

Evaluation of WRF Model Performance for Surface Energy Balance terms during Persistent Cold Air Pool (PCAP) Events

Xia Sun, Heather A. Holmes

Atmospheric Sciences Program, Department of Physics, University of Nevada, Reno, NV

Introduction

- PCAPs are characterized by stable ABL conditions
- PCAPs are accompanied by elevated air pollution concentrations due to limited mixing and low PBLH
- WRF does not give satisfactory results
- Land-atmosphere interaction is pivotal for meteorology simulation (it might hold the key!)

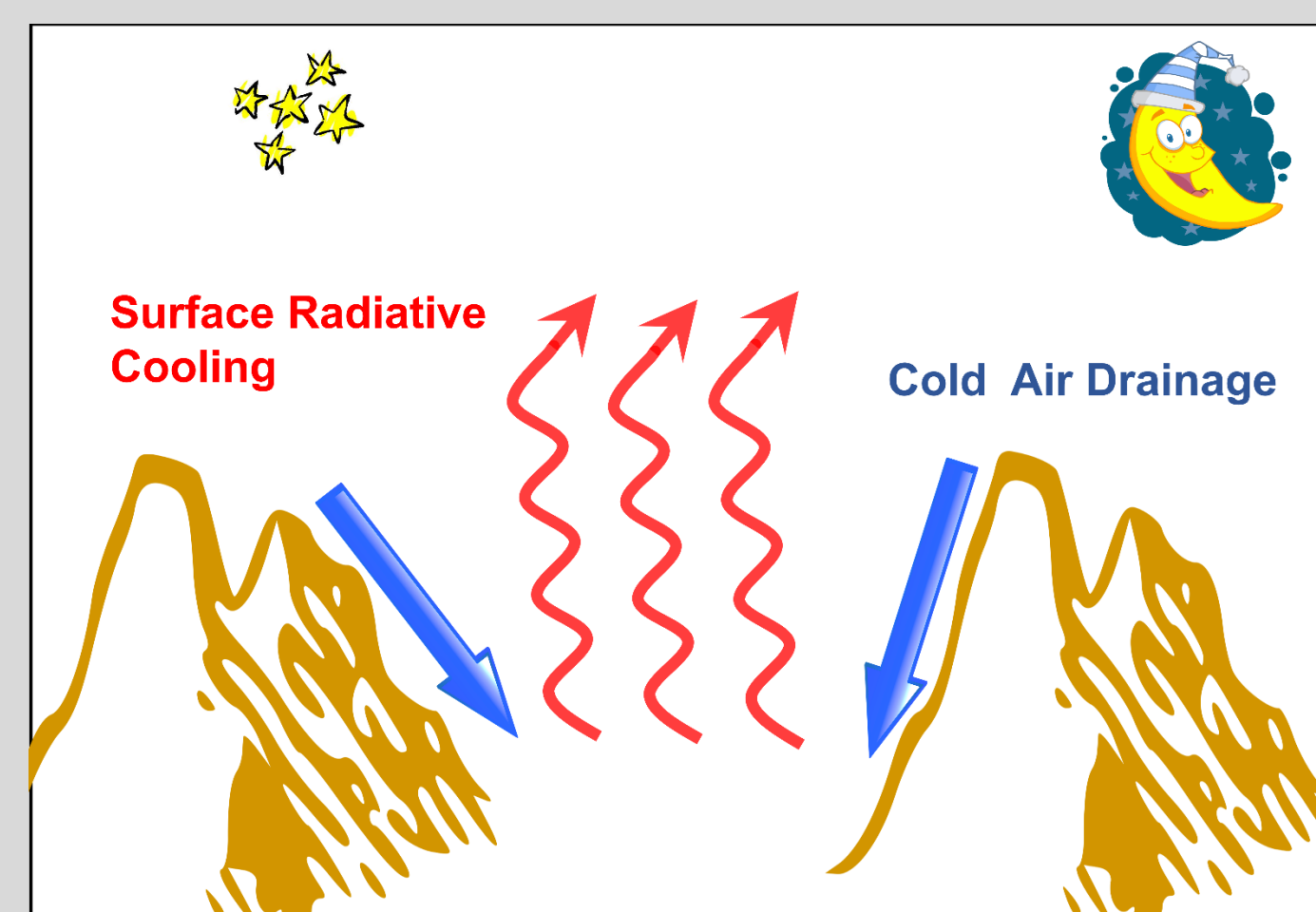


Figure 1 Cold air pools are topographic depression with cold air

Data and Methods

- The Persistent Cold Air Pool Study, 2010-2011, Utah (PI: Whiteman, UU)

