

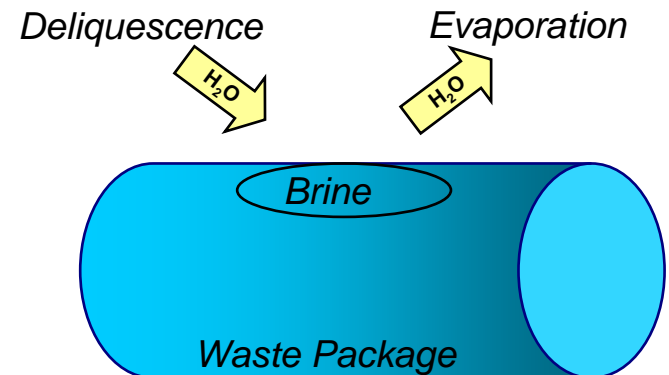
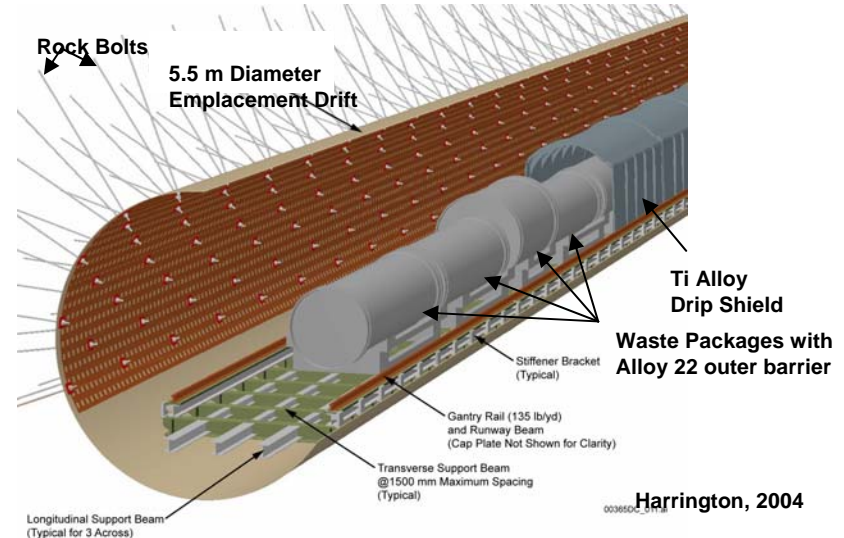
# Effect of Capillary Retention by Dusts on the Corrosivity of Deliquescence Brines

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# Background

- Engineered barriers at a potential Yucca Mountain, Nevada, high-level waste repository include waste packages and drip shields
- Corrosion due to brines is a potential degradation process
  - Deliquescence of inorganic salts present in dusts
  - Evaporative concentration of seepage water



# Background (Cont'd.)

- Deliquescence

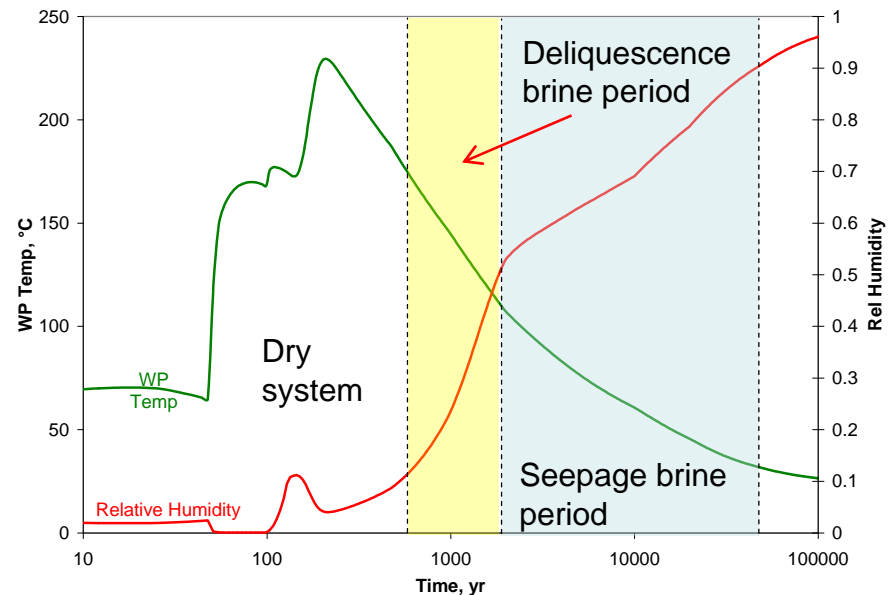
- Rapid absorption of water from humid air by inorganic salts to form a saturated solution

