

Results from the NOvA Experiment

Martin J. Frank
University of South Alabama
on behalf of the NOvA Collaboration

September 30th, 2025
Padua, Italy



XXI Workshop on
Neutrino Telescopes



Introduction



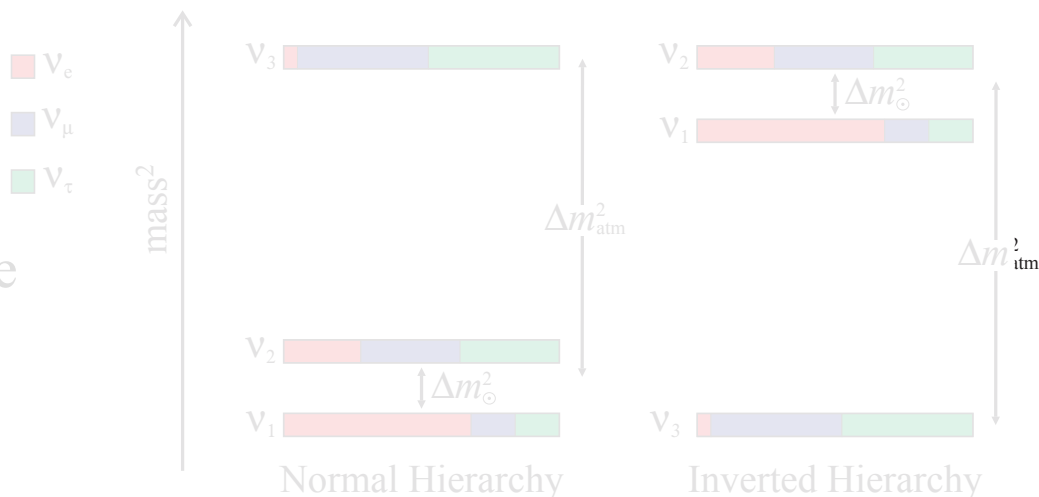
NOvA:

- **NuMI**: Neutrinos at the Main Injector (ν_μ)
- **Off-Axis**: monoenergetic beam (2 GeV)
- ν_e Appearance

$$\frac{P(\nu_\mu \rightarrow \nu_e)}{P(\nu_\mu \rightarrow \nu_\mu)} = f(\theta_{13}, \theta_{23}, \delta_{\text{CP}}, \text{mass hierarchy}, \dots)$$

Physics Goals:

- measure $\theta_{13}, \theta_{23}, \Delta m_{32}^2$
- measure δ_{CP}
CP-violating phase angle
- resolve mass hierarchy
- resolve θ_{23} octant



Introduction



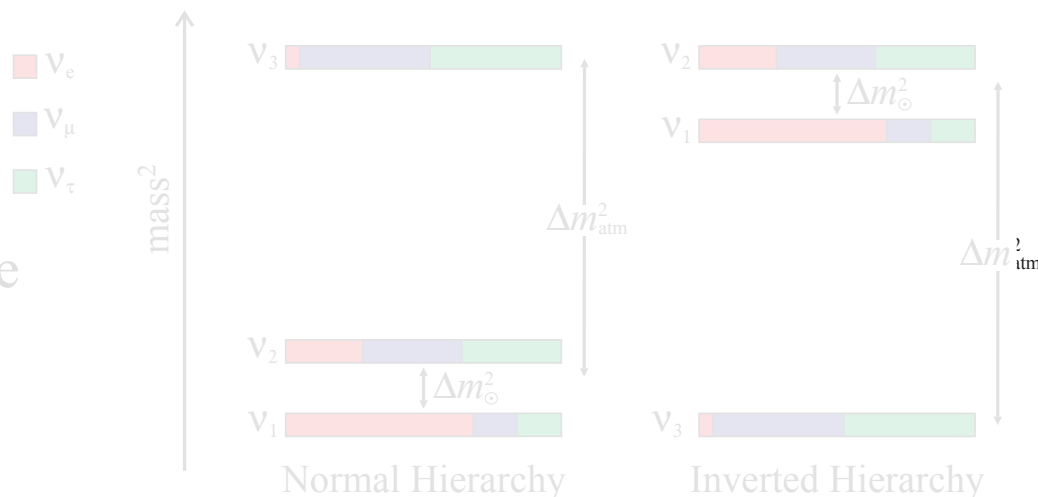
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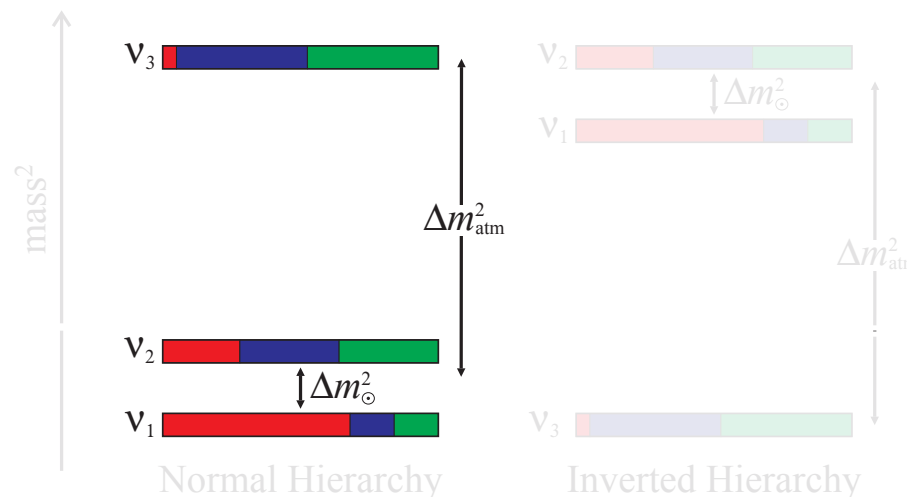
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■ ν_e
■ ν_μ
■ ν_τ



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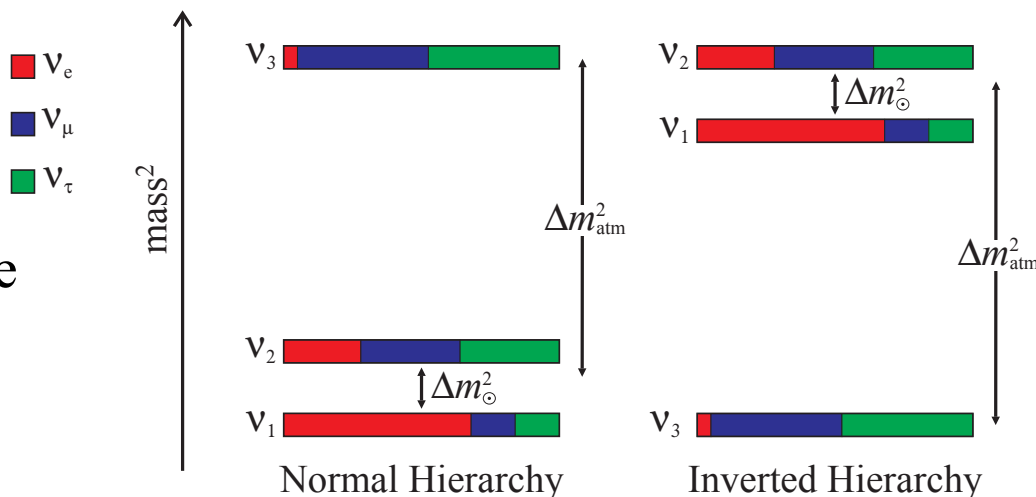
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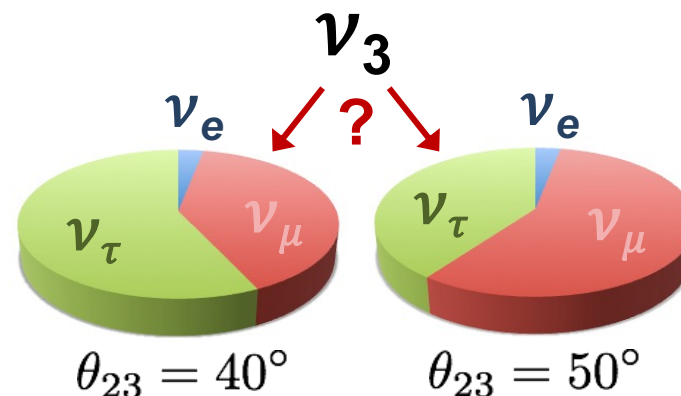
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Beyond Oscillation Physics

- Non-Standard Interactions
- Neutrino Cross Sections
- Sterile Neutrinos
- Dark Matter
- Magnetic Monopoles
- Supernova
- And More!

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○ Physics Goals:

- Search for magnetic monopoles
- New results hot off the press today!

Beyond Oscillation Physics

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- **Magnetic Monopoles**
- Supernova
- And More!

New

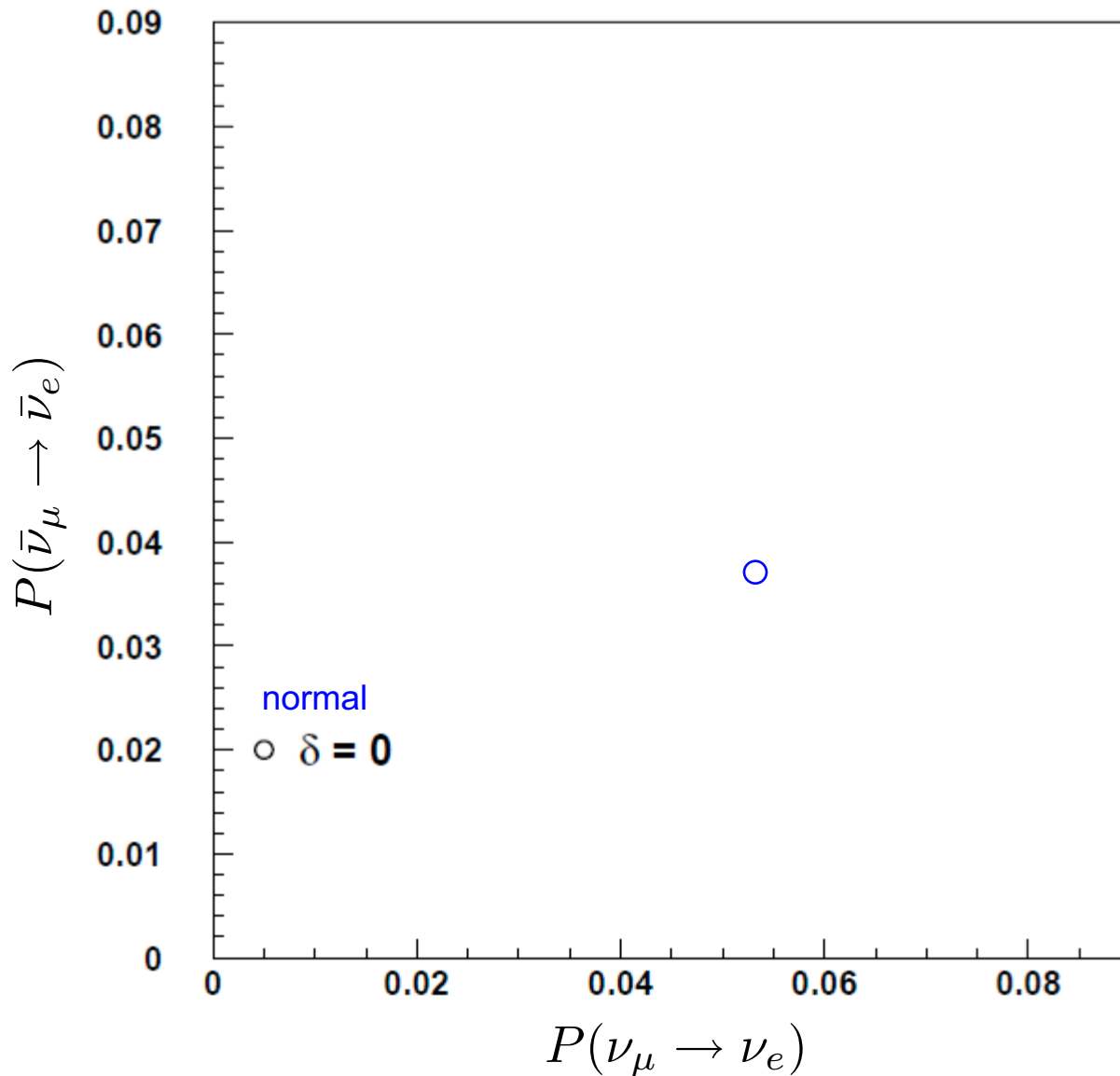


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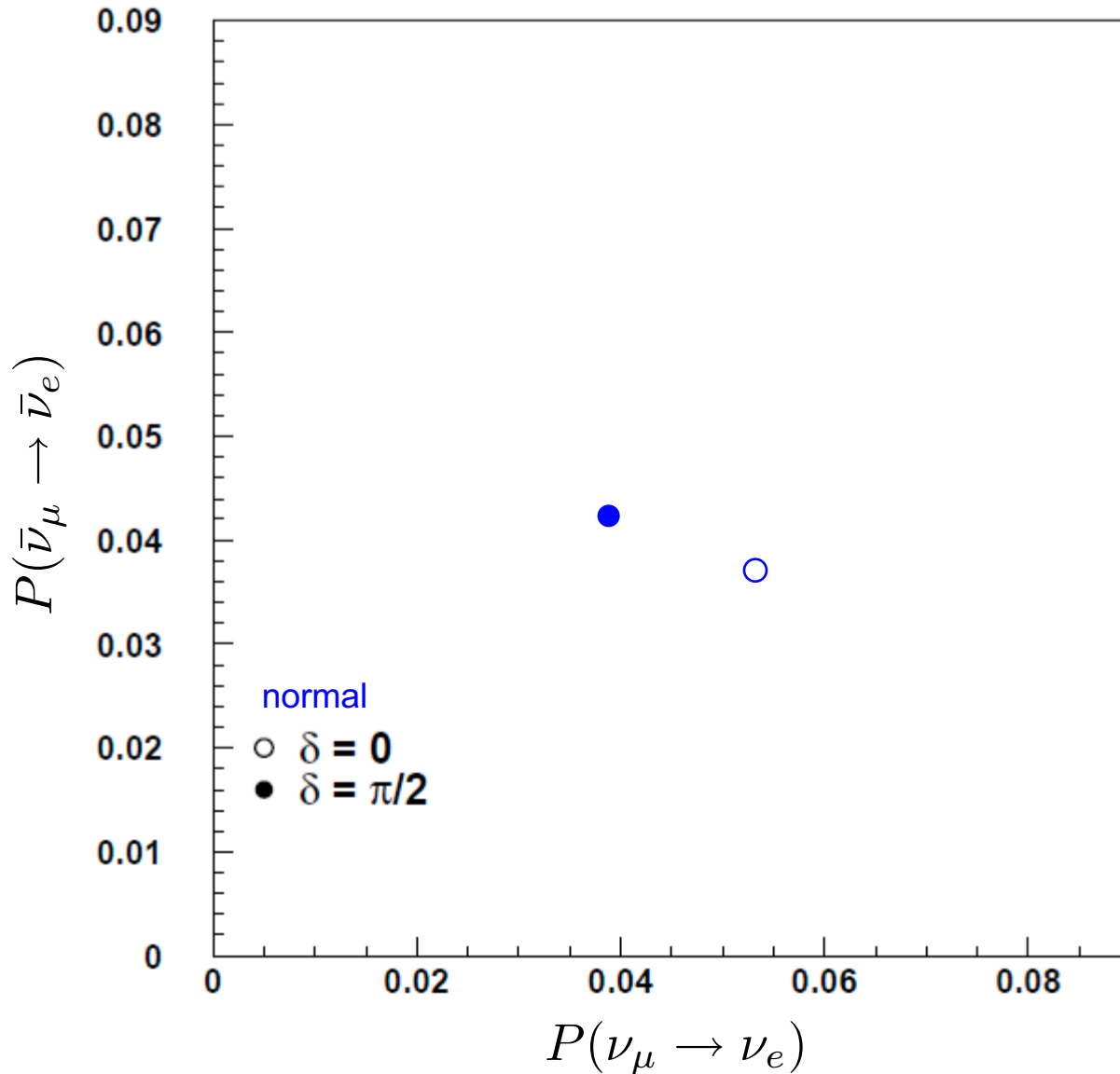
NEUTRINO OSCILLATION RESULTS

Extracting Nature's Parameters



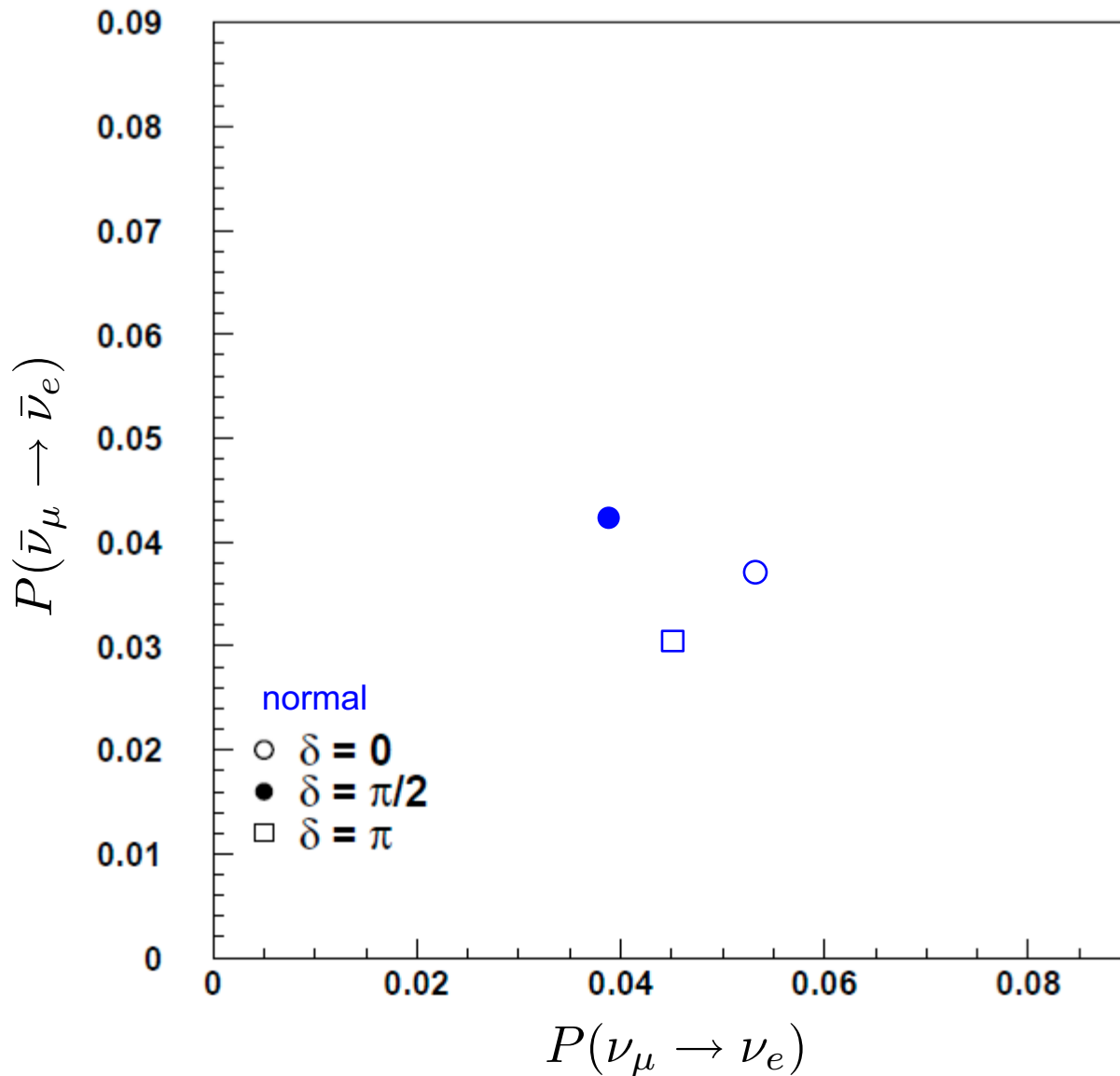
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Extracting Nature's Parameters



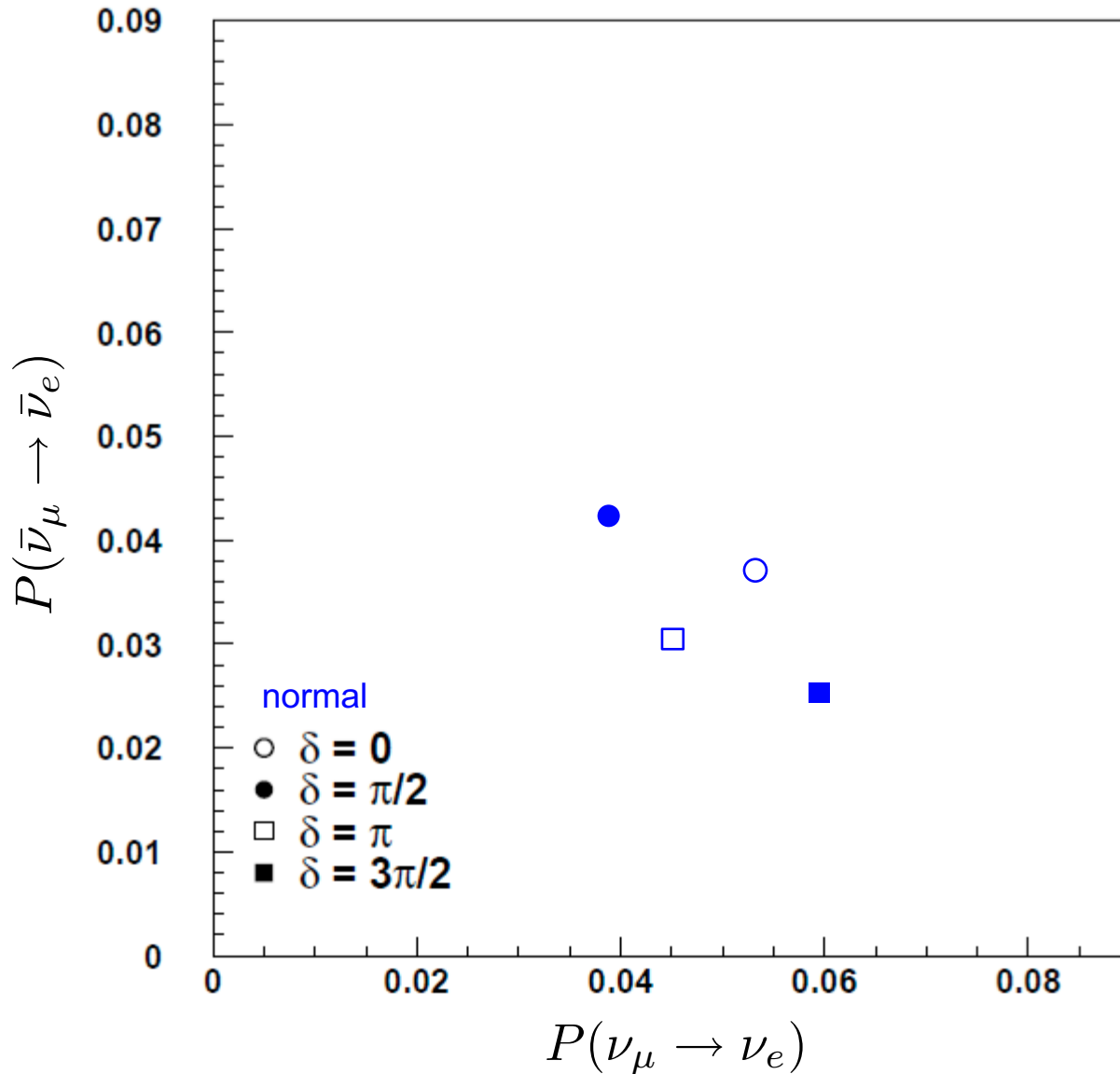
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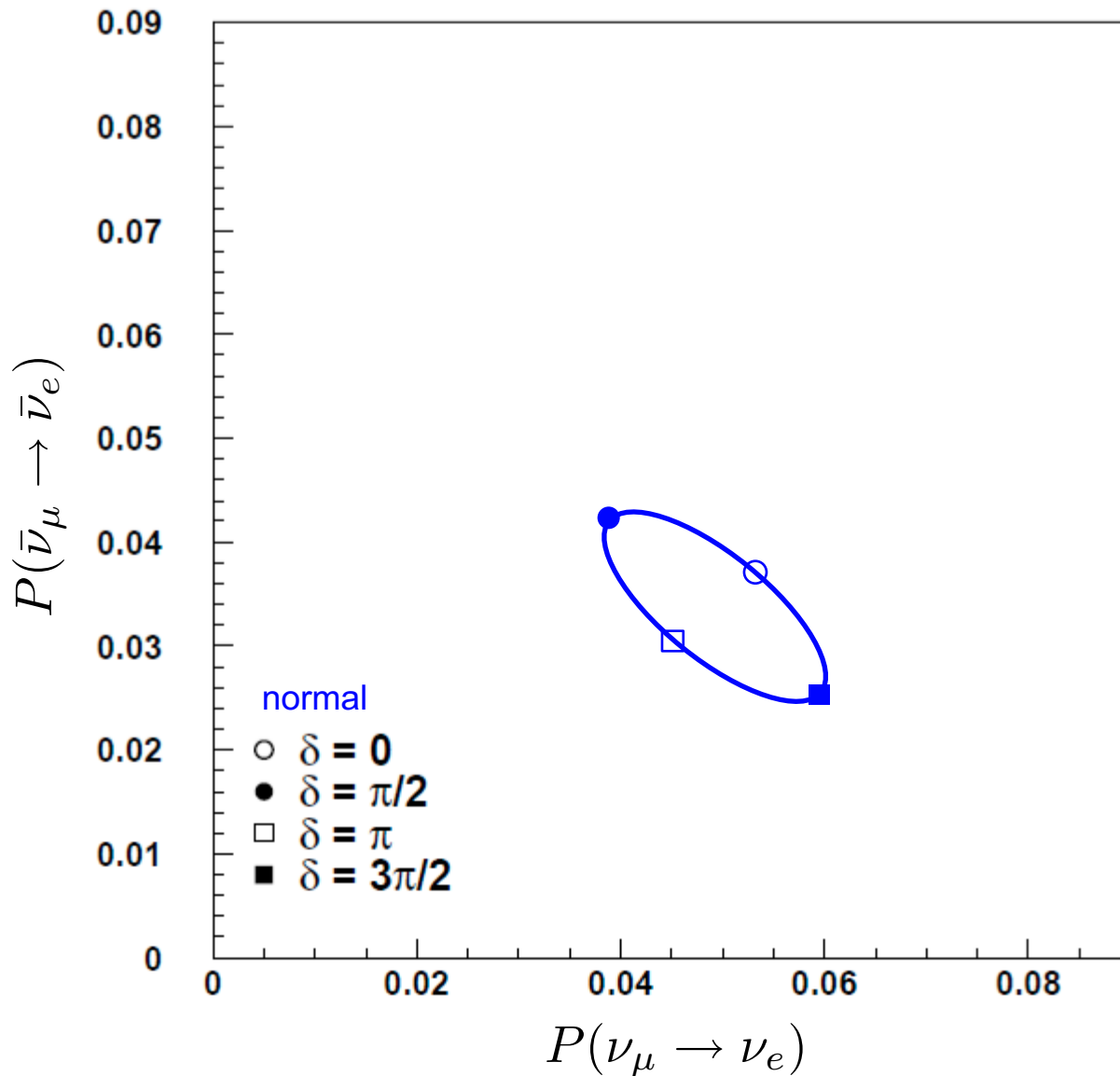
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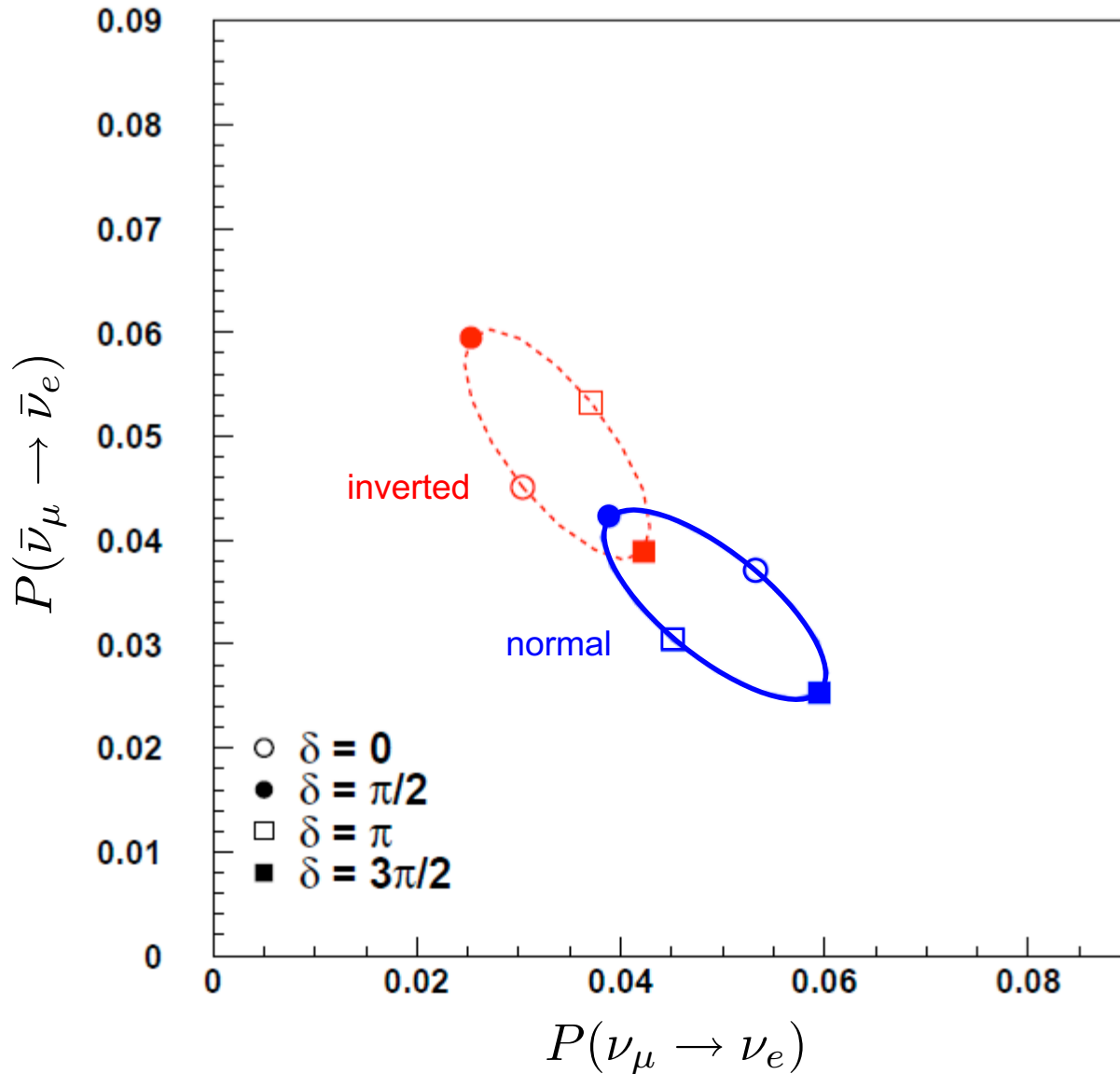
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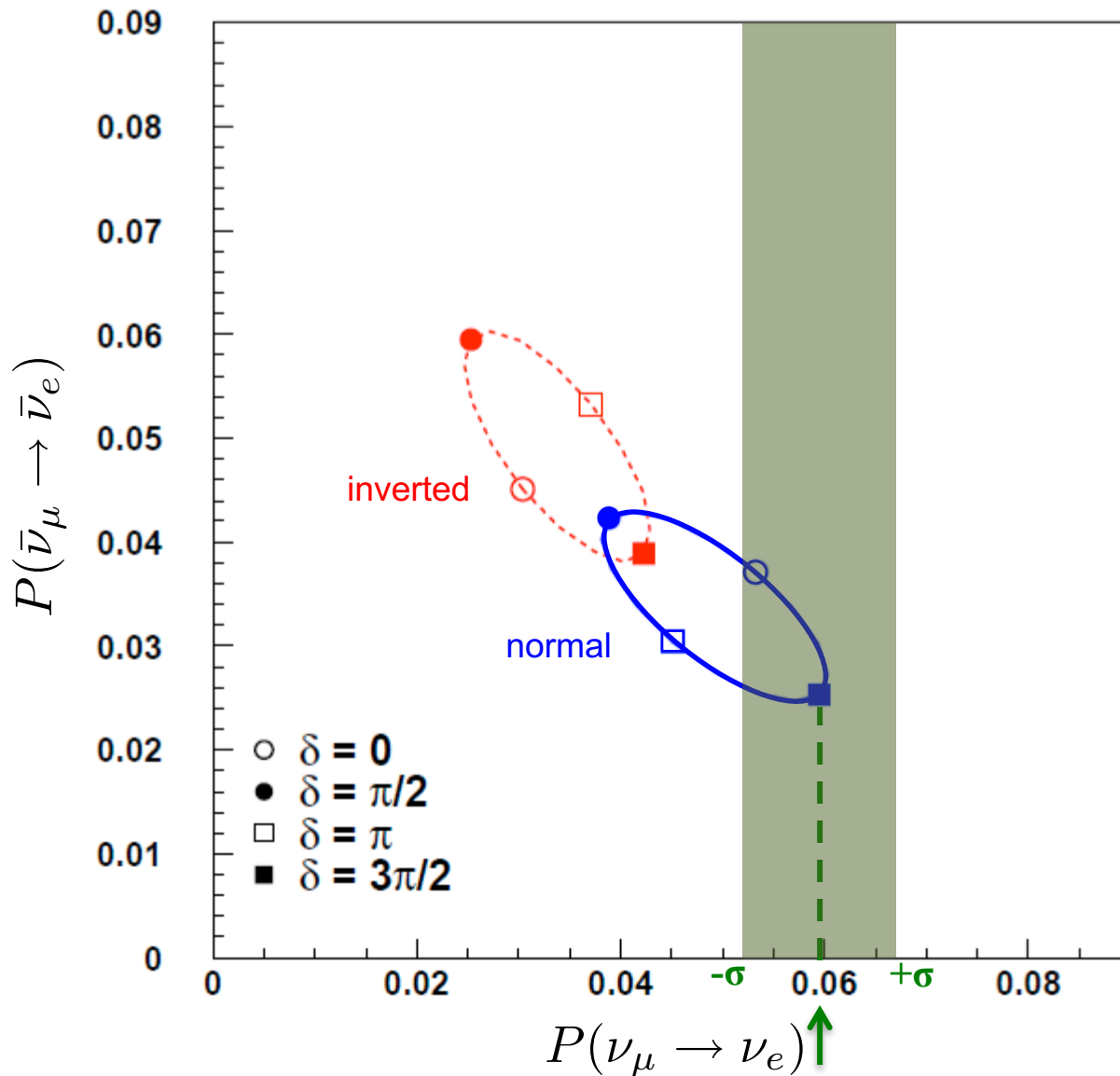
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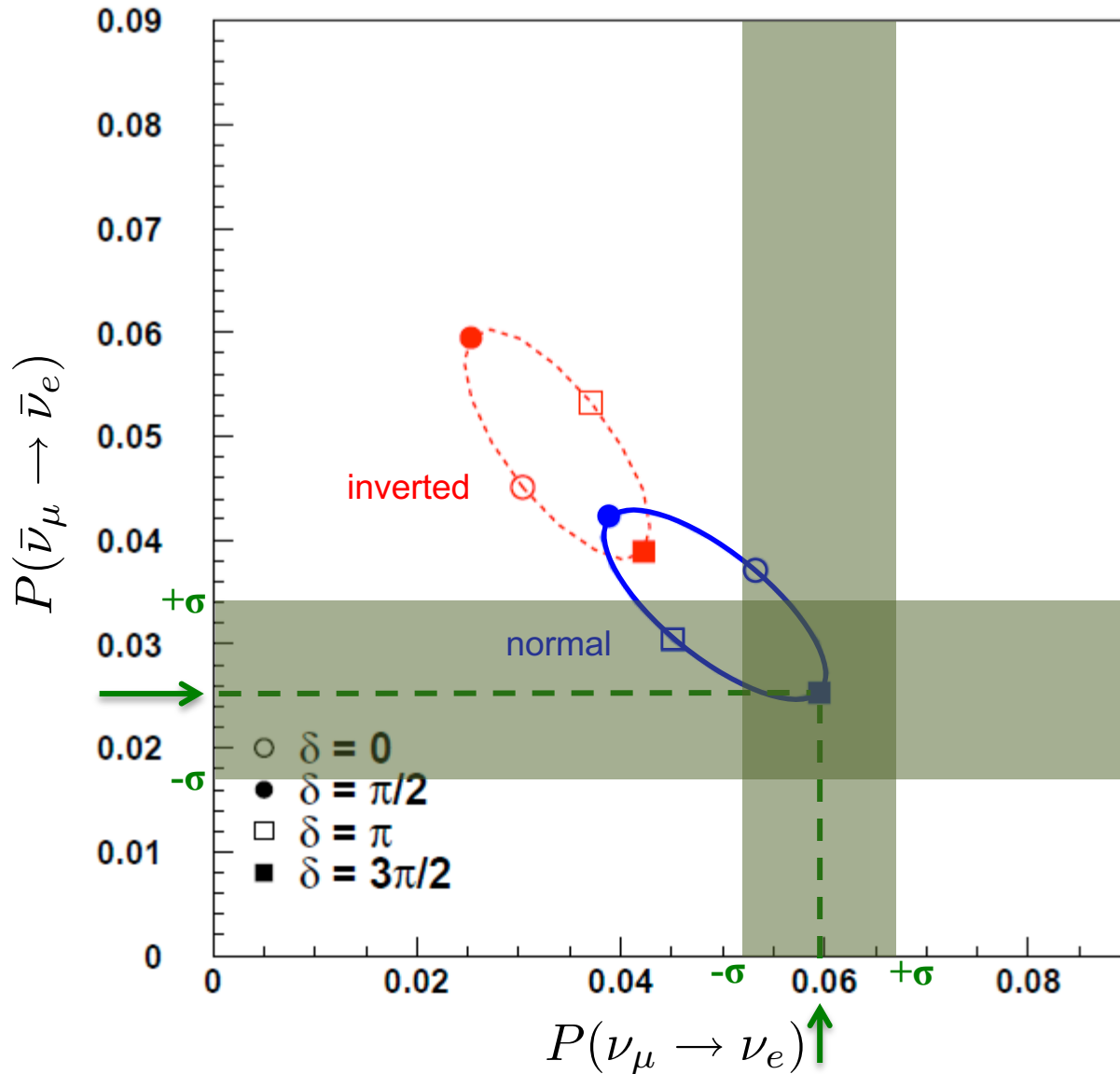
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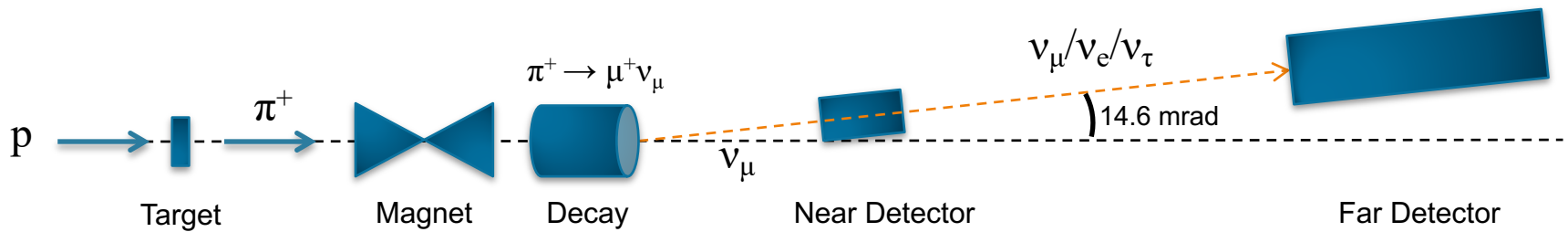


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- Here is an example measurement NOvA might make.

