

RUNNING TITLE: OC oxidation processes across vegetation

Carbon inputs from riparian vegetation limit oxidation of physically-bound organic carbon via biochemical and thermodynamic processes

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Key points.

- Riparian vegetation protects bound-OC stocks
- Biochemical and metabolic OC oxidation processes vary with vegetation
- Common thermodynamic principles underlie OC oxidation regardless of vegetation

1 **Abstract.**

2 In light of increasing terrestrial carbon (C) transport across aquatic boundaries, the
3 mechanisms governing organic carbon (OC) oxidation along terrestrial-aquatic interfaces are
4 crucial to future climate predictions. Here, we investigate biochemistry, metabolic pathways, and
5 thermodynamics corresponding to OC oxidation in the Columbia River corridor using ultra-high
6 resolution C characterization. We leverage natural vegetative differences to encompass variation
7 in terrestrial C inputs. Our results suggest that decreases in terrestrial C deposition associated
8 with diminished riparian vegetation induce oxidation of physically-bound OC. We also find that
9 contrasting metabolic pathways oxidize OC in the presence and absence of vegetation and—in
10 direct conflict with the ‘priming’ concept—that inputs of water-soluble and thermodynamically
11 favorable terrestrial OC protects bound-OC from oxidation. In both environments, the most
12 thermodynamically favorable compounds appear to be preferentially oxidized regardless of
13 which OC pool microbiomes metabolize. In turn, we suggest that the extent of riparian
14 vegetation causes sediment microbiomes to locally adapt to oxidize a particular pool of OC, but
15 that common thermodynamic principles govern the oxidation of each pool (e.g., water-soluble or
16 physically-bound). Finally, we propose a mechanistic conceptualization of OC oxidation along
17 terrestrial-aquatic interfaces that can be used to model heterogeneous patterns of OC loss under
18 changing land cover distributions.

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21

22 1. Introduction

23 Soils and nearshore sediments comprise a C reservoir that is 3.2 times larger than the
24 atmospheric C pool [Burd *et al.*, 2016], yet Earth System Models (ESMs) struggle to integrate
25 mechanisms of OC oxidation into predictions of atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations
26 [Todd-Brown *et al.*, 2013; Wieder *et al.*, 2013; Wieder *et al.*, 2015]. In particular, OC oxidation
27 in nearshore habitats constitutes a significant uncertainty in atmospheric C flux [Aalto *et al.*,
28 2003; Battin *et al.*, 2009] and knowledge on C cycling along these transitional ecosystems is
29 necessary to accurately predict global C cycling [Burd *et al.*, 2016]. Terrestrial C inputs into
30 aquatic systems have nearly doubled since pre-industrial times; an estimated 2.9 Pg C now
31 crosses terrestrial-aquatic interfaces annually (vs. 0.9 Pg C yr⁻¹ stored within forested
32 ecosystems) [Battin *et al.*, 2008; Regnier *et al.*, 2013]. The magnitude of this flux has garnered
33 significant recent attention [Battin *et al.*, 2008; Battin *et al.*, 2009; Regnier *et al.*, 2013], yet the
34 biochemical, metabolic, and thermodynamic mechanisms governing OC oxidation along aquatic
35 interfaces remain a crucial uncertainty in climate predictions. New molecular techniques are
36 providing insight into OC dynamics [Mason *et al.*, 2016; Malak M Tfaily *et al.*, 2015; M.M.
37 Tfaily *et al.*, 2017], but we still lack an understanding of why some OC remains stabilized for
38 millennia whereas other OC is rapidly oxidized [Schmidt *et al.*, 2011].

39 The ability of microorganisms to oxidize complex OC is an important constraint on C
40 cycling, as OC is a mixture of compounds with different propensities for biotic oxidation [J
41 Hedges and Oades, 1997; J I Hedges *et al.*, 2000]. Within terrestrial research, OC oxidation is
42 often framed within the concept of ‘priming’, whereby microbial oxidation of chemically-
43 complex, less bioavailable OC is fueled by the addition of more bioavailable and
44 thermodynamically favorable OC compounds [Kuzyakov, 2010]. However, the applicability of

45 priming in aquatic environments is unclear [*Bengtsson et al.*, 2014; *Bianchi*, 2011; *Guenet et al.*,
46 2010]. Aquatic systems, and in particular nearshore environments, frequently experience mixing
47 of terrestrial and aquatic C sources with distinct chemical character, providing a theoretical basis
48 for priming expectations [*Bengtsson et al.*, 2014; *Guenet et al.*, 2010]. Consistent with priming,
49 *Guenet et al.* [2010] have proposed that this mixing generates “hotspots” or “hot moments” of
50 biological activity facilitated by complementary C resources. Alternatively, OC stabilization in
51 sediments is tightly linked to organomineral interactions, which provide physical protection from
52 extracellular enzyme activity [*J I Hedges and Keil*, 1995; *Hunter et al.*, 2016; *Rothman and*
53 *Forney*, 2007], and the strength of these interactions may override any influence of priming.
54 Early investigations of priming effects in aquatic systems have been inconclusive, with evidence
55 both for [*Dorado-García et al.*, 2016] and against [*Bengtsson et al.*, 2014; *Catalán et al.*, 2015]
56 priming mechanisms.

57 Several new perspectives have attempted to move beyond frameworks, such as priming,
58 that depend on strict chemical definitions to predict OC oxidation [*Burd et al.*, 2016; *Cotrufo et*
59 *al.*, 2013; *Lehmann and Kleber*, 2015]. Recent work proposes that the probability of OC
60 oxidation is related to a spectrum of chemical properties and that even very complex OC can be
61 oxidized when more thermodynamically favorable OC is depleted or isolated from
62 microorganisms. For example, *Lehmann and Kleber* [2015] have proposed a ‘soil continuum
63 hypothesis’ whereby OC is a gradient of continually decomposing compounds that are variably
64 accessible for biotic oxidation, with no notion of chemically labile versus recalcitrant
65 compounds. Similarly, *Burd et al.* [2016] have suggested that OC oxidation is a ‘logistical
66 problem’ involving the ability of microorganisms to access and metabolize compounds. Both

67 concepts capture the emerging belief that chemically-complex, less thermodynamically favorable
68 OC can be oxidized when more favorable compounds are inaccessible.

69 Here, we address a critical knowledge gap in predicting the global C balance [*Aalto et al.*,
70 2003; *Battin et al.*, 2009; *Burd et al.*, 2016; *Regnier et al.*, 2013]—mechanisms governing OC
71 oxidation along terrestrial-aquatic interfaces. Specifically, we investigate the biochemistry,
72 microbial metabolism, and thermodynamics of OC oxidation in nearshore water-soluble and
73 physically-bound (i.e., mineral and microbial) OC pools along a freshwater terrestrial-aquatic
74 interface. We leverage natural variation in riparian vegetation along the Columbia River in
75 Eastern Washington State, the largest river in the U.S. west of the Continental Divide [*Ebel et*
76 *al.*, 1989; *Moser et al.*, 2003], to examine these mechanisms in the context of spatial variation in
77 terrestrial C deposition. Consistent with the priming paradigm, we hypothesize that (a) C
78 deposition associated with riparian vegetation increases total aerobic metabolism and enhances
79 oxidation of bound-OC stocks, while (b) areas without riparian vegetation foster lower rates of
80 aerobic metabolism with minimal oxidation of bound-OC.

81

82 **2. Materials and Methods**

83 *2.1. Site Description*

84 This study was conducted along the Columbia River shoreline within the Hanford 300A
85 (approximately 46° 22' 15.80"N, 119° 16' 31.52"W) in eastern Washington State [*Graham et al.*,
86 2016a; 2017; *Slater et al.*, 2010; *Zachara et al.*, 2013]. The Columbia River experiences
87 shoreline geographic variation in vegetation patterns, substrate geochemistry, and microbiome
88 composition [*Arntzen et al.*, 2006; *Lin et al.*, 2012; *Peterson and Connelly*, 2004; *Slater et al.*,
89 2010; *James C Stegen et al.*, 2016; *James C. Stegen et al.*, 2012; *Zachara et al.*, 2013].

90 Accordingly, the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River embodies an ideal natural system in
91 which to examine heterogeneity of terrestrial OC inputs and subsequent OC oxidation
92 mechanisms.