- Potential corrosion of engineered barriers at elevated temperatures

- NaCl-KNO<sub>3</sub>-NaNO<sub>3</sub> salts

have deliquescence points exceeding 190 °C [374 °F]

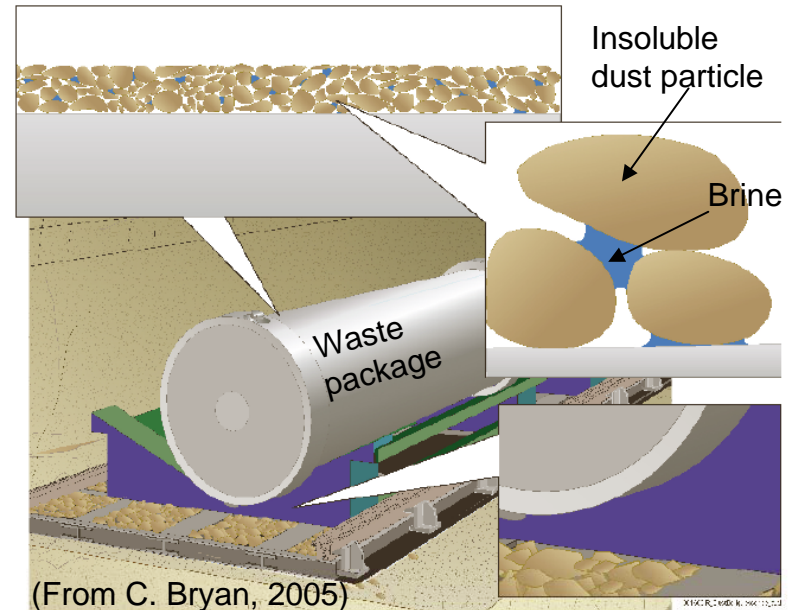
- These salts are possible deliquescent mineral assemblages at Yucca Mountain (C. Bryan, 2005)



Calculated Waste Package Temperature and Relative Humidity for a Degraded Drift Scenario

# Background (Cont'd.)

- Rock dusts could mitigate corrosion by deliquescence brines (C. Bryan, 2005)
  - Physical isolation of salt minerals in the dust may inhibit the formation of eutectic salt mixtures with low deliquescence relative humidity
  - Limited volume of brine
  - Capillary and surface tension effects in the dust will limit brine contact with metal surface



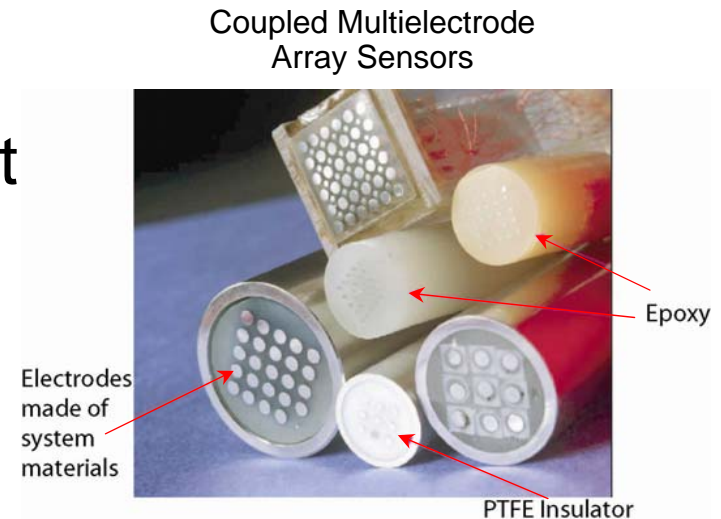
# Objectives of This Study

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- Measure corrosion in brines formed by deliquescence of salts mixed with rock dusts
- Evaluate the effect of capillary retention by dusts on corrosivity of deliquescence brines