Extracting Nature's Parameters



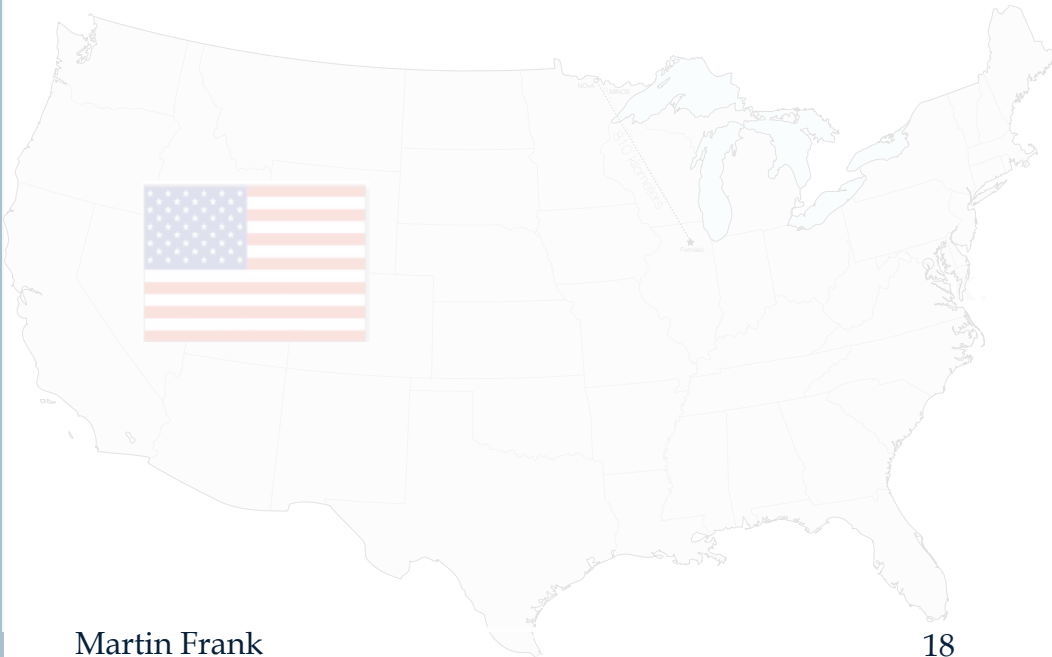
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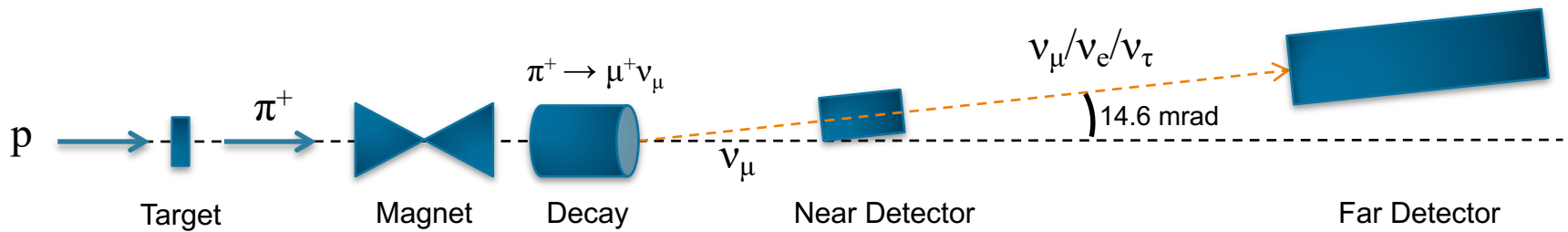


Neutrino Beam

Baseline ($L = 810$ km)

The neutrino beam travels from Fermilab to Ash River, MN through the earth's crust.



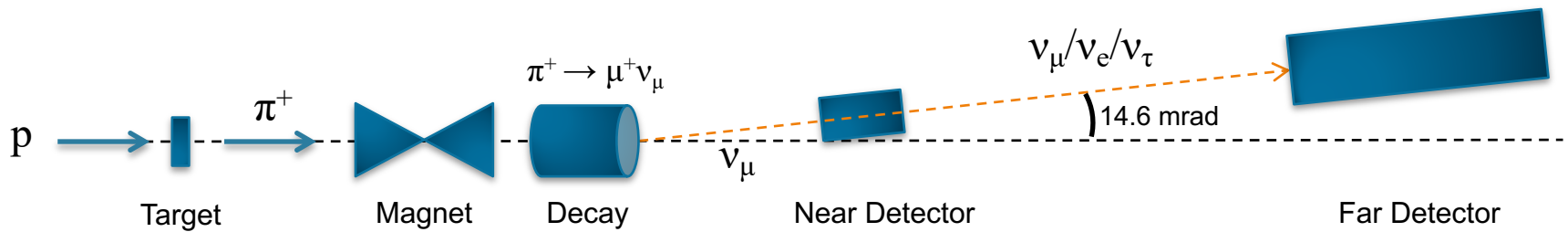


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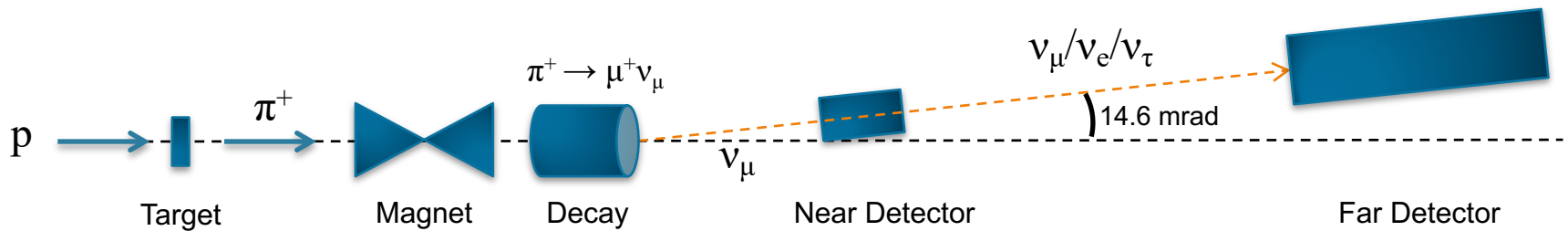


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Neutrino Beam

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Energy ($E_\nu = 2 \text{ GeV}$)

We can achieve a narrowly distributed neutrino energy by placing the detectors 14.6 mrad off the beam axis.

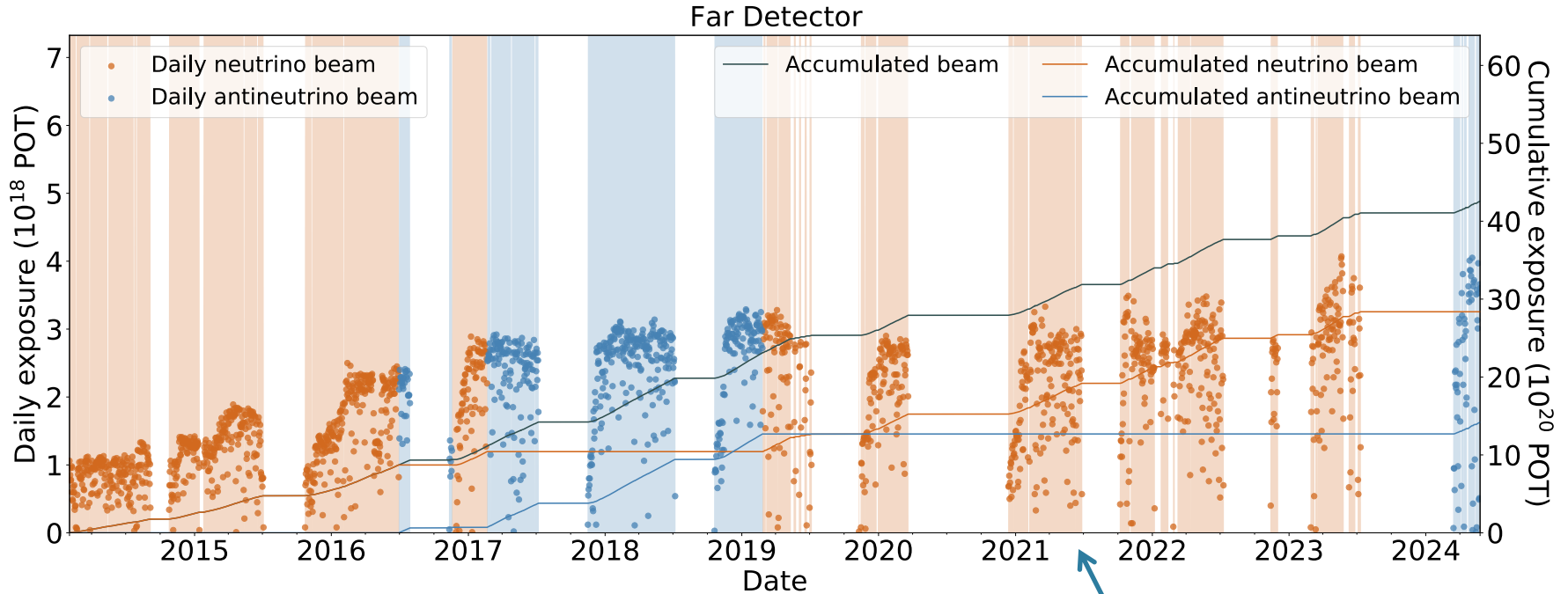
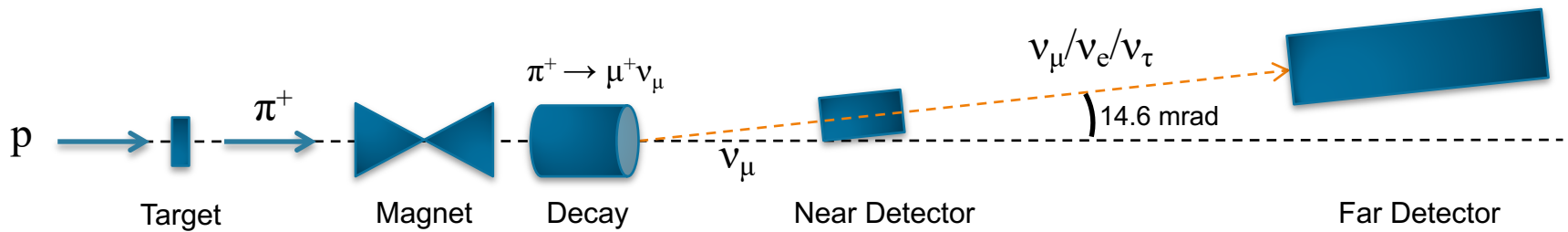
This is also the $\nu_\mu \rightarrow \nu_e$ oscillation peak.

Protons on Target (POT)

$26.6 \times 10^{20} \text{ POT}$: neutrino mode

$12.5 \times 10^{20} \text{ POT}$: antineutrino mode





Protons on Target (POT)

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10 years of beam!
2014 - 2024

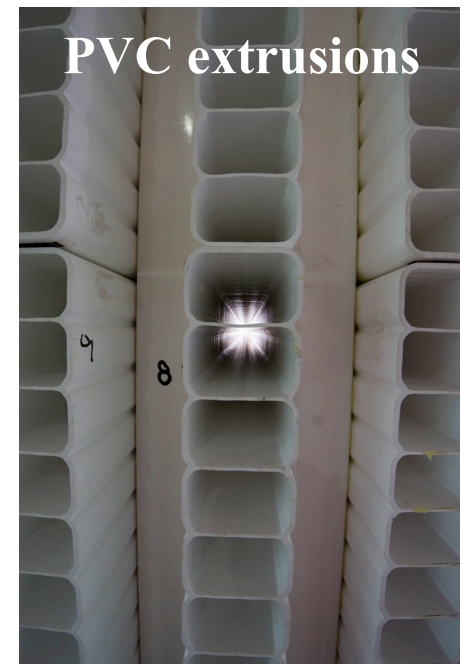
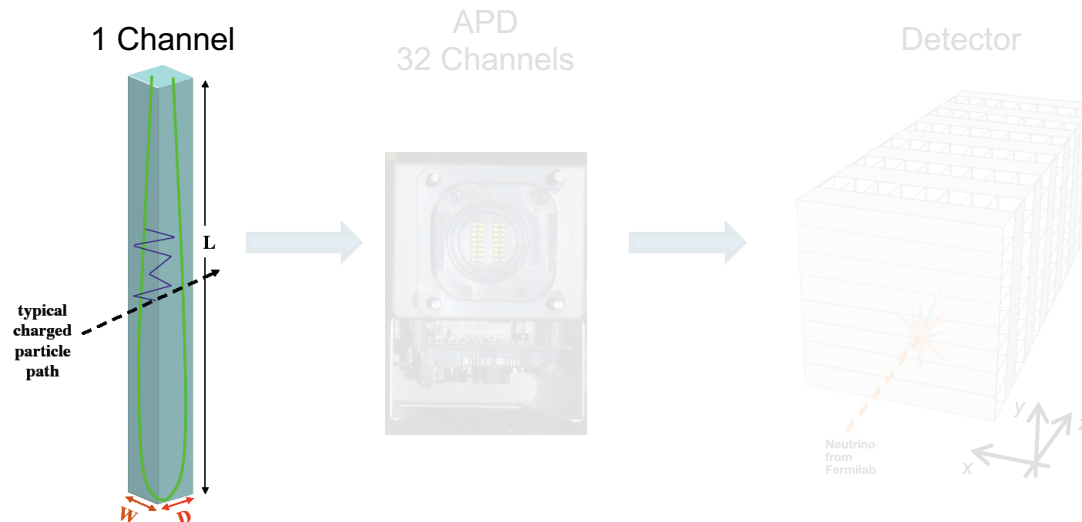
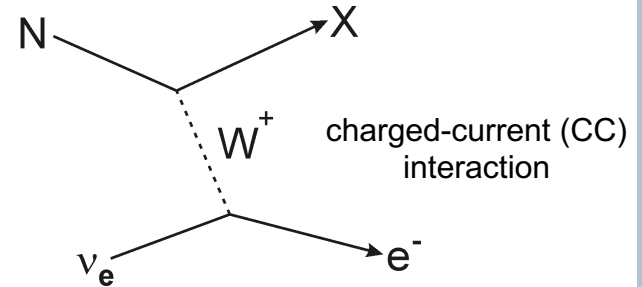
Neutrino Detection

- We want to detect electron neutrinos (ν_e):

- This requires a large detector mass and good electron identification.

- NOvA is a rectangular tracking calorimeter.

- low Z materials: PVC extrusions filled with liquid scintillator
 - radiation length ~ 40 cm, Molière radius ~ 11 cm
 - provides many samples per radiation length (differentiate e^- and π^0)
- each extrusion contains one wavelength-shifting fiber
- ends of fiber read out by avalanche photo-diode (APD)



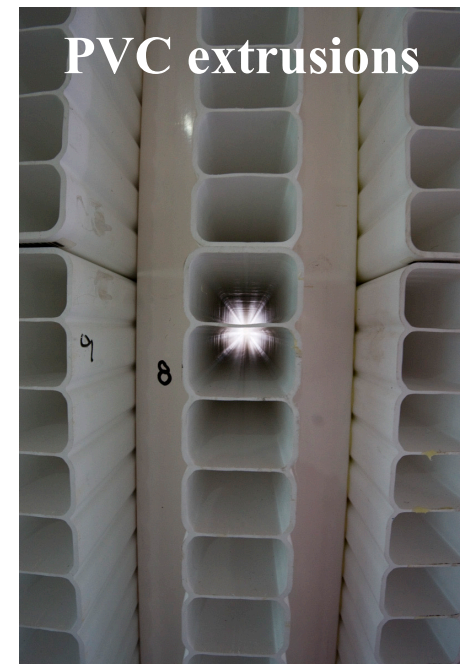
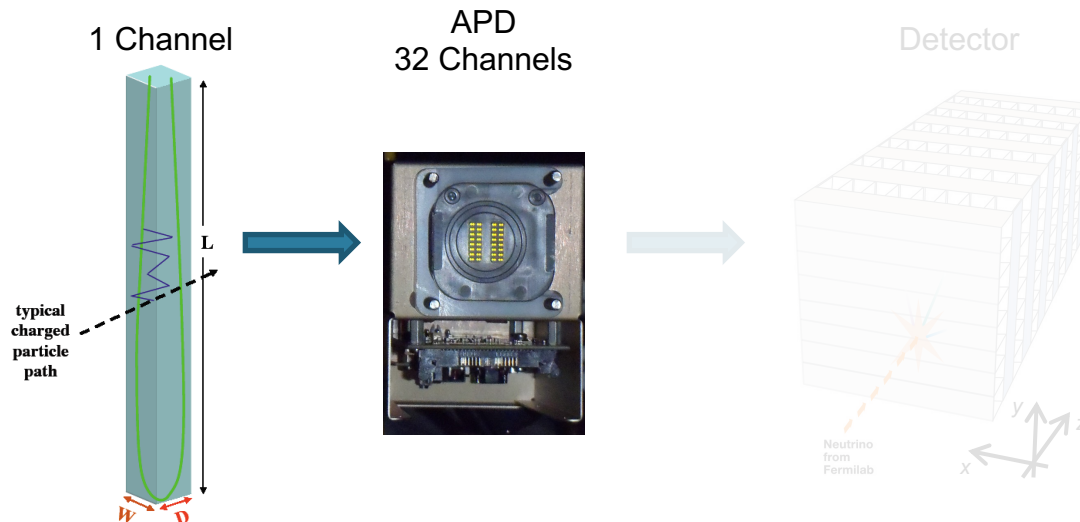
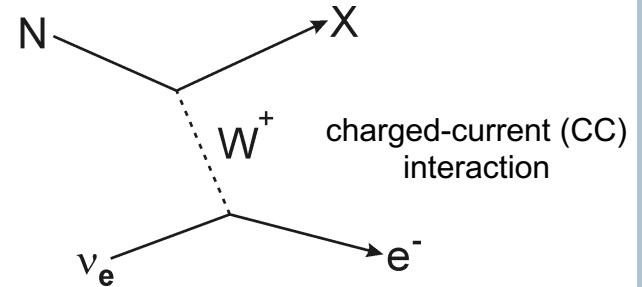
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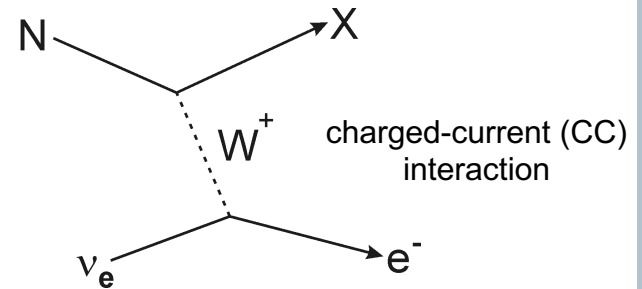
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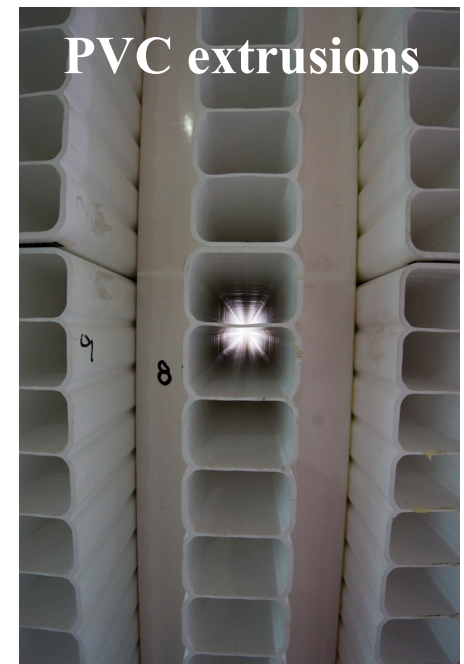
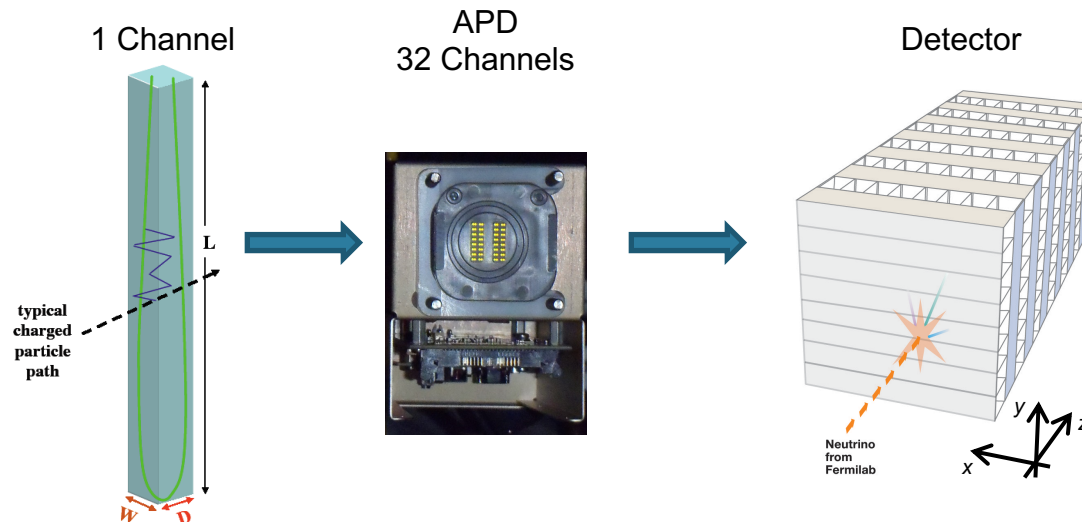


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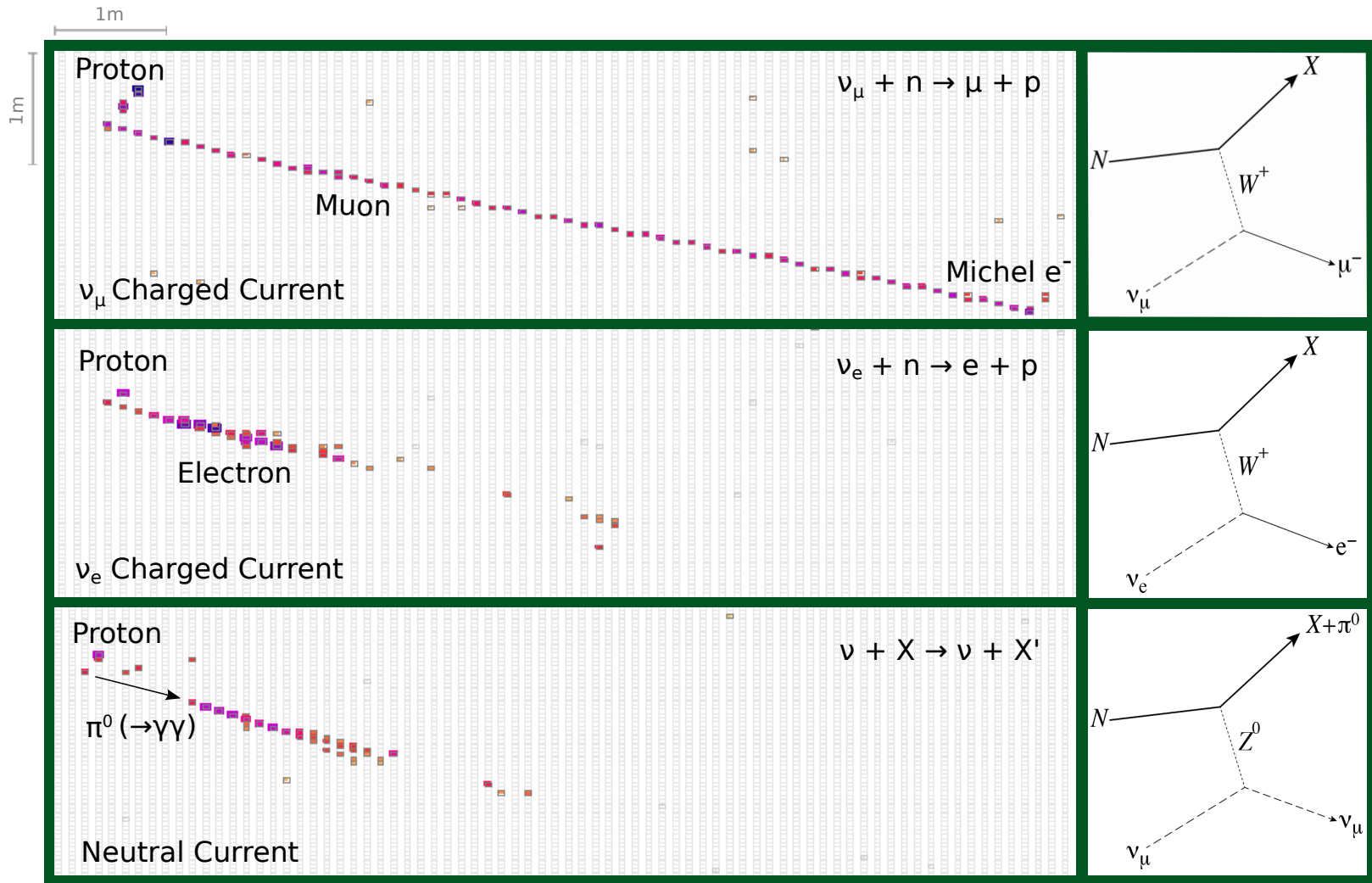
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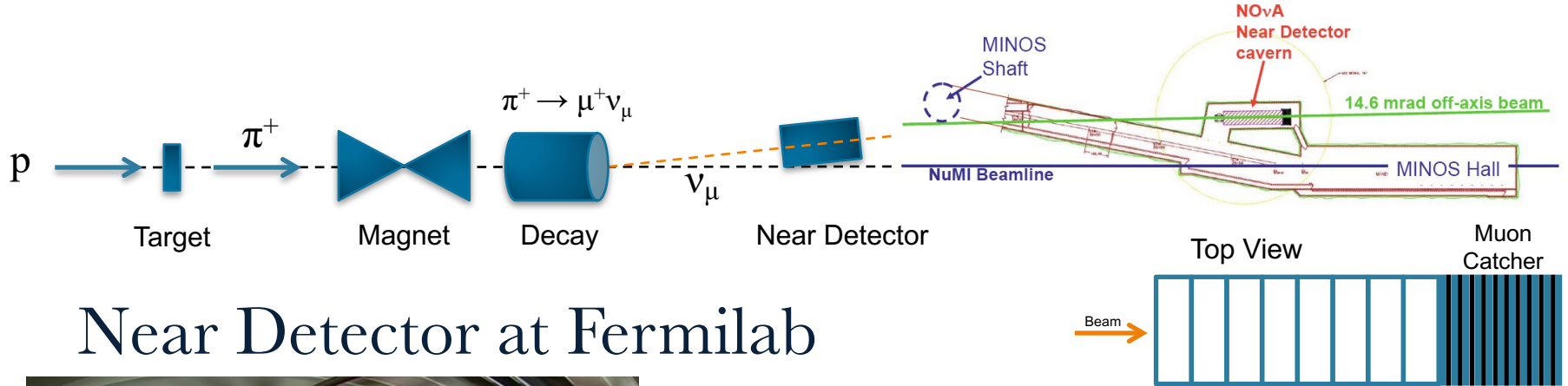


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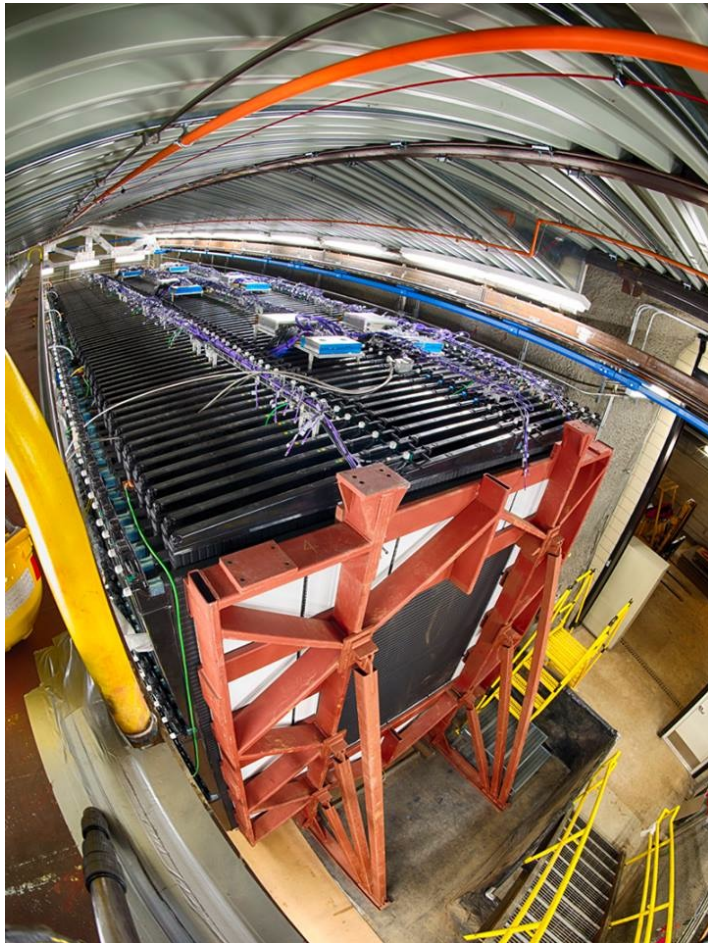


Simulated Event Display

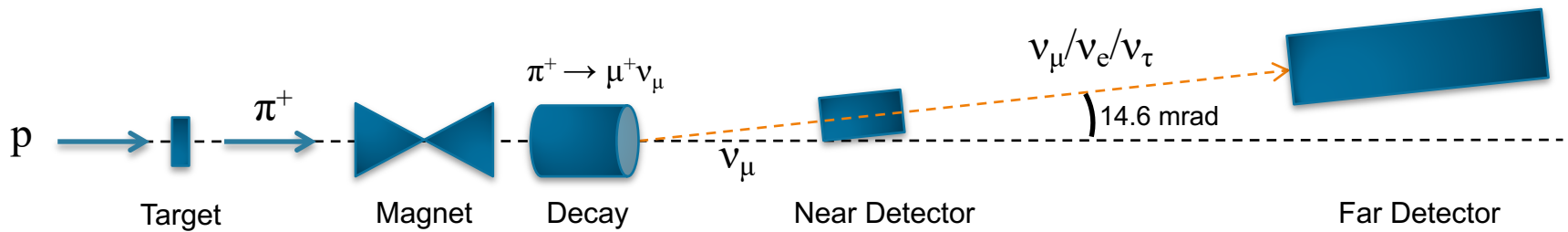




Near Detector at Fermilab



- 1 km downstream from NuMI target
- 105 m underground
- 300 tons
- $4 \text{ m} \times 4 \text{ m} \times 15 \text{ m}$
- Instrumented with 20k channels
- Several neutrino interactions per second
- Few cosmic ray muons per second