93 Liquid N₂-frozen sediment profiles (0-60 cm) were collected at two transects within
94 shoreline stretches with or without riparian vegetation (hereafter, V and NV for ‘vegetated’ and
95 ‘not vegetated’, Table 1) perpendicular to the Columbia River in March 2015, separated by a
96 distance of ~170m. V was characterized by a moderately sloping scour zone, small boulders; and
97 vegetation consisted of woody perennials *Morus rubra* (Red Mulberry) and *Ulmus rubra*
98 (Slippery Elm), with a closed canopy. Upper bank samples were collected within the root zone.
99 In contrast, NV was characterized by a gradually sloping scour zone and cobbled armor layer.
100 We collected profiles at three locations in each transect with 5m spacing within a spatial domain
101 of ~175 x 10m. In each transect, the lower bank profile was located at ~0.5m (vertical distance)
102 below the water line and the upper bank profile was located ~0.5m (vertical distance) above the
103 water line approximately 10m horizontal distance, with the third profile situated at the midpoint.
104 Each profile was sectioned into 10-cm intervals from 0-60cm, and OC composition (see below
105 for Methods) did not differ across upper (0-10cm) to lower (50-60cm) sections in each profile.
106 To provide sufficient sample size (n >15 at each transect) for cross-site comparisons, each 10-cm
107 section was used as a replicate sample.

108

109 2.2. Sample Collection

110 Liquid N₂-frozen sediment profiles were collected as outlined in *Moser et al.* [2003]
111 using a method developed by *Lotspeich and Reed* [1980] and modified by *Rood and Church*
112 [1994]. A pointed stainless steel tube (152 cm length, 3.3 cm outside diameter, 2.4 cm inside

113 diameter) was driven into the river bed to a depth of ~60cm. N₂(l) was poured down the tube for
114 ~15 minutes, until a sufficient quantity of material had frozen to the outside of the rod. The rod
115 and attached material was removed from the river bed with a chain hoist suspended beneath a
116 tripod. Profiles were placed over an aluminum foil lined cooler containing dry ice. Frozen
117 material was removed by with a mallet. The material was then wrapped in the foil and
118 transported on dry ice to storage at -80°C. In the lab, profiles were sectioned into 10cm depth
119 intervals from 0-60 cm (n = 6 per profile, except for NV3 which was sectioned only from 30-
120 60cm; total n = 33)

121

122 2.3. Physicochemistry

123 Details concerning physicochemical assays are provided in the Supporting Information.
124 Briefly, we determined the particle distribution of sediments by separating size fractions via
125 sieving; total nitrogen, sulfur, and carbon content were determined using an Elementar vario EL
126 cube (Elementar Co.Germany); NH₄⁺ was extracted with KCl and measured with Hach Kit
127 2604545 (Hach, Loveland, Co); iron content was measured with a ferrozine assay; and all other
128 ion concentrations were measured by inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (ICP-MS)
129 on HCl extractions. Aerobic metabolism was determined with a resazurin reduction assay,
130 modified from *Haggerty et al.* [2009]

131

132 2.4. FT-ICR-MS solvent extraction and data acquisition

133 We leverage state of science chemical extraction protocols combined with Electrospray
134 ionization (ESI) and Fourier transform ion cyclotron resonance (FT-ICR) mass spectrometry
135 (MS) to infer differences in OC character among our samples. Previously, *Tfaily et al.* [2015;

136 2017] have demonstrated the optimization of OC characterization from soils and sediments by
137 sequential extraction with polar and non-polar solvents tailored to the sample set of interest.
138 Tfaily's extraction procedures have been coupled to ESI FT-ICR-MS to distinguish OC pools
139 among ecosystems and soil types [*Malak M Tfaily et al.*, 2015; *M.M. Tfaily et al.*, 2017] as well
140 as to provide information on the metabolism of distinct OC pools among samples within a single
141 environment [*Bailey et al.*, 2017]. Other common OC characterization methods such as nuclear
142 magnetic resonance spectroscopy (NMR), Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FT-IR), and
143 gas chromatography MS only analyze a limited number of compound classes [*Kögel-Knabner*,
144 2002; *Kögel-Knabner*, 2000]. In contrast, ESI FT-ICR-MS introduces intact organic molecules
145 into the MS without fragmentation and allows for the detection of a wide range of chemical
146 compounds [*Malak M Tfaily et al.*, 2015; *M.M. Tfaily et al.*, 2017]. The use of 12 Tesla (T) FT-
147 ICR-MS offers high mass resolving power (>1M) and mass measurement accuracy (<1 ppm),
148 and while nascent in its application within complex environmental systems, it has emerged as a
149 prevailing method for determining OC chemistry of natural organic matter [*Kim et al.*, 2003;
150 *Koch et al.*, 2005; *Malak M Tfaily et al.*, 2011; *Tremblay et al.*, 2007]. Moreover, *Tfaily et al.*
151 [2015; 2017] have demonstrated that sequential extraction with targeted solvents can
152 preferentially select OC pools with differing chemical character (e.g., lipid-like vs. carbohydrate-
153 like).

154 Here, we used three solvents with different polarities —water (H₂O), methanol (CH₃OH,
155 hereafter “MeOH”) and chloroform (CHCl₃)—to sequentially extract a large diversity of organic
156 compounds from samples, according to *Tfaily et al.* [2015; 2017]. Water extractions were
157 performed first, followed by MeOH and then CHCl₃. Previous work has shown that each solvent
158 is selective towards specific types of compounds [*Malak M Tfaily et al.*, 2015]. Water is a polar

159 solvent with a selection bias for carbohydrates with high O/C ratios, amino-sugars and other
160 labile polar compounds [*Malak M Tfaily et al.*, 2015]; and, as nearshore environments frequently
161 experience wetting, water extractions represent an estimation of readily accessible OC
162 compounds in these environments. Conversely, CHCl₃ is selective for non-polar lipids associated
163 with mineral interactions and cellular membranes (i.e., physically-bound OC) [*Malak M Tfaily et*
164 *al.*, 2015]. Because MeOH has a polarity in between that of water and CHCl₃, it extracts both
165 water-soluble and bound-OC pools (i.e., a mix of compounds that water and CHCl₃ extract), and
166 *Tfaily et al.* [2015] have demonstrated compositional overlap between water-soluble and MeOH
167 extracted OC pools. In this study, we are interested in the differences in OC composition
168 between pure water-soluble and bound-OC pools, and we will focus our discussion on H₂O- and
169 CHCl₃-extractions only. We use H₂O- and CHCl₃-extracted OC as proxies for readily
170 bioavailable (i.e., weakly bound) vs. less bioavailable (i.e., mineral- and microbial-bound) pools,
171 respectively.

172 Extracts were prepared by adding 1 ml of solvent to 100 mg bulk sediment and shaking in
173 2 mL capped glass vials for two hours on an Eppendorf Thermomixer. Samples were removed
174 from the shaker and left to stand before spinning down and pulling off the supernatant to stop the
175 extraction. The residual sediment was dried with nitrogen gas to remove any remaining solvent,
176 and then the next solvent was added. The CHCl₃ and H₂O extracts were diluted in MeOH to
177 improve ESI efficiency. *Tfaily et al.* [2015] estimated the OC extraction efficiency to be ~15%.
178 *Tfaily et al.* [2015] have previously demonstrated extraction efficiencies as low as 2% to be
179 representative of OC pool composition. We further note that numerous studies have established
180 FT-ICR-MS as a robust method for distinguishing compositional differences among OC pools

181 [Herzprung *et al.*, 2017; Kellerman *et al.*, 2015; Rossel *et al.*, 2016; Ward and Cory, 2015;
182 Zhang *et al.*, 2016].

183 Ultra-high resolution mass spectrometry of the three different extracts from each sample
184 was carried out using a 12 Tesla Bruker Solarix FT-ICR-MS located at the Environmental
185 Molecular Sciences Laboratory (EMSL) in Richland, WA, USA. As per Tfaily *et al.* [2017], we
186 performed weekly calibration using a tuning solution containing C₂F₃O₂, C₆HF₉N₃O,
187 C₁₂HF₂₁N₃O, C₂₀H₁₈F₂₇N₃O₈P₃, and C₂₆H₁₈F₃₉N₃O₈P₃ with *m/z* ranging from 112 to 1333
188 (Agilent Technologies, Santa Clara, CA USA), and instrument settings were optimized using
189 Suwannee River Fulvic Acid (IHSS). The instrument was flushed between samples using a
190 mixture of water and methanol. Blanks were analyzed at the beginning and the end of the day to
191 monitor for background contaminants.

192 The extracts were injected directly into the mass spectrometer and the ion accumulation
193 time was optimized for all samples to account for differences in OC concentration. The ion
194 accumulation time ranged between 0.5 and 1s. A standard Bruker electrospray ionization (ESI)
195 source was used to generate negatively charged molecular ions. Samples were introduced to the
196 ESI source equipped with a fused silica tube (30 μm i.d.) through an Agilent 1200 series pump
197 (Agilent Technologies) at a flow rate of 3.0 μL min⁻¹. Experimental conditions were as follows:
198 needle voltage, +4.4 kV; Q1 set to 50 *m/z*; and the heated resistively coated glass capillary
199 operated at 180 °C.

