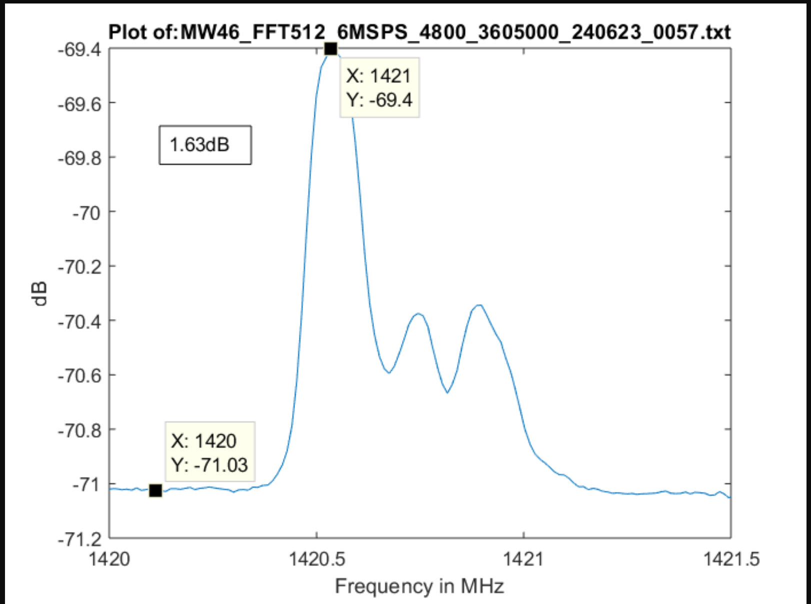
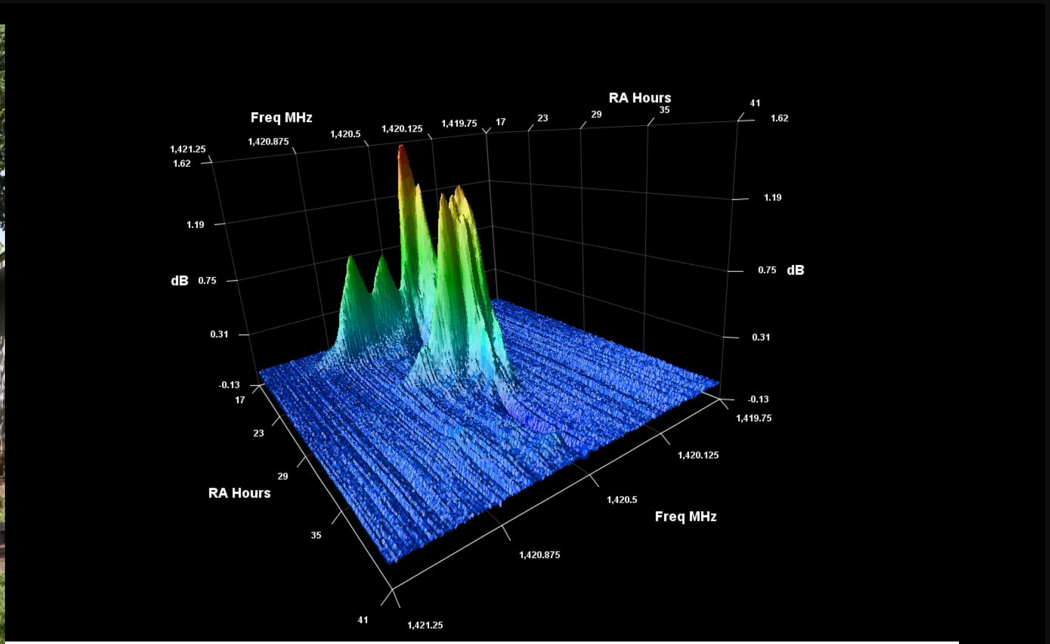
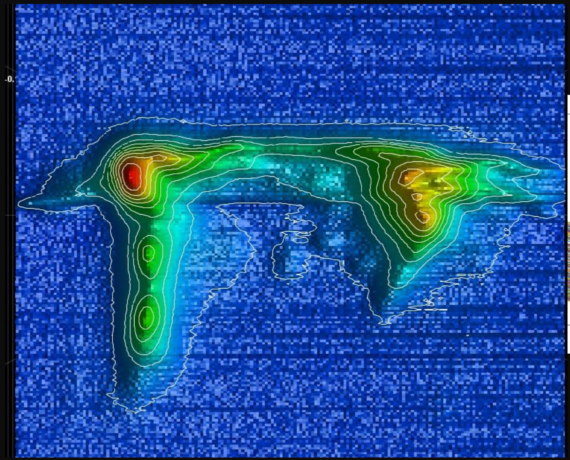
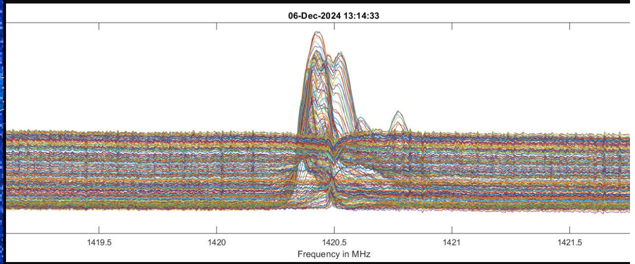
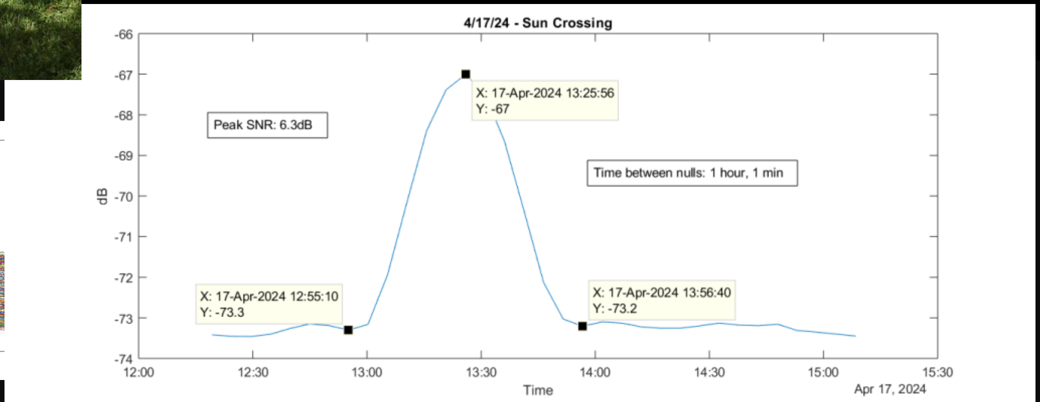
DIY Radio Astronomy







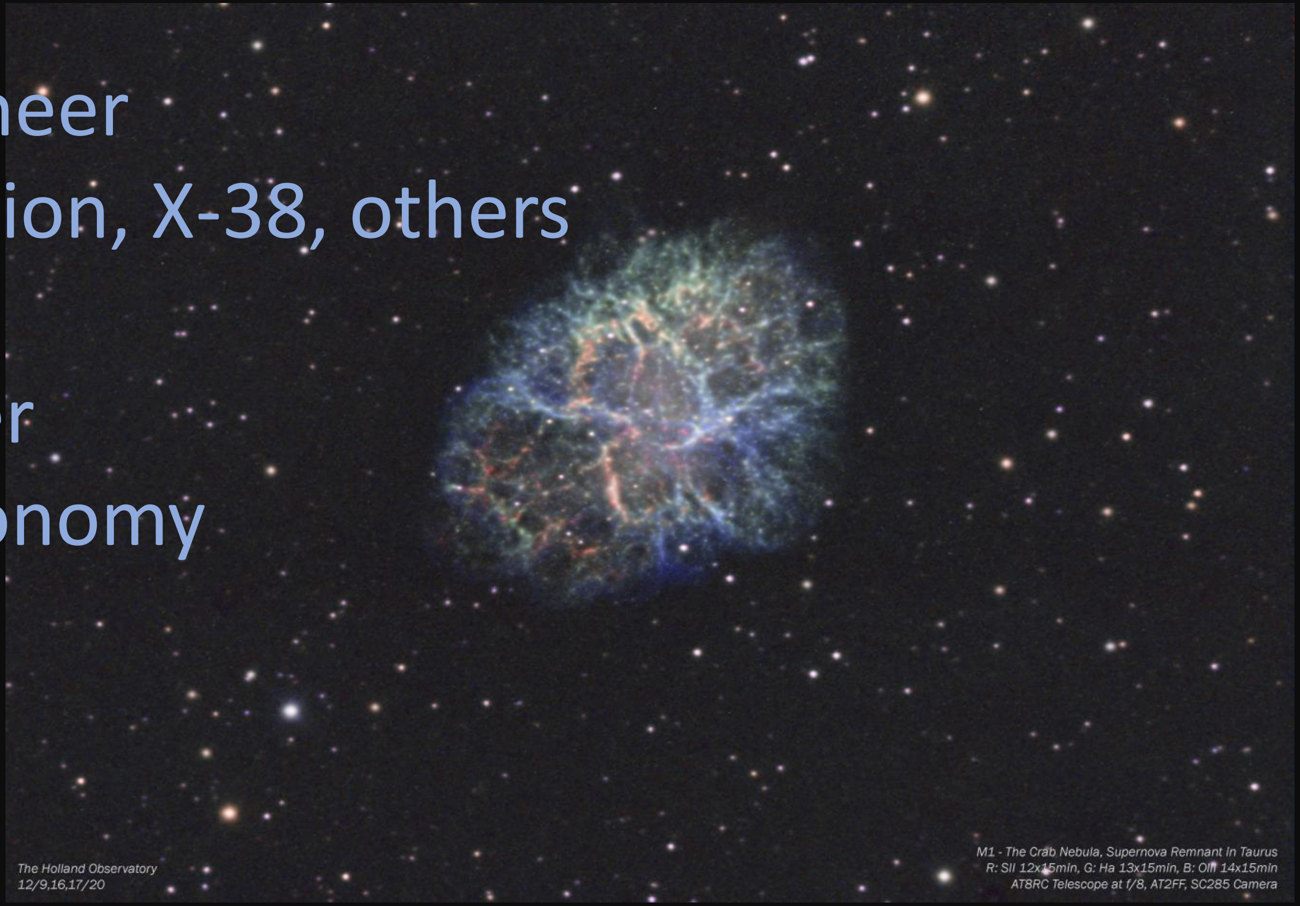




Doug Holland

Who Am I, and Why Am I Standing Up Here Talking to You?

- Member (President) of Johnson Space Center Astronomical Society
- Former NASA Electrical Engineer
  - Space Shuttle, Space Station, X-38, others
- Current Amateur Astronomer
  - Astroimaging, Radio Astronomy



Presentation Outline

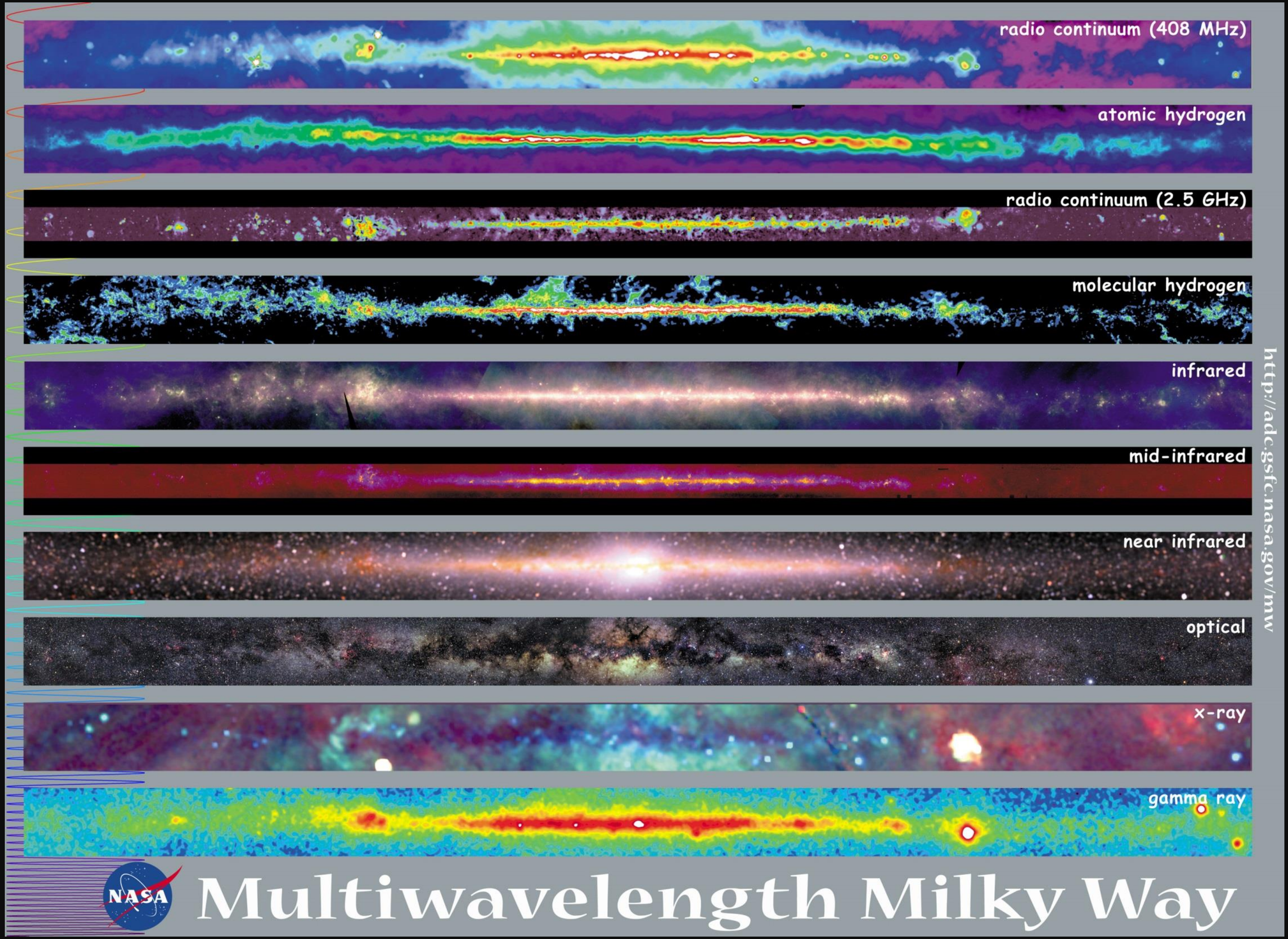
- General Radio Astronomy Information
- The Architecture of an Amateur Radio Telescope
- Four Configurations Used for this Presentation
- Projects
  - Project 1 – 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with WiFi Antenna
  - Project 2 – Improved 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with 2.1m Antenna
  - Project 3 – Total Power Measurements with 2.1m Antenna
  - Project 4 – What Can be Accomplished with a Satellite TV Dish Antenna
  - Project 5 – Methanol Masers with a Tracking Radio Telescope
- Other Projects that Can Be Done
- Resources Available for Amateur Radio Astronomy

The Holland Observatory
9/14,20-23,26-30/22

NGC6823 - Open Cluster with Nebula in Vulpecula
R - SII: 36x12min, G - Ha: 30x12min, B - OIII: 36x12min (L:Ha)
AT8RC Telescope at f/8, SC8300 Camera

General Radio Astronomy Information

Why do Radio Astronomy =>



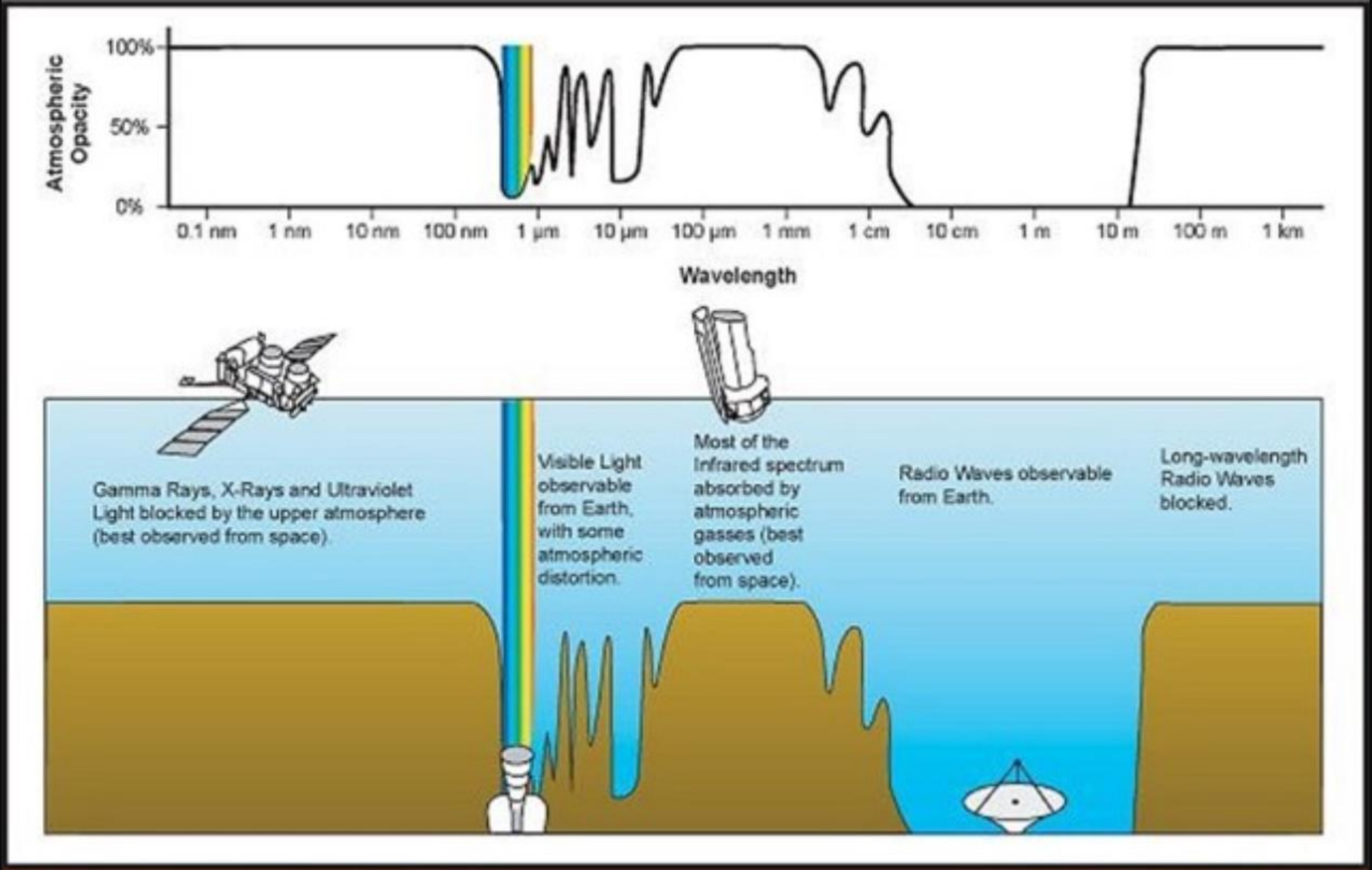
NASA: Multiwavelength Milky Way

Our galaxy / universe appears very different at different wavelengths

- Physical processes
- Hidden features
- > understanding

Doug Holland

General Radio Astronomy Information (cont'd) Atmospheric Opacity =>



SARA (Society of Amateur Radio Astronomers) Tutorial

Atmospheric Opacity low for:

Visible Light Wavelengths

Radio Wavelengths

Able to do visible & radio astronomy from the ground

Doug Holland

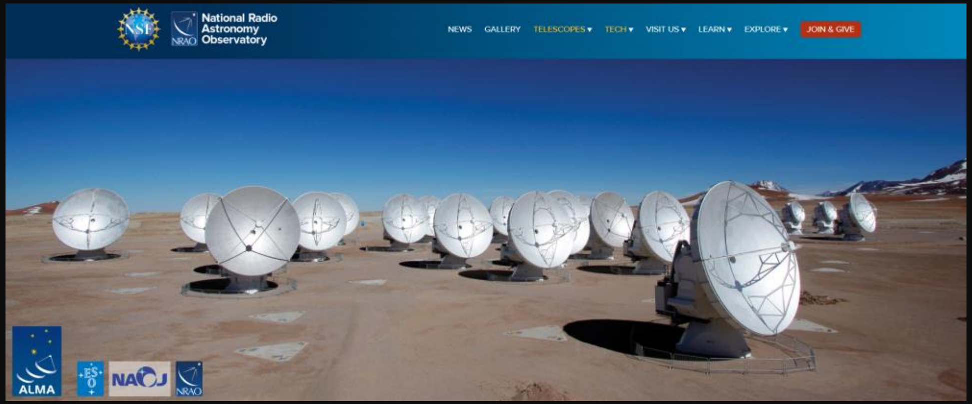
General Radio Astronomy Information (cont'd)

Can be done =>

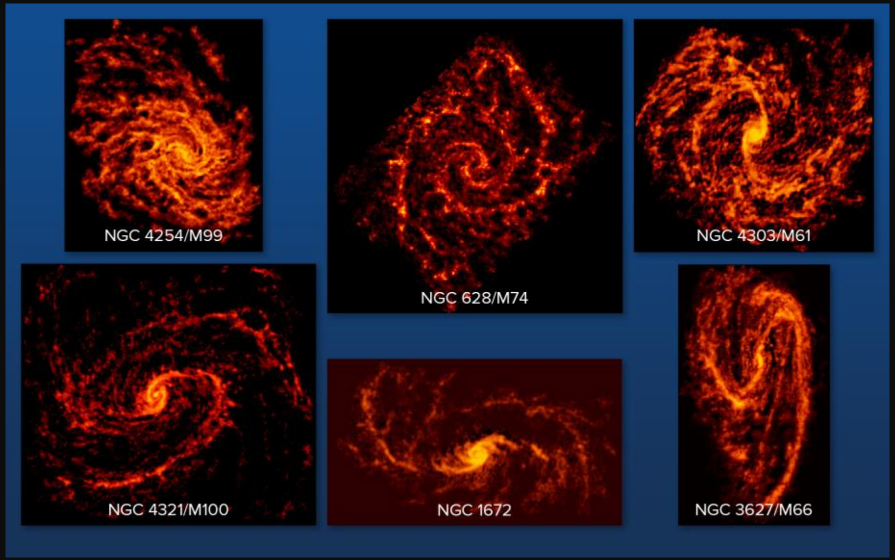
Doug Holland

General Radio Astronomy Information (cont'd)

Large arrays can create high resolution images



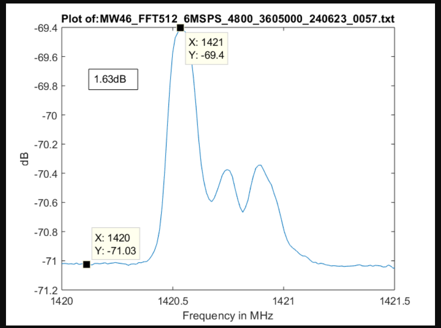
ALMA: **Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array**

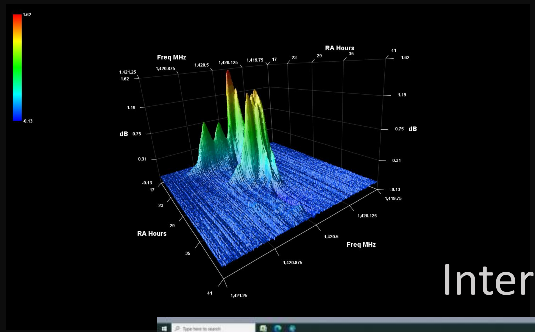


https://public.nrao.edu/telescopes/alma/science/#galaxies

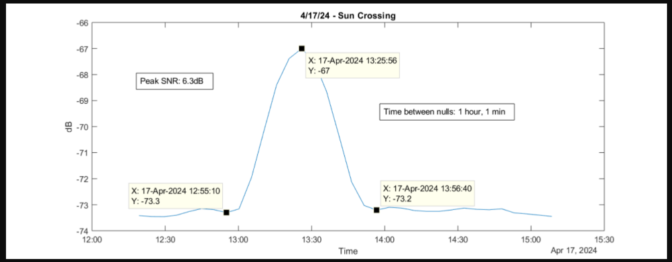
Small amateur radio telescopes can 'detect' objects