Far Detector in Ash River, MN

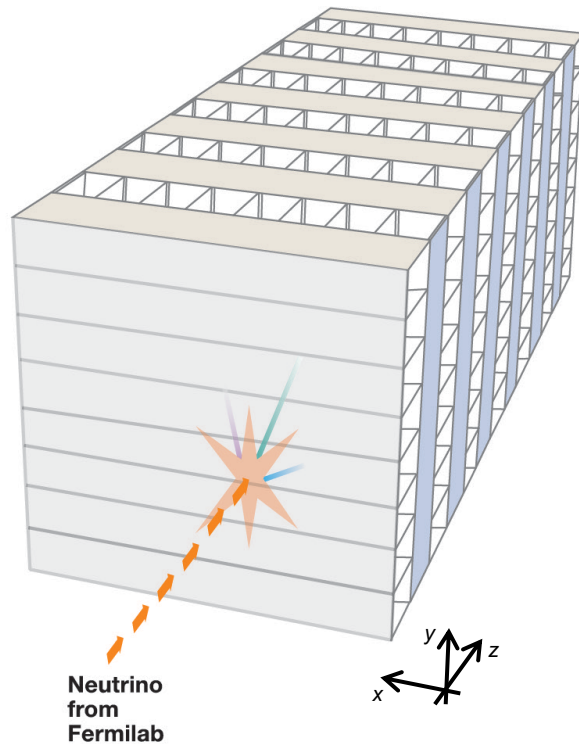


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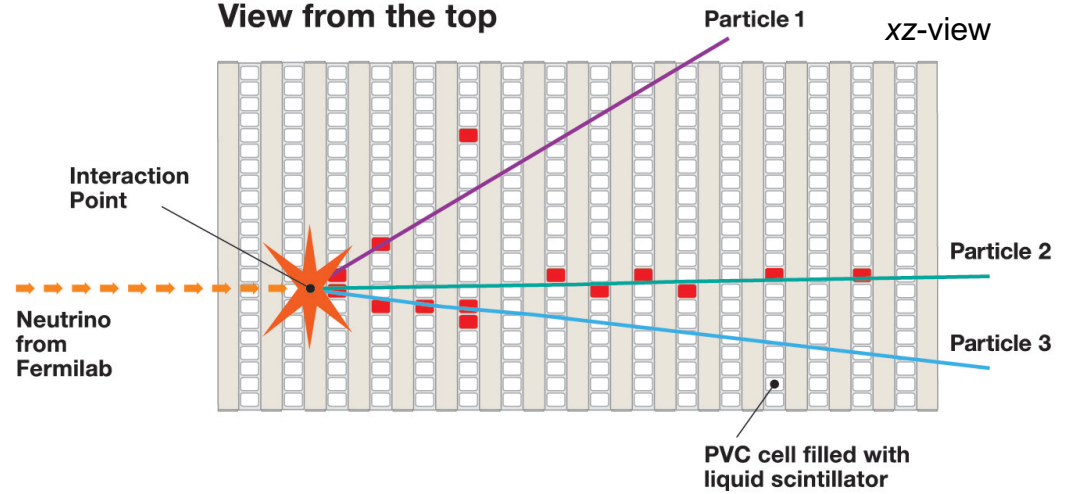
- 810 km downstream from NuMI target
- On the surface
- 14,000 tons
- $15 \text{ m} \times 15 \text{ m} \times 60 \text{ m}$
- Instrumented with 344k channels
- Few neutrino interactions per year
- $\sim 130,000$ cosmic ray muons per second

Neutrino Detection

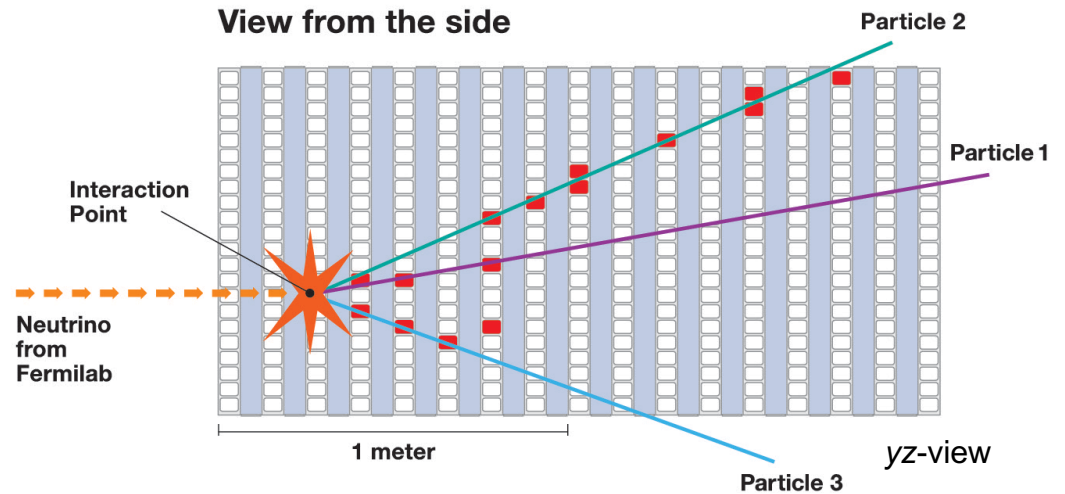
3D schematic of NOvA particle detector



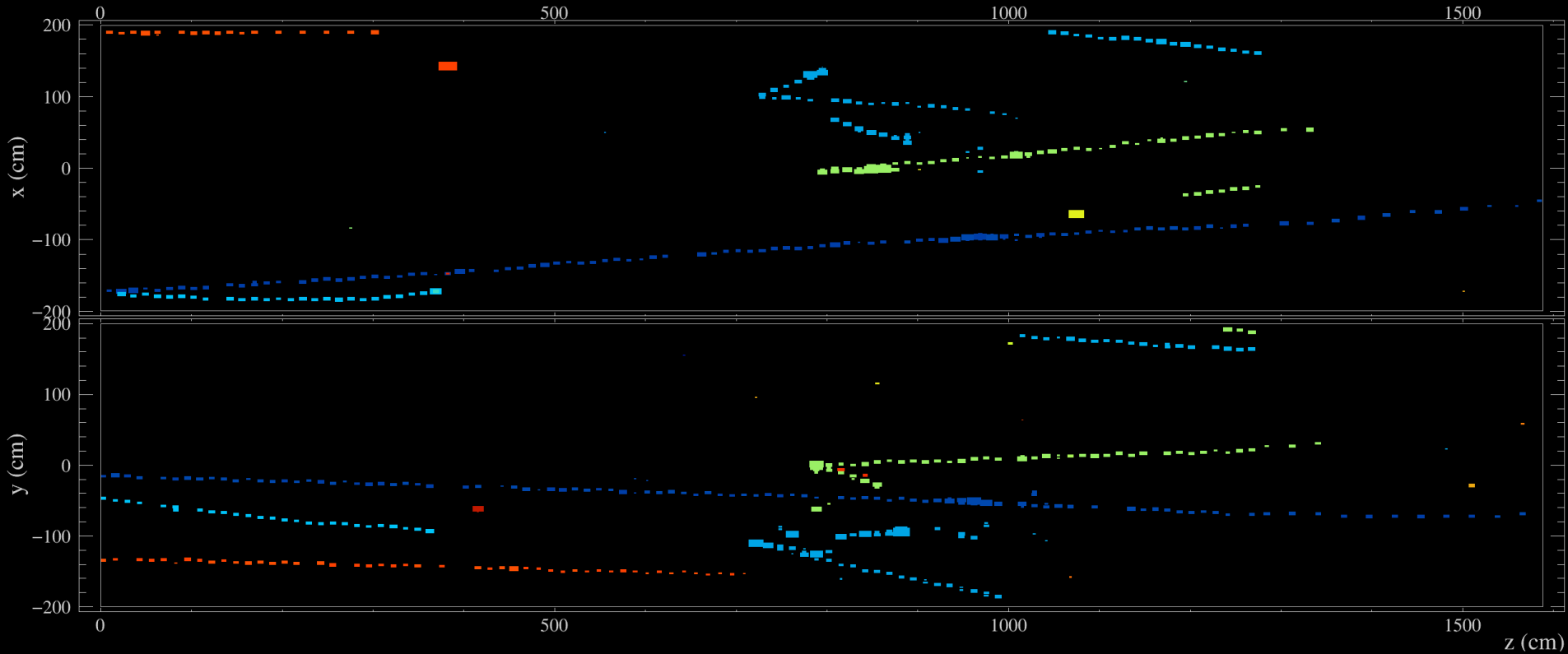
View from the top



View from the side



Near Detector Event Display



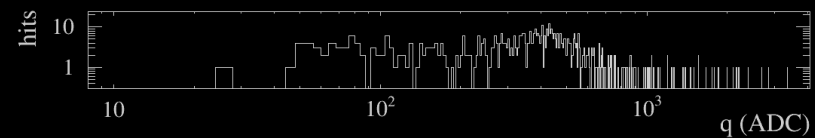
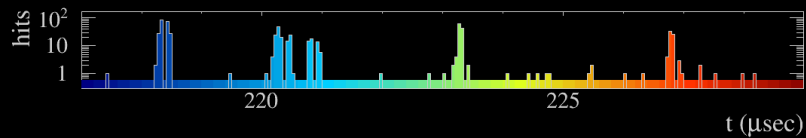
NOvA - FNAL E929

Run: 10407 / 1

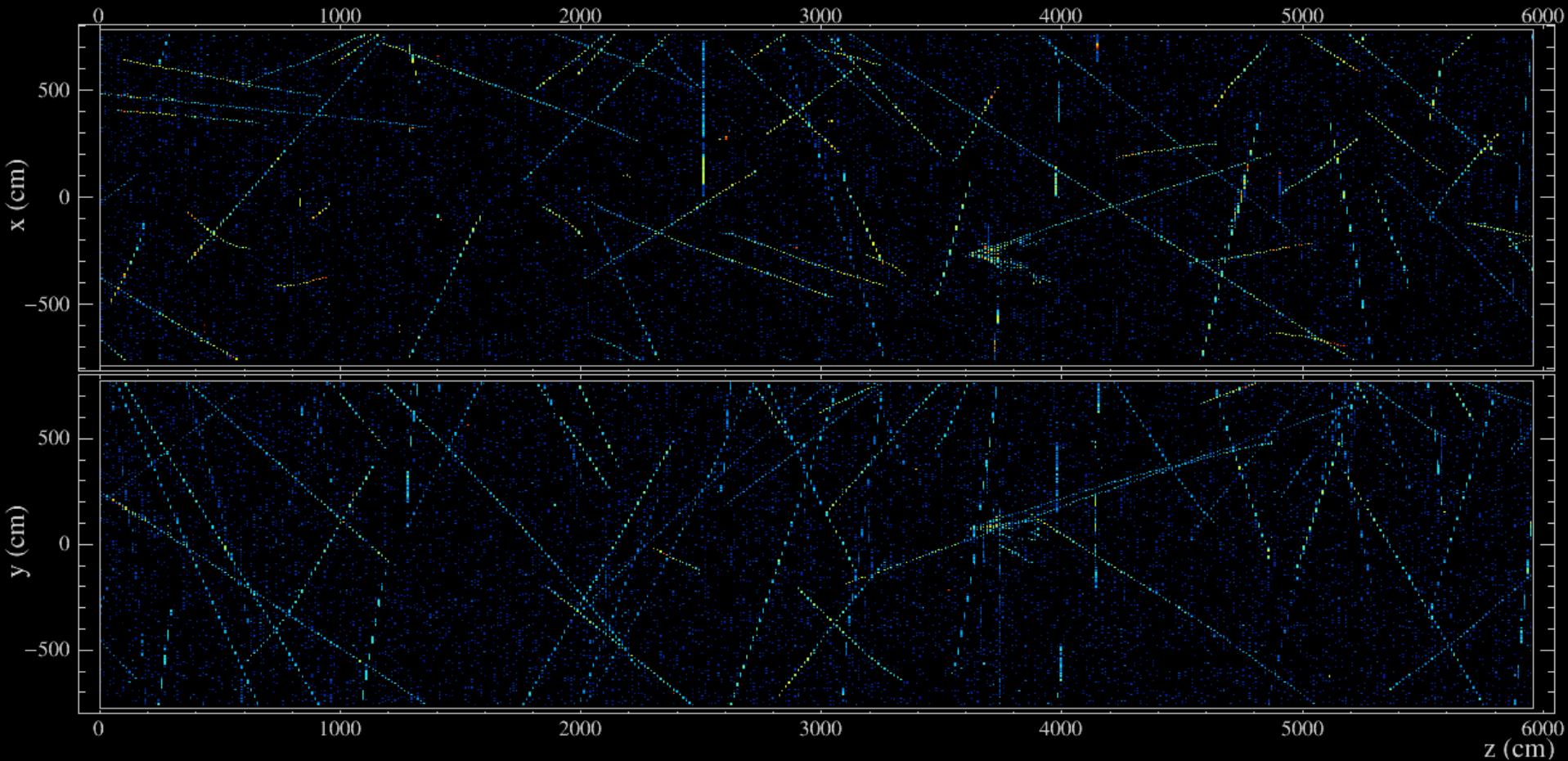
Event: 27950 / --

UTC Thu Sep 4, 2014

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Far Detector Event Display



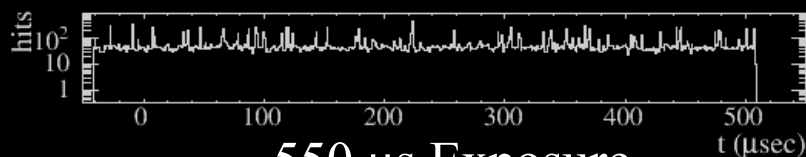
NOvA - FNAL E929

Run: 18620 / 13

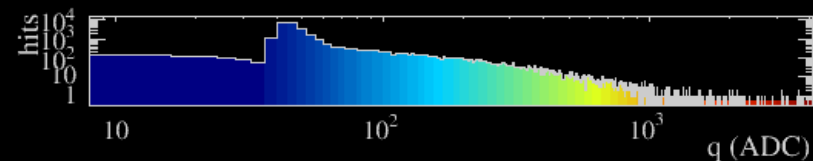
Event: 178402 / --

UTC Fri Jan 9, 2015

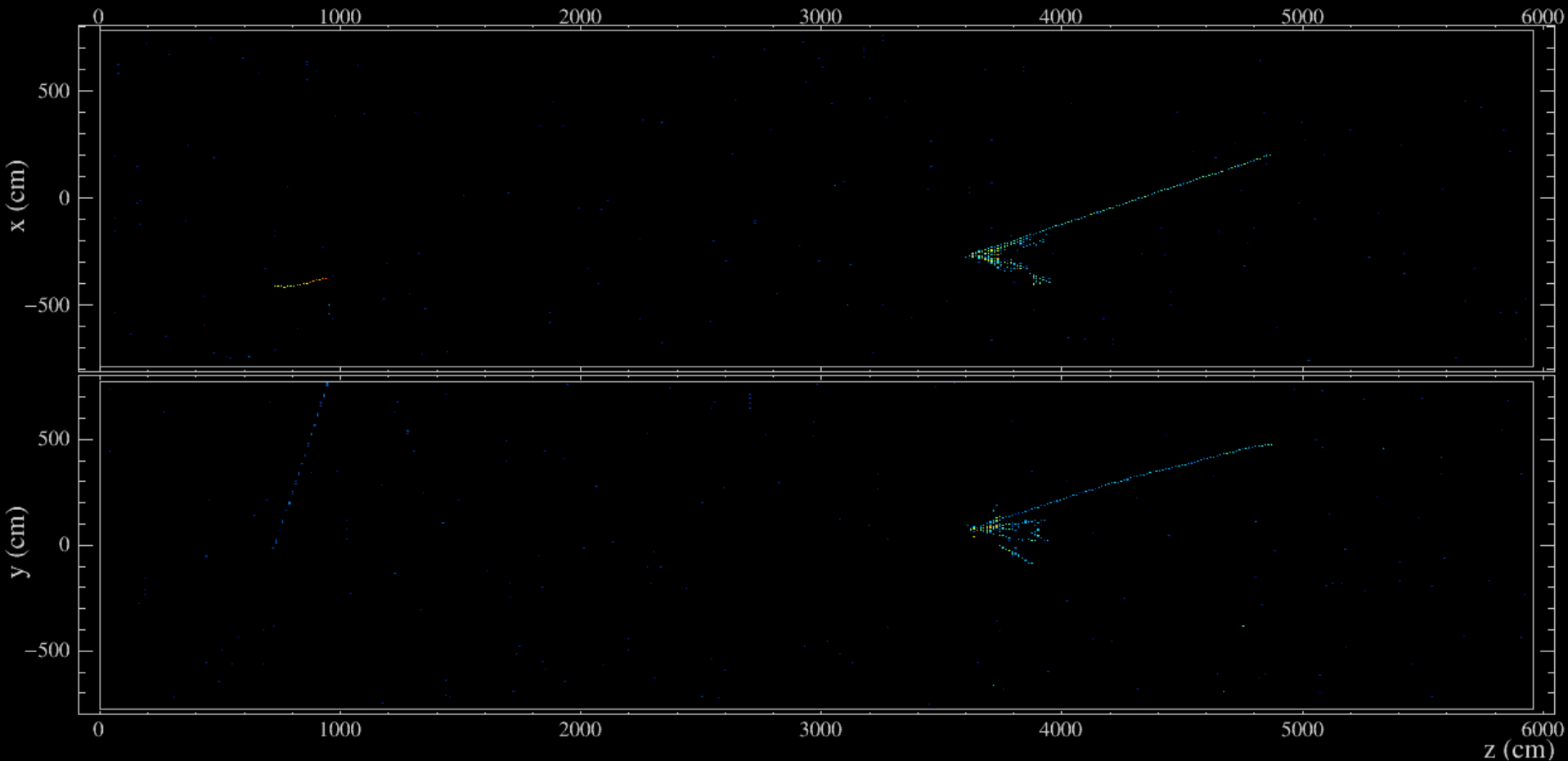
00:13:53.087341608



550 μs Exposure



Time Zoom on NuMI Beam Pulse



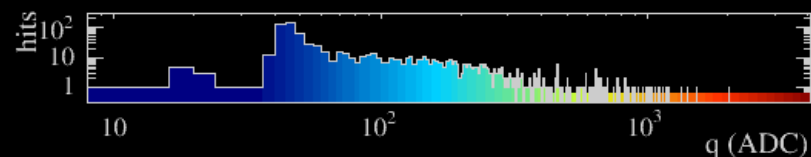
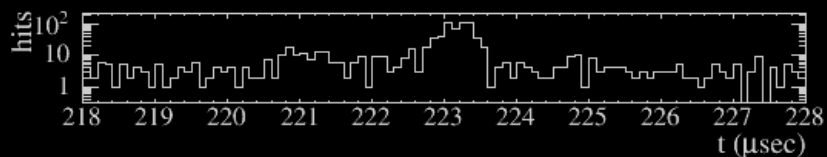
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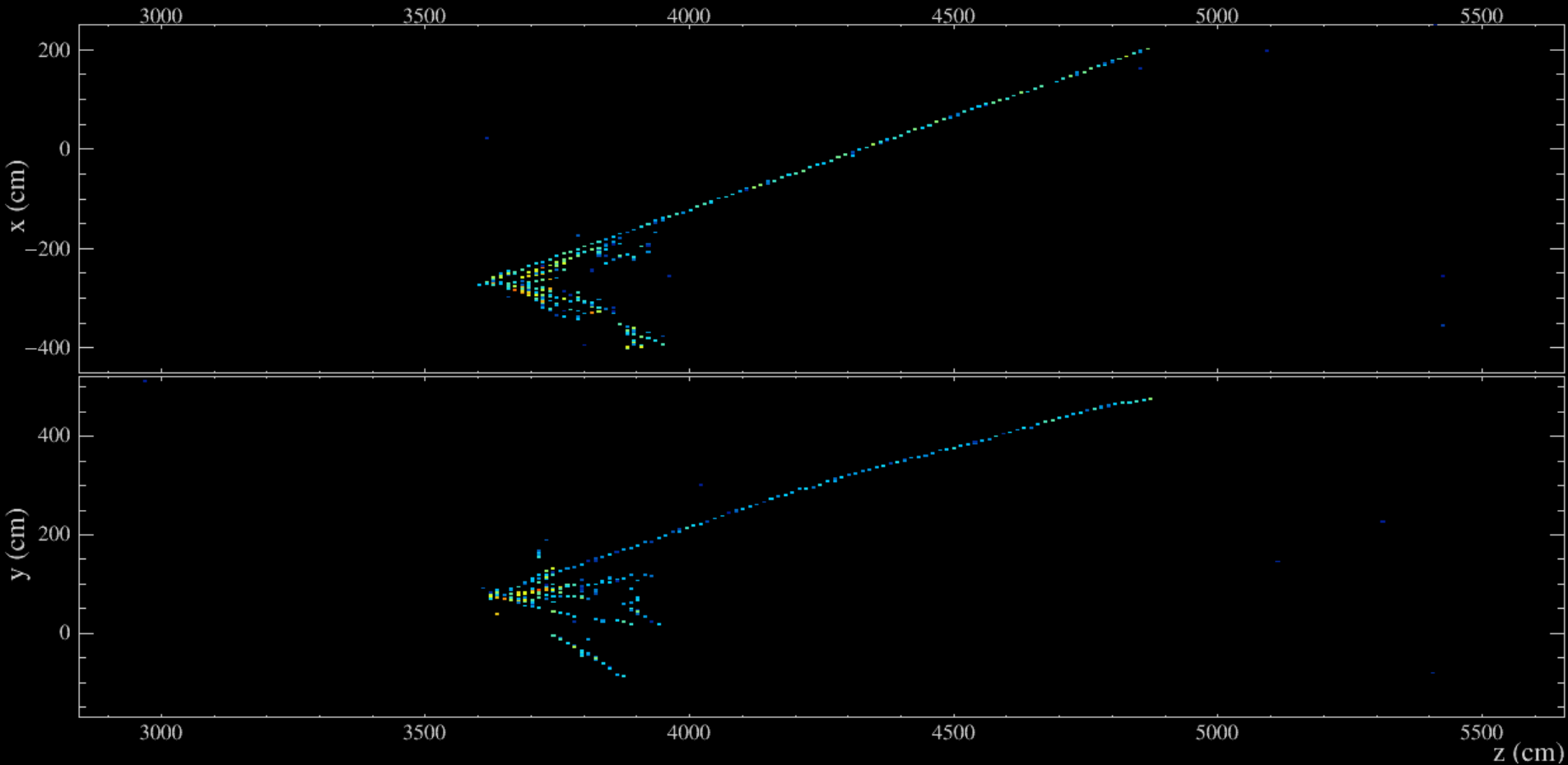
Event: 178402 / --

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00:13:53.087341608



Close-Up of Neutrino Interaction



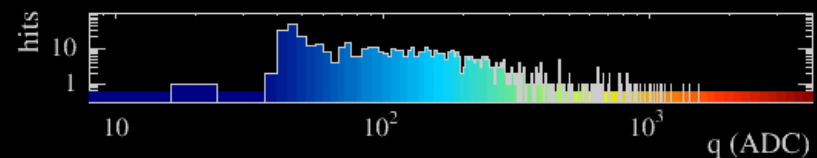
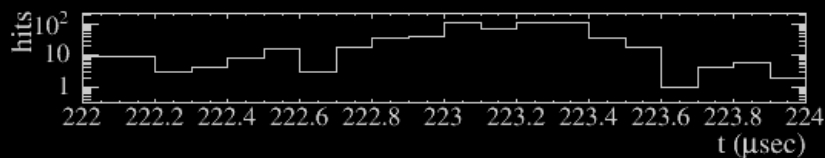
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Run: 18620 / 13

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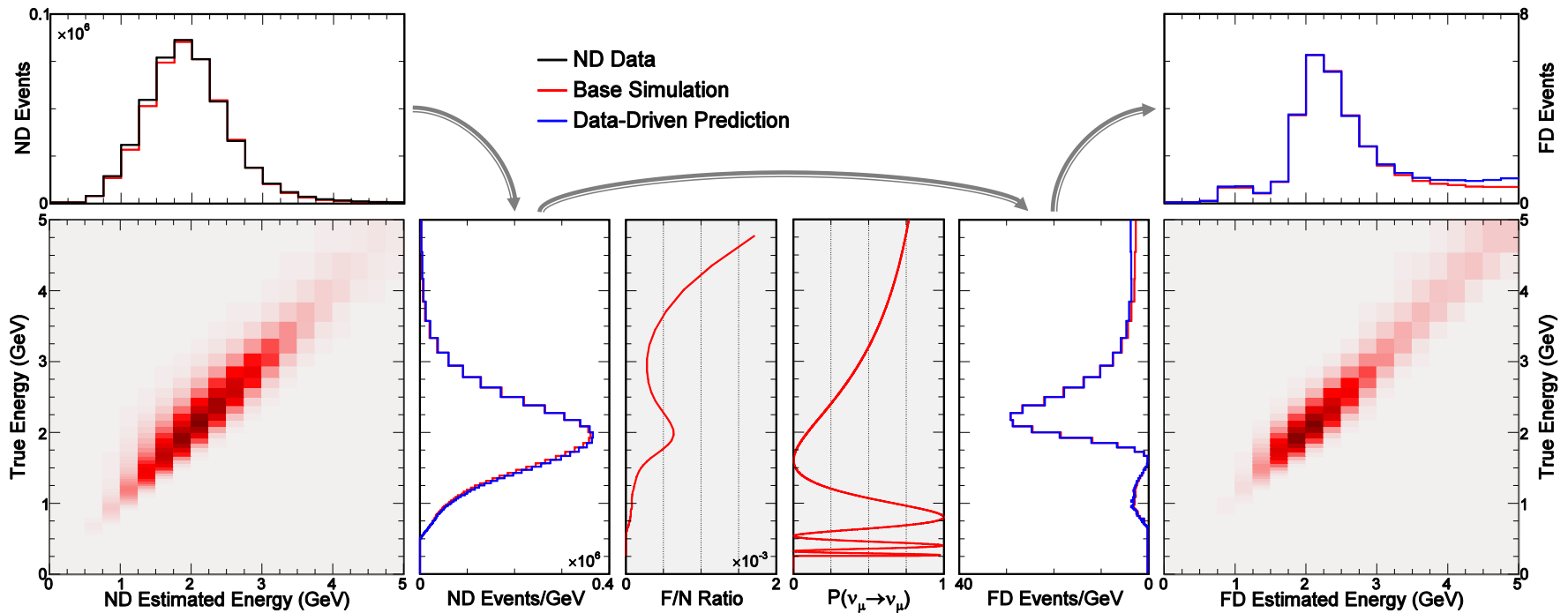
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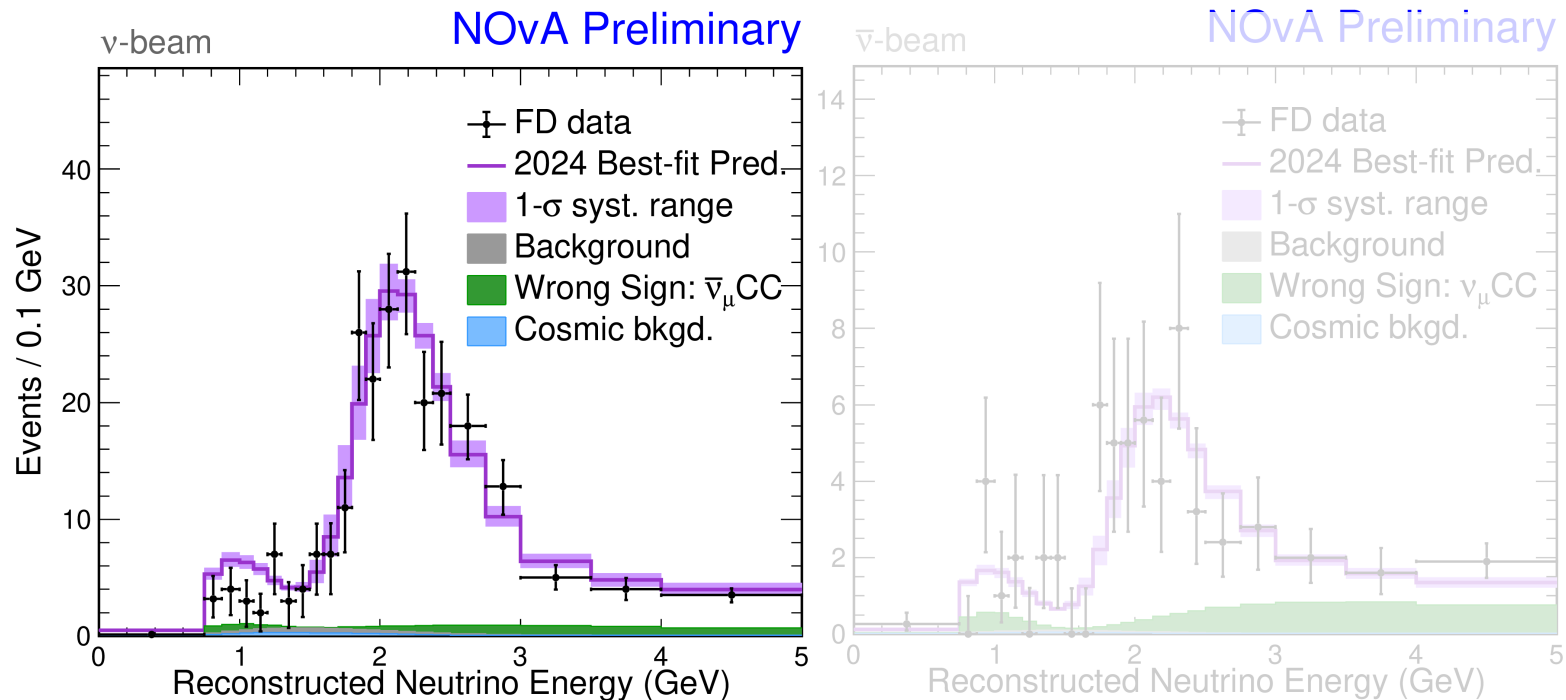


Far Detector Neutrino Prediction

- We use a data-driven technique to extrapolate the neutrino events in the near detector to the far detector:
 1. Estimate true energy distribution of near detector events
 2. Multiply by expected far/near event ratio and oscillation probability
 3. Convert far detector true energy into reconstructed energy



Muon Neutrino Events

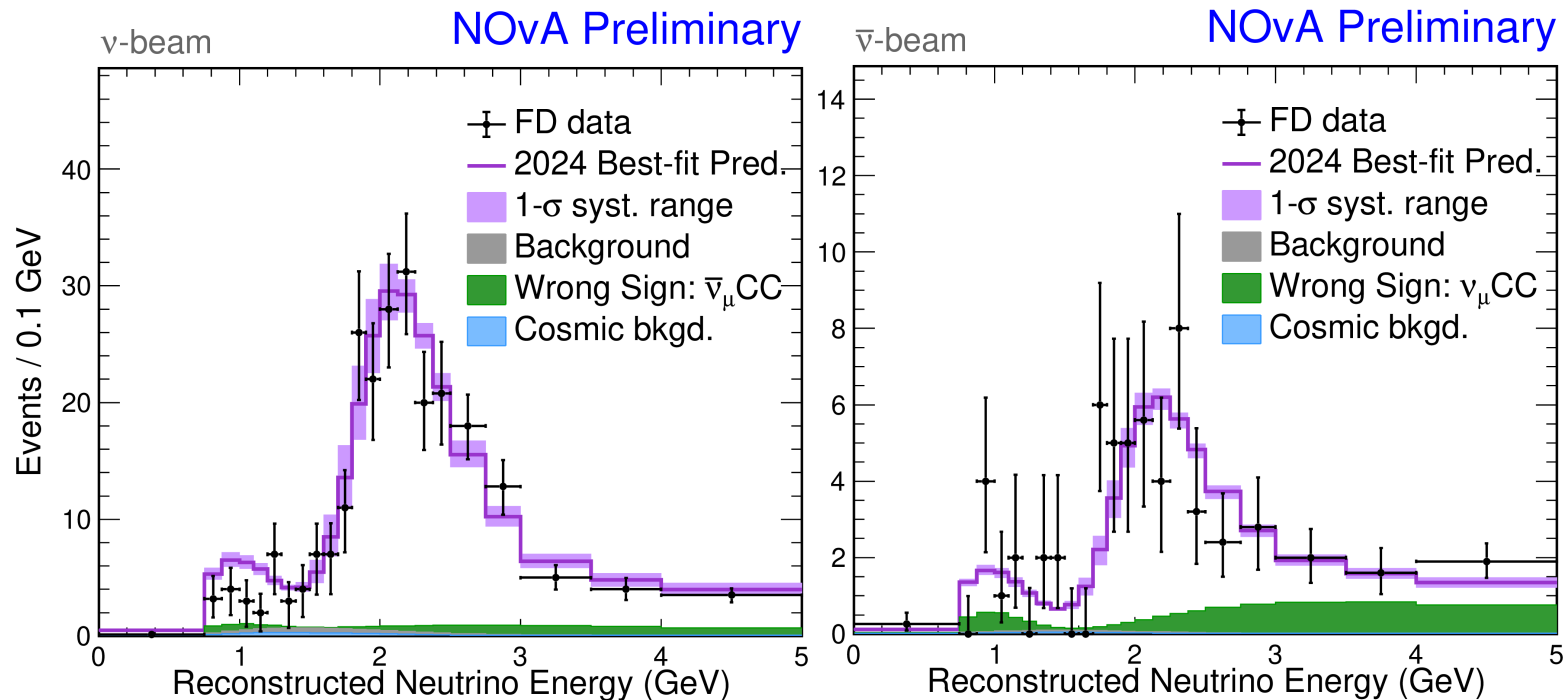


○ Muon neutrino event counts:

- 384 ν_μ candidates (beam: 26.6×10^{20} POT)
- 106 anti- ν_μ candidates (beam: 12.5×10^{20} POT)

○ Note the dip in the energy spectra indicating the disappearance of muon neutrinos