200

201 2.5. FT-ICR-MS data processing

202 One hundred forty-four individual scans were averaged for each sample and internally
203 calibrated using an organic matter homologous series separated by 14 Da (–CH₂ groups). The

204 mass measurement accuracy was less than 1 ppm for singly charged ions across a broad m/z
205 range (100-1200 m/z). The mass resolution was $\sim 350K$ at 339 m/z . Data Analysis software
206 (BrukerDaltonik version 4.2) was used to convert raw spectra to a list of m/z values applying
207 FTMS peak picker module with a signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) threshold set to 7 and absolute
208 intensity threshold to the default value of 100.

209 Putative chemical formulae were then assigned using in-house built software following
210 the Compound Identification Algorithm (CIA), proposed by *Kujawinski and Behn* [2006],
211 modified by *Minor et al.* [2012], and previously described in *Tfaily et al.* [2017]. Chemical
212 formulae were assigned based on the following criteria: S/N >7, and mass measurement error <1
213 ppm, taking into consideration the presence of C, H, O, N, S and P and excluding other elements.
214 To ensure consistent formula assignment, we aligned all sample peak lists for the entire dataset
215 to each other in order to facilitate consistent peak assignments and eliminate possible mass shifts
216 that would impact formula assignment. We implemented the following rules to further ensure
217 consistent formula assignment: (1) we consistently picked the formula with the lowest error and
218 with the lowest number of heteroatoms and (2) the assignment of one phosphorus atom requires
219 the presence of at least four oxygen atoms.

220

221 2.6. Identification of putative biochemical transformations using FT-ICR-MS

222 To identify potential biochemical transformation pathways, we followed the procedure
223 detailed by *Breitling et al.* [2006] and employed by *Bailey et al.* [2017]. In essence, the mass
224 difference between m/z peaks extracted from each spectrum with S/N>7 were compared to
225 commonly observed mass differences associated with biochemical transformations. All possible
226 pairwise mass differences were calculated within each extraction type, and differences (within

227 1ppm) were matched to a list of 92 common biochemical transformations (e.g., gain or loss of
228 amino groups or sugars). For example, a mass difference of 99.07 corresponds to a gain or loss
229 of the amino acid valine, while a difference of 179.06 corresponds to the transfer of a glucose
230 molecule. Pairs of peaks with a mass difference within 1 ppm of our transformation list were
231 considered to be related by the corresponding compound. This approach is feasible with FT-ICR-
232 MS data because the set of peaks in each sample are related by measureable and clearly defined
233 mass differences corresponding to gains and losses of compounds. It has been previously used by
234 *Bailey et al.* [2017] to demonstrate differences in biochemical transformations among soils
235 incubated with different microbial inoculate and among pore size classes in complex soil
236 matrices.

237

238 *2.7. Identification of putative microbial metabolic pathways using FT-IR-MS*

239 Additionally, a set of putative microbial metabolic pathways in each sample can be
240 identified by locating chemical formulae assigned to m/z's within metabolic pathways defined in
241 the Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes and Genomes (KEGG, Release, 80.0, <http://www.kegg.jp>)
242 [*Kanehisa and Goto*, 2000]. For example, a peak with a mass of 400.3356 was assigned formula
243 C₂₀H₁₆O₉ and mapped to KEGG pathway 'map00254' (Aflatoxin biosynthesis). While only a
244 subset of compounds detected by FT-ICR-MS are defined within the KEGG database (i.e., peaks
245 must be assigned a chemical formula and that chemical formula must be present in a KEGG
246 pathway), we found 415 unique peaks that were assigned putative molecular formulae *and* that
247 corresponded to compounds present in KEGG pathways. Additionally, we defined assignments
248 at the pathway level (i.e., by "map" number) instead of using enzyme level classification (i.e.,

249 EC number) in order to aggregate compounds found within the same pathways. This was done to
250 facilitate functional interpretation.

251 Although we acknowledge our results do not represent a comprehensive analysis of all
252 microbial metabolic pathways present in a sample, we assume that KEGG pathways containing
253 more peaks detected by FT-ICR-MS within a sample are more likely to be active than those with
254 fewer mapped peaks. We further reduced possible random matches by assessing correlations
255 with aerobic metabolisms as described in the ‘Statistical Methods’ section below, and we
256 compare results across samples to yield insight into microbial pathways in each sample beyond
257 that which can be garnered from biochemical transformations. The results are, however,
258 conceptually congruent with those derived from the biochemical transformation analyses
259 described in the preceding sub-section. The KEGG pathway and transformation analyses are
260 independent of each other, yet provided consistent insights and thus together they provide greater
261 confidence in our interpretations.

262

263 *2.8. Statistical Methods*

264 All statistical analyses were conducted using R software (<https://www.r-project.org/>). FT-
265 ICR m/z intensities were converted into presence/absence data prior to analysis because
266 differences in m/z intensity are influenced by ionization efficiency as well as relative abundance
267 [Kujawinski and Behn, 2006; Minor et al., 2012; Malak M Tfaily et al., 2015; M.M. Tfaily et al.,
268 2017].

269 To examine differences in OC composition between transects, we used the ‘vegan’
270 package to construct a Sorenson dissimilarity matrix for all m/z’s identified (i.e., we included
271 peaks with or without assigned formula) within each OC pool (water-soluble or physically-

272 bound). Differences between vegetation states (i.e., V vs. NV) were tested with PERMANOVA
273 (999 permutations, ‘vegan’) and visualized using Non-metric Multidimensional Scaling (NMDS,
274 ‘vegan’). One sample (NV, profile 1, depth 30-40cm) was removed due to peak interference
275 during FT-ICR-MS, and three samples (NV, profile 2, depths 00-10cm, 10-20cm, 20-30cm) were
276 excluded because were unable to collect sufficient sample mass for all analyses.

277 To reveal transformations associated with aerobic metabolism and to study differences in
278 those transformations across vegetation states, we determined the number of times a given
279 transformation occurred within each OC pool in each sample. Specifically, for each of the 92
280 compounds in our set of biochemical transformations, we counted the number of times in each
281 sample that transformation was observed to yield an estimate of the prevalence or ‘abundance’ of
282 each transformation in each sample. We correlated these abundance estimates to rates of
283 metabolism using Pearson’s product-moment correlation coefficient. Positive relationships were
284 inferred as biochemical transformations possibly associated with biotic OC oxidation. To
285 determine variation in biochemical transformations across vegetation states, we calculated Bray-
286 Curtis dissimilarity from the abundance of biochemical transformations that positively correlated
287 with aerobic metabolism at either vegetation state, visualized them with non-metric
288 Multidimensional Scaling visualization (NMDS, ‘vegan’), and statistically evaluated them with
289 PERMANOVA (999 permutations, ‘vegan’). We refer to H₂O- and CHCl₃-soluble OC pools at
290 V and NV, respectively, as V-W (‘vegetated water’), V-B (‘vegetated bound’), NV-W (‘not
291 vegetated water’), and NV-B (‘not vegetated bound’) for the remainder of the manuscript.

292 Similar to our analyses of biochemical transformations, we found the number of m/z’s
293 that mapped to a given KEGG pathway. We make the assumption that pathways with more m/z’s
294 mapped to them have a higher probability of actively contributing to biogeochemical function.

295 To identify which pathways were most likely to contribute to aerobic metabolism, we correlated
296 the number of m/z's mapped to a given KEGG pathway within each sample to aerobic
297 metabolism. Those pathways with positive correlations were interpreted as contributing to OC
298 oxidation, and the following analysis was conducted only with positively correlated KEGG
299 pathways. The number peaks mapping to each KEGG pathway in a sample was normalized by
300 the total number of peaks mapping to any positively correlated KEGG pathway in the sample to
301 yield data as a relative abundance. Pathways were clustered based on their relative abundance in
302 each vegetation state and pool type. Clusters were determined using the 'hclust' algorithm in R
303 with the 'complete linkage' clustering method and visualized using the 'pheatmap' package.

304 Finally, we examined associations between aerobic metabolism and OC thermodynamics
305 by calculating the Gibbs Free Energy of OC oxidation under standard conditions ($\Delta G^{\circ}_{\text{Cox}}$) from
306 the Nominal Oxidation State of Carbon (NOSC) as per *La Rowe and Van Cappellen* [2011].
307 NOSC was calculated from the number of electrons transferred in OC oxidation half reactions
308 and is defined by the equation:

$$309 \quad (1) \text{NOSC} = -((-Z + 4a + b - 3c - 2d + 5e - 2f)/a) + 4$$

310 , where a, b, c, d, e, and f are, respectively, the numbers of C, H, N, O, P, S atoms in a given
311 organic molecule and Z is net charge of the organic molecule (assumed to be 1). In turn, $\Delta G^{\circ}_{\text{Cox}}$
312 was estimated from NOSC following *La Rowe and Van Cappellen* [2011]:

$$313 \quad (2) \Delta G^{\circ}_{\text{Cox}} = 60.3 - 28.5(\text{NOSC})$$

314 Values of $\Delta G^{\circ}_{\text{Cox}}$ are generally positive, indicating that OC oxidation must be coupled to the
315 reduction of a terminal electron acceptor. While $\Delta G^{\circ}_{\text{Cox}}$ varies according to the availability of
316 terminal electron acceptors, our system is primarily oxic, allowing us to infer oxygen as the
317 primary electron acceptor in most reactions and make direct comparisons across samples.

