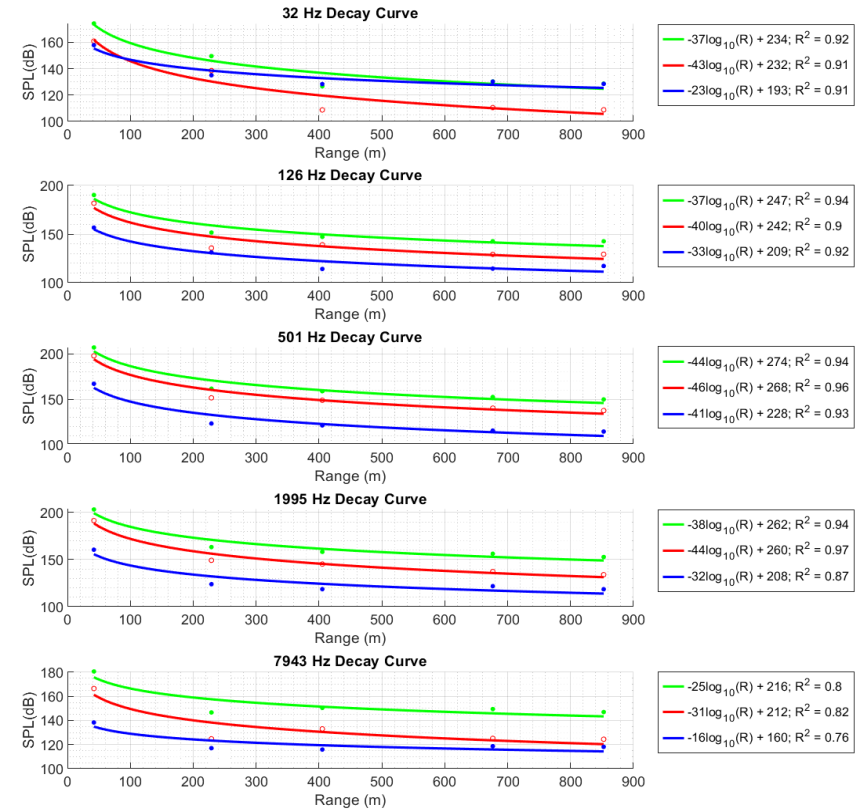
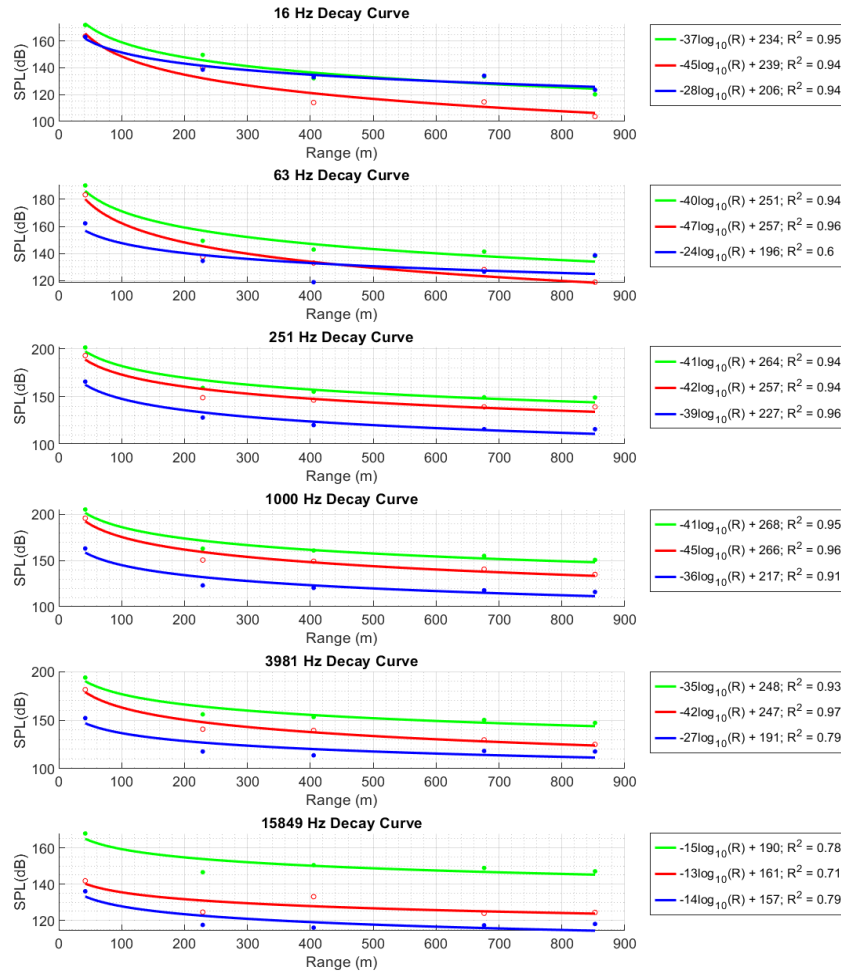
# Single-Strike and Blow-by-Blow Sound Decay Curves





