

AGR-5/6/7 Experiment Status as of the End of Cycle 166A

Joe Palmer

November 2019



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operated by Battelle Energy Alliance

AGR-5/6/7 Experiment Status as of the End of Cycle 166A

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**Idaho National Laboratory
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83415**

<http://www.inl.gov>

**Prepared for the
U.S. Department of Energy**

**Under DOE Idaho Operations Office
Contract DE-AC07-05ID14517**

AGR-5/6/7 Operations Summary from Start of Irradiation Through First Half of Cycle 166A

Technical Coordination Team
November 11, 2019

Joe Palmer
Mechanical Engineer, PE



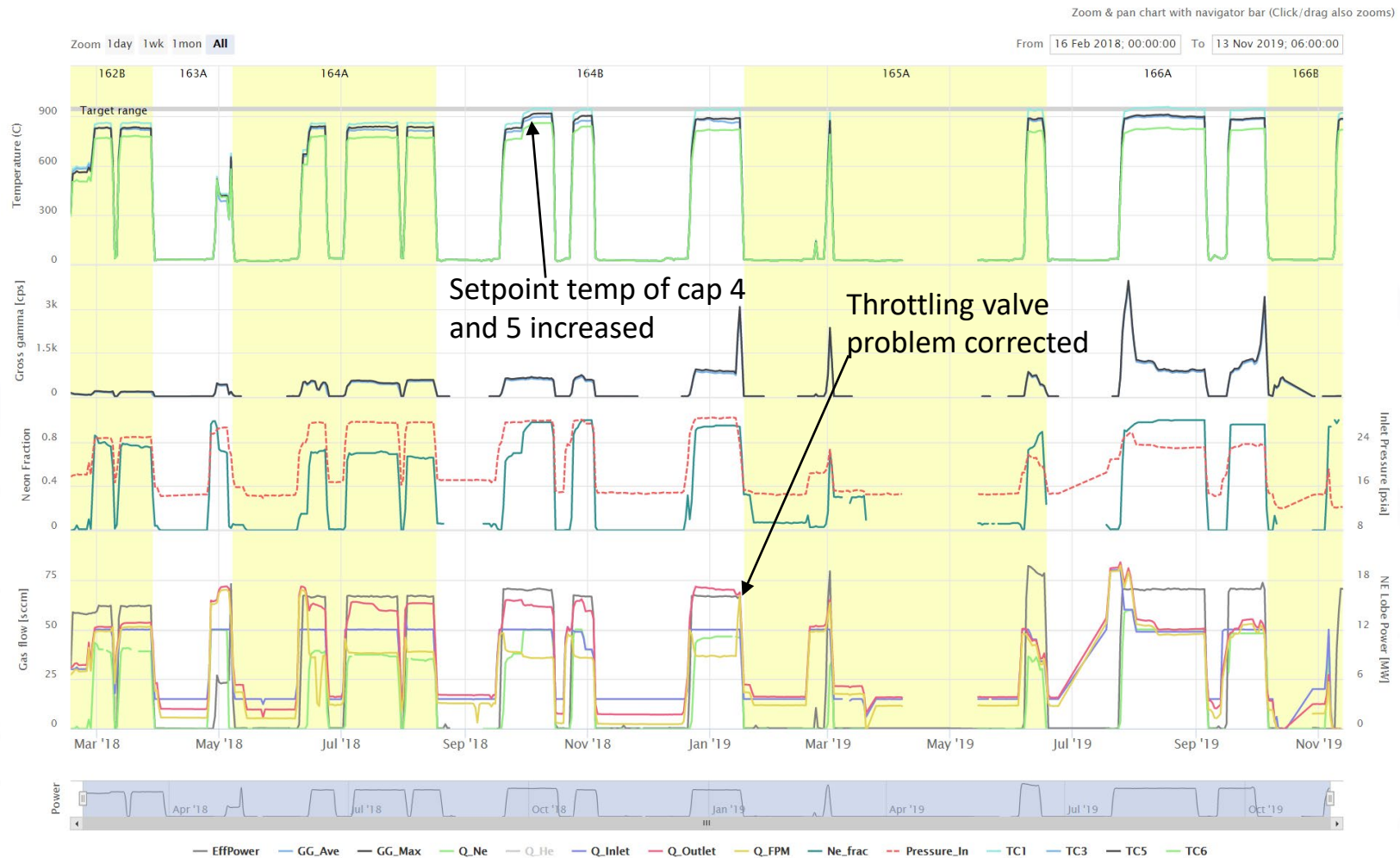
Overall, the first three cycles of irradiation proceeded as planned

Items of note:

- Failure rate of thermocouples was higher than expected
- Downstream needle valves were throttled resulting in part of exhaust flow being diverted prior to reaching fission product monitors (this was corrected near the end of cycle 164B)
- No evidence of fuel failures on fission product monitoring system

Capsule 4 NDMAS data for entire irradiation

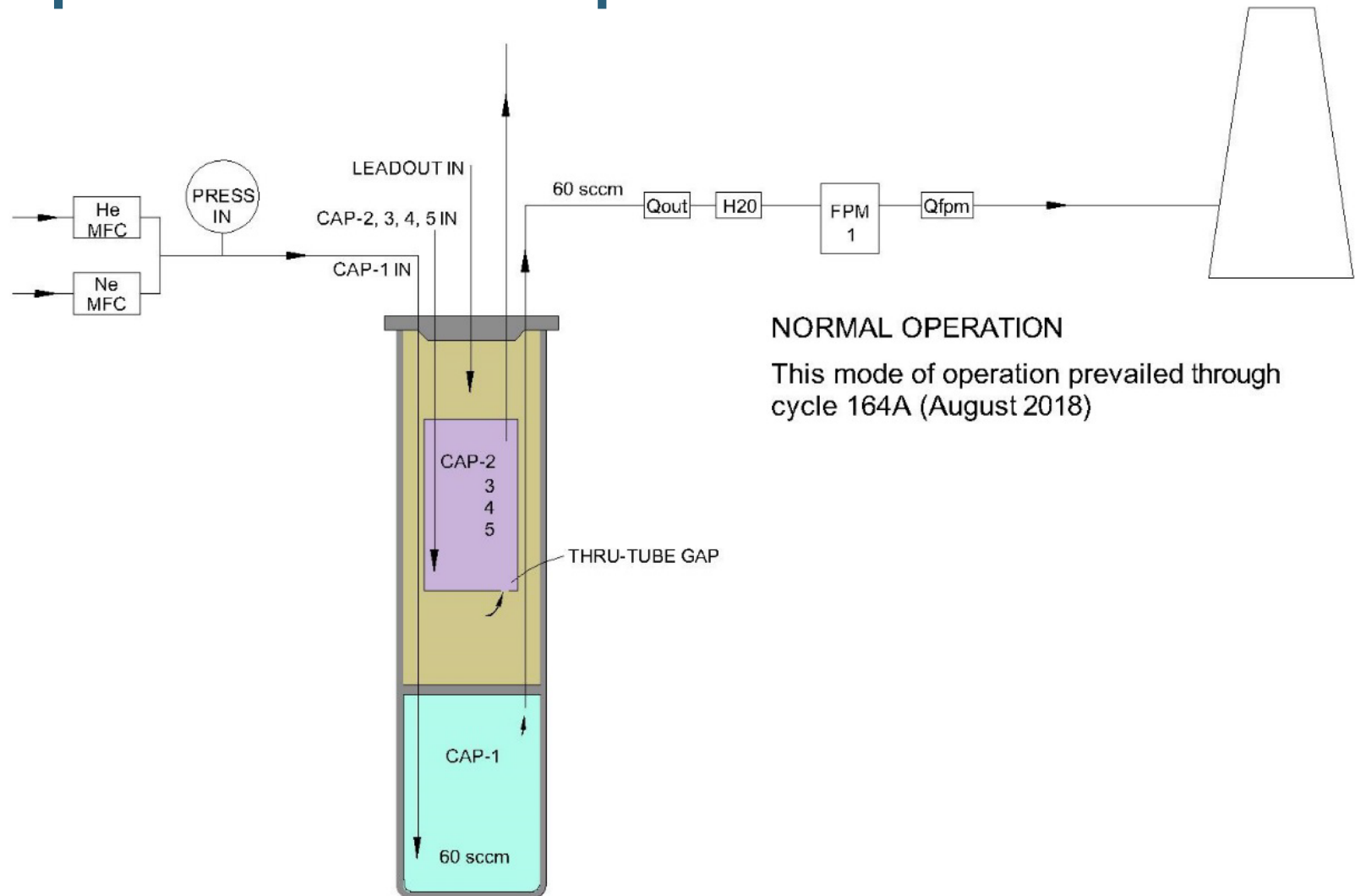
Capsule 4: Thermocouples, reactor power, gross gamma, & gas flows



The balance of this presentation will focus primarily on capsule 1

- At the beginning of the fourth cycle, cycle 164B a rapid increase in the capsule 1 inlet pressure was noted

Simplified P&ID for capsule 1



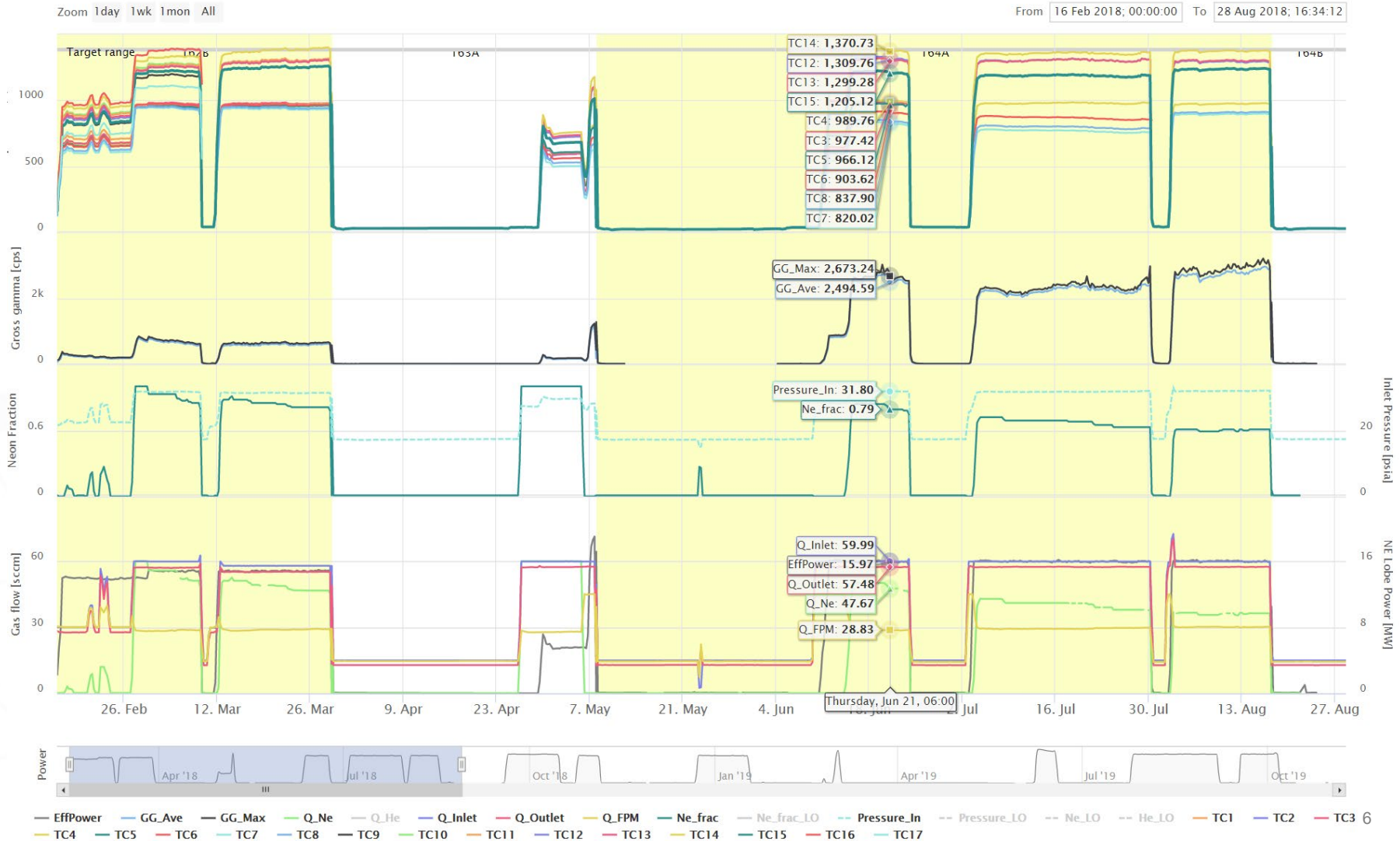
NORMAL OPERATION

This mode of operation prevailed through cycle 164A (August 2018)

Capsule 1 performance is as expected for first three cycles

Capsule 1: Thermocouples, reactor power, gross gamma, & gas flows

Zoom & pan chart with navigator bar (Click/drag also zooms)



Capsule 1 CY2018 Irradiation Summary

Start of
Irradiation
Feb 16

First Evidence of Plugging in
Capsule 1

Sept 19 Correlates with start of full
power operations for Cycle
164B

2018



2018

- Capsule 1 Isolated
- Periodic Gas Blend Updates
- Attempt to Run at 15 sccm
- Stable Pressure at 11 sccm

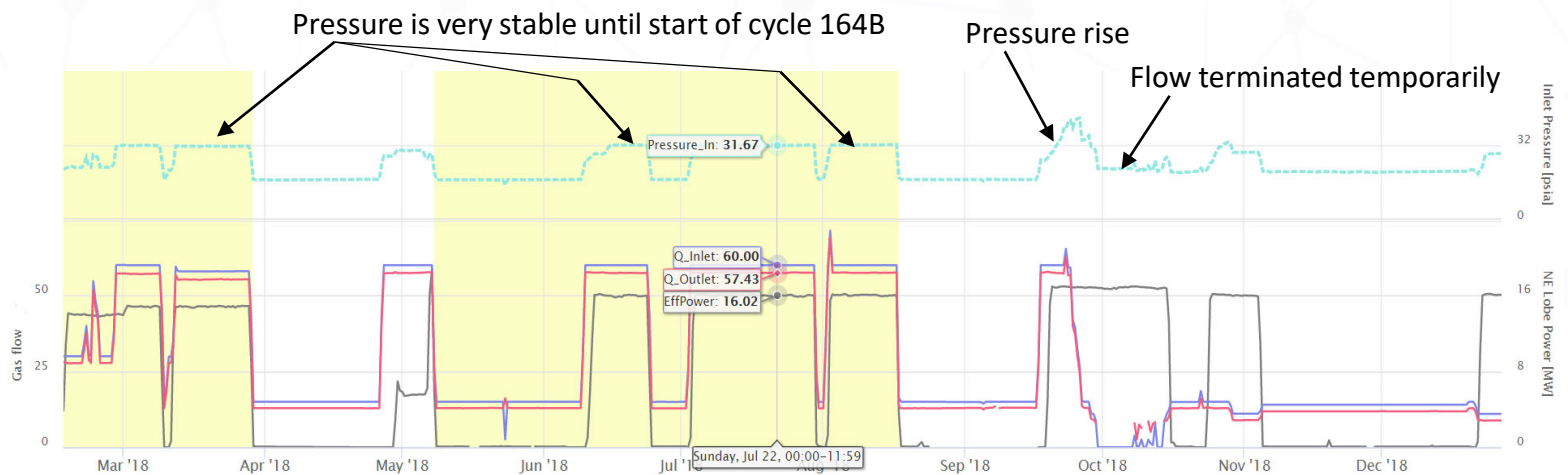
Cycle

162B

163A

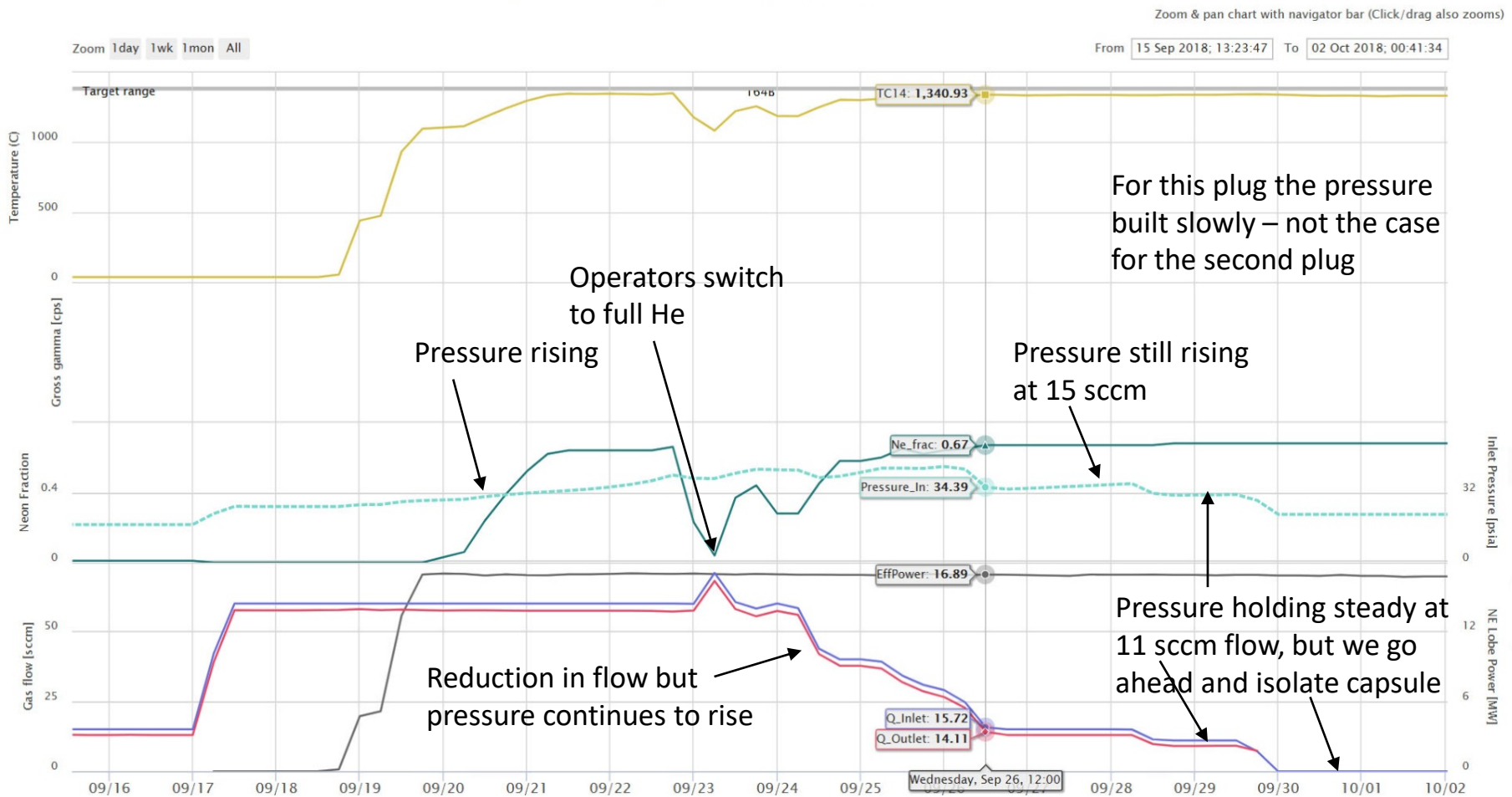
164A

164B

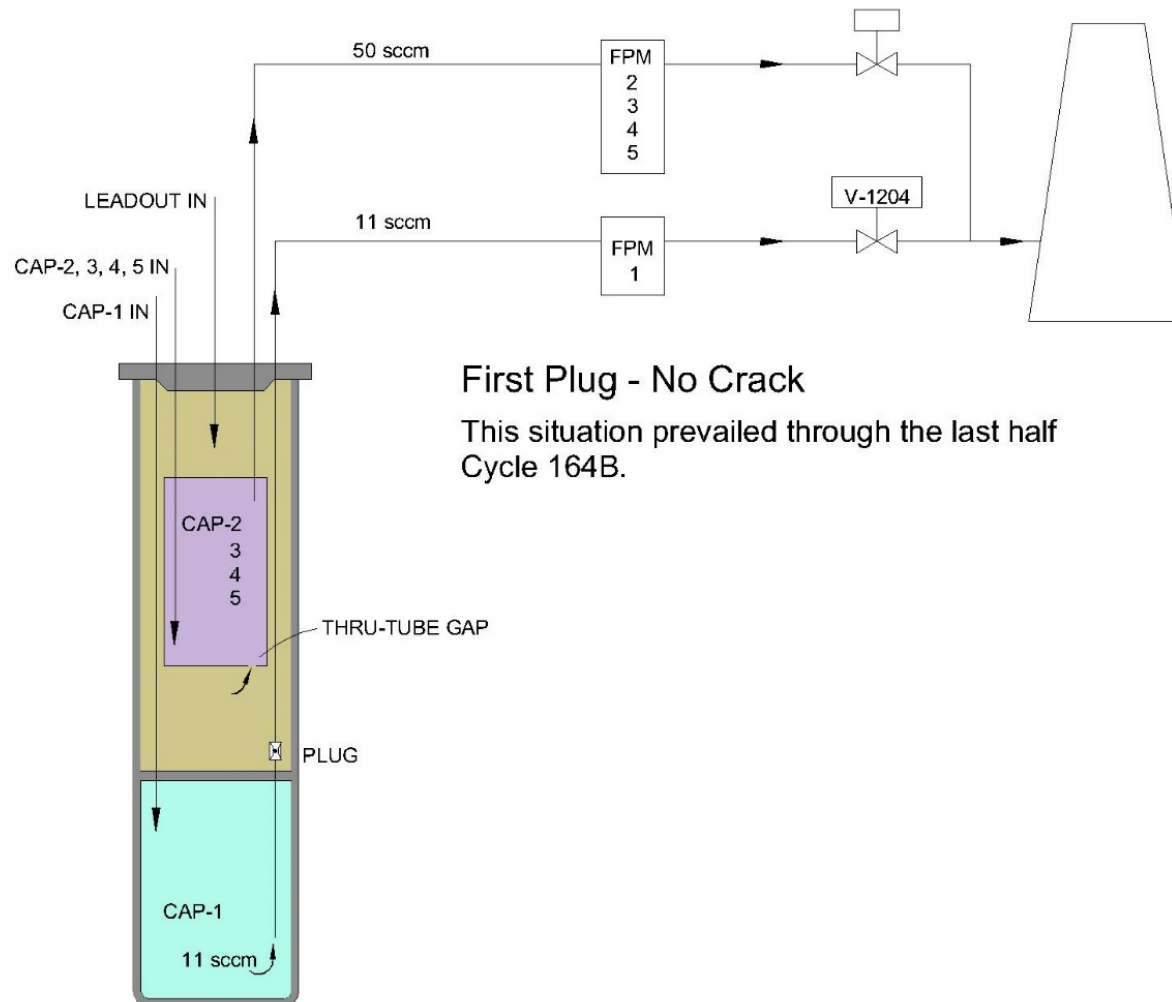


Details of capsule 1 first plug Sept 19 – Oct 2, 2018

Capsule 1: Thermocouples, reactor power, gross gamma, & gas flows



Capsule 1 first plug – no crack



Why did a plug appear in capsule 1?