Spectrums

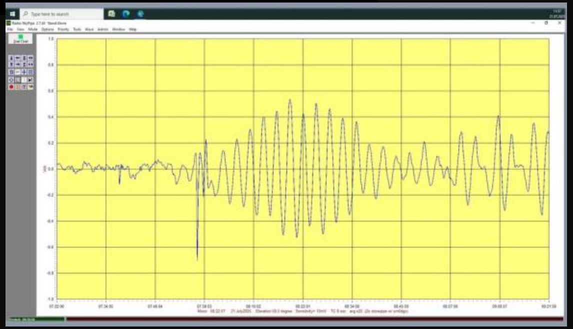




Interferometer



Total power



Jan Henning Holmedal Lustrup,
fb Amateur Radio Astronomy

Doug Holland

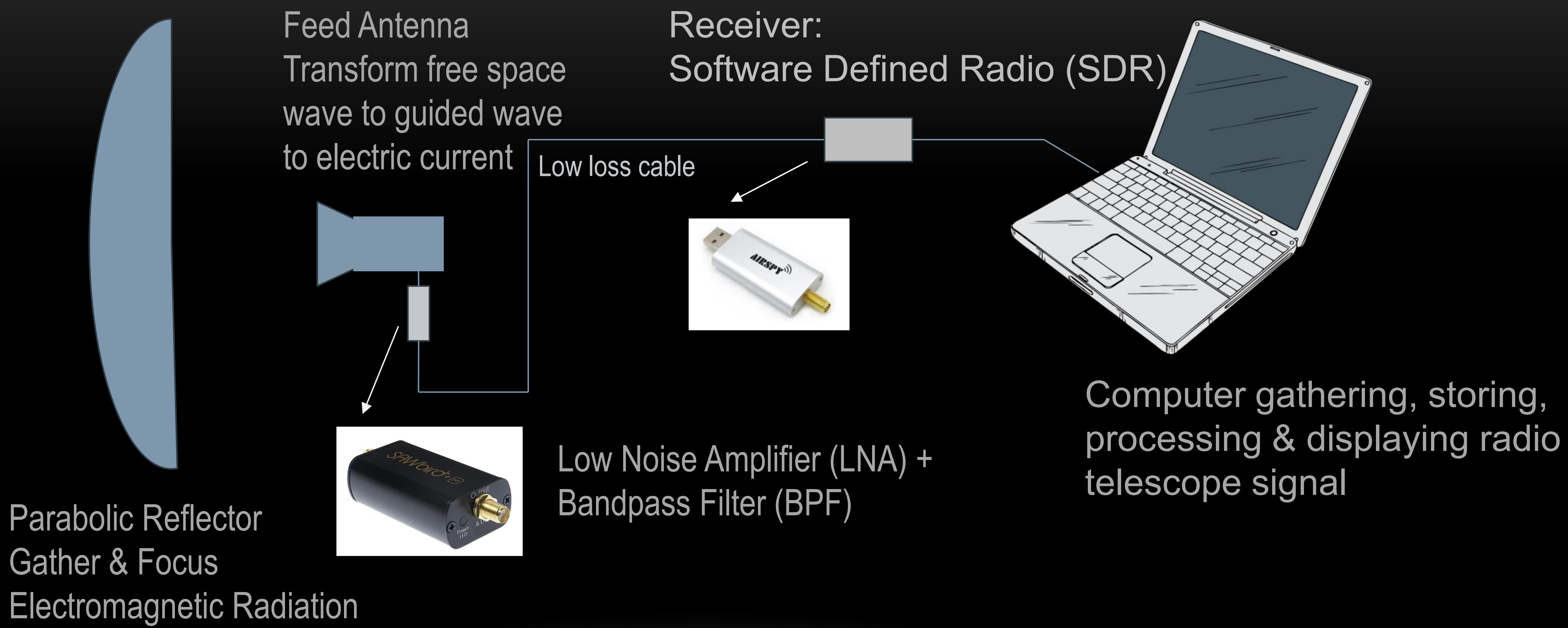
General Radio Astronomy Information (cont'd)

Even though amateur radio astronomers do not generally create high resolution images, there are many exceptional things that can be done =>

- Capture the evidence of the Milky Way's multiple spiral arms
  - Create a model / image of the overall structure of our galaxy
- Measure the rotation rate of our galaxy
- Determine the location of our solar system within the Milky Way
- Measure the changing radio frequency (RF) output of the Sun
- Measure the temperature of the Moon
- Detect:
  - active / radio galaxy
  - star forming region not visible to optical telescopes
  - super nova remnant (SNR)
  - masers (water, OH, methanol)
  - meteors
- Listen to radio emissions from Jupiter
- & a whole lot more

Milky Way Galaxy in the direction of Perseus, 30x4 minute exposures
Rokinon 16mm Lens at f/4, Modified Canon 450D Camera, ISO200

The Architecture of an Amateur Radio Telescope



Typical, simplest configuration

Four Configurations Used for this Presentation

Wifi Antenna

2.1m / 7’ Radio Telescope

Satellite TV Antenna

1.1m Tracking
Radio Telescope

Project 1 – 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with WiFi Antenna

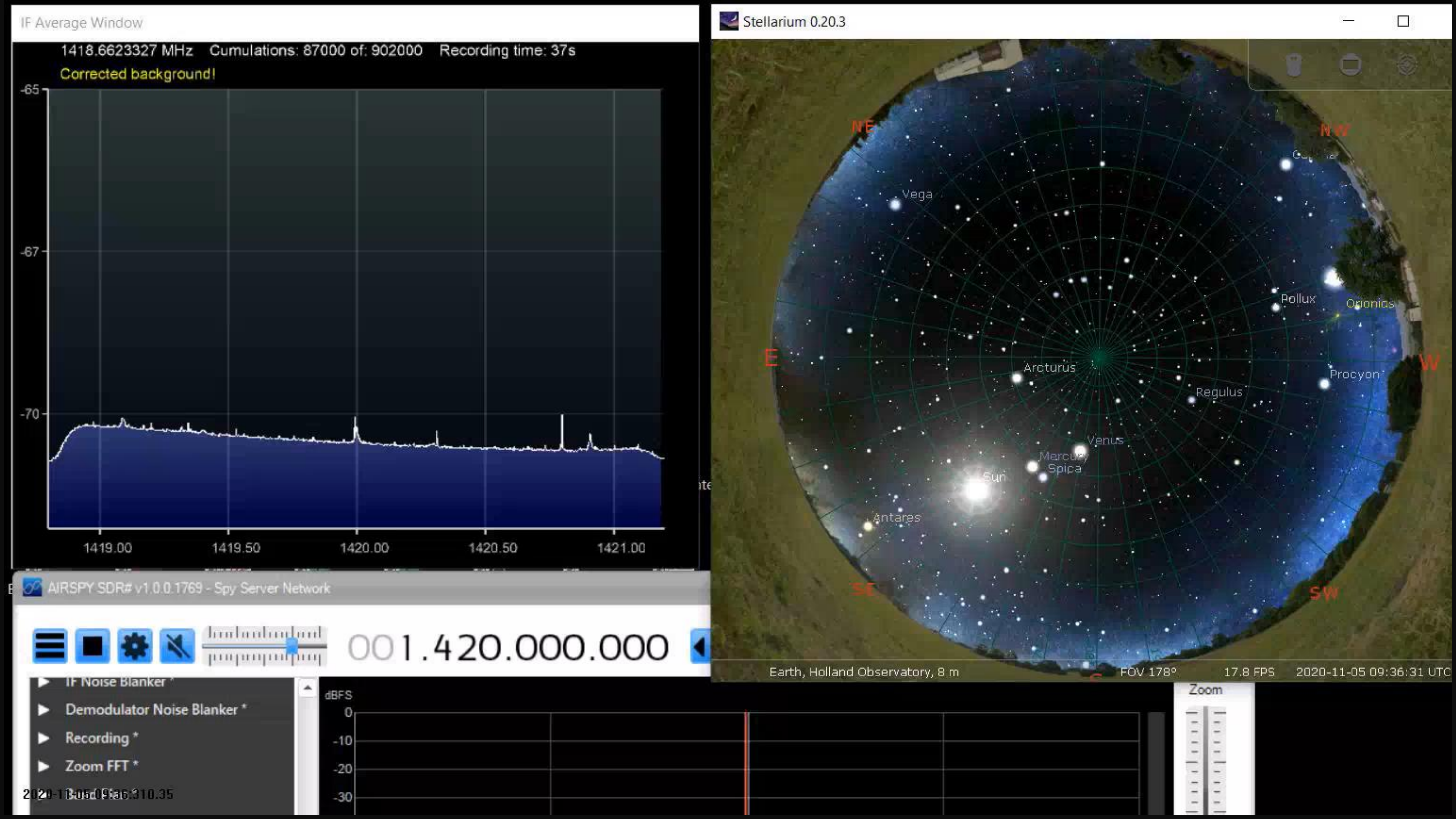
★ **Project 1A**

Screen Capture Video of Neutral Hydrogen in Milky Way

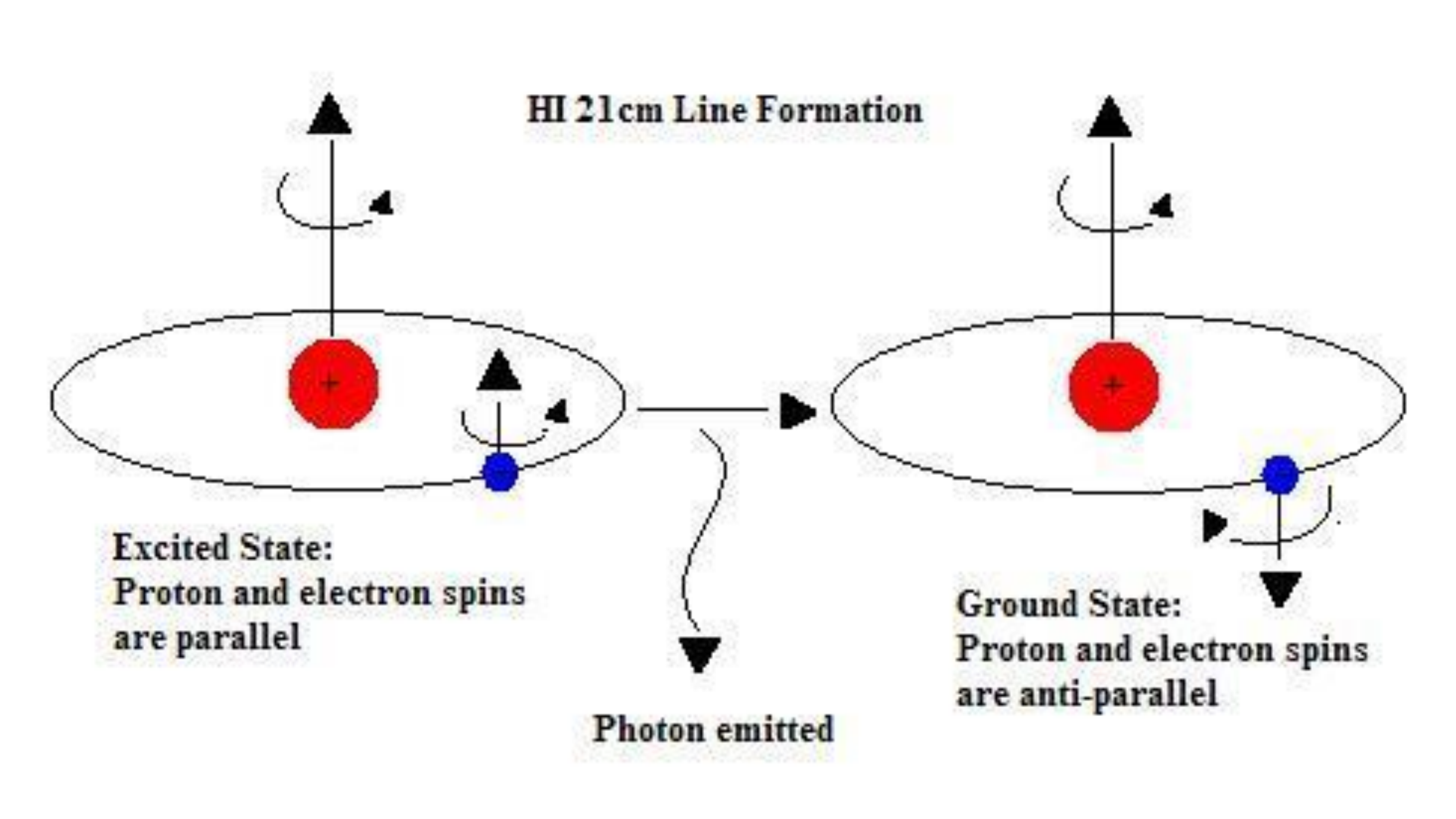
Doug Holland

Project 1 – 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with WiFi Antenna (cont'd)

First, results =>



Project 1 – 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with WiFi Antenna (cont'd)



astrobites.org

Why does neutral hydrogen emit at 21cm? =>

Project 1 – 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with WiFi Antenna (cont'd)

How to do =>

<u>21cm Radio Telescope</u>
(21cm => 1.42GHz)
Hydrogen Emission

WiFi Dish Antenna: $82.99
eBay
- 24dBi gain
- 2.4GHz but works at 1.42GHz
- 14ºx10º beam width

Low Noise Amplifier: $44.95
Amazon
- Nooelec H1 LNA
- 40dB, Designed for 21cm

Software Defined Radio: $24.95
https://www.rtl-sdr.com/
- USB interface, v3

Project 1 – 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with WiFi Antenna (cont'd)

Makes 21cm Neutral Hydrogen Detection Possible !!

Nooelec SAWbird+ H1 - Premium Saw Filter & Cascaded Ultra-Low Noise Amplifier (LNA) Module for Hydrogen Line (21cm) Applications

Project 1 – 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with WiFi Antenna (cont'd)

Software Defined Radio (SDR) interfaces via USB

SDR# software controls SDR (free)

IF Average Plugin used to average multiple samples to decrease noise and increase signal (free)

Stellarium or other planetary program to view Milky Way transit (free)

Chronolaps – screen capture video (free)

Project 1 – 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with WiFi Antenna (cont’d)

Low Noise Amplifier (LNA)

Software Defined Radio (SDR)

Project 1 – 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with WiFi Antenna (cont’d)

Link to Source of Design

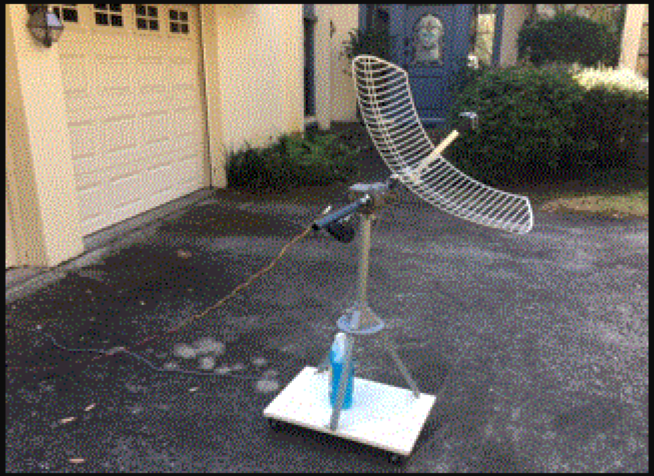
https://www.rtl-sdr.com/cheap-and-easy-hydrogen-line-radio-astronomy-with-a-rtl-sdr-wifi-parabolic-grid-dish-lna-and-sdrsharp/

Or – search ‘Easy Hydrogen Line Radio Astronomy’

Presentation posted on webpage: www.holland-observatory.net

Project 1 – 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with WiFi Antenna (cont'd)

If you would prefer to buy a kit:



Scope in a Box, $350

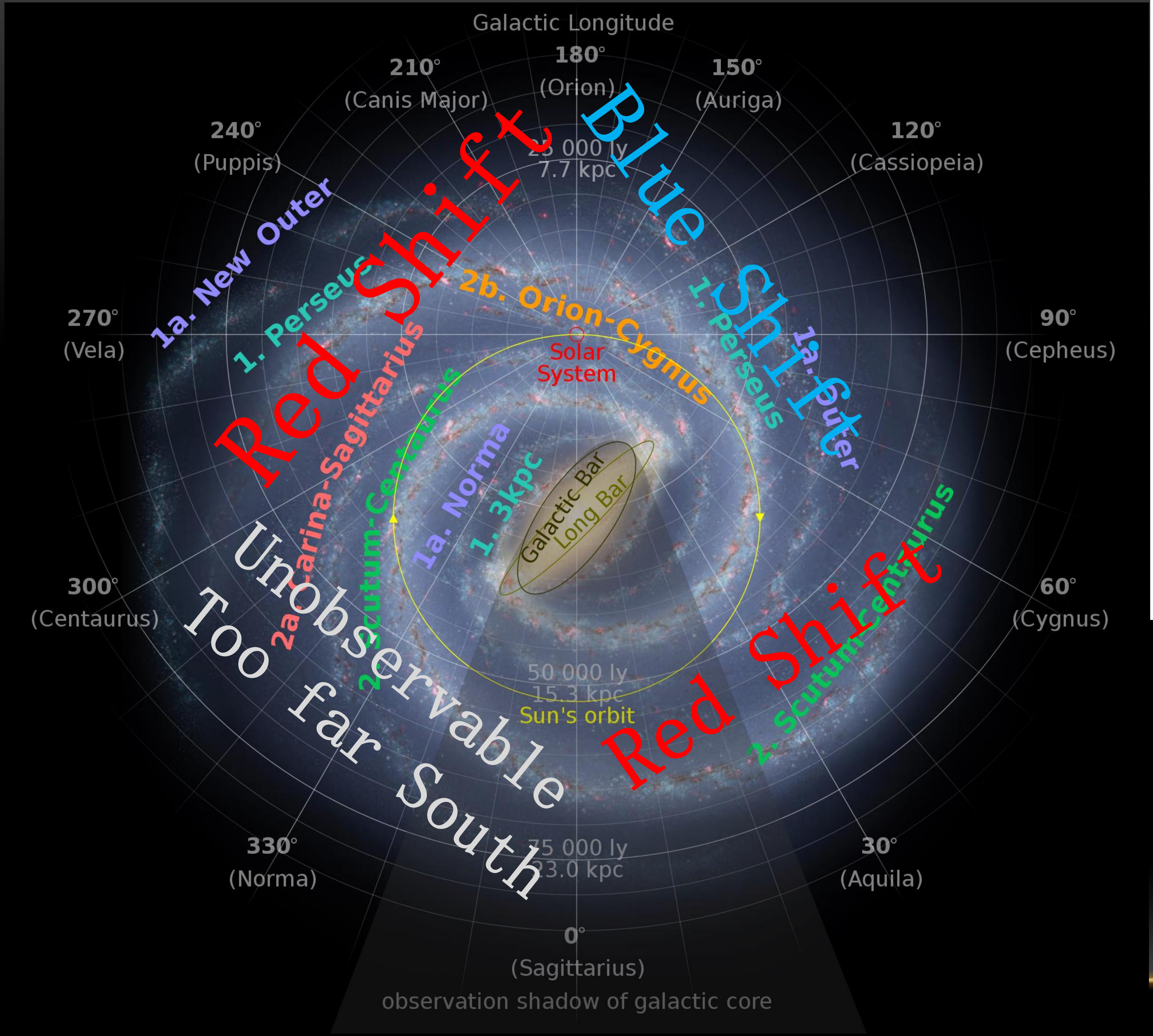
Project 1 – 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with WiFi Antenna (cont'd)

What else can be done with this system?

!!! Measure where our solar system is located within the Milky Way !!!

Solar System Distance from Center of Milky Way

★ **Project 1B**



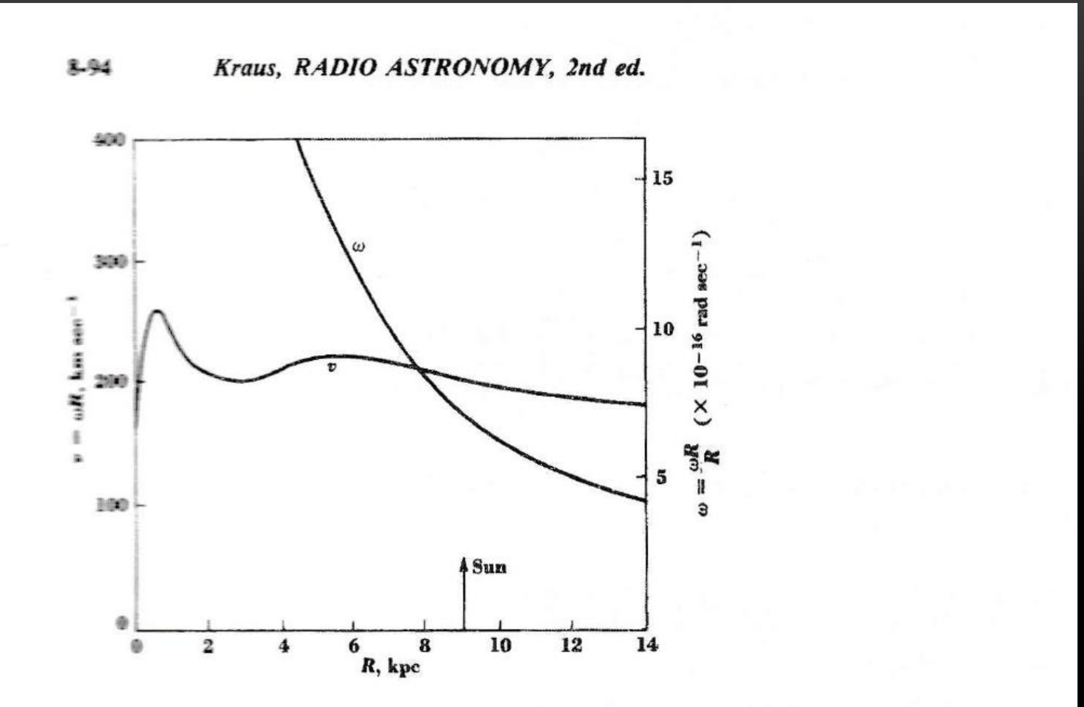


Fig. 8-63. Circular velocity v and angular velocity ω in our galaxy as a function of distance R from the center. (*After Rougoor and Oort*, 1960.)

Angular velocity (w) decreases with distance from center of galaxy

Can see intuitively from image of Milky Way. Spiral arms - Closer in areas, higher angular velocity.

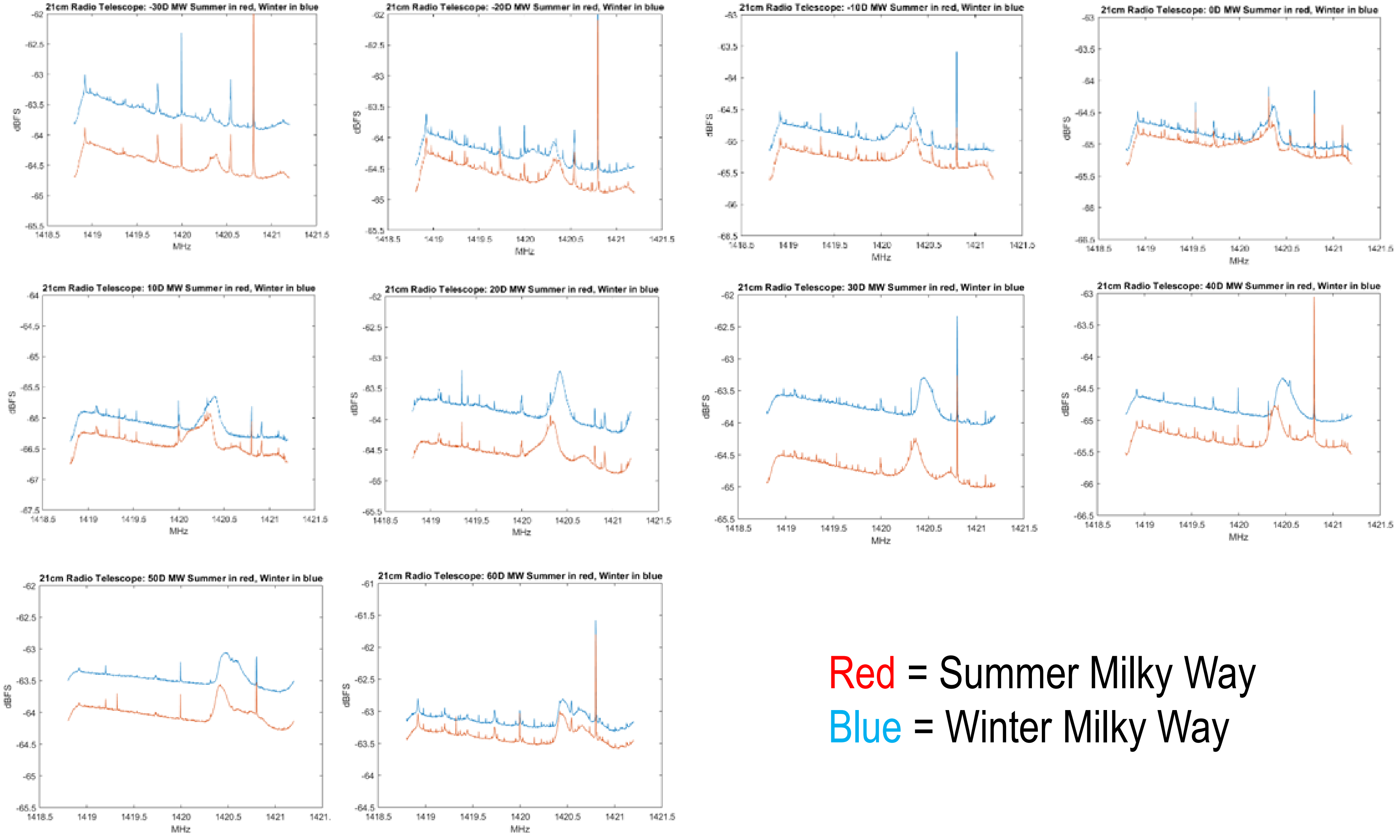
https://earthsky.org/upl/2020/01/milky-way-arms-suns-location-orion-cygnus-arm.png