318 Additionally, though the exact calculation of $\Delta G^{\circ}_{\text{Cox}}$ necessitates an accurate quantification of all
319 species involved in every chemical reaction in a sample, the use of NOSC as a practical basis for
320 determining $\Delta G^{\circ}_{\text{Cox}}$ has been validated [Arndt *et al.*, 2013; LaRowe and Van Cappellen, 2011].

321 Here, we assessed relationships between aerobic metabolism and $\Delta G^{\circ}_{\text{Cox}}$ of OC
322 compounds identified in each OC pool (determined by FT-ICR-MS analysis) using linear
323 regressions in each vegetation state, in which aerobic metabolism (determined by resazurin
324 assay) was the independent variable and average $\Delta G^{\circ}_{\text{Cox}}$ of all m/z's with assigned formula was
325 the dependent variable.

326

327 **3. Results and Discussion**

328 *3.1. Shifts in physicochemical, metabolic, and OC character between vegetation states*

329 Differences in vegetation states corresponded to differences in physicochemistry, aerobic
330 metabolism, and OC pool composition. V was characterized by mature trees near the water line
331 and was nutrient-rich relative to NV (Figure S1-3). V displayed comparatively high
332 concentrations of total C and rates of aerobic metabolism (Figure S1-3). In contrast, NV
333 consisted of vegetation-free, cobble-ridden shoreline with sandier soils, low total C, and low
334 aerobic metabolism (Figure S1-3).

335 Compositional difference in OC pools indicated a possibility for distinct OC oxidation
336 processes between the vegetation states (Figure 1), as preferential oxidation of certain OC
337 compounds in each state would be expected to generate an observable difference in OC pool
338 composition. Further, total organic OC content explained only 38% of aerobic metabolic rates
339 ($R^2 = 0.38$, $P < 0.0001$, Figure S4), leaving open the possibility that OC compositional

340 differences may be related to differences in aerobic metabolism at each vegetation state. The
341 following sections explore this possibility.

342

343 *3.2. Associations between C transformations and aerobic metabolism*

344 Given compositional differences in OC between vegetation states and known impacts of
345 C chemistry on metabolic functioning in other systems [*Castle et al.*, 2016; *Graham et al.*,
346 2016b], we hypothesized that biochemical transformations related to rates of aerobic metabolism
347 would be unique to each vegetation state.

348 Consistent with this hypothesis, transformation analysis indicated that the biochemical
349 processes associated with OC oxidation were significantly different between the vegetation
350 states. Specifically, OC transformations that increased in abundance with increases in aerobic
351 metabolism were significantly different at each vegetation state (PERMANOVA, H₂O P = 0.022
352 and CHCl₃ P = 0.002, Figure 3 a-b, Table 2). In comparing differences in transformations
353 occurring within the water-soluble OC pool, we observed higher abundances of amino- and
354 sugar-associated transformations for V-W relative to NV-W. Twenty-six of these
355 transformations were identified as contributing to aerobic metabolism in V-W, while none were
356 identified in NV-W. These V-W transformations were primarily associated with simple C
357 molecules (e.g., glucose, alanine, and lysine, Table 2). Conversely, within the bound-OC pool,
358 38 transformations were identified as contributing to aerobic metabolism in NV-B, compared to
359 only 11 in V-B. In both cases, these transformations consisted of a greater proportion of complex
360 C molecules (e.g., pyridoxal phosphate, palmitic acid, and glyoxylate, Table 2) than in water-
361 soluble pools.

362 The larger number of transformations associated with aerobic metabolism in V-W vs. V-
363 B, and the larger number in NV-B vs. NV-W, suggests that aerobic metabolism in vegetated and
364 unvegetated areas depend on water-soluble and bound-OC pools, respectively. We note some
365 oxidation of the bound-OC pool under vegetated conditions, but only 11 correlations were
366 observed between V-B transformations and aerobic metabolism suggesting a relatively minor
367 role, especially considering that there were 38 significant correlations for NV-B. These
368 differences suggests that an increased supply of bioavailable compounds in vegetated areas leads
369 to bound-OC being less involved in aerobic metabolism, relative to unvegetated areas where
370 bound-OC appears to be heavily involved in aerobic metabolism. The concept of priming
371 [Kuznyakov, 2010] would predict the opposite pattern—a greater supply of bioavailable OC
372 should increase the contributions of less bioavailable OC (here, bound-OC) to aerobic
373 metabolism. Our results run counter to a priming mechanism and indicate that the supply of
374 bioavailable compounds—associated with riparian vegetation—diminishes the contribution of
375 bound-OC to aerobic metabolism and, in turn, protects bound-OC pools. Mineral-stabilized OC
376 therefore has greater potential to remain sequestered along river corridors with spatially and
377 temporally consistent inputs of bioavailable OC, potentially derived from riparian vegetation.
378 The fate of OC that moves across the terrestrial-aquatic continuum may therefore be impacted by
379 land use change [Foley *et al.*, 2005] in ways not currently represented in ESMs.

380

381 *3.3. Associations between microbial metabolic pathways and aerobic metabolism*

382 Because we observed stark differences in the identity of OC transformations that
383 correlated with aerobic metabolism across vegetation states, we hypothesized that the microbial
384 metabolic pathways associated with OC transformations were also dependent on vegetation state.

385 Indeed, pathways associated with OC oxidation were distinct at V vs. NV, supporting our
386 hypothesis that there were differences in the metabolic processing of OC in the presence or
387 absence of riparian vegetation. Specifically, while the metabolism of plant-derived compounds
388 appeared to be a major driver of aerobic respiration at both vegetation states, metabolism at V
389 mostly involved readily bioavailable plant derivatives in the water-soluble OC pool, and
390 metabolism at NV was associated with plant derivatives in the bound-OC pool (Figure 4).

391 In V-W, two primary pathways were involved in metabolism of plant compounds, each
392 contained within its own hierarchical cluster (map01110: Biosynthesis of secondary metabolites;
393 map00941: Flavonoid biosynthesis). A concomitant cluster of plant-associated metabolisms with
394 lower abundance in V-W (Cluster 4) was also positively correlated to aerobic metabolism
395 (Figure 4). Secondary metabolites (map01110) are largely comprised of plant-derived
396 compounds such as flavonoids [Agati *et al.*, 2012], terpenoids [Tholl, 2015], and nitrogen-
397 containing alkaloids [Willaman and Schubert, 1961], while flavonoids [Agati *et al.*, 2012] are
398 one of those most abundant plant-derived compounds. Associations with aflatoxin [Trail *et al.*,
399 1995], flavone/flavonol [Agati *et al.*, 2012], and phenylpropanoids [Hahlbrock and Scheel, 1989]
400 (Cluster 4) bolster this association between plant-associated metabolic pathways and aerobic
401 metabolism in V-W.

402 Although correlations between plant-associated KEGG pathways and aerobic metabolism
403 could indicate the persistence of plant secondary metabolites rather than microbial metabolism,
404 our results indicate a central role for vegetation in water-soluble OC oxidation in either case. For
405 example, if KEGG associations were attributable to plant metabolism instead of microbial
406 metabolism, correlations between plant-associated pathways and aerobic metabolism in V-W
407 would indicate an indirect relationship between plant growth and microbial oxidation of OC,

408 whereby plant byproducts support microbial communities in oxidizing other portions of the OC
409 pool.

410 In contrast to V-W, NV-W did not display associations between plant-associated
411 metabolic pathways and OC oxidation. All correlations indicated broad metabolic processes
412 including membrane transport and carbohydrate metabolism that may indicate utilization of other
413 resources (Cluster 3, Figure 4).

414 Instead, we observed relationships between plant-associated metabolisms and OC
415 oxidation within NV-B. For example, correlations were strongest in Cluster 1, which contained
416 pathways of cutin, suberine, and wax biosynthesis [*King et al.*, 2007; *Raffaele et al.*, 2009;
417 *Shepherd and Wynne Griffiths*, 2006], alpha-linolenic acid metabolism [*Crawford et al.*, 2000;
418 *Creelman and Mulpuri*, 2002], and biosynthesis of secondary metabolites [*Agati et al.*, 2012;
419 *Tholl*, 2015; *Willaman and Schubert*, 1961] (Figure 4). Each of these pathways denotes the
420 synthesis or metabolism of a plant-associated lipid compound. Because no specific metabolisms
421 were correlated to OC oxidation in the water-soluble pool, we hypothesize that these lipid-based
422 metabolisms comprise the primary KEGG-identifiable pathways associated with OC oxidation in
423 areas without riparian vegetation. We also observed one cluster of pathways that correlated with
424 metabolism at V-B (Cluster 7) and contained plant-associated metabolic pathways such as
425 linoleic acid metabolism [*Crawford et al.*, 2000; *Creelman and Mulpuri*, 2002] and
426 brassinosteroid biosynthesis [*Bishop*, 2007], indicating some oxidation of lipid plant material in
427 the bound-OC pool under vegetated conditions. We therefore propose that plant-derived lipid
428 compounds serve as a secondary substrate for OC oxidation in shorelines with riparian
429 vegetation, given that most correlations at V were detected in the water-soluble pool.