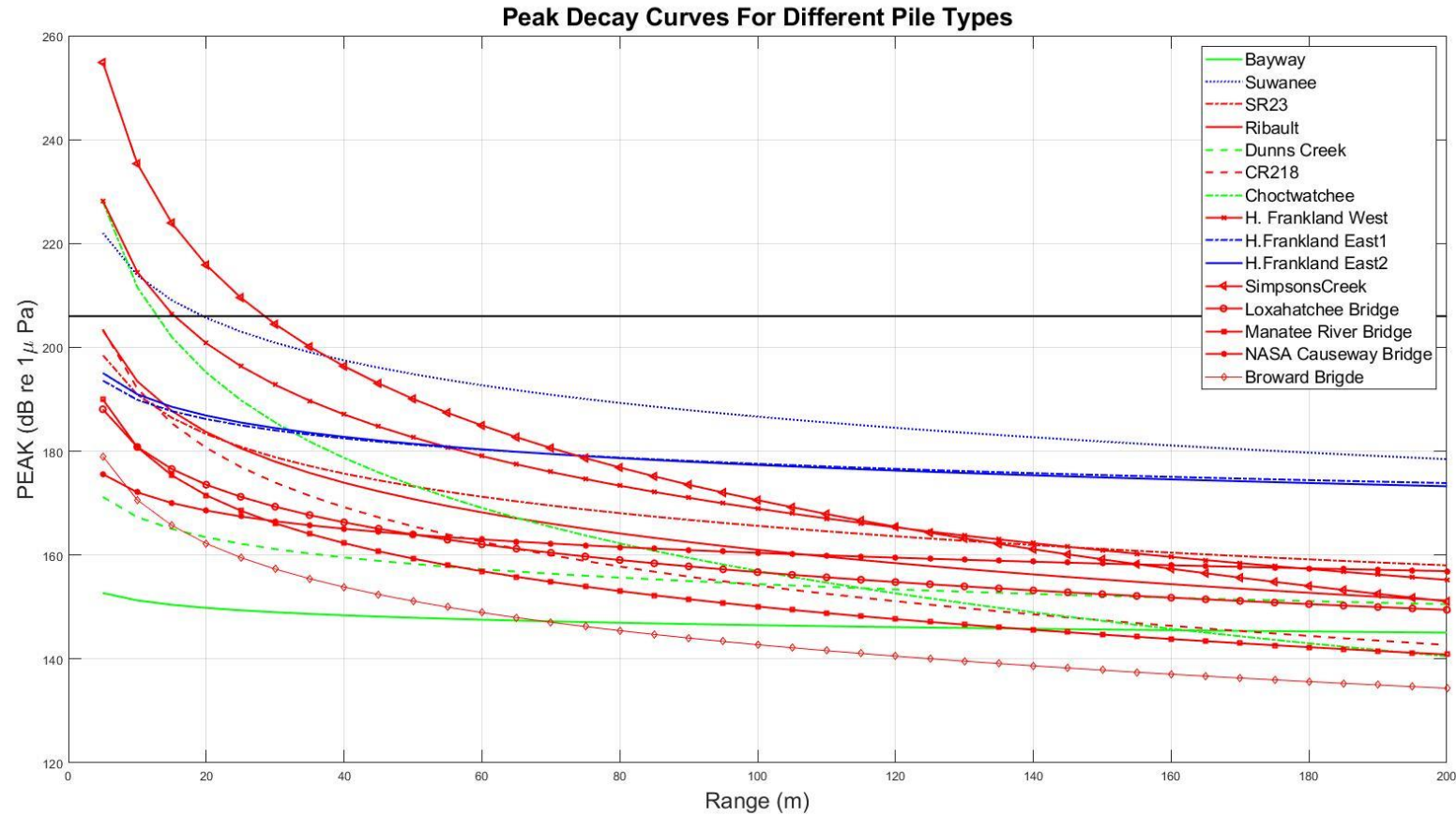
# 1/1 Octave Decay Curves

HF - 2



Examples of Peak Octave Decay Curves

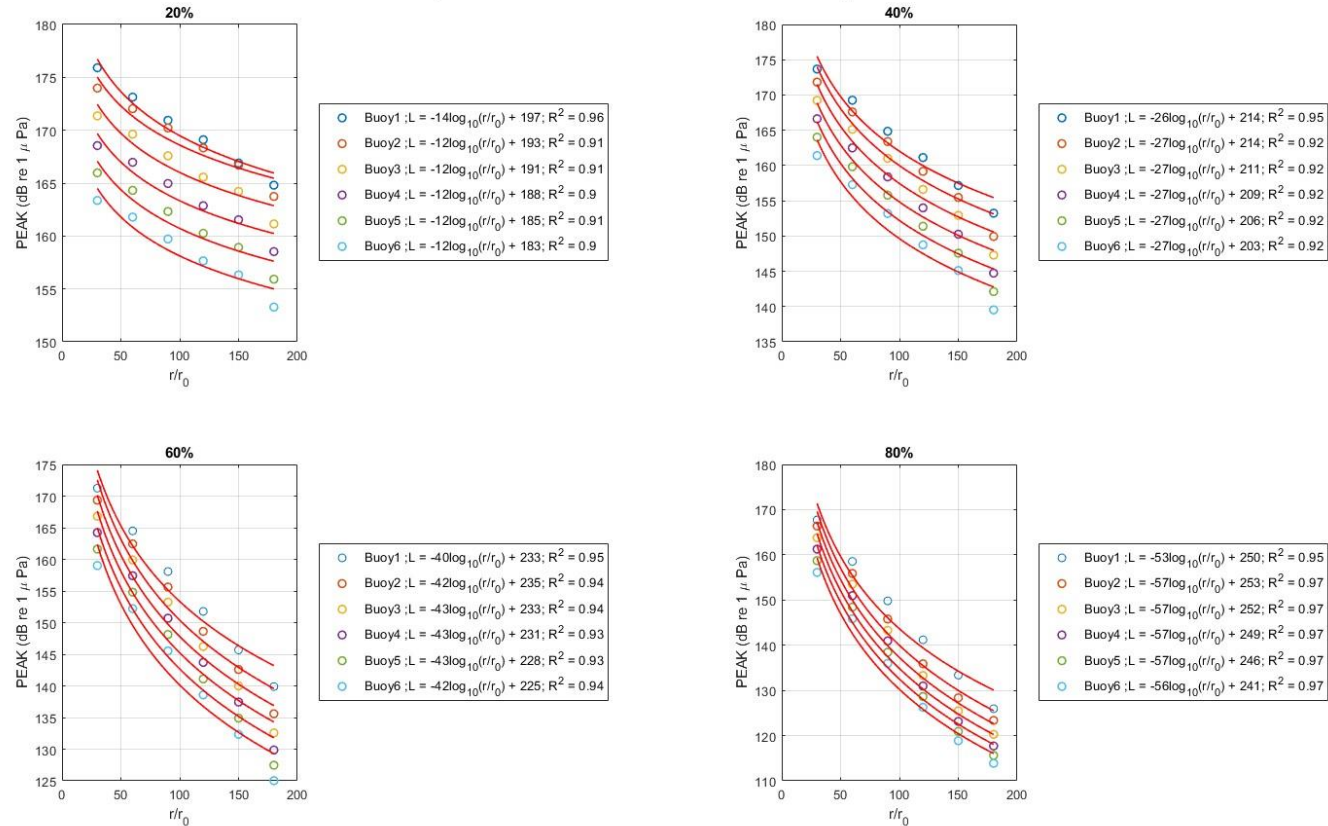
# Decay Curve Variability



Mean Decay Curves from All Sites

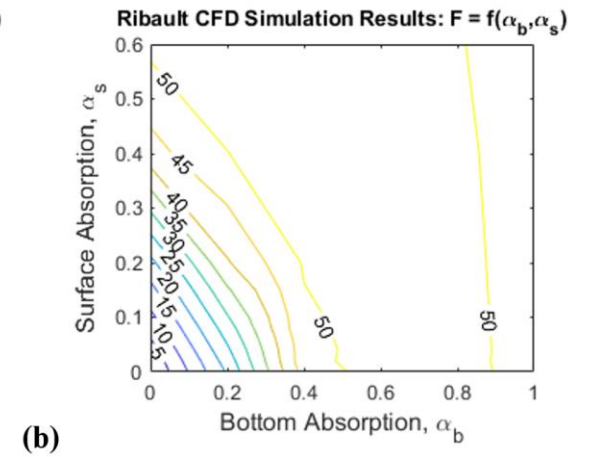
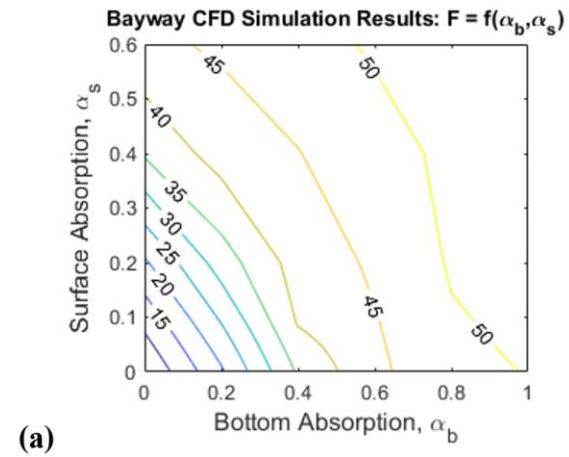
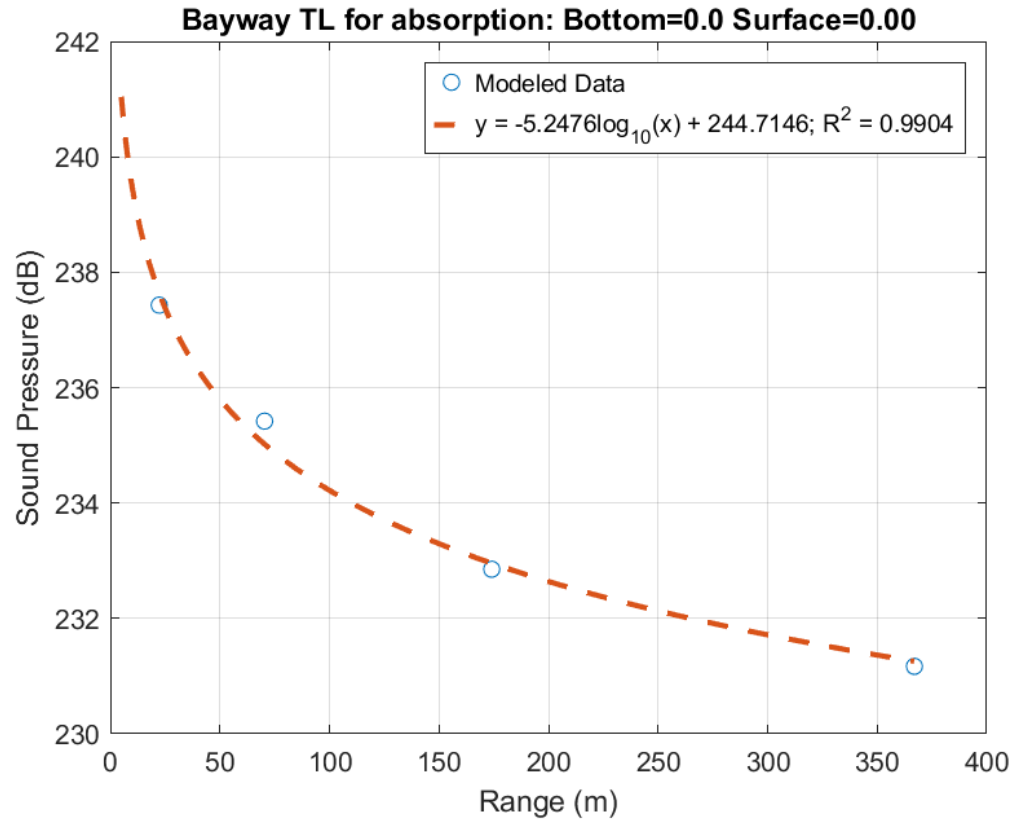
# CFD Hypothetical Data