21cm Radio Telescope
(21cm => 1.42GHz)
Hydrogen Emission

- WiFi Antenna, Software Defined Radio (SDR)
- Raspberry Pi Configuration

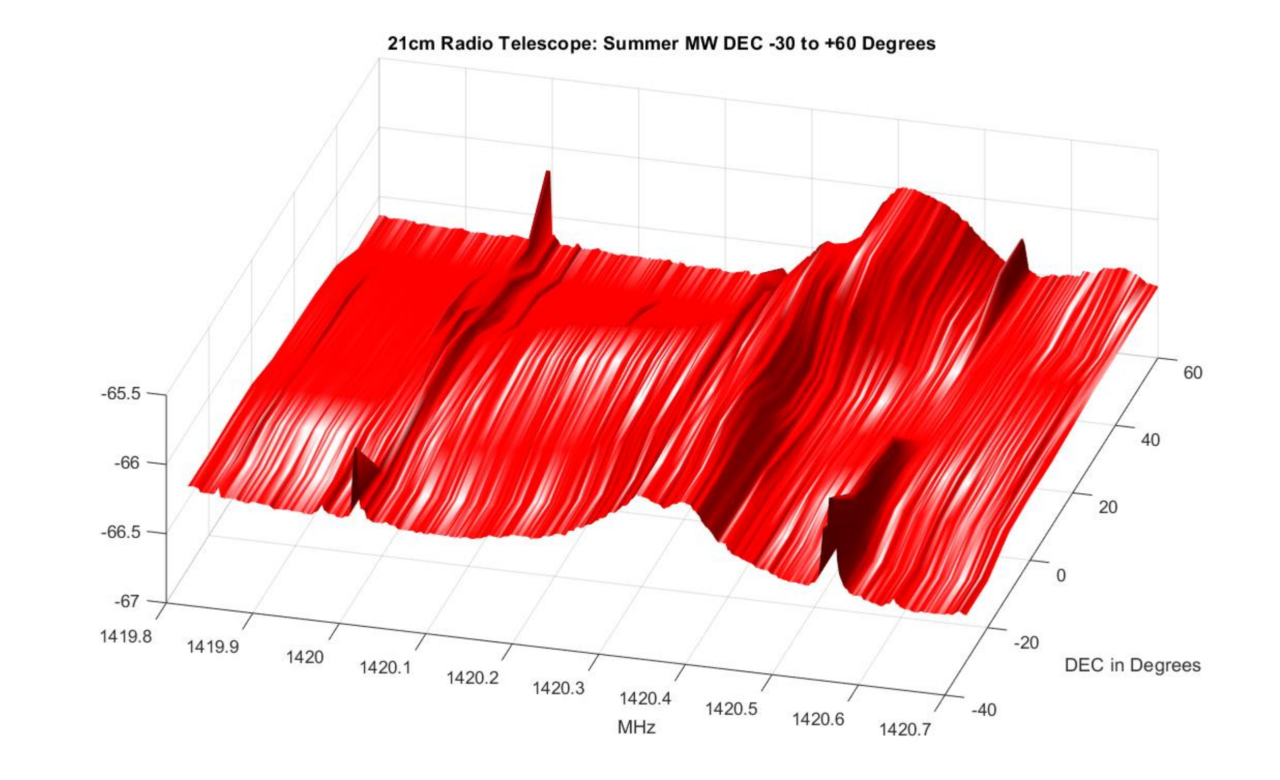
Data gathered along *galactic equator at 10º* increments 11/3 to 11/17, 2020

21cm Plots at Galactic Equator – Spaced at 10 Degrees Declination

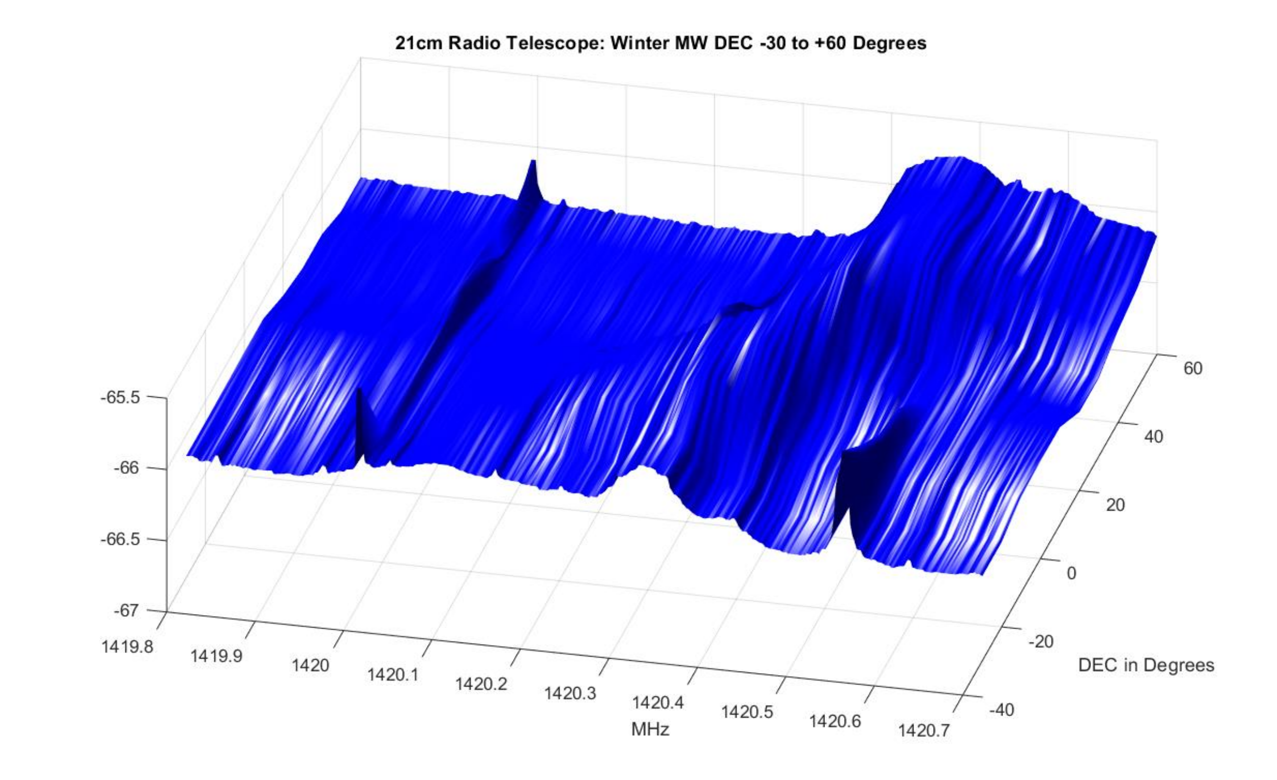


Red = Summer Milky Way
Blue = Winter Milky Way

3D Surface Plots of Summer (Red) and Winter (Blue) Milk Way Data



- The **diameter of** the luminous **Milky Way** is between 100,000 and 120,000 light years across.
- Sun (Solar System) is 1/2 to 2/3rds from center (www.universetoday.com)



Declination vs. Amplitude vs. Frequency
-30^0 DEC: Center of galaxy (Sagittarius)
$+60^0$ DEC: Most Northerly point of galactic equator (all data taken along galactic equator)

=> Transition between red shift and blue shift is approx. 1/2 to 2/3 from center of galaxy to most Northerly point

Project 2 – Improved 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with 2.1m Antenna

After having some success =>

=> What could we do to improve our results?

Project 2 – Improved 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with 2.1m Antenna (cont'd)

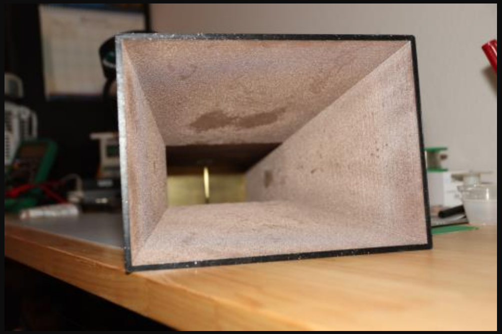
Obviously, make it BIGGER =>

2.1m / 7' Parabolic Dish
f/0.4
Resolution ≈ 7° (HPBW)
6mm spaced hardware cloth
Collected flux ∝ Dish Area

Doug Holland

Project 2 – Improved 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with 2.1m Antenna (cont'd)

Note – Wifi Antenna came with built in feed antenna
=> Now we need to design and build a feed antenna



3D Printed Pyramidal Horn

Helical Beam Antenna

Loop Antenna

Circular Waveguide Horn Antenna

End Result –
Circular Waveguide Horn Best
(aka Cantenna, Stove Pipe Antenna)
* Many online examples

Doug Holland

Project 2 – Improved 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with 2.1m Antenna (cont'd)

Things to know about feed antennas 1 =>

You may think that focus is at ¼ wave antenna

BUZZ - Wrong – It is near the aperture of the Circular Waveguide (CWG) Antenna

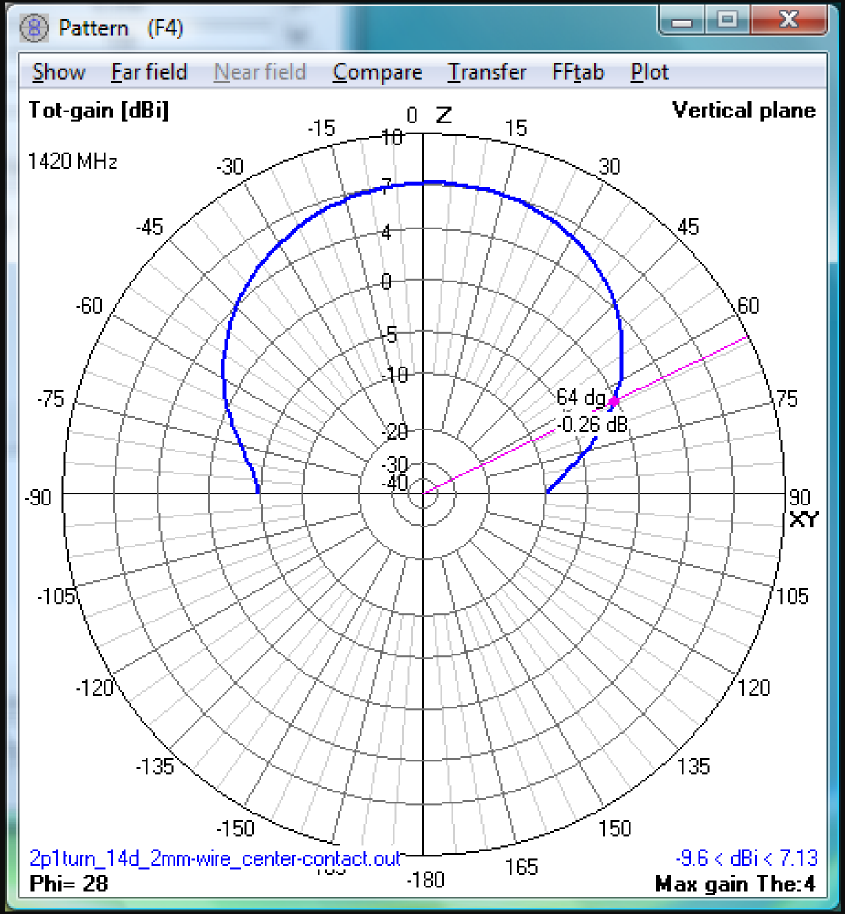
*** Also – just to confuse everyone, the radio astronomers call focus point the 'phase center'

*** Depth of focus is wavelength dependent – more relaxed at radio wavelengths

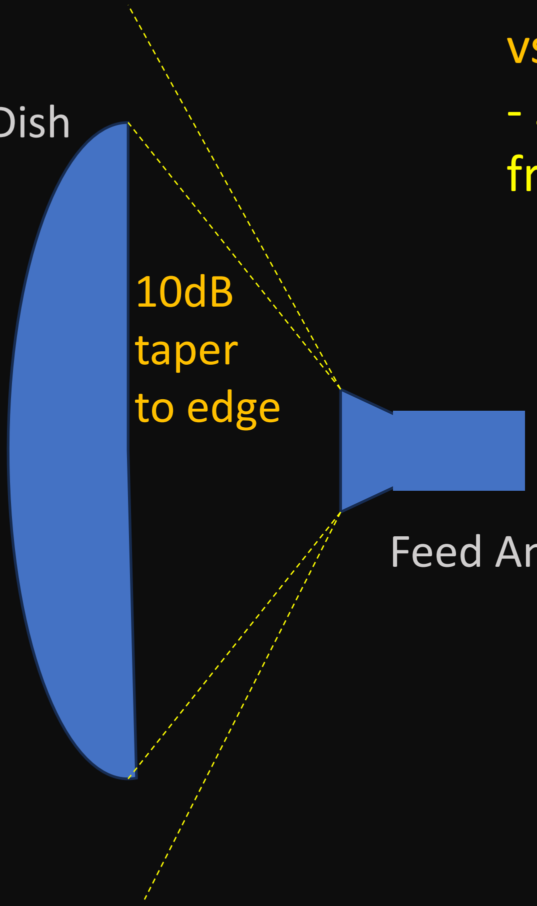
Doug Holland

Project 2 – Improved 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with 2.1m Antenna (cont'd)

Things to know about feed antennas 2 =>



4NEC2 Software



<u>Trade-off</u>

- Fully illuminated dish

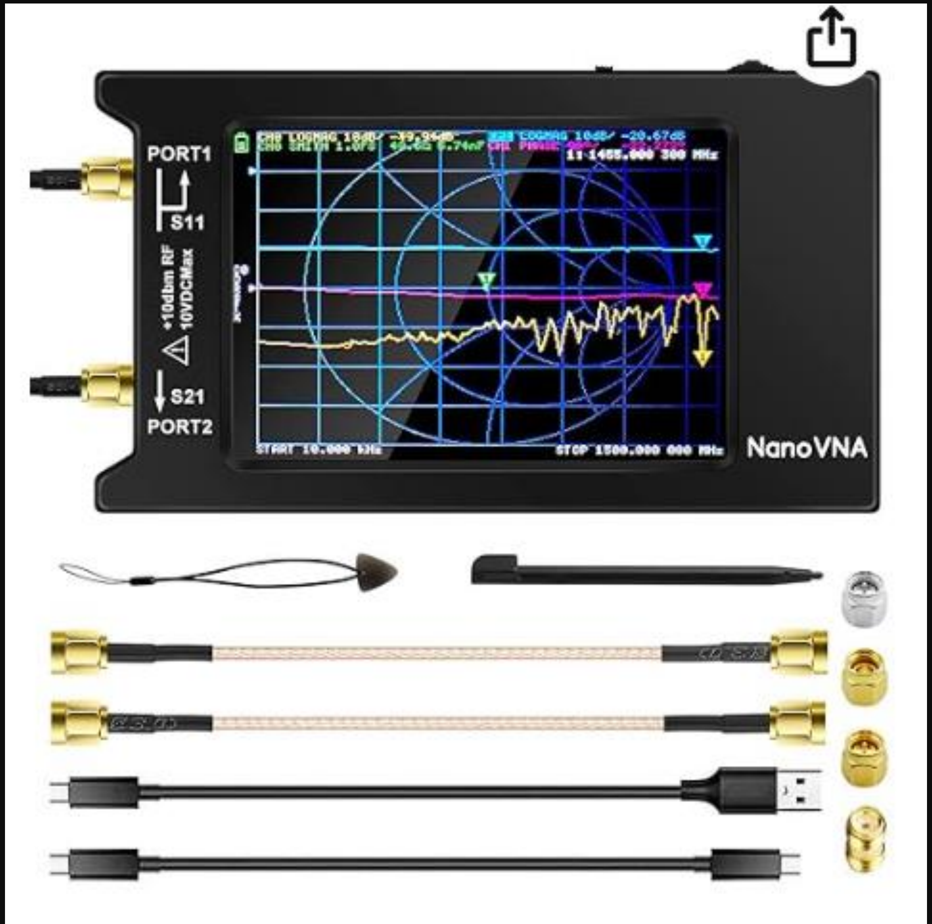
vs.

- Spill over (signal from outside dish)

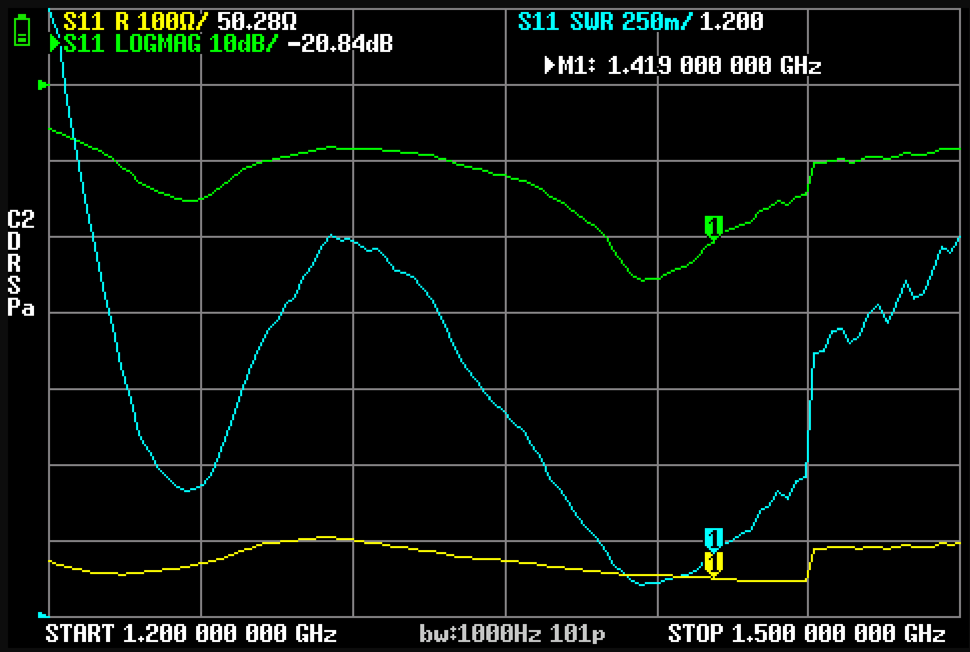
Doug Holland

Project 2 – Improved 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with 2.1m Antenna (cont'd)

Things to know about feed antennas 3 =>



NanoVNA-H4 (Vector Network Analyzer) – very useful for testing feed antennas [$68 on Amazon]



Project 2 – Improved 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with 2.1m Antenna (cont'd)

Things to know about feed antennas 4 =>

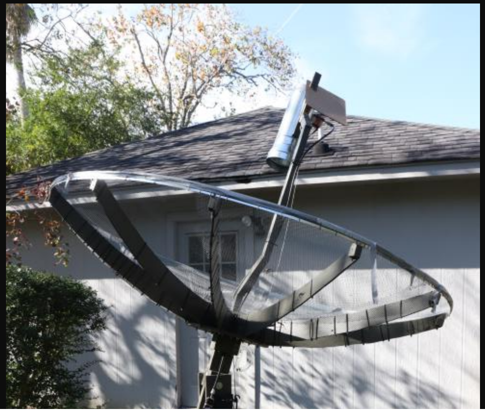
Low Noise Amplifier (LNA) is mounted directly on feed antenna

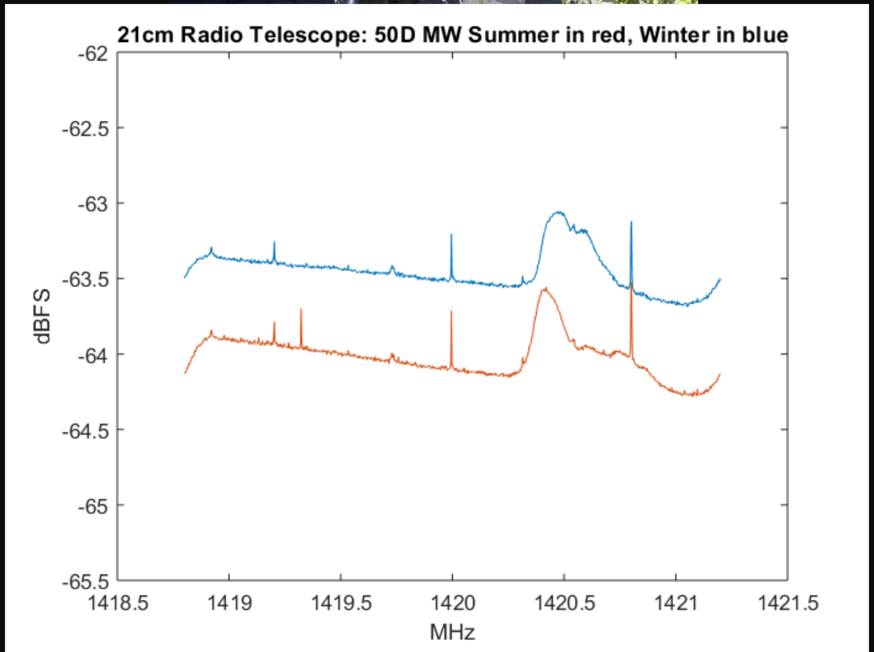
Otherwise, LNA will amplify noise from cabling

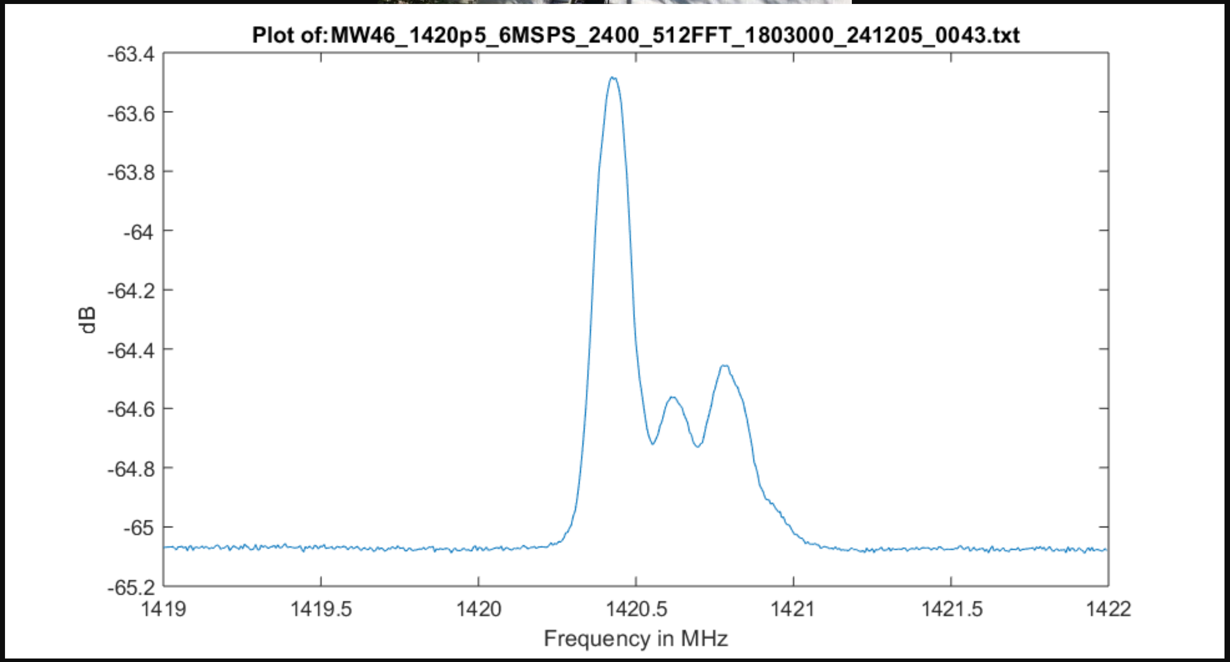
Doug Holland

Project 2 – Improved 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with 2.1m Antenna (cont'd)

Did we improve our results?