- We assumed the plug was in the exhaust line and later actions (swapping of lines) confirmed this
- The quantity of fission products released is several orders of magnitude too small to occlude the line
- The best candidate is the resin binder from the neolube which was painted on the interior of the inner capsule surfaces to increase the radiant heat transfer between the graphite holders and capsule walls
- We have used neolube in the previous AGR experiments, but not in such large quantities

An imprecise description of neolube

SERVICES (SIS)
908-788-5550

by Adaptas Solutions

Neolube



⊕ Hover to zoom

Price: \$34.00

Part # 789003

Neolube

Quantity (EA)

1

Add to Cart

15 IN STOCK

- Description
- Features
- Specs

Description

Neolube is used to coat the threads on fittings to assure a smooth operation. Neolube is graphite dissolved in Isopropanol solvent. Within minutes of application the Isopropanol evaporates off leaving only graphite to lubricate the threads. No oils or other high boiling contaminants are present to contaminate vacuum of high purity systems.

Neolube No. 1 is a dry film, conductive lubricant, used in many applications as an anti-seize compound, thread lubricant and for lubricating moving parts and rubbing surfaces.

The composition of this material is 99% pure furnace graphite particles in Isopropanol. The material has excellent radiation resistance and high chemical purity. The thin, non corrosive film of Neolube 1 prevents seizing, fretting, galling and resists abrasion. It is easy to apply by spray, brush or dip and has excellent adhesion after a fast air dry. It does not migrate and it is non freezable. Neolube No 1 allows for easy assembly and non destructive disassembly. It has the properties which enable it to be used for lubrication in internal and external applications.

Features

- Graphite carbon in Isopropanol solvent
- Coat threads for smooth operation
- No oils or other high boiling contaminants

Specs

Physical Properties of Neolube	
Total Solids Content, weight percent	3.3% +/- 0.5%
Maximum particle dimension of 90% of particles	4 Microns
Maximum particle dimension of any particle	10 microns
Lubricant	Processed micro graphite
Binder	Thermoplastic resin
Diluent	Isopropanol
Consistency	Thin liquid
Shelf life	No limit in closed container
Temperature range	-70 deg F - 400 deg F
Color	Black
Flash Point	52 deg F
Coefficient of friction	0.030 - 0.090

Neolube is ideal to coat the threads for the desorption system. Needles and fittings go on much easier and no system contamination occurs.

A better description of neolube



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Neolube No.1 Lubricant

[MSDS](#)

TECHNICAL INFORMATION SHEET

NEOLUBE NO. 1 LUBRICANT - COLLOIDAL GRAPHITE IN ISOPROPANOL

APPLICATION: NUCLEAR POWER GENERATING PLANTS, NUCLEAR REACTORS, COMMERCIAL AND NAVAL

Neolube No. 1 is a dry film, conductive lubricant, used extensively at nuclear power generating plants and other nuclear facilities as an anti-seize compound, thread lubricant and for lubricating moving parts and rubbing surfaces.

The composition of this material is 99% pure furnace graphite particles, a thermoplastic resin and isopropanol. The material has excellent radiation resistance and high chemical purity. The thin, non-corrosive film of **Neolube No. 1** prevents seizing, fretting, galling and resists abrasion. It is easy to apply by spray, dip or brush and has excellent adhesion after a fast air dry. The dry film of **Neolube No. 1** will not migrate and it is non freezable.

Neolube No. 1 has satisfied the stringent requirements for lubricating the internal and auxiliary equipment mechanisms of commercial and naval nuclear reactor systems. **Neolube No. 1** allows easy assembly, trouble-free operation and non-destructive disassembly. **Neolube No. 1** provides non corrosive, dry adherent lubrication for metal parts with limited clearances in applications where control of impurities is required.

Neolube No. 1 is **NOT RECOMMENDED FOR LUBRICATING THREADS IN THE REACTOR PRIMARY CONTAINMENT AREAS**, where operating temperatures for the fittings are greater than 400°F. Neolube No. 1260 is recommended for use in containment and/or secondary side in nuclear applications.

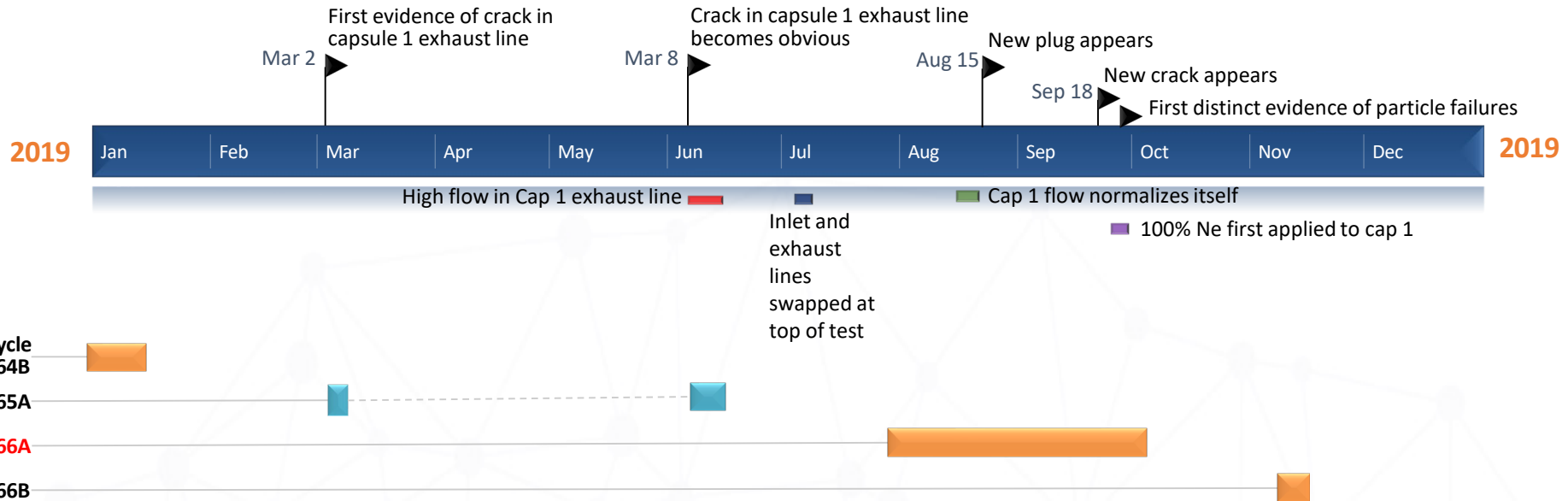
A Certificate of Quality Conformance and Analysis is available for each lot upon request.

Neolube No. 1 has been used successfully in applications where it has withstood radiation levels of 1×10^9 rads.

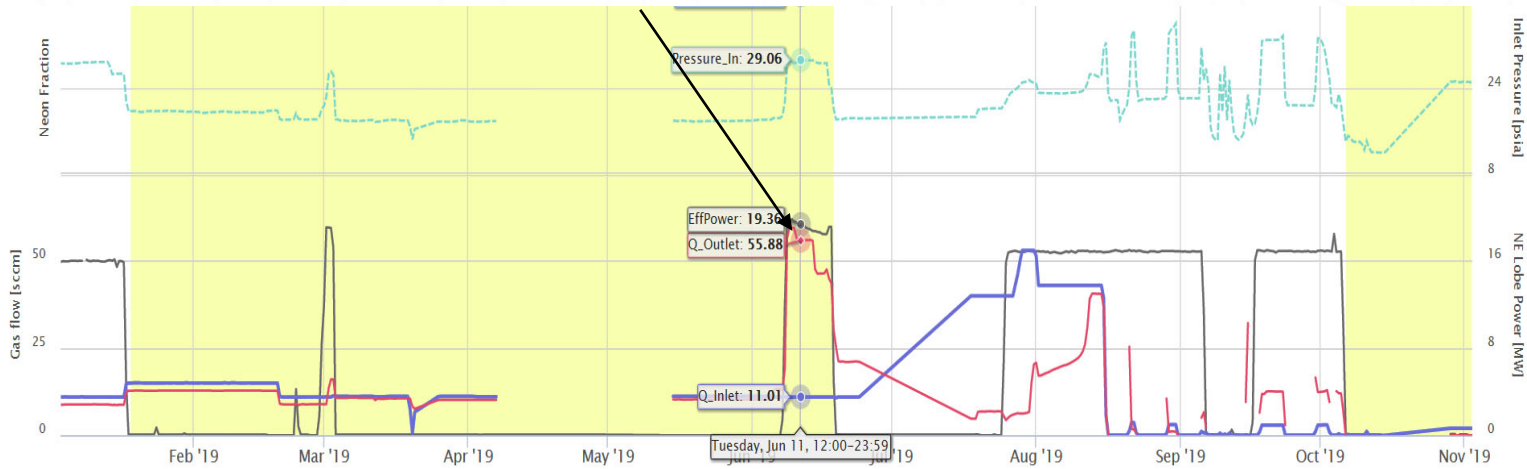
Physical and Chemical Requirements	MIL-L-24131C
Total Solids Content, weight percent	3.3% +/- 0.50%
Graphite Content, percent of total solids	75% +/- 5%

25% of the solids is apparently the resin binder
Calculations indicate this is plenty of material to plug
a .032" diameter hole (ID of gas lines in core region)

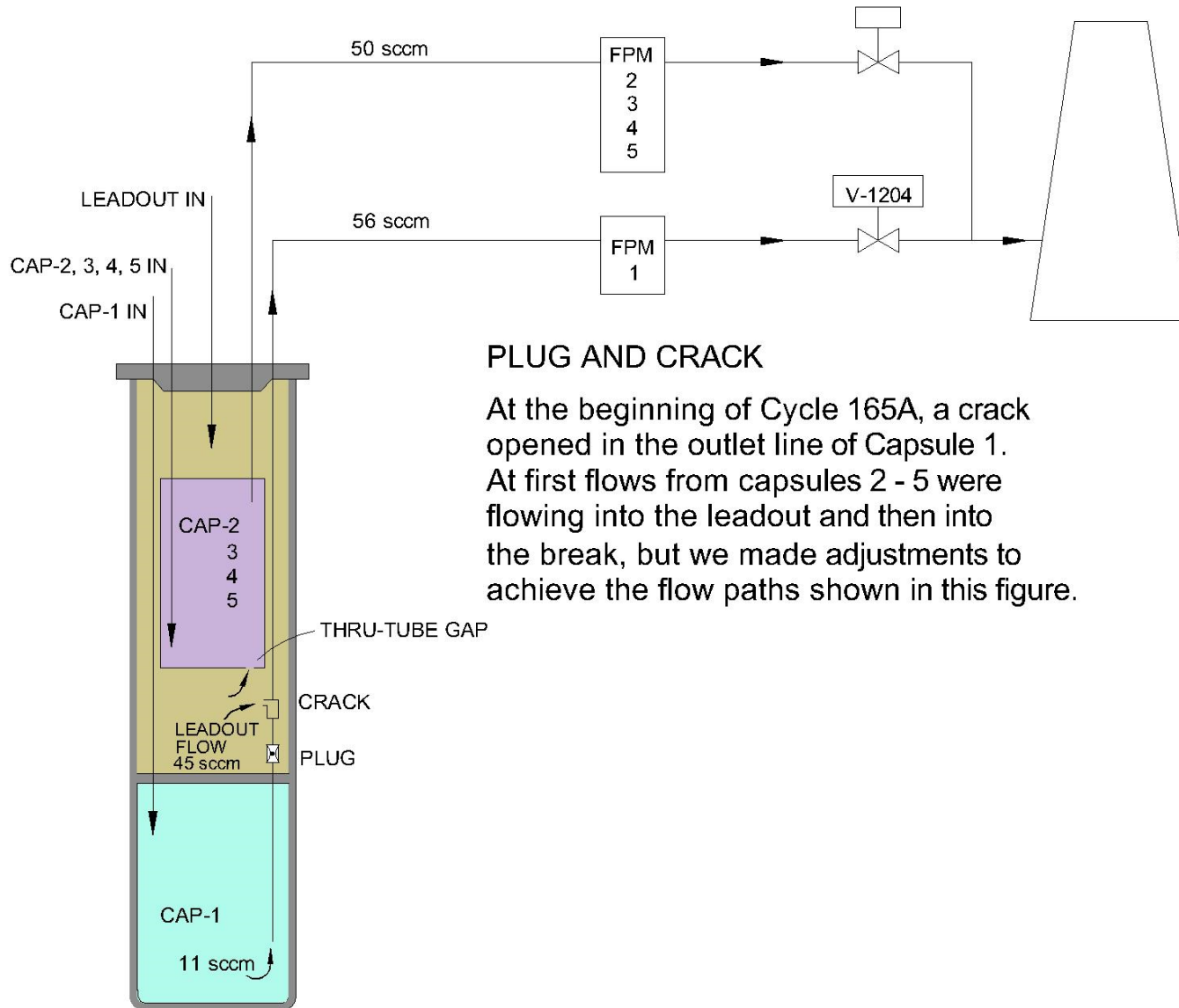
Capsule 1 CY2019 Irradiation Summary



Outlet flow much greater than inlet



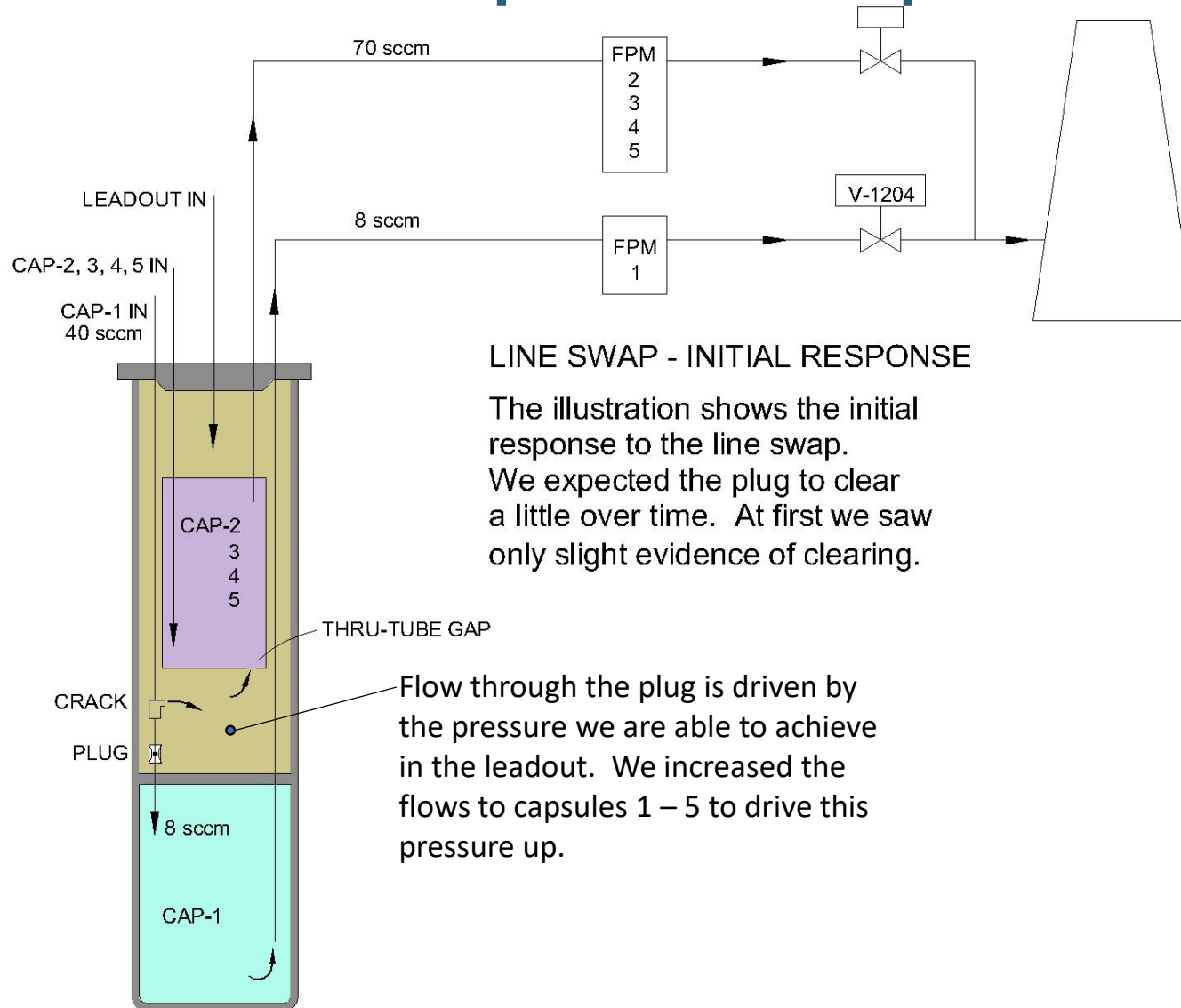
Capsule 1 plug and crack



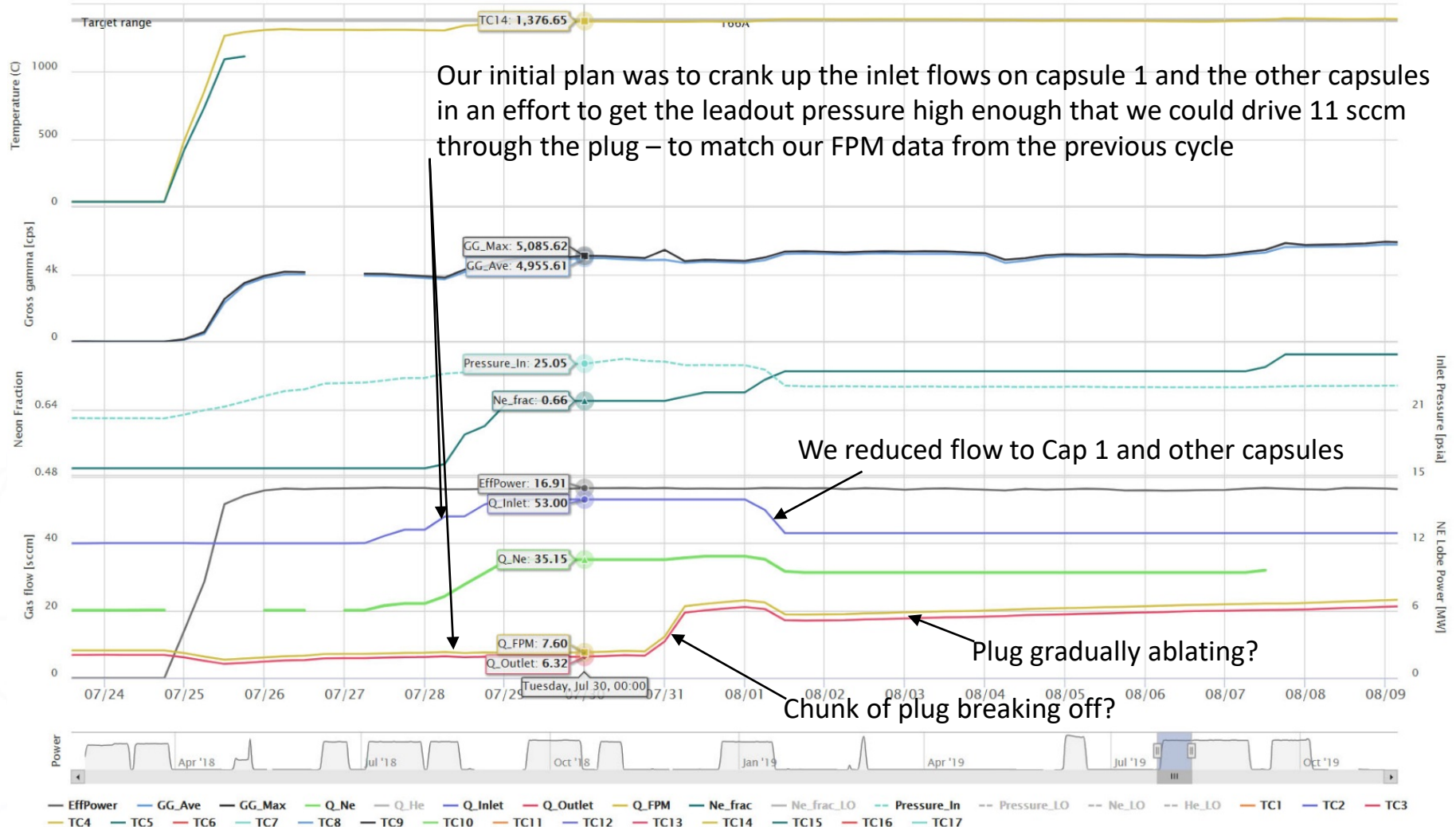
Reason for line swap

- We were concerned that the dilution gas from the leadout would make interpretation of fission product measurements for capsule 1 difficult.
- We decided to swap the inlet and outlet lines for capsule 1 at the top of the test.
- This would ensure that whatever we read on channel 1 of the Fission Product Monitoring System (FPMS) had actually come from capsule 1 and at a known flow rate.
- The eventual results of the line swap were quite surprising – first elation, followed by stark disappointment.