Muon Neutrino Events

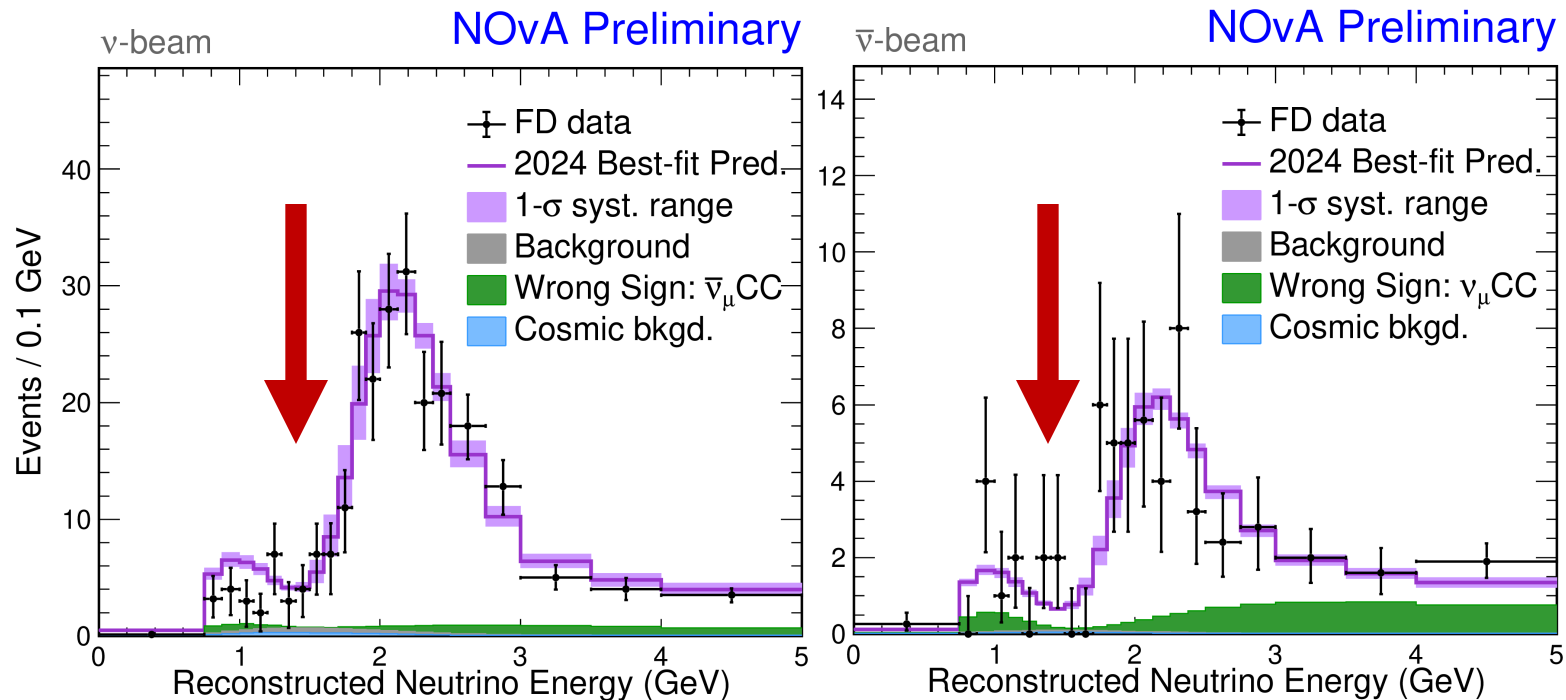


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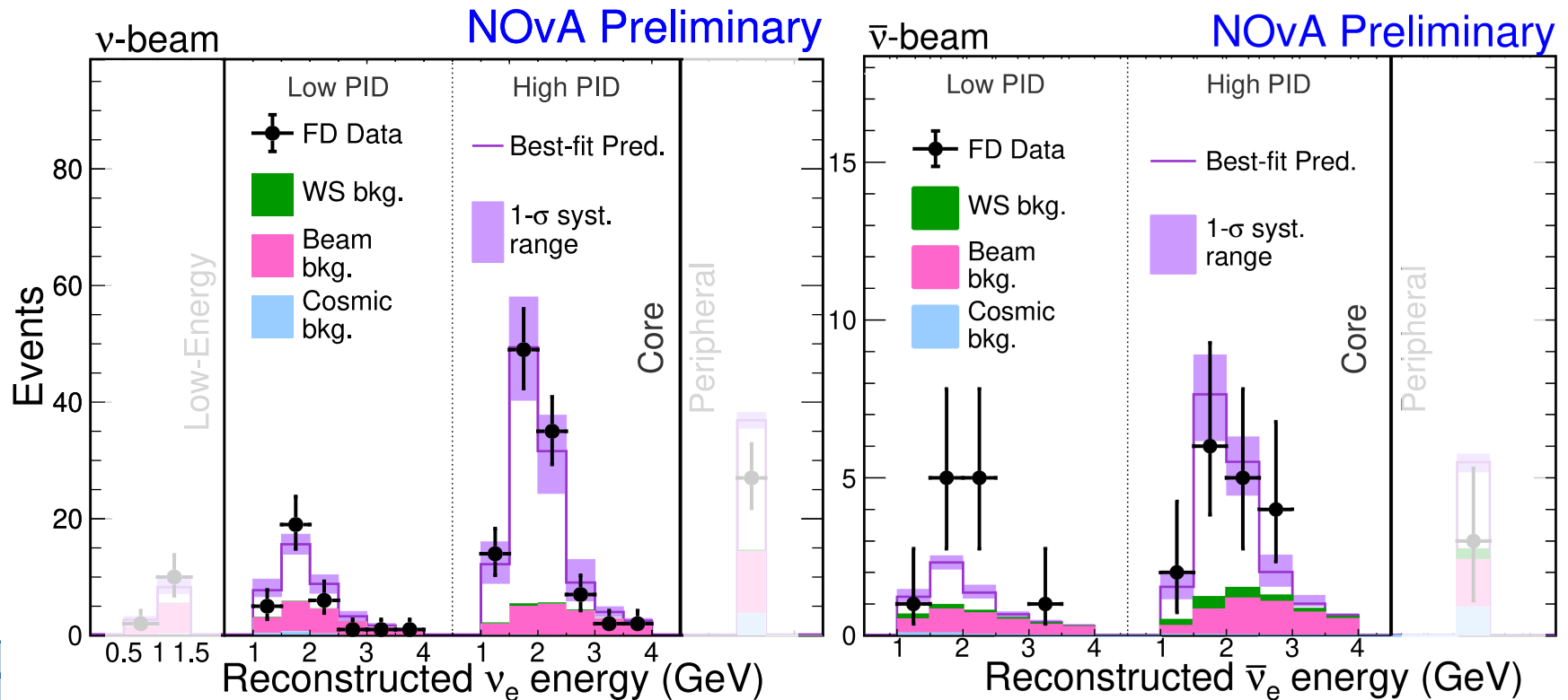
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Electron Neutrino Events



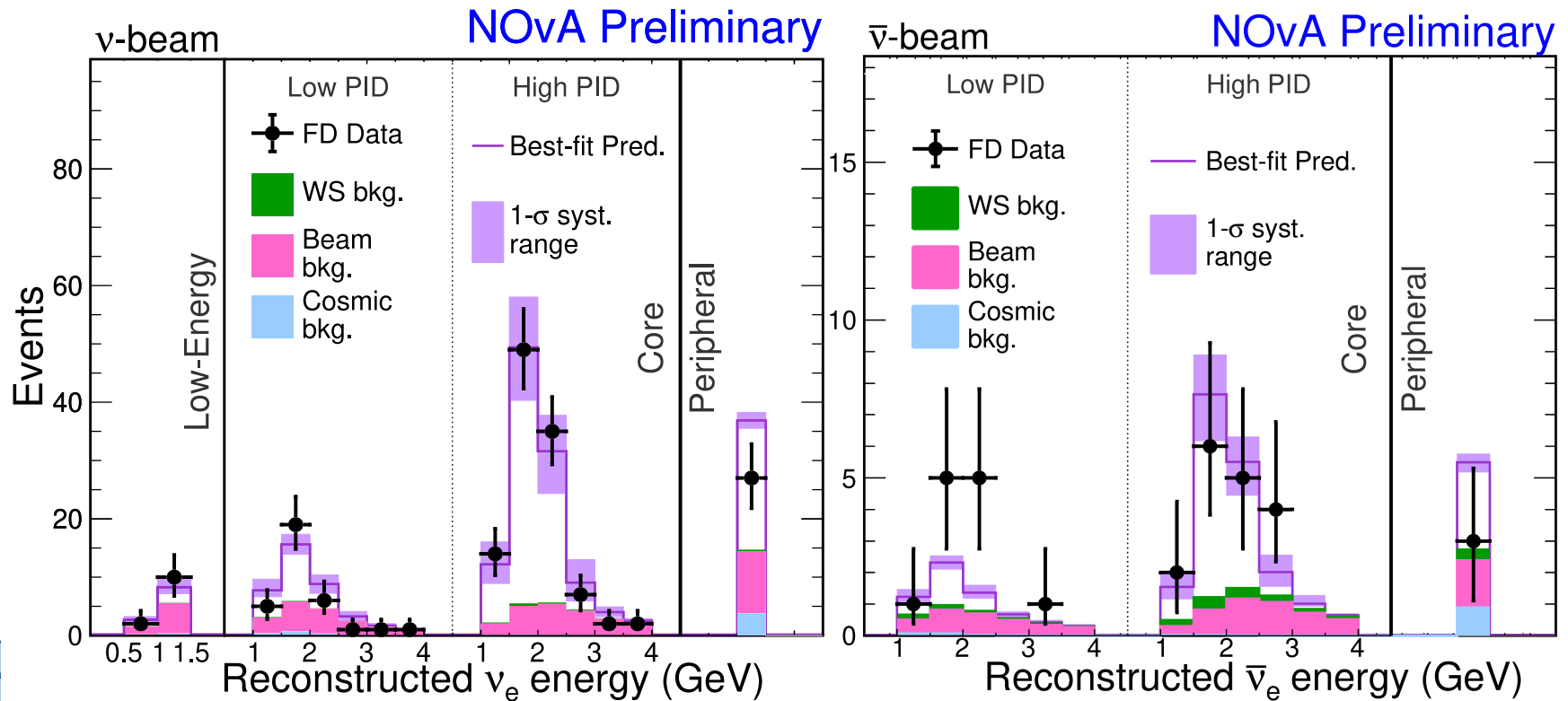
Electron neutrino event counts

- 181 ν_e candidates (beam: 26.6×10^{20} POT)
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Samples divided into four selections:

- Low-Energy, Low Particle ID (PID), High PID and Peripheral

Electron Neutrino Events



- Electron neutrino event counts

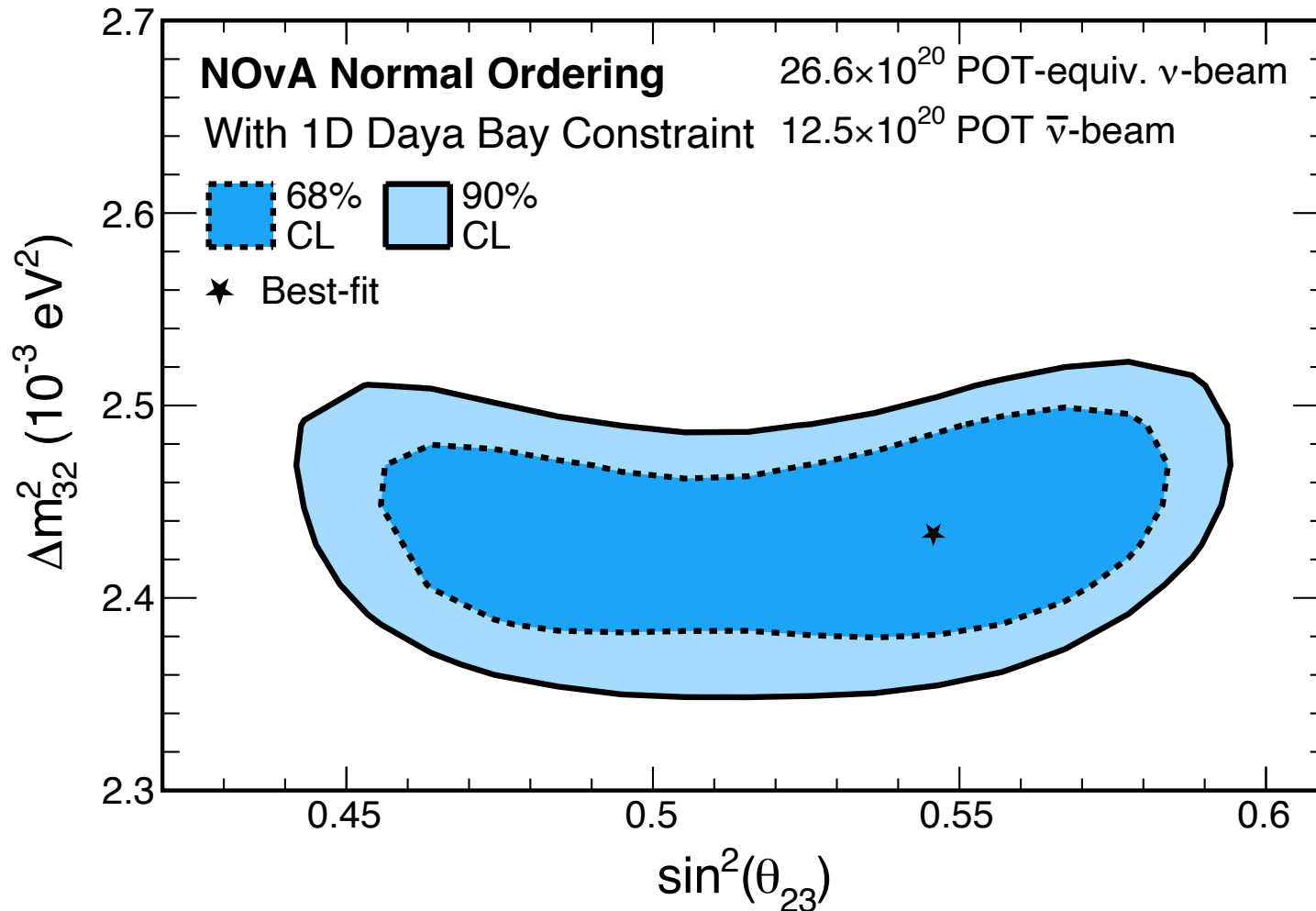
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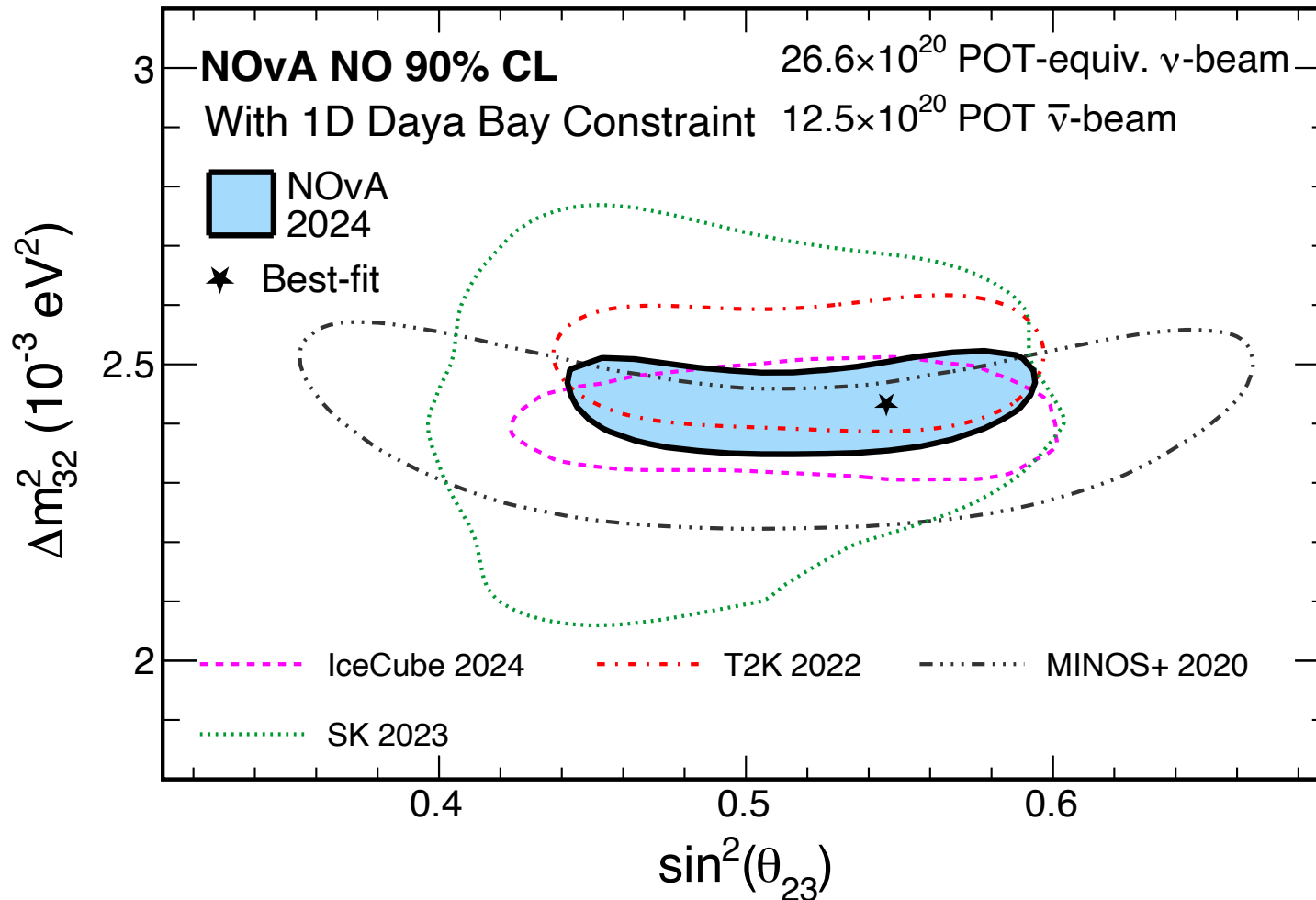
Extract Nature's Parameters

NOvA Preliminary

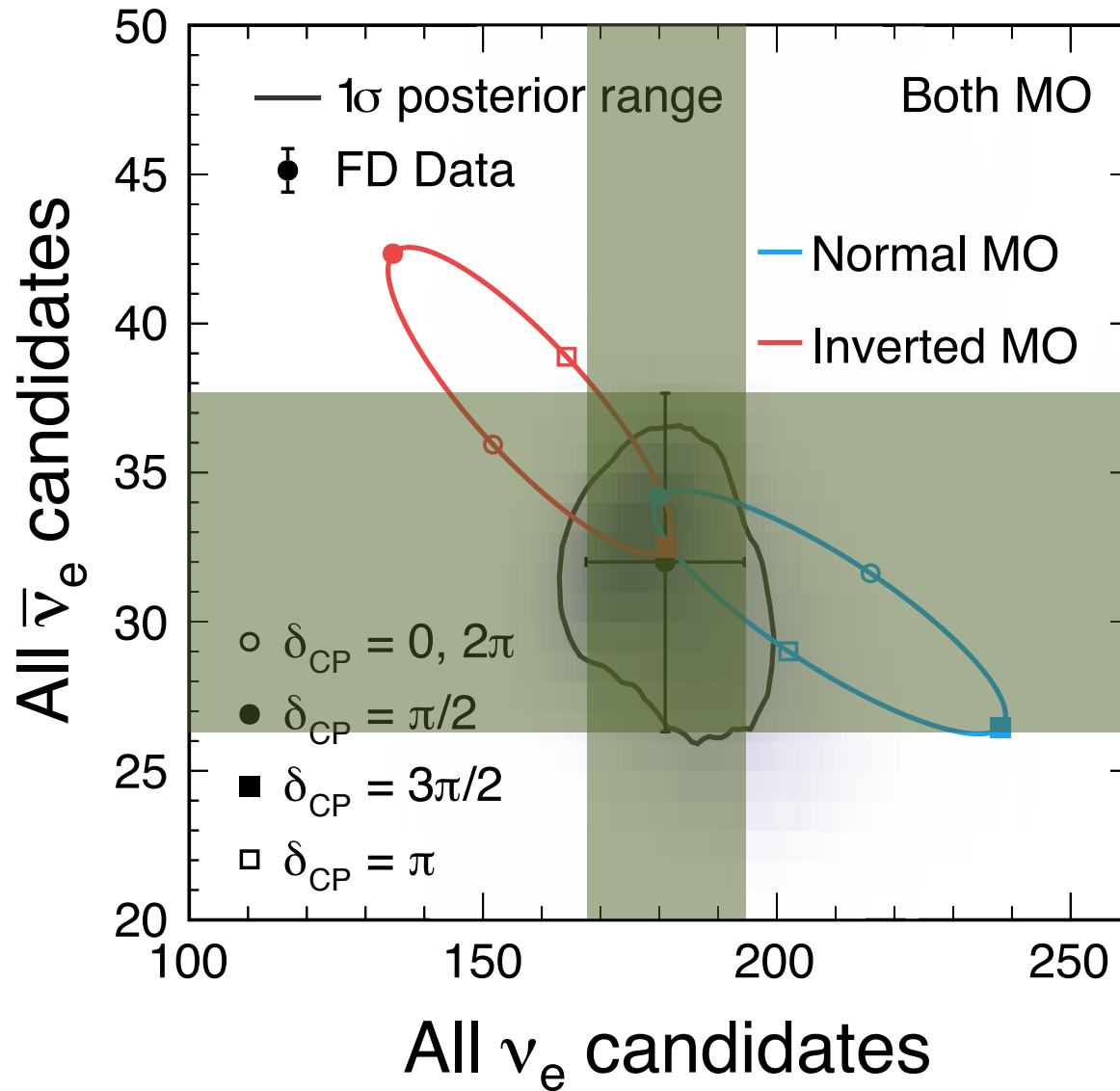


Extract Nature's Parameters

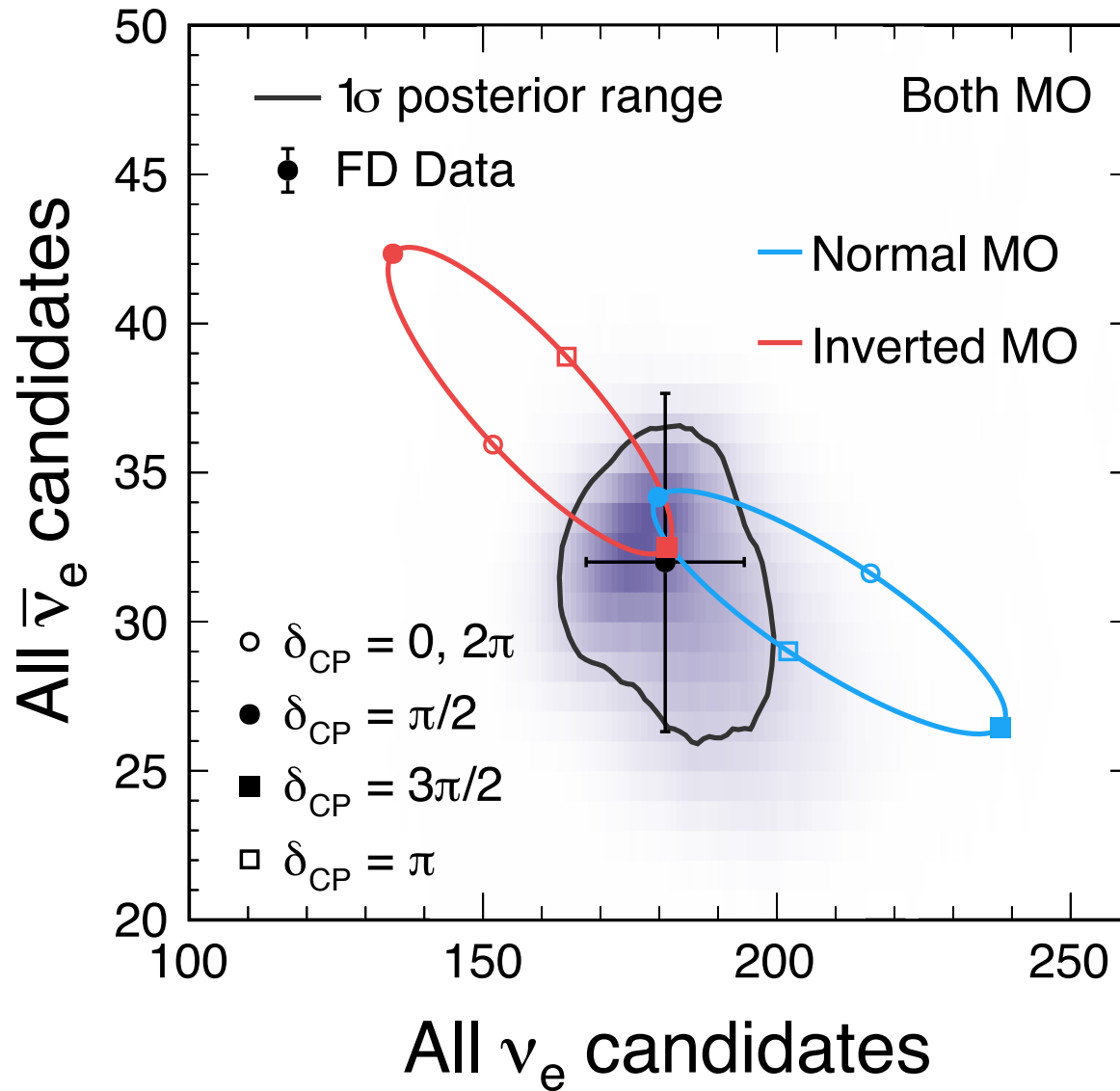
NOvA Preliminary



Extract Nature's Parameters

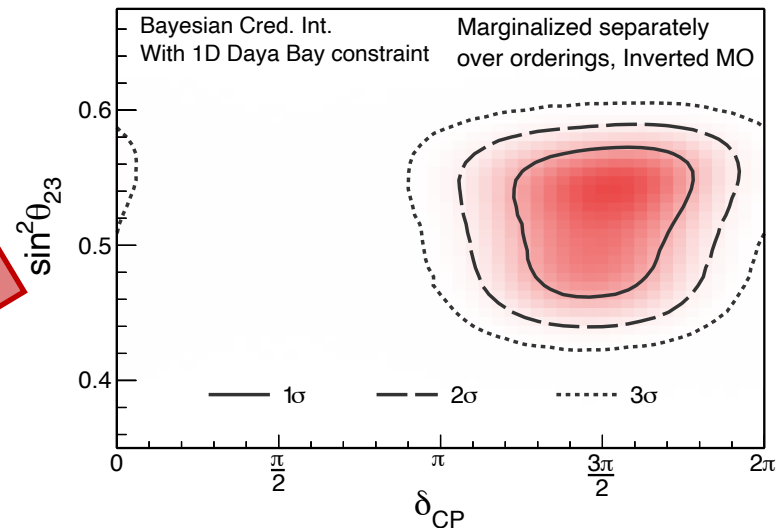
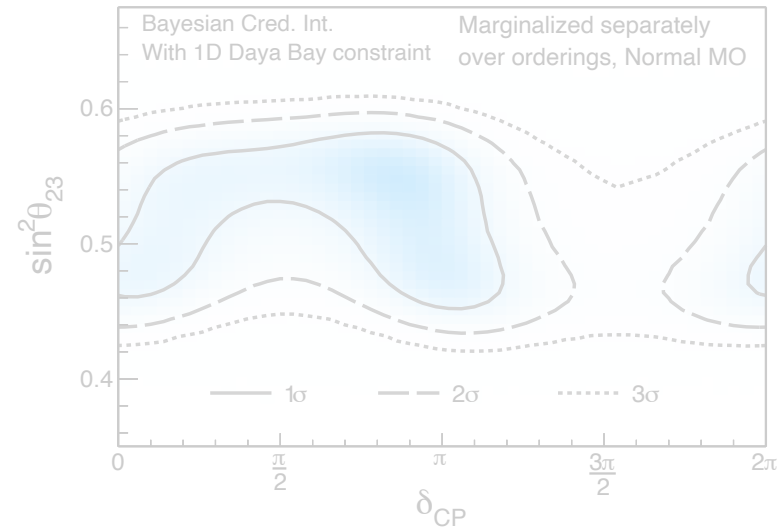
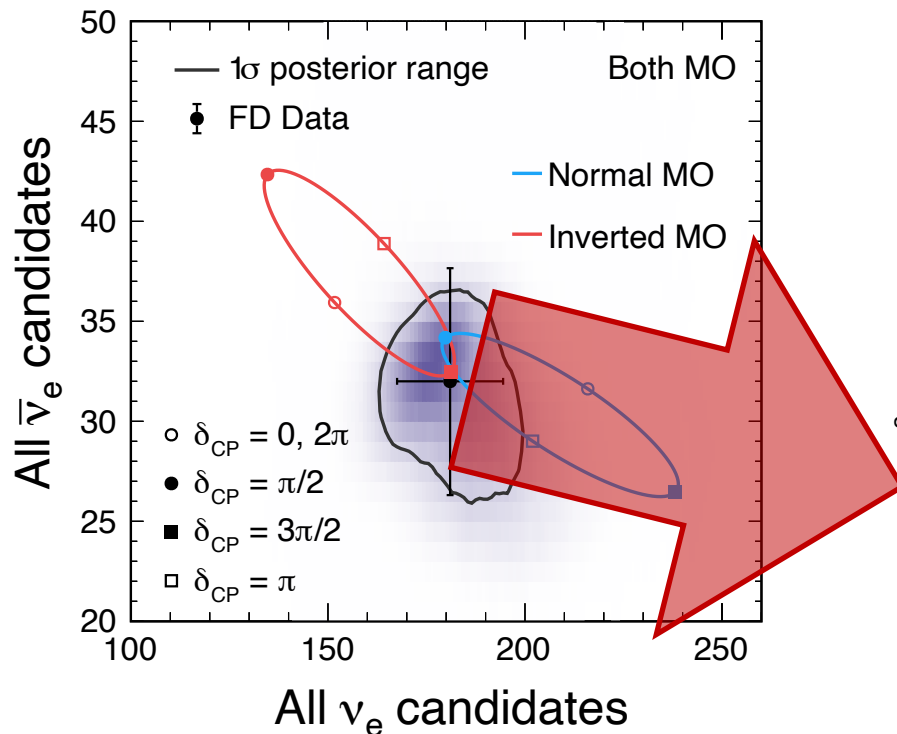


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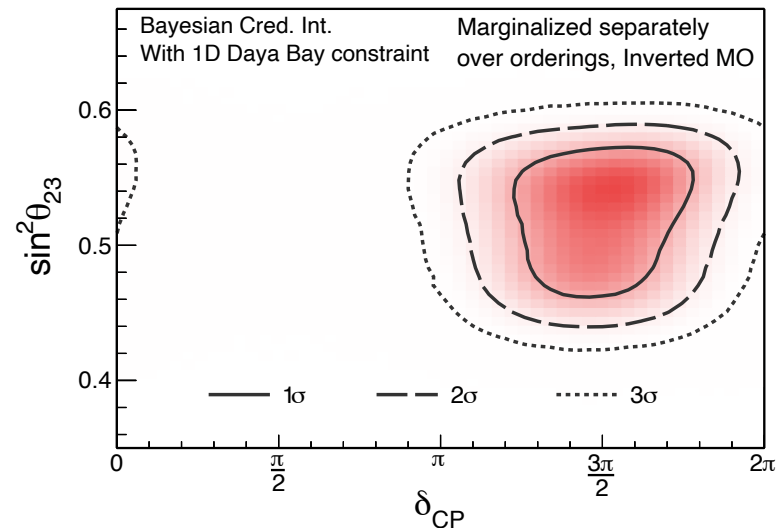
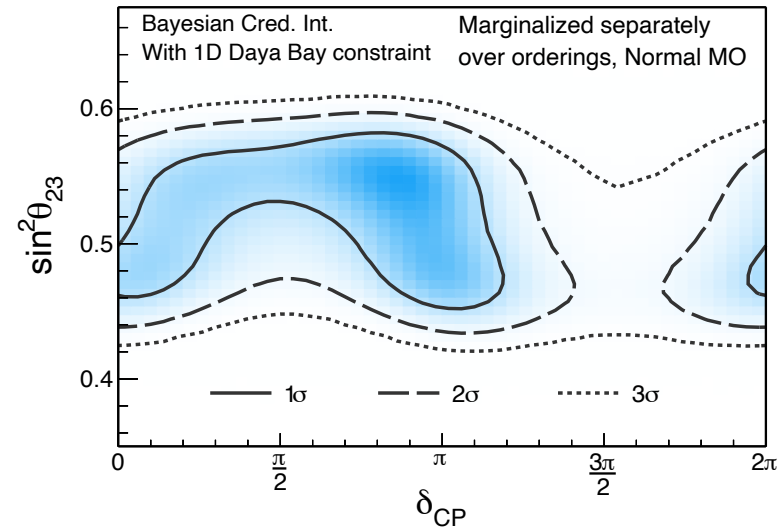
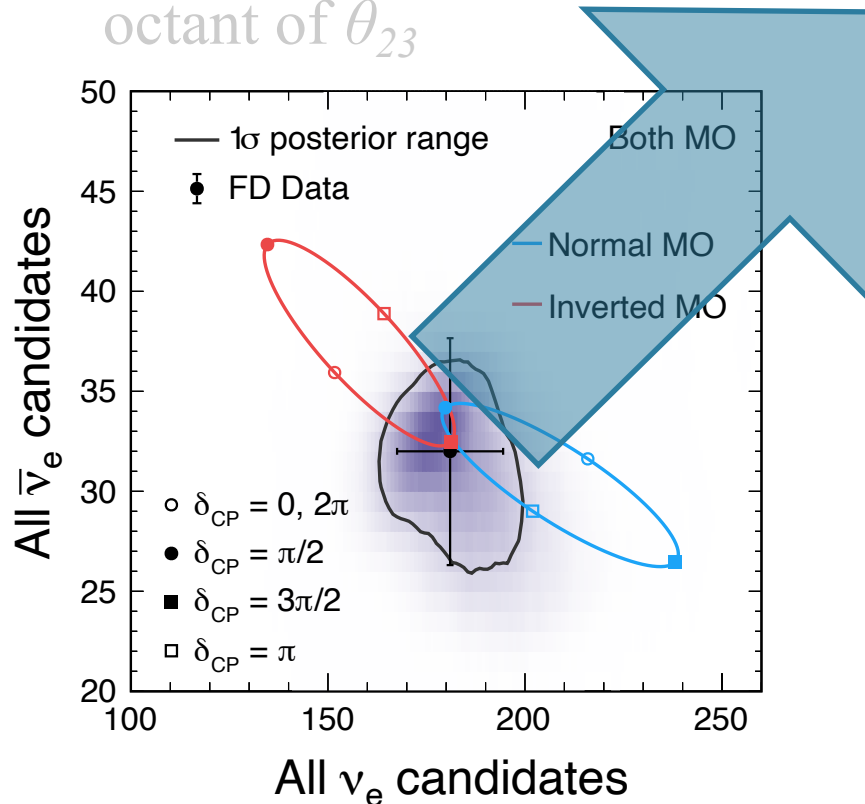
Extract Nature's Parameters

- Mild preference for normal ordering
- Mild preference for upper octant of θ_{23}