Sound Decay Curves for Different Bottom Absorption Coefficients



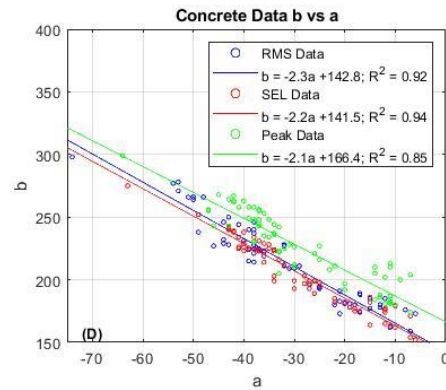
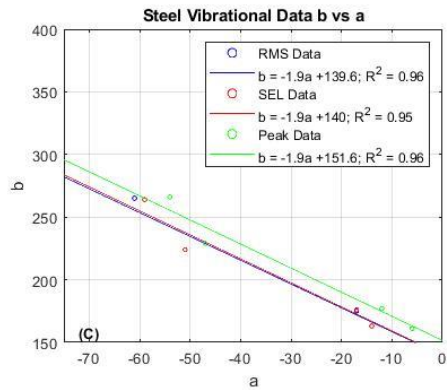
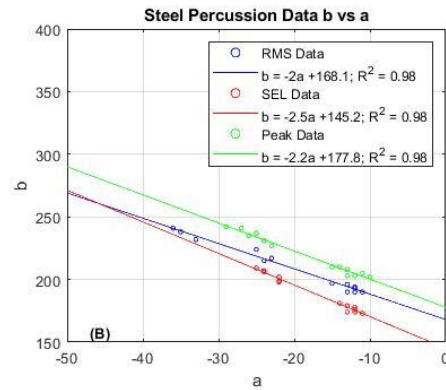
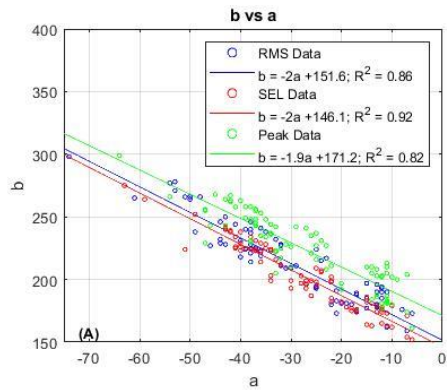
Example of CFD Hypothetical Data