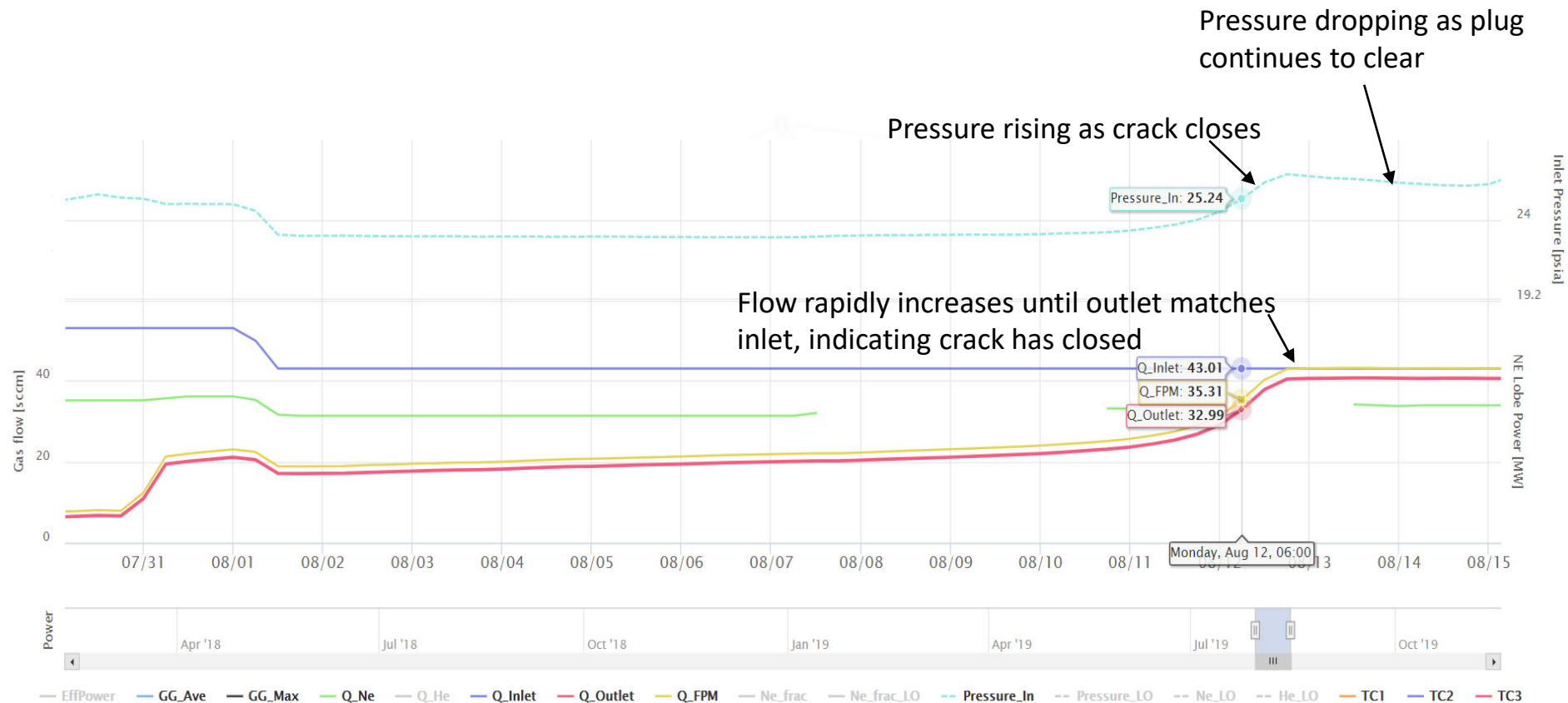
Capsule 1 line swap – initial response



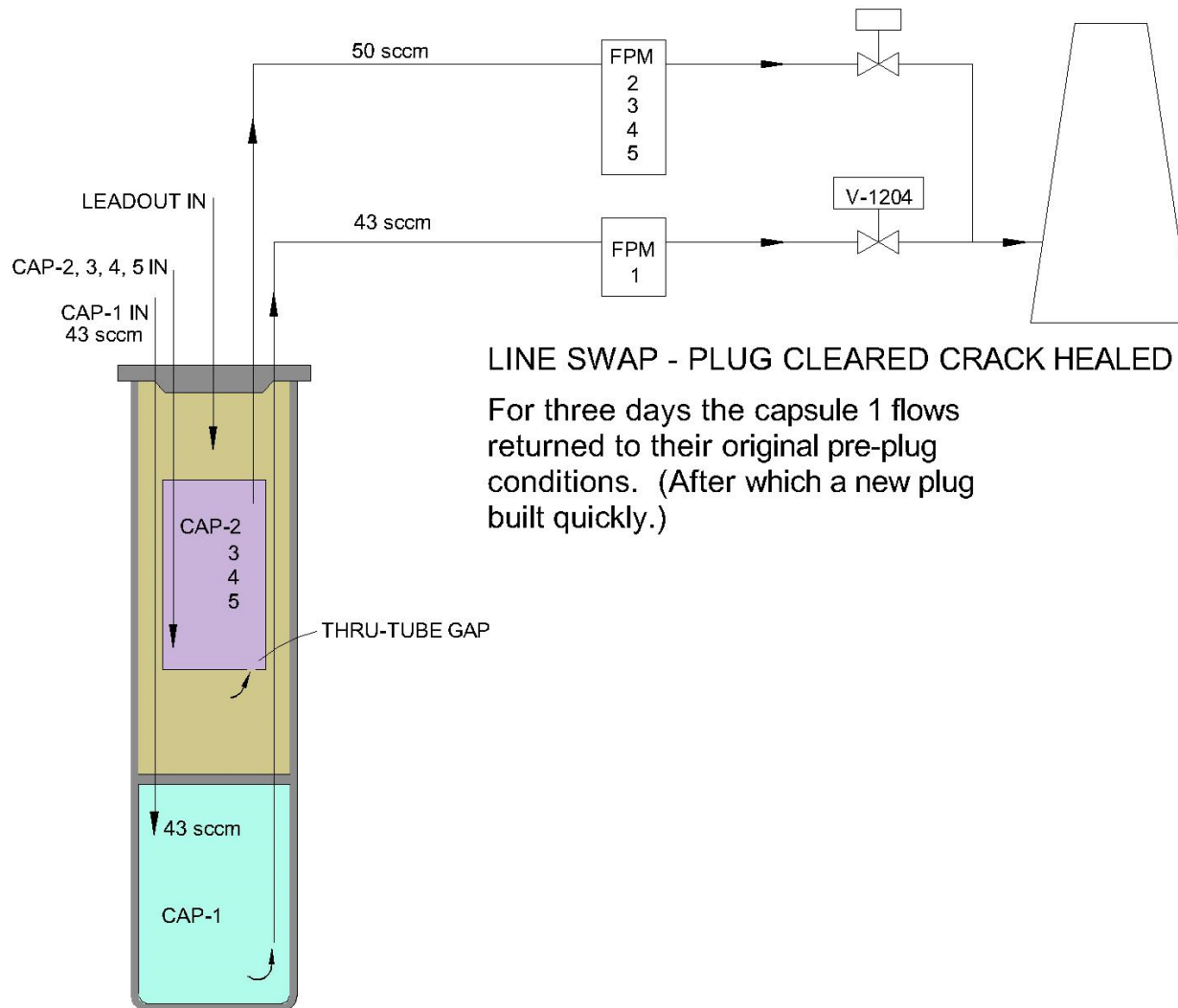
Line swap initial response July 24 – Aug 9, 2019

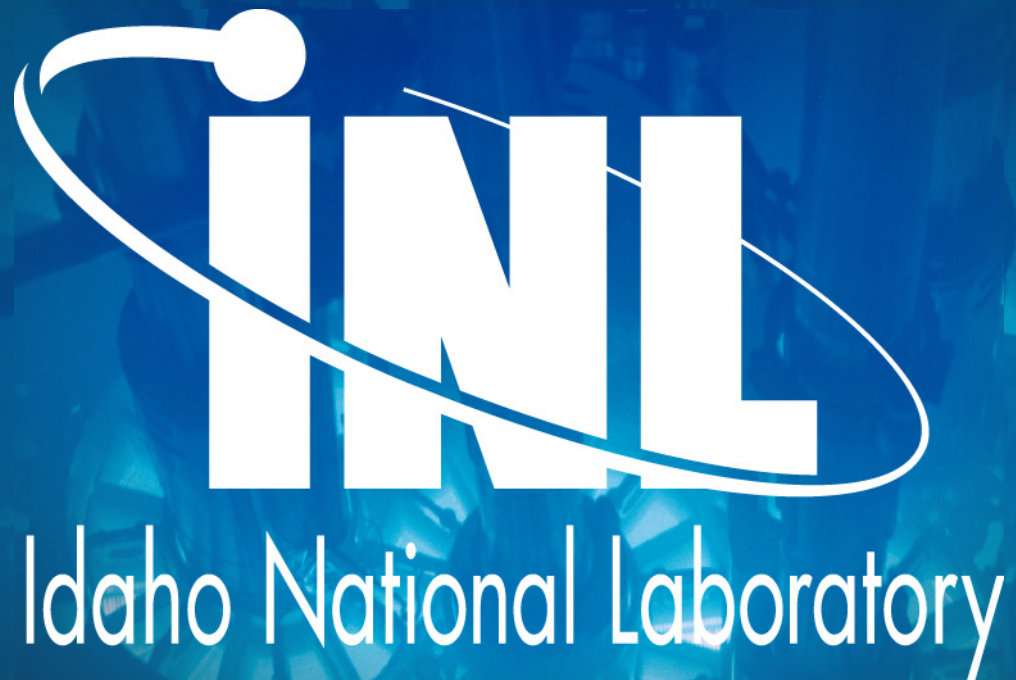


Line swap: plug clears, crack heals Aug 10 - 15, 2019



Capsule 1 line swap – plug cleared, crack closed





AGR-5/6/7 Temperature Performance as of End of Cycle 166A

Technical Coordination Team
November 11, 2019

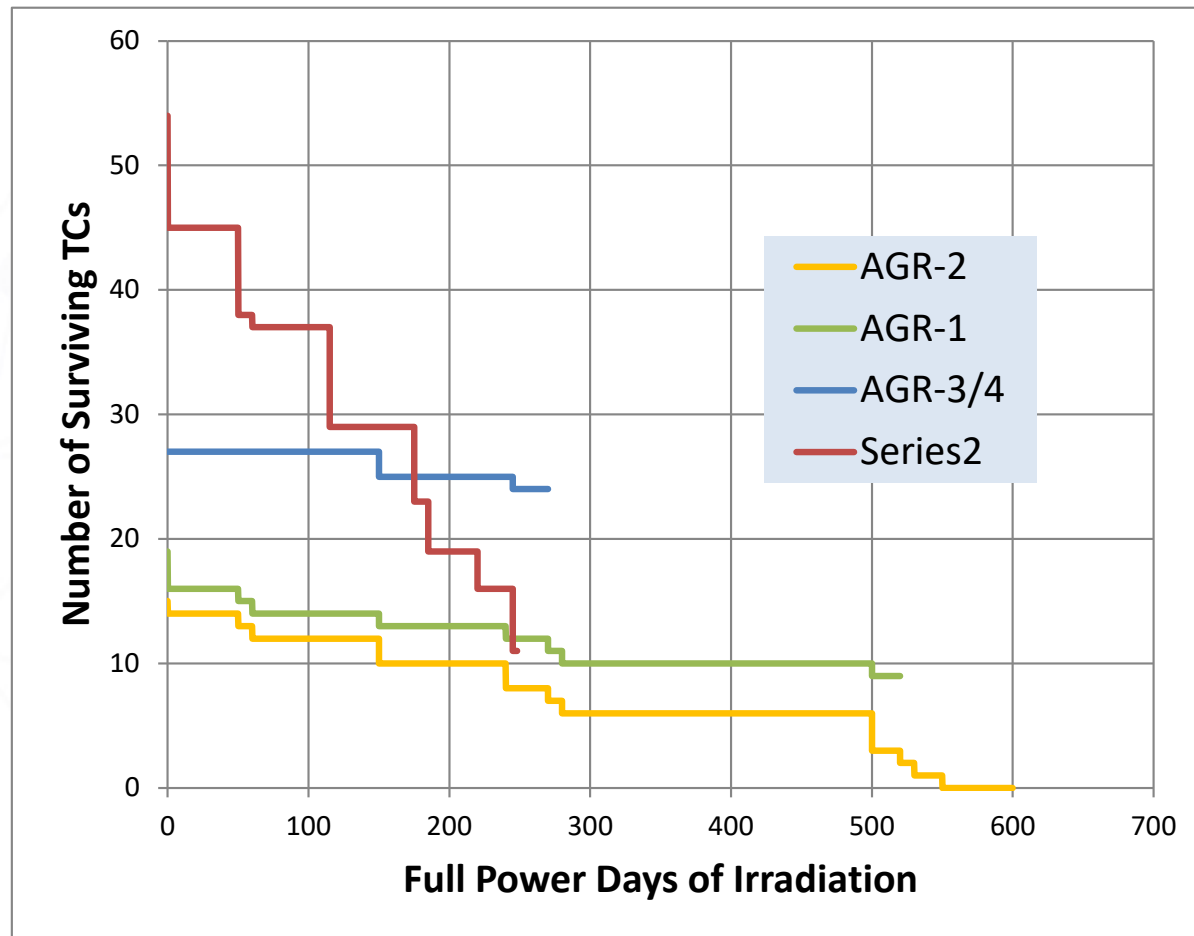
Joe Palmer
Mechanical Engineer, PE



Thermocouple Performance

Survivors by Capsule/Type		End of Assem	End of Install	End of 162B	End of 163A	End of 164A	End of 164B	End of 165A	End of 166A
Cap 5	STD	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Cap 4	STD	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Cap 3	STD	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3
	CAMB	7	5	5	5	2	2	2	1
	HTIR	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	0
Cap 2	STD	8	8	8	8	6	3	2	0
Cap 1	STD	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
	CAMB	7	7	6	6	3	1	0	0
	HTIR	9	9	4	4	4	3	2	0
Total Surviving		49	45	38	37	29	23	19	11

AGR-5/6/7 TC Performance Compared to Past AGR Tests



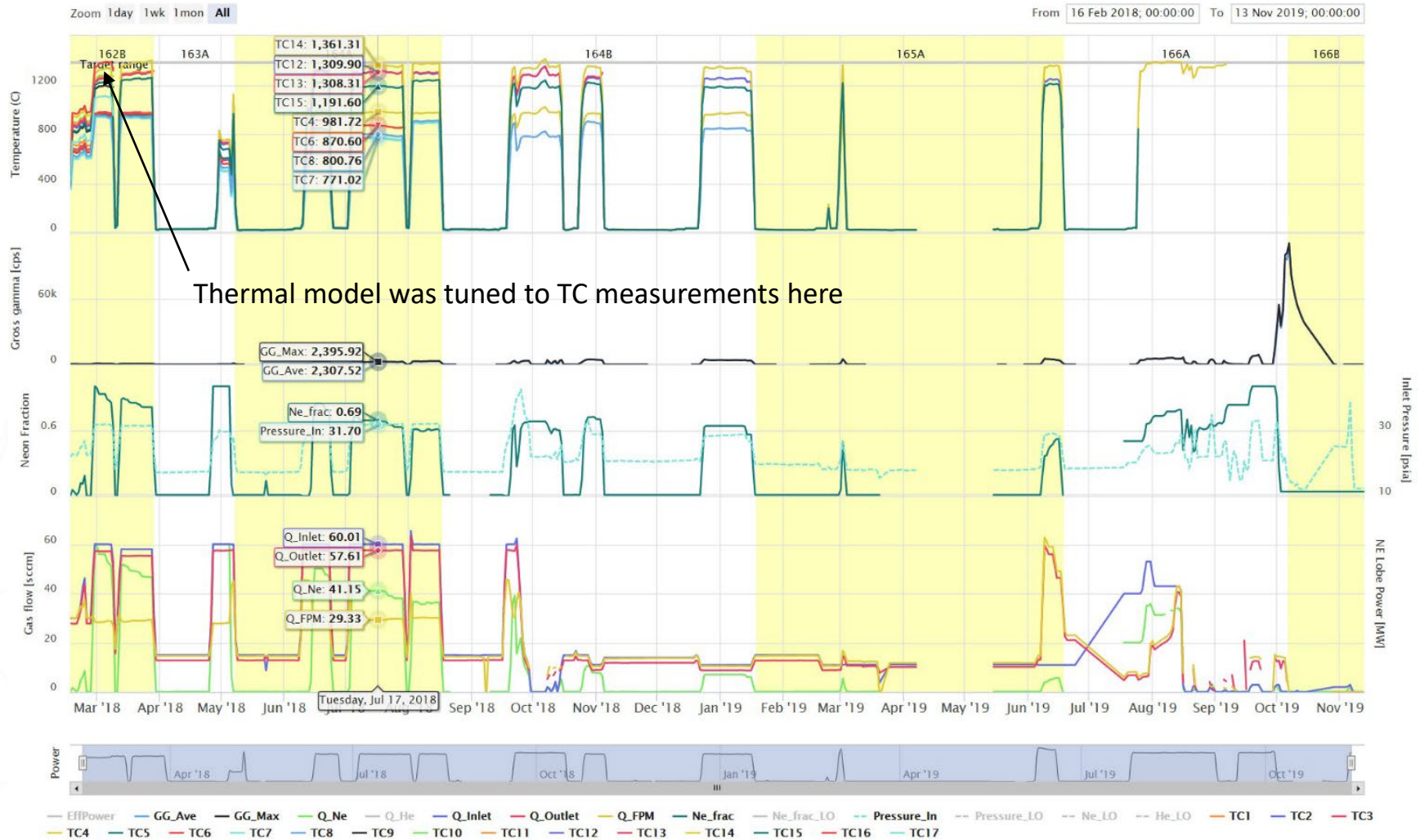
Thermocouple Performance (cont)

- The AGR-5/6/7 thermocouple failure rate has been high
- Nearly all of the hot and “deep” thermocouples have failed so the failure rate should markedly decrease.
- AGR-1 and AGR-2 also experienced high failure rates with 3 of the 6 capsules in each experiment having no functioning thermocouples for more than half of the irradiation period.

Thermal modelling

- The thermal model is “tuned” to the thermocouples during the early part of the first cycle
- It is done at this time based on the assumption that the thermocouples should be essentially drift free at this point

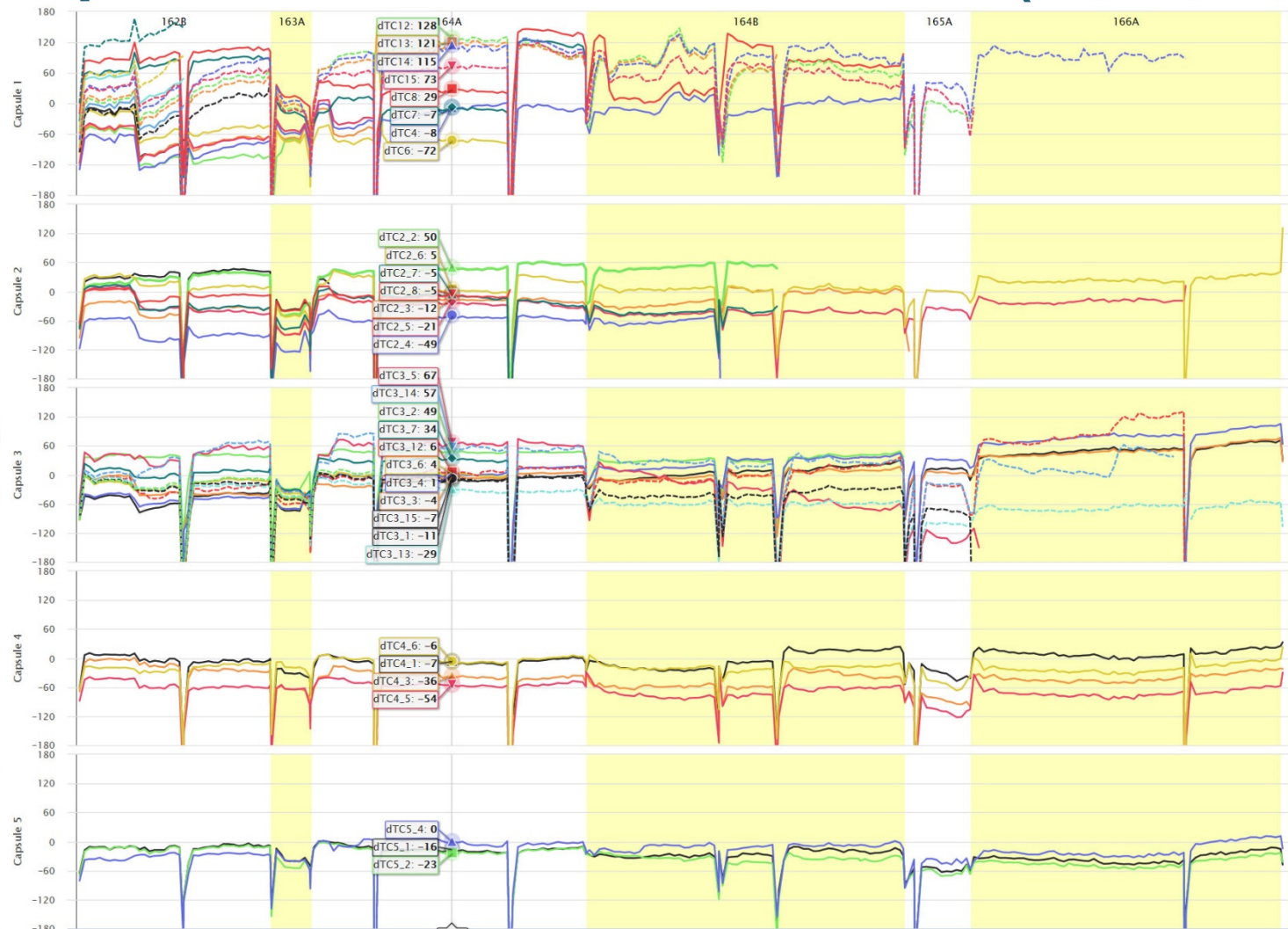
Capsule 1 measured temperatures throughout irradiation



Thermal model tuning – primary parameters

- Gas gap thickness – via neolube thickness
- Graphite conductivity
- Emissivity (for radiant heat transfer)
- We did look at the effects of fuel and holders being off-centered, but it was not a major factor
- These parameters were tuned only within defensible ranges
- Tuning adjustments were made consistent capsule to capsule
- Tuning adjustments were kept consistent cycle to cycle

All capsules measured - calculated (residuals)

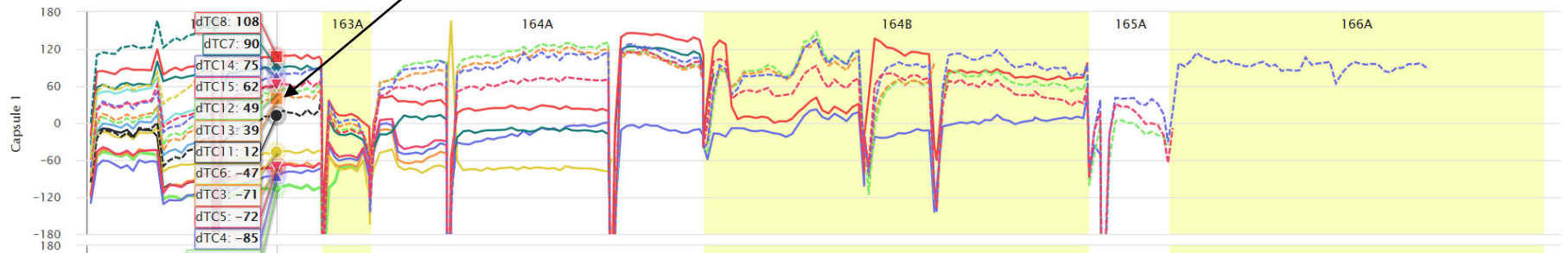


Capsule 1 measured - calculated entire test period

Fairly even distribution of residuals this first cycle

AGR-5/6/7 TC residuals (measured - calculated) in C

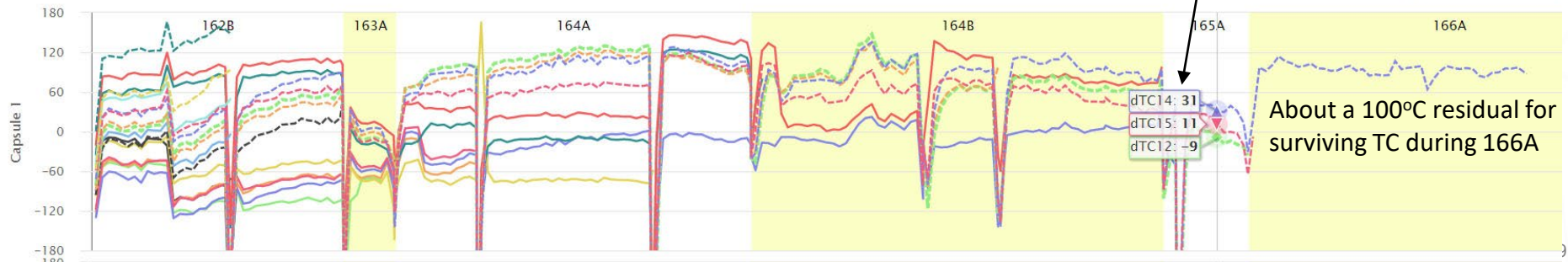
Click & drag on chart to zoom; use scrollbar to pan