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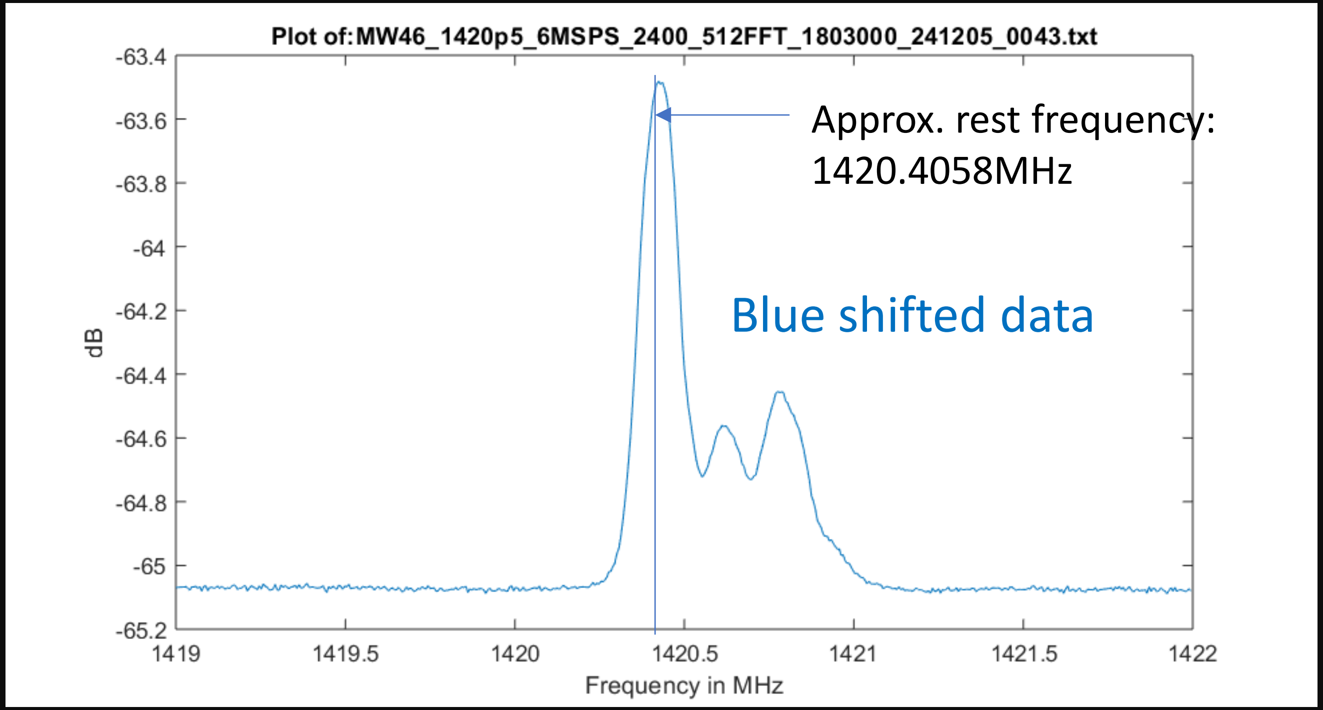
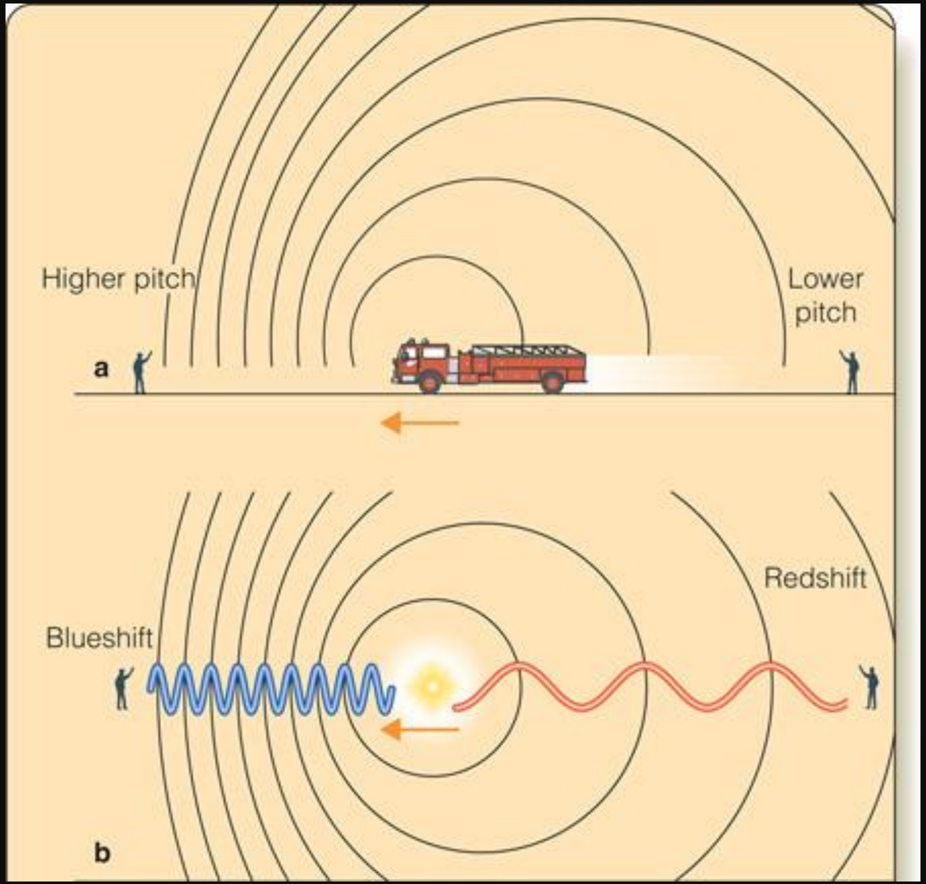
Project 2 – Improved 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with 2.1m Antenna (cont'd)

What can we do with our improved data => ★ **Project 2A**

Evidence of Multiple Spiral Arms in Milky Way





The Doppler Effect

From: Fundamentals of Astronomy, Seeds & Backman

- Neutral Hydrogen rest frequency = 1420.4058MHz
- Blue shift humps are evidence of the Milky Way having multiple spiral arms

Doug Holland

Project 2 – Improved 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with 2.1m Antenna (cont'd)

"Observations of the 21-cm hydrogen line have enabled radio astronomers to deduce for the first time a picture of the spiral structure of our galaxy" Radio Astronomy by John D. Kraus

Project 2 – Improved 21cm Neutral Hydrogen with 2.1m Antenna (cont’d)

★ Project 2B

Creating 3D Representation of Our 21cm Neutral Hydrogen Data

New Radio Astronomy Software

- Facebook ‘Amateur Radio Astronomy’ group

➢ IFAvg2CSV (free)

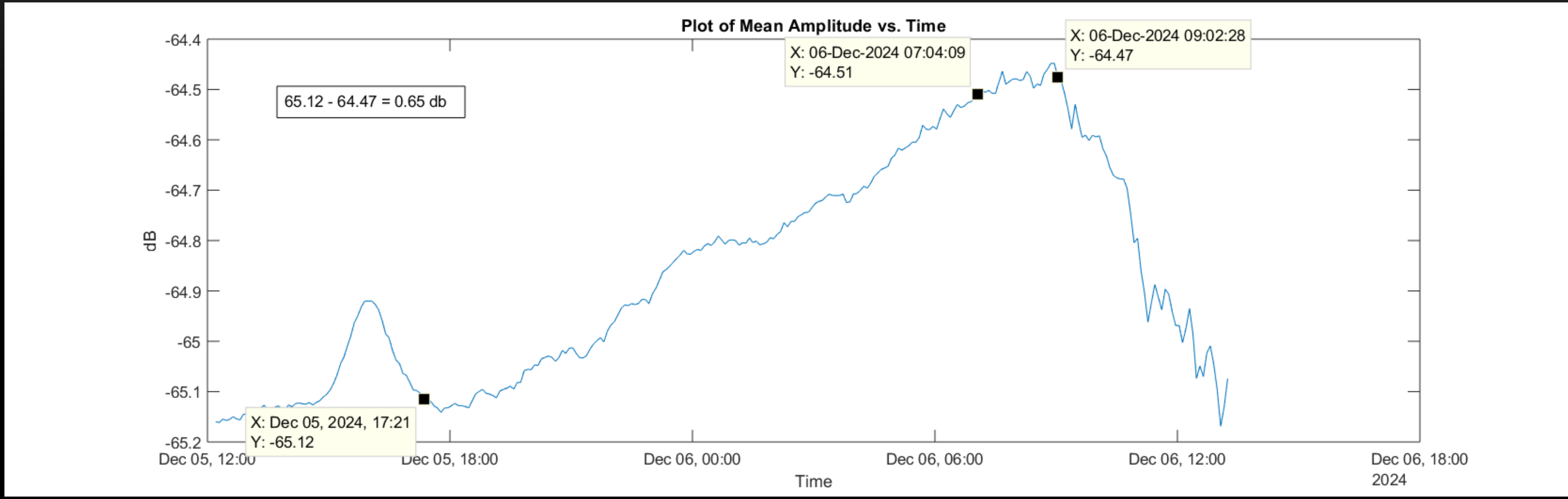
❑ Takes files made by SDR# and converts to CSV (CSV – comma separated values)

➢ Rinearn Graphics (free)

❑ Takes CSV files and plots: 2D and 3D versions

Perseus Molecular Cloud flanked by IC348 (left) and NGC1333 (right) Reflection Nebulae
LRGB - L: 49x5min, R: 24x5min, G: 12x5min, B: 18x5min, 200mm Canon L Series Lens at f/3.4, SC8300 Camera

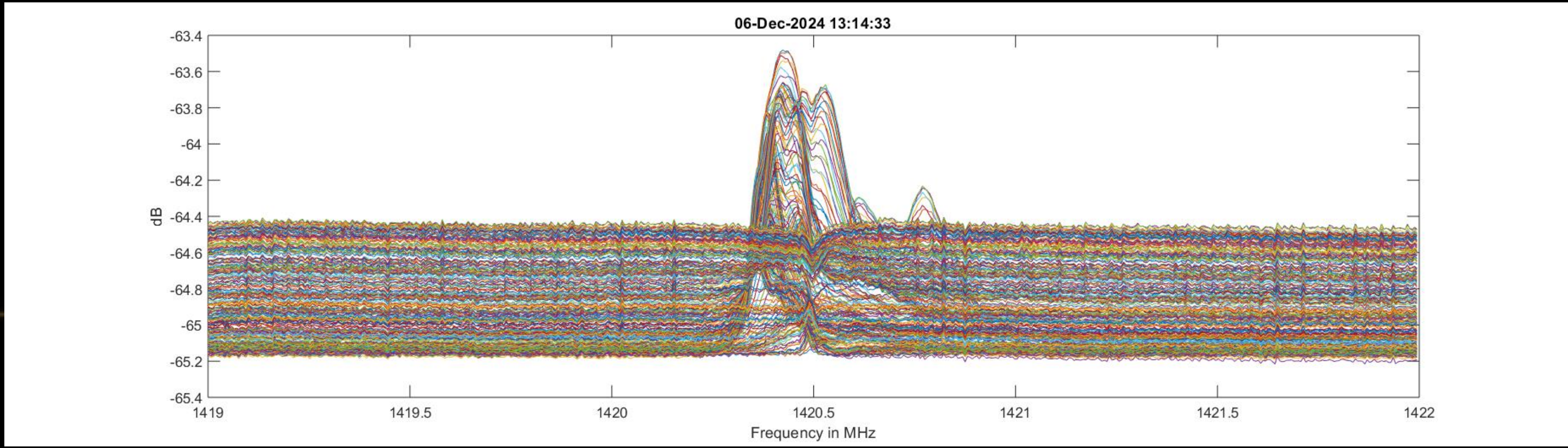
- IFAvg2CSV
  - Takes files made by SDR# and converts to CSV



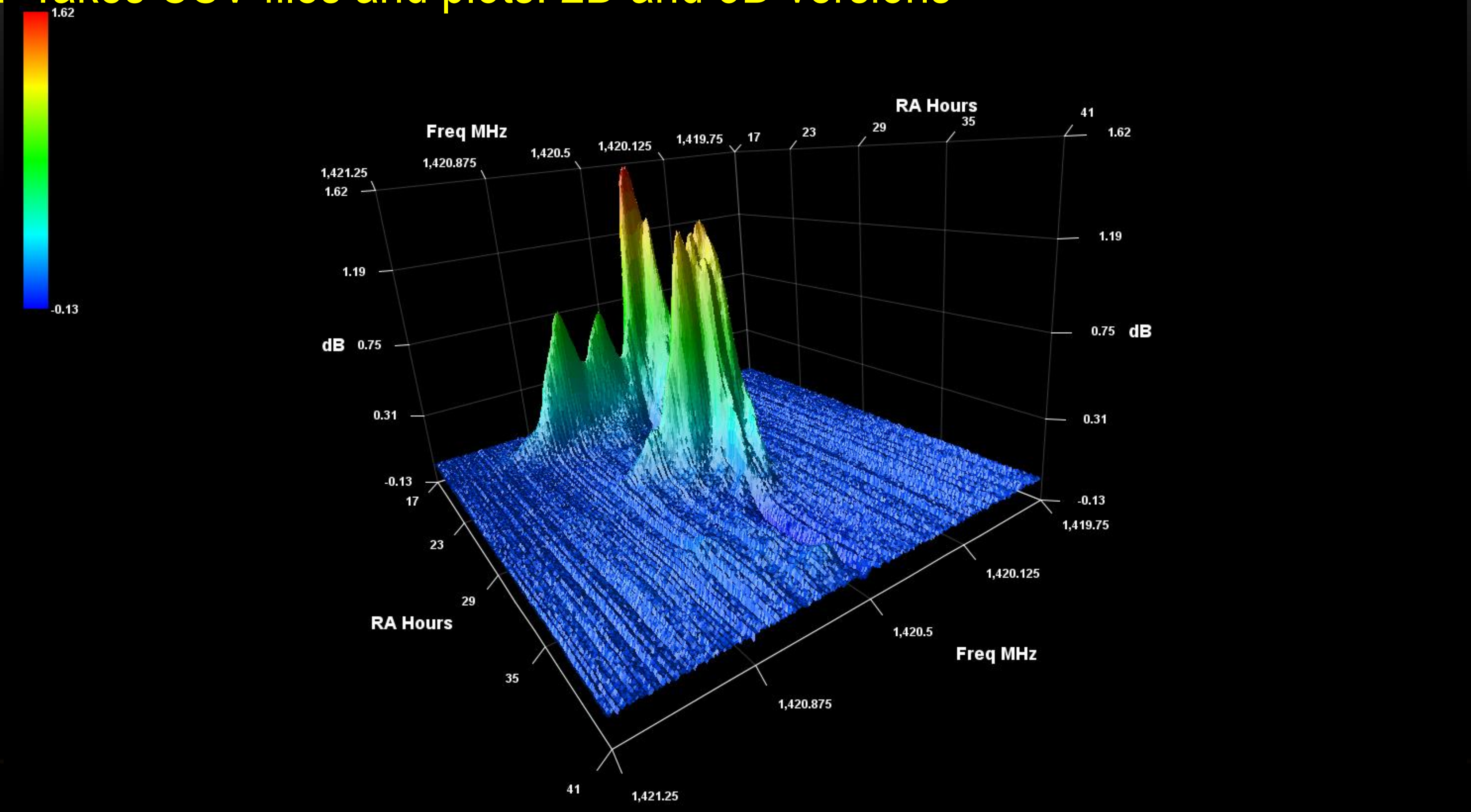
24 hours

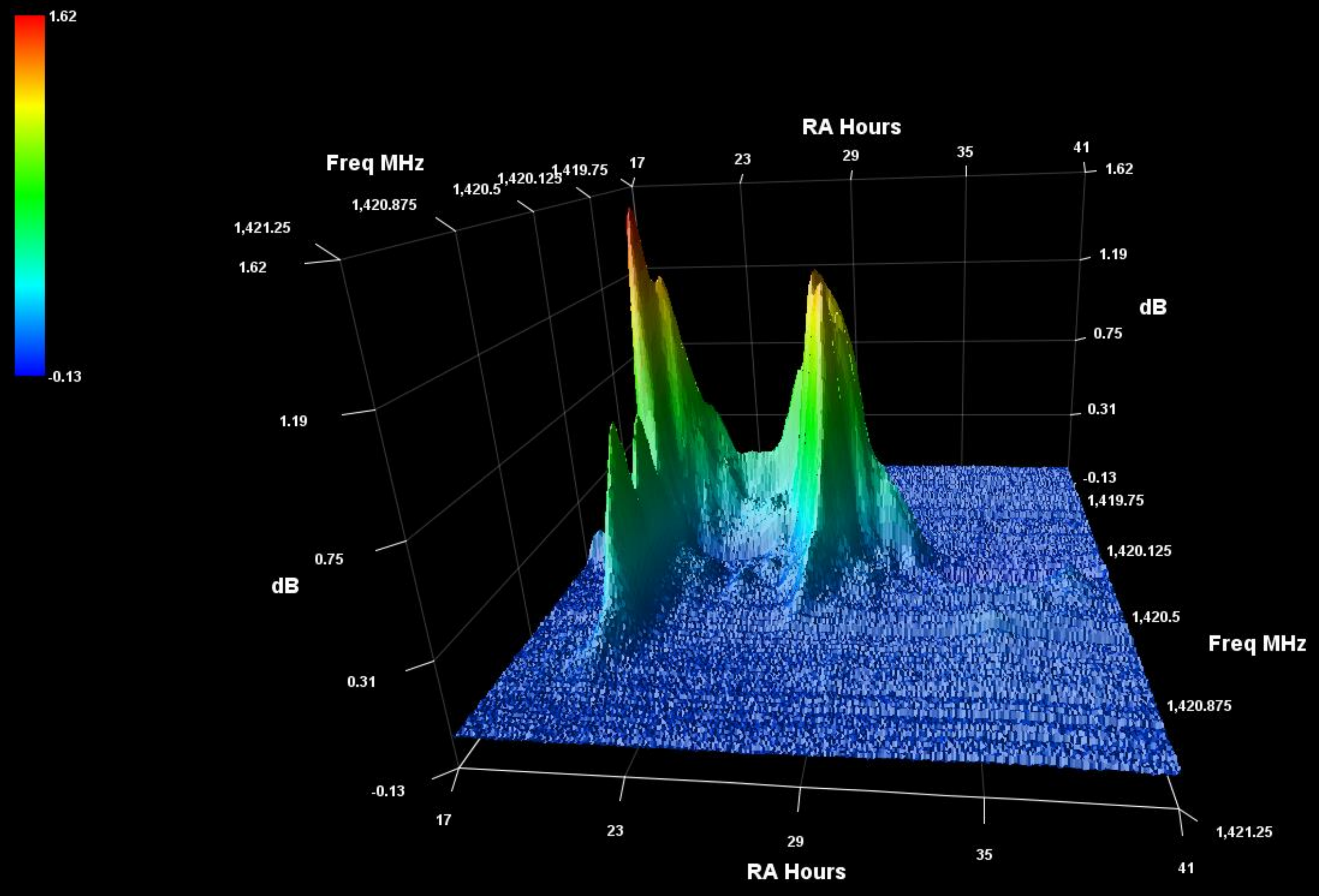
DEC 47.5^{0}

Normalizes Data (original data has gain / baseline drift)

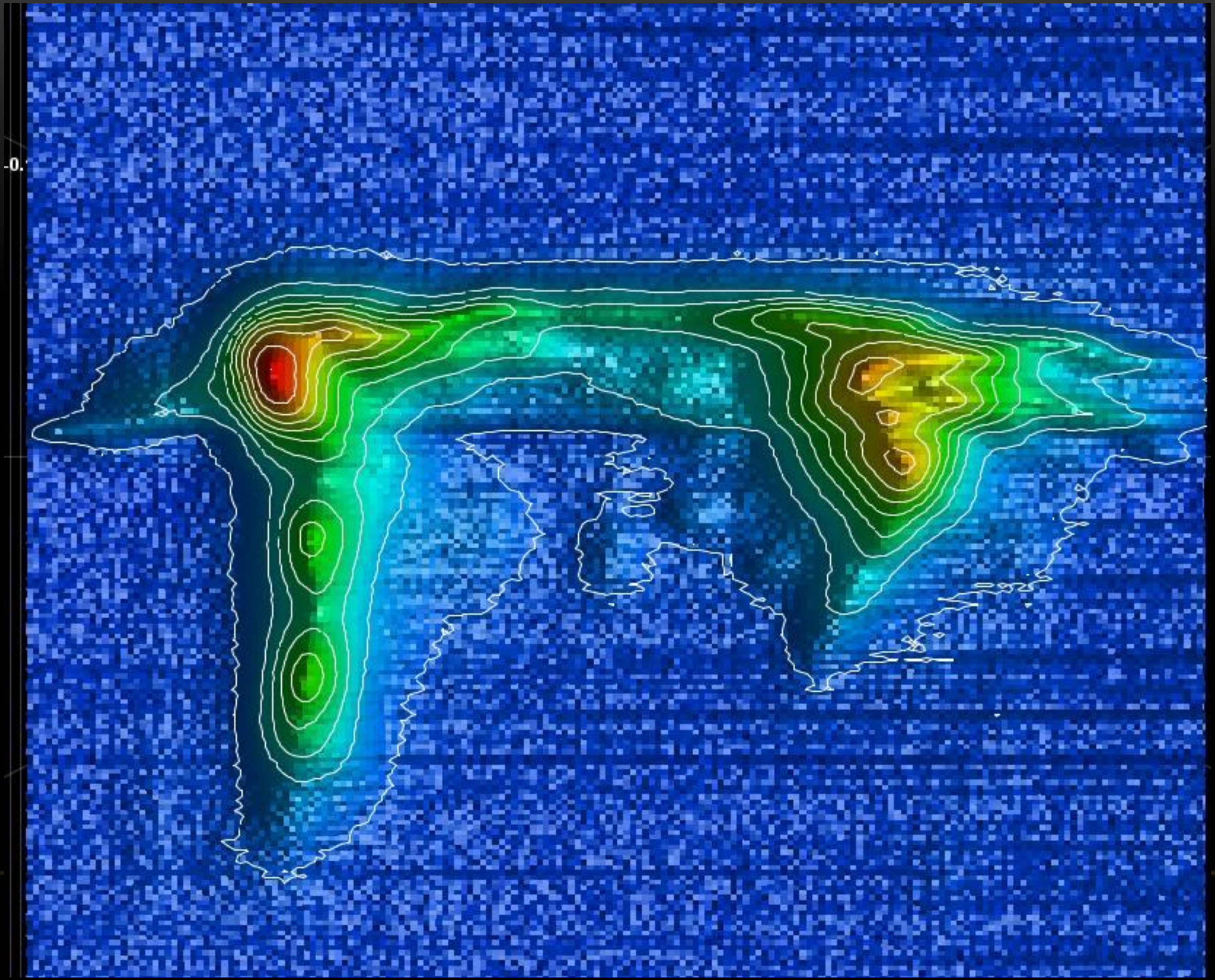


- Rinearn Graphics
  - Takes CSV files and plots: 2D and 3D versions





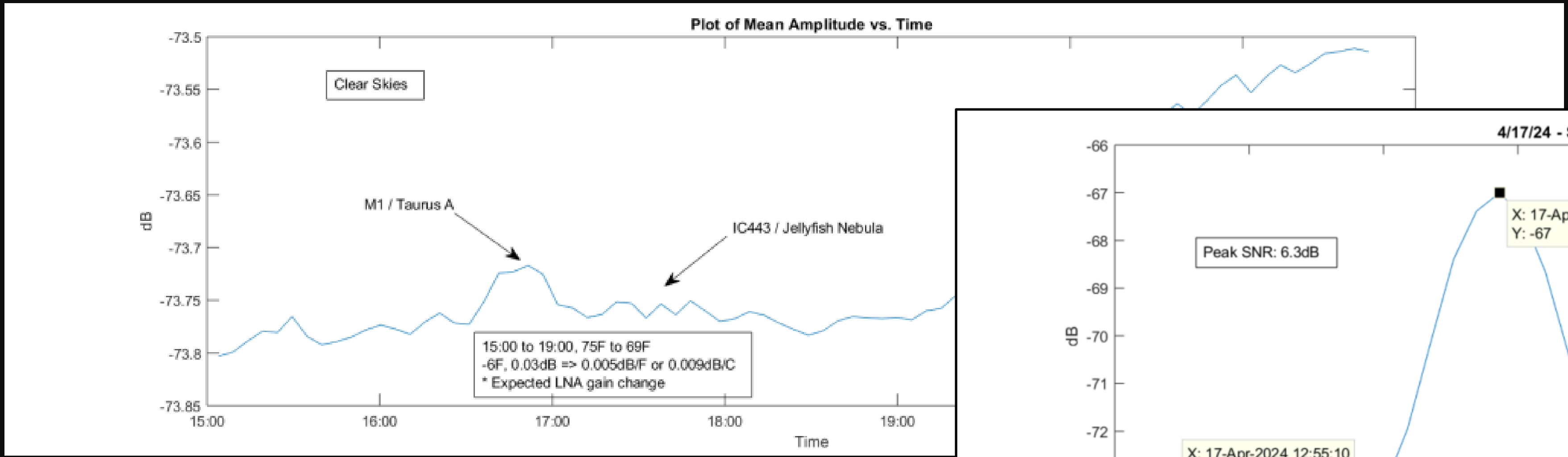
1.62
-0.13
RA Hours
Freq MHz
1,421.25
1,420.875
1,420.5
1,420.125
1,419.75
17
23
29
35
41
1.62
1.19
0.75
0.31
-0.13
dB
Freq MHz
RA Hours