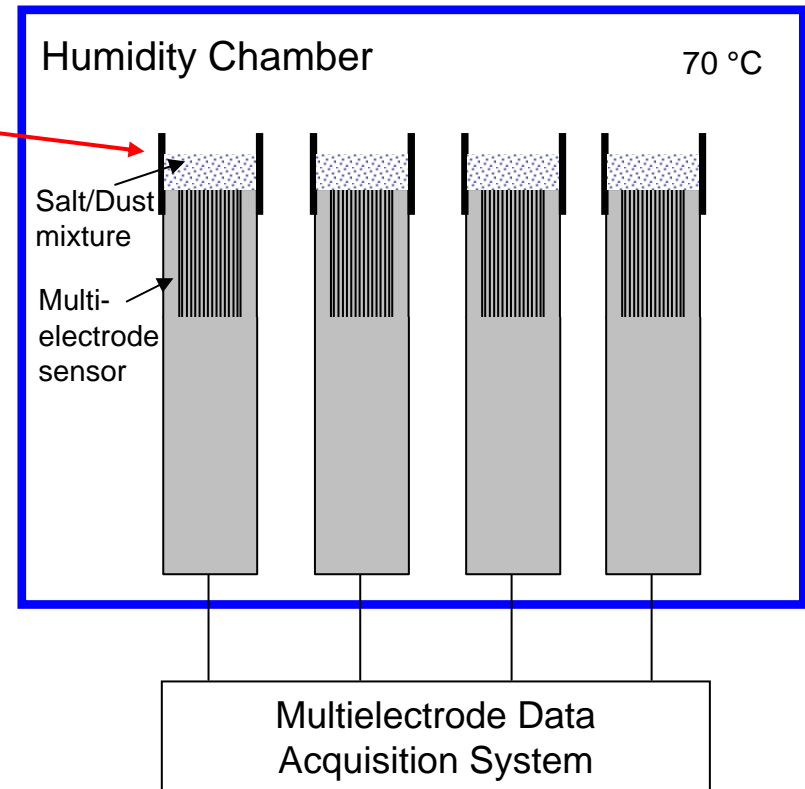
# Experimental Method

- Corrosion was monitored using a coupled multielectrode array sensor (MAS) probe developed at SwRI® (Yang et al., 2002)
  - Carbon steel electrodes for higher sensitivity to corrosivity of brine
- Deliquescent salt: NaCl
- Rock dust: Topopah Spring Tuff
  - Potential repository host rock
  - Crushed and sieved to  $<74\text{ }\mu\text{m}$  [ $<0.003\text{ in}$ ] diameter
- Quartz powder used for comparison
  - Ground and sieved to  $<250\text{ }\mu\text{m}$  [ $<0.01\text{ in}$ ] diameter
  - Acid washed