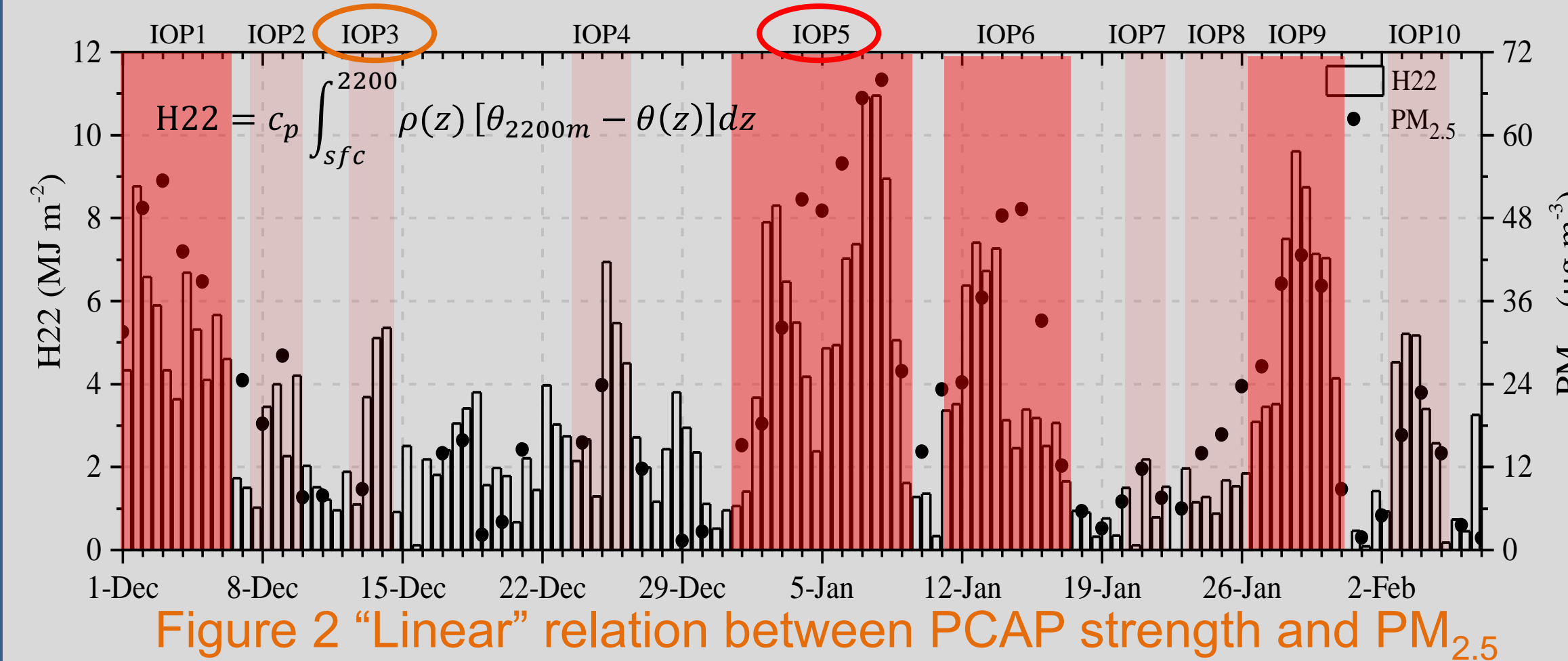


Figure 2 "Linear" relation between PCAP strength and PM_{2.5}

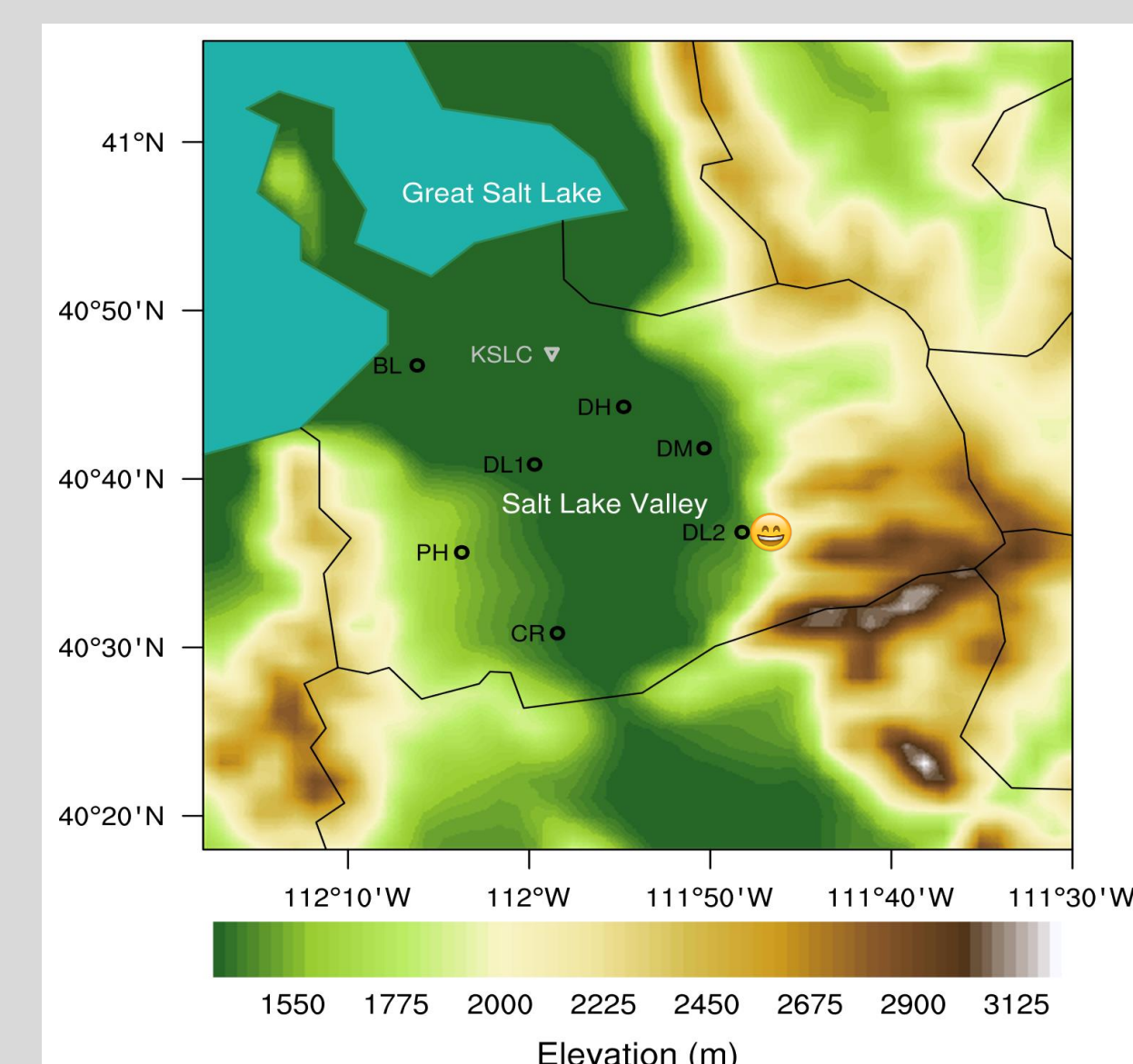


Figure 3 Obs data from site DL2 is used in our case study

- Three domains, dx/dy=0.48 km
- NAM reanalysis data (12km) with 3 hr forecasting dataset
- Three sensitivity experiments for two IOPs, using ACM2, YSU, and MYJ PBL schemes

Weak PCAP (IOP3)