Remarkably small residuals during high power PALM cycle

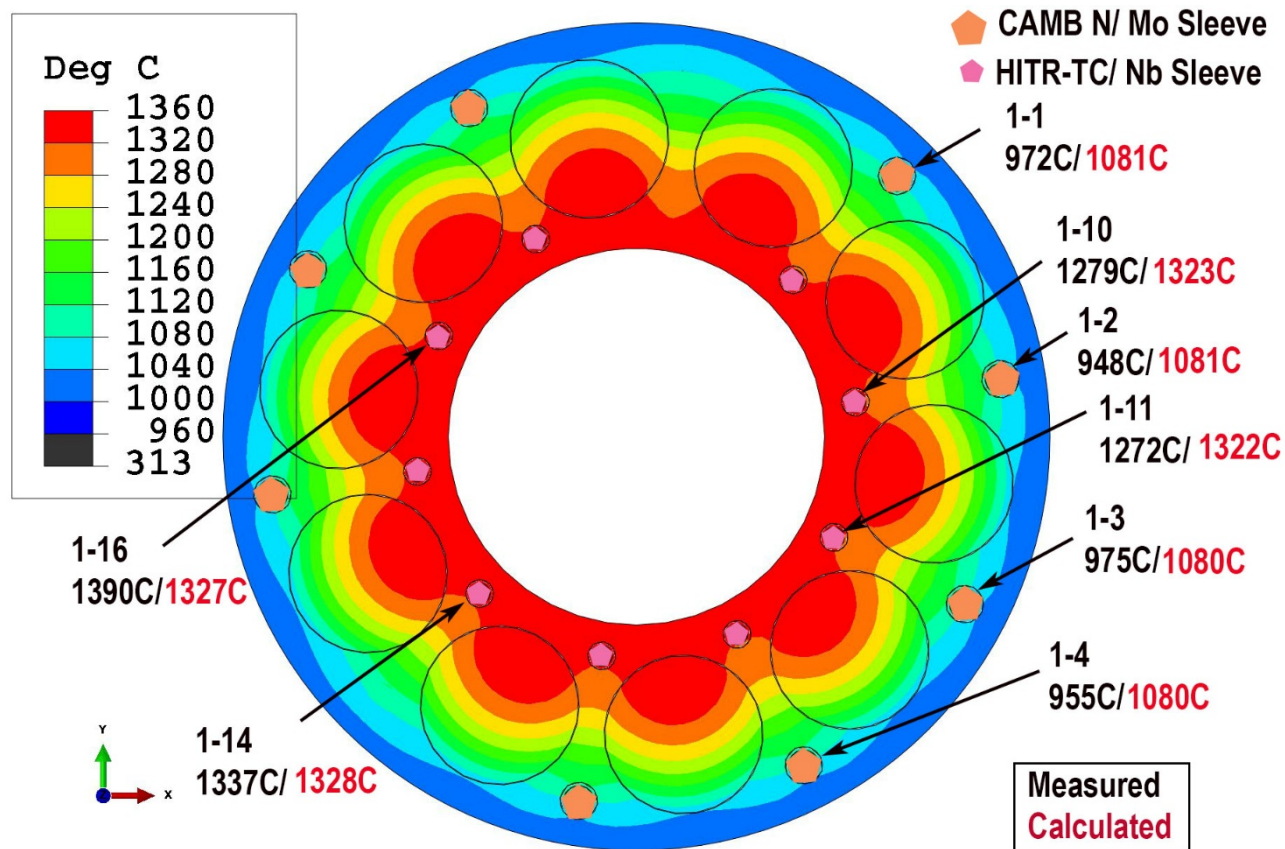
AGR-5/6/7 TC residuals (measured - calculated) in C

Click & drag on chart to zoom; use

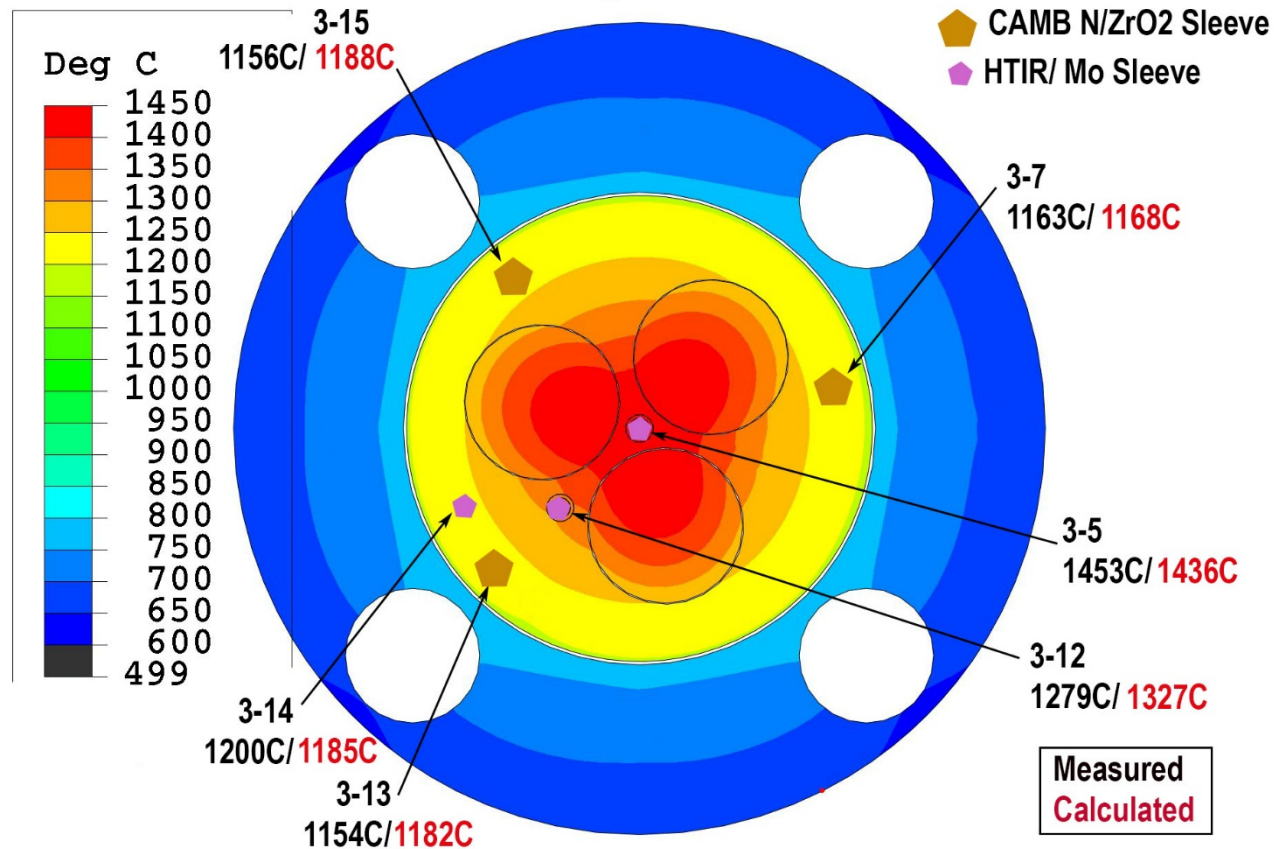


About a 100°C residual for surviving TC during 166A

Capsule 1 measured vs calculated – early in first cycle



Capsule 3 thermocouples measured vs calculated early in first cycle



Consistent discrepancy between residuals of outboard vs inboard thermocouples in capsule 1 implies lower conductivity of graphite perhaps

- This conductivity was lowered as much as possible consistent with the literature
- An even lower graphite conductivity might improve capsule 1 residuals slightly, but would increase residuals for other capsules
- Capsule 1 inboard thermocouples consistently read 60 – 100°C higher than the model predicts. Therefore the time averaged particle temperature distribution could be considerably underpredicted

Particle Temp Requirements from AGR-5/6/7 “Technical and Function Requirements Document” (TFR)

Table 1. Fuel Particle Temperature Distribution.

AGR-5/6	
Desired fraction of particles per temperature range	Number of Particles Based on 500,000 total
30% <900°C	150,000
30% 900°C - 1050°C	150,000
30% 1050°C - 1250°C	150,000
10% 1250°C - 1350°C	50,000
Total	500,000
AGR-7	
Temperature Range	Minimum Number of Particles
1350°C - 1500°C	50,000

Table 1 represents a goal particle distribution. It is not expected that it will be achieved exactly. Additional temperature requirements are as follows:

- a) AGR-5/6 time average minimum temperature $\leq 700^{\circ}\text{C}$
- b) AGR-5/6 time average, peak temperature $1350 \pm 50^{\circ}\text{C}$
- c) AGR-7 time average, peak temperature $1500 \pm 50^{\circ}\text{C}$.

Excerpt from AGR-5/6/7 “Test Plan”

- Since AGR-7 is designed as a margin test of the UCO fuel, a dominant fuel performance parameter for this test is time at temperature. Considering AGR-2 tested UCO fuel at a time-average peak temperature of 1360°C with online data indicating no deleterious effects (Collin, 2014), AGR-7 will be tested at a higher peak temperature of 1500°C and the majority of the ~50,000 particles will operate above 1350°C.
- In both AGR-5/6 and AGR-7, an instantaneous peak temperature specification of $\leq 1800^{\circ}\text{C}$ will provide an operational limit to minimize overheating of the fuel.
- The time-average peak temperature of AGR-5/6 is required to be $1350 \pm 50^{\circ}\text{C}$, while the time-average peak temperature of AGR-7 should be $1500 \pm 50^{\circ}\text{C}$. Furthermore, the AGR-5/6 test specifications require the time-average minimum temperature to be less than 700°C,

Instantaneous AGR-5/6 Fuel Temperature Distribution

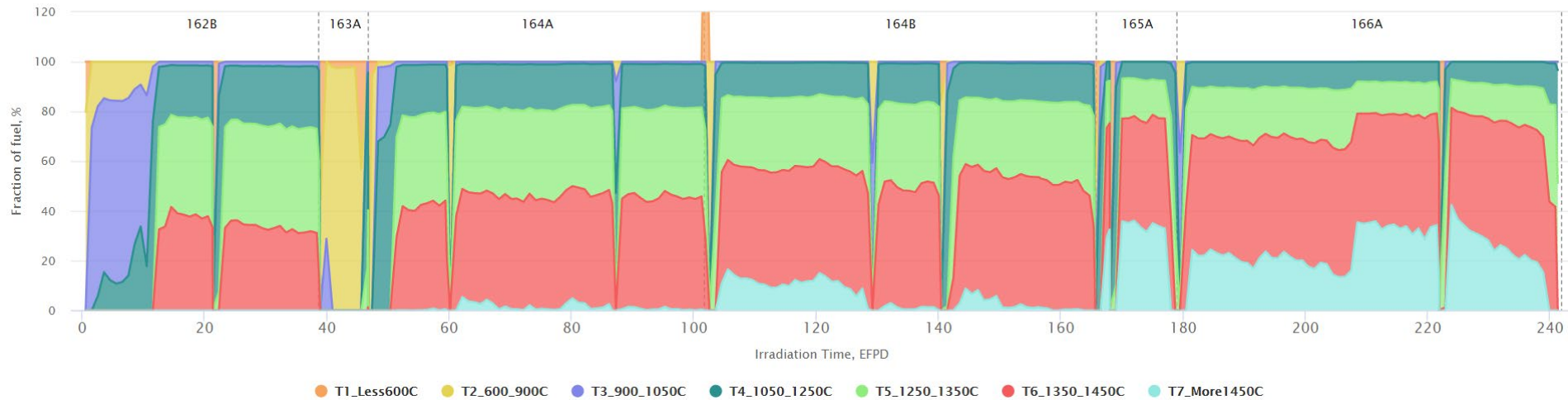
Instantaneous fuel temperature fractions by range for AGR-5/6 capsules



Peak fuel temperatures had been drifting down (prior to 165A PALM cycle). We increased TC set points for Cycle 166A on capsules 1, 2, 3.

Instantaneous AGR-7 Fuel Temperature Distribution

Instantaneous fuel temperature fractions by range for AGR-7 capsule



Highcharts.com

T-Avg V-Avg AGR-5/6 Fuel Temperature Distribution

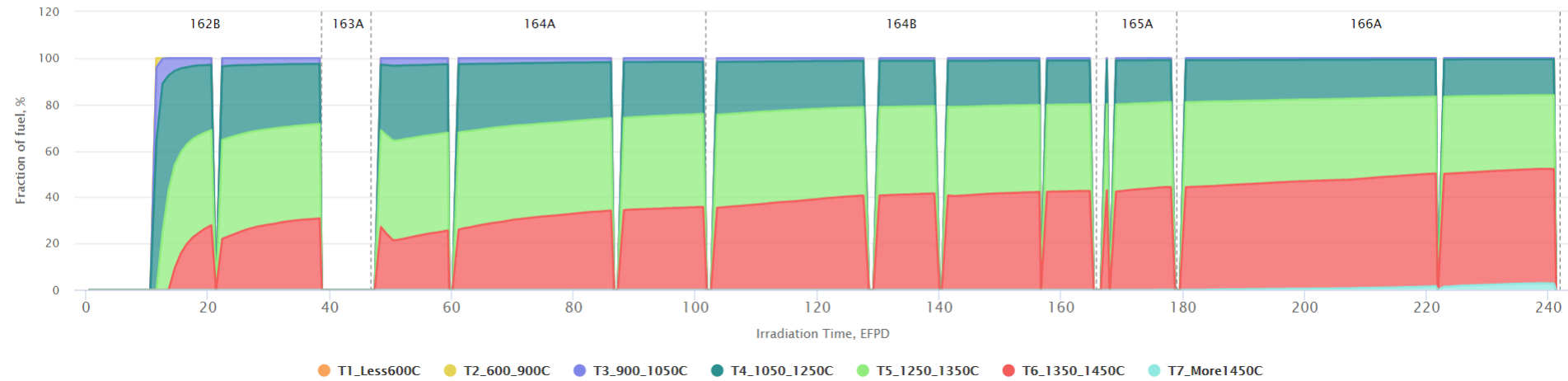
Time-average fuel temperature fractions by range for AGR-5/6 capsules

Only days, when control TC reached the target range, are included in the averaging, which resulted in 138.7 out of 160.5 EFPDs by the end of 164B

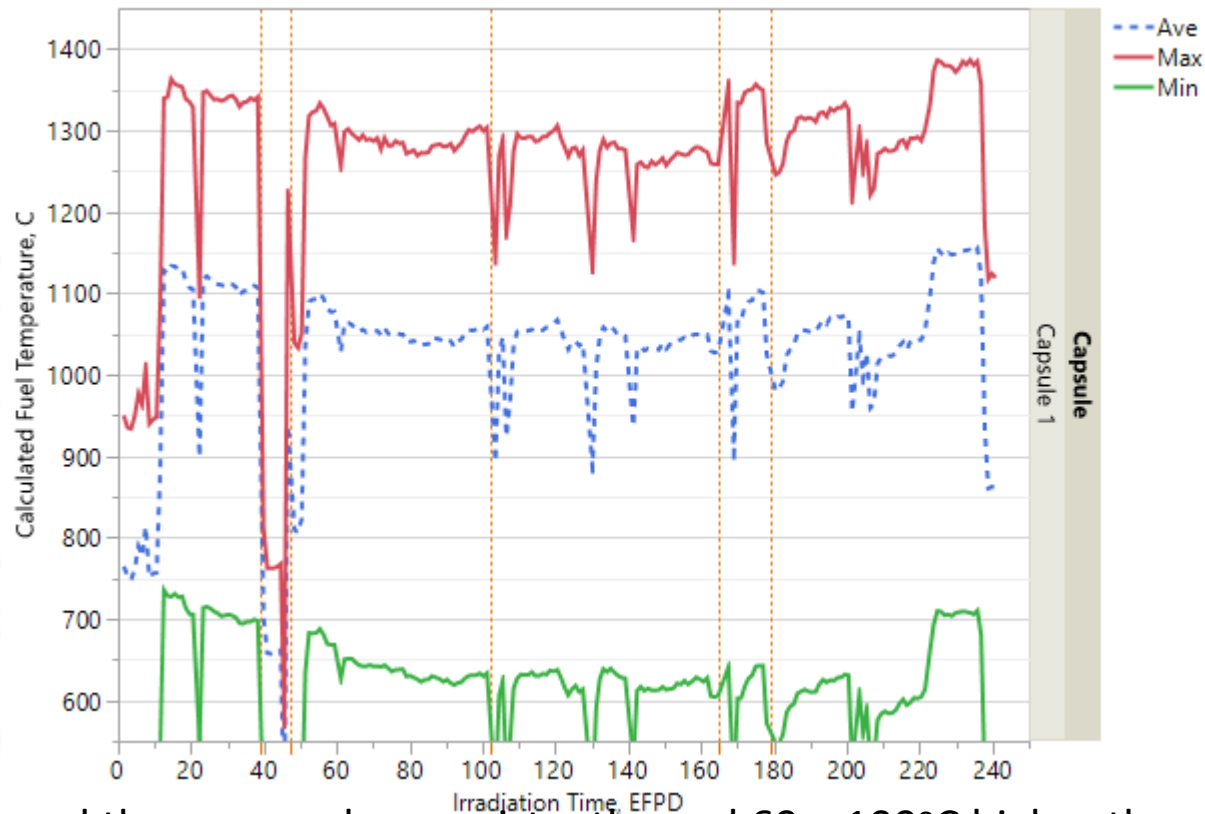


T-Avg V-Avg AGR-7 Fuel Temperature Distribution

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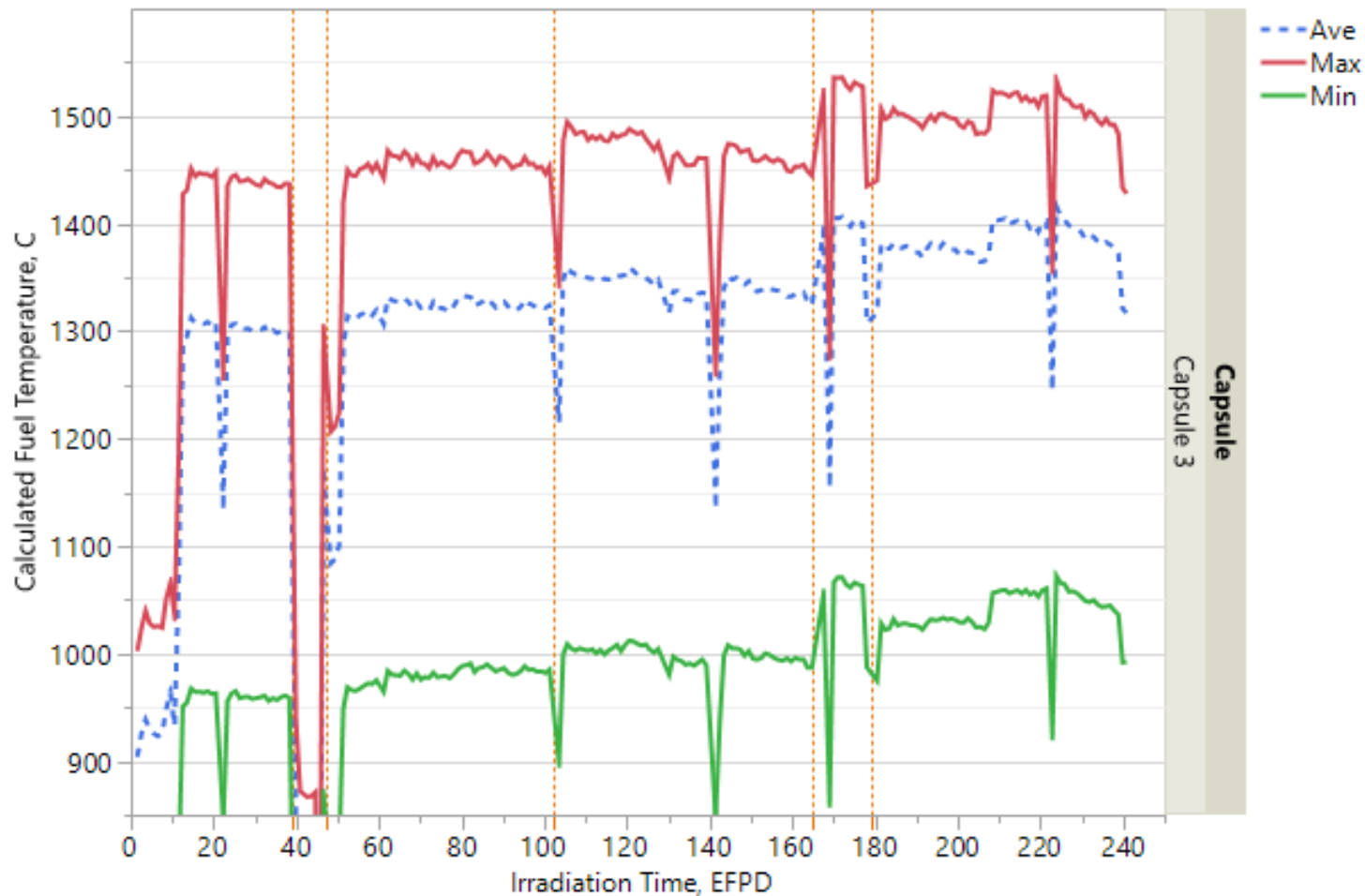


Capsule 1 peak and avg fuel temperatures (calculated)

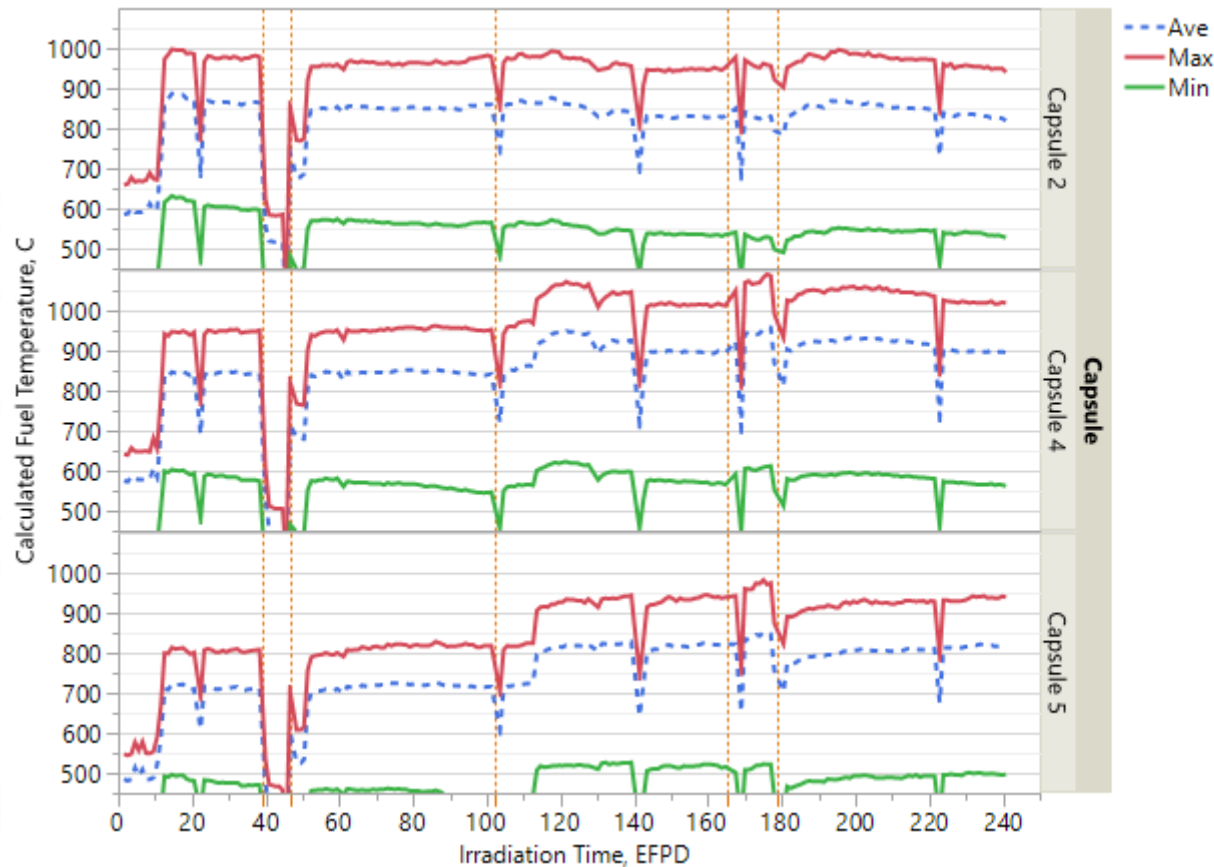


Capsule 1 inboard thermocouples consistently read 60 – 100°C higher than the model predicts. Therefore the peak temperature could be considerably under predicted.