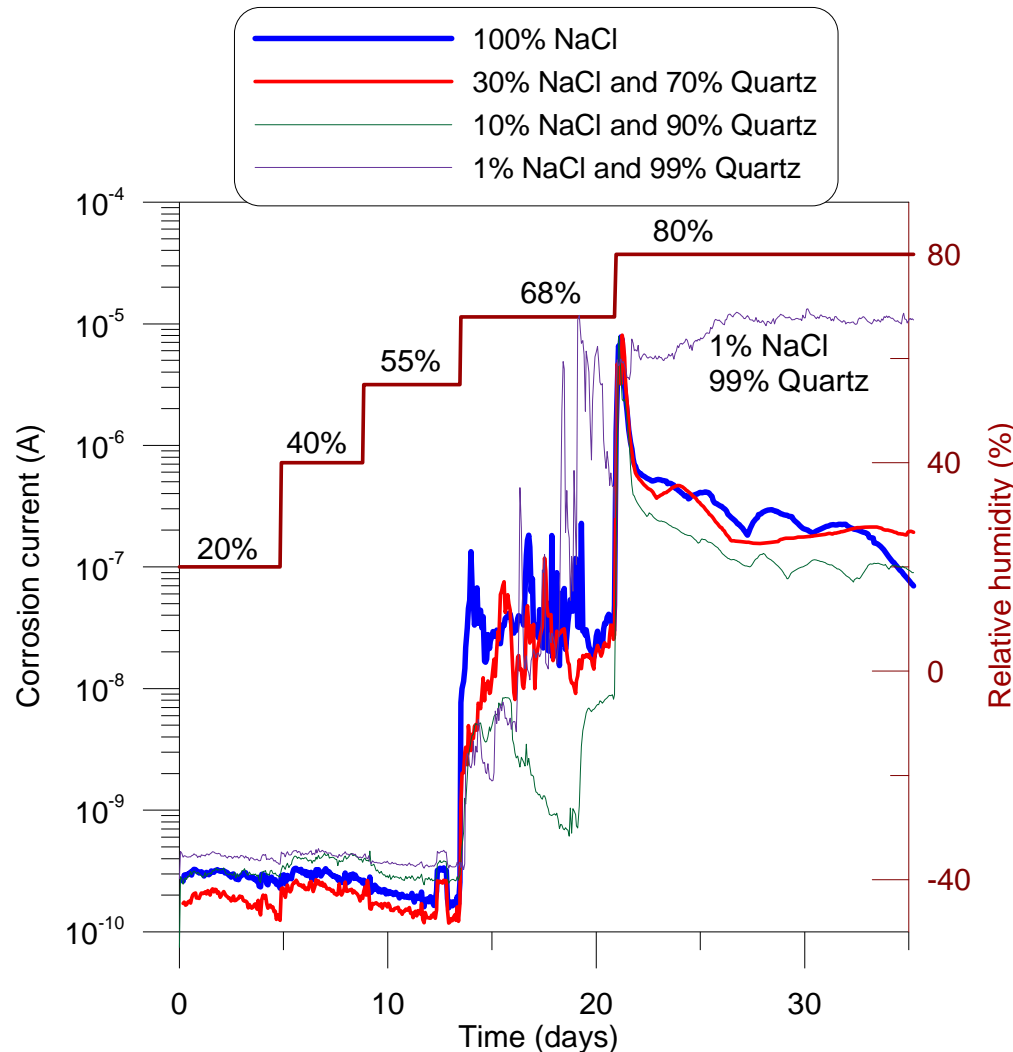


# Experimental Setup

- Salt/dust mixture placed inside Tygon<sup>®</sup> sleeve above the MAS probe
  - 10 g [0.35 oz] total mass
  - Relative amount of NaCl varied from 0.4 to 100 wt%
- Controlled temperature-humidity chamber (ESPEC)
  - Temperature = 70 °C [158 °F]
  - Relative humidity raised stepwise from <20% to above the deliquescence point of NaCl (75% at 70 °C [158 °F])