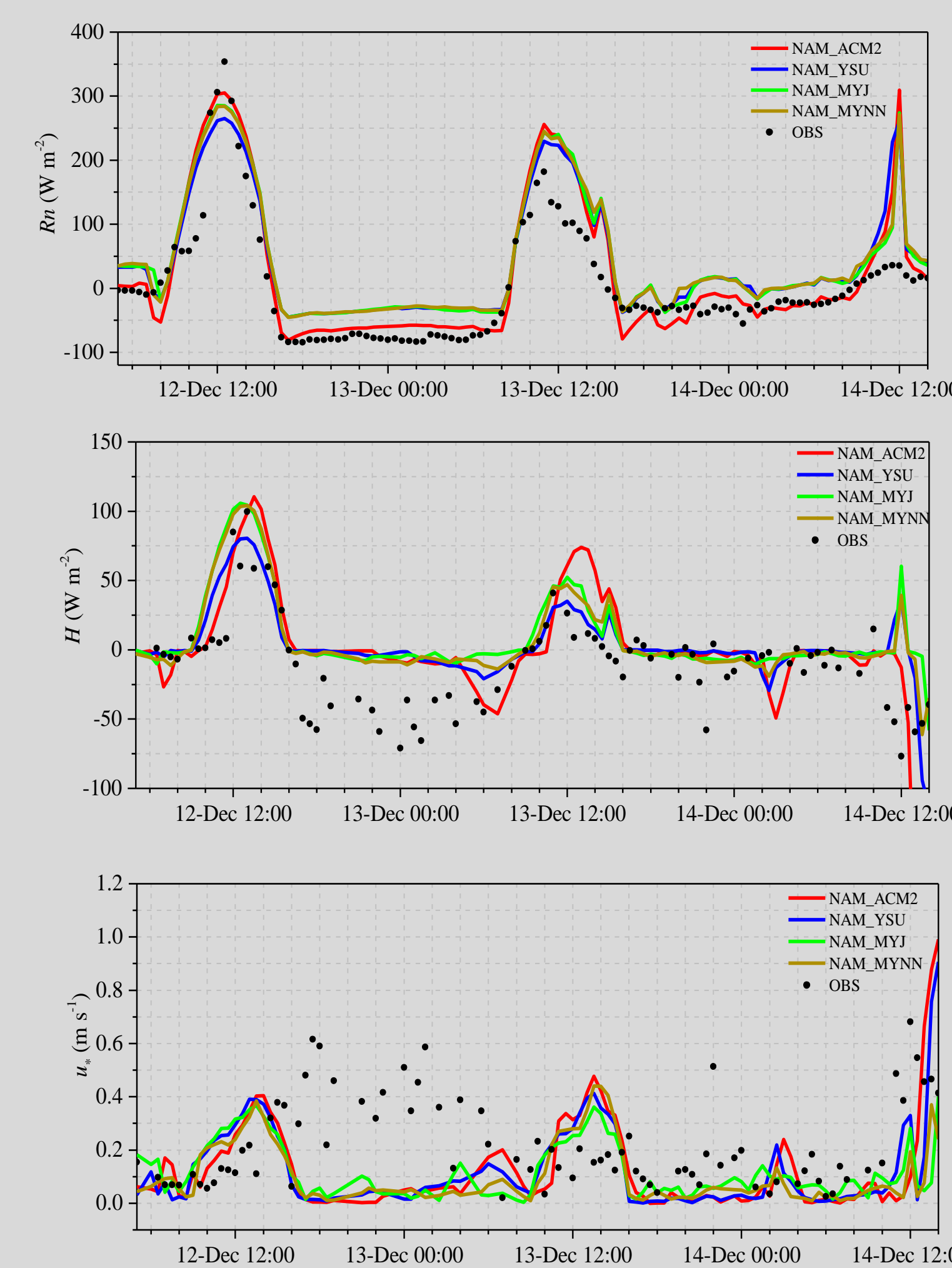


Figure 4

- Noah LSM produced higher background surface albedo than Pleim-Xiu LSM
- Net radiation was overestimated (higher *DSR* and lower *ULR*)

- Variations of turbulent fluxes during the weak PCAP were captured by the model
- Failure of modeling the mountain flow can underestimate $|H|$

Strong PCAP (IOP5)