Capsule 3 peak and avg fuel temperatures (calculated)



Capsules 2, 4, 5 peak and avg fuel temperatures (calculated)





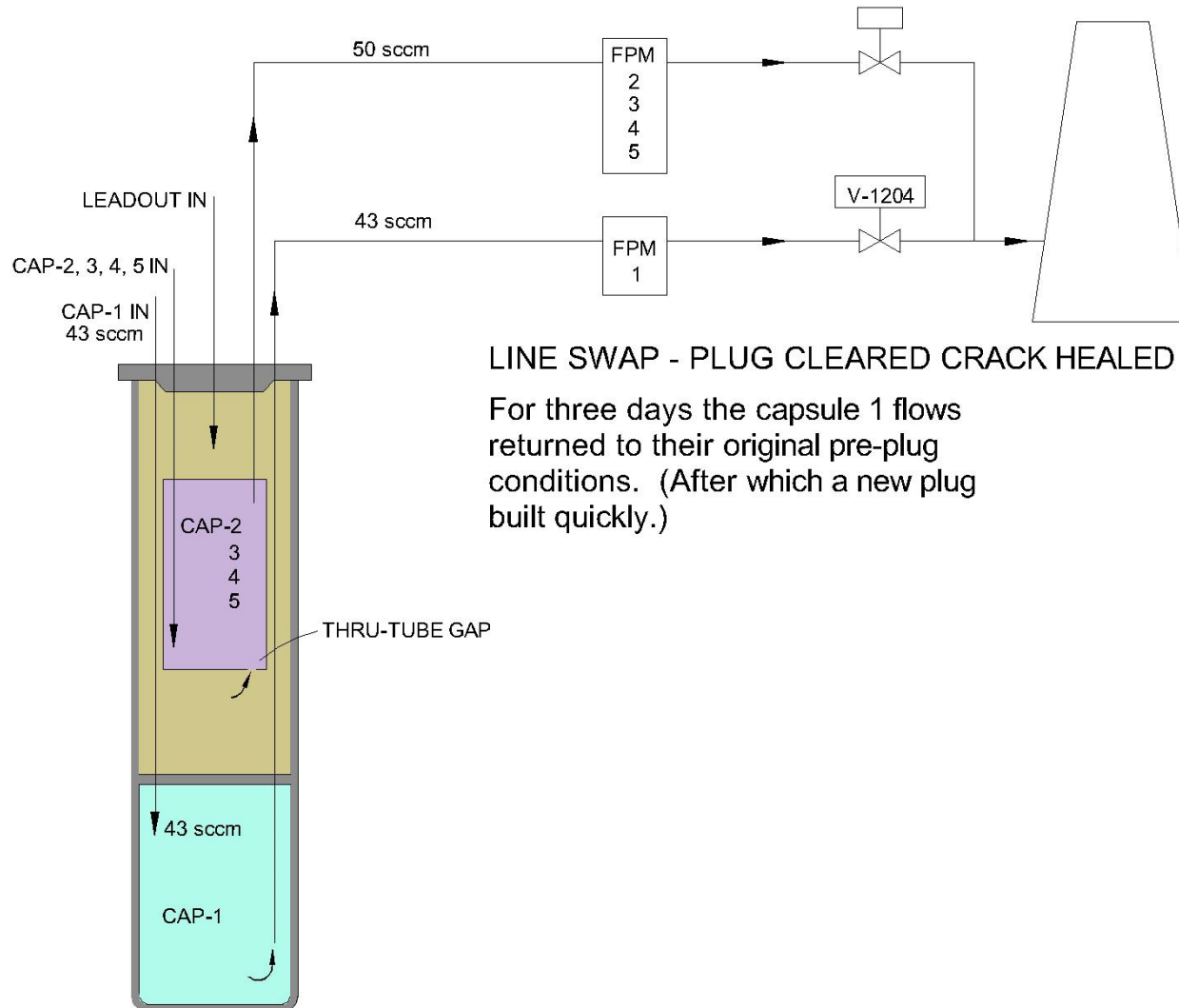
Details of last half of Cycle 166A operations

Technical Coordination Team
November 11, 2019

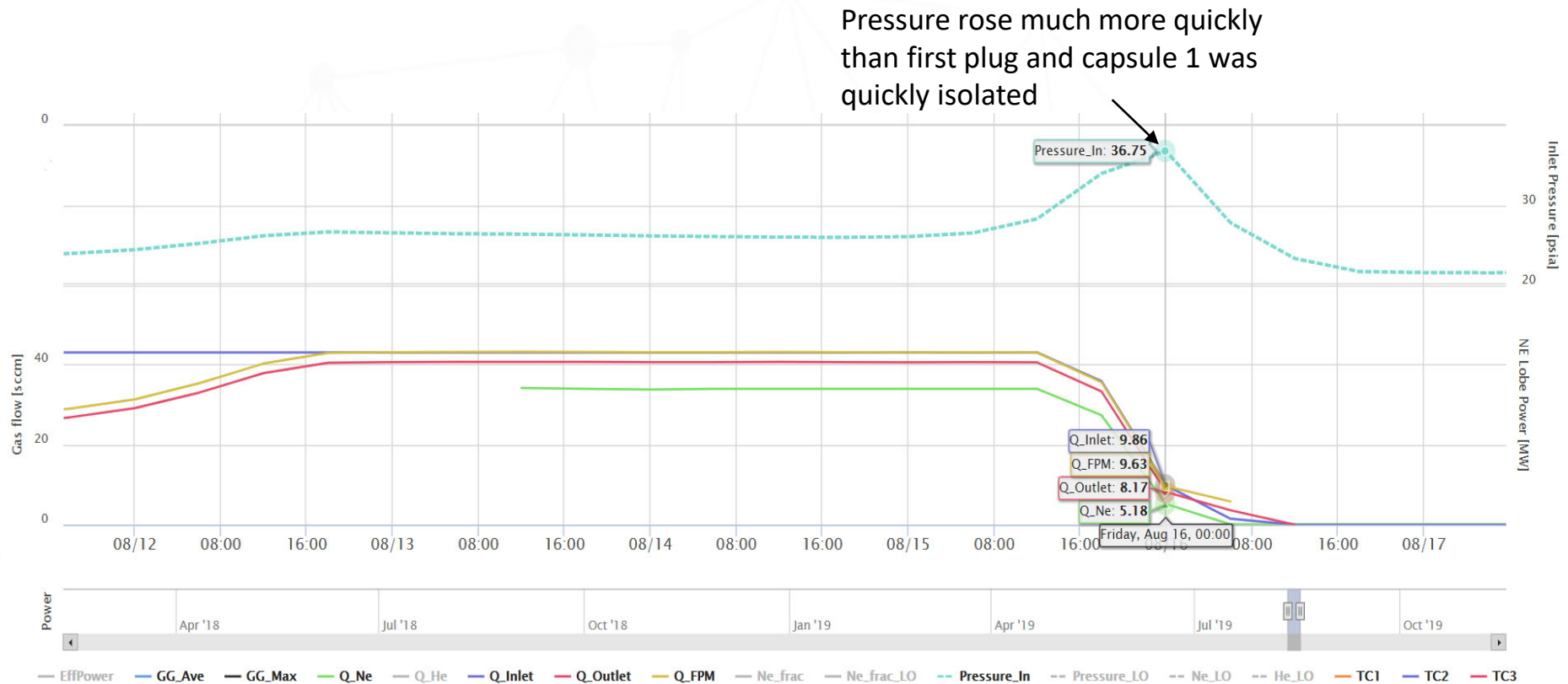
Joe Palmer
Mechanical Engineer, PE



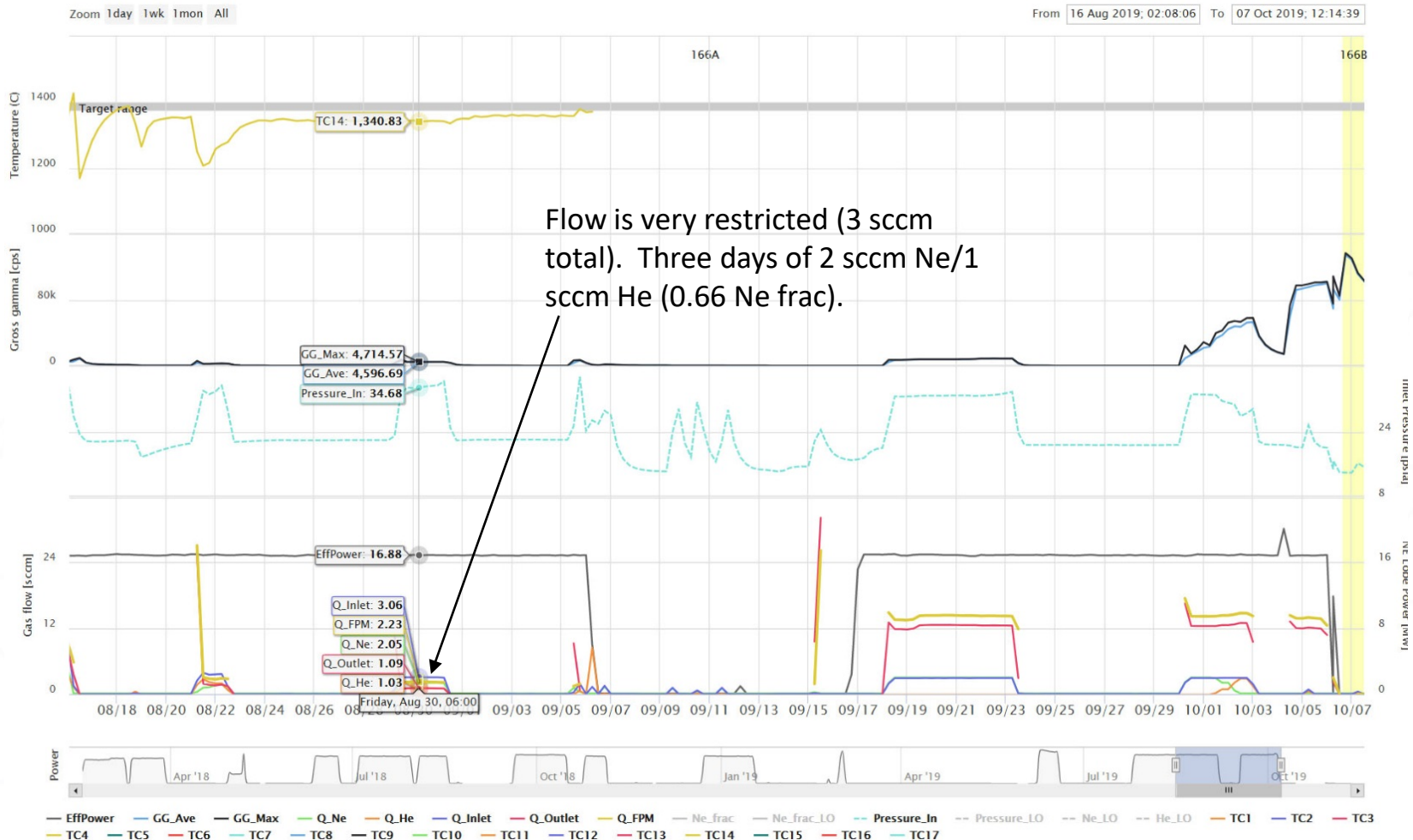
Capsule 1 line swap – plug cleared, crack closed