# Results–Test 1: NaCl/Quartz Mixture

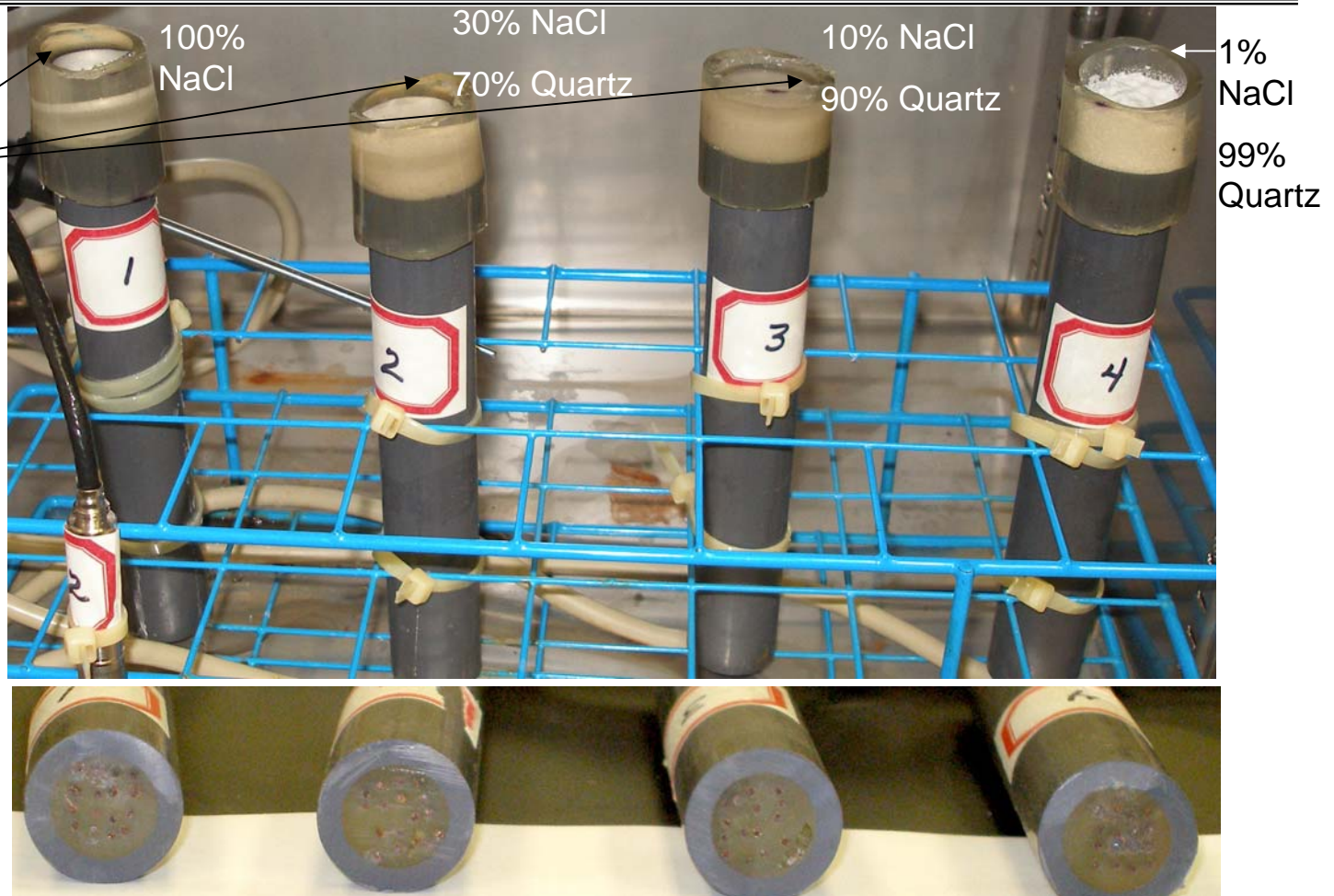


- Brine started to form at 68% RH, below the NaCl deliquescence relative humidity (75% RH)
- Brine from 1%-NaCl/99%-quartz mixture is the most corrosive
  - Possibly due to very thin electrolyte film where oxygen transport is not a limiting factor
  - Calculated volume of deliquescence brines (per 10 g of solid)
    - 100% NaCl: 31 mL
    - 30% NaCl: 9.3 mL
    - 10% NaCl: 3.1 mL
    - 1% NaCl: 0.31 mL



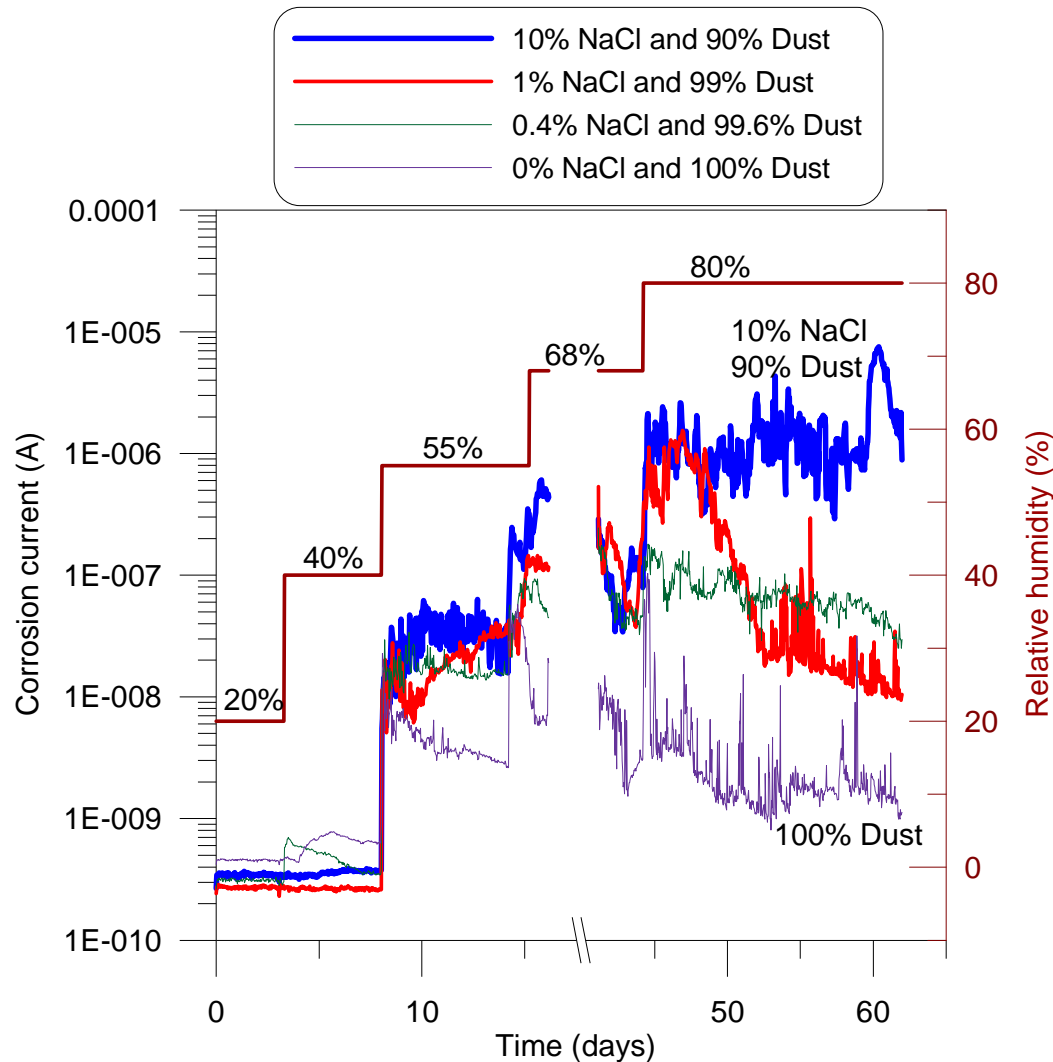
# Test 1 (NaCl/Quartz): Post-Test Observations