# CFD Data using Local Bathymetry



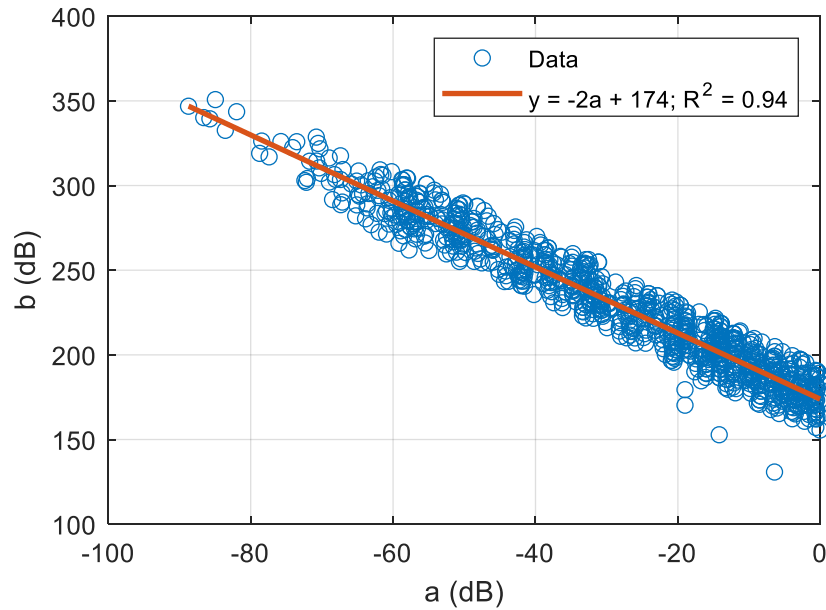


# Development of the Florida Attenuation Coefficient Tool (FACT)

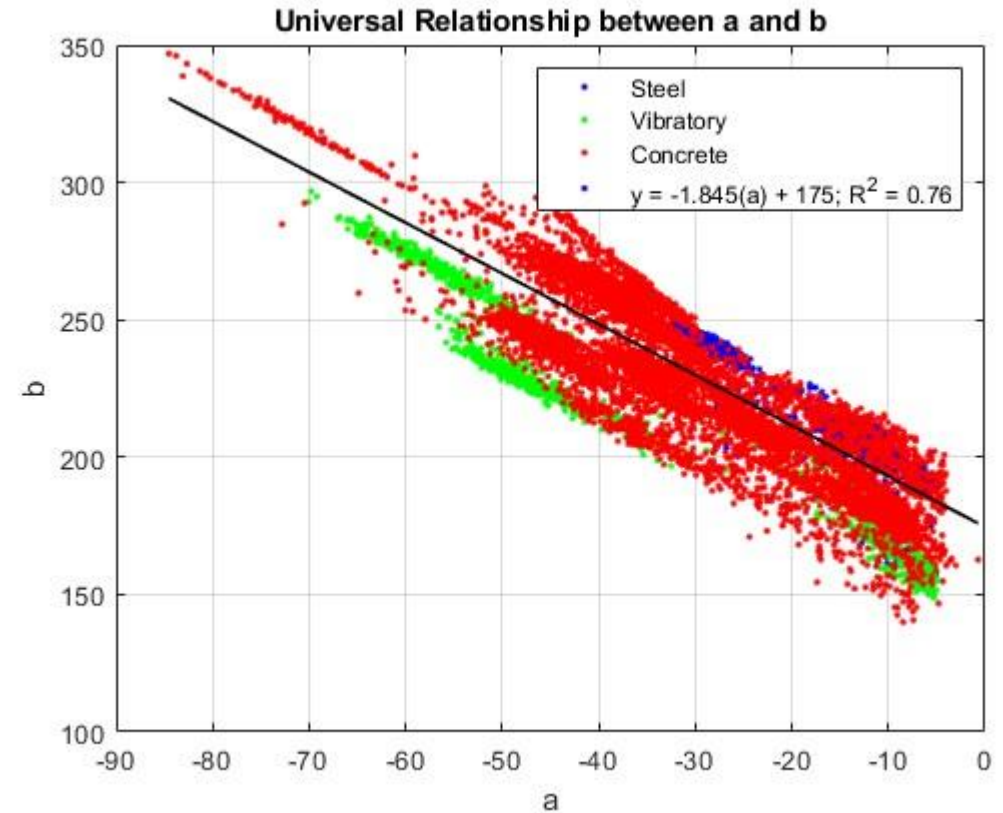


- $L_r = b + a \log_{10} \left( \frac{r}{r_0} \right)$
- $F = -a; b = L_S - B$
- $b = a_1 a + a_2 \rightarrow L_r = a_1 a + a_2 + a \log_{10} \left( \frac{r}{r_0} \right)$
- Example -  $L_S = 220 \text{ dB @ } 10 \text{ m}$ ; threshold = 206 dB; concrete pile
  - Using NMFS
    - $F = 15 \text{ dB}$
    - $r = \left\{ 10^{\left[ \frac{L_m - L_r}{F} \right]} \right\} r_m = \left\{ 10^{\left[ \frac{220 \text{ dB} - 206 \text{ dB}}{15 \text{ dB}} \right]} \right\} 10 \text{ m} = 86 \text{ m}$
  - Using FACT
    - $-a = F = \frac{L_m - a_2}{a_1 - \log_{10} \left( \frac{r}{r_0} \right)} = \frac{220 \text{ dB} - 166.4 \text{ dB}}{2.1 - \log_{10} (10 \text{ m} / 1 \text{ m})} = 49 \text{ dB}$
    - $r = \left\{ 10^{\left[ \frac{L_m - L_r}{F} \right]} \right\} r_m = \left\{ 10^{\left[ \frac{220 \text{ dB} - 206 \text{ dB}}{49 \text{ dB}} \right]} \right\} 10 \text{ m} = 19 \text{ m}$

# Is the FACT Universal?

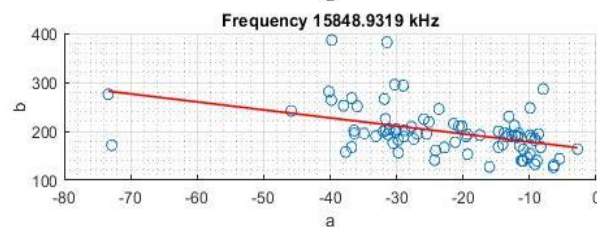
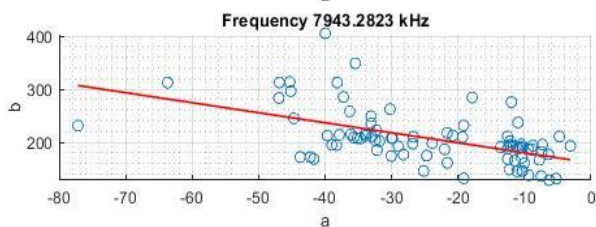
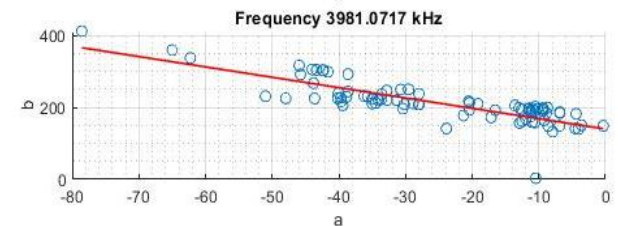
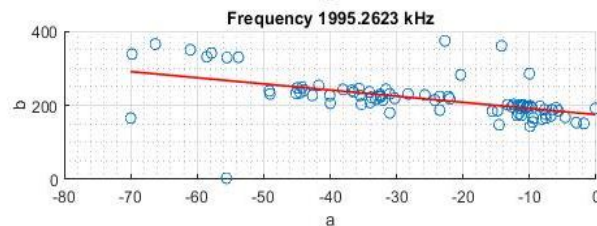
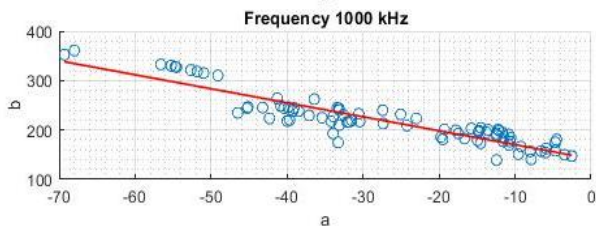
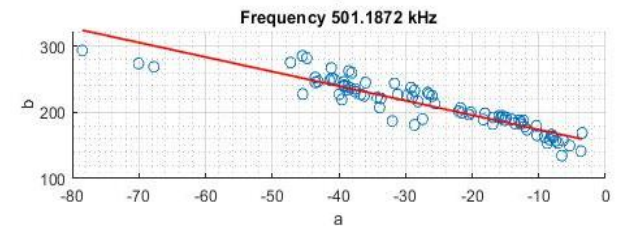
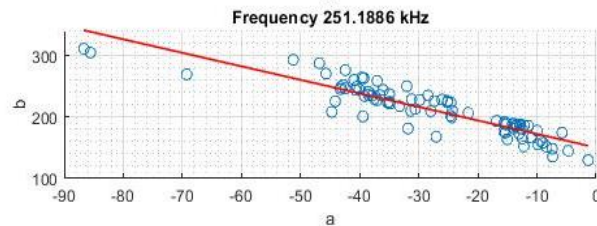
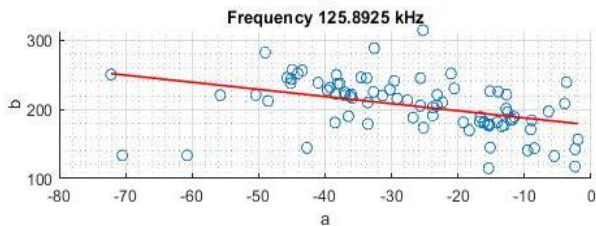
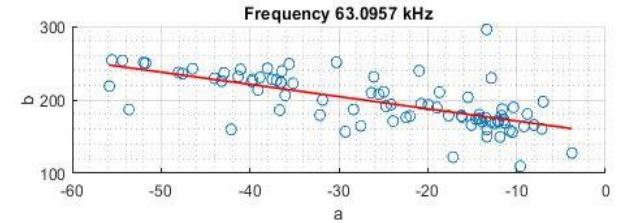
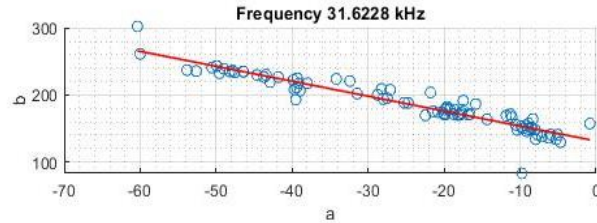
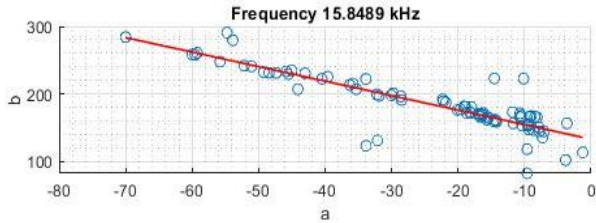