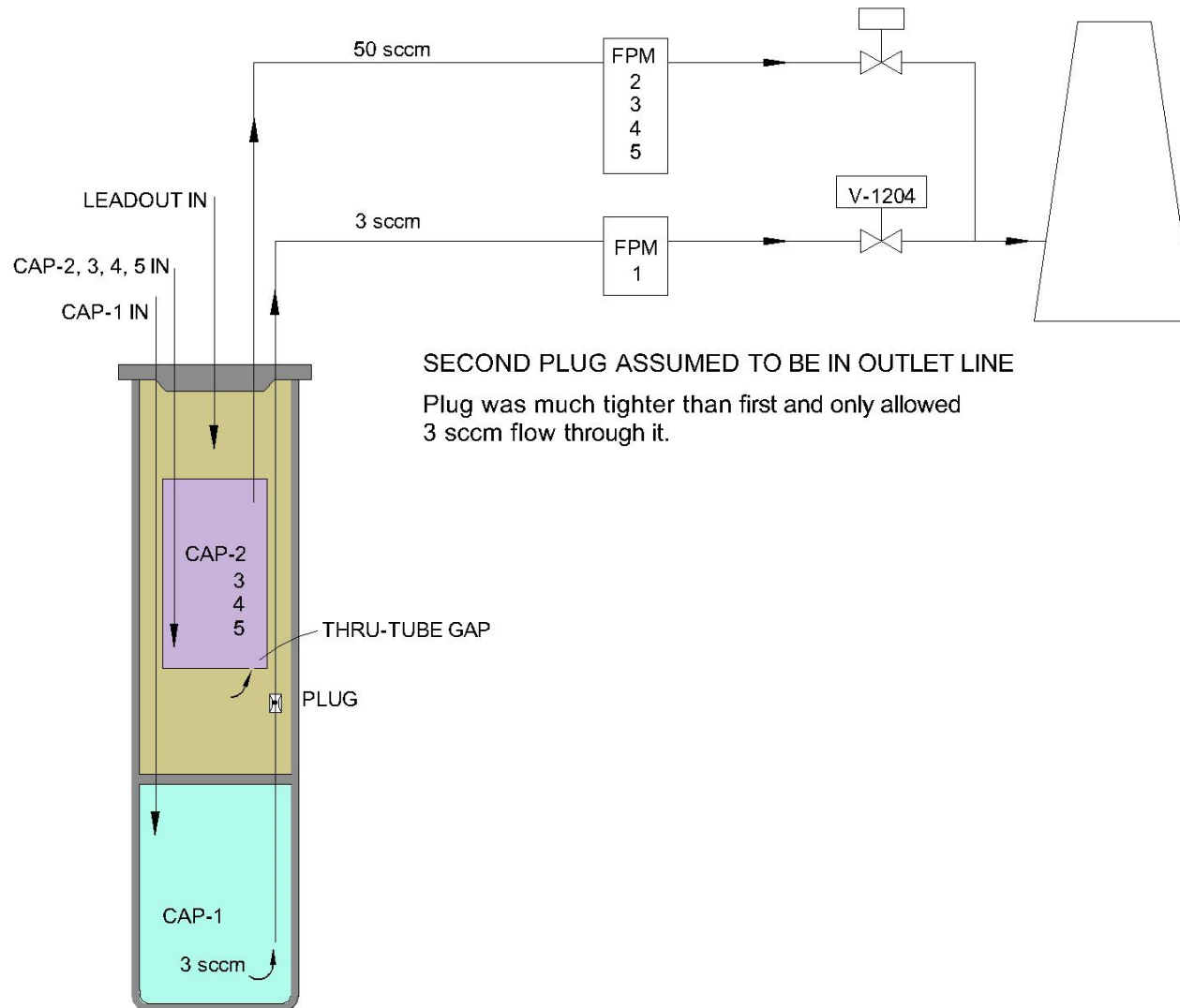
New plug appears Aug 16 - 17, 2019



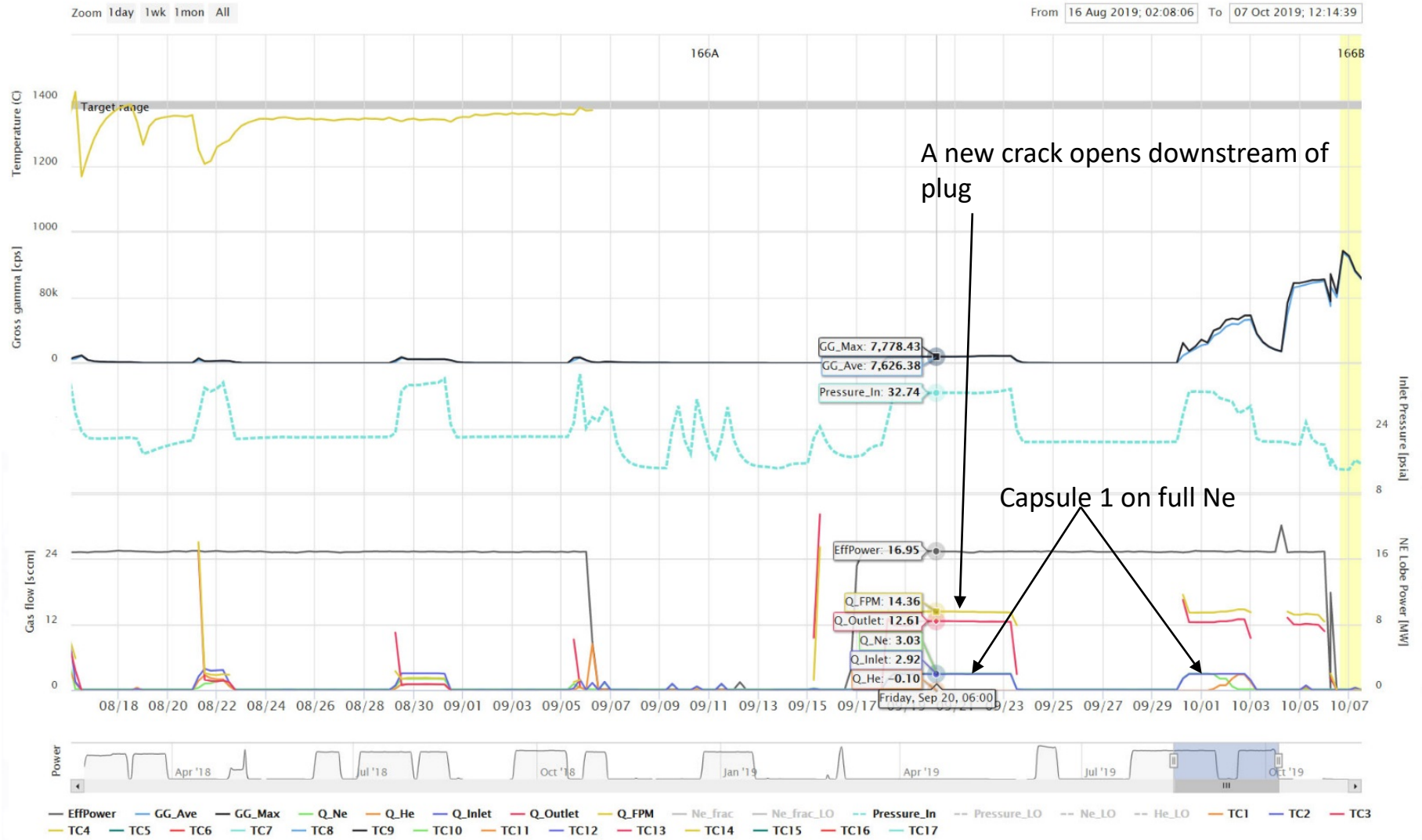
Cycle 166A August 18 to End of Cycle



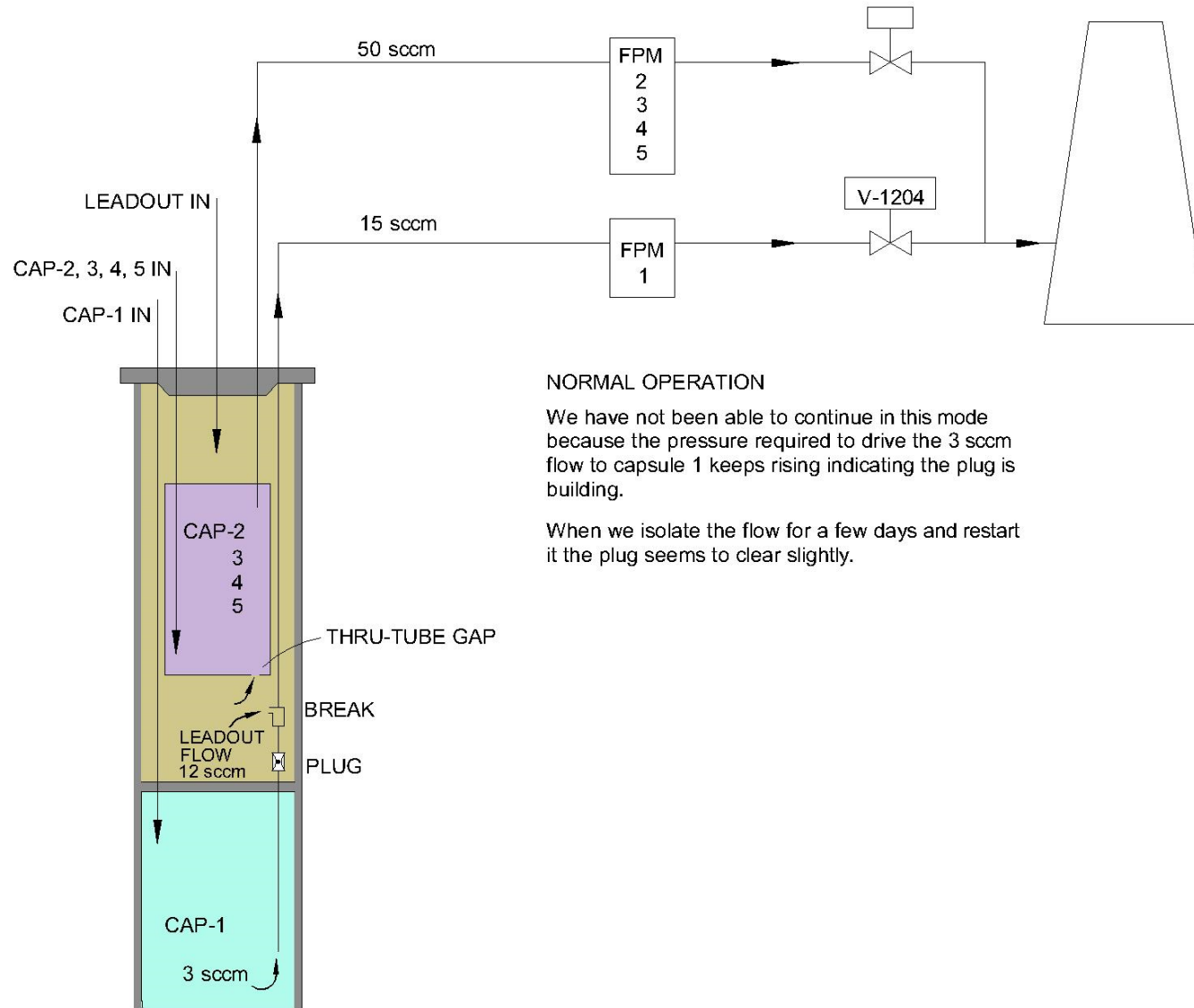
Second plug allows little flow



Cycle 166A August 18 to End of Cycle



166A operating mode after new crack identified

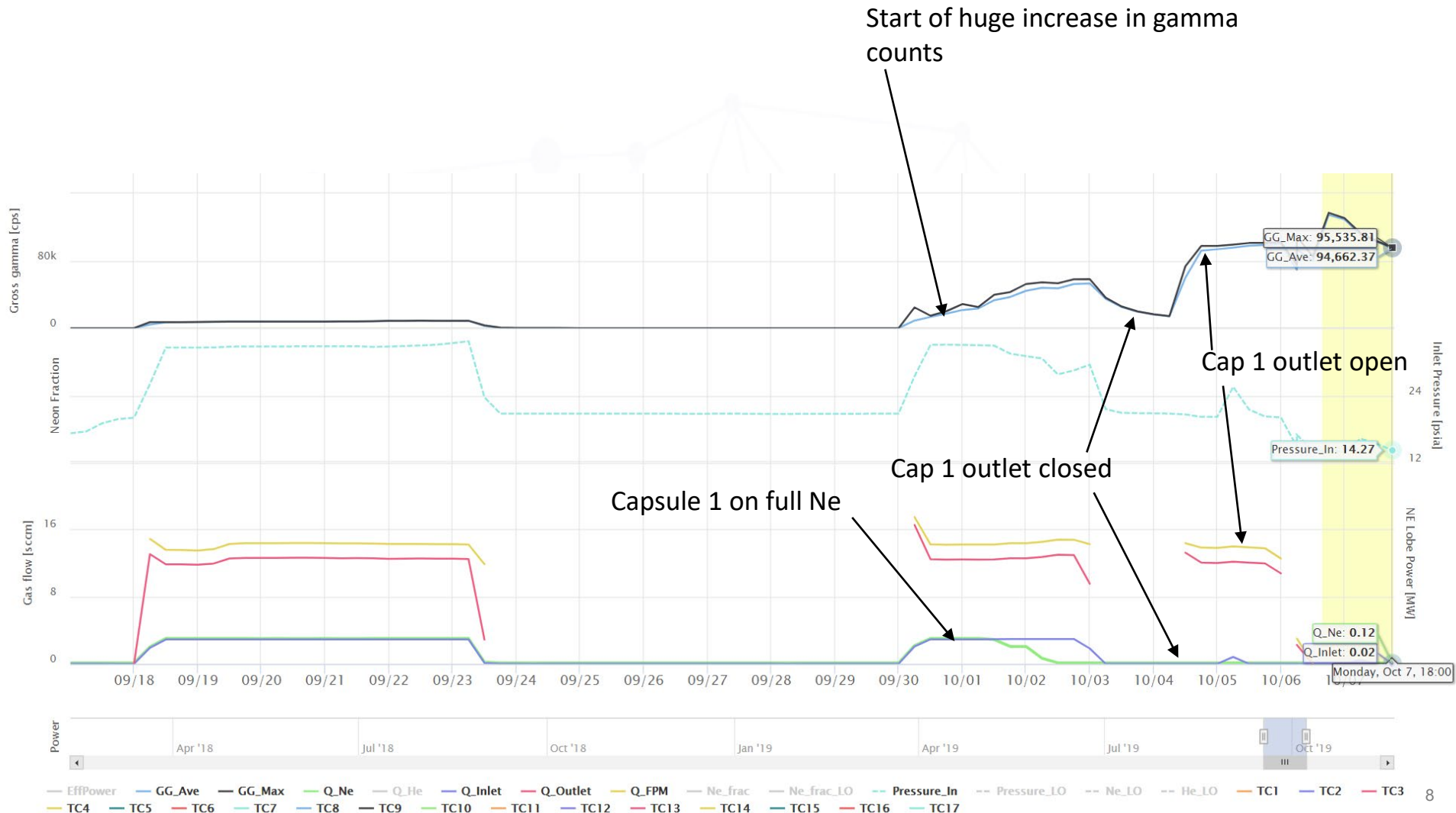


NORMAL OPERATION

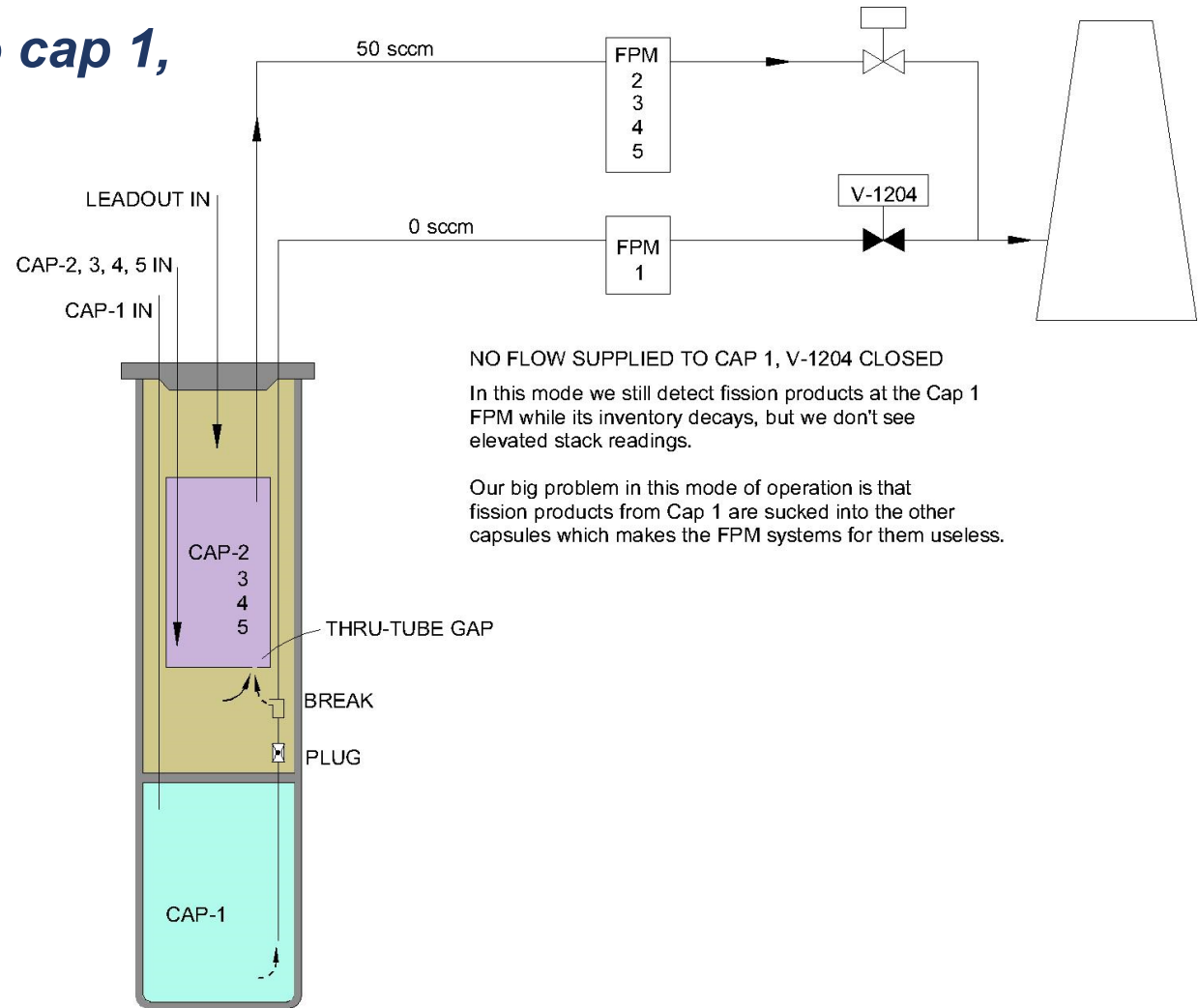
We have not been able to continue in this mode because the pressure required to drive the 3 sccm flow to capsule 1 keeps rising indicating the plug is building.

When we isolate the flow for a few days and restart it the plug seems to clear slightly.

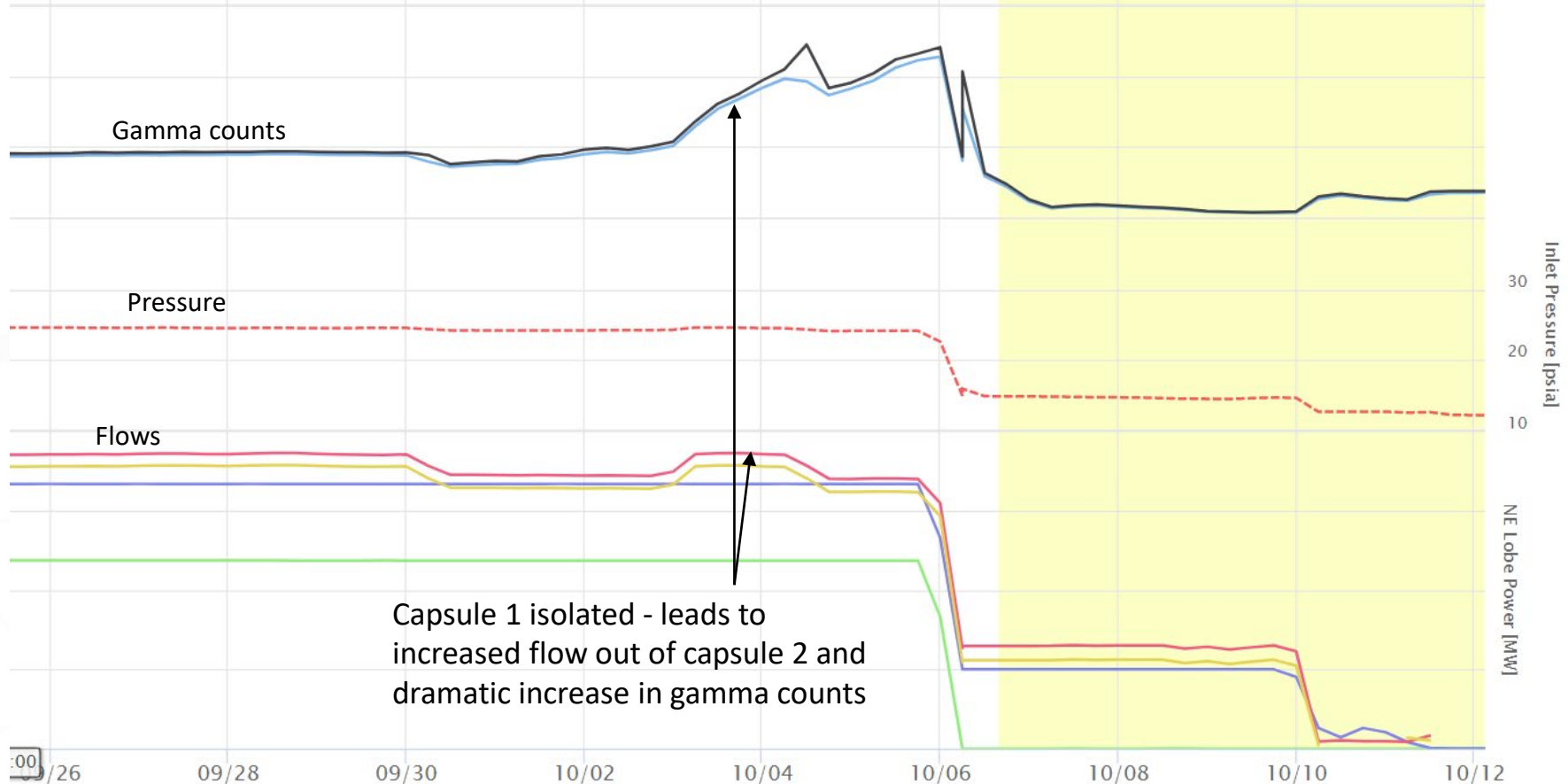
Last few days of cycle 166A



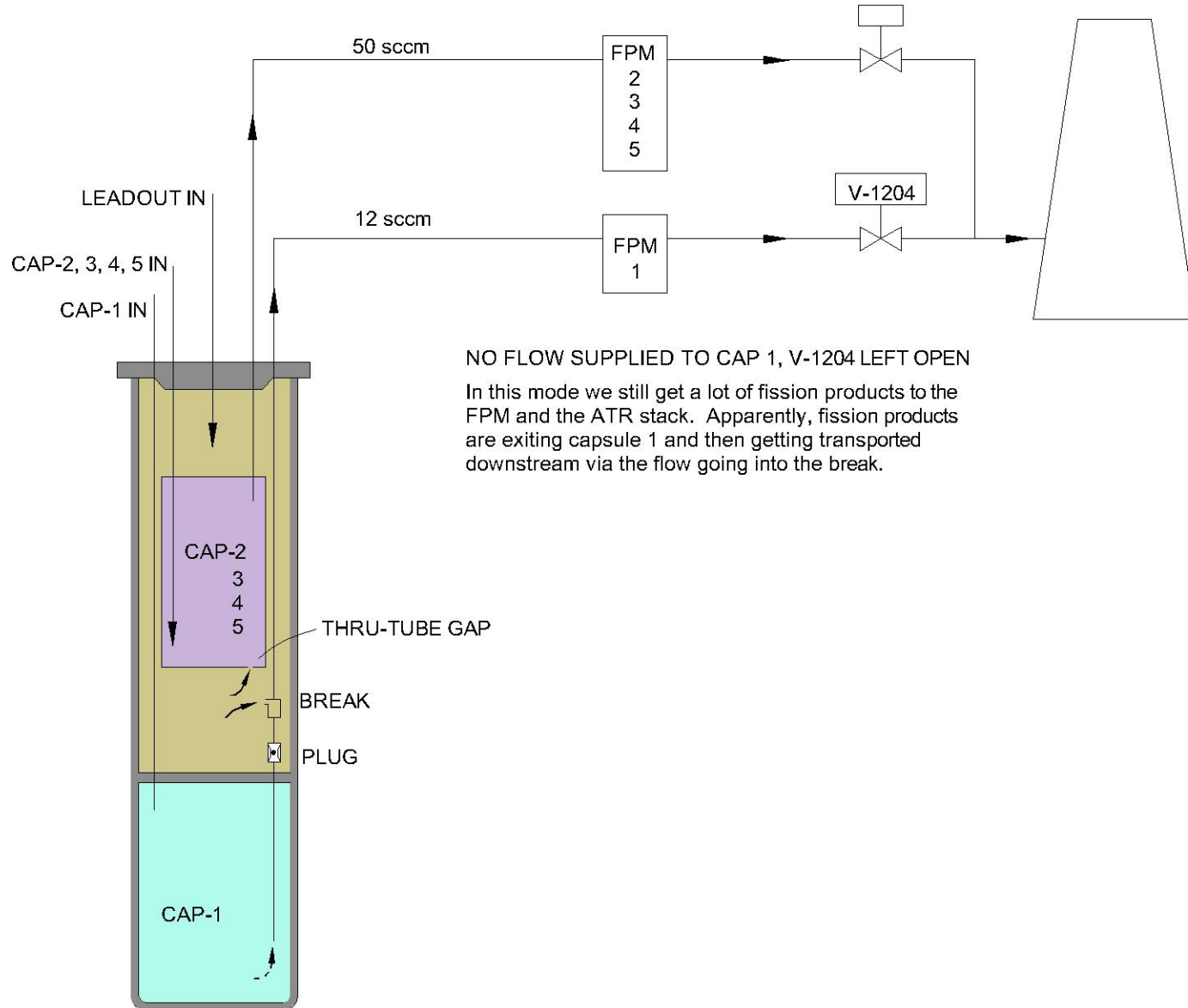
No flow supplied to cap 1, outlet blocked



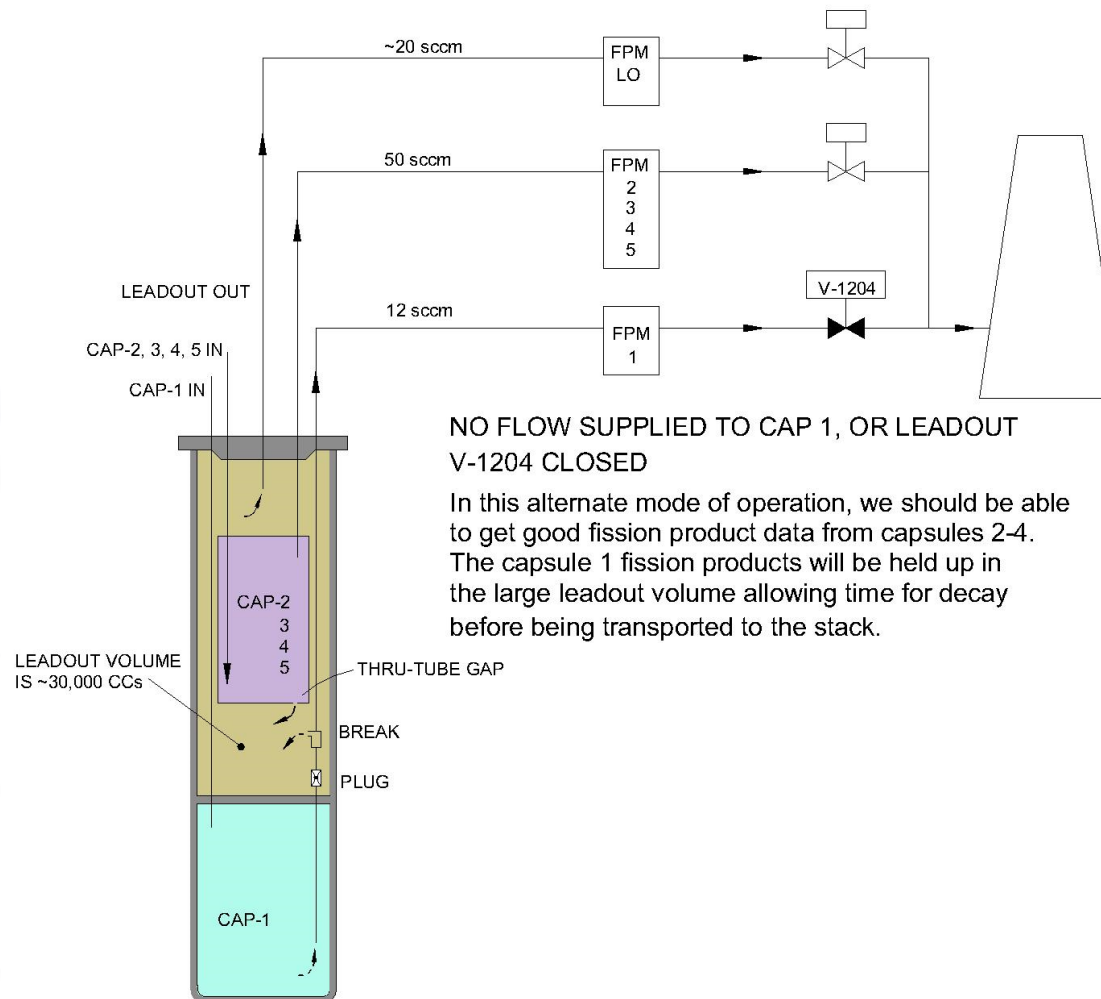
When capsule 1 outlet was isolated this allowed fission products to enter the leadout which were then sucked up by the other capsules – capsule 2 shown below



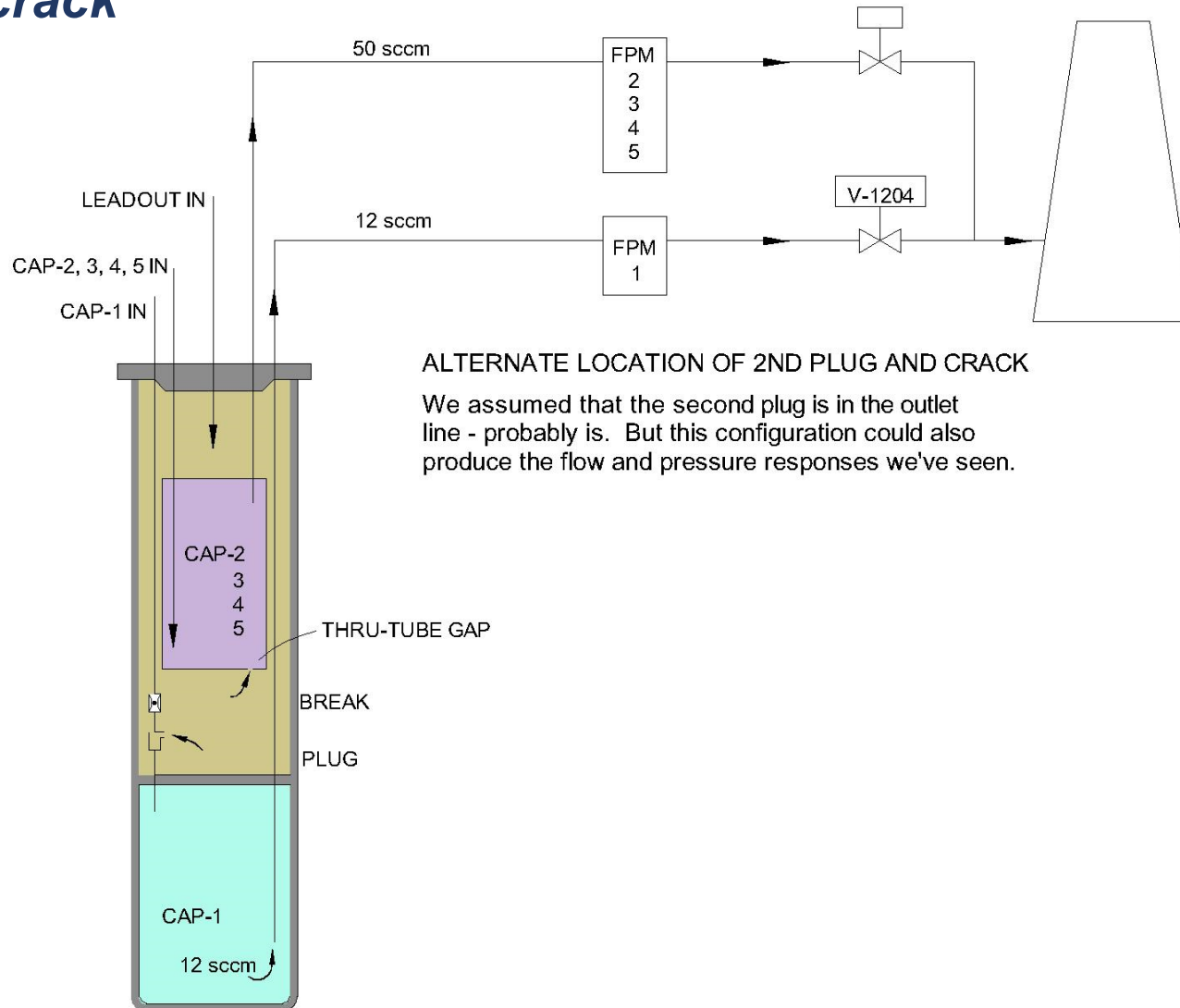
No flow supplied to cap 1 but outlet left open



Alternate mode of operation we hope to be able to use during current cycle (166B)



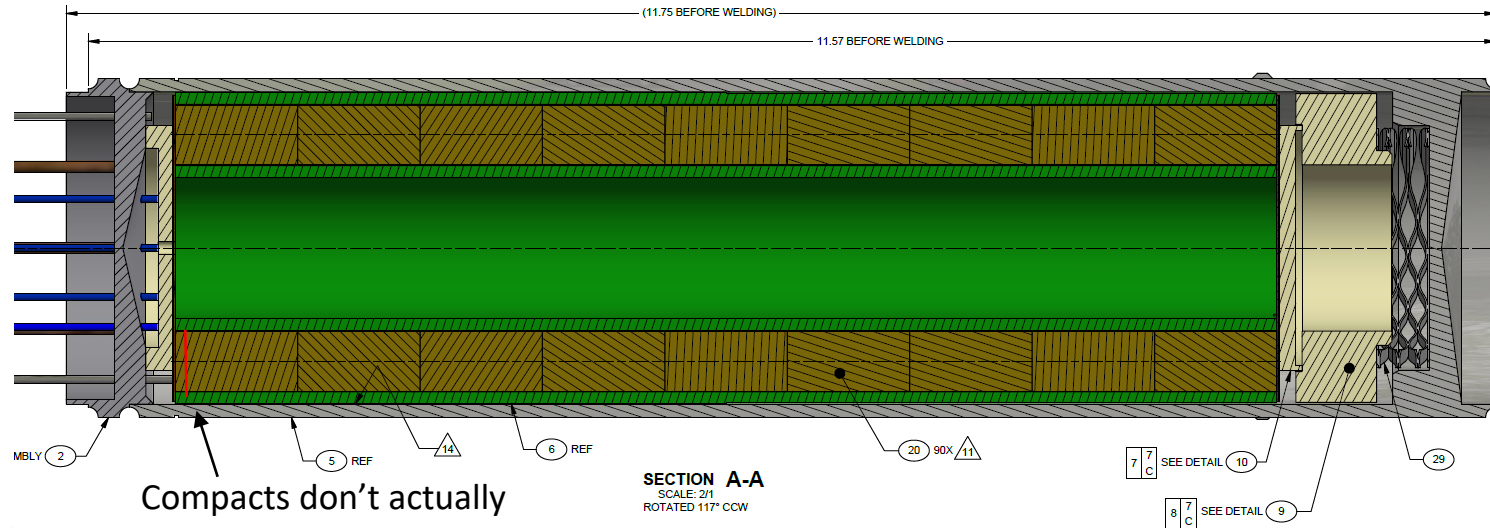
Alternate location of 2nd plug and crack



Information and musing relative to capsule 1 particle failures

- Thermocouple measurements indicate peak temperatures in Capsule 1 could have been as much 100°C higher than predicted by the model. That would still be only ~1480°C. Even another 100°C higher than that shouldn't theoretically be a problem, especially over just a few days.
- When the failures first occurred I wondered if perhaps the spring quit pressing the holder against the top head, and temperatures went very high.