- Deliquescence brines formed at 68% RH and 80% RH
- H<sub>2</sub>O overflow observed at 80% RH for probes 1, 2, and 3, but not on probe #4



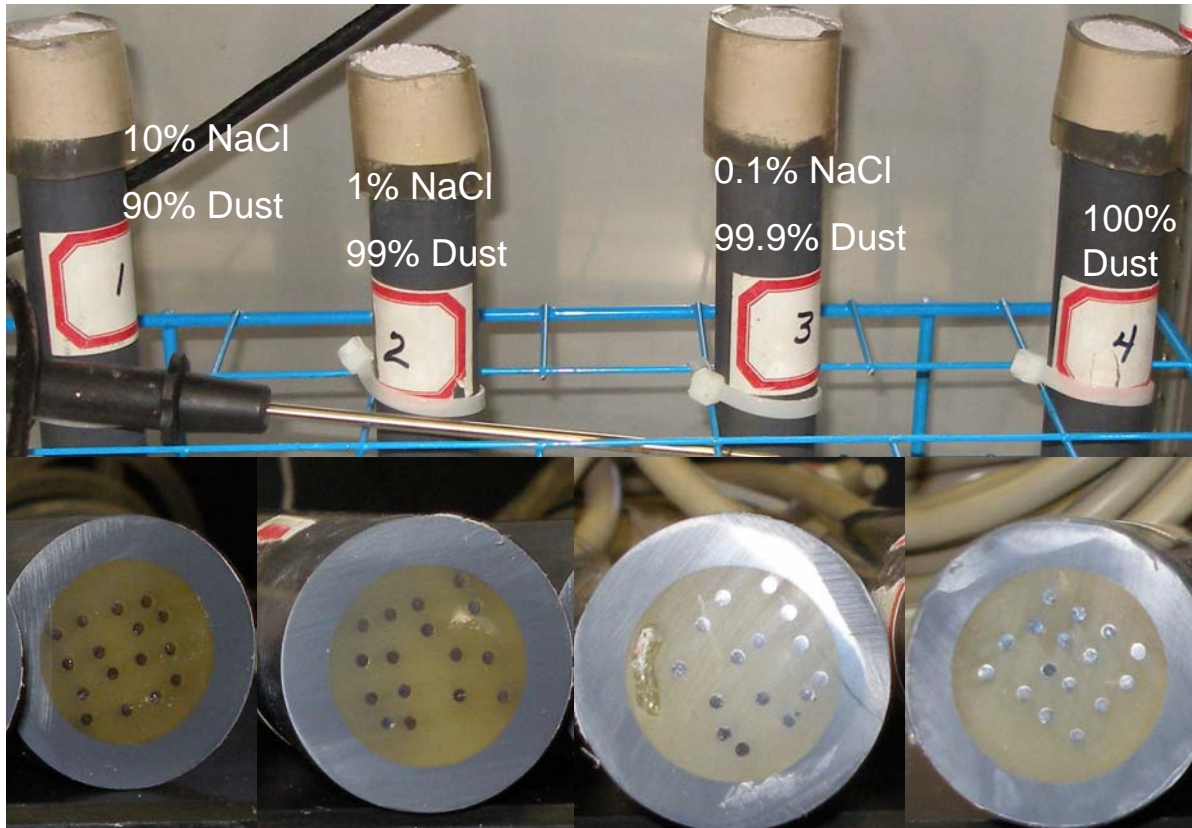
Corrosion was observed on each probe indicating solution contacted the metal surface

# Results–Test 2: NaCl/Dust Mixture



- Brine formed at 55% RH, below that observed for NaCl/quartz mixture (68% RH) and much lower than NaCl deliquescence point
  - Possible moisture absorption on dust
- Dust reduced the corrosion current, but did not prevent brine from contacting the metal surface