430

431 3.4. *Thermodynamics of carbon oxidation*

432 Finally, we hypothesized that microbes would preferentially oxidize more
433 thermodynamically favorable compounds at both sites, consistent with common thermodynamic
434 constraints on biogeochemical cycles [Burgin *et al.*, 2011; Hedin *et al.*, 1998; Helton *et al.*,
435 2015]. Because we observed evidence for preferential OC oxidation of the water-soluble OC
436 pool at V and of the bound-OC pool at NV, we further hypothesized that thermodynamic-based
437 preference of OC oxidation would be observable only in the preferred substrate pool within each
438 vegetation state. Consistent with this hypothesis, aerobic metabolism was positively correlated to
439 average $\Delta G^{\circ}_{\text{Cox}}$ in V-W ($R^2 = 0.22$, $P = 0.03$, Fig 5a) and NV-B ($R^2 = 0.54$, $P = 0.001$ Fig 5b),
440 but these variables were not correlated in V-B or NV-W. In both cases, aerobic metabolism
441 corresponded to a depletion of more thermodynamically favorable OC (i.e., OC became less
442 favorable as aerobic metabolism increased), resulting in progressively less favorable
443 thermodynamic conditions.

444 The priming conceptual framework would predict that terrestrial inputs associated with
445 riparian vegetation should condition microbial communities to oxidize less thermodynamically
446 favorable C, such as that found in the bound-OC pool. In such a scenario, inputs of
447 thermodynamically favorable carbon should—by minimizing community-level energy
448 constraints—allow for the rise of microbial physiologies that can oxidize less favorable C
449 [Kuzuyakov, 2010]. In this case, a significant relationship between thermodynamic favorability
450 and aerobic metabolism in the V-W pool should lead to a similar relationship within the V-B
451 pool. Our results reveal a strong relationship within the V-W pool, but not in the V-B pool,
452 thereby rejecting an influence of priming. Instead, our results suggest that bound-OC pools are
453 protected by thermodynamically favorable compounds that serve as preferred substrate.

454 In contrast to our expectation that water-soluble OC associated with riparian vegetation
455 would increase oxidation of bound-OC pools, we observed evidence consistent with inhibition of
456 bound-OC oxidation by thermodynamically favorable water-soluble compounds. Priming has
457 been actively debated in aquatic research [*Bengtsson et al.*, 2014; *Bianchi*, 2011; *Guenet et al.*,
458 2010], and a number of other studies have been unable to detect a priming effect in sediment and
459 aqueous habitats [*Bengtsson et al.*, 2014; *Catalán et al.*, 2015].

460 The mechanisms resulting in priming are not well understood, but the phenomenon has
461 been associated with nutrient and energy limitations in soil environments [*Kuzyakov*, 2010]. For
462 instance, under nutrient limitation microorganisms may oxidize chemically-complex OC to
463 garner resources (e.g., nitrogen mining), while shared resources that facilitate OC oxidation (e.g.,
464 extracellular enzymes) are more likely to facilitate ecological cheating under energy limiting
465 conditions [*Blagodatskaya and Kuzyakov*, 2008; *Catalán et al.*, 2015; *Guenet et al.*, 2010;
466 *Kuzyakov*, 2010]. Our system is oligotrophic, containing a fraction of the total C content
467 observed in other systems (Figure S1) such that C limitation rather than nutrient limitation might
468 drive OC oxidation dynamics. In such a case, readily bioavailable C inputs would be rapidly
469 oxidized but microbial communities may be well-adapted to rely on alternative energy sources
470 (e.g., NH_4^+ , Fe) that may be more available than bound-OC pools.

471

472 3.5. Conceptual model for OC oxidation at terrestrial-aquatic interfaces

473 Based on our work, we propose a conceptual model of OC oxidation along terrestrial-
474 aquatic interfaces in which the oxidation of bound-OC is limited by terrestrial inputs from
475 riparian vegetation (Fig 6. a-b). Riparian vegetation sustains inputs of water-soluble compounds
476 to nearshore OC pools, resulting in a larger thermodynamically favorable, water-soluble OC pool

477 (Figure 6b). This leads to higher overall C content in nearshore sediments and elevated rates of
478 aerobic respiration relative to areas with less riparian vegetation. However, our data suggest that
479 in the presence of riparian vegetation microbial carbon oxidation primarily uses the water-
480 soluble OC pool with minimal oxidation of bound-OC due to physical and/or thermodynamic
481 protection of this pool. For instance, $\Delta G^{\circ}_{\text{Cox}}$ was lower in water-soluble OC pools than in bound-
482 OC, and a large presence of this thermodynamically favorable pool may provide adequate
483 substrate to sustain metabolic functioning, limiting the need to metabolize less
484 thermodynamically favorable OC. Additionally, organomineral interactions can protect bound-
485 OC from extracellular enzyme activity [Hunter *et al.*, 2016], inhibiting the bioavailability of OC
486 by sequestering it within larger aggregates.

487 In contrast, non-vegetated riparian zones provide little input into water-soluble OC pools
488 (Fig 6a), and rates of metabolism and C pool sizes are lower in these environments. Carbon
489 oxidation in these non-vegetated zones occurs primarily within the bound-OC pool, albeit more
490 slowly and as product of different biochemical and metabolic pathways than in vegetated
491 environments (e.g., complex C transformations and lipid-based metabolism of plant derivatives).
492 We posit that water-soluble pools in non-vegetated sediments are sufficiently small that investing
493 in enzymes needed to metabolize this OC pool results in a net energy loss. Instead, microbes in
494 unvegetated areas must invest in cellular machinery to access bound-OC, and our results
495 imply that the cellular machinery needed to access bound-OC is distinct from the machinery
496 needed to access water-soluble OC.

497 Interestingly, aerobic metabolism within both types of sediments is related to a depletion
498 of thermodynamically favorable compounds; however, this dynamic is associated with water-
499 soluble OC pools in vegetated zones vs. bound-OC pools in non-vegetated zones. That is,

500 microorganisms in both environments are constrained to the metabolism of their primary
501 substrate pool but preferentially oxidize more thermodynamically favorable compounds within
502 that pool. This dynamic suggests that microorganisms are conditioned to metabolize a subset of
503 compounds within sediment OC, possibly defined by thermodynamic or physical protection
504 mechanisms, but operate under common thermodynamic constraints once adapted to oxidize a
505 certain OC pool.

506

507 *3.6. Broader Implications*

508 Our results indicate that terrestrial C inputs associated with riparian vegetation protect
509 bound-OC from oxidation, possibly aiding long-term storage of mineral-bound pools along river
510 corridors, and our work is particularly relevant to global patterns of CO₂ emissions in light of
511 changes in land cover and increases in C fluxes across the terrestrial-aquatic interface. The
512 magnitude, distribution, and chemical quality of terrestrial C fluxes into aquatic environments
513 are perturbed by shifts in land cover (e.g., due to agriculture, urbanization, and climate-driven
514 vegetation change) [Fang *et al.*, 2005; Knapp *et al.*, 2008]. These fluxes have been examined
515 primarily for their own propensity to be oxidized along land-to-sea continuums [Battin *et al.*,
516 2008; Battin *et al.*, 2009; Regnier *et al.*, 2013], but we also suggest a role for these fluxes in
517 stabilizing mineral-bound carbon within nearshore environments. For example, vegetation
518 removal, impervious surfaces, and drainage systems coincident with urbanization alter terrestrial
519 C runoff patterns, both changing their magnitude and creating preferential deposition flowpaths
520 [Fraleley *et al.*, 2009; Imberger *et al.*, 2011; Smith and Kaushal, 2015]. Agricultural drainage
521 systems also lead to preferential flowpaths as well as spatiotemporal variation in the quantity and
522 quality of terrestrial-aquatic fluxes [Graeber *et al.*, 2012; Larson *et al.*, 2014], an effect that

523 strongly influences C cycling given that 40% of the earth's land is cultivated [*Foley et al.*, 2005;
524 *Graeber et al.*, 2012]. We propose that changes in the distribution of these fluxes through space
525 and time may impact OC oxidation both in the C transported along these flow paths and within
526 sediments that are differentially exposed to terrestrial OC.