Capsule 1 cross-sections



Compacts don't actually go all the way to top of the holder

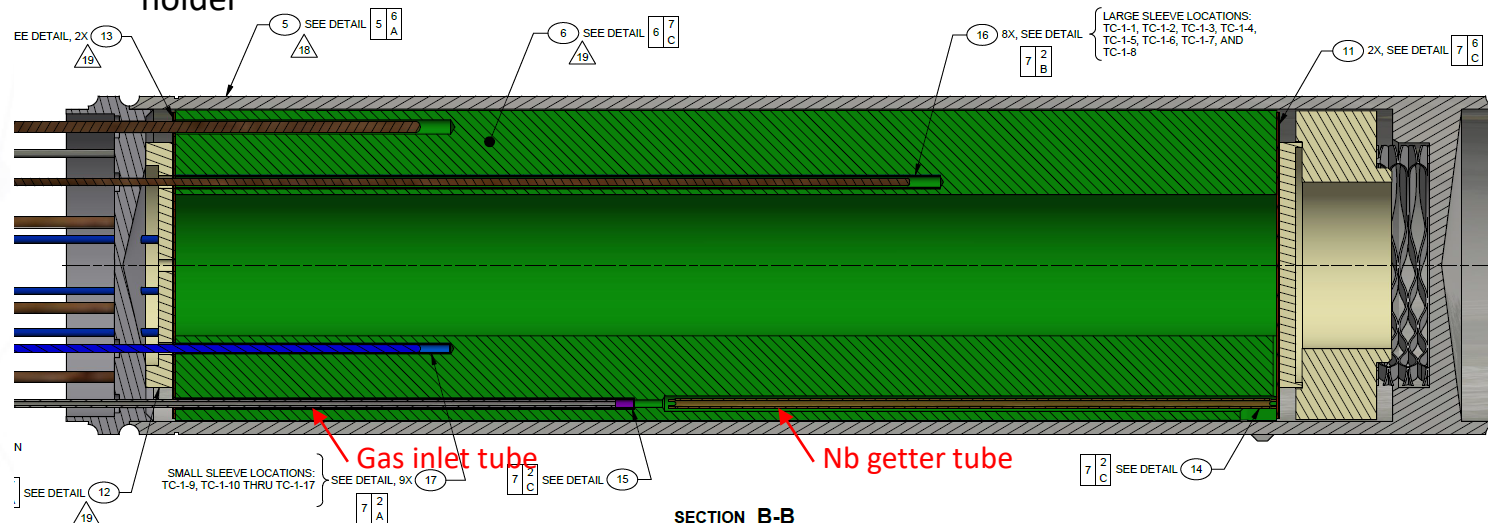
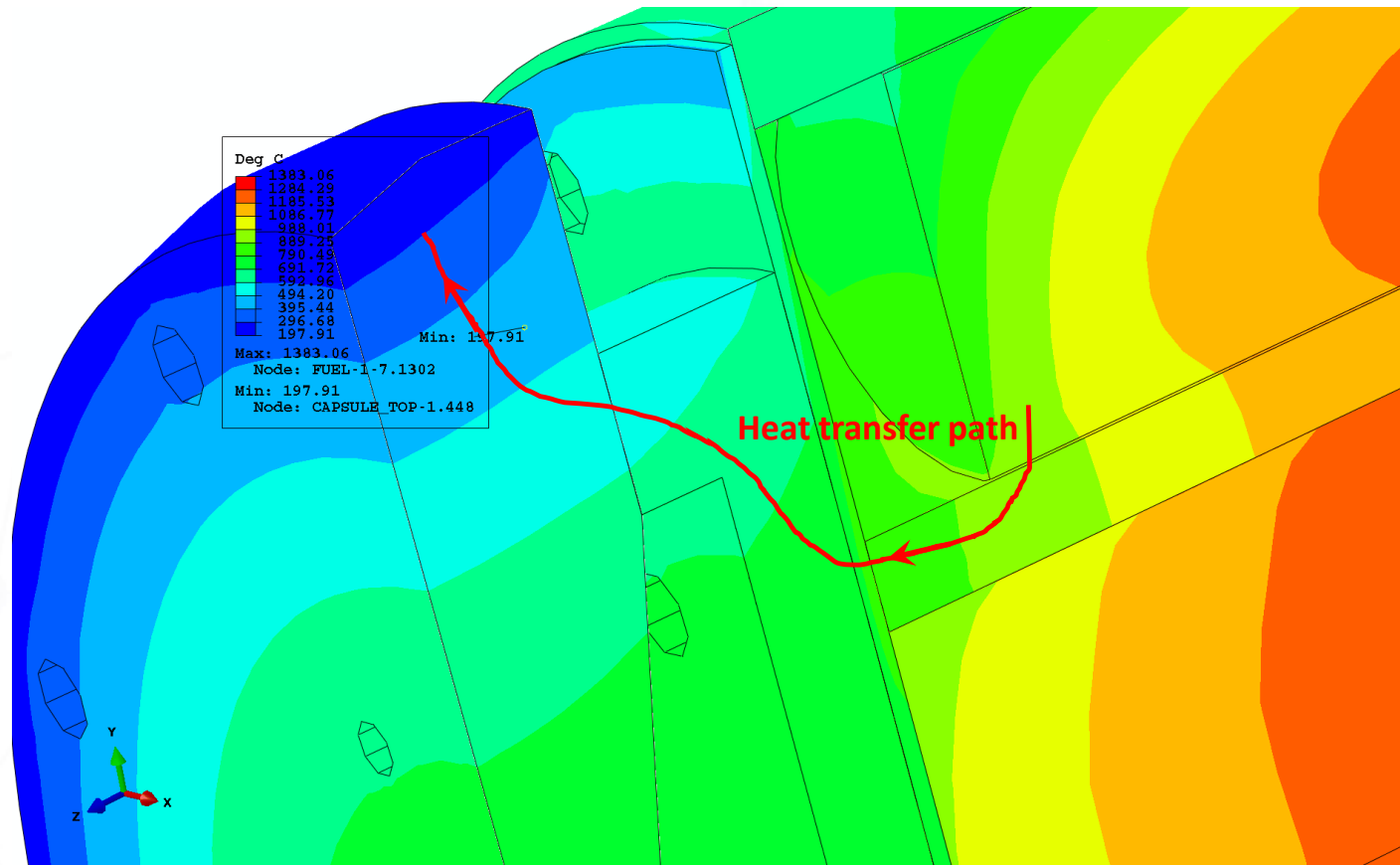


Photo showing compact stacks do not go to top of holder

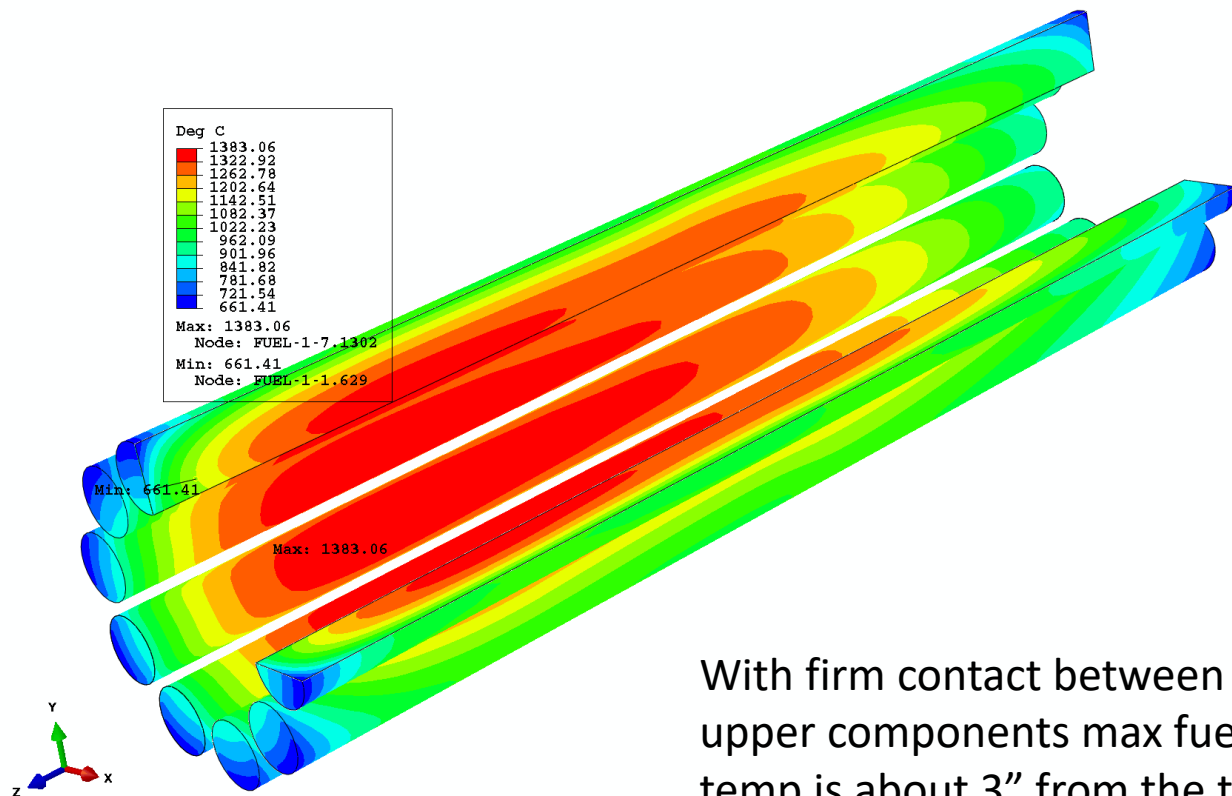


We specified slight shorter compacts so that they would always fit inside the holder regardless of shrinkage

It turns out the heat transfer scheme adopted for capsule 1 doesn't work as intended – doesn't matter whether there is contact between the holder and lid

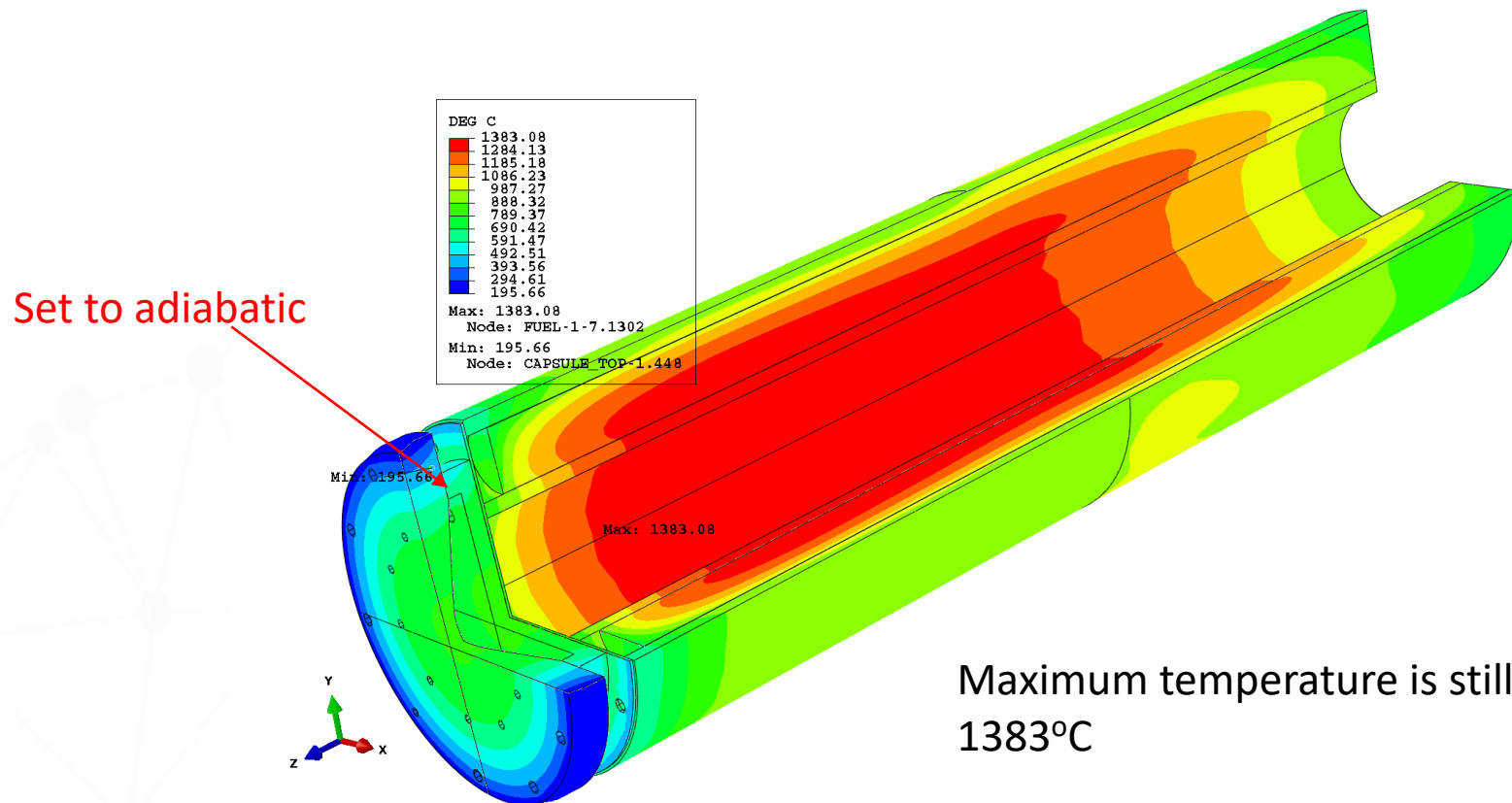


Temperature contours with good contact at top



With firm contact between upper components max fuel temp is about 3" from the top and is 1383°C

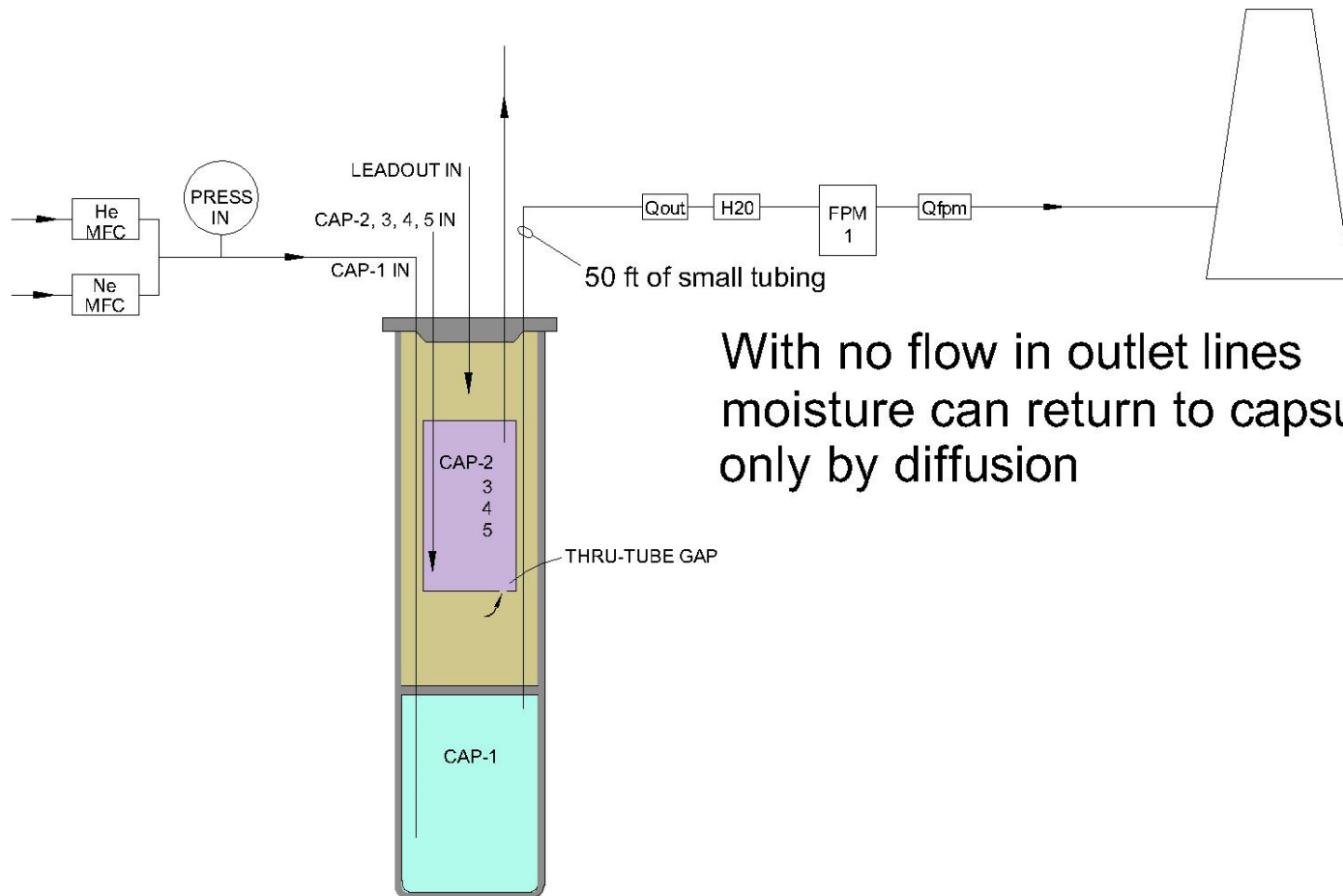
Temperature contours with poor contact at top



Maximum temperature is still
1383°C

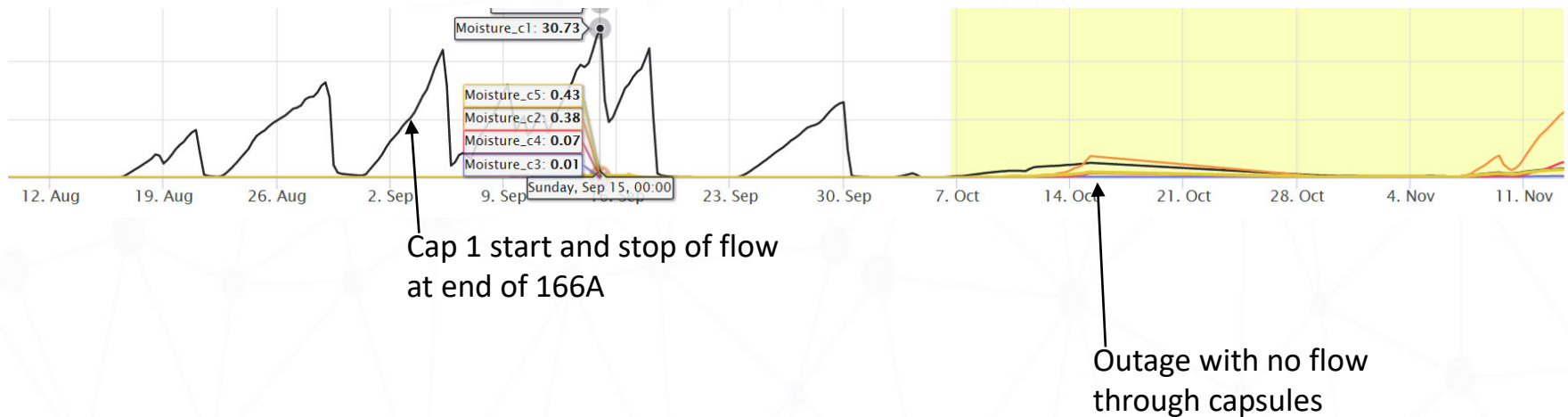
How about moisture ingress?

- We only measure moisture in the outlet lines



With no flow in outlet lines
moisture can return to capsules
only by diffusion

When capsules are isolated moisture levels in downstream lines increase



Is there perhaps a common mode failure behind the capsule 1 plugged and cracked lines, and the fuel particle failures?