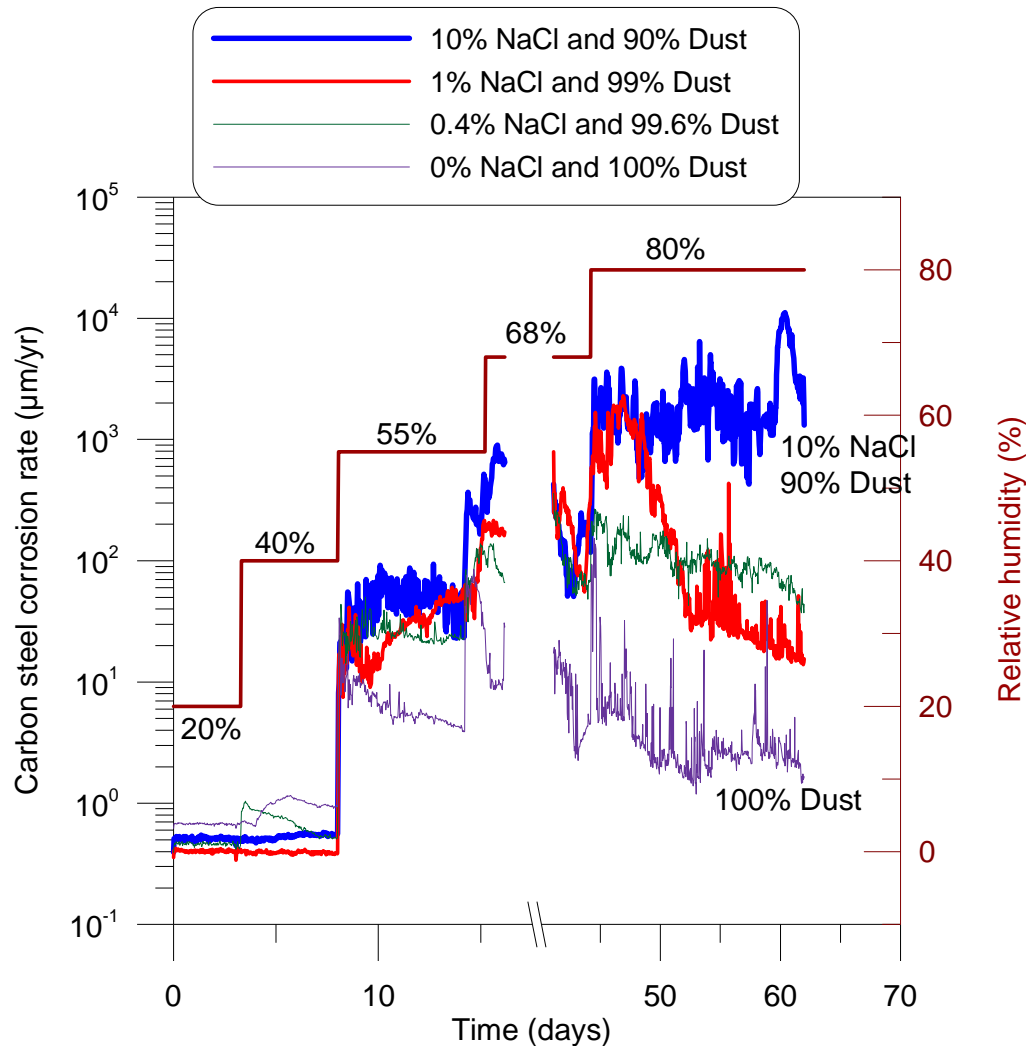
# Test 2 (NaCl/Dust): Post-Test Observations



- Calculated volume of deliquescence brines (per 10 g of solid)
  - 10% NaCl: 3.1 mL
  - 1% NaCl: 0.31 mL
  - 0.4% NaCl: 0.12 mL
- No visible liquid formed even at 80% RH, but the solid mixtures were damp