$a$  and  $b$  from all hypothetical data



$a$  and  $b$  from all blow-by-blow data

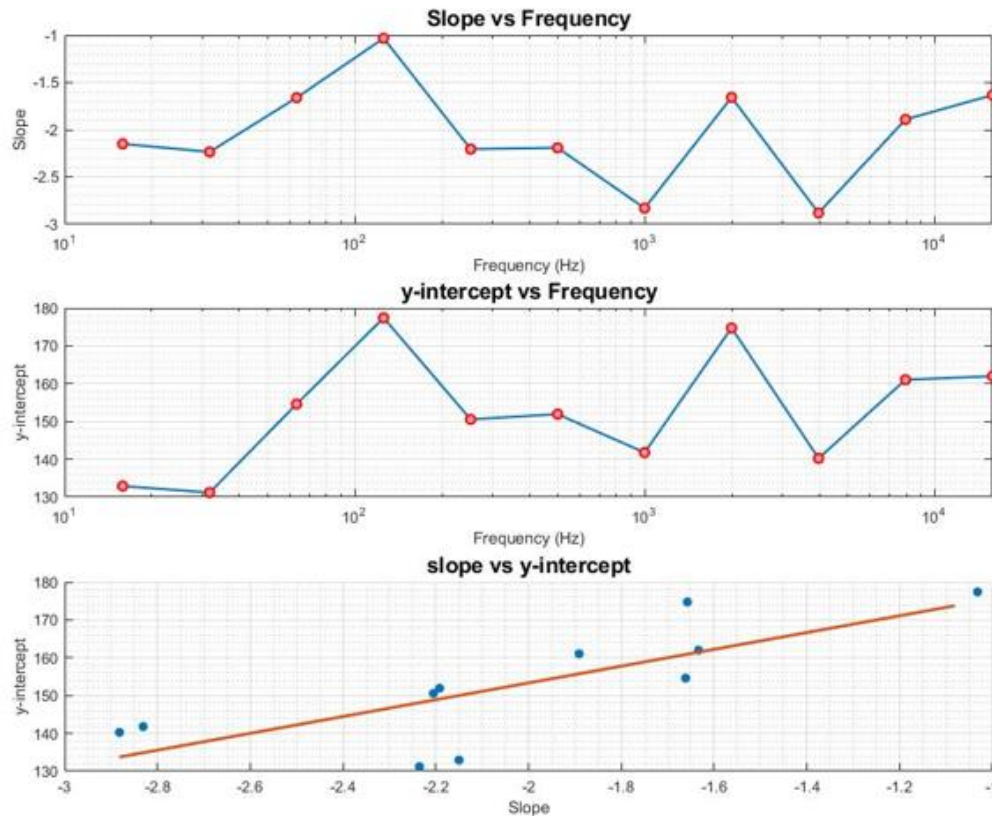
# Is the FACT Universal?



$a$  and  $b$  in each frequency bin



# Why is the FACT Universal?



Example – suppose 200 dB in each frequency bin

Frequency (Hz)	Slope (i.e., $a_1$ ; unitless)	Intercept (i.e., $a_2$ ; dB)	F-value (i.e., $a$ ; dB)
16	2.15	133	31
31.5	2.23	131	31
63	1.68	155	27
125	1.02	178	22
250	2.2	151	22
500	2.2	153	21
1000	2.83	142	20
2000	1.65	175	15
4000	2.87	140	21
8000	1.87	161	21
16000	1.65	163	22

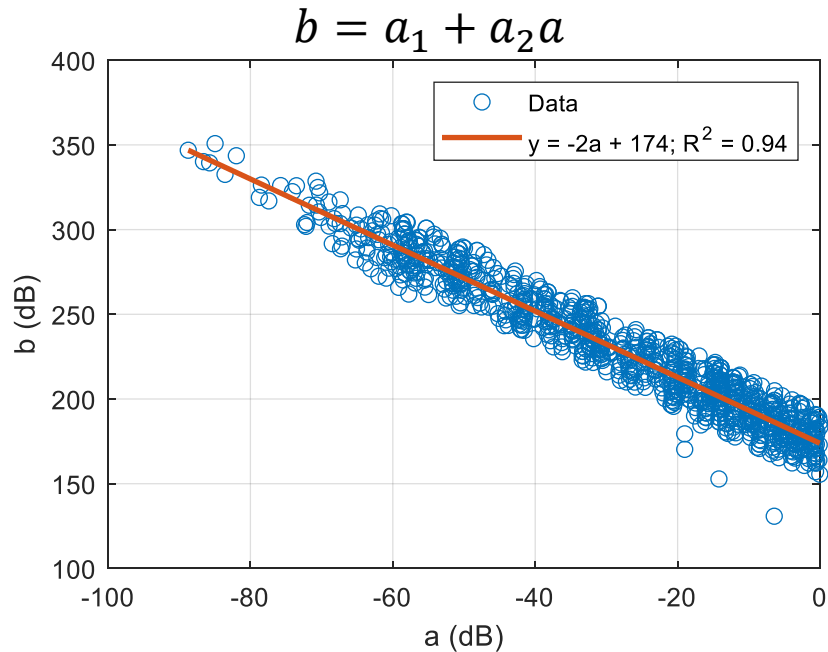
Attenuation and source-levels as functions of frequency



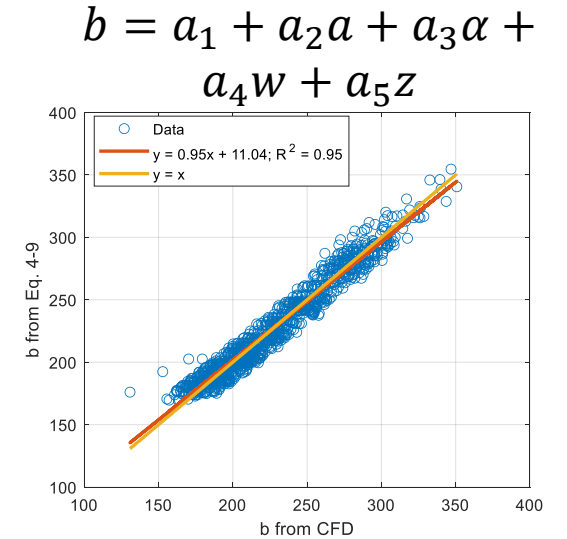
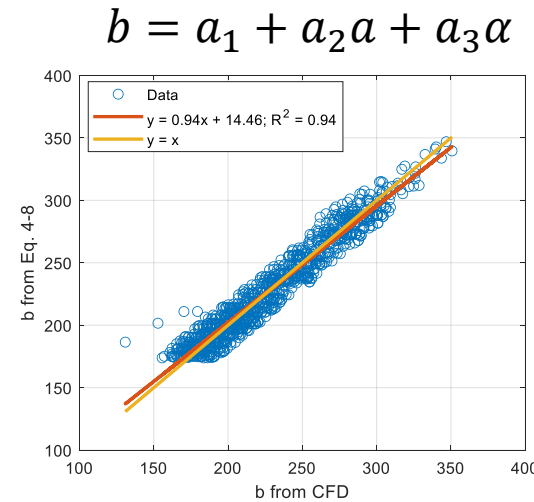
# Why is the FACT Universal?