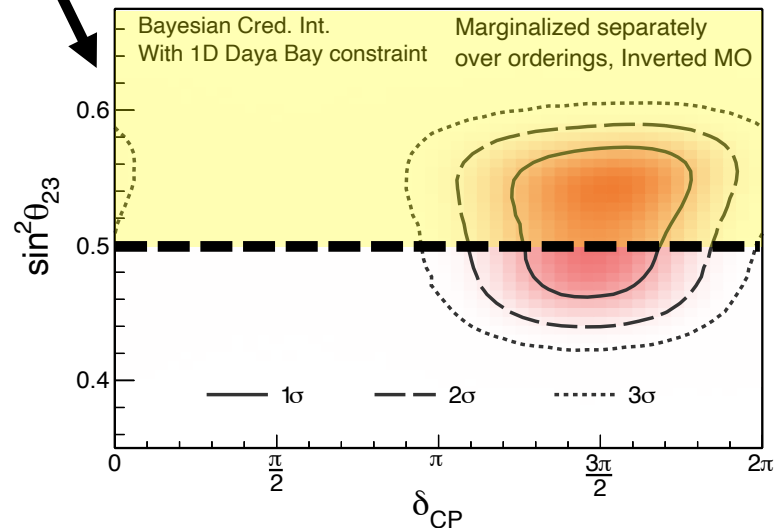
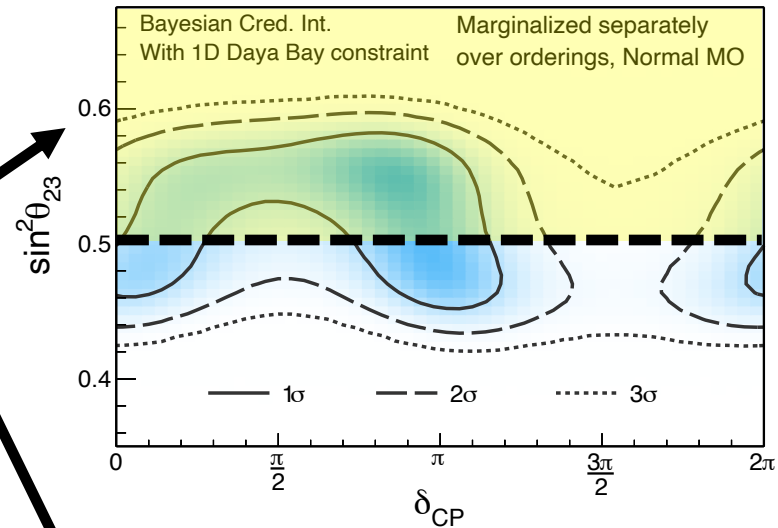
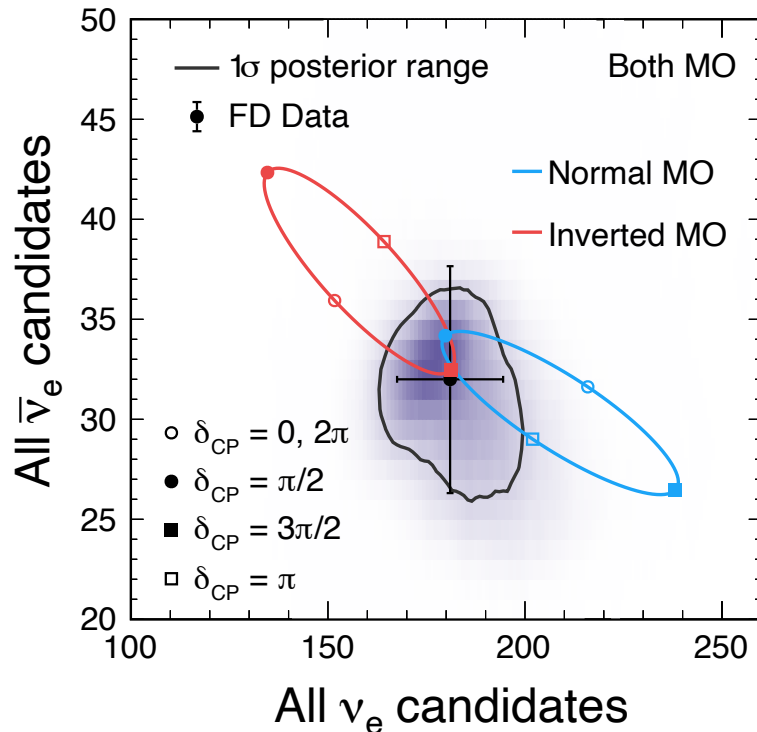
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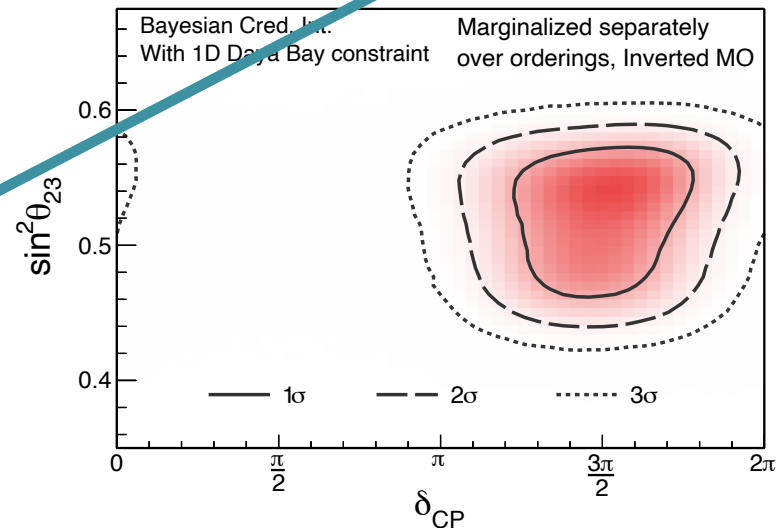
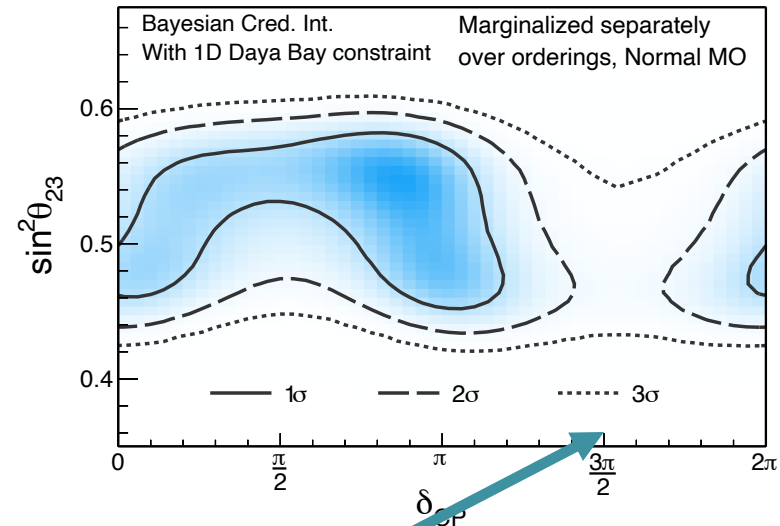
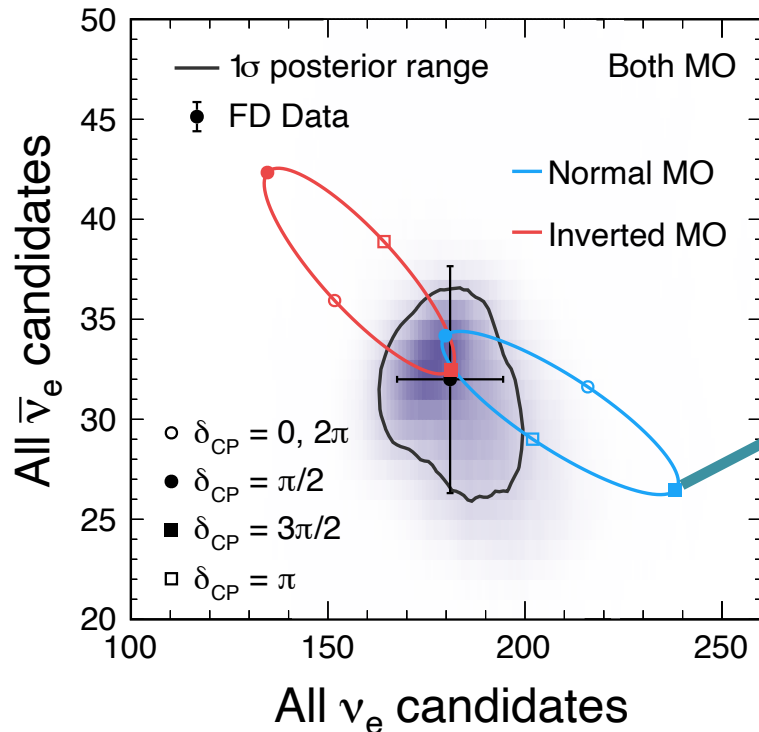
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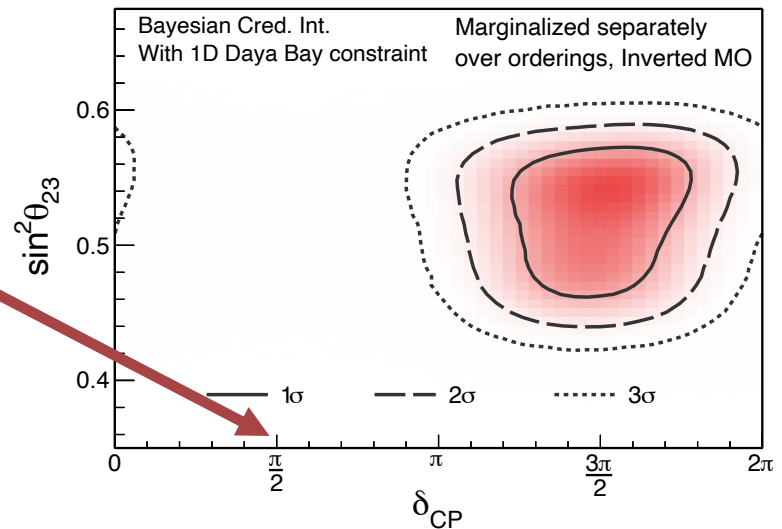
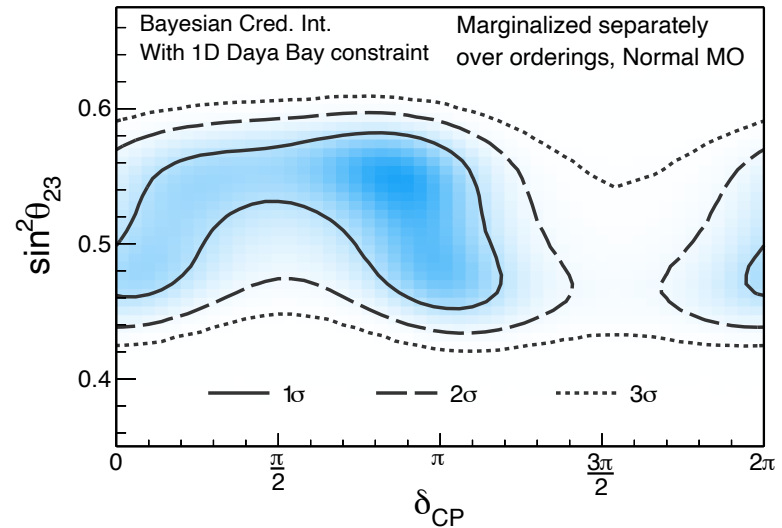
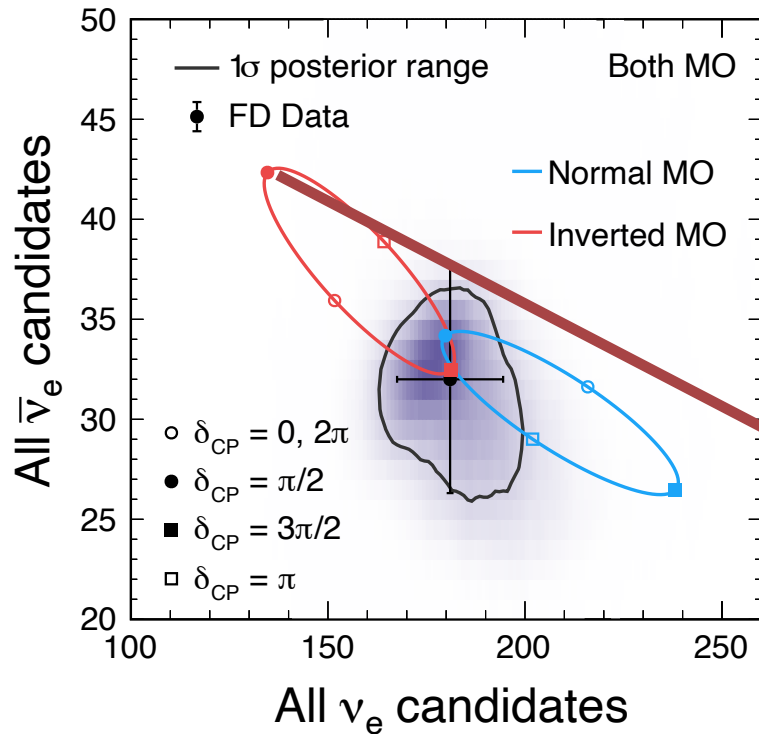
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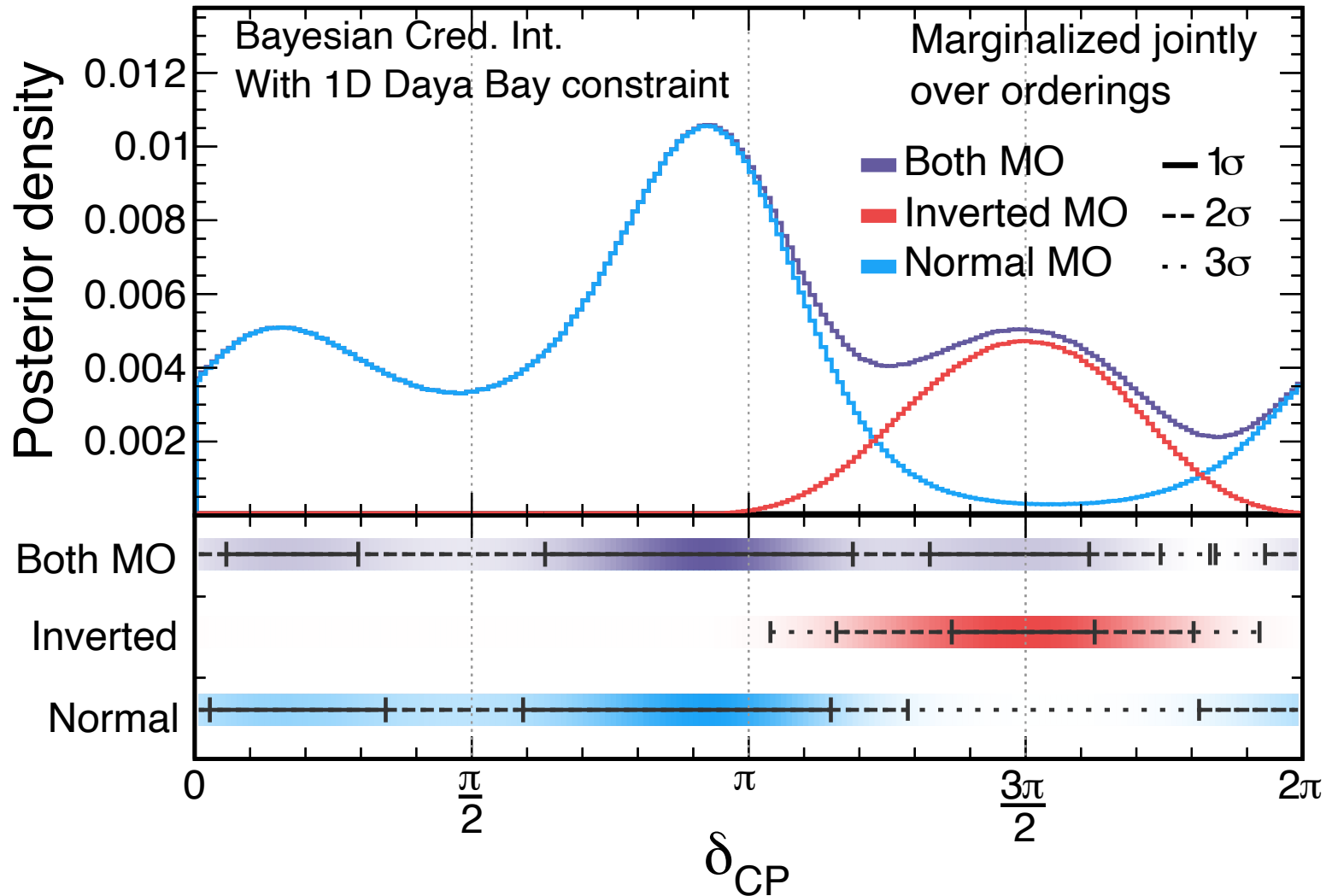


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Extract Nature's Parameters



Neutrino Oscillation Results



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- We measured the most precise single-experiment constraint on the atmospheric neutrino mass-splitting!

| Parameter | Best-fit | Normal Ordering Preference (σ) | |
|--|---------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| $\sin^2(\theta_{23})$ | $0.546^{+0.032}_{-0.075}$ | W/ 1D Daya Bay constraint | p-value 0.1731 1.36σ |
| Δm_{32}^2 (10^{-3} eV^2) | $2.433^{+0.035}_{-0.036}$ | W/ 2D Daya Bay constraint | p-value 0.1158 1.57σ |
| $\delta_{\text{CP}} (\pi)$ | 0.875 | | |



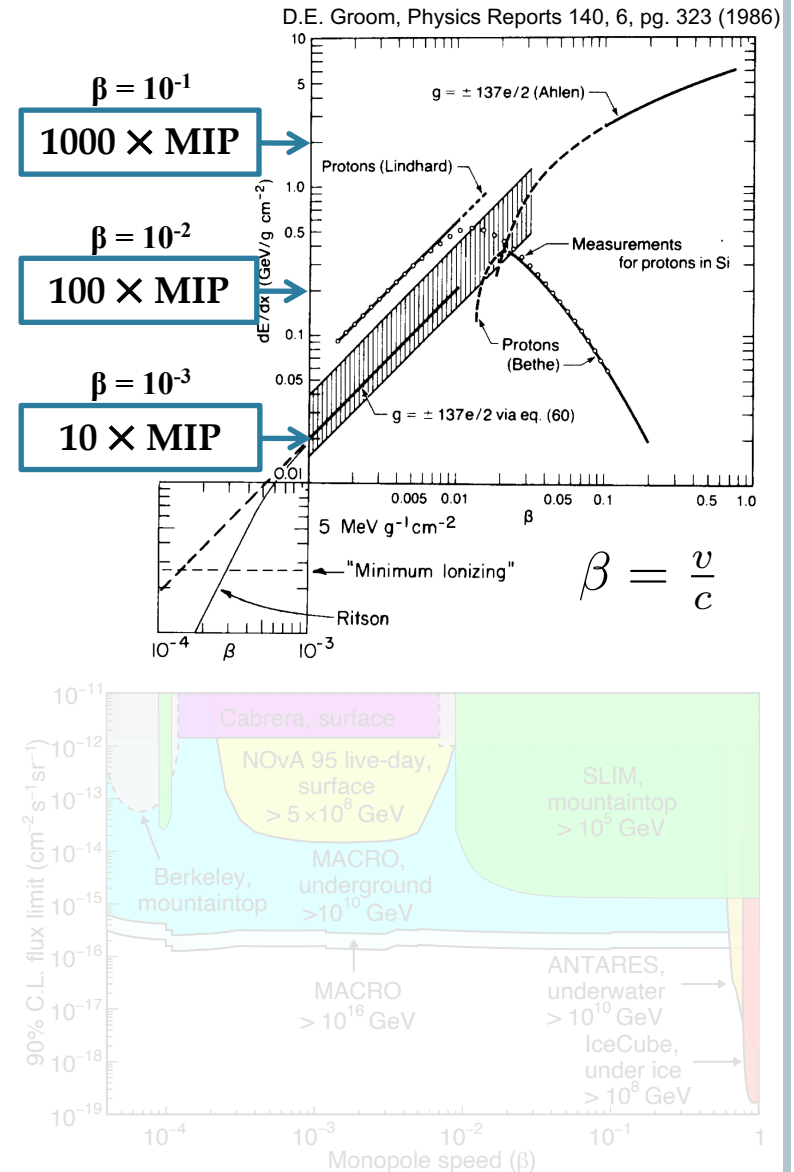
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MAGNETIC MONOPOLE SEARCH

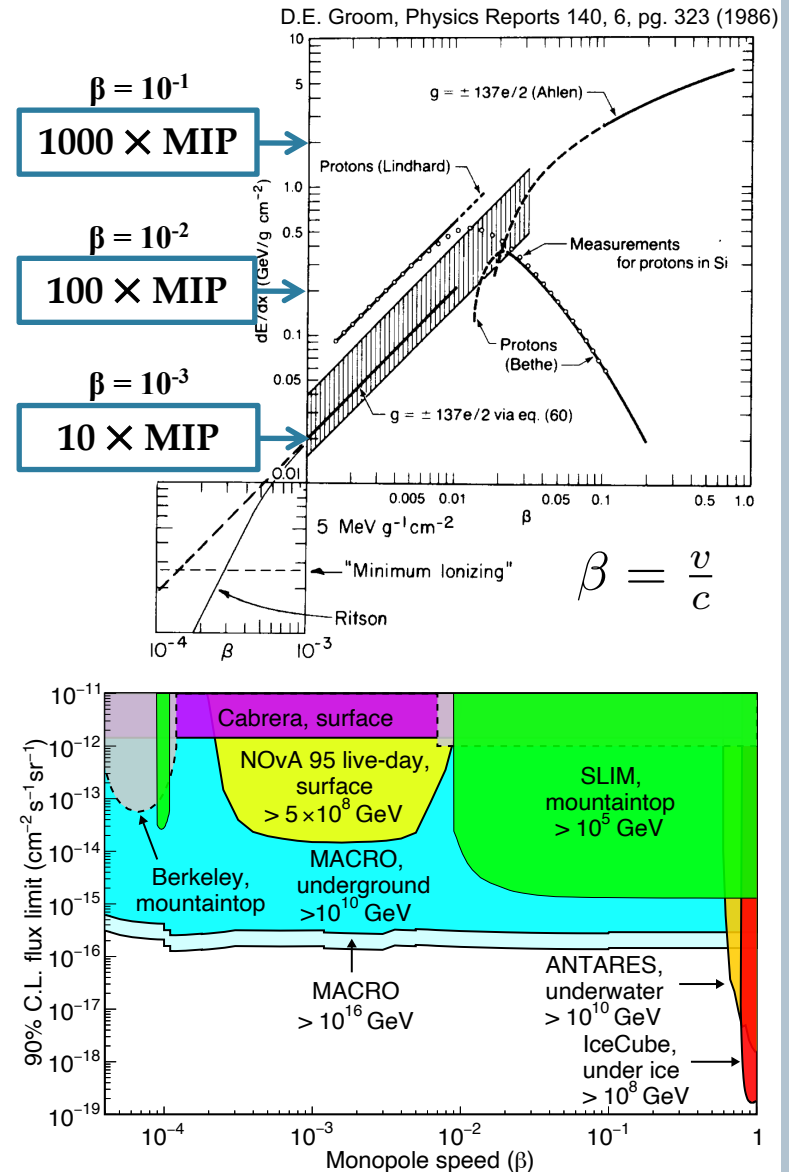
Magnetic Monopole Search

- “The magnetic monopole is the most venerable member of the mythological bestiary of physics.”
– Don Groom
- We search for magnetic monopoles.
- If they exist, they will deposit energy in our detector.
- NOvA has the unique potential to probe a new region of phase space:
 - due to our large surface area
 - and our location on the surface.
- NOvA has dedicated triggers to write out monopole-like events.
- First search published in 2021.



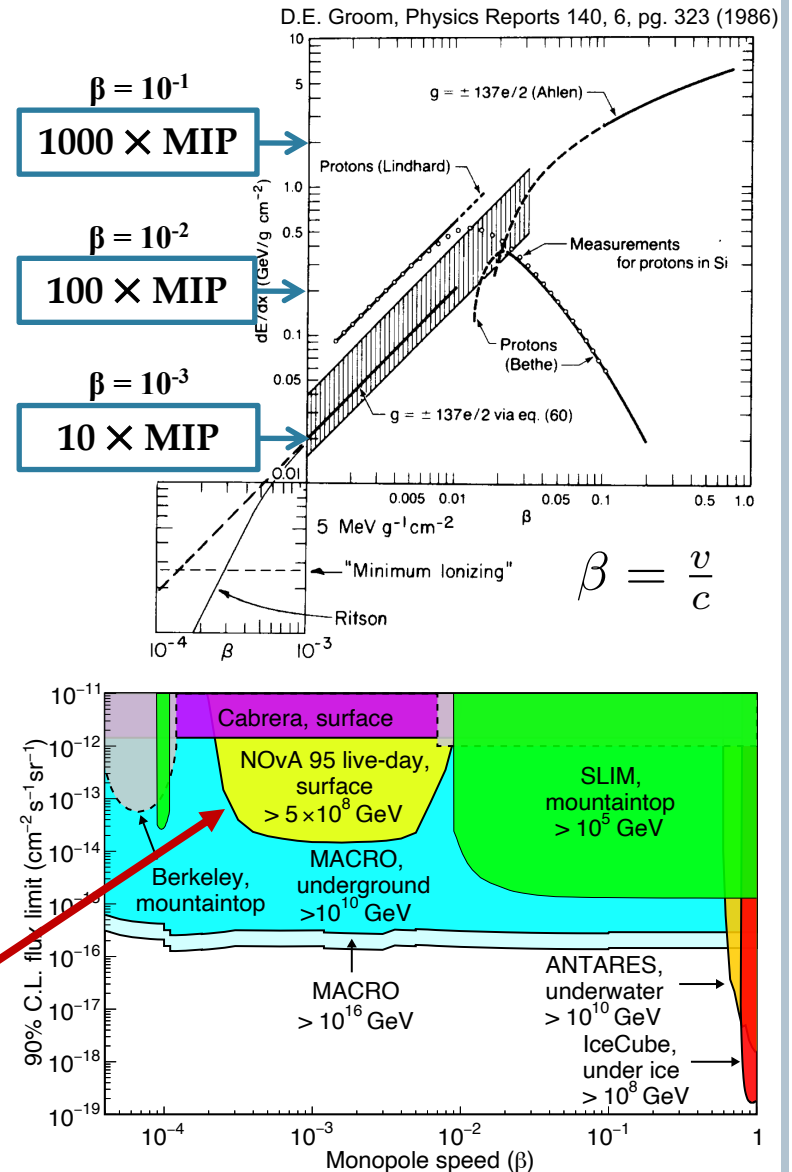
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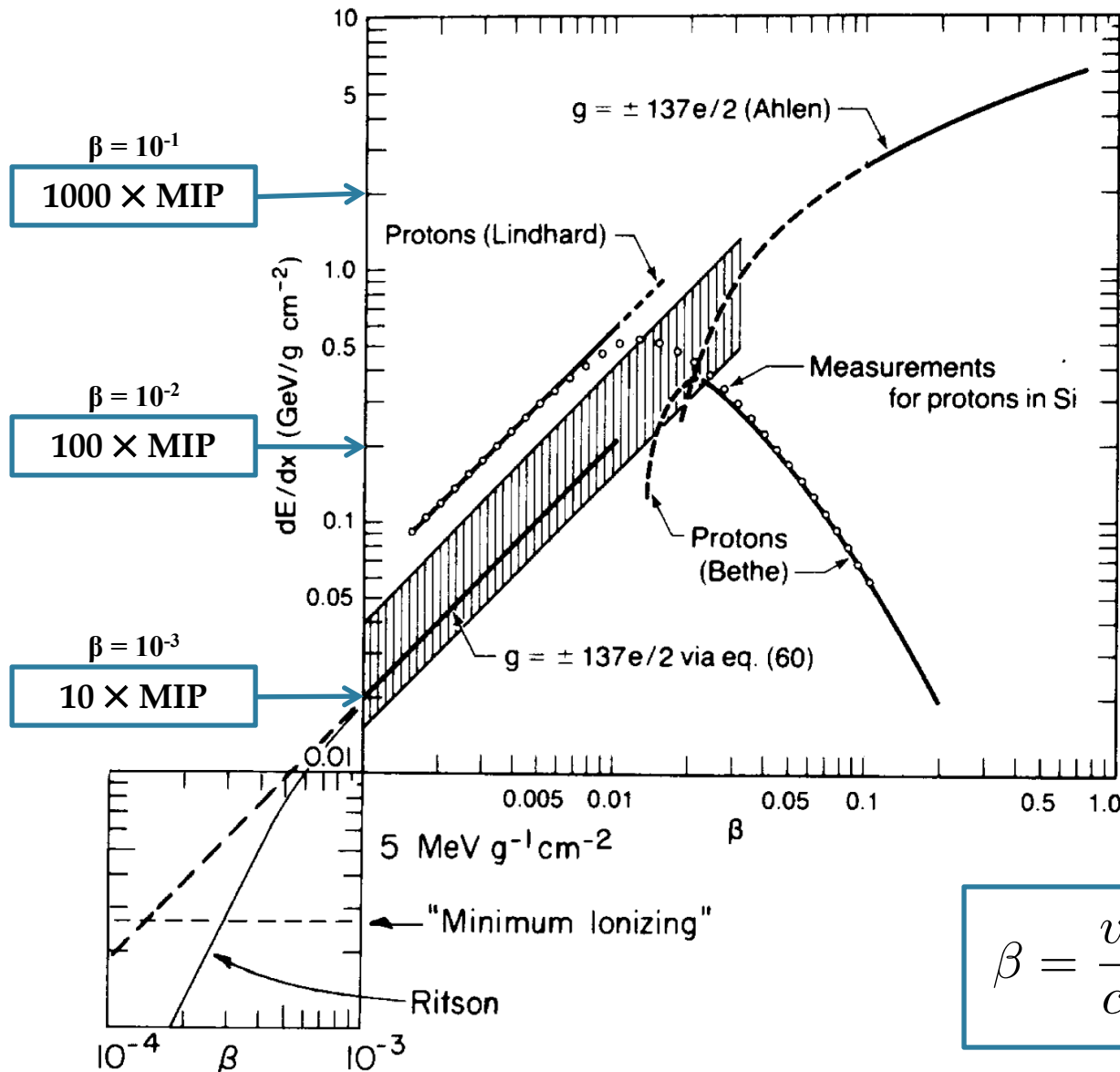


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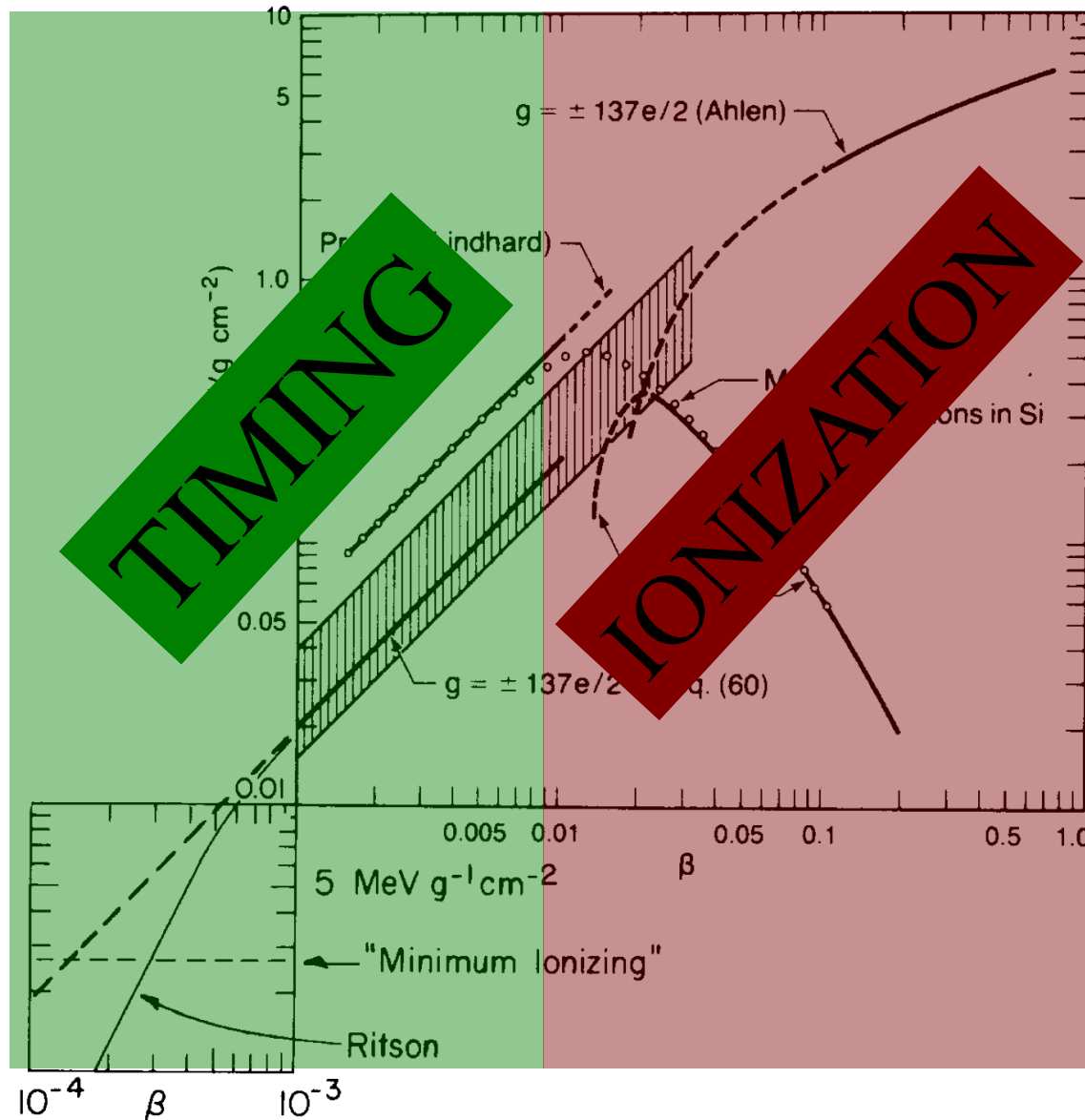
Magnetic Monopole Energy Deposition



- Groom's summary of the magnetic monopole energy deposition as calculated from EM.
- Monopole interaction is similar to particle with charge $Z = 69$ at high β .

$$\beta = \frac{v}{c} = \frac{\text{velocity}}{\text{speed of light}}$$

Analysis Strategy



- We divide the magnetic monopole searches into two broad categories based on:

- Ionization
- Timing

Analysis Strategy

Large energy deposition is suppressed through Birks effect.

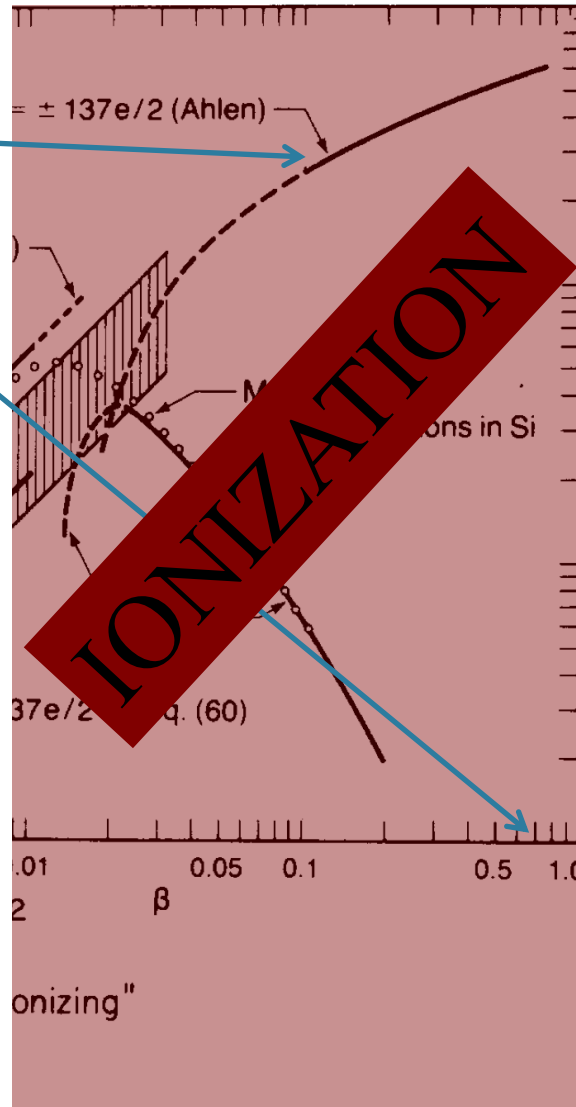


- A lot of work went into verifying that these effects were properly accounted for in our simulation.

Analysis Strategy

Large energy deposition is suppressed through Birks effect.

Fast monopoles ($\beta \gtrsim 0.7$) produce Cherenkov light.