527 Furthermore, vegetation distributions in natural ecosystems are predicted to shift in
528 response to altered precipitation regimes. Associated changes in plant phenology, morphology,
529 and establishment will impact the quantity, quality, and distribution of terrestrial material
530 entering aquatic systems [*Knapp et al.*, 2008], and we currently have an incomplete
531 understanding of how these patterns will vary across ecosystems and precipitation patterns [*Fang*
532 *et al.*, 2005; *Knapp et al.*, 2008]. A mechanistic framework for C oxidation that captures impacts
533 of heterogeneity in vegetation in river corridors will therefore aid in predicting how terrestrial-
534 aquatic interfaces respond to ongoing perturbations. Here, we demonstrate a potential for
535 increases in the intensity of terrestrial C fluxes to lead to larger mineral-bound C pools by
536 physically and thermodynamically protecting these pools; and conversely, a potential for
537 oxidation of mineral-bound C pools in areas with diminished terrestrial C inputs.

538 Earth System Models depend on mathematical representations of C cycling, and the
539 continued development of these models is tightly coupled to conceptual advances drawn from
540 field-based observations [*Burd et al.*, 2016; *Six et al.*, 2002]. Despite recent progress, these
541 models are still missing key regulatory processes [*Todd-Brown et al.*, 2013; *Wieder et al.*, 2013;
542 *Wieder et al.*, 2015]. To address this knowledge gap, we propose a new conceptual framework of
543 OC dynamics based on analysis of *in situ* observational data that explicitly considers a central
544 challenge in model improvement—biochemical, metabolic, and thermodynamic mechanisms
545 governing OC oxidation along terrestrial-aquatic interfaces. Our results directly contrast those

546 expected within a ‘priming’ framework, and we advance that water-soluble thermodynamically
547 favorable OC associated with riparian vegetation protects thermodynamically less favorable
548 bound-OC from oxidation. We also demonstrate differences in biochemical and metabolic
549 pathways associated with metabolism of water-soluble and bound-OC pools in the presence or
550 absence of riparian vegetation, furthering a processed-based understanding of terrestrial-aquatic
551 interfaces.

552 Our conceptualization of OC oxidation may also be applicable beyond terrestrial-aquatic
553 interfaces, as many ecosystems experience spatiotemporal variability in the quantity of
554 thermodynamically favorable water-soluble OC. For instance, vegetation senescence generates
555 pulses of bioavailable C into most temperate and tropical ecosystems. Our research provides an
556 opportunity to enhance the mechanistic underpinning of OC oxidation process representations
557 within ESMs—an imperative under heterogeneous landscapes and unknown future land cover
558 distributions—and proposes interactions between OC thermodynamics and mineral-inhibition of
559 OC oxidation as a key future research need.

560

561 **Author Contributions.**

562 EBG was responsible for conceptual development and data analysis and was the primary writer
563 with guidance from JCS and MT. ARC, AEG, CTR, ECR, DWK, and JCS were responsible for
564 experimental design and data collection. MT was responsible for all FT-ICR processing. All
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566

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575

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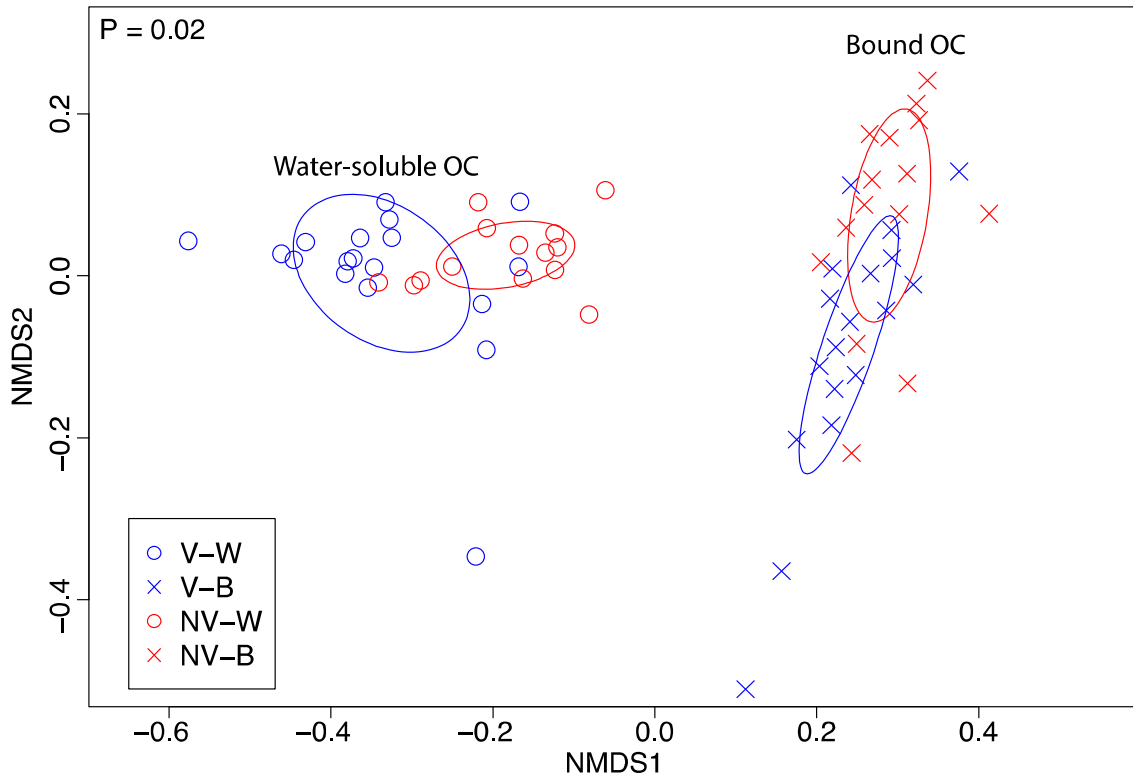
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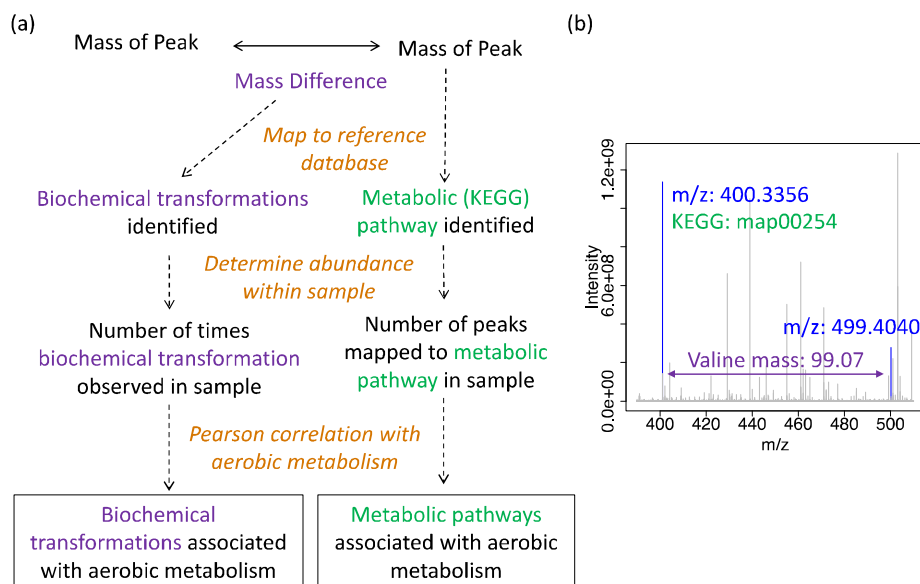
811 **Figure Captions and Table Legends.**

Figure 1



812

813 **Figure 1. NMDS visualization of dissimilarity in OC pool composition.** Water-soluble and
814 bound-OC pools are represented by open circles and x's, respectively. Samples associated with
815 riparian vegetation are blue, and those in areas without vegetation are red. The P-value reflects
816 differences among all groups, as assessed by PERMANOVA. Ellipses represent the standard
817 deviation of the average axis scores for each group, generated using the 'ordiellipse' function in
818 the 'vegan' package. Within each extraction, the composition of OC pools was significantly
819 different across vegetation states (both $P = 0.001$).