- $L_r = b + a \log_{10} \left( \frac{r}{r_0} \right)$
- $b = a_1 a + a_2$
- $a_2 = C a_1(f) + D$
- $b = a_1(f)a + C a_1(f) + D$
- $L_r = a_1(f)a + C a_1(f) + D + a \log_{10} \left( \frac{r}{r_0} \right)$
- $L_r = D + a_1(f)[C + a] + a \log_{10} \left( \frac{r}{r_0} \right)$

# Do Including Water Depth, Geotech Absorption, or Channel Width Improve Predictive Value?



Hypothetical CFD data relationship between  $a$  and  $b$  using hypothetical CFD data



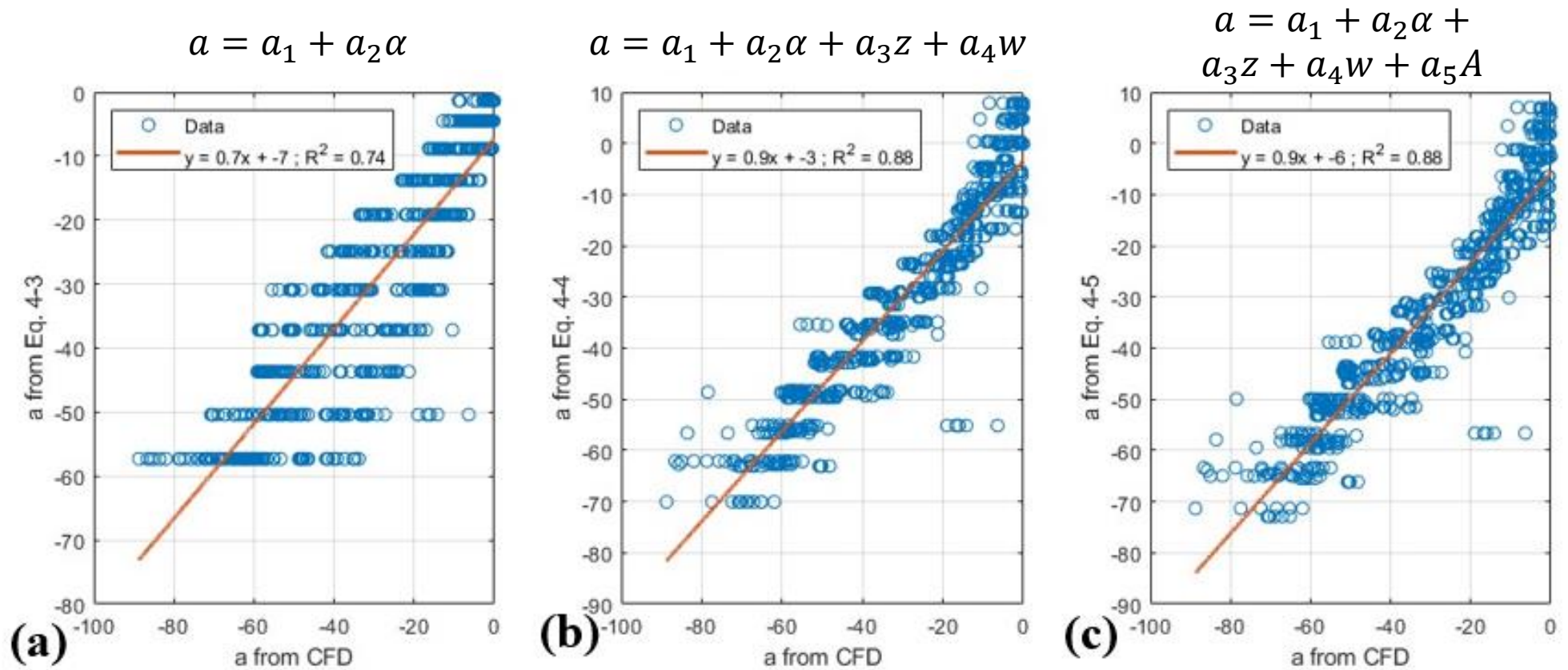
Modeled  $b$  data including geotech (left) and water depth + geotech + channel width (right) using hypothetical CFD data

$w$  = channel width

$z$  = water depth

$\alpha$  = geotech absorption coefficient

# Predicting Attenuation Without Measuring Sound at 1 Location



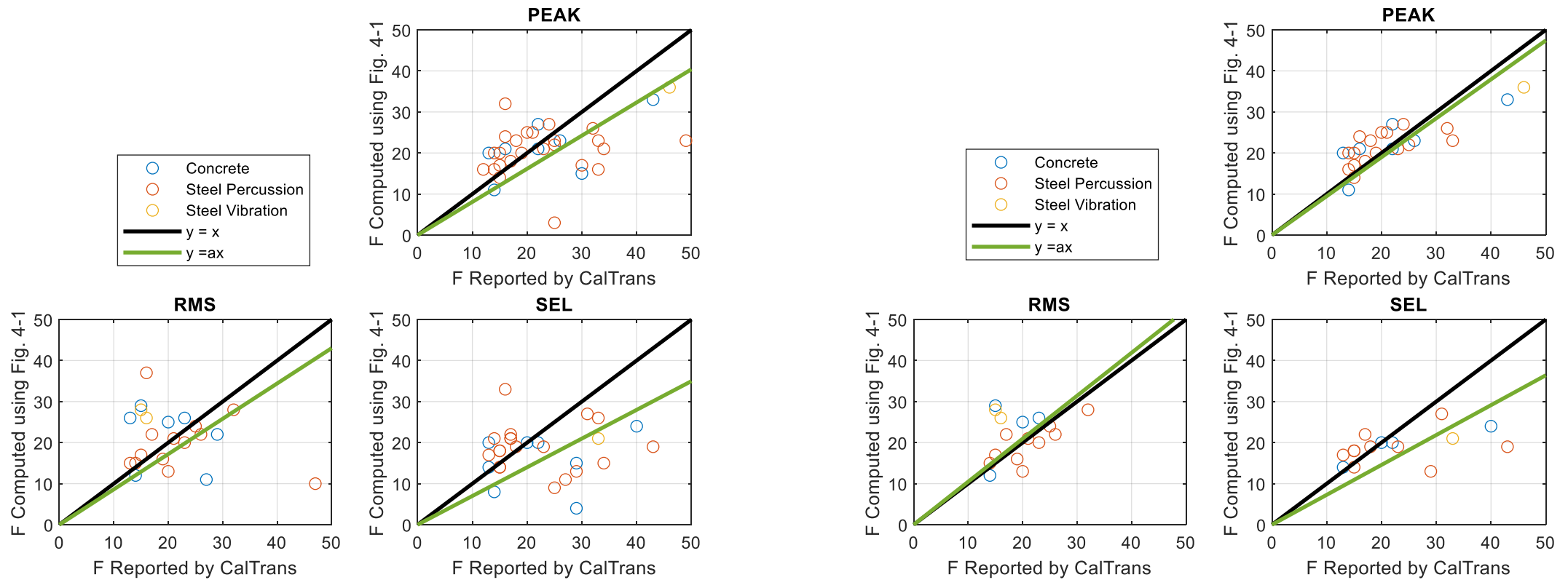
Modeled attenuation data based upon site conditions only using hypothetical CFD data

# Verification

- Using 32 datasets from CalTrans, the FACT was verified
- Very few CalTrans data from concrete and vibratory piles; mostly from steel impact driving



# Verification Results



Verification results using all data from CalTrans

Verification results using piles that conformed to FDOT piles

# Task 4 – Stakeholder Meetings

- Several meetings were held with stakeholders including representatives from NMFS, USFWS, and NOAA. These meetings began ~spring of 2021 and continued throughout the end of the project.
- As a result of these meeting, data analysis had to be repeated and reformatted several times to meet the agencies' expectations.