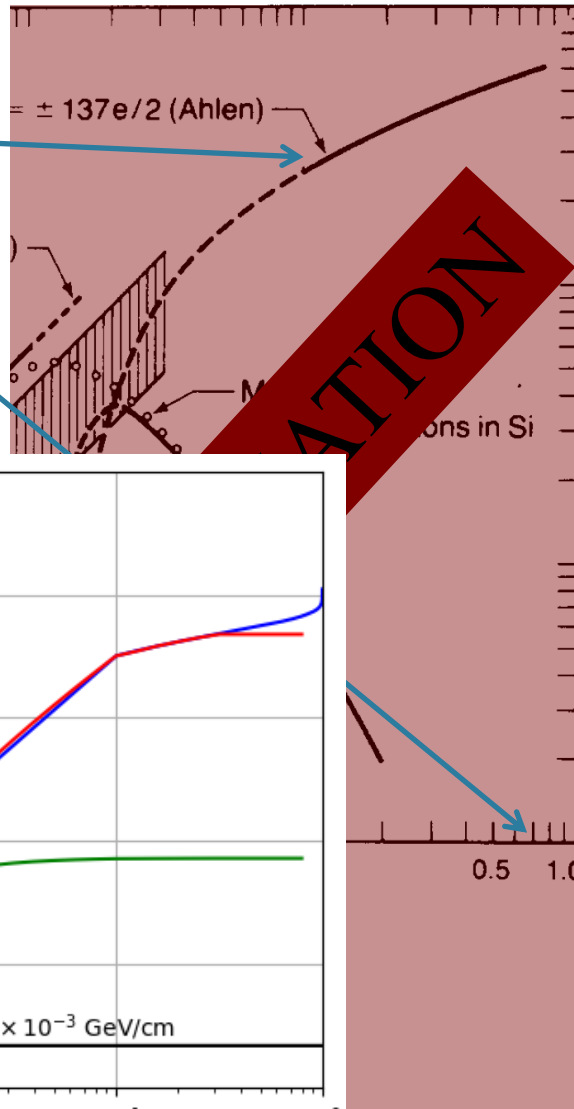


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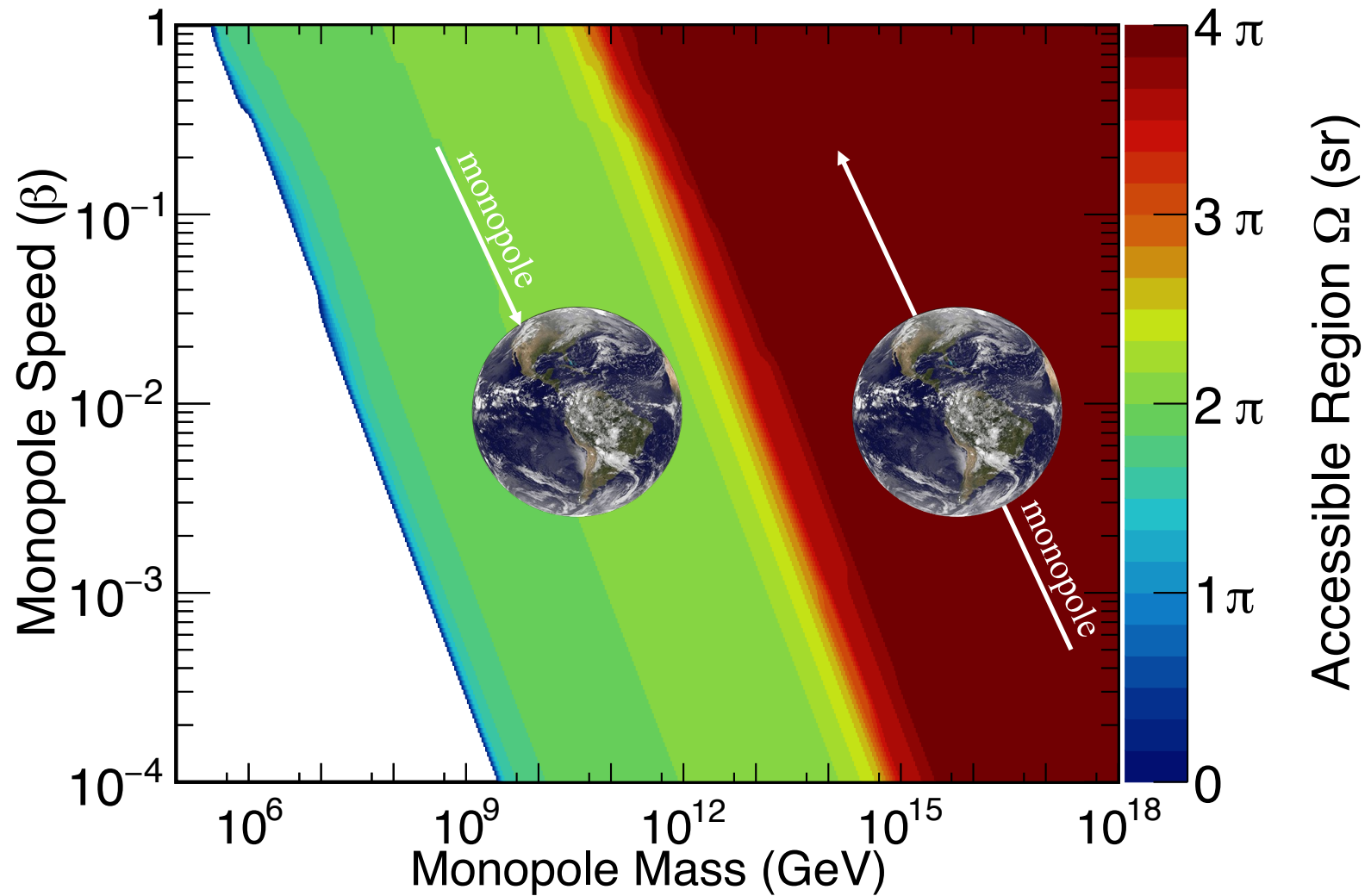
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Acceptance Region



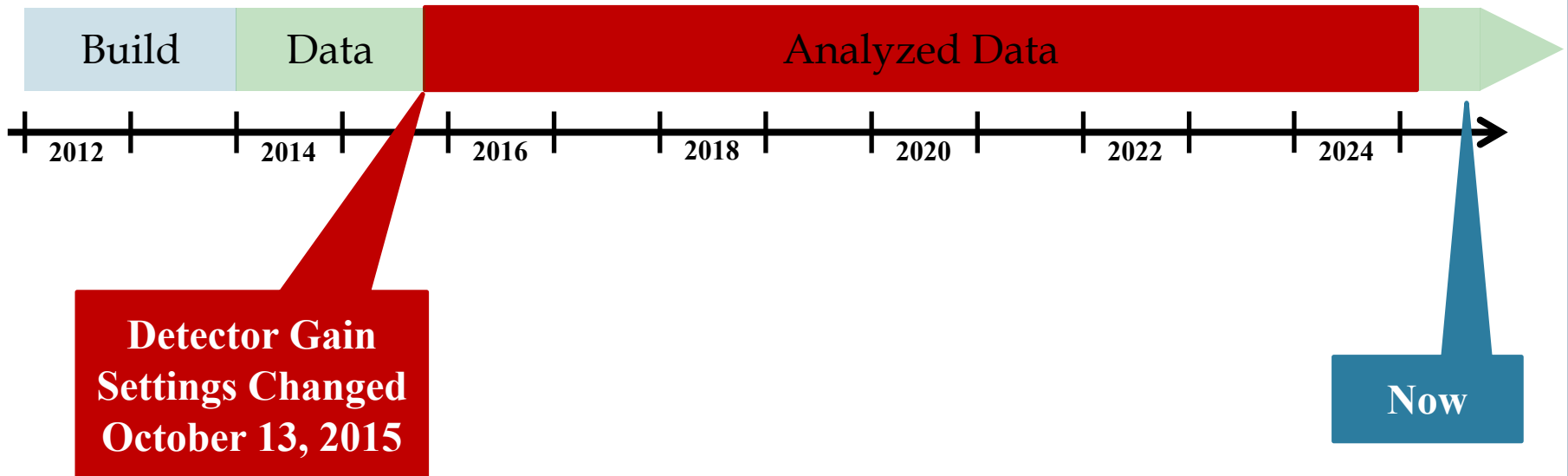
Data Samples

○ Ionization Search:

- October 2015 – February 2025
- 2,904 days (2,713 days marked as good)

○ Timing Search:

- February 2016 – October 2024
- 2,985 days (2,743 days marked as good)



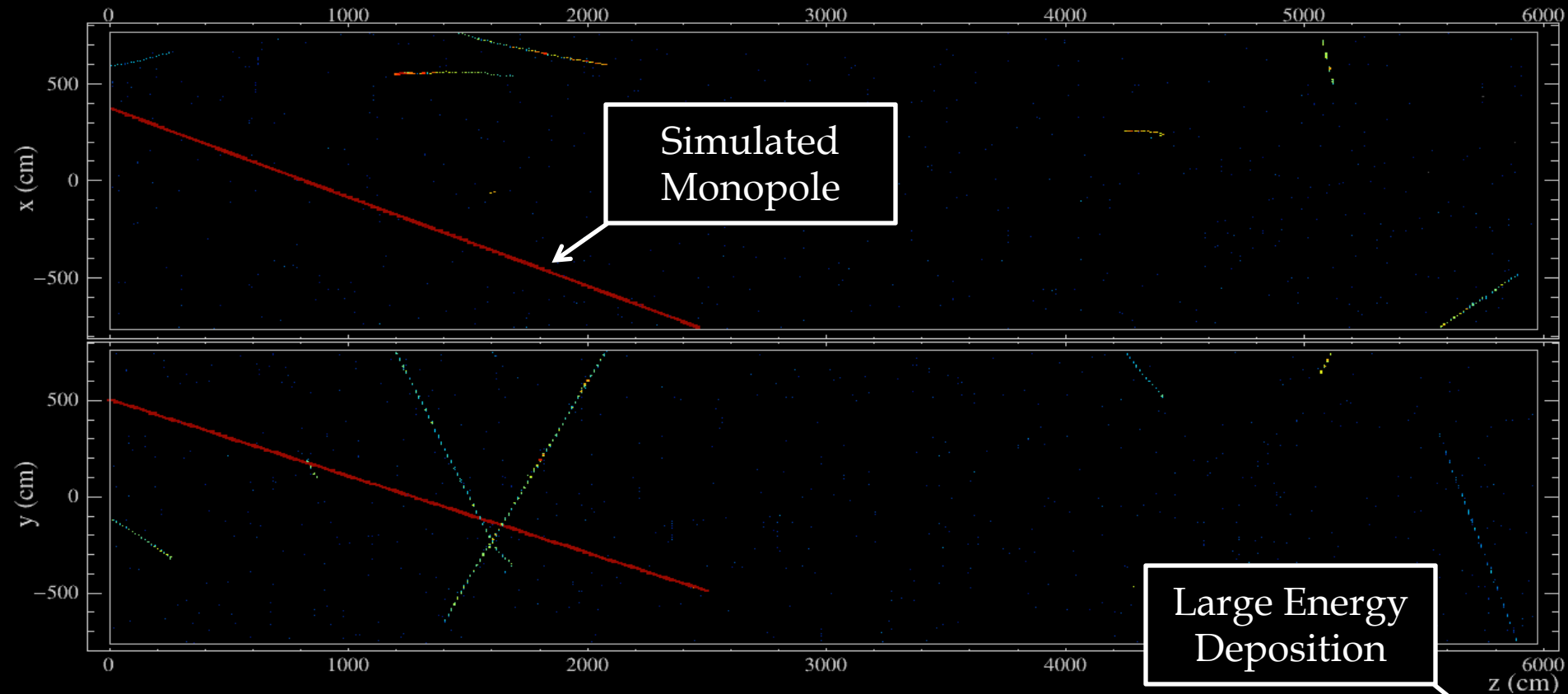


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IONIZATION MAGNETIC MONOPOLE SEARCH

Raw Data with Simulated Monopole



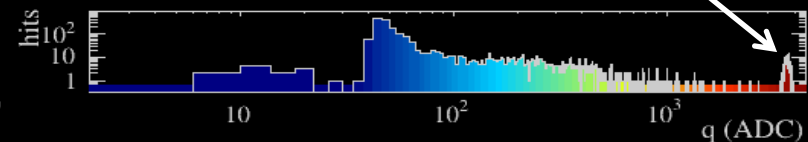
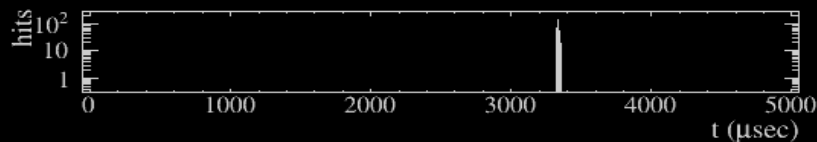
NOvA - FNAL E929

Run: 24000 / 1

Event: 9 / --

UTC Thu Jan 1, 1970

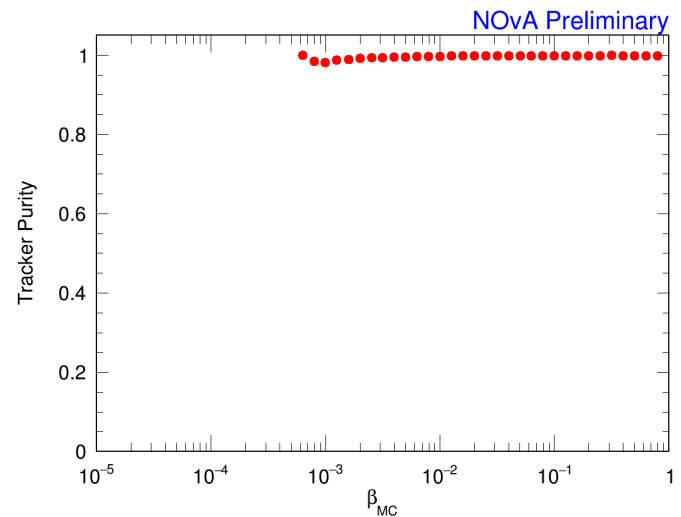
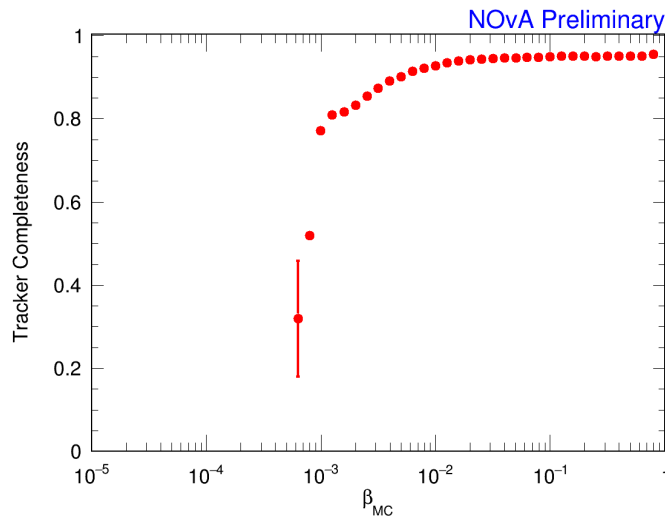
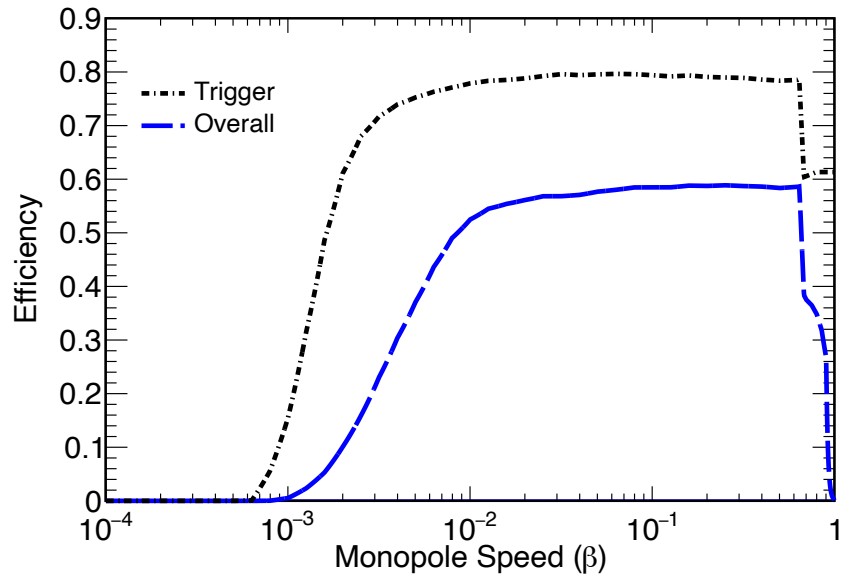
00:00:0.000000000



50 μs Exposure

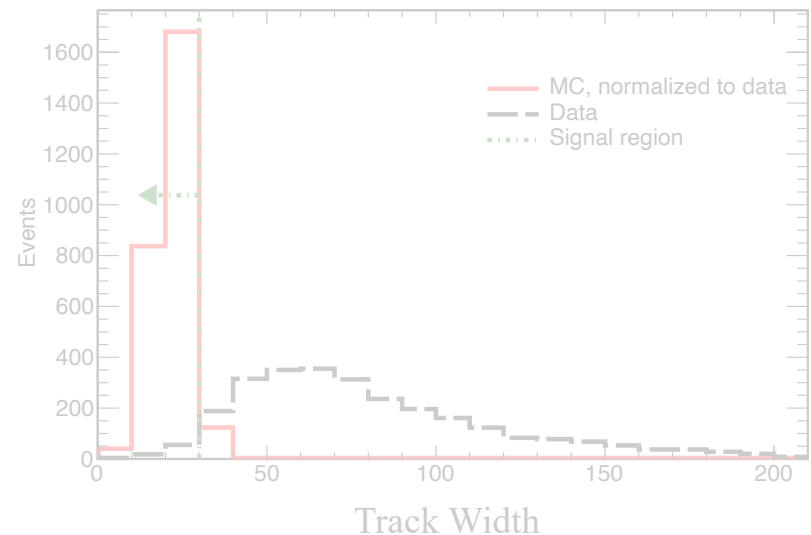
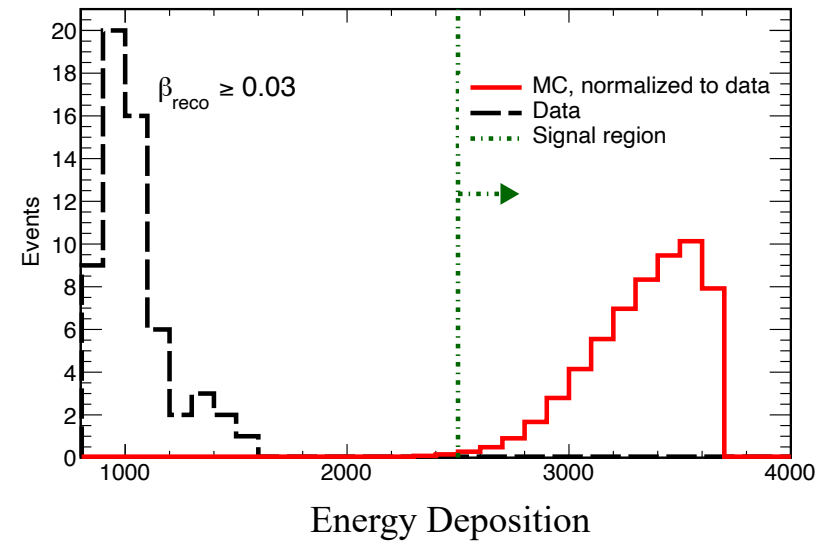
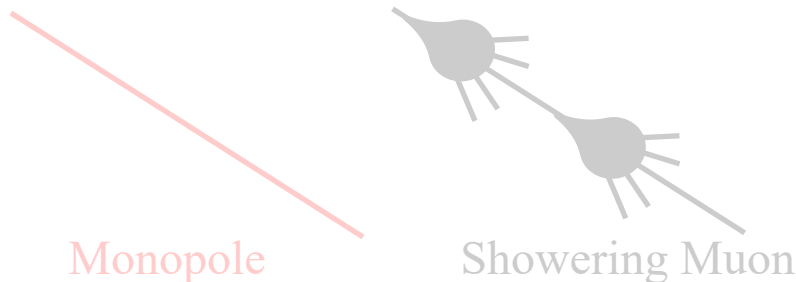
Analysis Strategy

1. Trigger on monopole-like patterns with high energy depositions in live data stream.
2. Reconstruct event kinematics offline.
 - $\sim 100\%$ track purity for $\beta > 10^{-3}$
 - $\sim 90\%$ track completeness for $\beta > 10^{-2}$



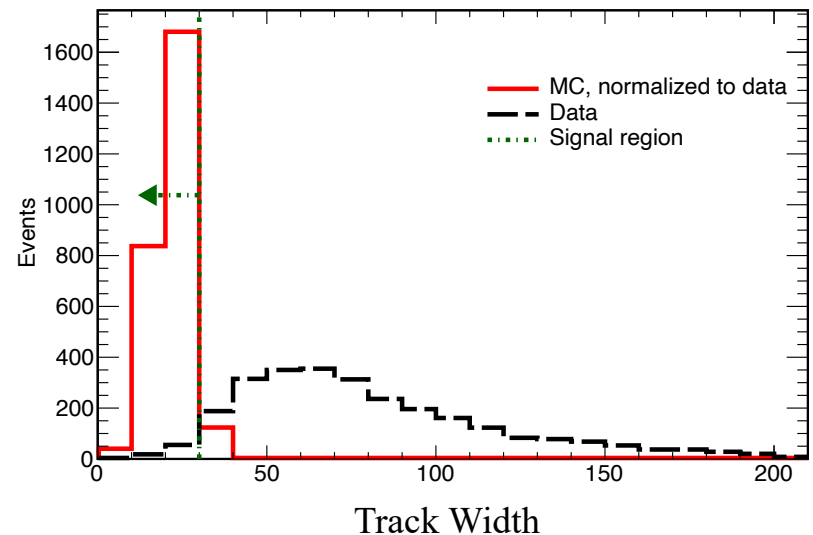
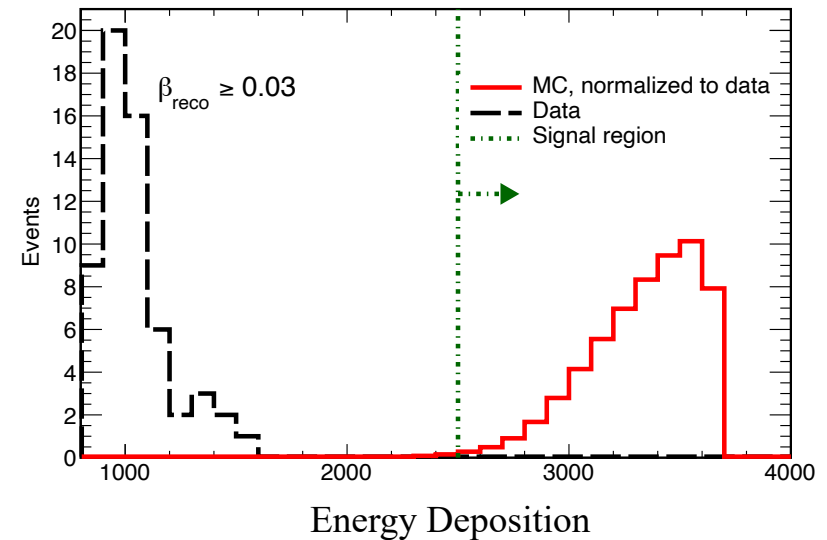
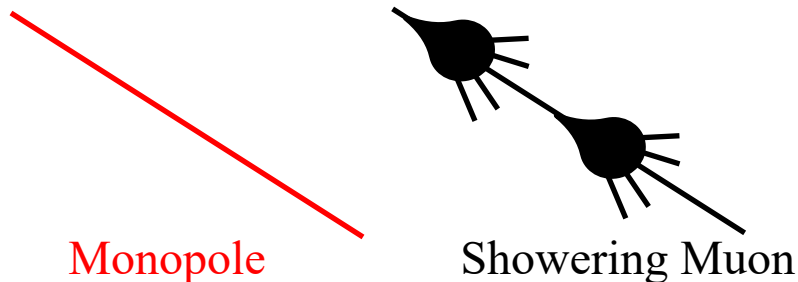
Offline Analysis Strategy

- Data:
 - Triggered by ionizing monopole algorithm
- MC:
 - Simulated monopole overlaid with cosmic data
- Select events with high energy deposition
- Select narrow events:

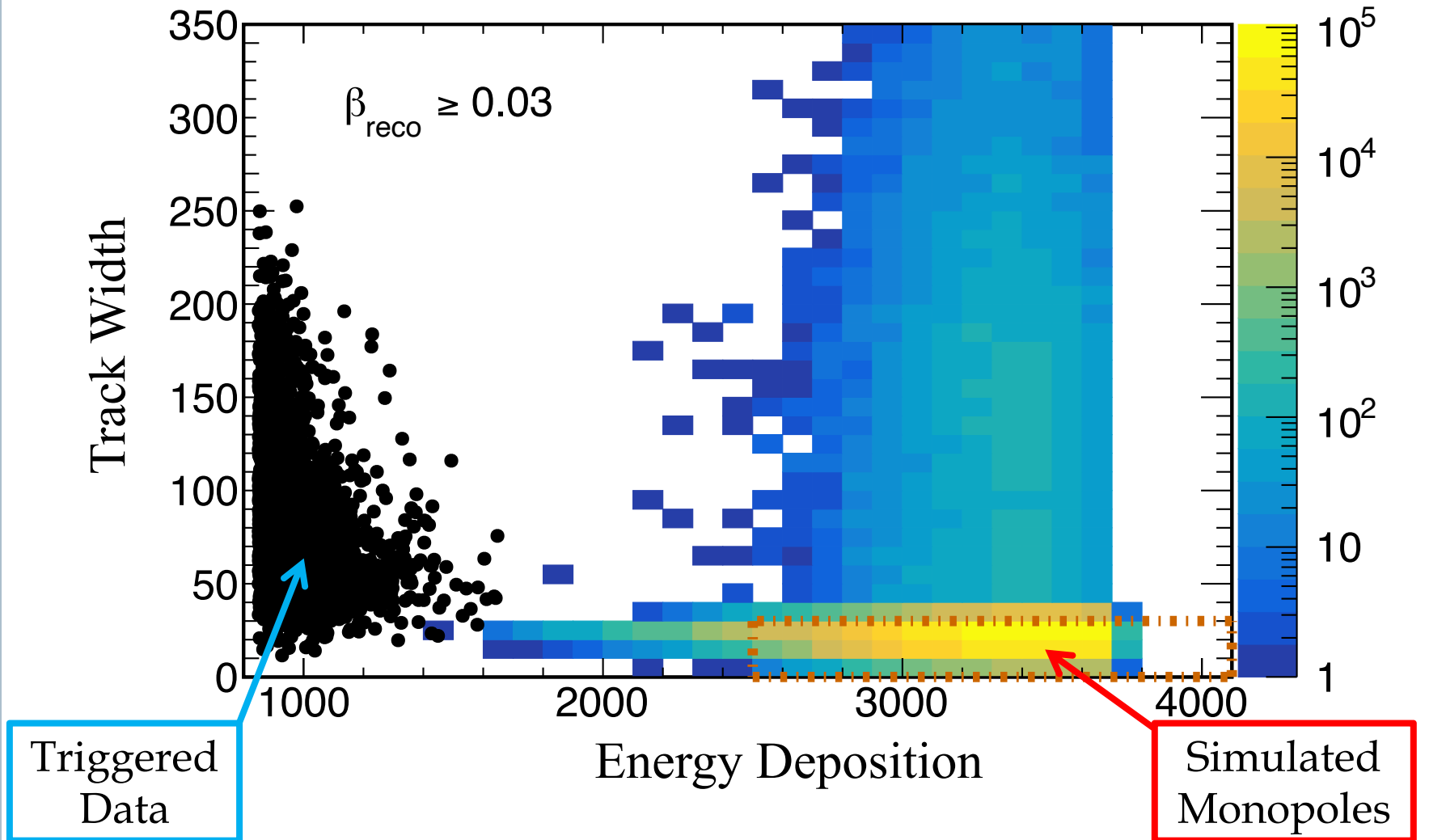


Offline Analysis Strategy

- Data:
 - Triggered by ionizing monopole algorithm
- MC:
 - Simulated monopole overlaid with cosmic data
- Select events with high energy deposition
- Select narrow events:
 - Removes energetic showering muons that tend to be wider

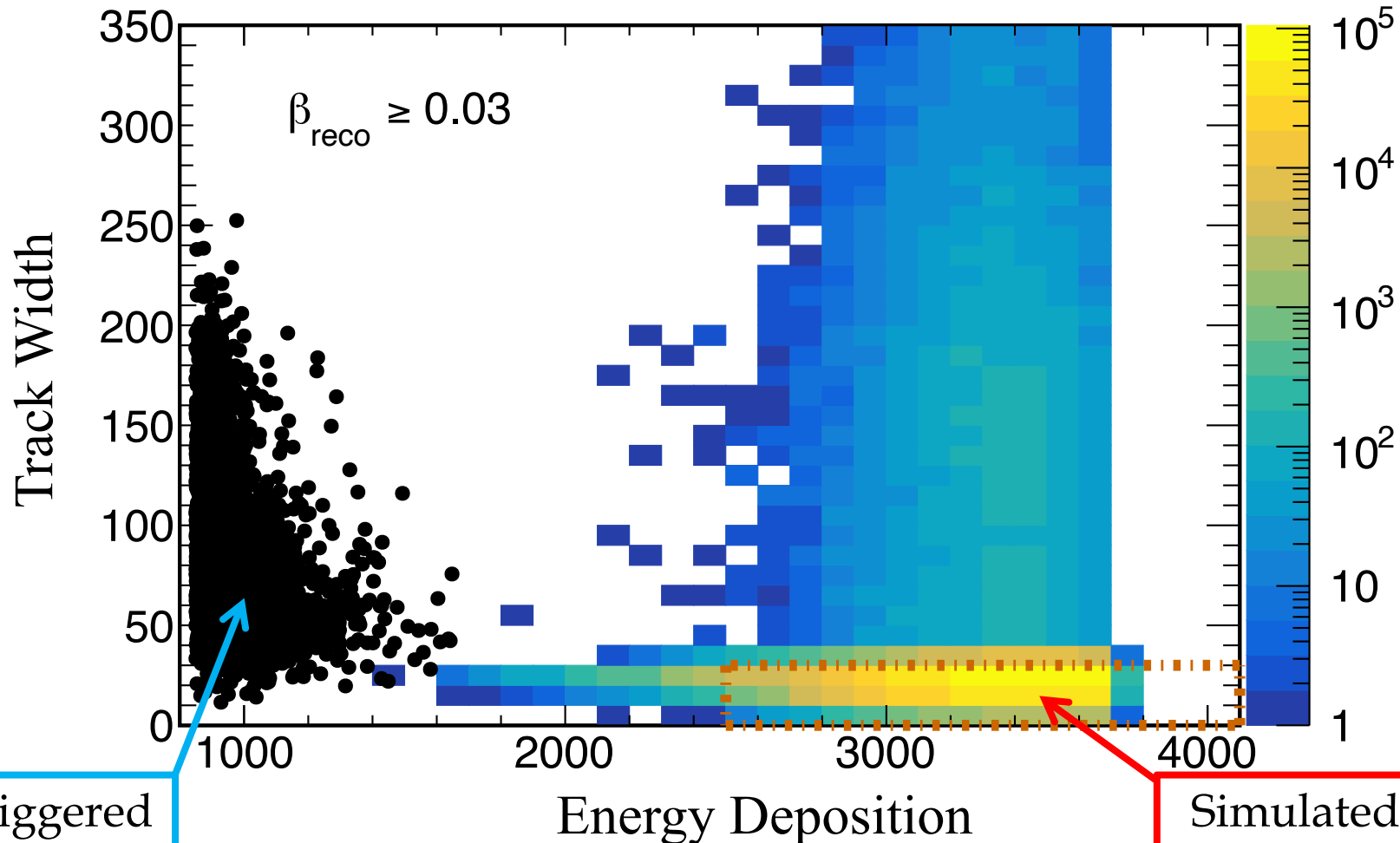


Signal Search

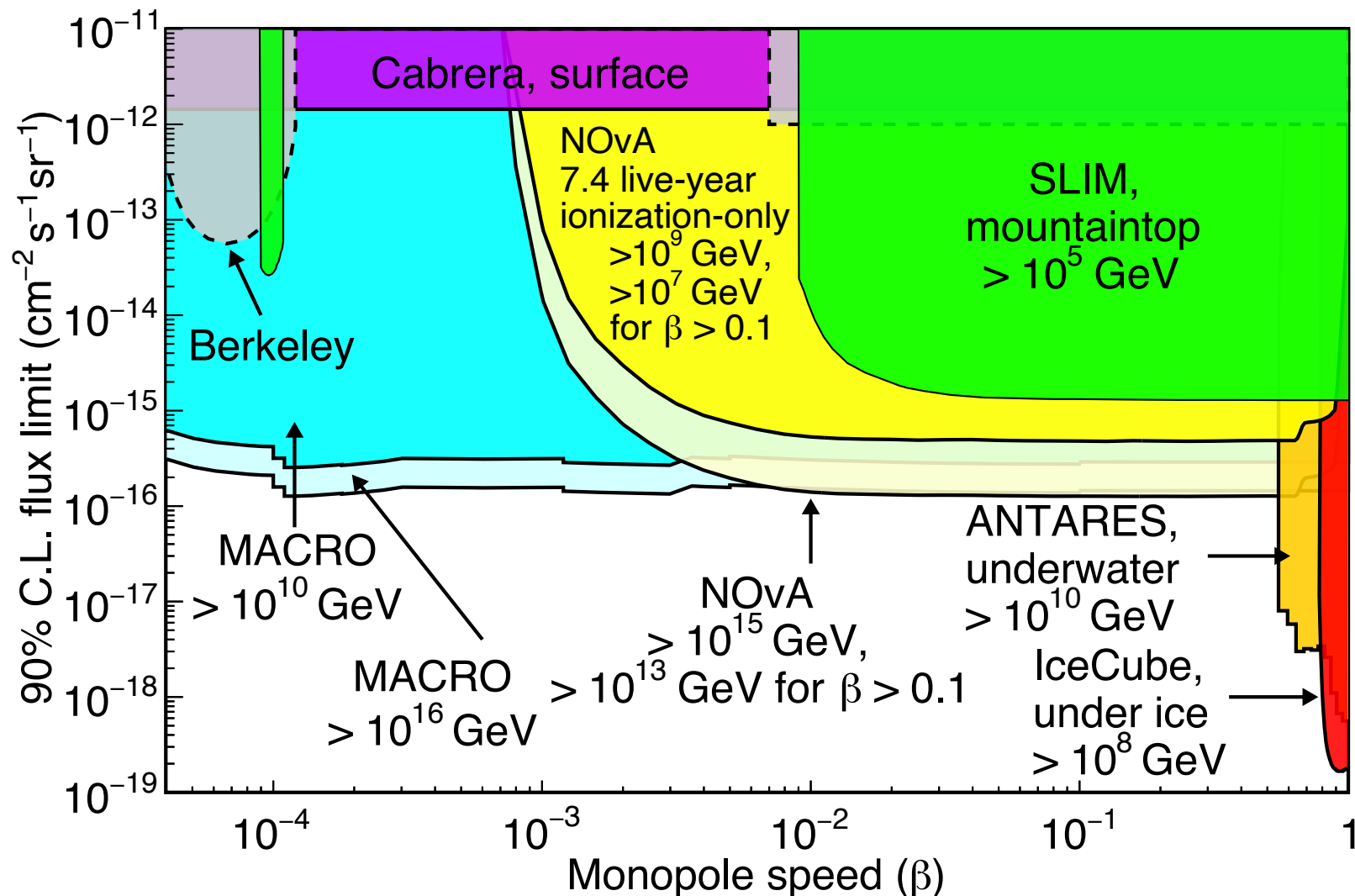


Signal Search

No Magnetic Monopole Event Found!