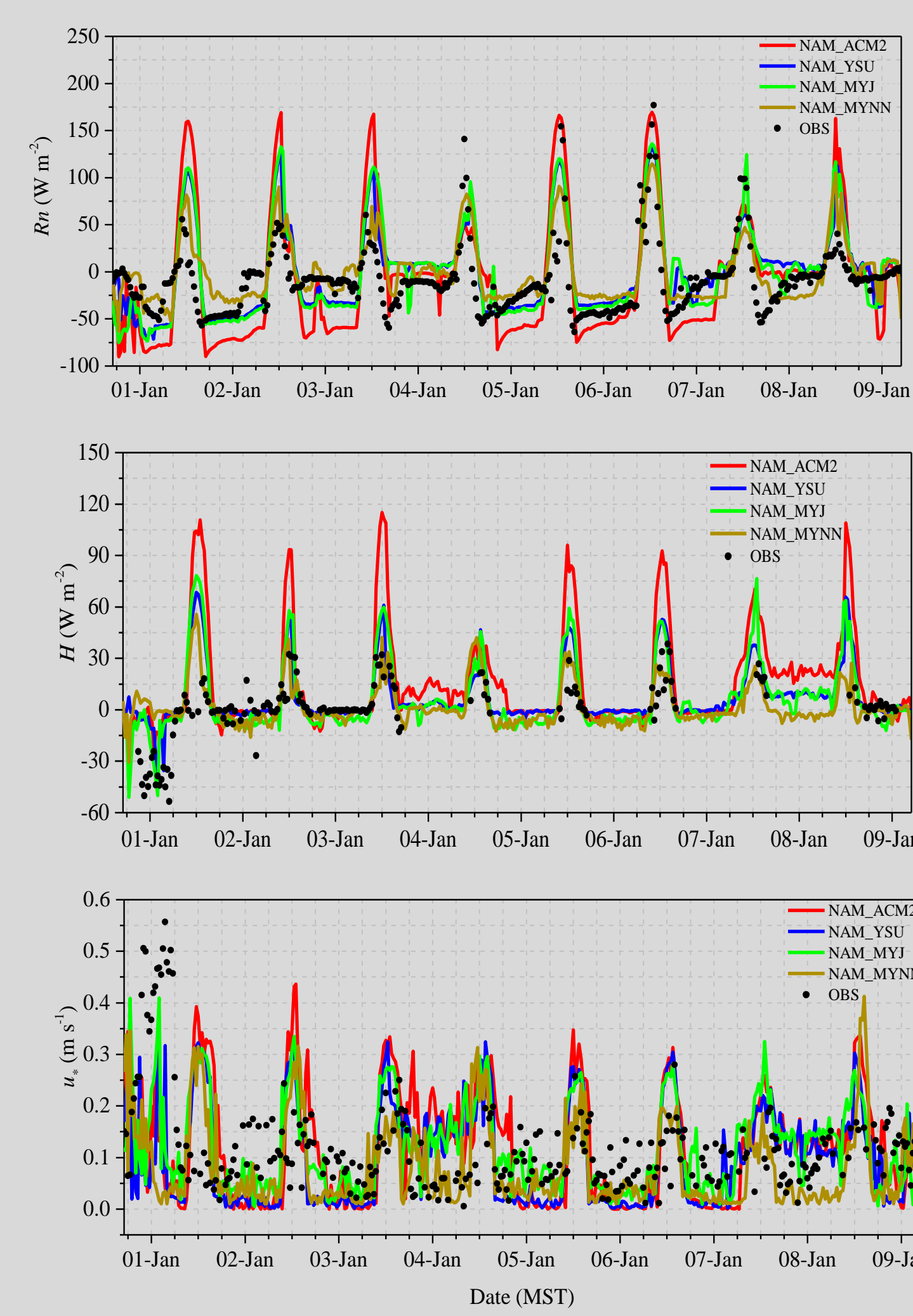


Figure 5

- The model simulated lower surface albedo during snow coverage
- Net radiation was overestimated (lower *USR* and lower *ULR*)

- Model performance degraded during the strong PCAP
- NAM_MYNN performed best in simulating surface turbulent fluxes

Surface Exchange Coeff.

$$H = -\rho c_p CH(\theta_a - \theta_0) \quad (1)$$

$$CH = \frac{ku_*}{\ln\left(\frac{z}{z_{0h}}\right) - \psi_h\left(\frac{z}{L}, \frac{z_{0h}}{L}\right)} \quad (2)$$

- Major underestimation of ϕ_h in the stability range of $0.025 < \zeta \leq 1.0$
- Almost inverse behavior of ϕ_h versus ζ
- Overall overestimation of CH in models