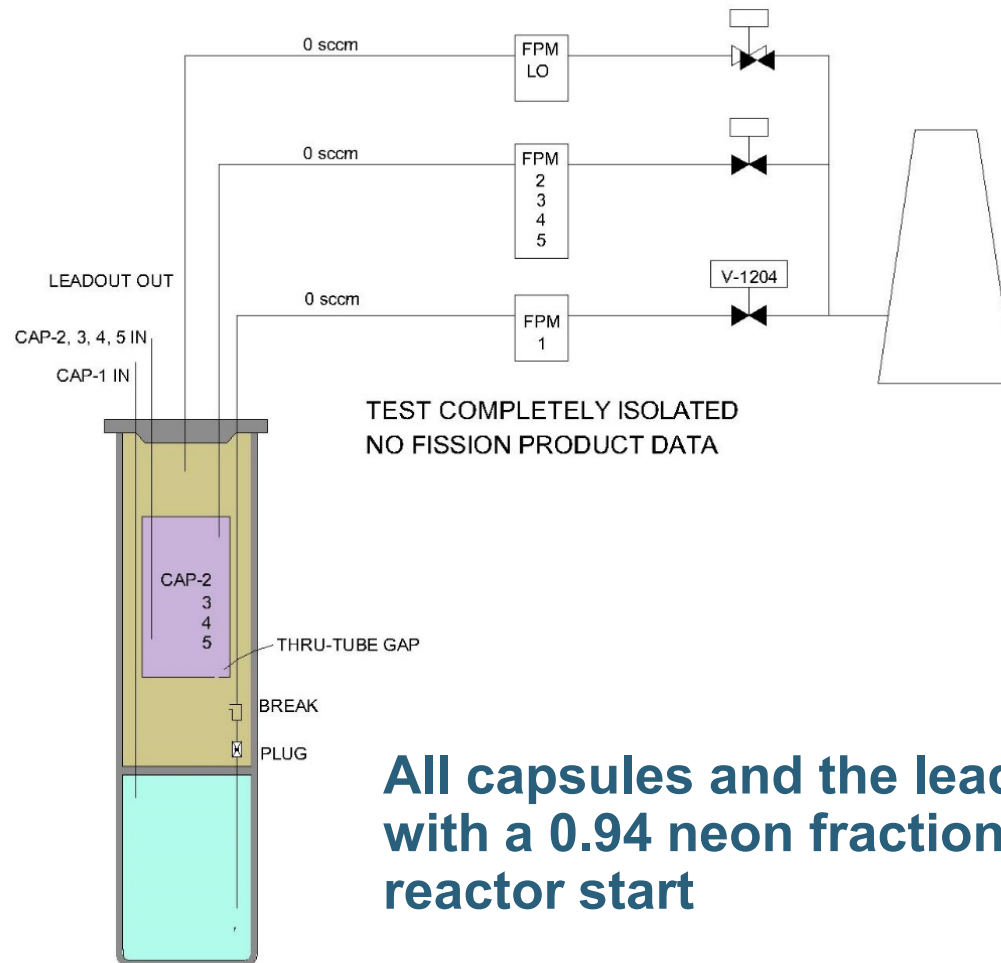
AGR-5/6/7 Path Forward – Cycle 166B and Beyond

Technical Coordination Team
November 11, 2019

Joe Palmer
Mechanical Engineer, PE

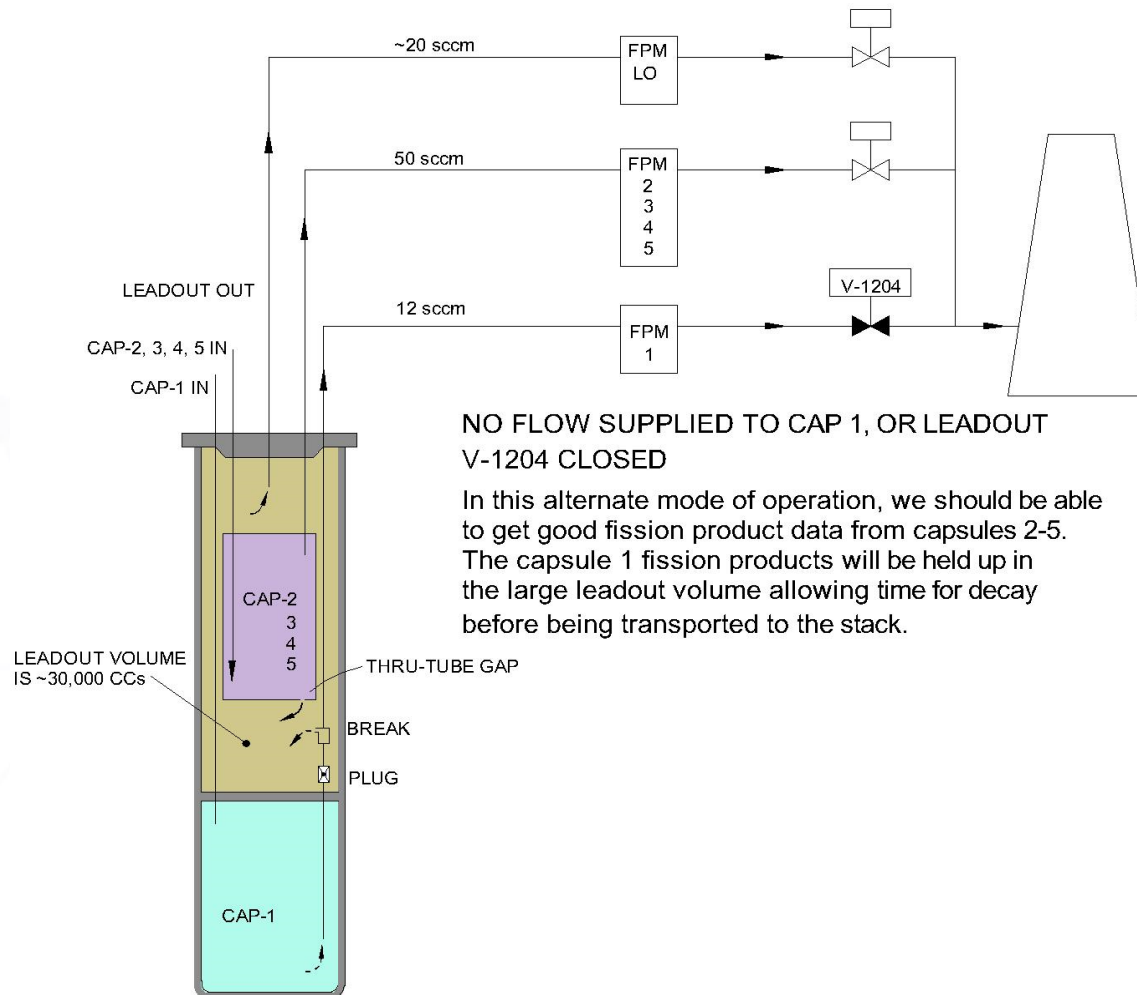


Current operating mode of AGR-5/6/7



All capsules and the leadout were prefilled with a 0.94 neon fraction blend prior to reactor start

Alternate mode of operation we hope to be able to use during current cycle (166B)



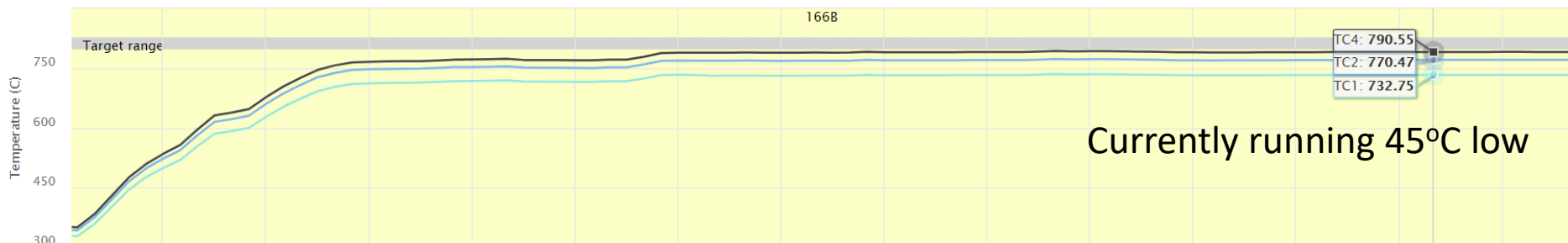
Capsules 4 and 5 current temperatures

Capsule 5: Thermocouples, reactor power, gross gamma, & gas flows for current cycle

Zoom & pan chart with navigator bar (Click/drag also)

Zoom 1day 1wk 1mon All

From 10 Nov 2019; 00:40:47 To 13 Nov 2019; 16:00:00

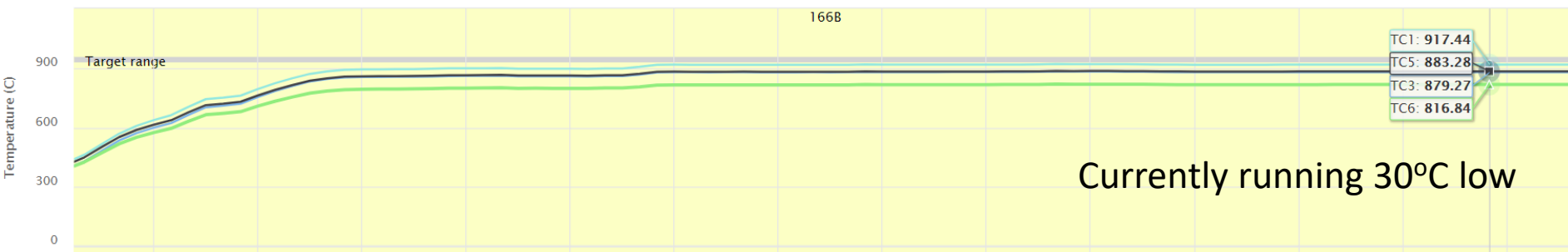


Capsule 4: Thermocouples, reactor power, gross gamma, & gas flows for current cycle

Zoom & pan chart with navigator bar (Click/drag also)

Zoom 1day 1wk 1mon All

From 10 Nov 2019; 01:24:35 To 13 Nov 2019; 16:00:00



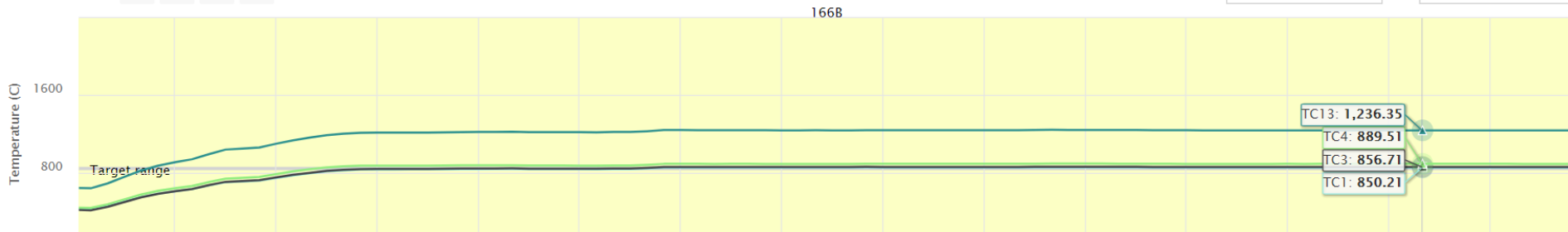
Capsule 3 current temperatures

Capsule 3: Thermocouples, reactor power, gross gamma, & gas flows for current cycle

Zoom & pan chart with navigator bar (Click/drag al

Zoom 1day 1wk 1mon All

From 10 Nov 2019; 00:18:08 To 13 Nov 2019; 17:00:00



Currently running about 20°C high

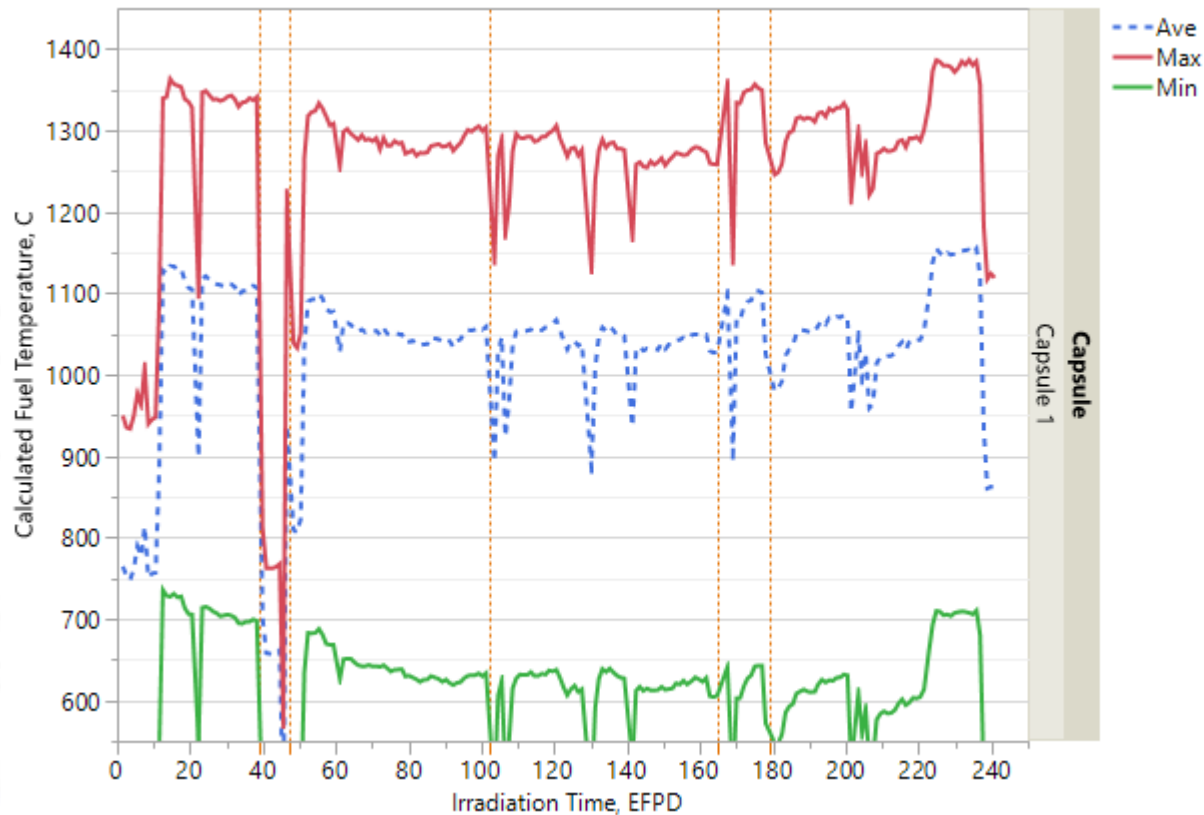
Capsules 1 and 2 current temperatures

- There are no functioning thermocouples in these capsules
- Capsule 1 should be running at temperatures slightly below what it ran at the end of cycle 166A when on full neon (vs current neon fraction of 0.94).
- We have increased the neon fraction of capsule 2 from 0.70 to 0.94. Based response of capsule 4 to a similar change, the capsule 2 peak temperatures are likely 80 – 100°C higher than last cycle

If capsule 1 is a write-off what will we have left?

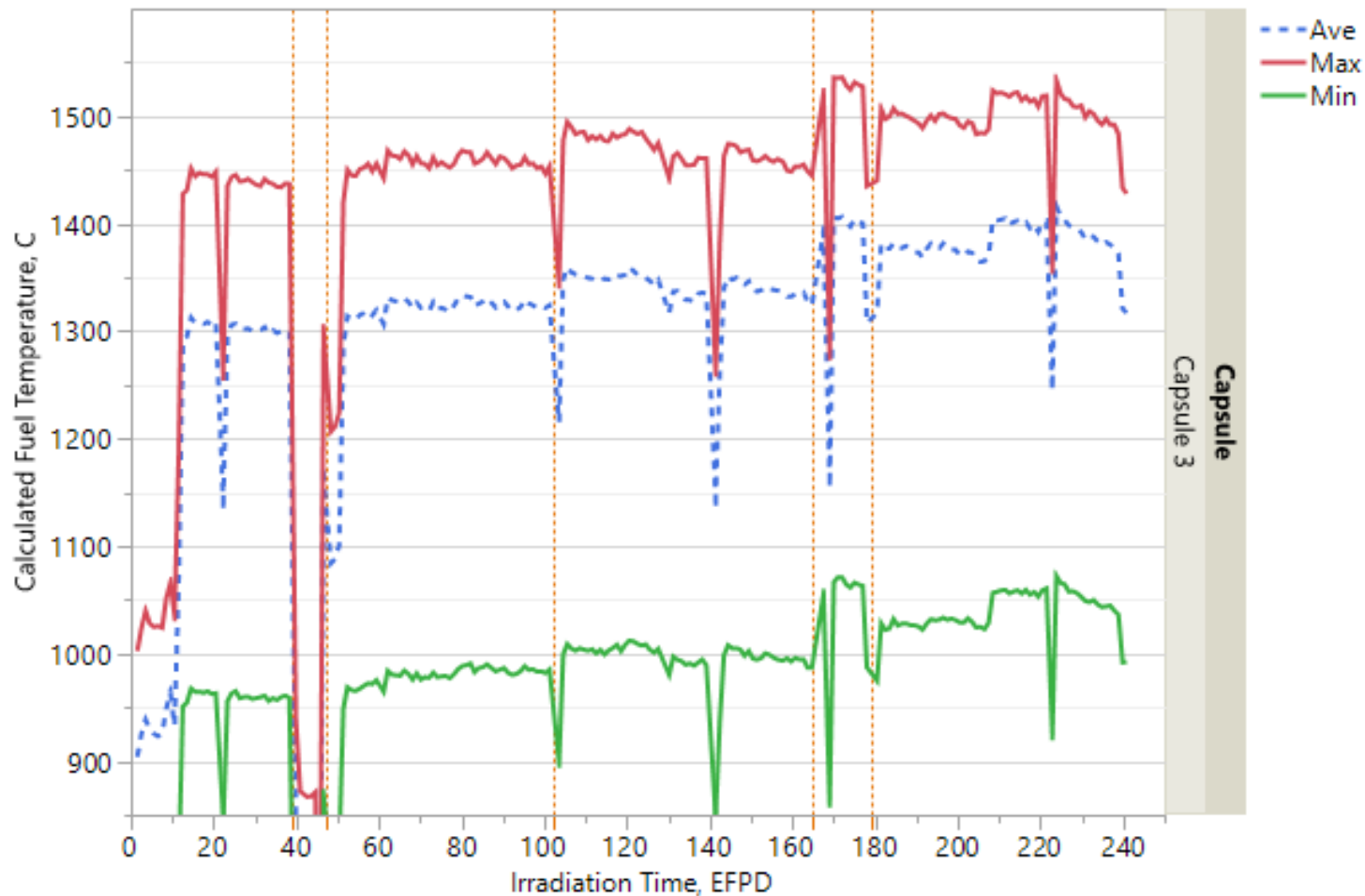
- Capsules 2, 4, and 5 could cover the range 700°C – 1050°C
- Capsule 3 could cover the range 1250°C – 1500°C
- There are a few (very few) particles in capsule 3 in the 1100°C – 1250°C range (if we continue to run at current set point)
- We may want to consider lowering the temperature of capsule 3 to put more particles in the 1100°C – 1250°C range

Capsule 1 peak and avg fuel temperatures (calculated)

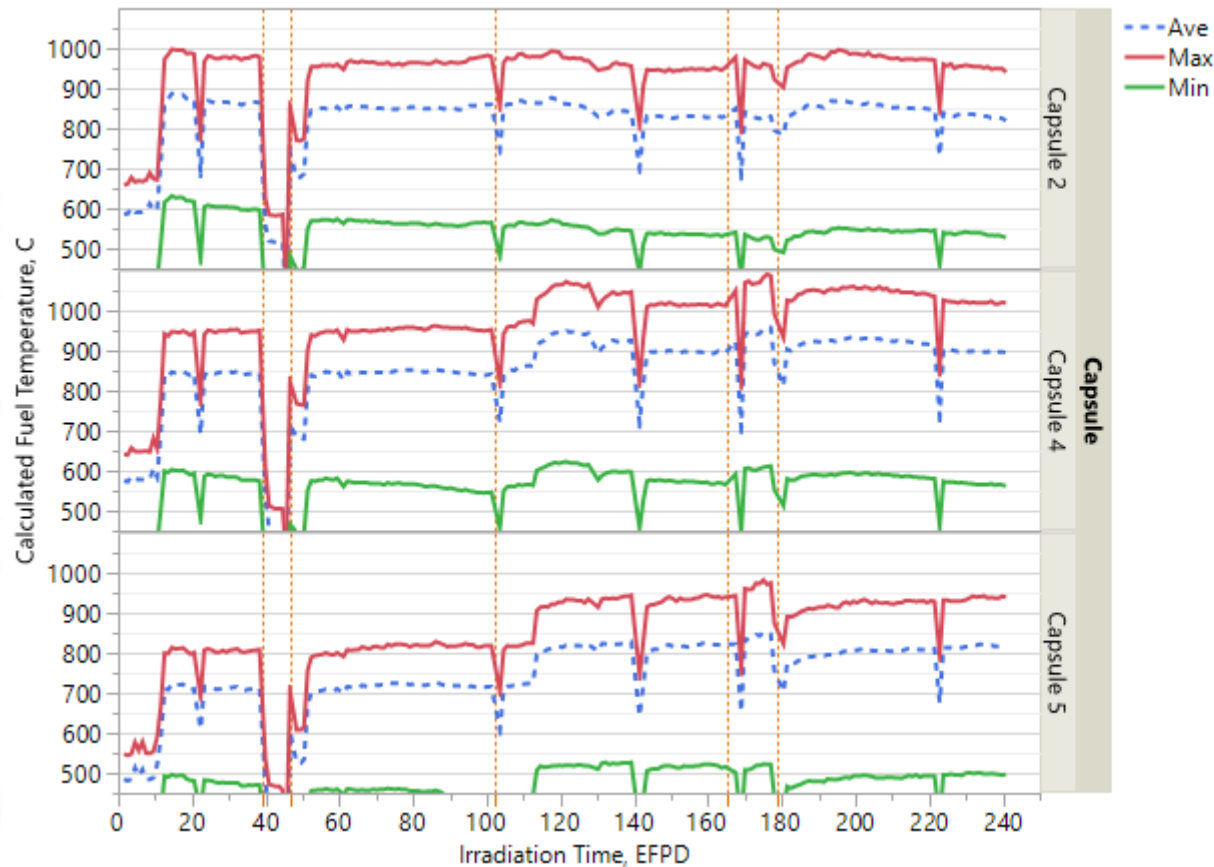


Capsule 1 inboard thermocouples consistently read 60 – 100°C higher than the model predicts. Therefore the peak temperature could be considerably under predicted.

Capsule 3 peak and avg fuel temperatures (calculated)



Capsules 2, 4, 5 peak and avg fuel temperatures (calculated)



AGR-5/6/7 Irradiation Look Ahead – Projection Method

AGR-5/6/7 peak burnup by cycle and cumulative

Original Estimate from ECAR-2961

Actual Followed by Projected

Cycle No.	Cycle Type	Cycle Length (EFPD)	Lobe Power (MW)	Lobe Output (MWD)	Cum Lobe Output (MWD)	Filter	Peak Burnup (%)	Cycle	Cycle Length (EFPD)	Lobe Power (MW)	Lobe Output (MWD)	Cumulative Lobe Output (MWD)	Filter	Proj Cycle Burnup (%)	Peak Burnup (%)	
1	Regular	50	14	700	700	M	2.5	Reg 162B	43	14.25	613	613	M		1.95	ACTUAL
2	Regular	50	14	700	1400	M	4.9	PALM 163A	9	7.2	65	678	M		2.0	
3	PALM	15	20	300	1700	H	5.6	Reg 164A	57	15.44	880	1558	M		5.0	
4	Regular	50	14	700	2400	M	7.5	Reg 164B	65	16.11	1047	2605	M		7.8	
5	Regular	50	14	700	3100	M	9.3	PALM 165A	14	19	266	2871	M	0.62	8.4	PROJECTED
6	PALM	15	20	300	3400	M	10.0	Reg 166A	59	17	1003	3874	L	2.44	10.9	
7	Regular	50	14	700	4100	L	11.7	Reg 166B	60	17	1020	4894	L	2.04	12.9	
8	Regular	50	16	800	4900	L	13.3	PALM 167A	6	20	120	5014	L	0.24	13.1	
9	PALM	15	20	300	5200	L	13.9	Reg 168A	60	21	1260	6274	L	2.24	15.4	Cycle end
10	Regular	50	18	900	6100	L	15.5	Reg 168B	60	21	1260	7534	L	1.96	17.3	
11	Regular	50	18	900	7000	L	16.9	PALM 169A	14	21	294	7828	L	0.37	17.7	
12	PALM	15	20	300	7300	L	17.3	Reg 170A	60	21	1260	9088	L	1.58	19.3	
13	Regular	50	18	900	8200	L	18.5	Total	507							Feb 2021
Total		510		8,200	8200											
21 MW lobe powers are not currently in the ISOP. Would need to be requested.																

This slide is from the April TCT meeting

AGR-5/6/7 Irradiation Look Ahead

Actual Followed by Projected									
Cycle	Cycle		Lobe	Lobe	Cum Lobe		Proj Cycle	Peak Burnup	
	Length		Power	Output	Output				
	(EFPD)	Cum Days	(MW)	(MWD)	(MWD)	Filter	(%)	(%)	
Reg 162B	39	39	14.25	556	556	M		1.95	ACTUAL
PALM 163A	9	48	7.2	65	621	M		2.0	
Reg 164A	57	105	15.44	880	1501	M		5.0	
Reg 164B	65	170	16.11	1047	2548	M		7.8	
PALM 165A	15	185	19	285	2833	M	0.7	8.5	
Reg 166A	60	245	17	1020	3853	L	2.6	11.0	Cycle end Aug 2020
Reg 166B	60	305	17	1020	4873	L	2.04	13.1	
PALM 167A	5	310	14	70	4943	L	0.14	13.2	
Reg 168A	60	370	20	1200	6143	L	2.1	15.3	
Reg 168B	60	430	20	1200	7343	L	1.9	17.2	
PALM 169A	14	444	21	294	7637	L	0.37	17.6	Nov 2020
Reg 170A	60	504	21	1260	8897	L	1.58	19.1	Mar 2021