# Task 5 – Technical Guidance

- The FACT was implemented in the NOAA/NMFS calculator

# FACT/NMFS Calculator

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
		Acoustic Metric												
	Peak	SEL	RMS											
Drive Type	Concrete Impact													
Measured single strike level (dB)	220	220	220											
Distance (m)	10	10	10											
Number of Piles Per Day	5													
Number of Strikes Per Pile OR Vibration Duration in Minutes	20													
Attenuation Assumed (dB)	0	NMFS recommends 5 dB as default, if attenuation used												
		F-Value												
Drive Type	Peak	SEL	RMS											
Concrete Impact	49	65	53											
<b>Notes (source for estimates, etc.)</b>														
(This tool was last updated June 7, 2023)														
Drive Type (Please Choose From Below)	Coefficient	Peak	SEL	RMS										
Unknown	a1		-1.9	-2										
	a2	171.2	146.1	151.6										
Steel Impact	a1	-2.2	-2.5	-2										
	a2	177.8	145.2	168.1										
Concrete Impact	a1	-2.1	-2.2	-2.3										
	a2	166.4	141.5	142.8										
Steel Vibration	a1	-1.9	-1.9	-1.9										
	a2	151.6	140	139.8										



# FACT/NMFS Calculator

**IMPACT PILE DRIVING**  
VERSION 1.0 Multi-Species: 2021

**STEP 1: GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION**

PROJECT TITLE and CONTACT:

PROJECT/SOURCE INFORMATION (year, material, number, pile strikes, etc.):

NOTES (Please include all assumptions):

**STEP 2: QUANTITATIVE PROJECT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

Drive Type:	SEL <sub>in</sub> METRICS			WEIGHTING (WFA in MHz)
	Peak	SEL <sub>avg</sub>	RMS	
Unattenuated Single strike level (dB) (see Pile Level Tab for average values Copy ONLY Pile Values (12), not formulas)	220	220	220	Effective Quiet (Fish Only) See Turtle Default WFA (MHz) Marine Mammal Default WFA (MHz)
Attenuated Single strike level (dB) (see Pile Level Tab for average values Copy ONLY Pile Values (12), not formulas)	220	220	220	
Distance associated with single strike level (meters) (Typically 10-m but please double check when being used)	10	10	10	WFA Weighting Factor Adjustment
Transmission loss constant (LWED TO FOOT 100L)	40	85	50	
Number of piles per day (best estimate based on previous experience)	5	Attenuation assumed (e.g., bubble curtain) (enter positive number)	0	
Number of strikes per pile (best estimate based on previous experience)	20			
Number of strikes per day	100			
Cumulative SEL at measured distance	240			

**RESULTANT ISOPLETHS\* (Range to Effect)**

**FISHES**

ONSET OF PHYSICAL INJURY BEHAVIOR	SEL <sub>in</sub> Threshold (dB)		RMS Threshold (dB)
	Peak (PK) Threshold (dB)	7 dB ± 2 g	
	15.4	64.6	74.4

**SEA TURTLES**

PTS ONSET BEHAVIOR	SEL <sub>in</sub> Threshold (dB)		RMS Threshold (dB)
	Peak (PK) Threshold (dB)	SEL <sub>avg</sub> Threshold (dB)	
	232	204	175

**MARINE MAMMALS**

Hearing Group	PTS ONSET		BEHAVIOR	
	LF Cetacean PTS Peak (PK) Threshold (dB)	MF Cetacean PTS Peak (PK) Threshold (dB)	HF Cetacean PTS Peak (PK) Threshold (dB)	PW Pinniped PTS Peak (PK) Threshold (dB)
	19.5	6.2	25.4	11.8

**ALL MARINE MAMMALS BEHAVIOR**

RMS Threshold (dB)	PTS ONSET		BEHAVIOR	
	LF Cetacean PTS SEL <sub>avg</sub> Threshold (dB)	MF Cetacean PTS SEL <sub>avg</sub> Threshold (dB)	HF Cetacean PTS SEL <sub>avg</sub> Threshold (dB)	PW Pinniped PTS SEL <sub>avg</sub> Threshold (dB)
160.4	147.8	52.9	185.5	121.9

**WEIGHTING FUNCTION CALCULATIONS (Sea Turtles and Marine Mammals Only)**

Weighting Function Parameters	Low-Frequency Cetaceans	Mid-Frequency Cetaceans	High-Frequency Cetaceans	Phocid Pinnipeds	Otariid Pinnipeds	Sea Turtles
a	1	1.5	1.8	1	2	1.4
b	2	2	2	2	2	2
c	40	15	10	1.5	0.8	0.077
d	18	115	140	20	20	0.44
e	0.13	1.2	1.36	0.75	0.64	2.35
Adjustment (dB)	-0.01	-0.14	-0.21	-0.36	-0.16	0.00

**Vibratory Pile Driving**  
VERSION 1.0 Multi-Species: 2021  
KEY

**STEP 1: GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION**

PROJECT TITLE and CONTACT:

PROJECT/SOURCE INFORMATION (year, material, number, duration to drive (hr), etc.):

NOTES (please include all assumptions):

**STEP 2: QUANTITATIVE PROJECT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

Drive Type:	METRIC		WEIGHTING (WFA in MHz)
	SEL <sub>in</sub> (NOT Peak)	RMS (NOT Peak)	
Disturbance Sound Pressure Level (dB) (see Pile Level Tab for average values Copy ONLY Pile Values (12), not formulas)	Switch to Impact Calculator	Switch to Impact Calculator	See Turtle Default WFA (MHz) Marine Mammal Default WFA (MHz)
Attenuated Sound Pressure Level (dB) (see Pile Level Tab for average values Copy ONLY Pile Values (12), not formulas)	Switch to Impact Calculator	Switch to Impact Calculator	0.16 2.5
Distance associated with sound pressure level measurement (meters) (Typically 10-m but please double check when being used)	Switch to Impact Calculator	Switch to Impact Calculator	
Transmission loss constant (NMP5 experience) (2 ± estimate)	Switch to Impact Calculator	Switch to Impact Calculator	
Number of piles per day (best estimate based on previous experience)	Switch to Impact Calculator	Attenuation (e.g., bubble curtain) (enter positive number)	Switch to Impact Calculator
Duration to drive a single pile (including best estimate based on previous experience)	Switch to Impact Calculator		
Duration of Sound Production within a day (seconds)	Switch to Impact Calculator	Cumulative SEL at measured distance (dB)	240
10 Log (duration of sound production)	Switch to Impact Calculator		

**RESULTANT ISOPLETHS\* (Range to Effect)**

**FISHES**

ONSET OF PHYSICAL INJURY BEHAVIOR	SEL <sub>in</sub> Threshold (dB)		RMS Threshold (dB)
	Peak (PK) Threshold (dB)	7 dB ± 2 g	
	15.4	64.6	74.4

**SEA TURTLES**

PTS ONSET BEHAVIOR	SEL <sub>in</sub> Threshold (dB)		RMS Threshold (dB)
	Peak (PK) Threshold (dB)	SEL <sub>avg</sub> Threshold (dB)	
	232	204	175

**MARINE MAMMALS**

Hearing Group	PTS ONSET		BEHAVIOR	
	LF Cetacean PTS Peak (PK) Threshold (dB)	MF Cetacean PTS Peak (PK) Threshold (dB)	HF Cetacean PTS Peak (PK) Threshold (dB)	PW Pinniped PTS Peak (PK) Threshold (dB)
	19.5	6.2	25.4	11.8

**ALL MARINE MAMMALS BEHAVIOR**

RMS Threshold (dB)	PTS ONSET		BEHAVIOR	
	LF Cetacean PTS SEL <sub>avg</sub> Threshold (dB)	MF Cetacean PTS SEL <sub>avg</sub> Threshold (dB)	HF Cetacean PTS SEL <sub>avg</sub> Threshold (dB)	PW Pinniped PTS SEL <sub>avg</sub> Threshold (dB)
160.4	147.8	52.9	185.5	121.9

**WEIGHTING FUNCTION CALCULATIONS (Sea Turtles and Marine Mammals Only)**

Weighting Function Parameters	Low-Frequency Cetaceans	Mid-Frequency Cetaceans	High-Frequency Cetaceans	Phocid Pinnipeds	Otariid Pinnipeds	Sea Turtles
a	1	1.5	1.8	1	2	1.4
b	2	2	2	2	2	2
c	40	15	10	1.5	0.8	0.077
d	18	115	140	20	20	0.44
e	0.13	1.2	1.36	0.75	0.64	2.35
Adjustment (dB)	-0.01	-0.14	-0.21	-0.36	-0.16	0.00



# FACT/NMFS Calculator

## IMPACT PILE DRIVING REPORT

PRINT IN LANDSCAPE TO CAPTURE ENTIRE SCREEN

(if OTHER INFO or NOTES get cut-off, please include information elsewhere)