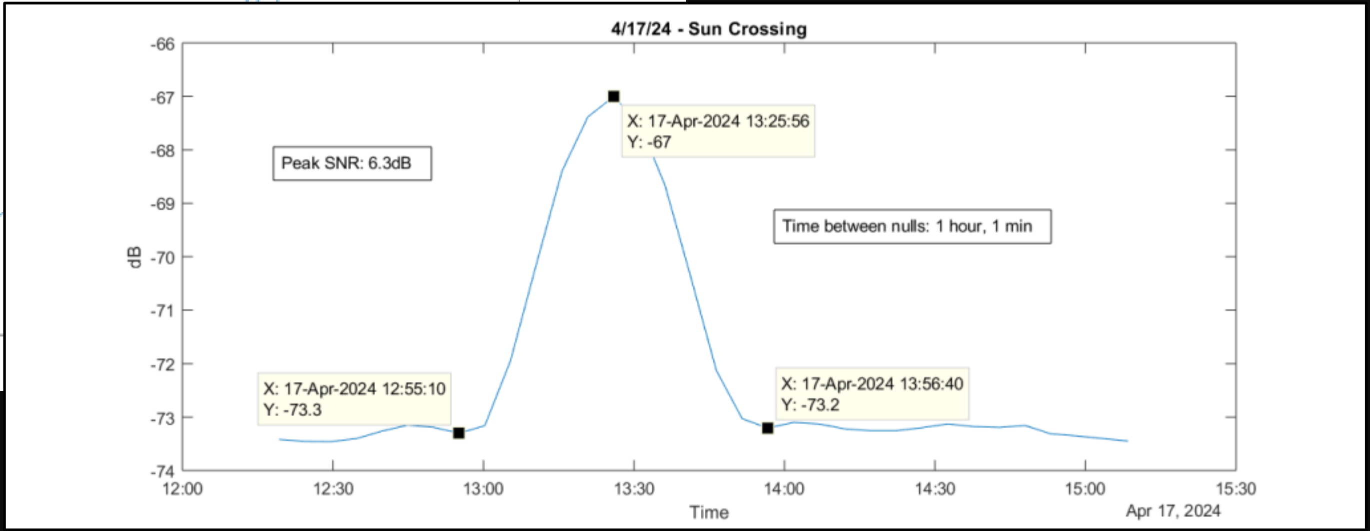


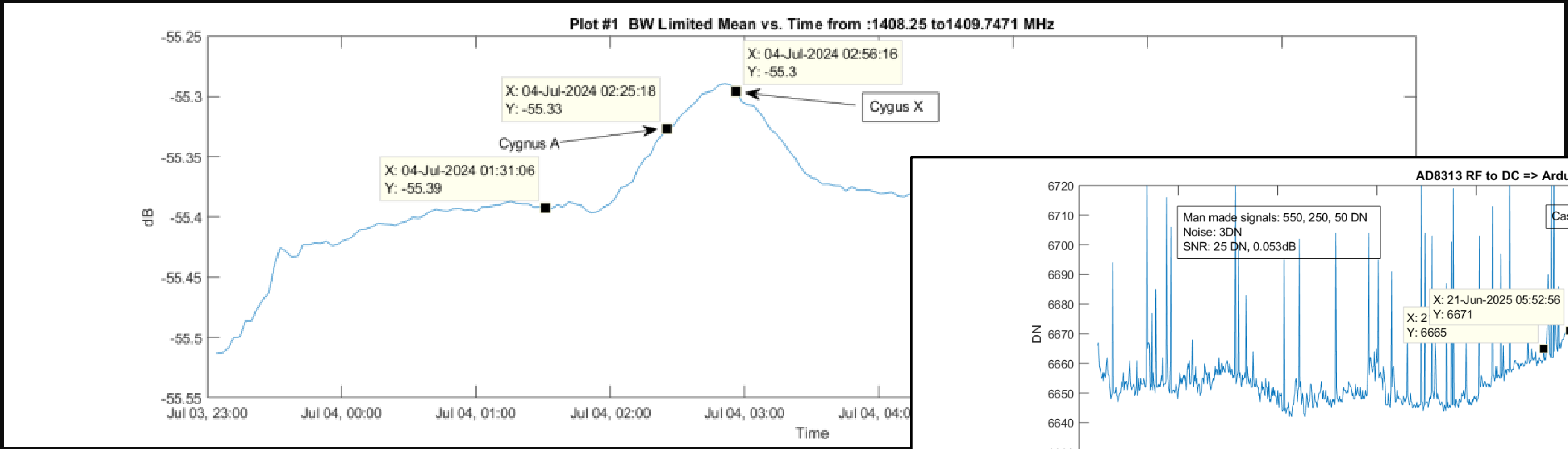
Contour Plot

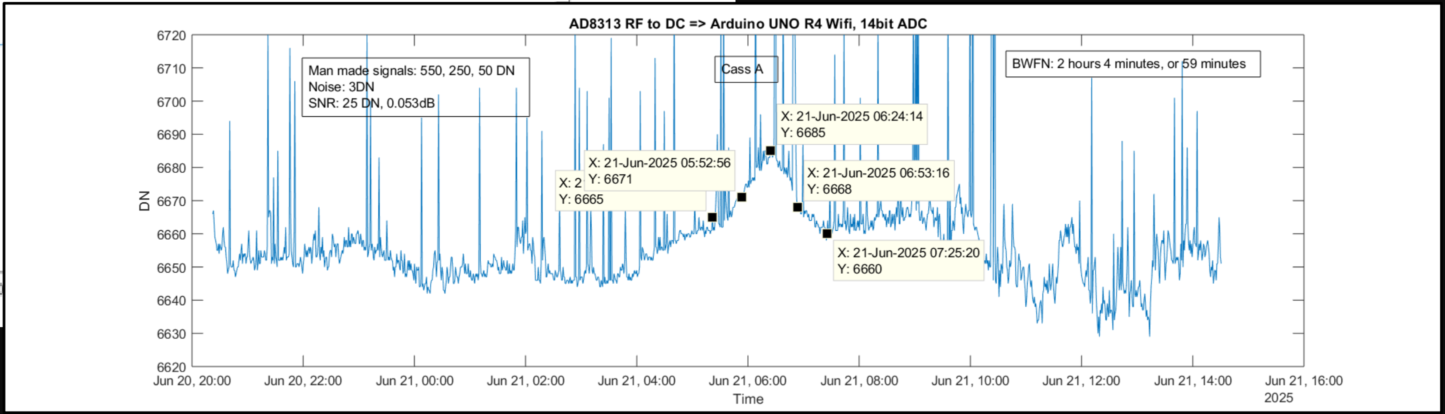
Produced by Alex Pettit

Project 3 – Total Power Measurements with 2.1m Antenna



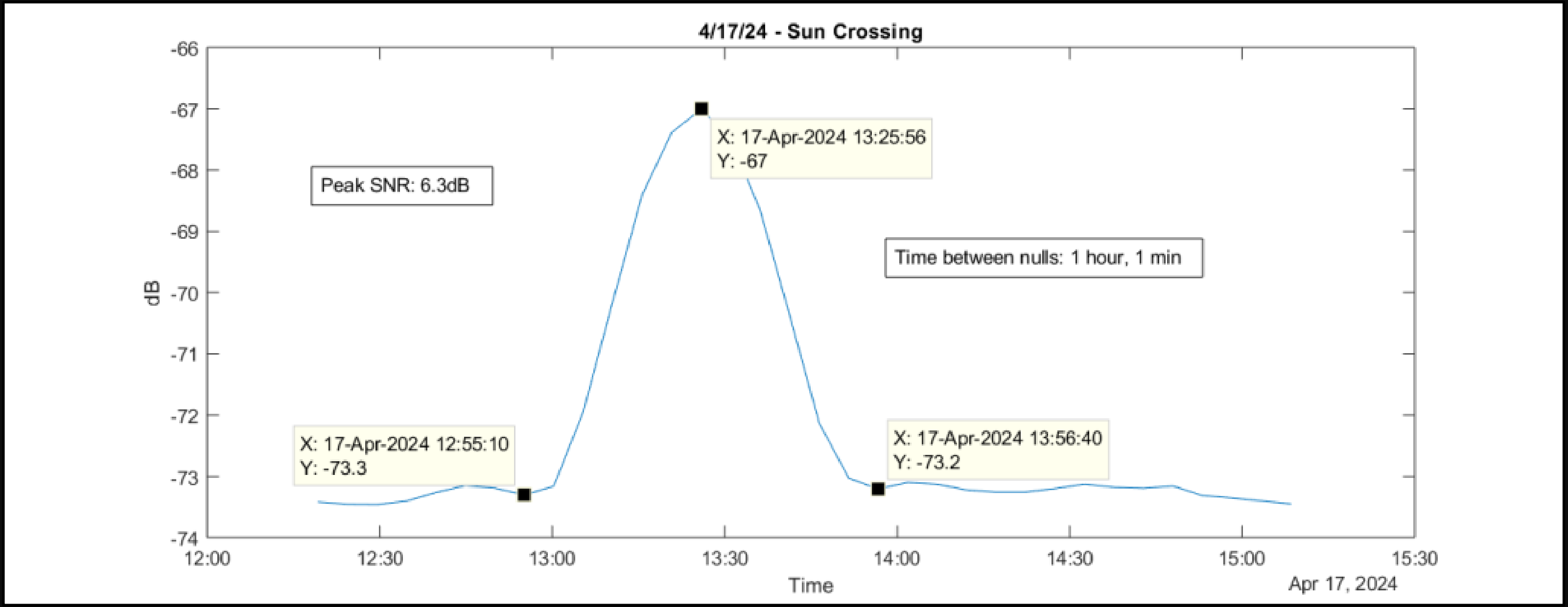






Project 3 – Total Power Measurements with 2.1m Antenna (cont'd)

- What is a Total Power Measurement?
  - Previous measurements were spectrums: Frequency vs. Amplitude
  - Total Power: Time vs. Amplitude => Total power contained in entire bandwidth detected plotted over time (hours, minutes)



Example – Sun Crossing: signal received as Sun crosses over radio telescope beam

Bandwidth of Software Defined Radio (SDR) can be set. Max = 4.8MHz

Doug Holland

Project 3 – Total Power Measurements with 2.1m Antenna (cont'd)

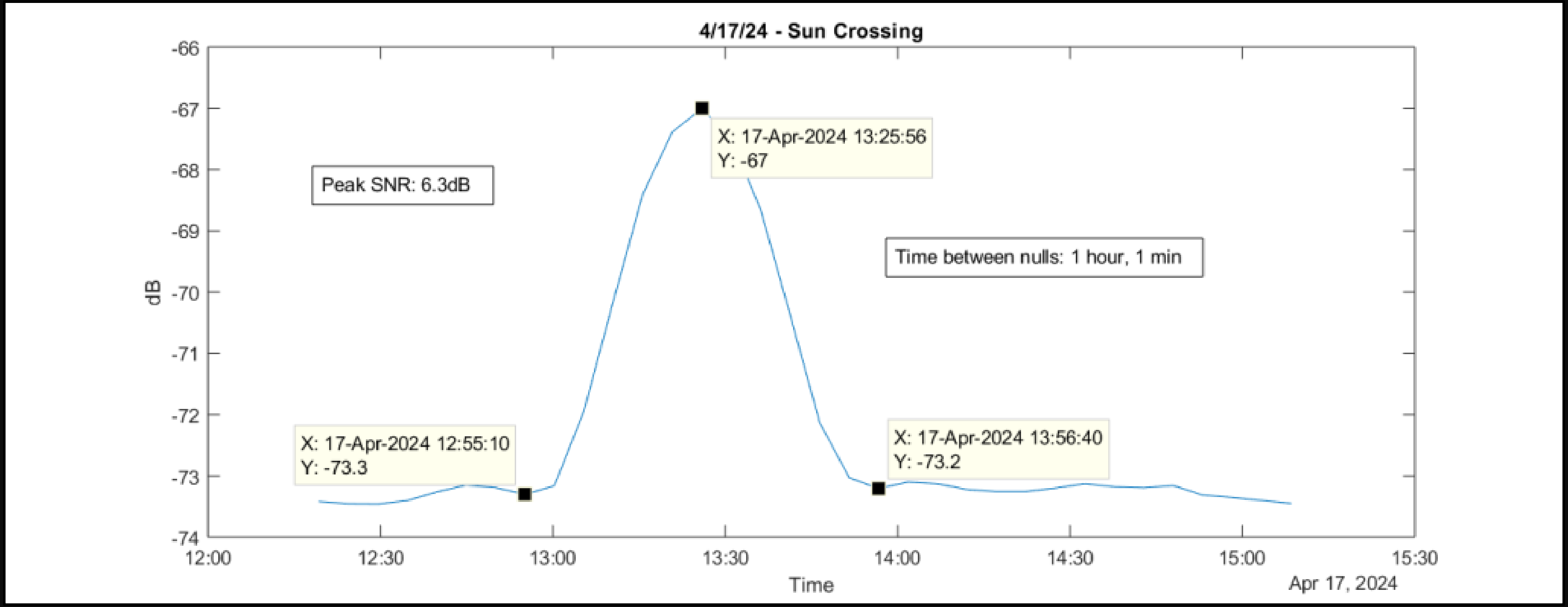
★ **Project 3A**

Sun Crossings and the Solar Flux Unit SFU

Doug Holland

Project 3 – Total Power Measurements with 2.1m Antenna (cont'd)

- We can perform Sun crossings to measure the changing solar flux from day to day and over the solar cycle
- NOAA website lists the Sun's Solar Flux Unit (SFU) for each day for various frequencies: https://services.swpc.noaa.gov/text/solar_radio_flux.txt



Doug Holland

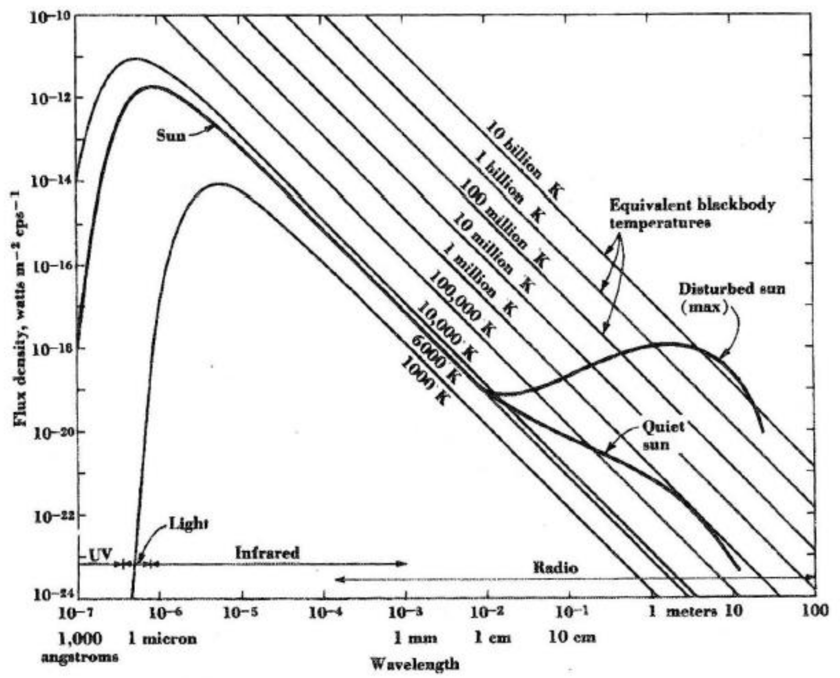


Fig. 8-34. The solar spectrum from the ultraviolet to radio wavelengths (heavy curve). The solar flux density is equal to that from a blackbody radiator at 6000 K at wavelengths less than 1 cm but is greater than this at longer wavelengths. At radio wavelengths the radiation is between that of the quiet- and disturbed-sun curves. The other (lighter) curves give the flux density corresponding to blackbody radiators at various temperatures in degrees Kelvin.

Radio Astronomy by John D. Kraus

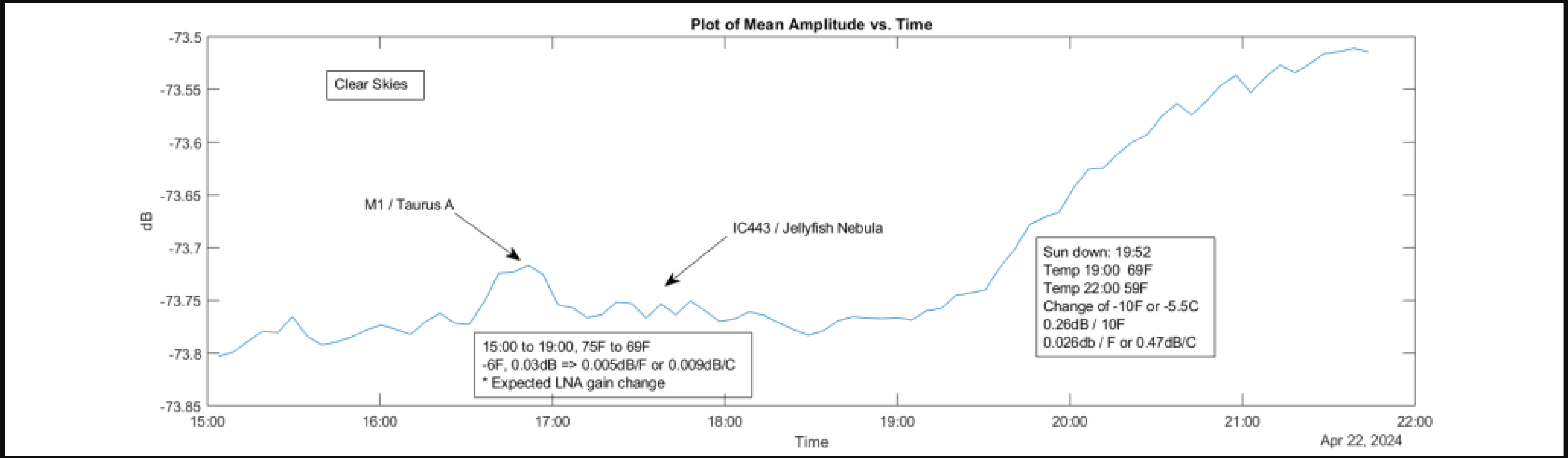
Project 3 – Total Power Measurements with 2.1m Antenna (cont'd)

★ **Project 3B**

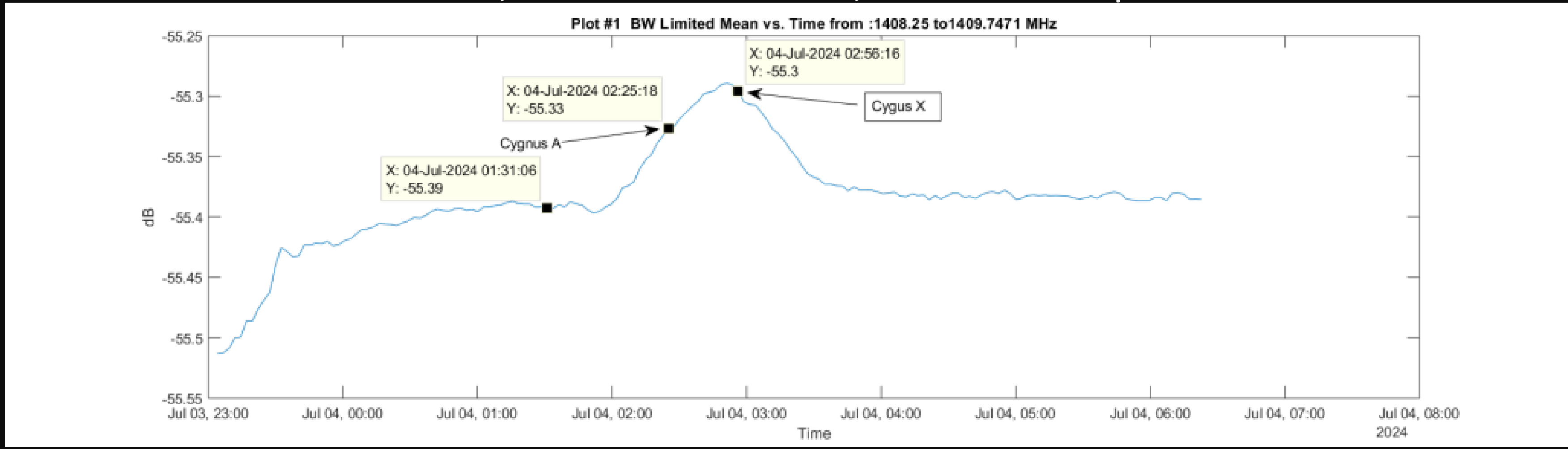
Total Power Measurements of Celestial Objects

Doug Holland

Project 3 – Total Power Measurements with 2.1m Antenna (cont'd)



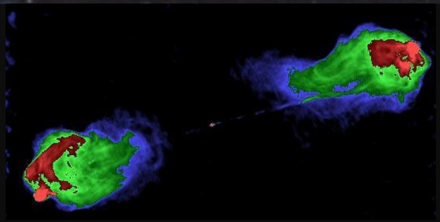
1407 MHz, 4.8MHz Bandwidth, 5 minute samples



1409 MHz, 1.2MHz Bandwidth, 3 minute samples

2.1m Radio Telescope, H1 LNA, Airspy mini SDR, SDR# software

Doug Holland



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cygnus_A#/media/File:3c405.jpg

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cygnus_X_(star_complex)

Project 3 – Total Power Measurements with 2.1m Antenna (cont'd)

★ **Project 3C**

Total Power Measurements using Power Detector Receiver

Doug Holland

Project 3 – Total Power Measurements with 2.1m Antenna (cont'd)

We would like to increase the sensitivity of our radio telescope without having to make it bigger, and bigger

$$F_v(\text{min}) = \text{SNR}\left(\frac{2k}{A_{eff}}\frac{T_{sys}}{\sqrt{bw * nt}}\right)$$

Sensitivity Formula

F_v(min) = *minimum flux density*
$Tsys = system\ noise$
$bw = bandwidth$
$n = number\ of\ subsamples$
$t = sampling\ time$
SNR = signal to noise ratio
$2k = 2\ x\ Boltzmann's\ constant$

As $\sqrt{bw}$ increases, minimum flux decreases

Increasing bw improves radio telescope sensitivity

The Holland Observatory
Ha: 10/29,30/16
OIII: Okie Tex 9/29/24
SII: 10/7,8,10/24

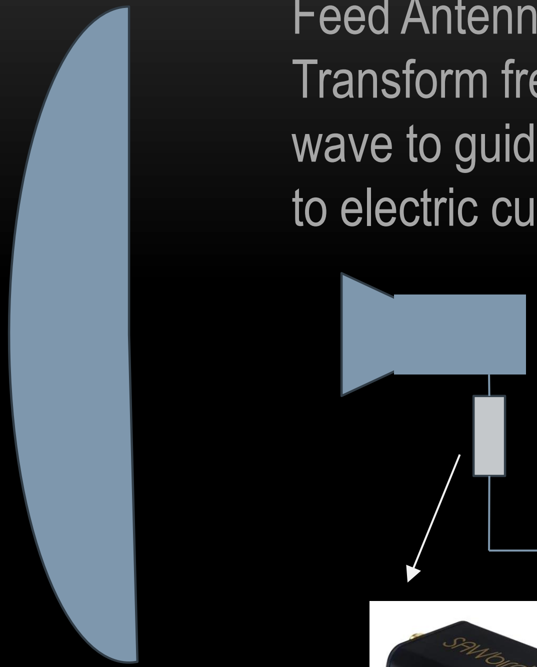
Doug Holland

NGC7380: The Wizard Nebula in Cepheus
SII: 56x15min, Ha: 44x15min, OIII: 28x15min
AT8RC Ritchey Chretien Telescope at f/8, SC8300 Camera

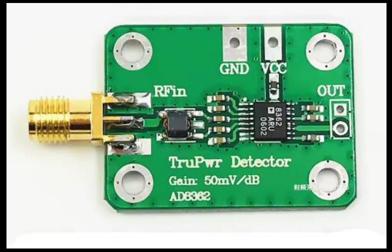
Receiver:
Power Detector + Arduino
Full LNA 65MHz Bandwidth

SDR limited to 4.8MHz

Feed Antenna
Transform free space wave to guided wave to electric current



Low loss cable



AD8313

+

Arduino UNO R4 Wifi

WiFi

Computer gathering, storing, processing & displaying radio telescope signal

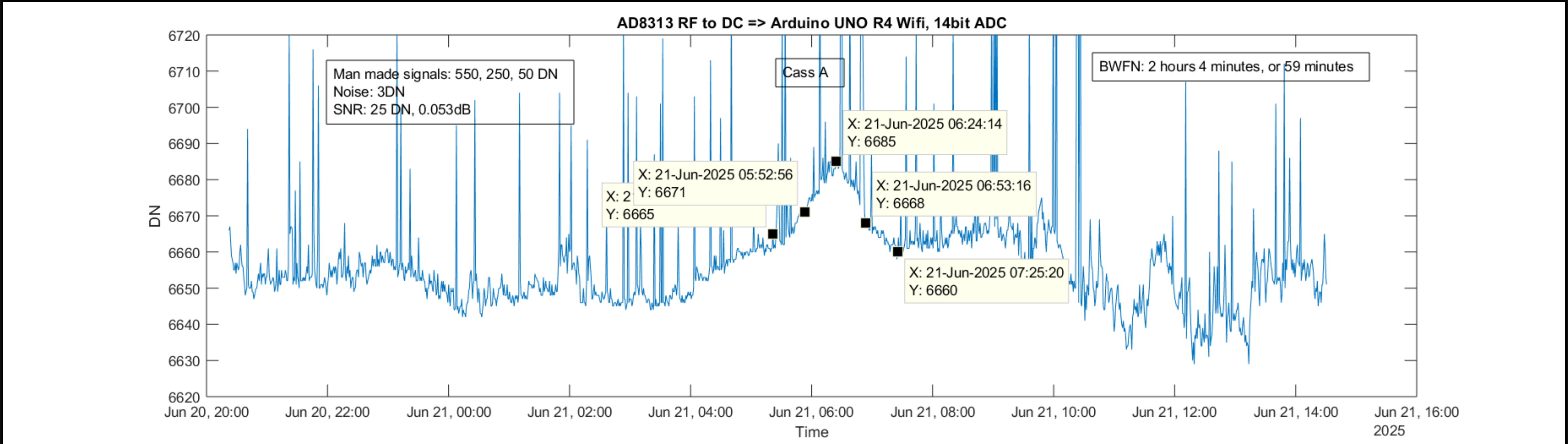
Low Noise Amplifier (LNA) +
Bandpass Filter (BPF)
Note – 65MHz Bandwidth

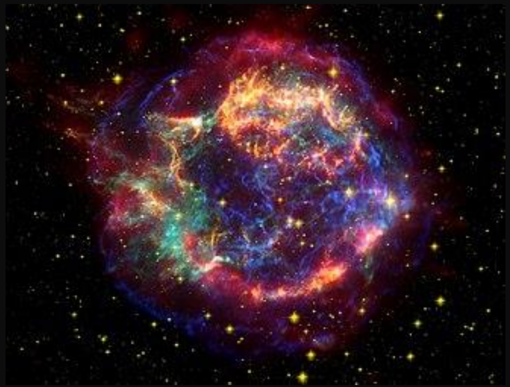
Reflector
Gather & Focus
Electromagnetic Radiation

*Note – schematic of Power Detector receiver on web page
www.holland-observatory.net

Power Detector for Receiver

Project 3 – Total Power Measurements with 2.1m Antenna (cont'd)





https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cassiopeia_A

Increasing bandwidth (bw) improves sensitivity, *but* lets more man-made noise through

Doug Holland

Project 4 – What Can be Accomplished with a Satellite TV Dish Antenna

Doug Holland

Member of our astronomy club asked –

Can a satellite TV dish be used for radio astronomy?