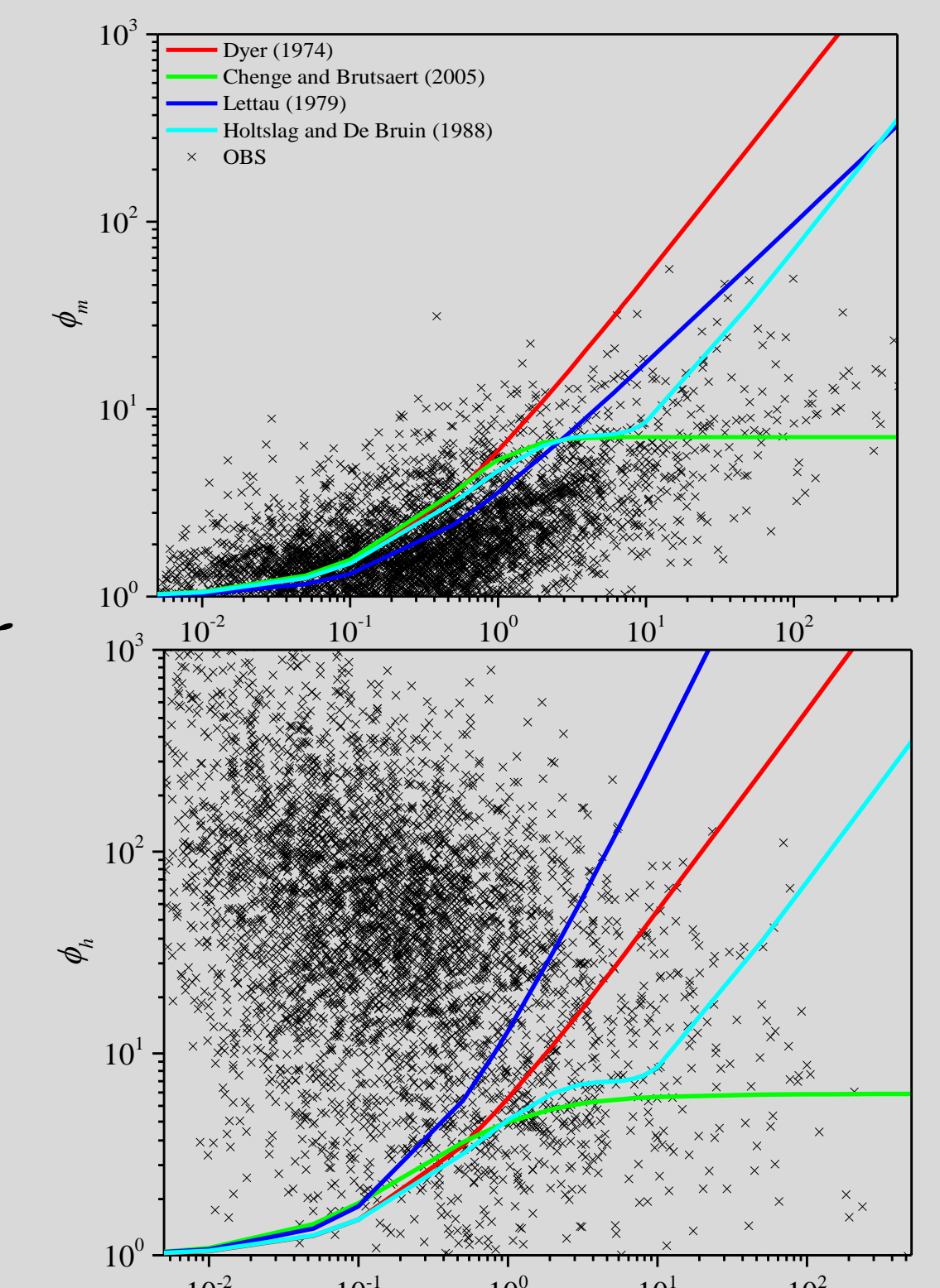


Figure 6

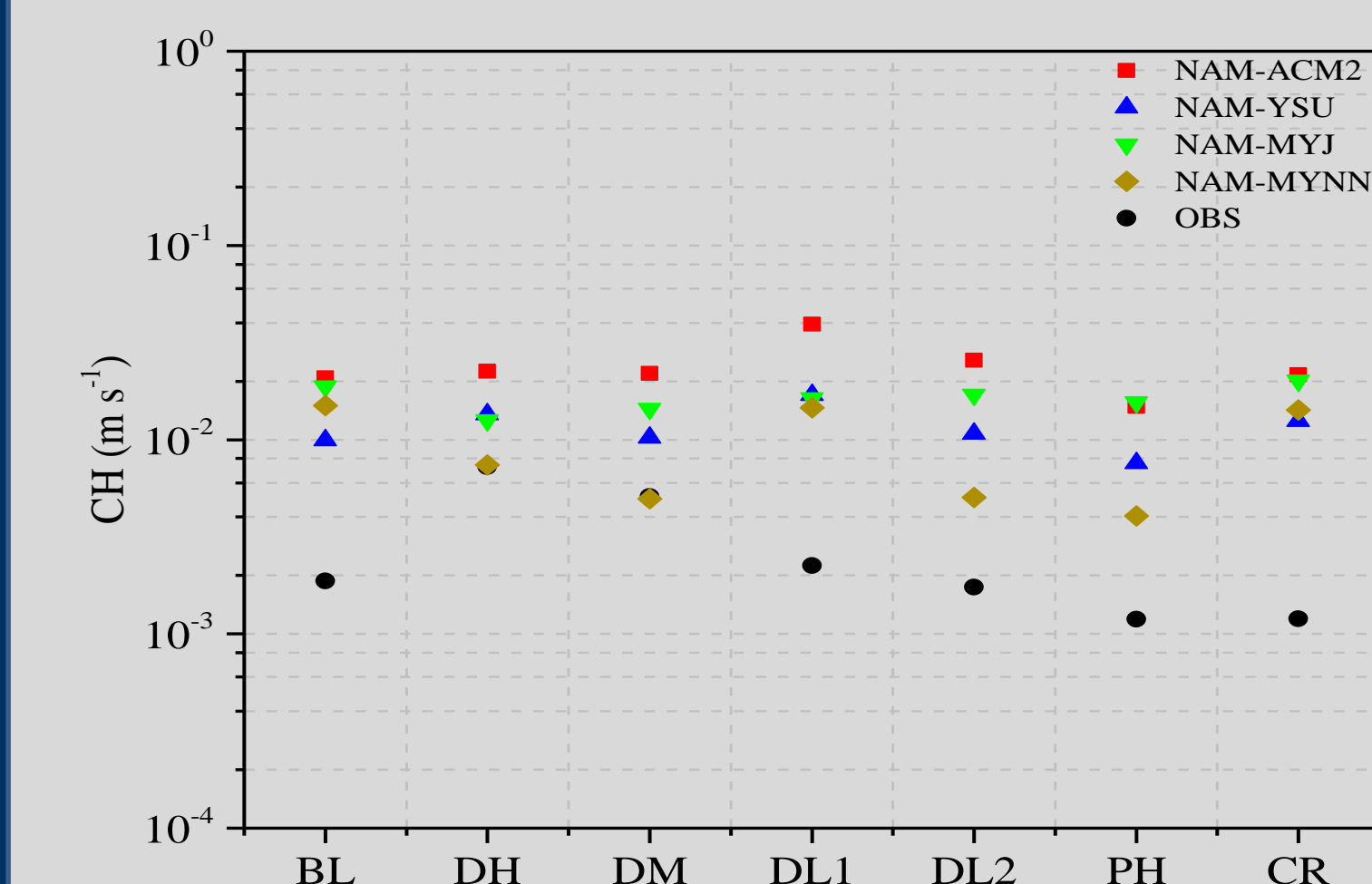


Figure 7

- Spatial variation of the CH discrepancies

Conclusions

- The model performance in simulating surface energy fluxes degraded in the strong PCAP compared to the weak PCAP.
- The overestimated surface sensible and latent heat fluxes during the strong PCAP was related to the overestimated net radiation and soil moisture.
- The NAM_MYNN case produced the least bias in both net radiation and surface turbulent fluxes for the strong PCAP.
- The underestimation of non-dimensional vertical temperature gradient in stability functions based on the Monin-Obukhov theory was responsible for the CH discrepancies in the WRF model.