Magnetic Monopole Flux Limits





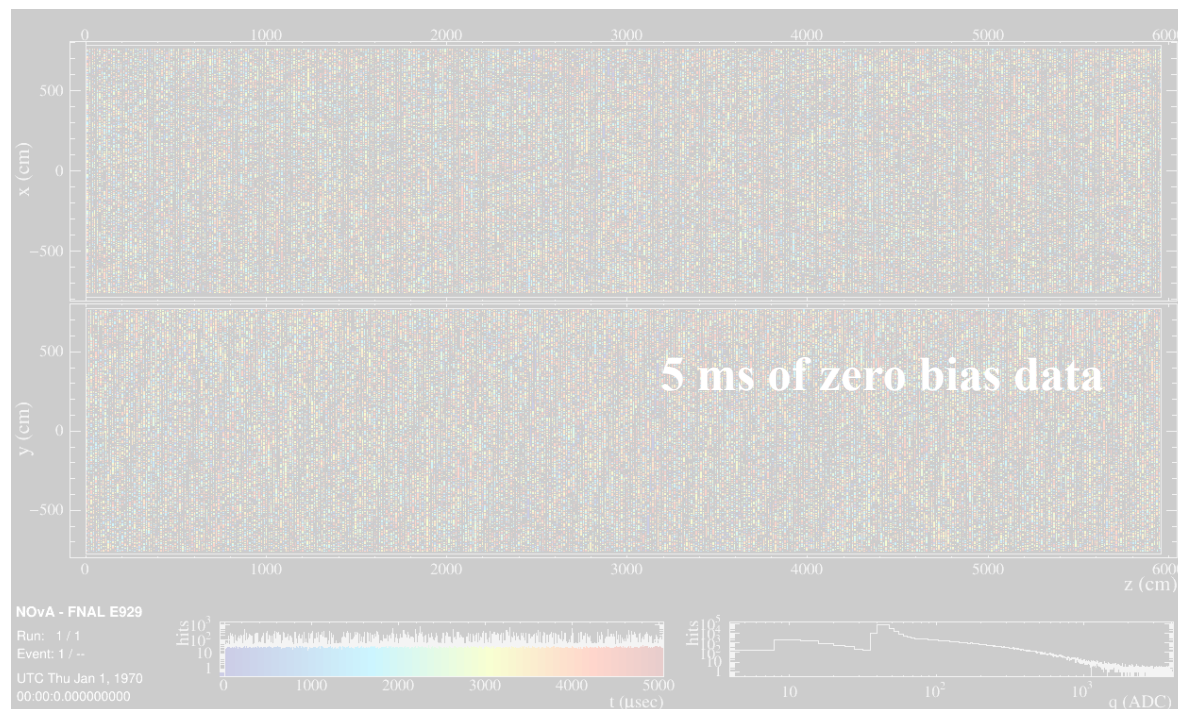
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TIMING MAGNETIC MONOPOLE SEARCH

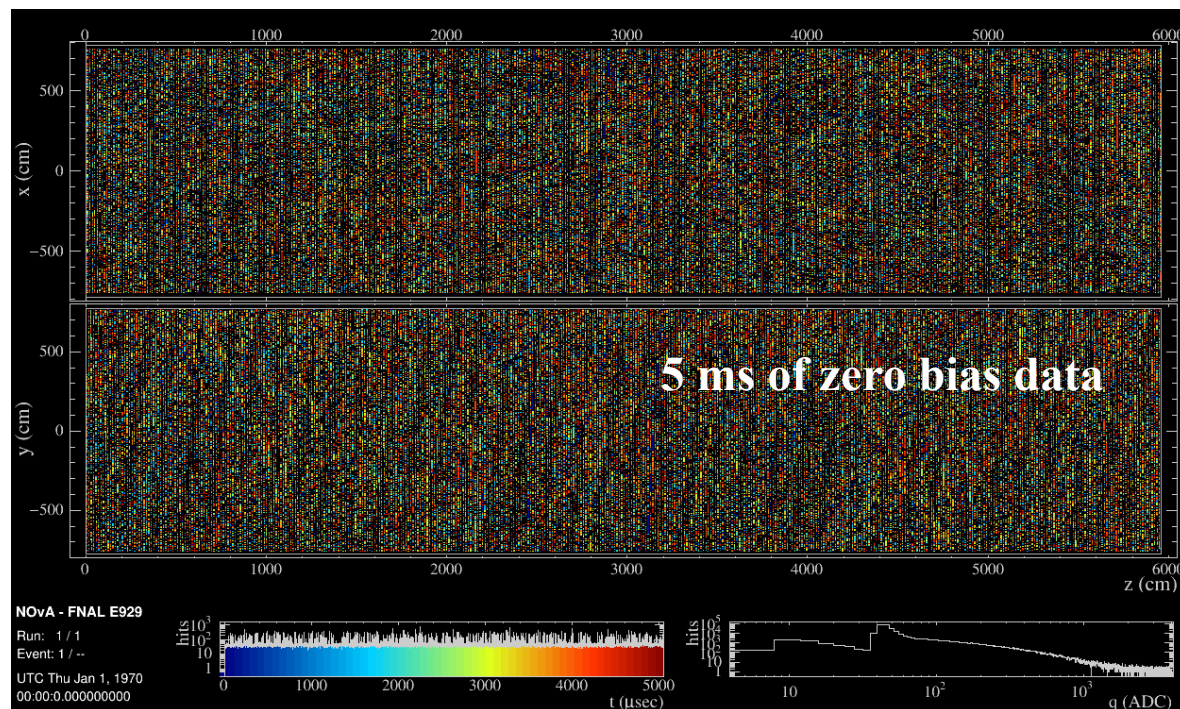
Monopole Simulation

- We used simulation to determine the efficiency of selecting monopole tracks for $10^{-4} < \beta < 10^{-2}$.
- The monopoles were simulated using an isotropic flux.
- Each simulated monopole was combined with 5 ms of zero bias data (i.e. data with typical running conditions).



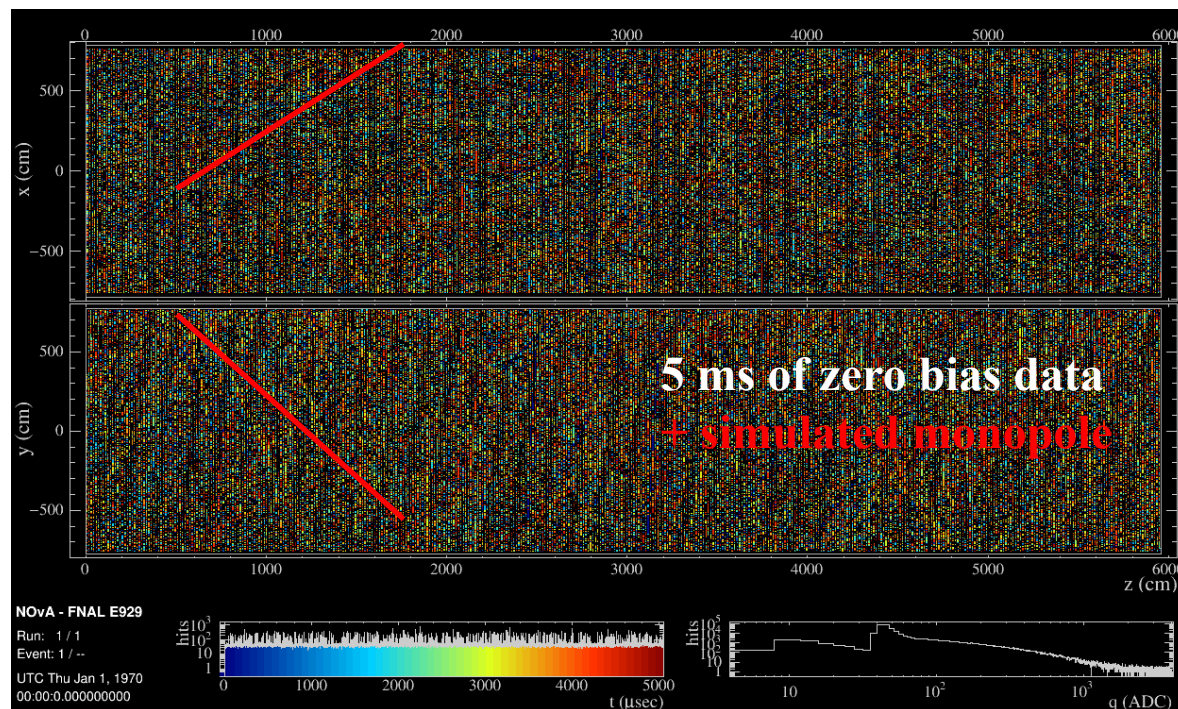
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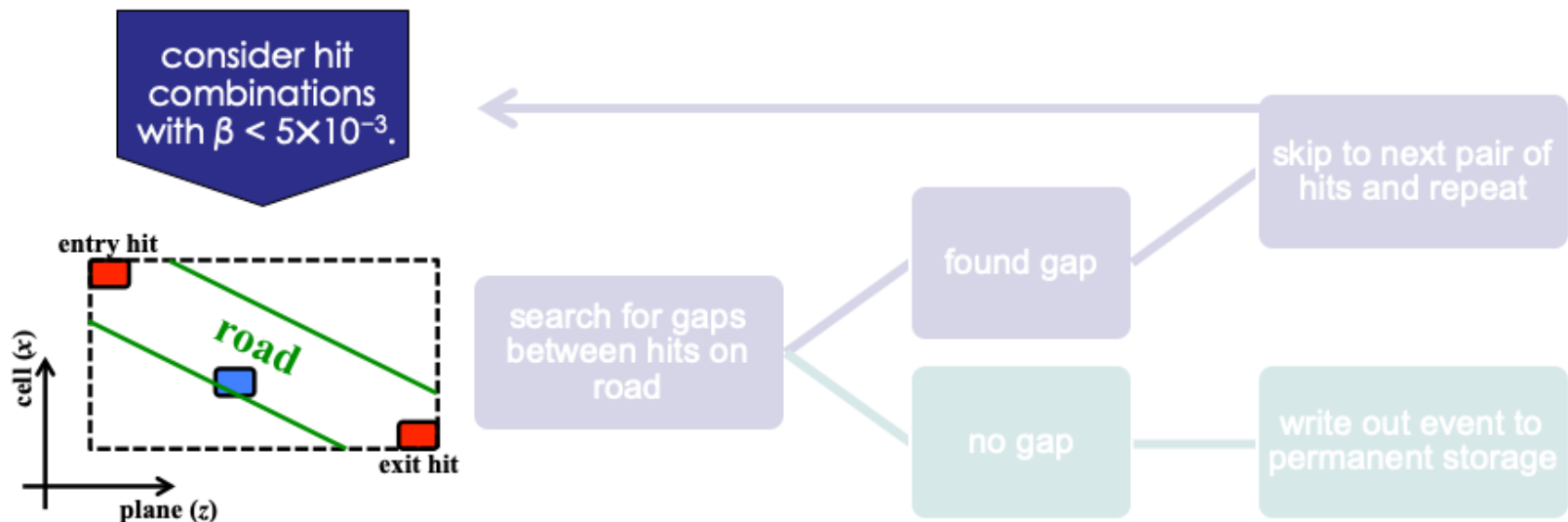
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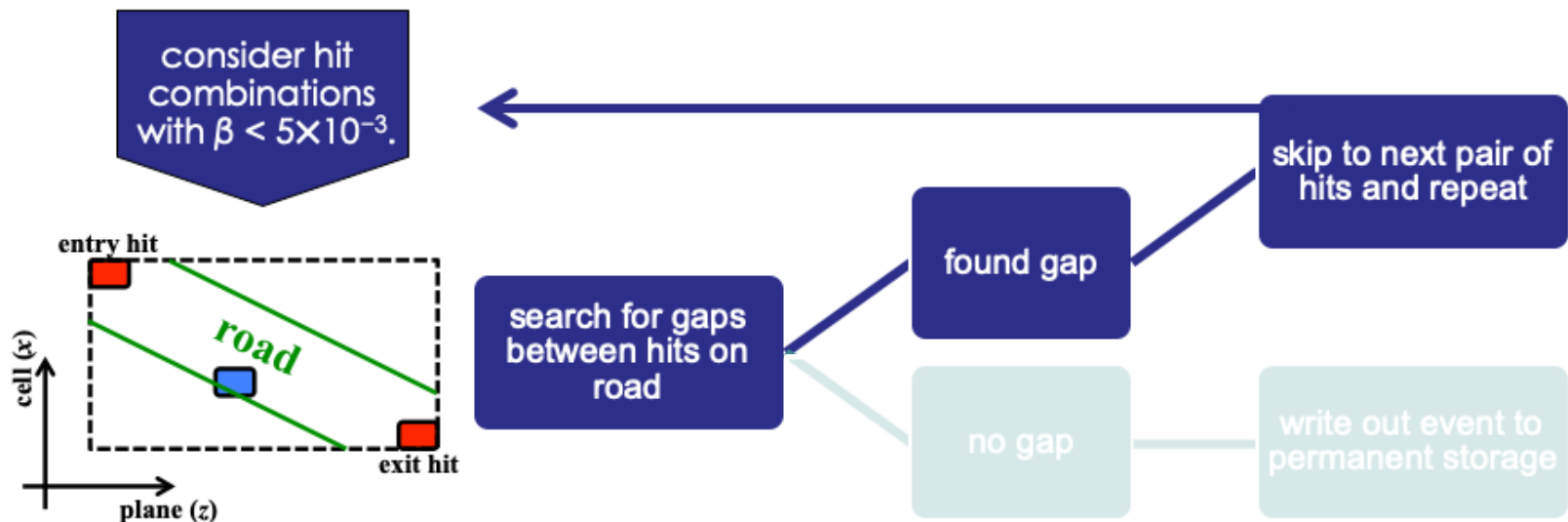
Analysis Strategy – Trigger

- The NOvA detectors are equipped with a data-driven trigger (DDT) system that continuously examines the live data stream on over 100 computing nodes.
- The monopole trigger algorithm examines pairs of hits on the surface of the detector for each event (5 ms).



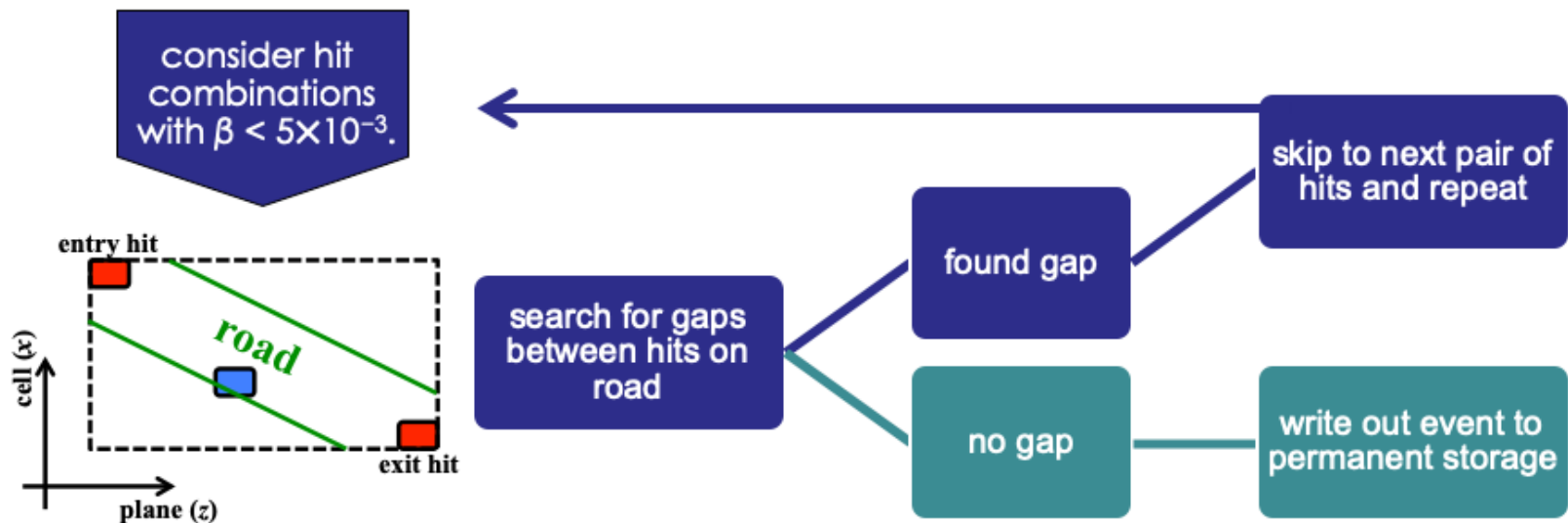
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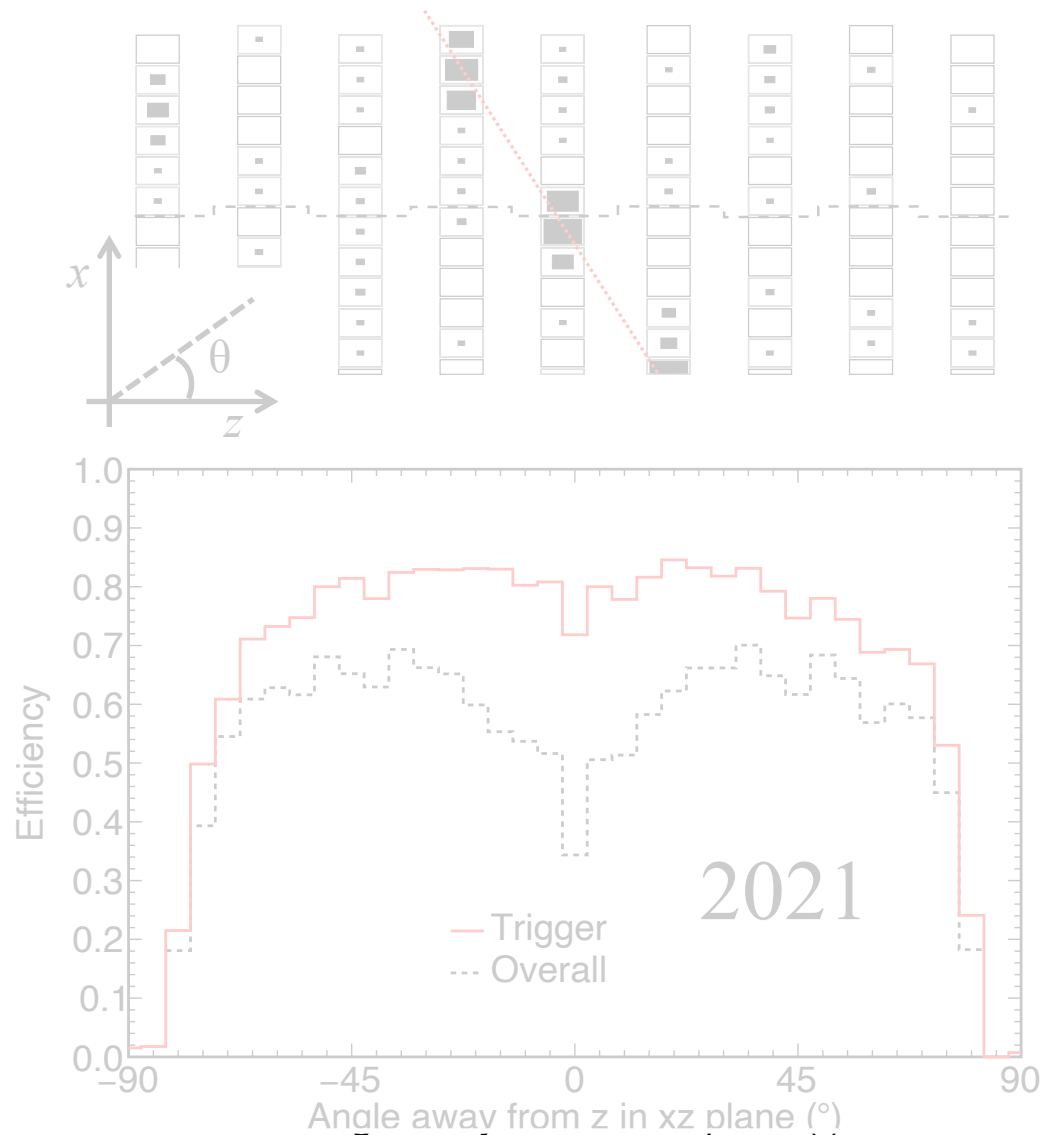
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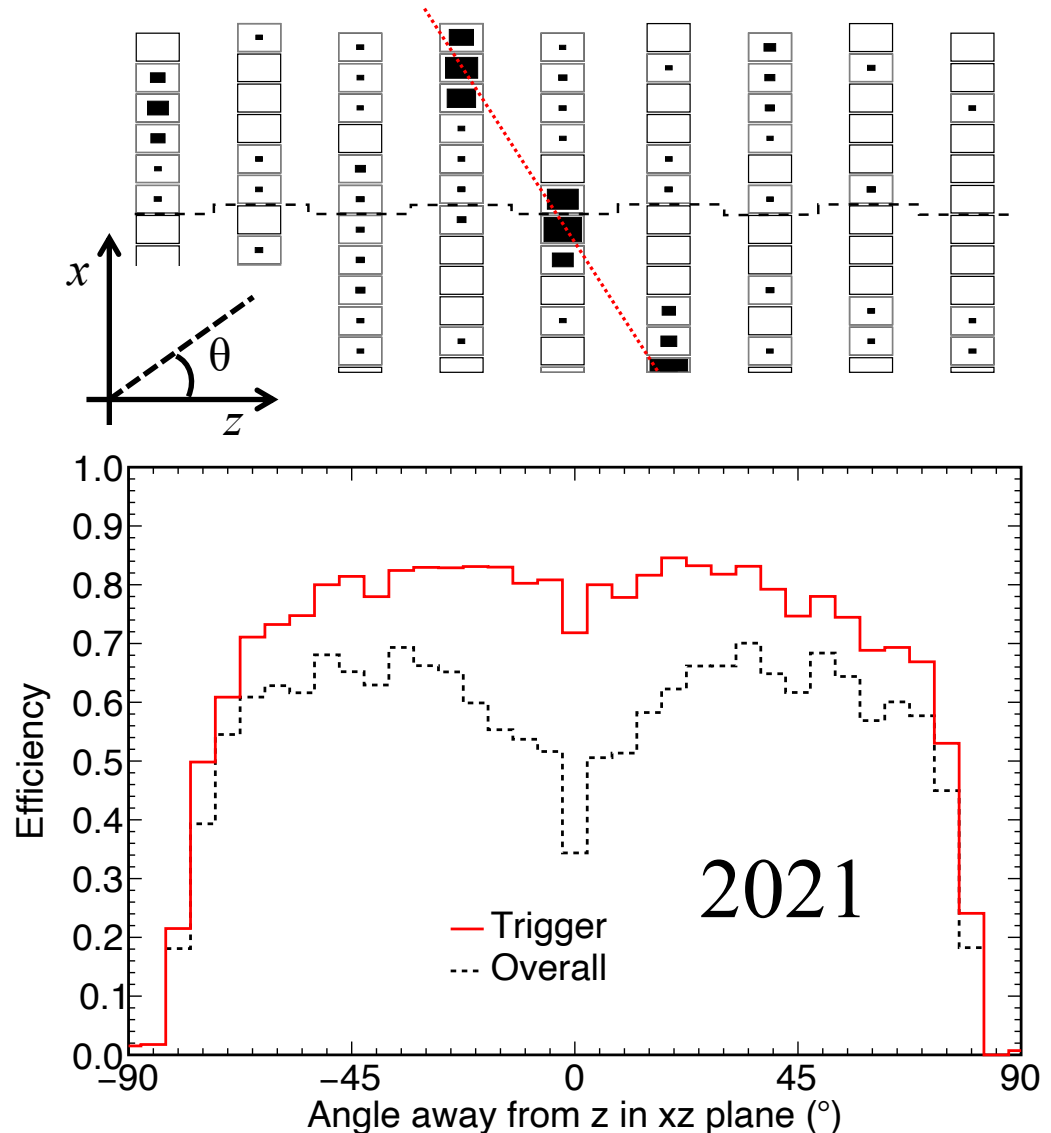
Trigger and Reconstruction Efficiencies

- Efficiency constant:
 - from $\beta \sim 5 \times 10^{-4}$
 - to $\beta \sim 5 \times 10^{-3}$
- Some efficiency lost due to tracks parallel to the detector planes.
 - $|\theta| \sim 90^\circ$
- Improvements in the trigger and offline reconstruction algorithms have increased efficiency since the 2021 result!



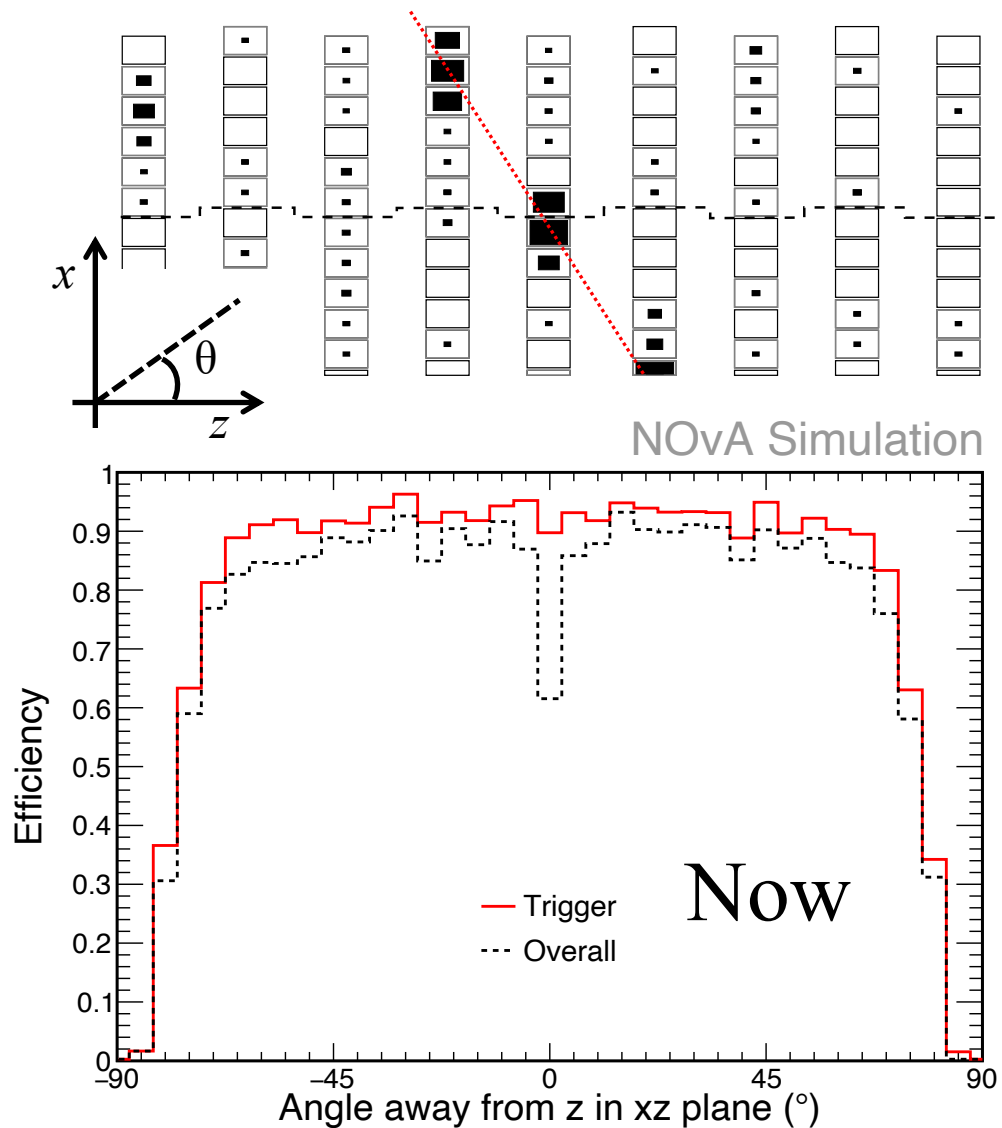
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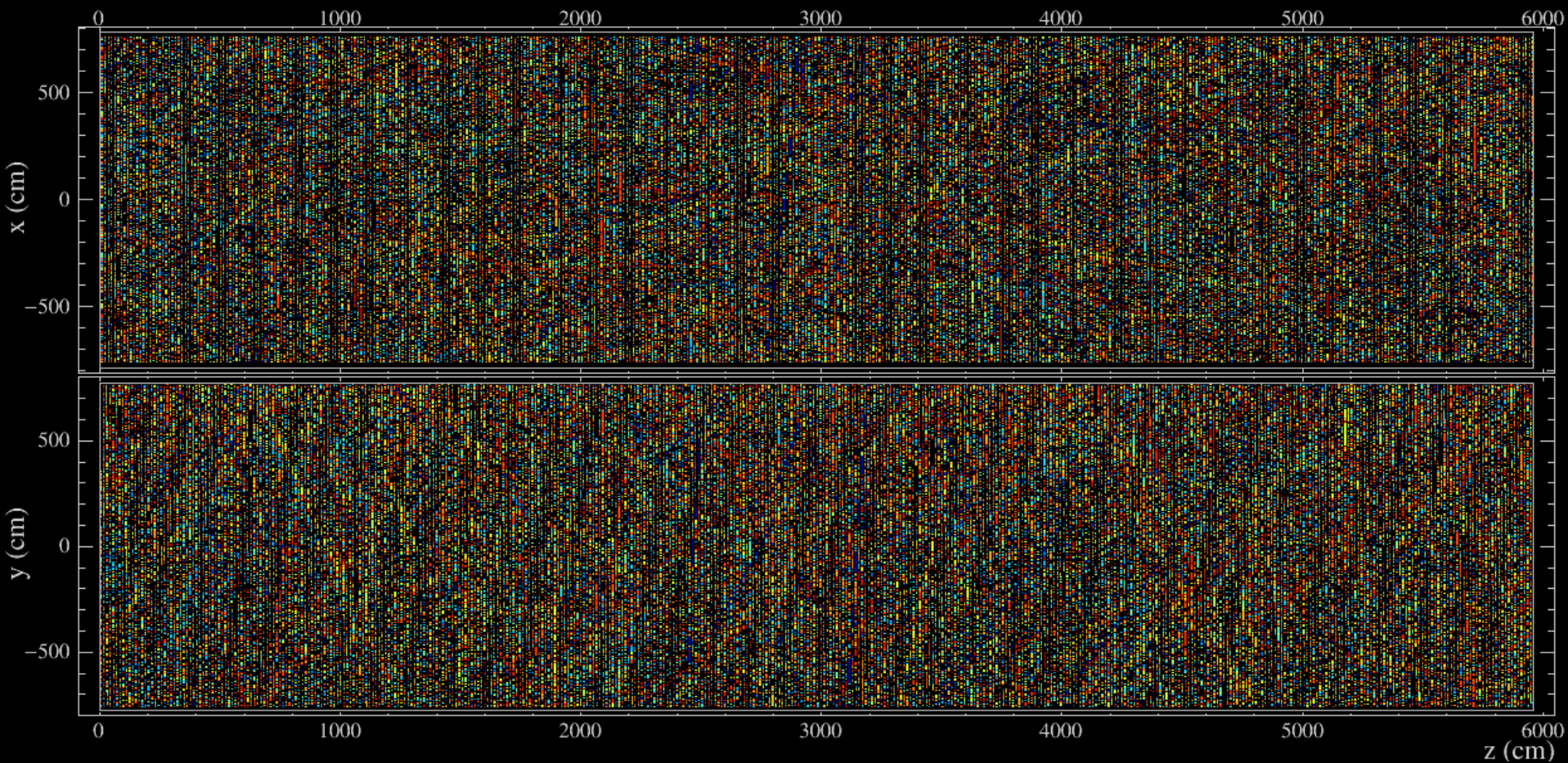


Trigger and Reconstruction Efficiencies

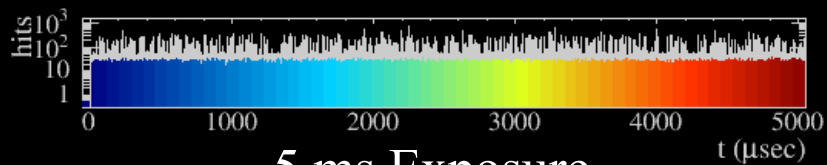
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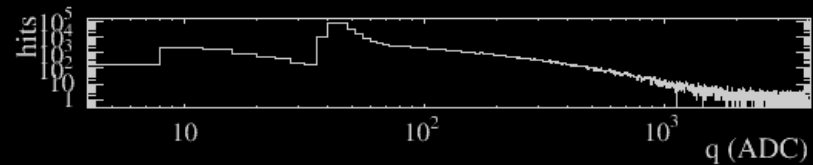
Offline Reconstruction



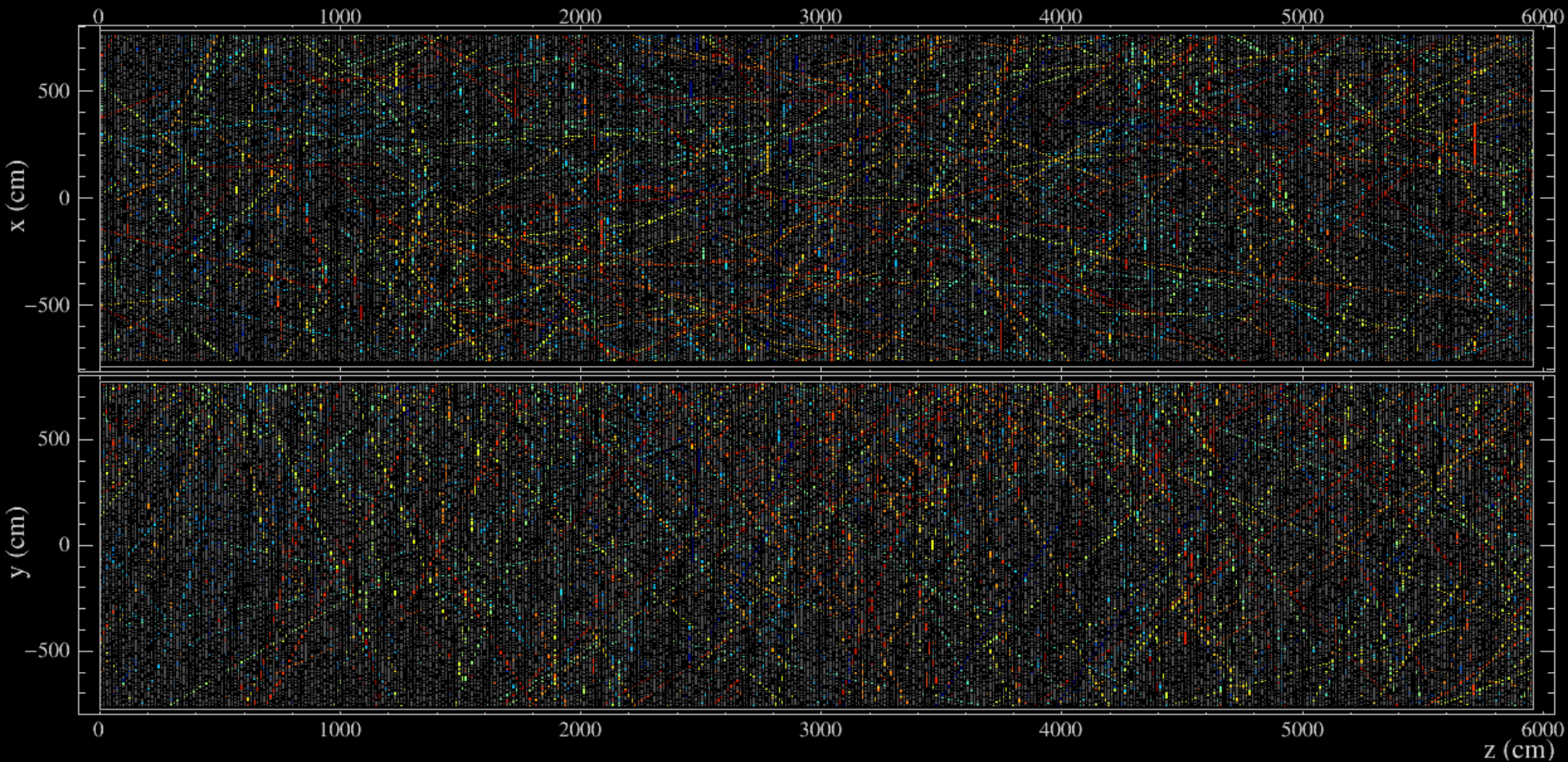
NOvA - FNAL E929



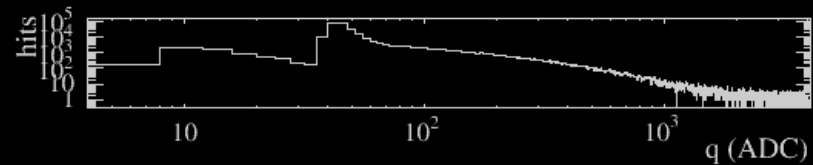
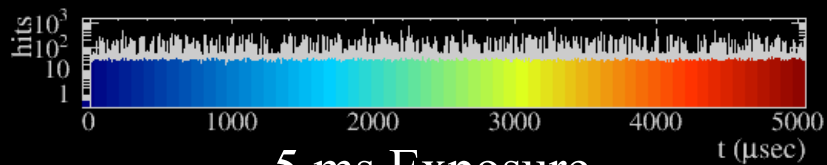
5 ms Exposure