820

821 **Figure 2. Methodology for inferring biochemical transformations and metabolic pathways.**

822 Panel (a) depicts our workflow for analyzing biochemical transformations and metabolic

823 pathways. Biochemical OC transformations (purple) were identified by mapping mass

824 differences in pairwise m/z peak comparisons to a set of 92 known masses transferred in

825 common biochemical transformations (e.g., glucose, amines). Metabolic pathways (green) were

826 identified by mapping all chemical formula assigned to m/z peaks to the KEGG database. Within

827 each sample, the abundance of each biochemical transformation and the number of peaks

828 mapping to each metabolic pathway were then correlated to aerobic metabolism to garner

829 insights into OC oxidation processes. Panel (b) displays an example portion of our FT-ICR-MS

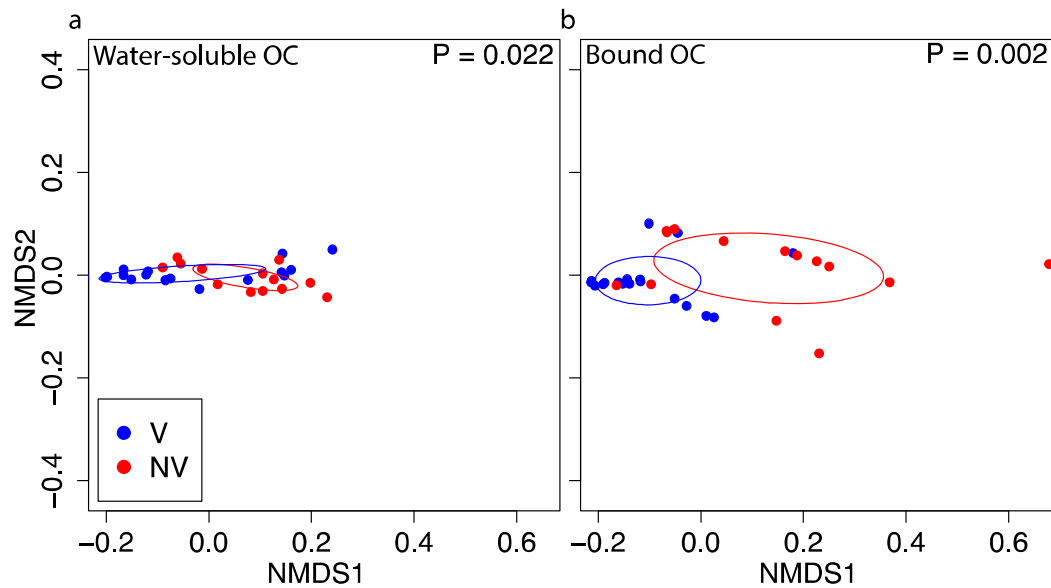
830 spectra overlain with peak assignments (blue), a biochemical transformation (mass difference

831 between peaks, denoted in purple), and a metabolic pathway (associated with the left-hand peak,

832 denoted in green).

833

Figure 3



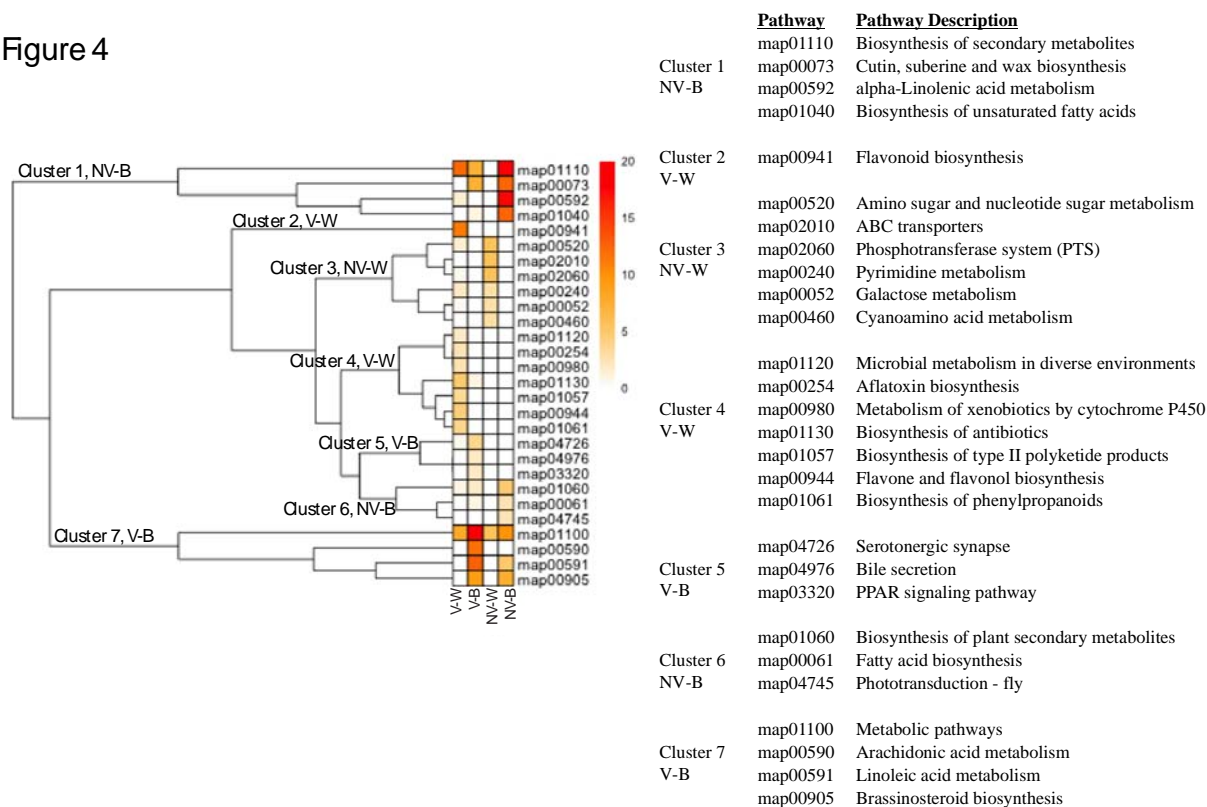
834
835 **Figure 3. NMDS visualization of biochemical transformation partitioning among vegetation**

836 **states.** Biochemical transformations that were correlated to aerobic metabolism were
837 significantly different among vegetation states in both the (a) water-soluble and (b) bound-OC
838 pools. V and NV are denoted in blue and red, respectively, and significance values are derived
839 from PERMANOVA. Ellipses represent the standard deviation of the average axis scores for
840 each group, generated using the 'ordiellipse' function in the 'vegan' package.

841

842

Figure 4

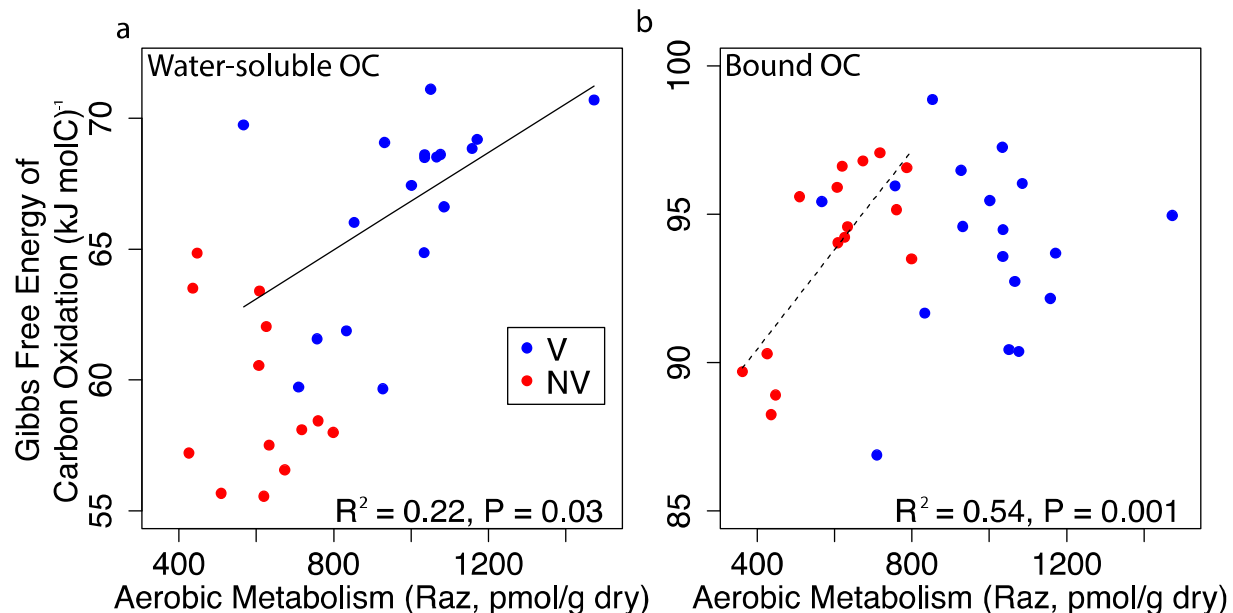


843
 844 **Figure 4. KEGG pathways associated with aerobic metabolism.** A hierarchical clustering
 845 heatmap shows KEGG pathways positively associated with aerobic metabolism. Colors move
 846 from white to red from a scale of 0% to 20%, showing percent relative abundance of each
 847 pathway in each group. Pathways are described and divided by cluster and listed in the legend.
 848 V-W, V-B, NV-W, and NV-B are placed on branches that yield clusters with which they are
 849 predominantly associated.