Rule of thumb – When someone tells you something cannot be done, someone else is probably already doing it -

SARA – the Society of Amateur Radio Astronomers

Under projects

The itty bitty radio telescope

=> Another member asked about measuring the temperature of the Moon <=

Measuring the Temperature of the Moon

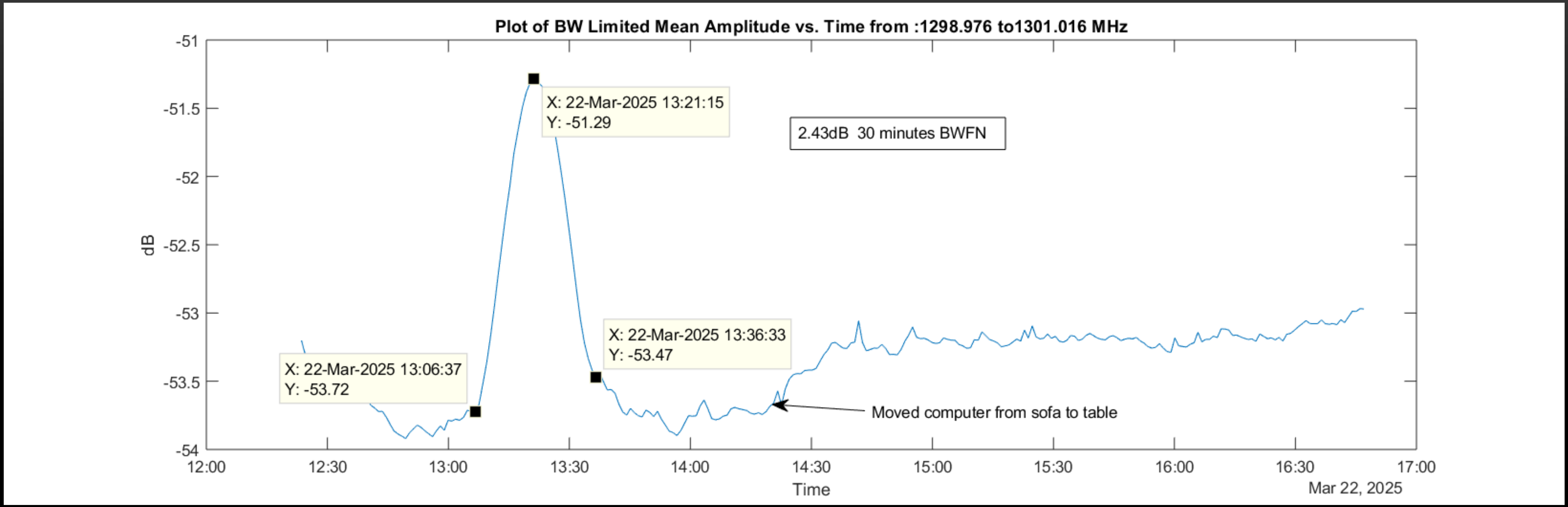
★ **Project 4**

WE WILL ATTEMPT TO USE A SATELLITE TV DISH ANTENNA TO MEASURE THE TEMPERATURE OF THE MOON

despicableme.wikia.com

First question – Can a satellite dish be used to detect celestial objects?

How about try something really bright, like the Sun



Answer – YES! A satellite dish can detect the Sun!

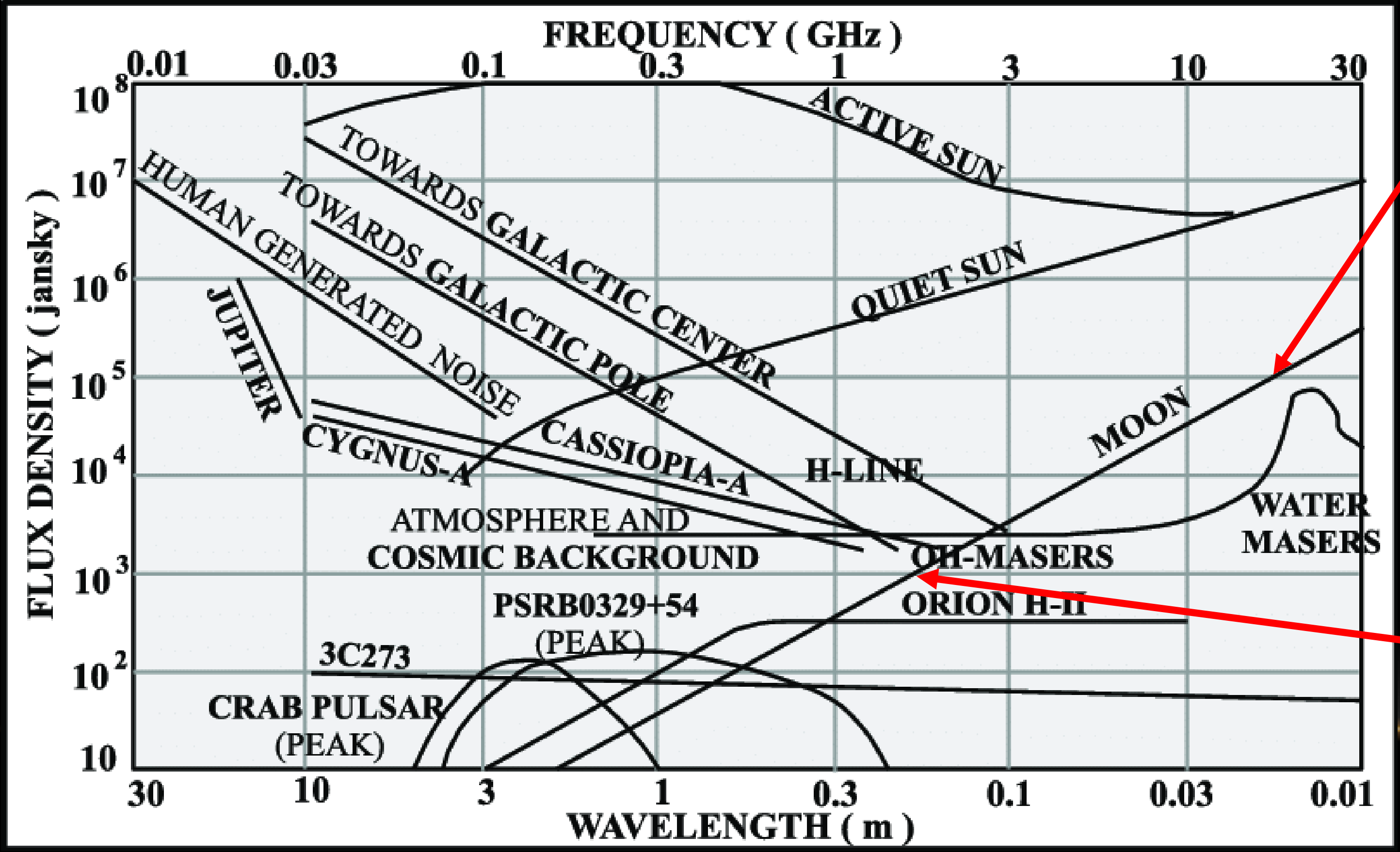
One challenge -

Date of measurement 3/22. Spring Equinox was 3/20.

Anyone got an idea why this could cause a problem?

Second question – Is there any chance a satellite dish could detect the Moon?

1. What frequencies do these detect?
   - From Internet search: 12.2 to 12.7GHz
2. Can we detect the Moon at these frequencies?



Radio Astronomy and Super-Synthesis: a Survey (Researchgate.net)

Approx. 2.36cm (12.7GHz)

!! Moon is about 100x brighter at 12.7GHz than 1.4GHz !!

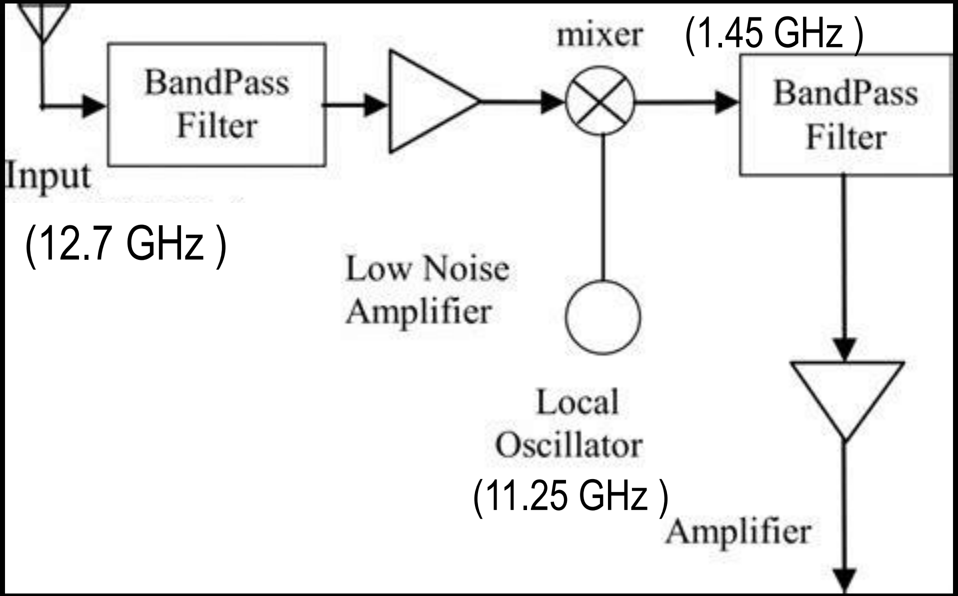
Approx. 21cm (1.4GHz)
Previous frequency area

Third question – Can we use a Software Defined Radio (SDR) for our receiver?

- Freq range of RTL-SDR: 500KHz to 1766MHz
- Freq range of Airspy Mini: 24 to 1700MHz

Signal 12GHz

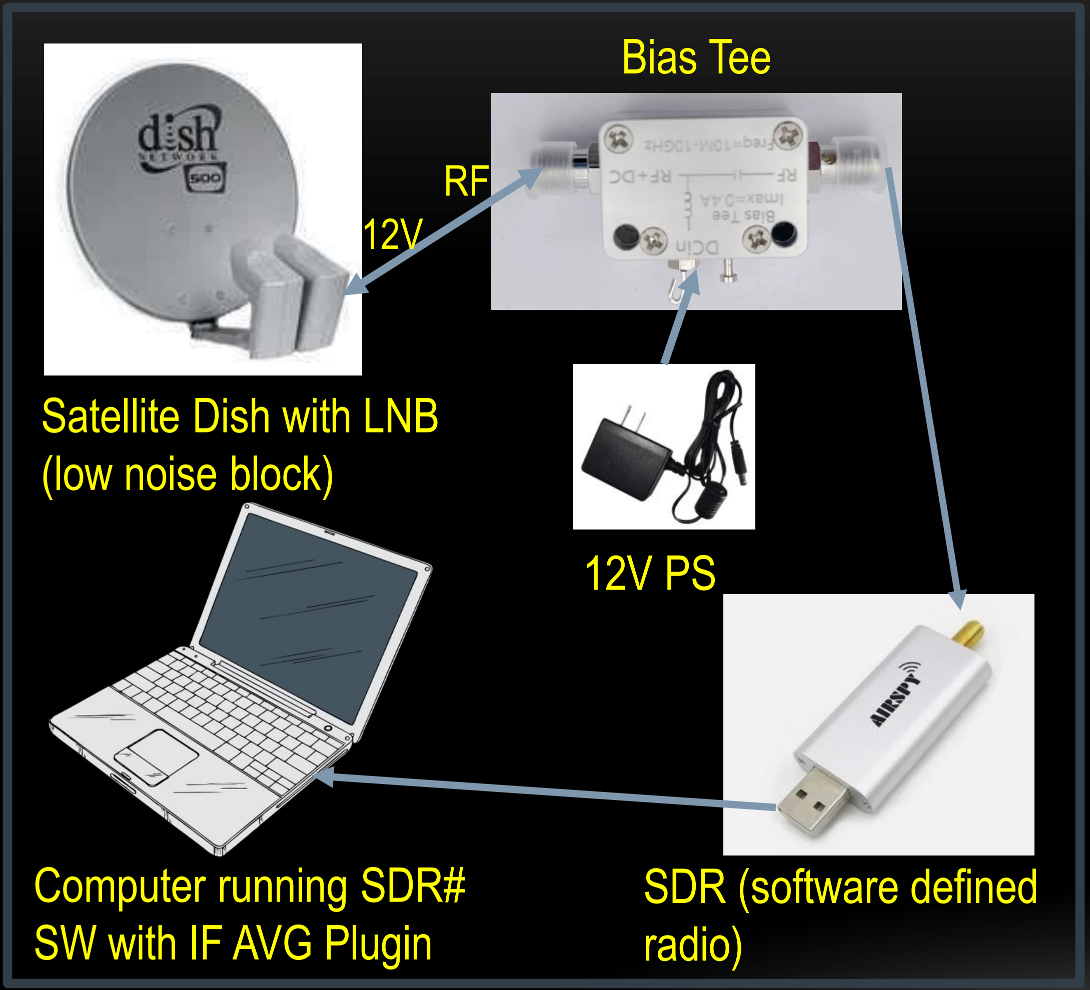
Low Noise Block (LNB)



wiringdigital.com

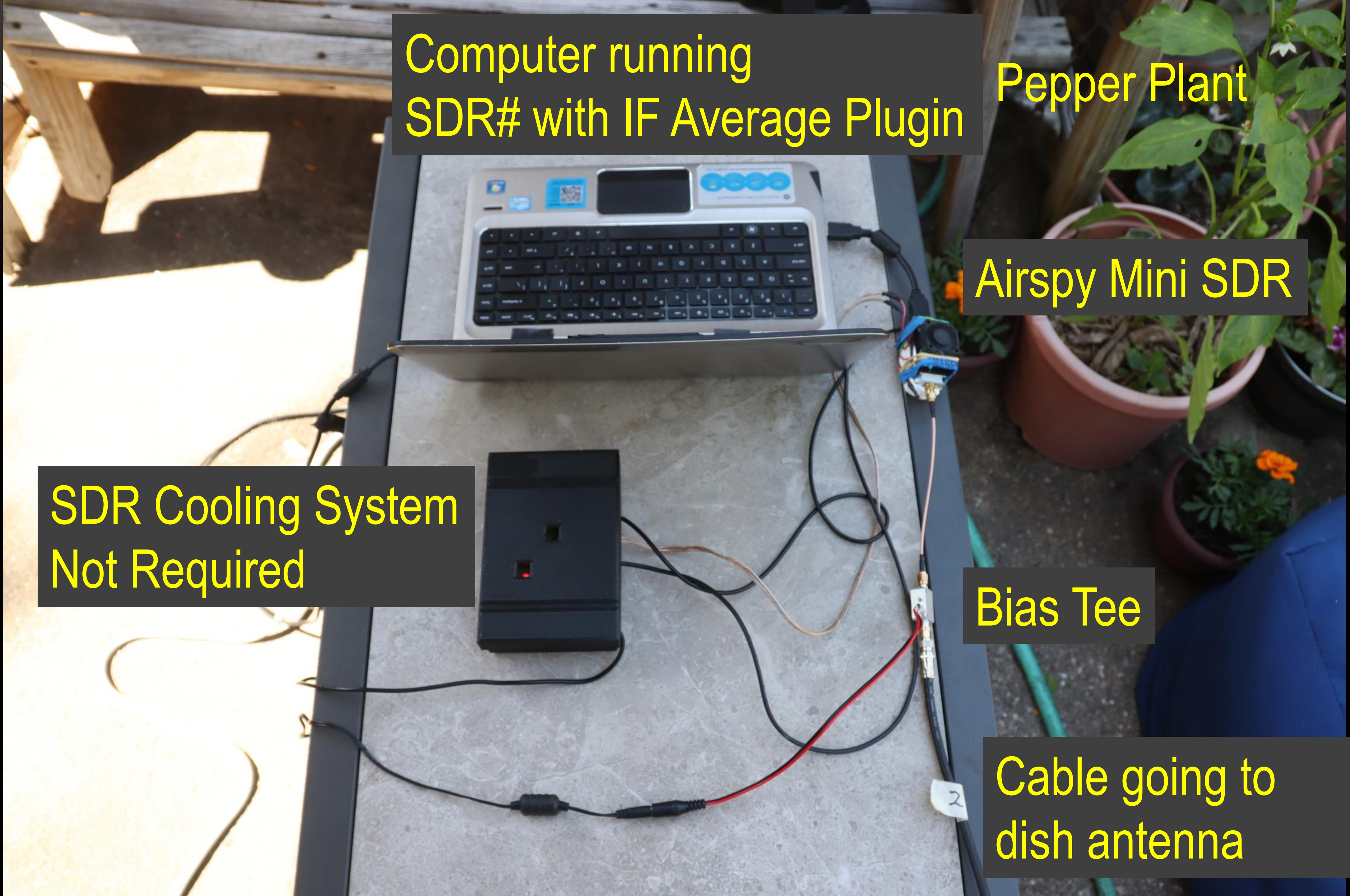
12.7GHz – 11.25GHz = 1.45GHz (1450MHz) => within range of SDR => YES !!

Fourth question – How do you power the LNB (12V) without blowing up SDR?



Signal Path

Aliexpress: Bias Tee / DC Block – routes power to LNB but not to SDR



Computer running
SDR# with IF Average Plugin
Pepper Plant
Airspy Mini SDR
SDR Cooling System
Not Required
Bias Tee
Cable going to
dish antenna

Fifth question – How do you know where antenna is pointing?

- Shape is a section of a parabola, offset feed antenna (LNB)

- *There is a plate on the bottom*

??? Any chance that the angle of the plate corresponds with direction of the antenna beam ???

!!! Turns out that it does => meaning that a protractor with weight on string can be used to set Declination !!!

=> Use compass to align antenna North / South along local meridian

Making the Measurement, Requirements

- Need to determine location of Moon
  - DEC changes every day
    - Find for that day's transit (when it crosses over local meridian – the line in the sky, overhead from North to South)
  - Use Planetarium Software: Kstars, The Sky, Stellarium, etc.

- Need to find usable frequency
  - Satellite interference experienced from 12.45 to 12.65GHz
  - Used 12.7GHz (1450MHz SDR) for measurement

Moon Temperature Measuring Configuration (with cat)

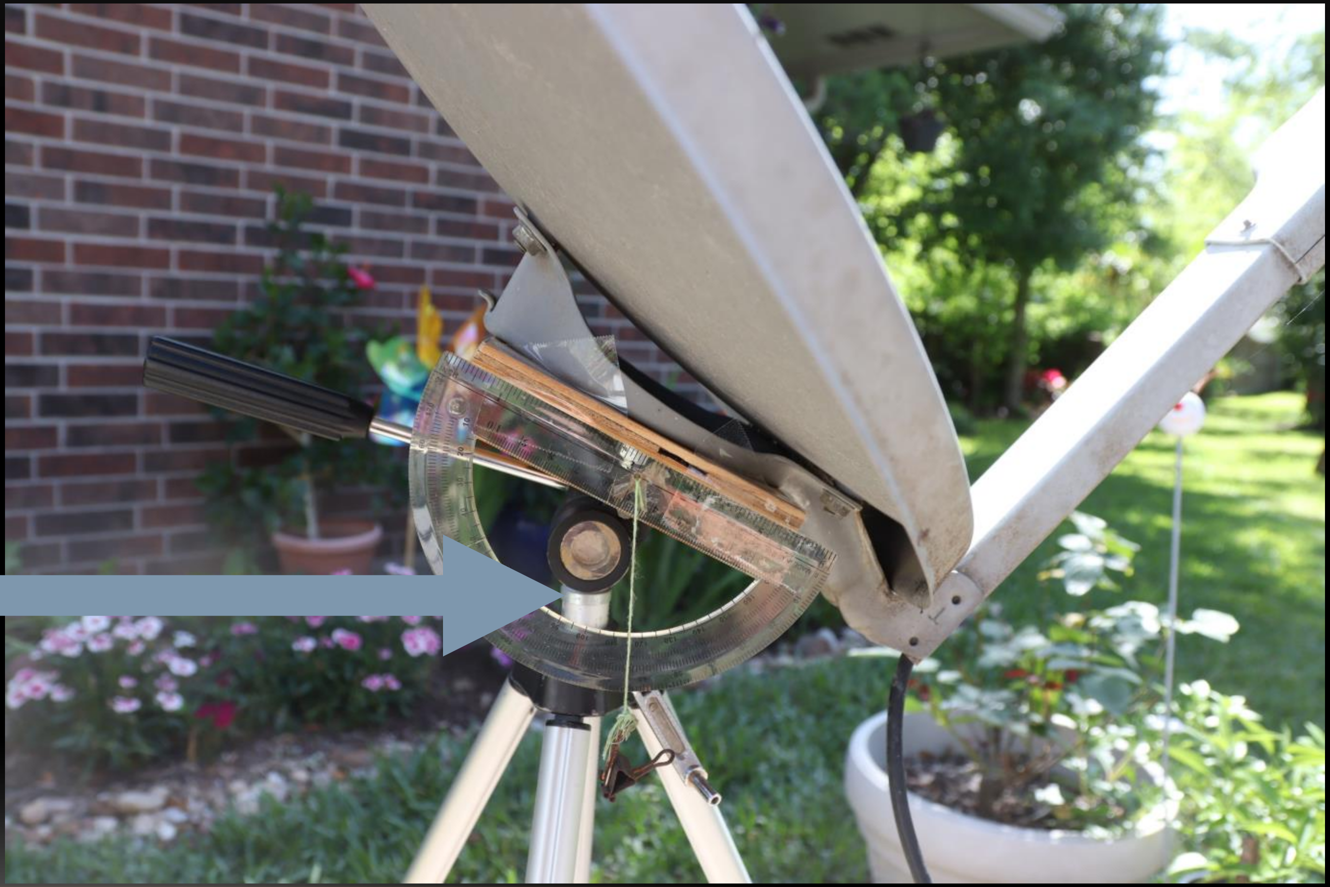
Using the Moon's Declination (at transit) to Set Protractor

Local Latitude – Moon's DEC = Protractor Setting

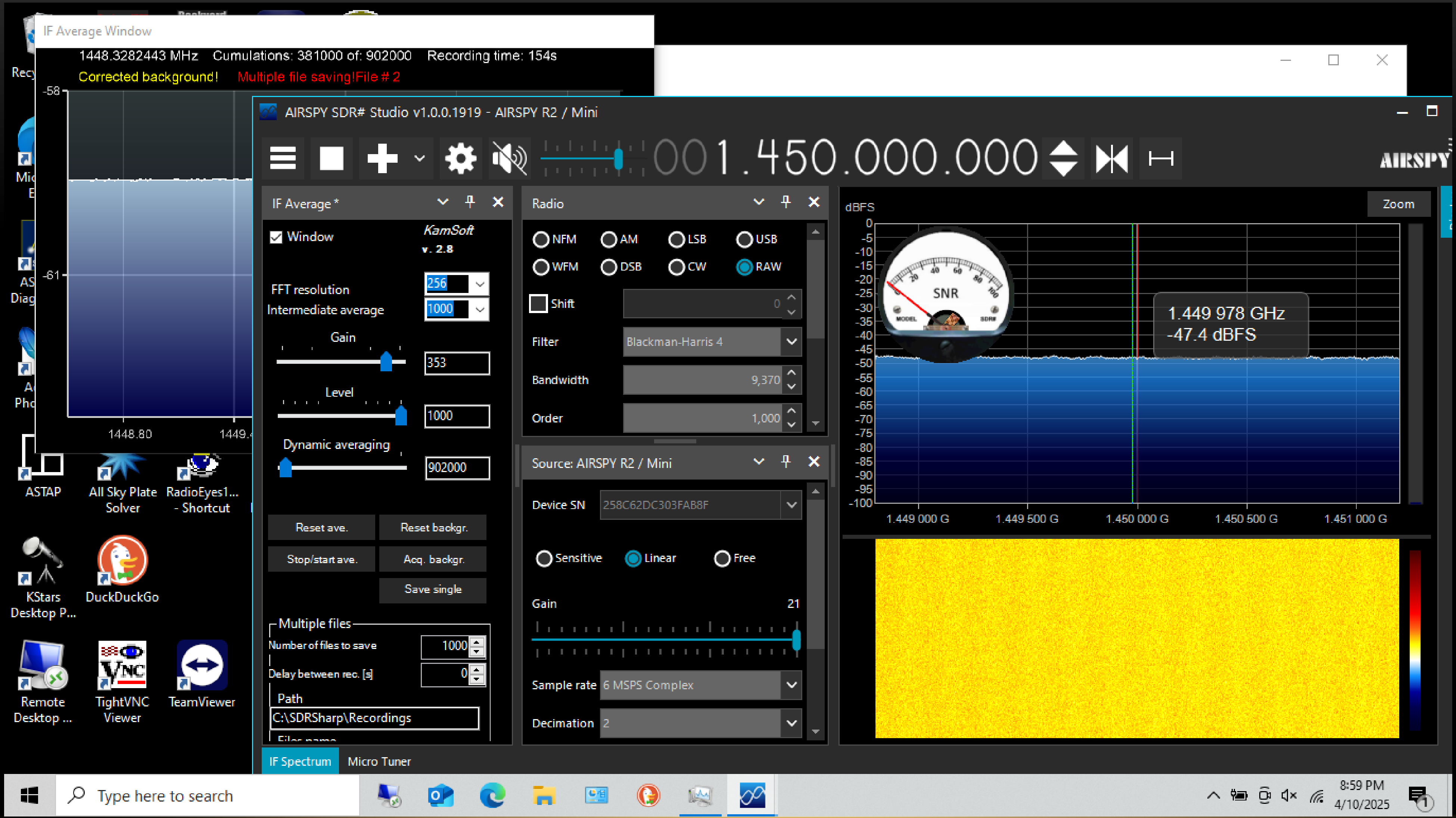
Example:

29º 36' - 04º 24' = 25º 12'