Example title

PROJECT INFORMATION	PEAK	SEL <sub>ss</sub>	RMS
Attenuated Single strike level (dB)	220	220	220
Distance associated with single strike level (meters)	10	10	10
Transmission loss constant	49	10	10
Number of piles per day	100		
Number of strikes per pile	20		
Number of strikes per day	1000		
Cumulative SEL at measured distance	230		

OTHER INFO

NOTES

Attenuation

### RESULTANT ISOPLETHS

(Range to Effects)

#### FISHES

ISOPLETHS (meters)	ONSET OF	PHYSICAL INJURY		BEHAVIOR
	Peak Isopleth	SEL <sub>cum</sub> Isopleth		RMS Isopleth
		Fish ≥ 2 g	Fish < 2 g	
	19.4	64.6	74.4	150.9

#### SEA TURTLES

ISOPLETHS (meters)	PTS ONSET		BEHAVIOR
	Peak Isopleth	SEL <sub>cum</sub> Isopleth	RMS Isopleth

#### MARINE MAMMALS

	LF Cetacean	MF Cetaceans	HF Cetaceans	PW Pinniped	OW Pinnipeds
PTS ONSET (Peak isopleth, meters)	10.5	6.2	23.4	11.0	5.7
PTS ONSET (SEL <sub>cum</sub> isopleth, meters)	147.8	52.9	155.9	121.9	54.4
	ALL MM				
Behavior (RMS isopleth, meters)	102.4				

## VIBRATORY PILE DRIVING REPORT

PRINT IN LANDSCAPE TO CAPTURE ENTIRE SCREEN

(if OTHER INFO or NOTES get cut-off, please include information elsewhere)

Switch to Impact Calculator

PROJECT INFORMATION	SEL	RMS
Attenuated Sound pressure level (dB)	Switch to Impact Calculator	Switch to Impact Calculator
Distance associated with sound pressure level (meters)	Switch to Impact Calculator	Switch to Impact Calculator
Transmission loss constant	Switch to Impact Calculator	Switch to Impact Calculator
Number of piles per day	Switch to Impact Calculator	
Duration to drive pile (minutes)	Switch to Impact Calculator	
Duration of sound production in day	Switch to Impact Calculator	
Cumulative SEL at measured distance		#VALUE!

OTHER INFO

NOTES

Attenuation

### RESULTANT ISOPLETHS

(Range to Effects)

#### FISHES

ISOPLETHS (meters)	BEHAVIOR
	RMS Isopleth
	0.0

#### SEA TURTLES

ISOPLETHS (meters)	PTS ONSET	BEHAVIOR
	SEL <sub>cum</sub> Isopleth	RMS Isopleth
	#NUM!	0.0

#### MARINE MAMMALS

	LF Cetacean	MF Cetaceans	HF Cetaceans	PW Pinniped	OW Pinnipeds
PTS ONSET (SEL <sub>cum</sub> isopleth, meters)	#NUM!	#NUM!	#NUM!	#NUM!	#NUM!
	ALL MM				
Behavior (RMS isopleth, meters)	0.0				

$$W(f) = C + 10 \log_{10} \left\{ \frac{(f/f_1)^{2a}}{[1 + (f/f_1)^2]^a [1 + (f/f_2)^2]^b} \right\}$$

# Summary, Research Conclusions, and Recommendations

- Underwater noise data were collected at 13 sites around Florida. Overall, data from 98 drive events were collected. Data were collected from five sites in northeast Florida, two sites from the Panhandle; three sites near Tampa Bay; one site near Cape Canaveral; and one site near Port St. Lucie.
- Computational analysis using CFD showed that geometrical spreading coupled with local bathymetry data could not explain measured field data. However, inclusion of bottom absorption allowed one to accurately reproduce field data.
- Analysis of these data showed that usually, using an  $F$ -value of 15 to predict underwater TL may be overly conservative for concrete piles in the sense that this estimate for  $F$  may underpredict sound attenuation. For steel piles driven via a percussion hammer, using an  $F$ -value of 15 was relatively close to measured data most of the time. While data from steel vibrational drives showed much higher attenuation than  $F = 15$ , and verification produced relatively accurate results, these data are limited and should be treated cautiously.
- Field data showed that sound attenuation was frequency dependent in the sense that very low frequencies (i.e., less than ~100 Hz to ~1,000 Hz) tended to attenuate faster than relatively high frequency sound.
- Mathematical analysis showed that the frequency dependency in attenuation was interrelated to the attenuation associated with geometrical spreading (i.e., the  $F$ -values or  $a$  terms presented throughout this report).

# Summary, Research Conclusions, and Recommendations

- Based upon the field data, a new design tool was developed to estimate  $F$ -values that was dubbed the FACT. The FACT is based upon the interplay between attenuation and the source-level that were consistently apparent in both field and hypothetical computational data. Its limitations are (i) it requires sound-level to be known at some distance from a pile drive; and (ii) the sound-level used in (i) must be above some threshold associated with the design tool's coefficient. In addition, we recommend using this tool only for piles of similar shape and dimension as the piles studied and verified in this report. Specifically, these are:
  - i) Square concrete piles between 18 inches and 36 inches wide driven via impact driving.
  - ii) Circular steel piles or sheet piles driven with an impact hammer up to a maximum diameter of 66 inches.
  - iii) 18-inch wide sheet piles driven with a vibrational hammer or 24-inch diameter circular piles driven with a vibrational hammer.
  - iv) Water depths between 2 m and 15 m.
- The FACT was verified using data reported by CalTrans (Buehler et al. 2015) at 32 sites where  $F$ -values were reported explicitly and where reported sound-levels were above the threshold mentioned above. In general, the FACT performed well in the sense that most of the time, it returned  $F$ -value that were either within 5 dB of reported values or were conservative.

# Project Benefits

- Quantitative
  - New quantitative design tool designed for Florida-specific pile driving using data from Florida
- Qualitative
  - Prior to this project, all underwater noise due to pile driving relied upon data from CalTrans

# Implementation Items

- The FACT is easy to implement, and a MS Excel spreadsheet/calculator has already been developed for this



# Publications

- Crowley, R., Makoleo, M.\*, Mushi, C.\*, Schaaf, A.\*, Sapp, E.\*, Gelsleichter, J., and Shamet, R. (abstract accepted, 2024). Validation of an empirical model for underwater noise due to pile driving based upon high attenuation at lower frequencies in shallow water. *GeoenvironMeet 2024*, Portland, OR, Sep. 28-11.
- Crowley, R., Schaaf, A.\*, Mushi, C.\*, Makoleo, M.\*, Sapp, E.\*, Gelsleichter, J., and Kopp, B.T. (abstract accepted, 2024). Refinement and implementation of a new empirical model for predicting underwater noise due to pile driving. *Geo-Congress 2024*, Vancouver, BC, Feb. 25-28.
- Crowley, R., Schaaf, A.\*, Mushi, C.\*, Makoleo, M.\*, Kopp, B., Dally, W.R., and Gelsleichter, J. (2023). Development of a new empirical model for predicting underwater noise due to pile driving. *Geo-Congress 2023*, Los Angeles, CA, March 26-29.
- Bosco, M.\*, Crowley, R., Sypula, D.\*, Schaaf, A.\*, Rivera, B.\*, Kopp, B., Dally, W.R., and Gelsleichter, J. (2022). Analysis of anthropogenic noise due to pile driving using computational fluid dynamics. *Geo-Congress 2022*, Charlotte, NC, March 20-23.
- Crowley, R., Berube, J.\*, Matemu, C.\*, Clark, M.\*, Kopp, B., Dally, W.R., and Gelsleichter, J. (2020). Development of a unique instrumentation system to monitor underwater noise due to pile driving. *Geo-Congress 2020*, Minneapolis, MN, February 25.

# Equipment

- Hydrophones/buoys – still at UNF but can be used in the future if needed

Thank you for Supporting this Research!