850

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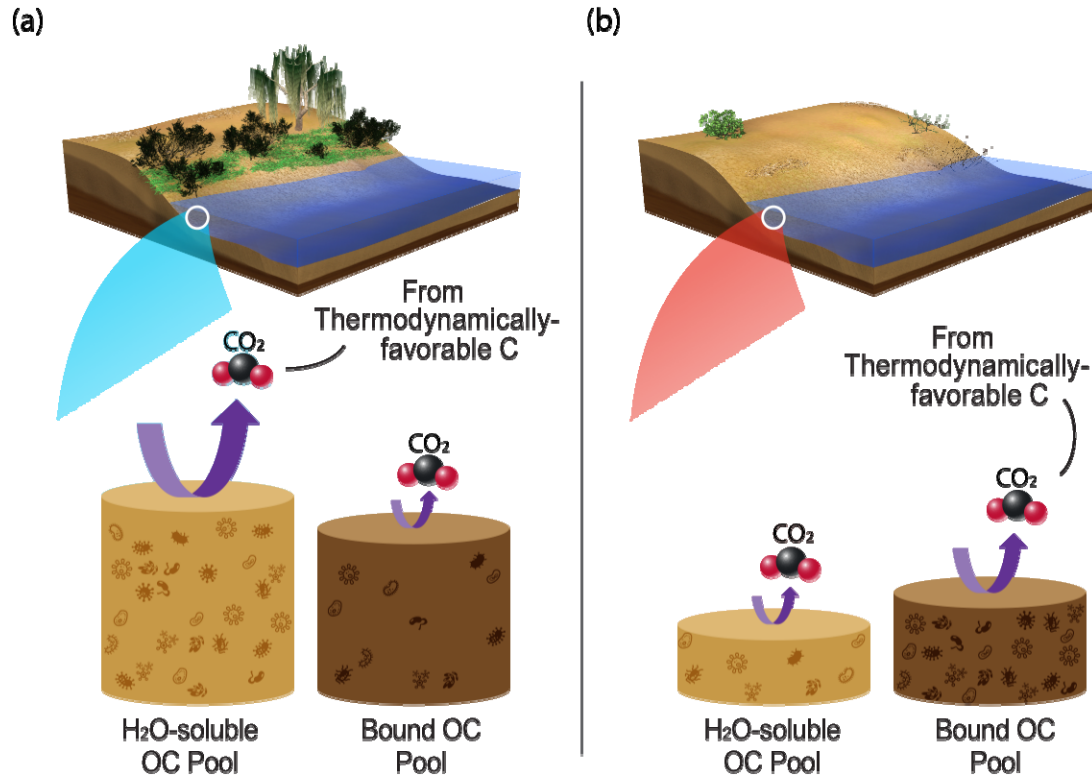
Figure 5



852
853 **Figure 5. Correlations between Gibbs free energy of carbon oxidation ($\Delta G^{\circ}_{\text{Cox}}$) and aerobic**

854 **metabolism.** (a) and (b) display linear regressions relating $\Delta G^{\circ}_{\text{Cox}}$ to aerobic metabolism in
855 water-soluble and bound-OC pools, respectively. Aerobic metabolism is expressed as pmoles of
856 resazurin reduced to resorufin per gram dry weight over a 48hr incubation period (Raz, see
857 Supplemental Information). V and NV are denoted in blue and red. Solid lines show significant
858 relationship at V; dashed lines show significant relationship at NV.

859



860

Figure

861 **6. Conceptualization of relationship between riparian vegetation and OC oxidation.** We

862 propose a conceptualization of OC oxidation at terrestrial-aquatic interfaces whereby (a) more

863 riparian vegetation results in greater terrestrial C deposition and larger water-soluble and bound-

864 OC pools. However, water-soluble OC is preferentially oxidized, which protects the bound-OC

865 pool. Conversely, (b) areas depleted in riparian vegetation experience lower inputs to water-

866 soluble OC pools and show lower rates of OC oxidation. This results in smaller OC pools (water-

867 soluble and bound) and microbial adaptation for oxidation of the bound-OC pool. In both cases,

868 the most thermodynamically favorable portions of the OC pool being metabolized are

869 preferentially oxidized. Height of the cylinders denotes pool sizes, and arrow thickness denotes

870 flux magnitude.

871

872

873 **Table 1. Acronyms and abbreviations used in this paper.**

Abbreviation/Acronym	Description
V	Transect with dense riparian vegetation (i.e., 'vegetated')
NV	Transect with sparse riparian vegetation (i.e., 'not vegetated')
V-W	Transect V, water extraction (water-soluble OC)
V-B	Transect V, chloroform extraction (bound-OC)
NV-W	Transect NV, water extraction (water-soluble OC)
NV-B	Transect NV, chloroform extraction (bound-OC)
H ₂ O	Water
CHCl ₃	Chloroform
C	Carbon
OC	Organic carbon
FT-ICR-MS	Fourier transform ion cyclotron resonance mass spectrometry
KEGG	Kyoto Encyclopedia of Genes and Genomes
$\Delta G^{\circ}_{\text{Cox}}$	Gibbs free energy of C oxidation

875 **Table 2. Biochemical transformations correlated with aerobic metabolism in each OC pool**
 876 **and vegetation state.**

	Pearson's r
V-W	
biotinyl_(-H)_C10H15N2O3S	0.74
uridine_5_diphosphate_(-H2O)_C9H12N2O11P2	0.67
cytosine_(-H)_C4H4N3O	0.65
uridine_5_monophosphate_(-H2O)_C9H11N2O8P	0.65
guanine_(-H)_C5H4N5O	0.61
guanosine_(-H2O)_C10H11N5O4	0.59
adenine_(-H)_C5H4N5	0.59
glutathione_(-H2O)_C10H15N3O5S	0.57
uracil_(-H)_C4H3N2O2	0.56
glucose_C6H12O6	0.53
C6H10O6	0.53
Aspartic_Acid_C4H5NO3	0.52
Glucuronic_Acid_(-H2O)	0.52
Lysine_C6H12N2O	0.51
D-Ribose_(-H2O)_(-ribosylation)	0.50
secondary_amine	0.50
Alanine_C3H5NO	0.50
C6H10O5	0.49
monosaccharide_(-H2O)	0.49
Threonine_C4H7NO2	0.49
Glutamic_Acid_C5H7NO3	0.48
pentose_C5H8O4	0.47
acetotacetate_(-H2O)_C4H4O2	0.47
Glutamine_C5H8N2O2	0.47
pyridoxal_phosphate_(-H2O)_C8H8NO5P	0.47
V-B	
isoprene_addition_(-H)_C5H7	0.61
phosphate	0.56
primary_amine	0.55
Glucuronic_Acid_(-H2O)	0.53
glyoxylate_(-H2O)_C2O2	0.53
malonyl_group_(-H2O)_C3H2O3	0.52
D-Ribose_(-H2O)_(-ribosylation)	0.49
pyrophosphate	0.49
acetotacetate_(-H2O)_C4H4O2	0.49
hydrogenation_dehydrogenation_H2	0.47

877

NV-W	
NONE	NA
NV-B	
Adenosine_5_monophosphate_(-H2O)_C10H12N5O6P	0.92
adenylate_(-H2O)_C10H12N5O6P	0.92
pyridoxal_phosphate_(-H2O)_C8H8NO5P	0.73
acetylation_(-H2O)_C2H2O	0.70
ketol_group_(-H2O)	0.70
Isoleucine_C6H11NO	0.69
Leucine_C6H11NO	0.69
ethyl_addition_(-H2O)_C2H4	0.69
Threonine_C4H7NO2	0.69
Valine_C5H9NO	0.68
Carboxylation_CO2	0.68
Glycine_C2H3NO	0.67
Formic_Acid_(-H2O)_CO	0.67
Serine_C3H5NO2	0.67
hydroxylation_(-H)_O	0.67
palmitoylation_(-H2O)_C16H30O	0.67
pentose_C5H8O4	0.66
secondary_amine	0.66
condensation/dehydration_H2O	0.66
C2H2_C2H2	0.66
erythrose_(-H2O)	0.66
CH4_O	0.65
methanol_(-H2O)	0.65
glyoxylate_(-H2O)_C2O2	0.65
NH_CH2	0.64
Alanine_C3H5NO	0.63
acetotacetate_(-H2O)_C4H4O2	0.63
Proline_C5H7NO	0.62
hydrogenation_dehydrogenation_H2	0.61
Histidine_C6H7N3O	0.60
malonyl_group_(-H2O)_C3H2O3	0.59
Cysteine_C3H5NOS	0.58
glcnac_C8H13N1O5	0.57
Methionine_C5H9NOS	0.57
Arginine_C6H12N4O	0.56
Aspartic_Acid_C4H5NO3	0.56

D-Ribose(→H₂O)ribosylation)

0.55