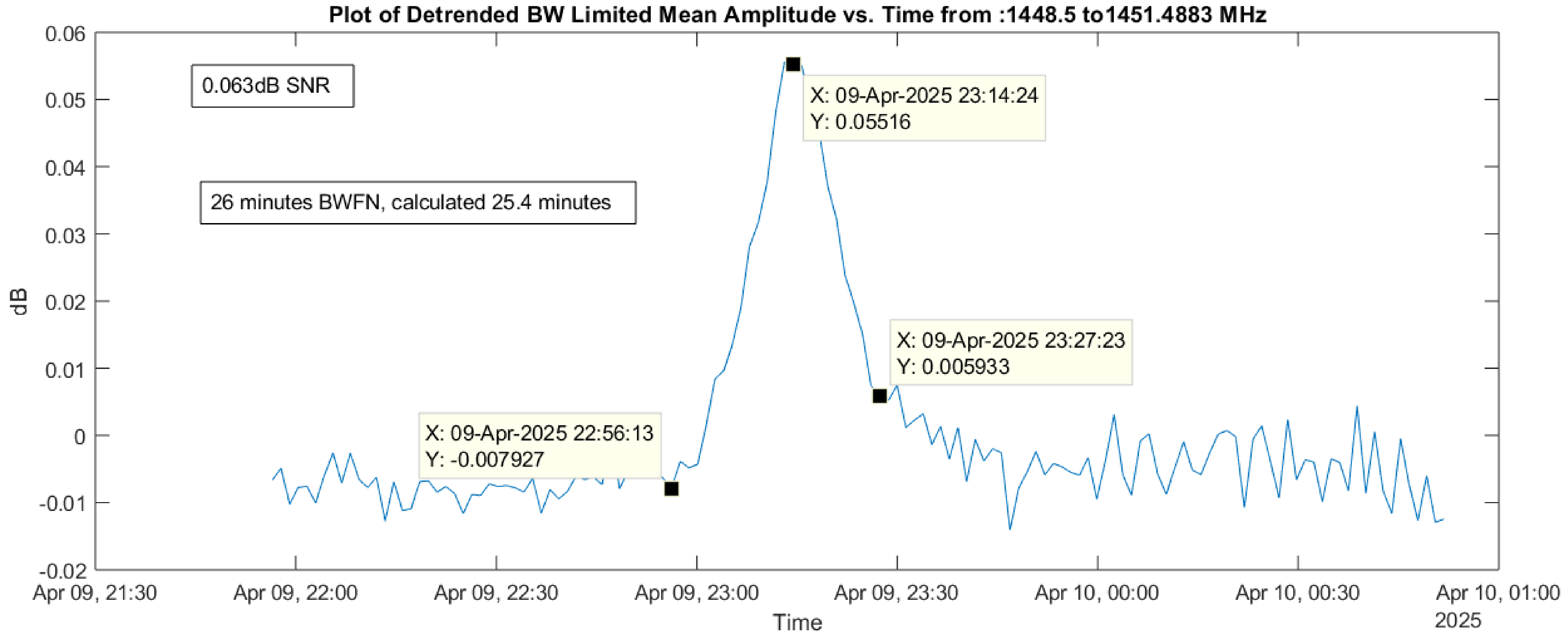
=> Set protractor 25º 12'
South of straight up



Making the Measurement, Software



SDR# with IF Average Plugin (free) – IF Average Plugin creates data files that can be plotted in other program (Excel, Matlab, etc.; example uses Matlab)



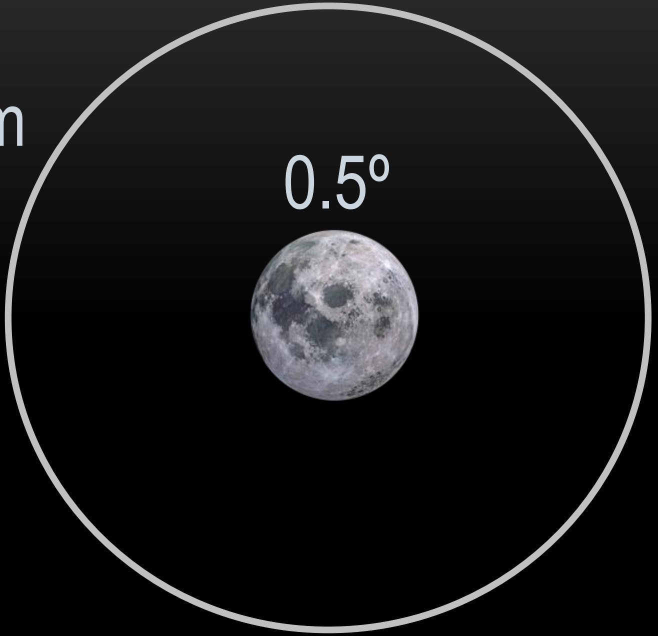
Moon Measurement – Amplitude vs. Time

How to use measurement to determine temperature of the Moon

Math is Fun !!

$$Tmoon = \frac{Teff}{R}$$

Antenna Beam
HPBW 3.17°



$$R = \frac{Moon(solid\ angle)}{Antenna\ HPBW\ (solid\ angle)} = \frac{\pi r_{Moon}^2}{\pi r_{HPBW}^2}$$

$$R = \frac{\pi \cdot (0.25^0)^2}{\pi \cdot (1.59^0)^2} = 0.0247$$

From SARA instruction videos
HPBW (half power beam width)

$$HPBW = 70^0 \frac{\lambda}{D}$$

λ = wavelength, D = diameter

$$HPBW = 70^0 \frac{0.0236m}{0.5207m} = 3.17^0$$

Method used for calculations from Klaus Henning, facebook Amateur Radio Astronomy Group 1/10/25

$$Teff = Ttotal - Tsys$$

$$Tsys = system\ noise\ level$$

$$Tsys = \frac{Th - yTc}{y - 1}$$

$Th = temperature\ of\ hot\ area, garage\ wall\ (82^0F)$

$Tc = temperature\ of\ cold\ area, sky\ (10K)$

Need Th in Kelvin, K

$$(((82^oF - 32^0F)\frac{5}{9}) + 273.15K) = 300.9K$$

$$Tsys = \frac{300.9K - 2.0893(10K)}{2.0893 - 1}$$

$$Tsys = 257K$$

$$PwrhotdB - PwrcolddB = 10\log(y)$$

$PwrhotdB = Hot\ power\ measured\ in\ dB$

$PwrcolddB = Cold\ power\ measured\ in\ dB$

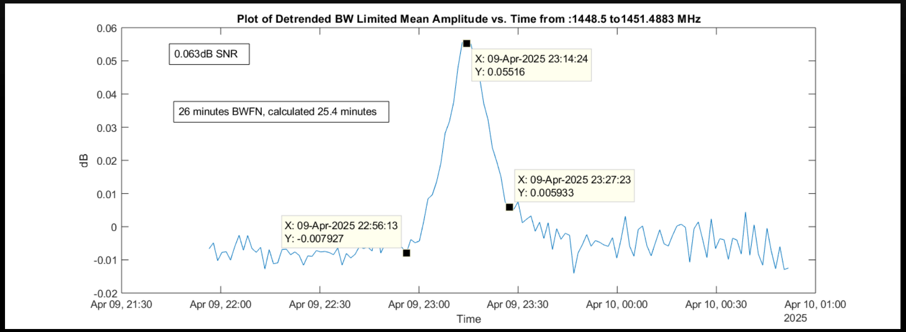
$-47.5\text{dB} - (-50.7\text{dB}) = 3.2\text{dB} = 10\log(\text{y})$

$\text{y} = 2.0893$

$$Teff = Ttotal - Tsys$$

$$\Delta TdB = MoondB\ above\ cold\ sky = 0.063dB$$

$$\frac{Ttotal}{Tsys} = 10^{\Delta Tdb/10}$$



$$\frac{Ttotal}{Tsys} = 10^{0.063db/10} = 1.0146$$

$$Ttotal = Tsys \cdot 1.0146 = 257K \cdot 1.0146 = 260.75K$$

$$Teff = Ttotal - Tsys = 260.75K - 257K = 3.75K$$

$$Tmoon = \frac{Teff}{R} = \frac{3.75K}{0.0247} = 151.8K$$

Measured temperature of the Moon: 151.8K

Expected temperature, a little above 200K?

Changes with phase of the Moon

Data taken about half way between first quarter and full Moon

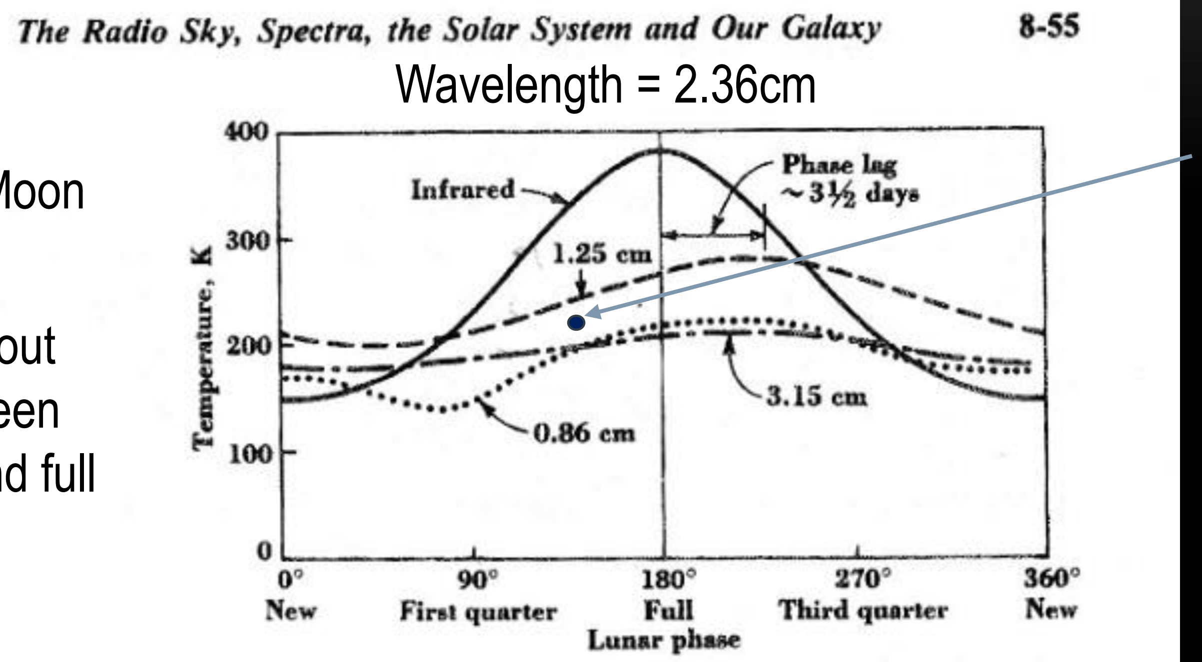
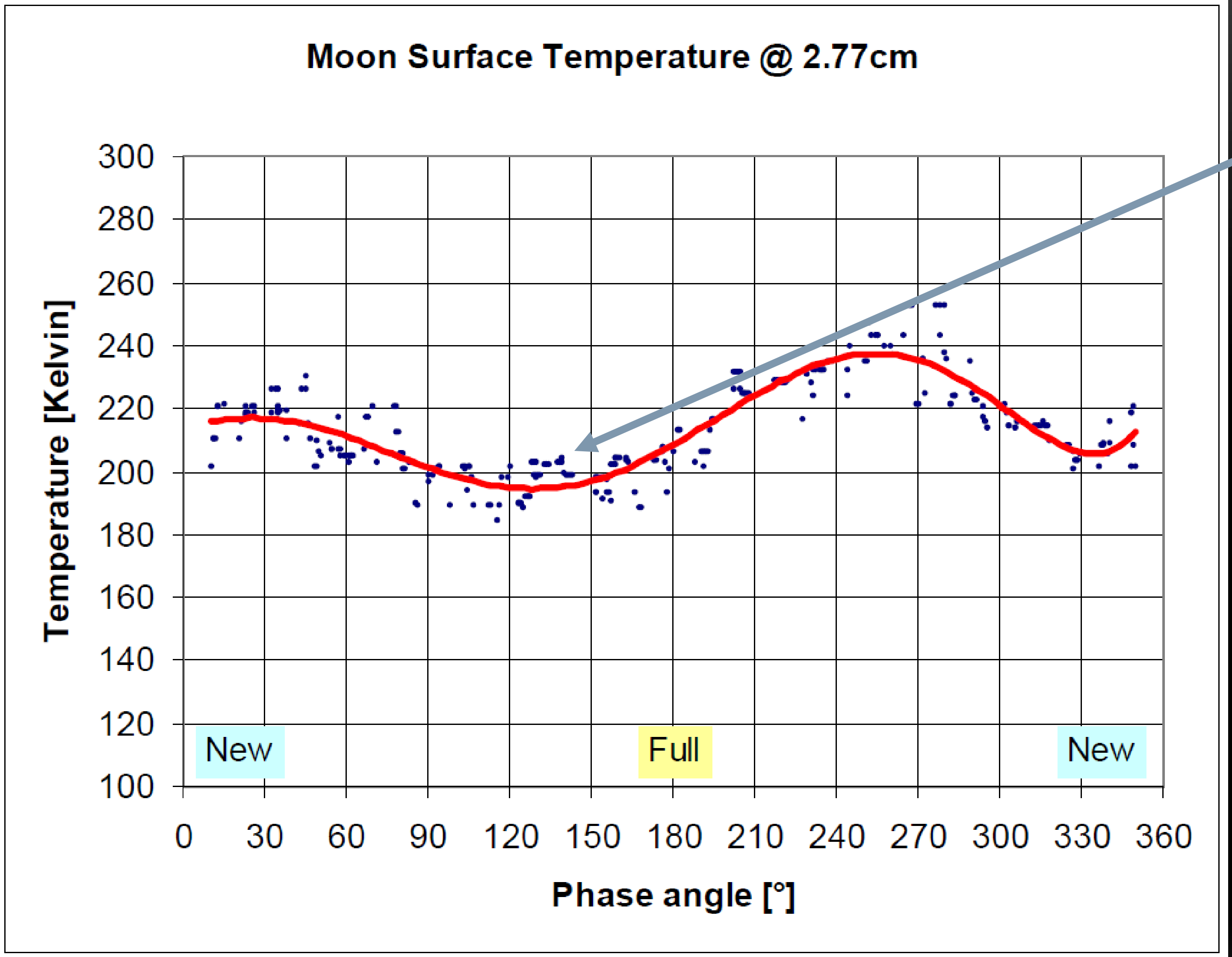


Fig. 8-41. Lunar temperature in kelvins as a function of lunar phase, showing the temperature variation, at infrared wavelengths and at wavelengths of 0.86, 1.25, and 3.15 cm. The temperatures are those of an equivalent blackbody radiator.

Radio Astronomy by John D. Kraus

"The smaller temperature range of the radio temperatures as compared to the infrared values is taken to indicate that the microwave radiation originates at some depth below the surface of the Moon, whereas the infrared radiation comes from a thin surface layer."



ETH Zürich RADIO ASTRONOMY AND PLASMA PHYSICS GROUP

The Moon's Temperature at λ=2.77cm

Christian Monstein

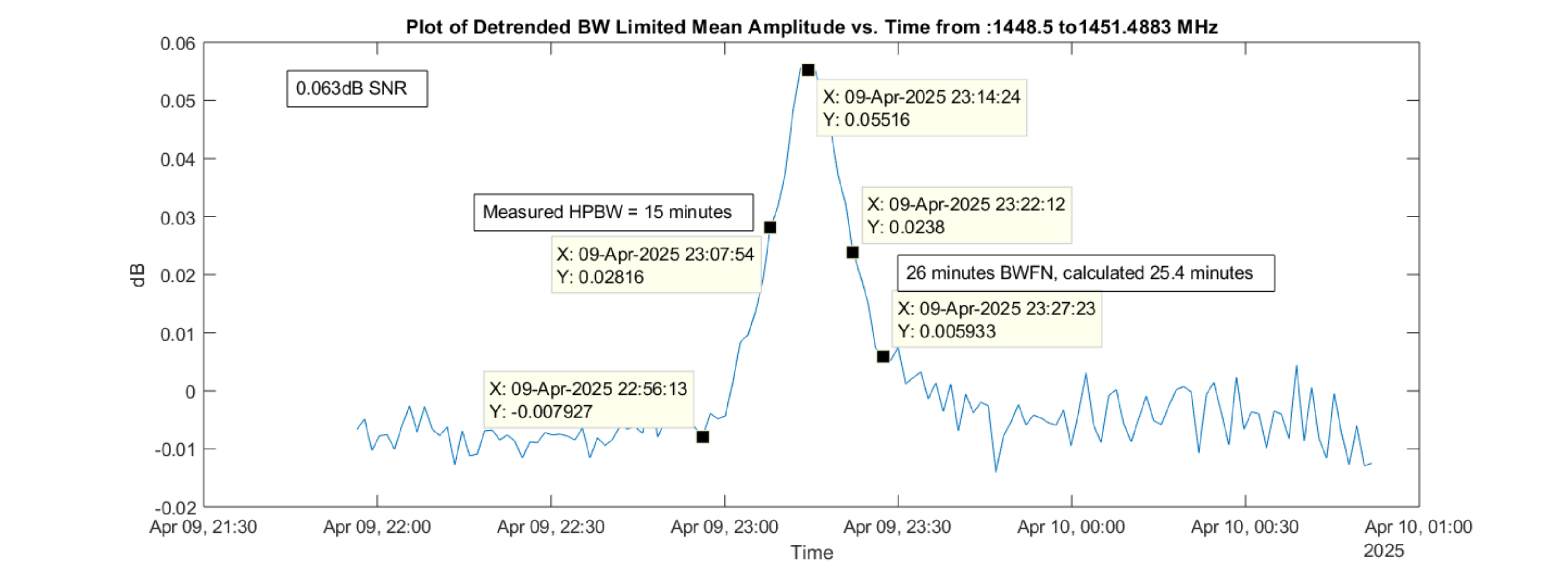
Actual measurements just above 200K

Another reference at approx. same wavelength: 2.77cm vs. 2.36cm

Where could there be errors in our method or calculation?

What about if we measure HPBW rather than calculate it?

15min/60min x 15⁰/hour = 3.75⁰



$$R = \frac{\pi \cdot (0.25^0)^2}{\pi \cdot (1.875^0)^2} = 0.0178$$

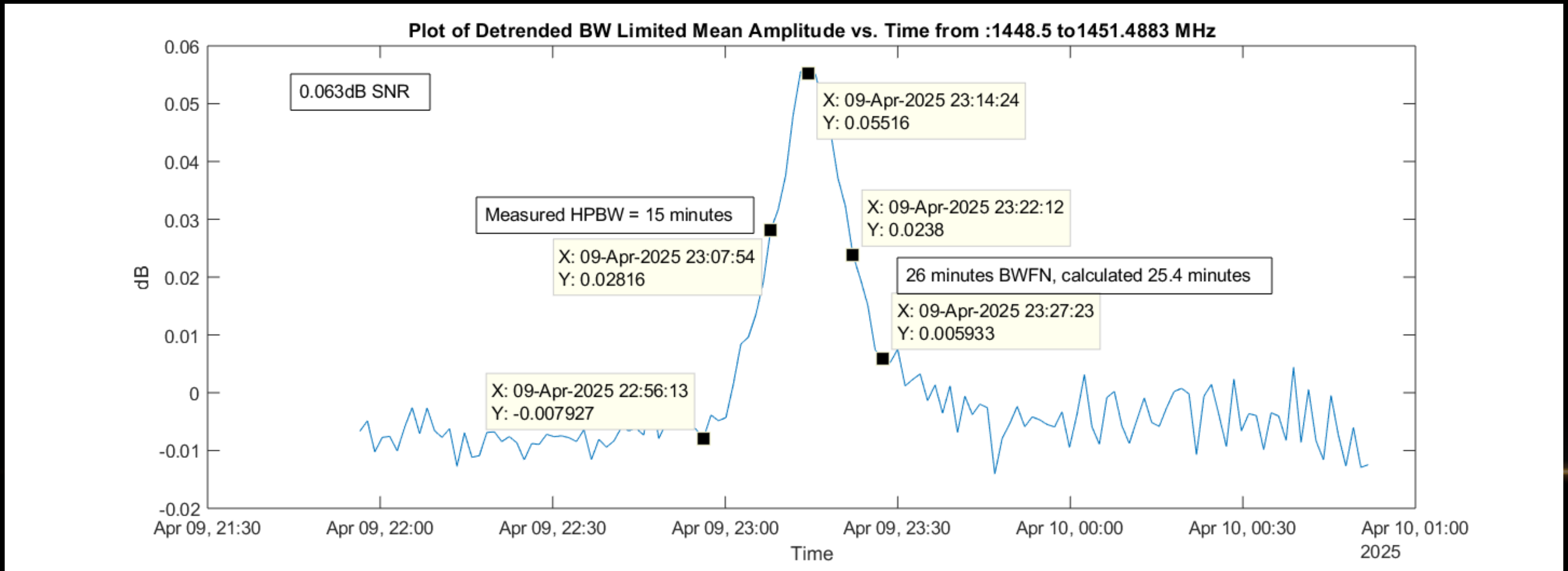
About expected value

$$Tmoon = \frac{Teff}{R} = \frac{3.75K}{0.0178} = 210\mathrm{K}$$

Conclusion =>

1. A reasonably ok signal can be received from the Moon at 12.7GHz with a Satellite TV Dish antenna

2. The temperature of the Moon can be measured, with relaxed precision, if measured HPBW is used, and patience



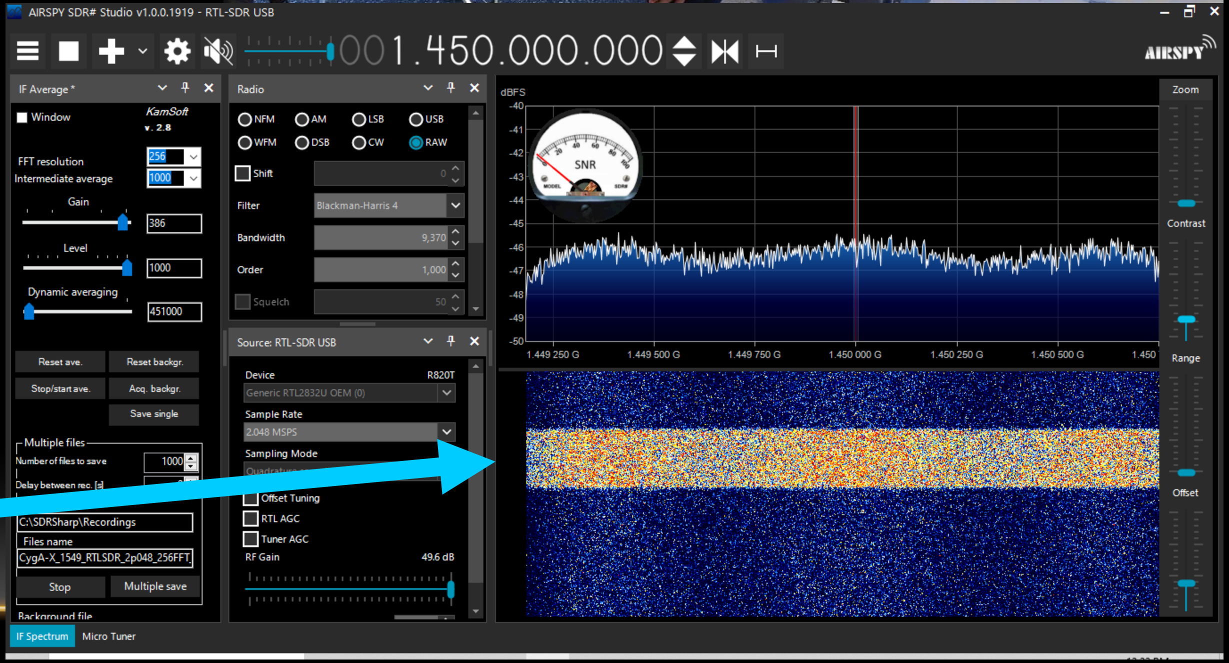
One more thing =>

Doug Holland

Public Outreach (Star Party) Radio Astronomy display!

Ric

not Ric



Detection of radiation from human bodies

Live demonstration of a Radio Telescope

Project 5 – Methanol Masers with a Tracking Radio Telescope

Doug Holland

What is a Maser?

Maser

(Microwave Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation)

Laser

(Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation)

https://i.pinimg.com/originals/db/3f/be/db3fbe7464a3495d6ce16b61ee2aaa89.jpg

Masers occur naturally in space…

How can we detect Masers?