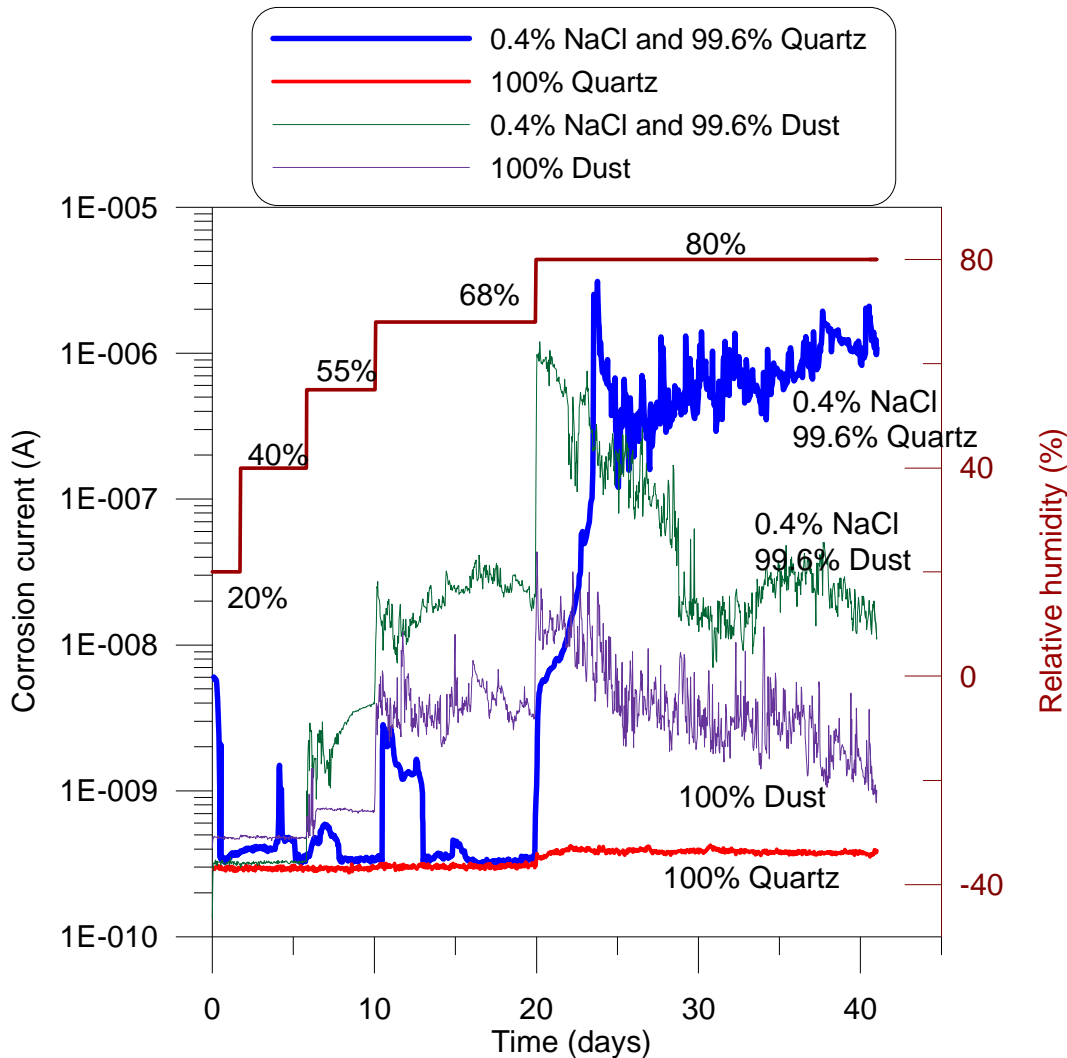
All the probes were corroded indicating liquid formed at each test condition

# Test 2 (NaCl/Dust): Corrosion Rate



- For all mixtures (even for NaCl-free system), carbon steel corrosion rate increased above 1 µm/yr once relative humidity exceeded 55%
  - Brine formed by deliquescence is sufficient to support ionic transport
  - Sufficient leachable salt present in pure rock dust to initiate corrosion of carbon steel

# Results–Test 3: NaCl/Quartz and NaCl/Dust Mixtures



- In 100% quartz test (no NaCl), no deliquescence brine was formed
- In 100% rock dust test (no NaCl), corrosion was observed indicating deliquescence brine was formed
- Deliquescence brine formed at lower relative humidity (55% RH) in NaCl/dust mixture compared to NaCl/quartz mixture (RH 68%)
- Carbon steel corrosion rate increased above 1  $\mu\text{m}/\text{yr}$  once relative humidity exceeded 55%



# Conclusions

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- Capillary retention by rock dust reduces the amount of deliquescence brine contacting the metal surface
- For carbon steel, however, capillary retention does not prevent corrosion by brines formed by salt deliquescence
- Future tests are planned using Alloy 22 material for the MAS probes at temperatures  $>70\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$  [ $158\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$ ]

# Acknowledgment

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This presentation is an independent product of the CNWRA and does not necessarily reflect the view or regulatory position of the NRC.

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