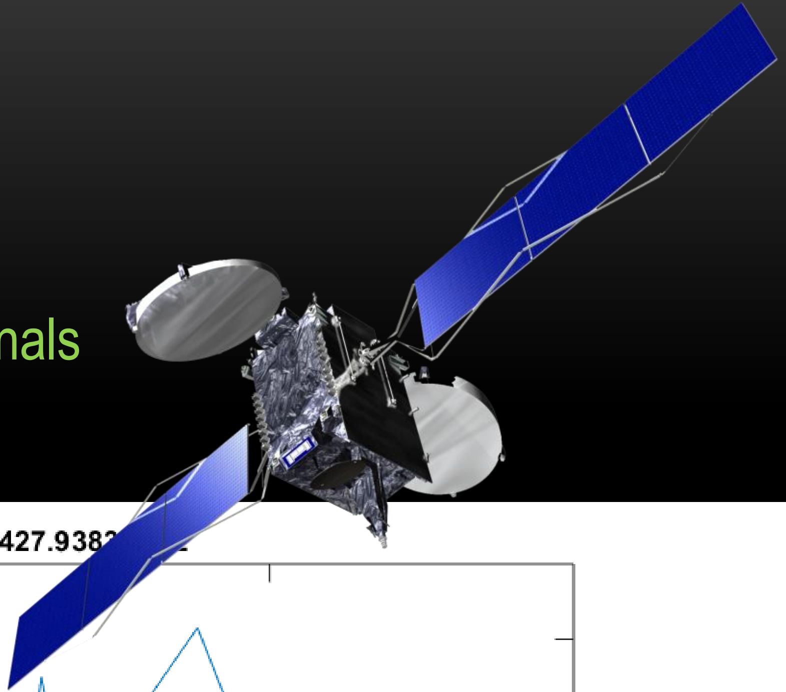
Methanol Masers – emit at 12GHz (12.178593 GHz)

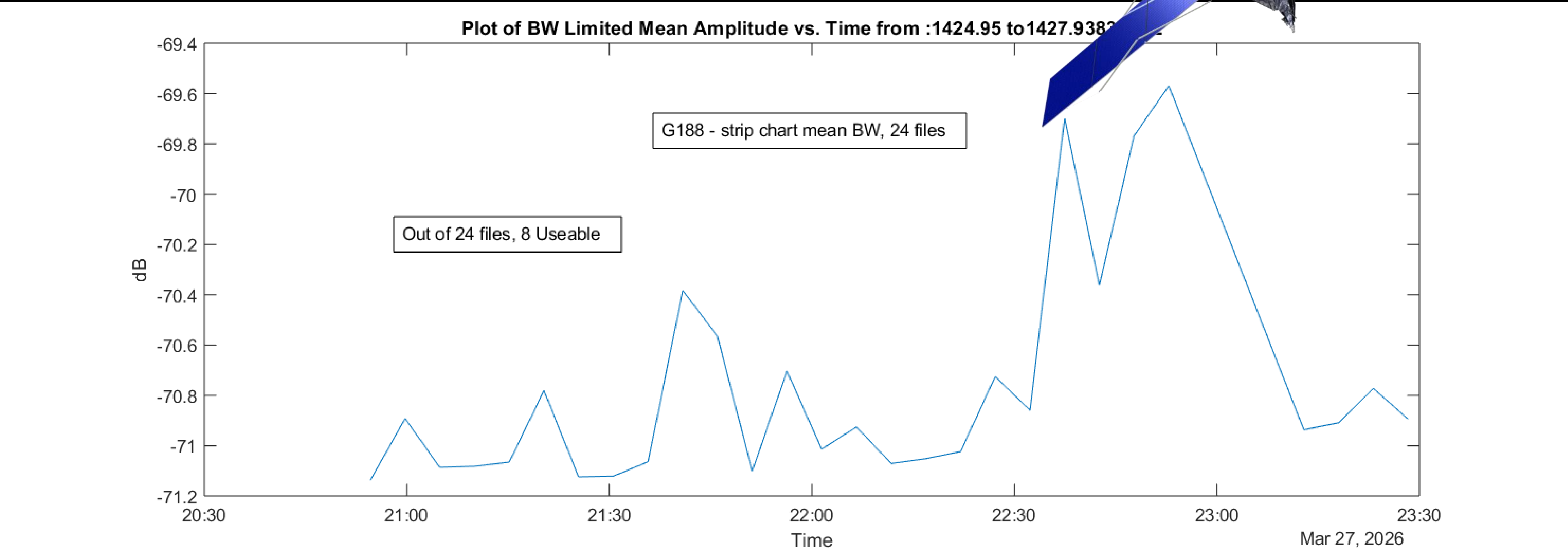
Satellite TV Antennas operate in the Ku-Band
=> 12 to 18 GHz

What are the Challenges of Observing 12GHz Ku-Band Masers with a Satellite TV Antenna?

Satellites...

From 3/27/26 data: peaks are samples that have satellite signals (5 minutes samples)





Masers are fairly faint – Need to increase Radio Telescope sensitivity

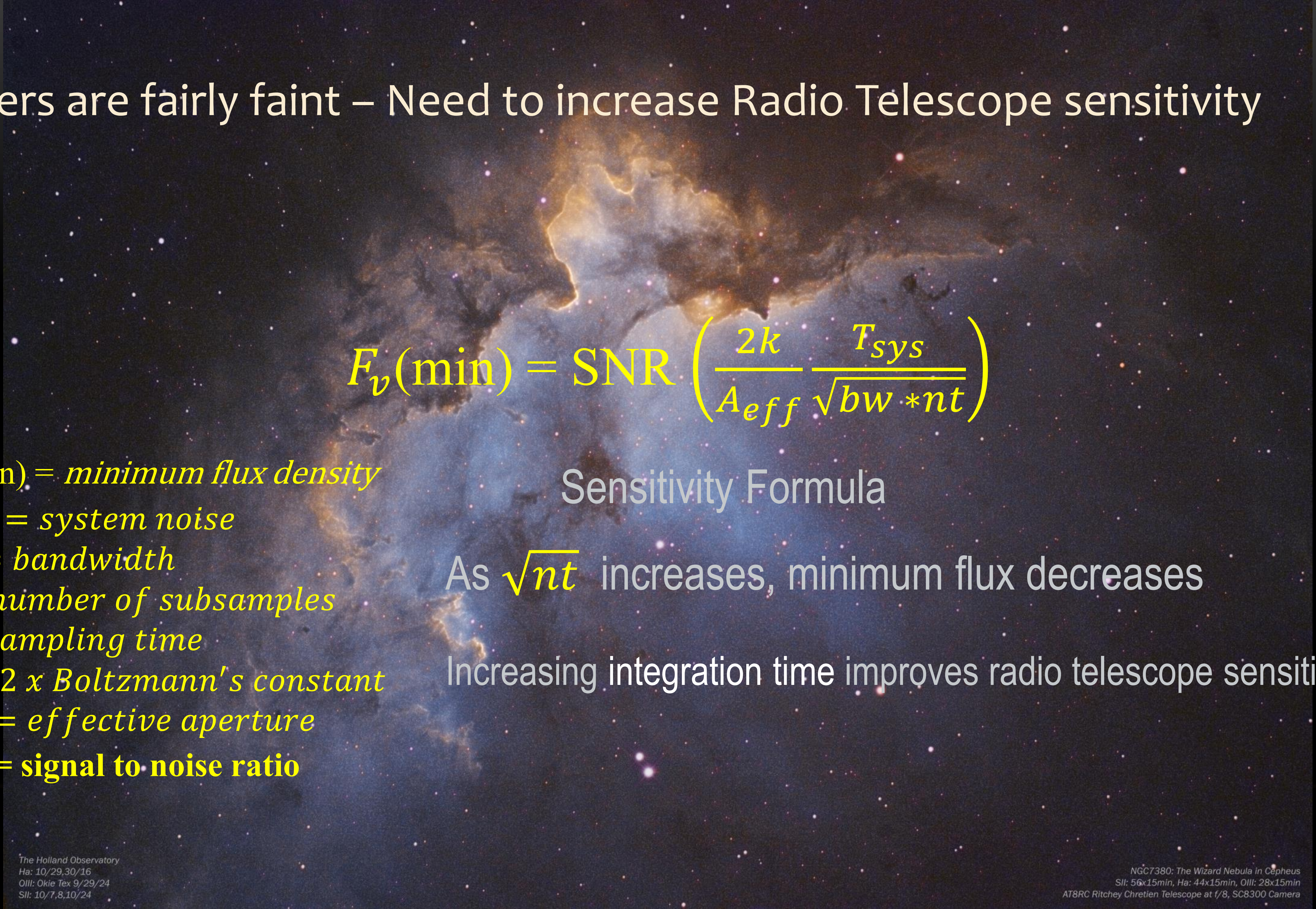
$$F_v(\mathrm{min}) = \mathrm{SNR}\left(\frac{2k}{A_{eff}}\frac{T_{sys}}{\sqrt{bw * nt}}\right)$$

$F_v(\mathrm{min})$ = *minimum flux density*
$Tsys = system\ noise$
$bw = bandwidth$
$n = number\ of\ subsamples$
$t = sampling\ time$
$2k = 2\ x\ Boltzmann's\ constant$
$A_{eff} = effective\ aperture$
SNR = signal to noise ratio

Sensitivity Formula

As $\sqrt{nt}$ increases, minimum flux decreases

Increasing **integration time** improves radio telescope sensitivity



How can we increase our Integration Time?



Mount a Radio Telescope on a German Equatorial Mount (GEM)

Guide Scope provides: Plate Solving & Autoguiding

What are some bright 12GHz Methanol Masers?

W3(OH) in Cassiopeia, approx. 800 Jy =>

G188.94+0.89 in Gemini, approx. 200 Jy =>

Note – Many masers are designated in Galactic Coordinates: G188.94+0.89
Galactic Longitude: 188.94º, Galactic Latitude: +0.89º

NGC7538 in Cepheus, approx. 200 Jy =>

Cepheus A in Cepheus, approx. 200 Jy =>

W48 in Aquila, approx. 150 Jy =>

From: Time Variability of Five Strong 12 GHz Methanol Masers by L. Moscadelli & M. Catarzi

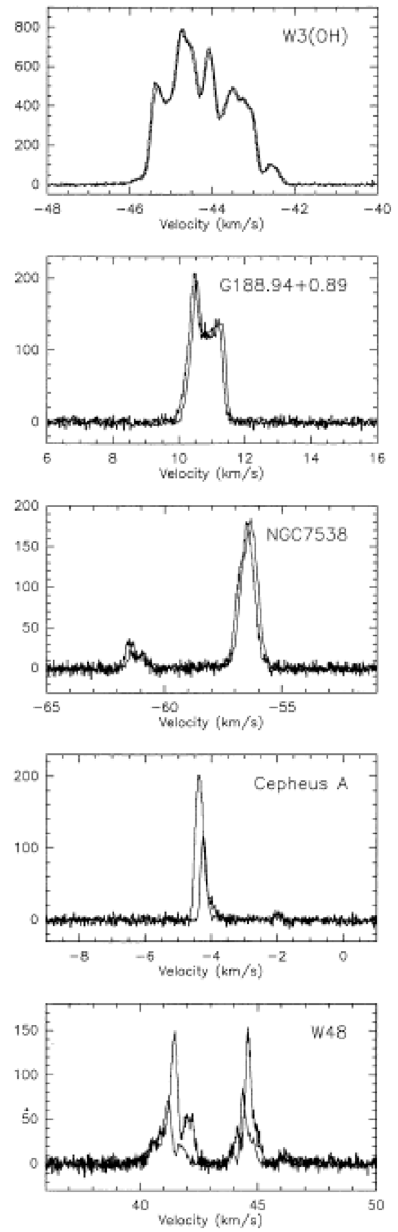
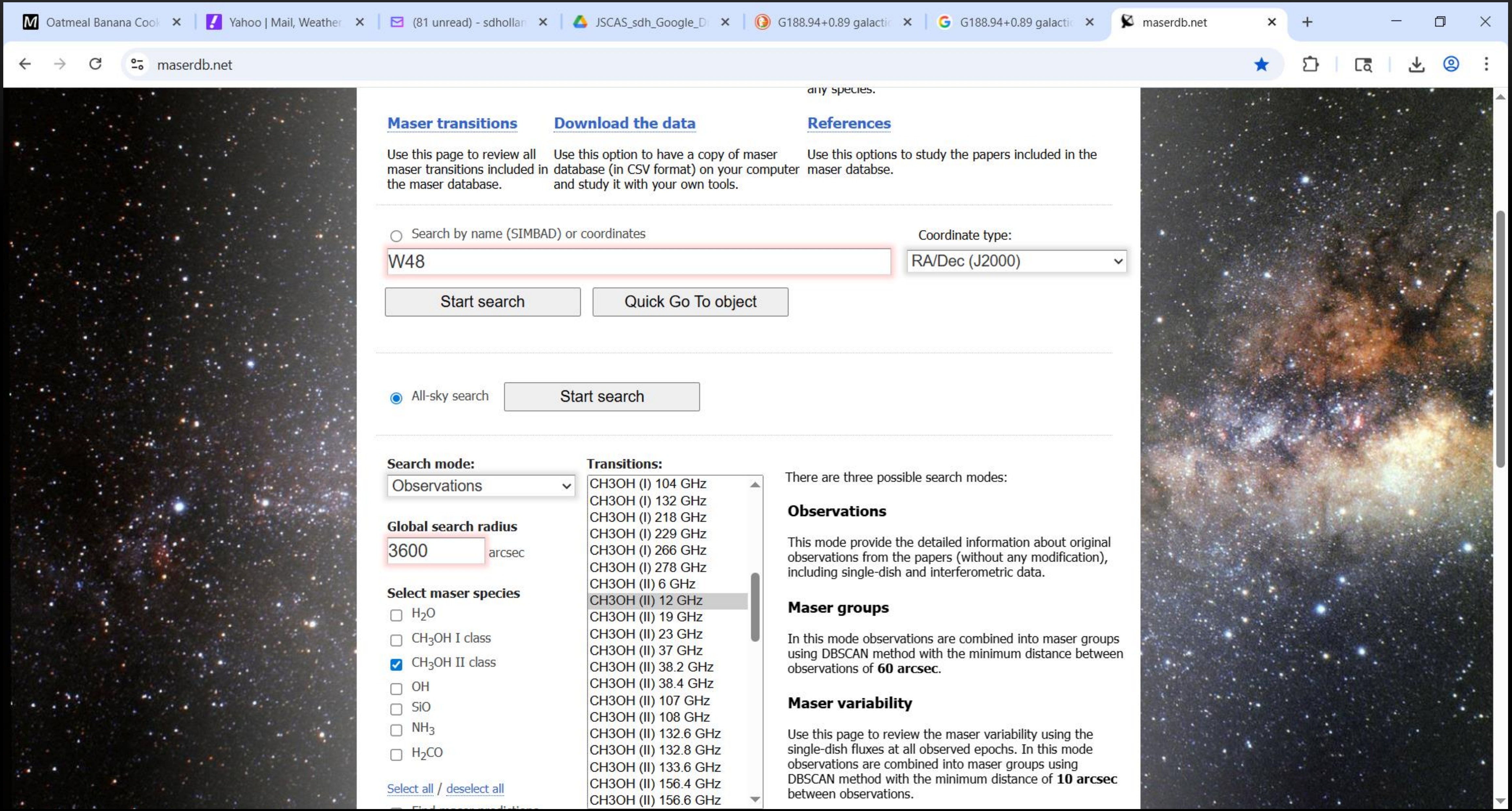


Fig. 1. For each of the five sources the spectrum of the 4/92 run (histogram plot) is shown on the top of the 11/90 one (normal plot). The flux density scale is in Jy

There is a web page for looking up masers: maserdb.net



W3(OH): It's A-Maser-ing

What is W3(OH)?

- It is the 3rd entry in the Westerhout Catalog
  - Westerhout Radio Catalog (1958)

- W3 is a giant molecular cloud and star forming region

- W3(OH) is a region within W3 that contains Hydroxyl Masers
  - And… also includes Methanol Masers =>

Where is W3(OH)?

How can we detect W3(OH)?

Need to be able to:

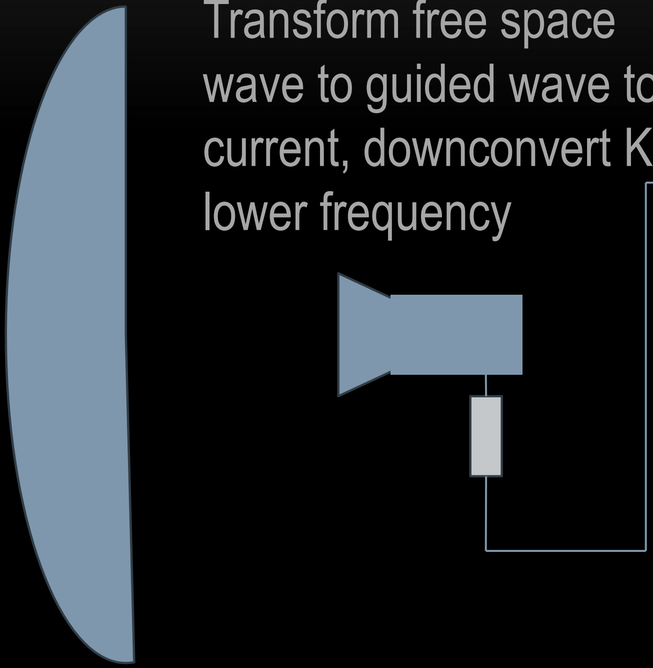
1. Point at target (Plate Solving)
2. Stay pointing at target (Auto Guiding)

Guide Scope & Guide Camera
INDI / Kstars / Ekos software

Methanol (CH3OH) rest frequency: 12,178.593 MHz. Use Ku-Band LNB (Low Noise Block) (Satellite TV Antenna)

Lots of integration / exposure time: tracking mount

How can we record W3(OH)?



1.1m Section of a Parabolic Reflector
Gather & Focus
Electromagnetic Radiation

Ku-Band LNB
Transform free space wave to guided wave to electric current, downconvert Ku-Band to lower frequency

Low loss cable

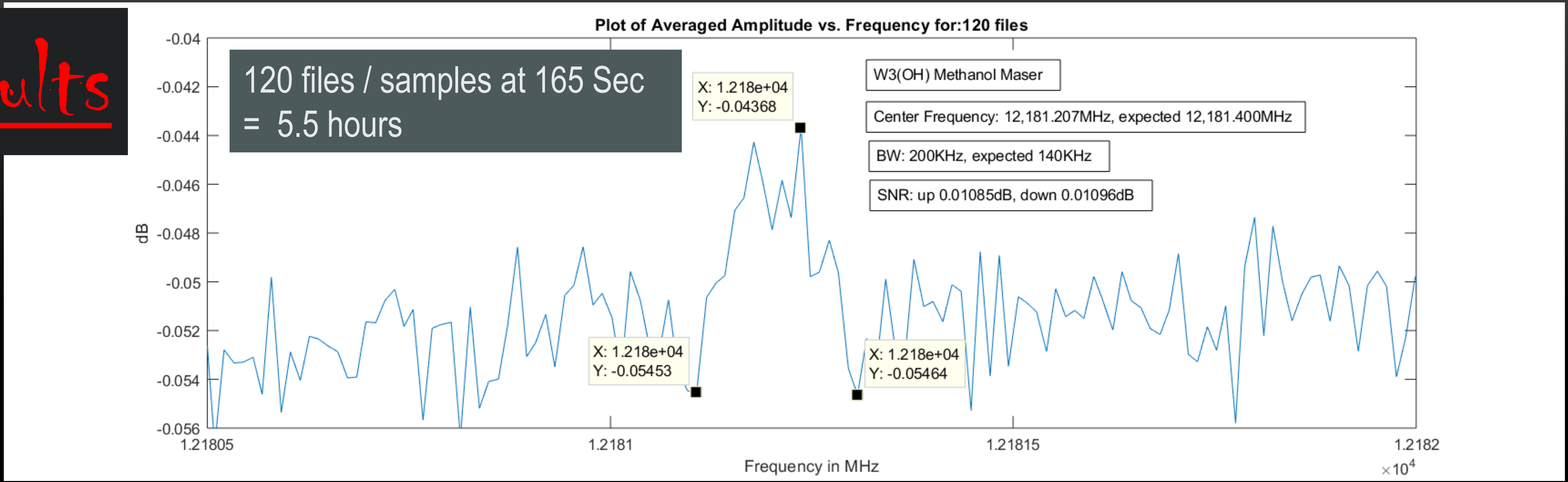
Receiver:
Software Defined Radio (SDR)

Airspy Mini

Computer gathering, storing, processing & displaying radio telescope signal
SDR# software with IF_Average Plug-in (Free!)
Data plotted (Matlab, Excel, Python, etc.)

Radio Frequency Signal Chain

Results



Why do we believe this signal is W3(OH)?

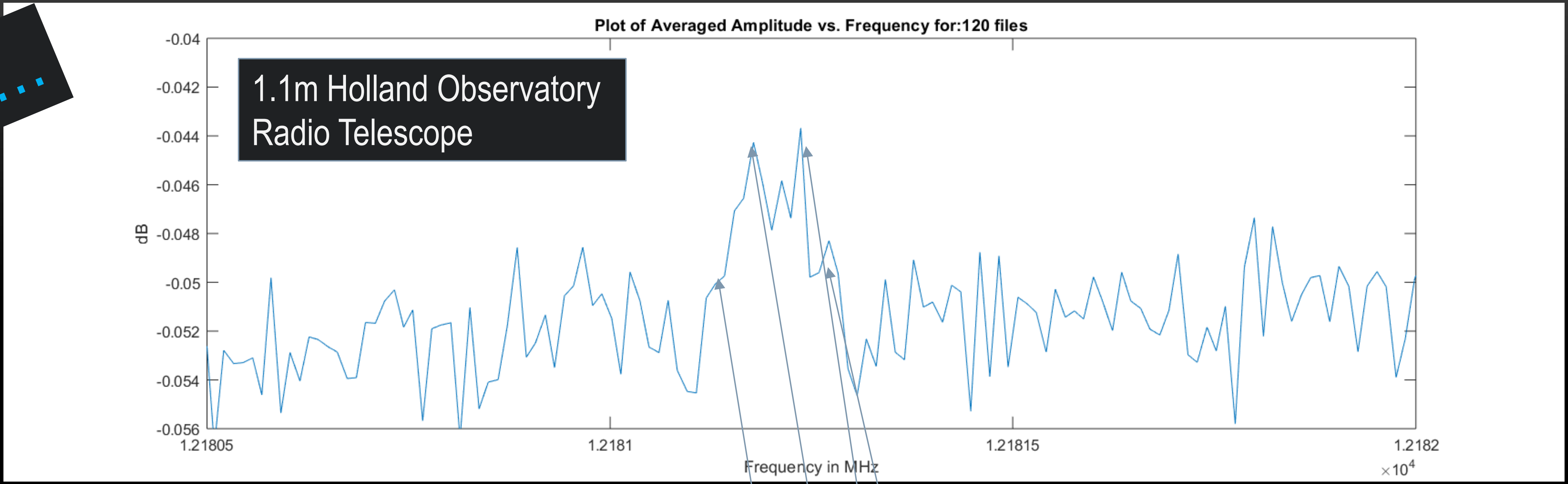
Rest frequency = 12,178.593MHz, Observed frequency = 12,181.207MHz

Expected frequency = 12,181.400MHz [VLSR = -44.86km/s (W3 velocity toward local standard of rest (local group of stars)), Radial Velocity = -25.01km/s (observer velocity toward W3 referenced to local standard of rest)]

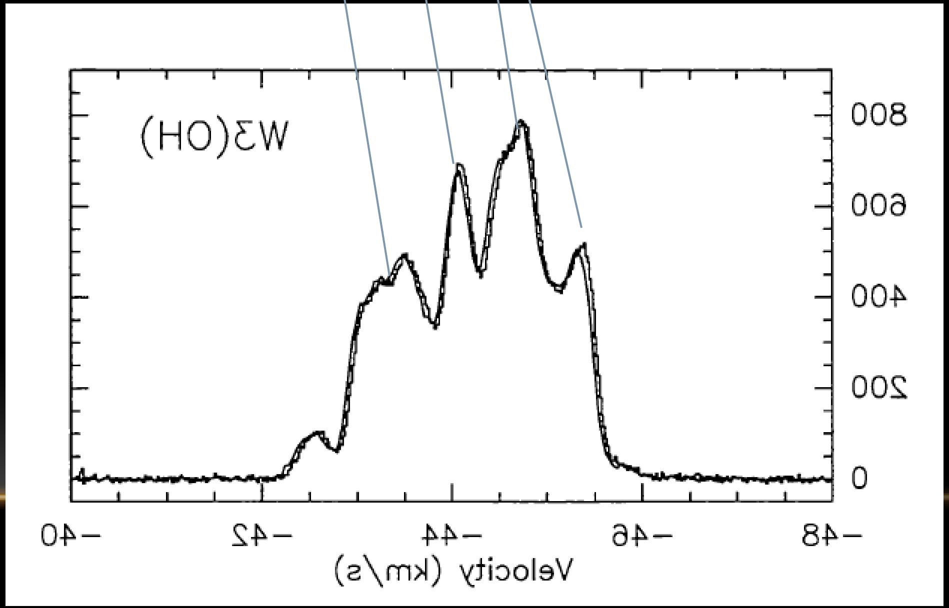
Expected 12,181.400MHz <= ? => Observed 12,181.207MHz, Δ 193KHz

LNB (GeoSatPro) local oscillator accurate to +/- 300KHz

And ...



It looks similar to expected =>



32m Medicina Radio Telescope

Time Variability of Five Strong 12 GHz Methanol Masers by L. Moscadelli and M. Catarzi

Other Projects that Can Be Done

- Measure rotation rate of our galaxy, the Milky Way
- Interferometer
- Detect meteors – Sudden Ionospheric Disturbances (SID)
- Detect solar flares – Sudden Ionospheric Disturbance (SID)
- Receive radio signals from Jupiter – Radio Jove
- Detect Water Masers at 22GHz (W49), OH Masers at 1612MHz (NML Cyg)
- More…

The Holland Observatory
10/9/21; 9/20-23,26-30,10/1/22

vdB 142 - Elephant Trunk Nebula in IC1396 in Cepheus
R - SII: 36x12min, G - Ha: 24x12min, B - OIII: 36x12min (L:Ha)
AT8RC Telescope at f/8, SC8300 Camera

Resources Available for Amateur Radio Astronomy

- Radio Astronomy, 2nd Edition by John D. Kraus, 1986
- Fundamentals of Radio Astronomy, Observational Methods by Jonathan M. Marr, 2016
- Essential Radio Astronomy by James J. Condon and Scott M. Ransom Online book, https://www.cv.nrao.edu/~sransom/web/xxx.html
- Society of Amateur Radio Astronomers (SARA), $20 per year (well worth it) https://www.radio-astronomy.org/
- Facebook: Amateur Radio Astronomy (group), 6.3K members

The Holland Observatory
9/29/20 & 10/5/20 Home Ha
10/12,13,14/20 Eldorado Star Party SII OIII

Cederblad 214 - Emission Nebula in Cepheus
LRGB - L&G: Ha 31x15min, R: SII 29x15min, B: OIII 33x15min
200mm Newtonian f/5, MPCC, SC8300 Camera


www.holland-observatory.net
The Holland Observatory
10/11,12,13/25
NGC7000 - North America Nebula and IC5070 - Pelican Nebula in Cygnus
Narrowband - Ha: L&G 30x5min, SII: R 36x5min, OIII: B 36x5min
Canon 200mm Camera Lens at f/3.4, SC8300 Camera