Remove Low Energy Hits



NOvA - FNAL E929

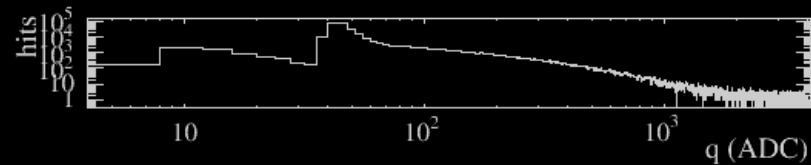
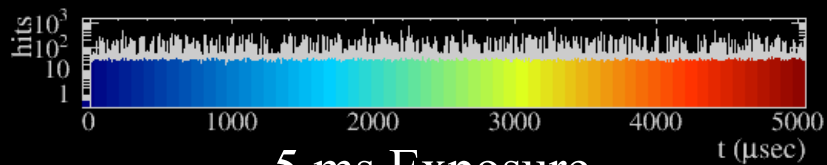


5 ms Exposure

Identify Cosmic Rays

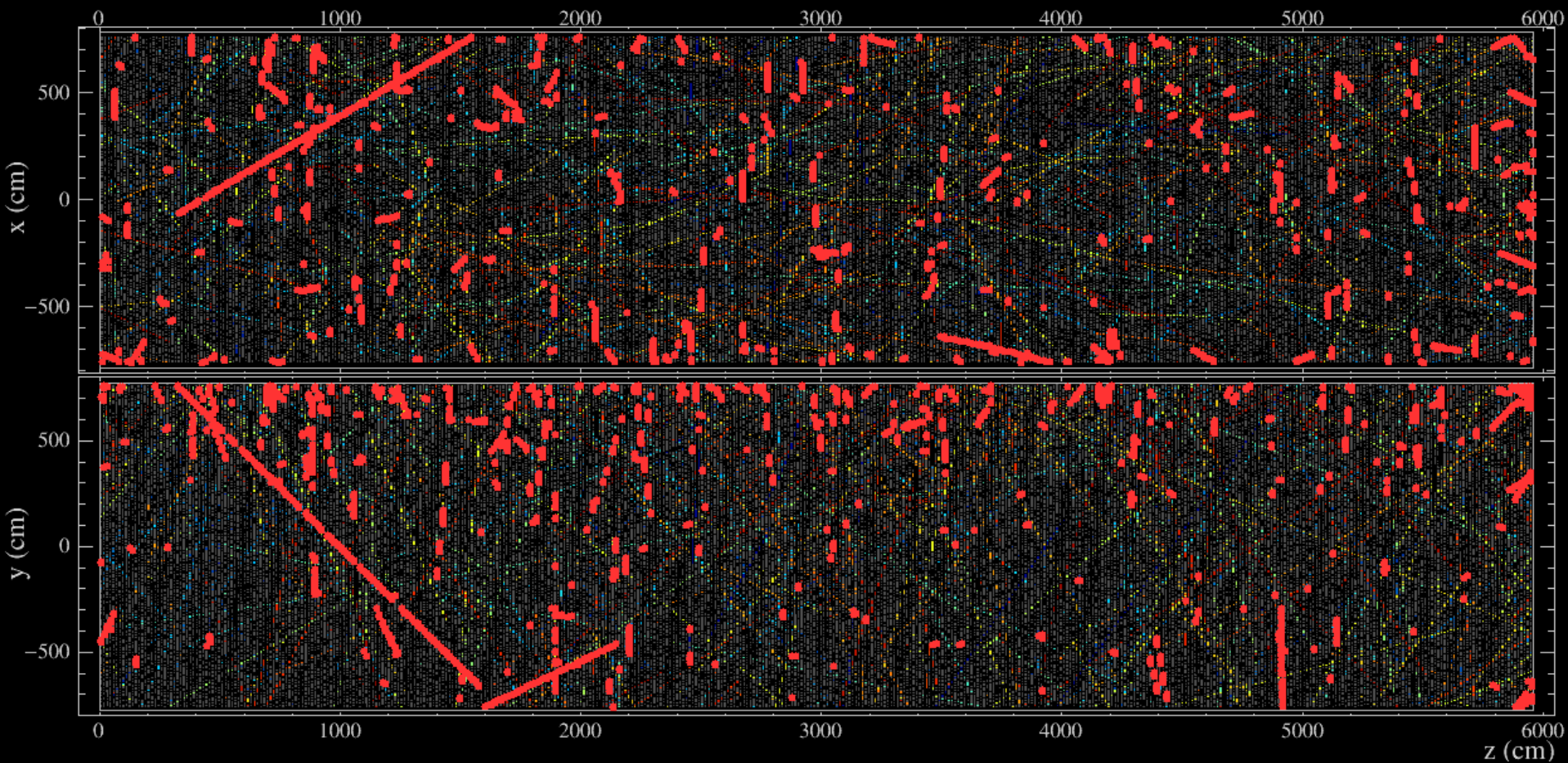


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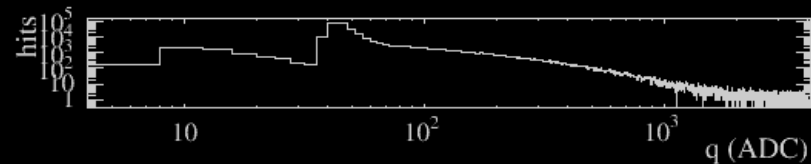
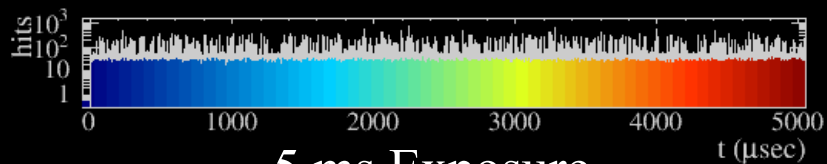


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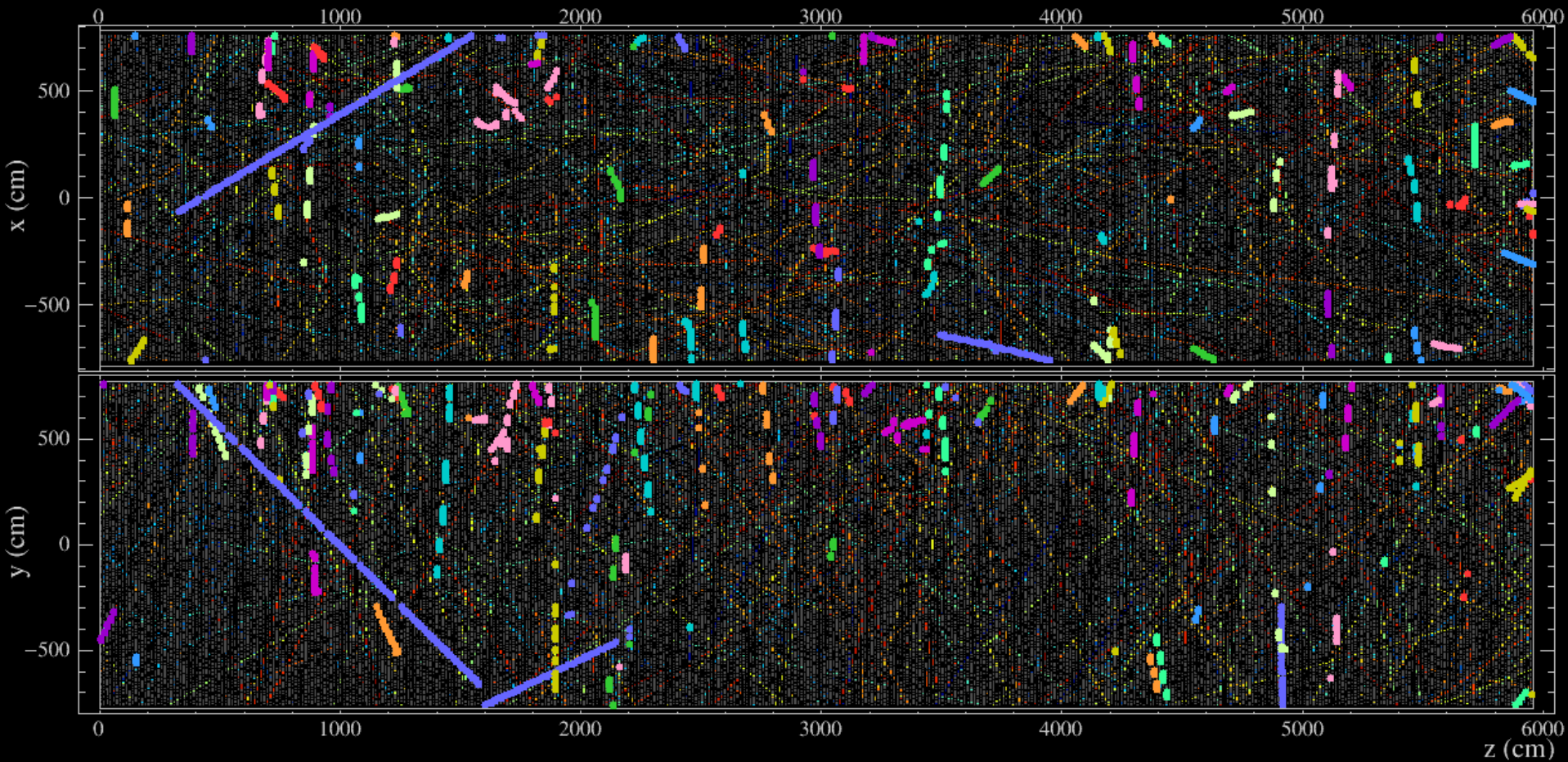


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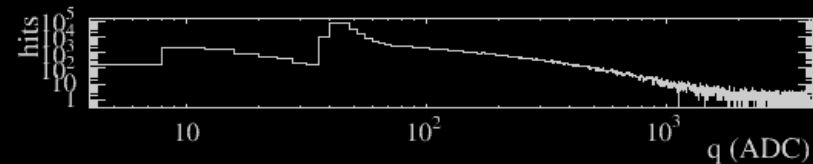
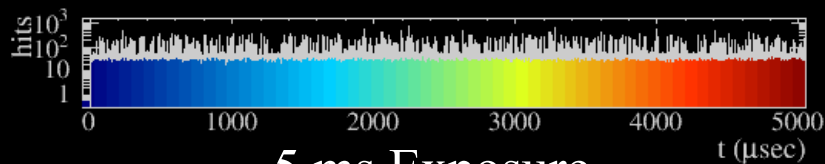


5 ms Exposure

Identify Groups of Correlated Hits

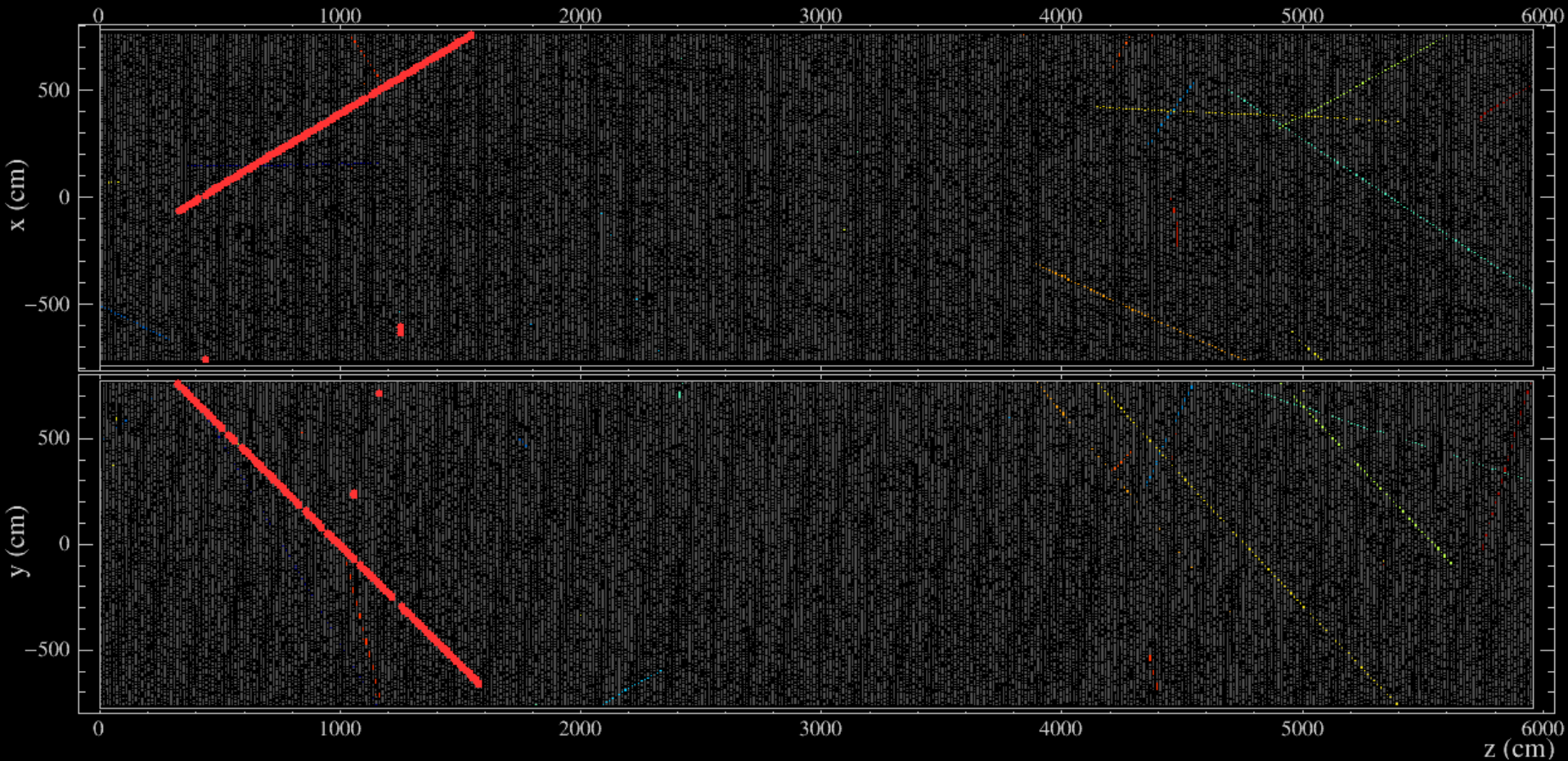


NOvA - FNAL E929

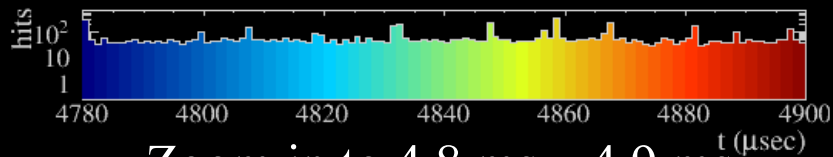


5 ms Exposure

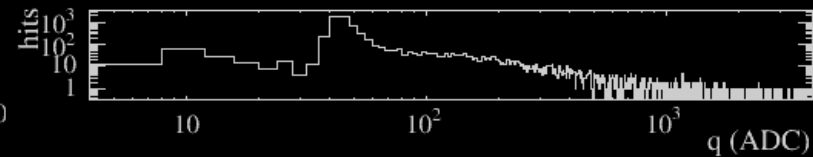
Time Zoom on Monopole Group of Hits



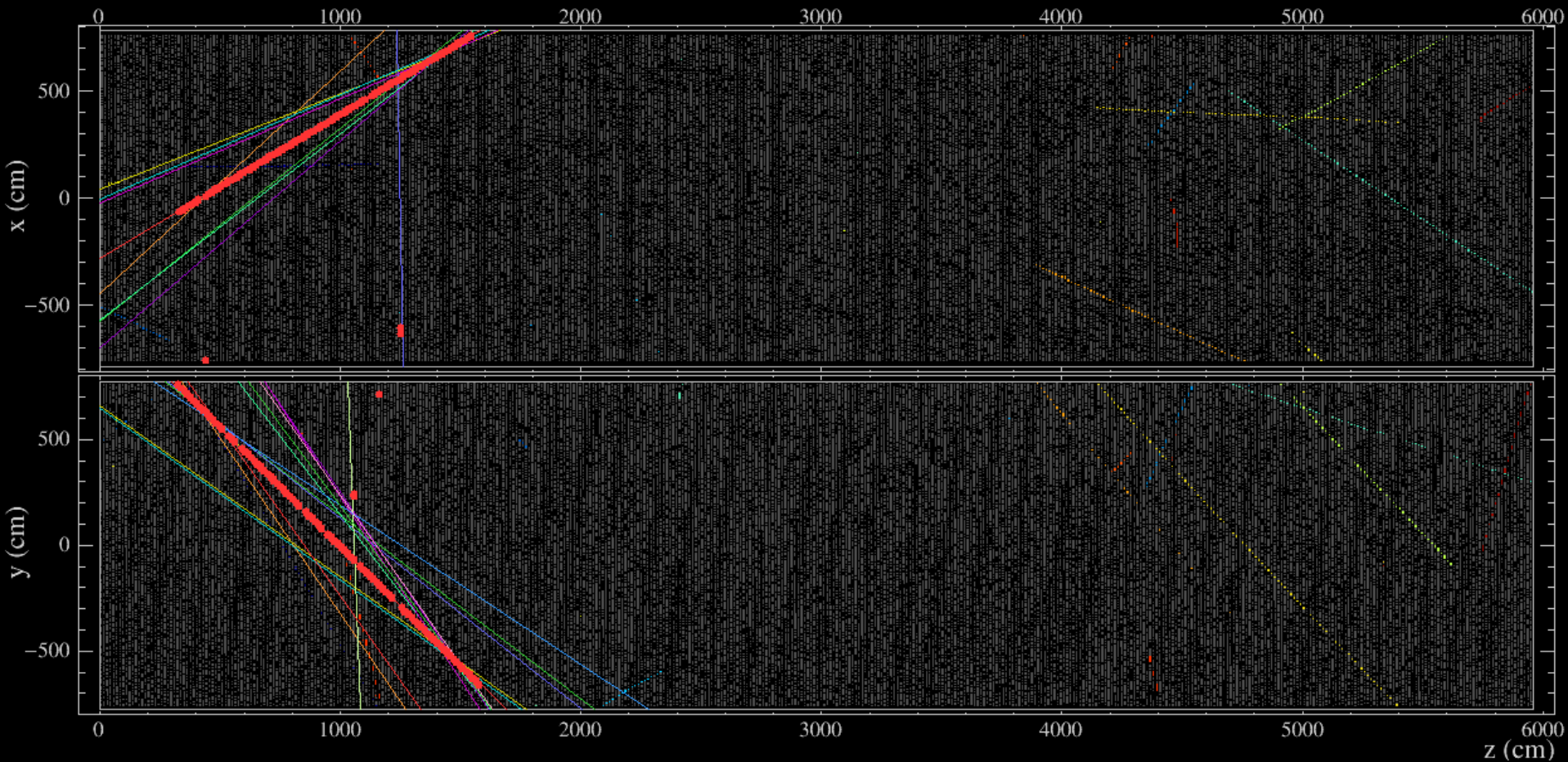
NOvA - FNAL E929



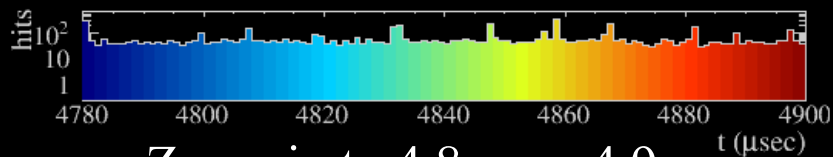
Zoom in to 4.8 ms – 4.9 ms



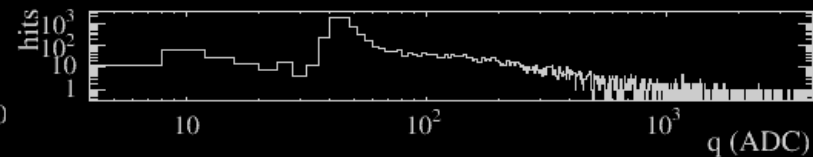
Identify Straight Line Features (Hough Tracking)



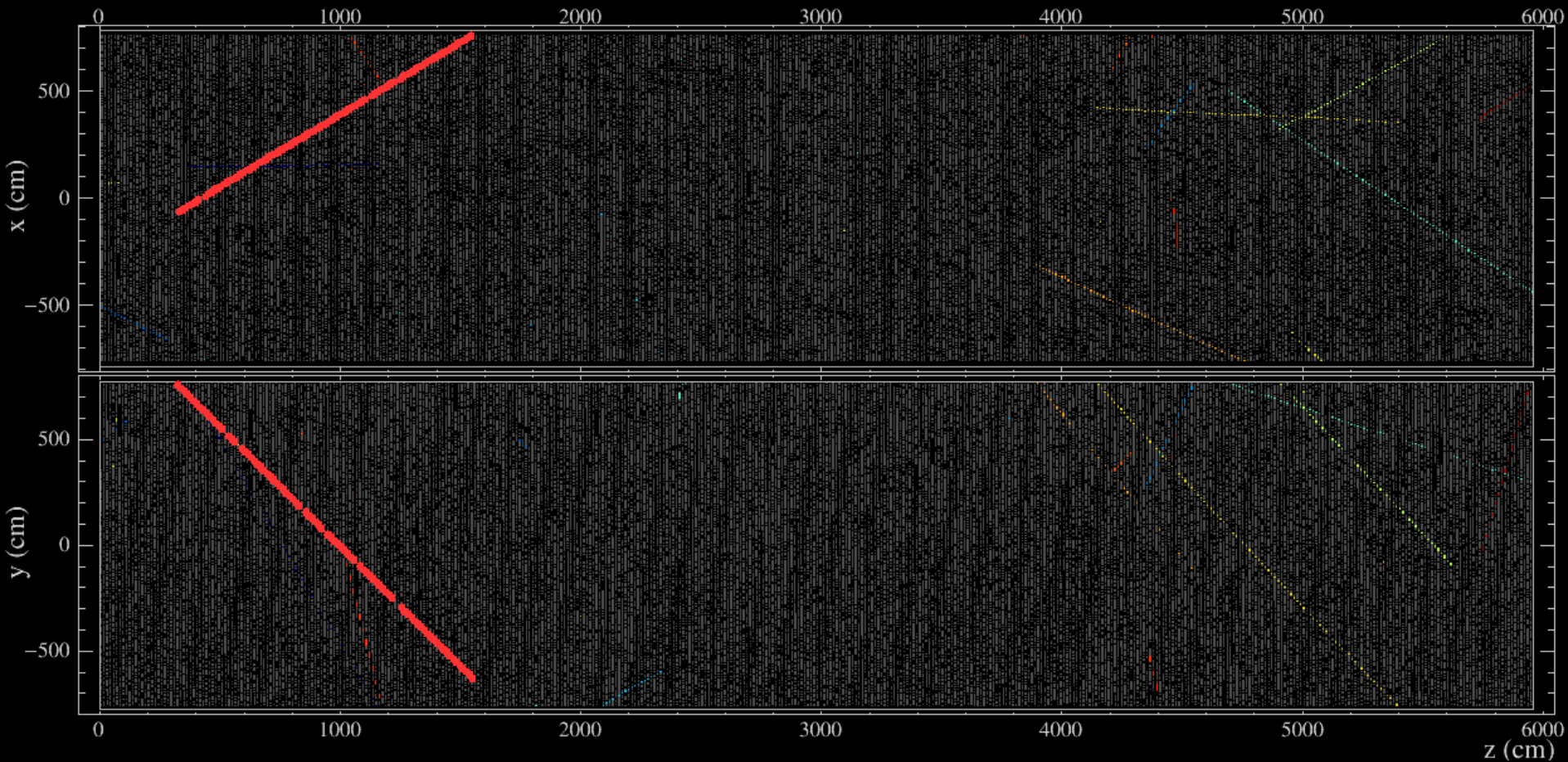
NOvA - FNAL E929



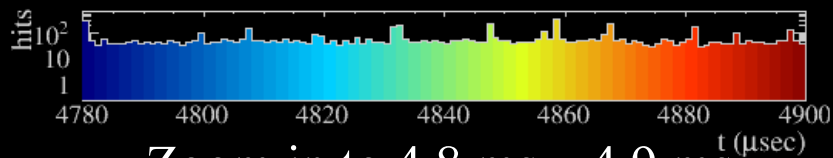
Zoom in to 4.8 ms – 4.9 ms



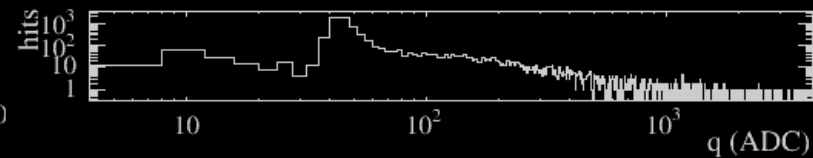
Identify Monopole Track



NOvA - FNAL E929



Zoom in to 4.8 ms – 4.9 ms



Analysis Strategy – Offline

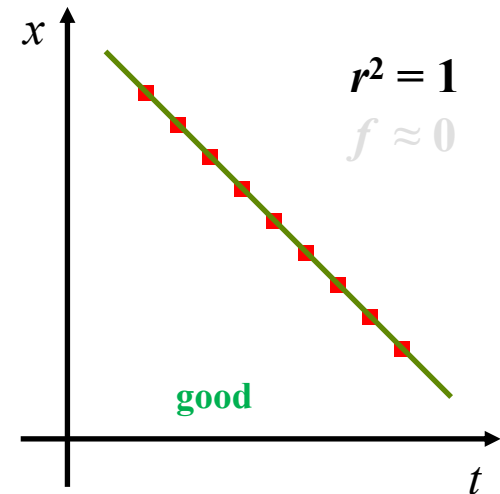
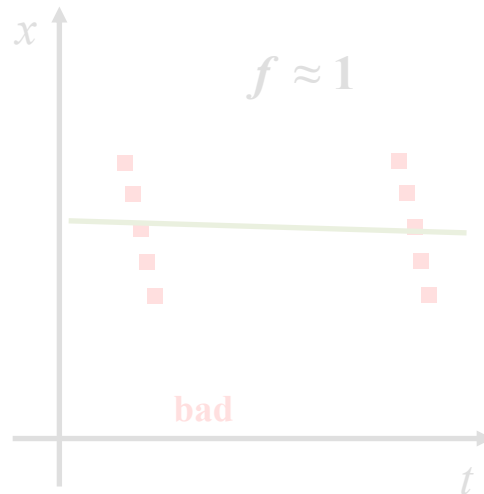
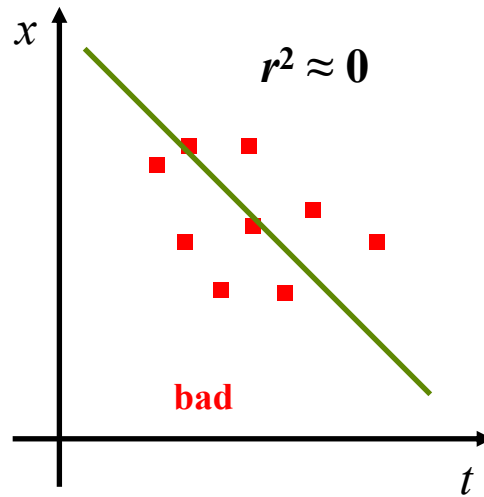
- We want to identify straight line tracks.
- Two powerful discriminators:

- Correlation coefficient: r^2

$$r = \frac{\sum_j^n (t_j - \bar{t})(x_j - \bar{x})}{\sum_j^n (t_j - \bar{t}) \sum_j^n (x_j - \bar{x})}$$

- Time gap fraction: f

$$f = \frac{\Delta t_{\max}}{\Delta t_{\text{track}}}$$



Selection Cuts
 $r^2 > 0.95$

Analysis Strategy – Offline

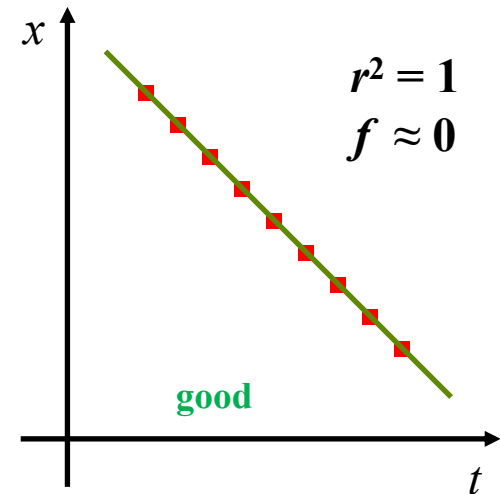
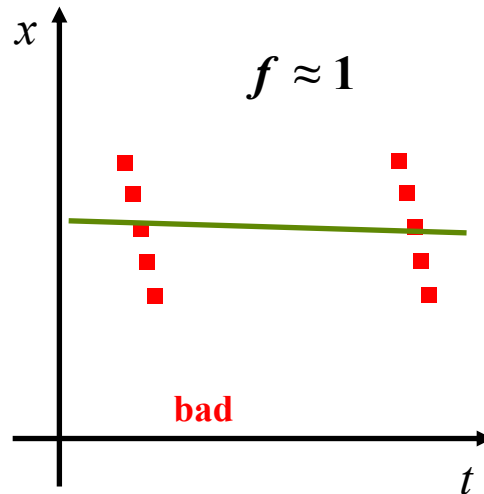
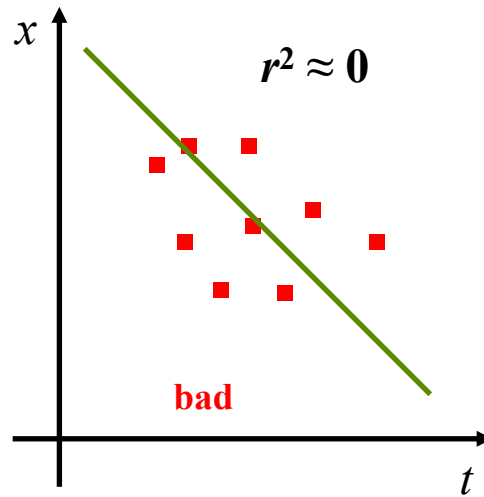
- We want to identify straight line tracks.
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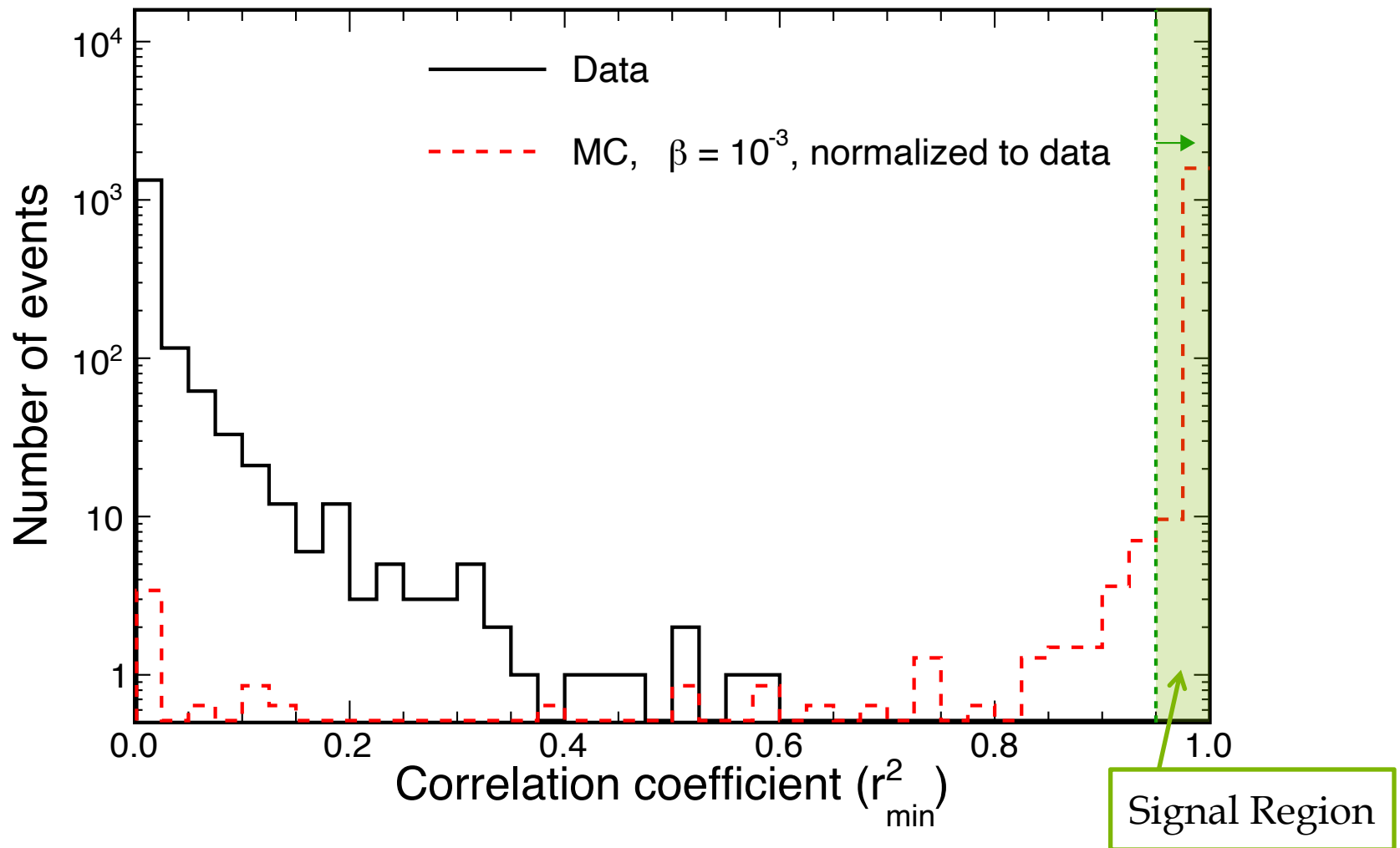
Selection Cuts

$$r^2 > 0.95$$

$$f < 0.2$$

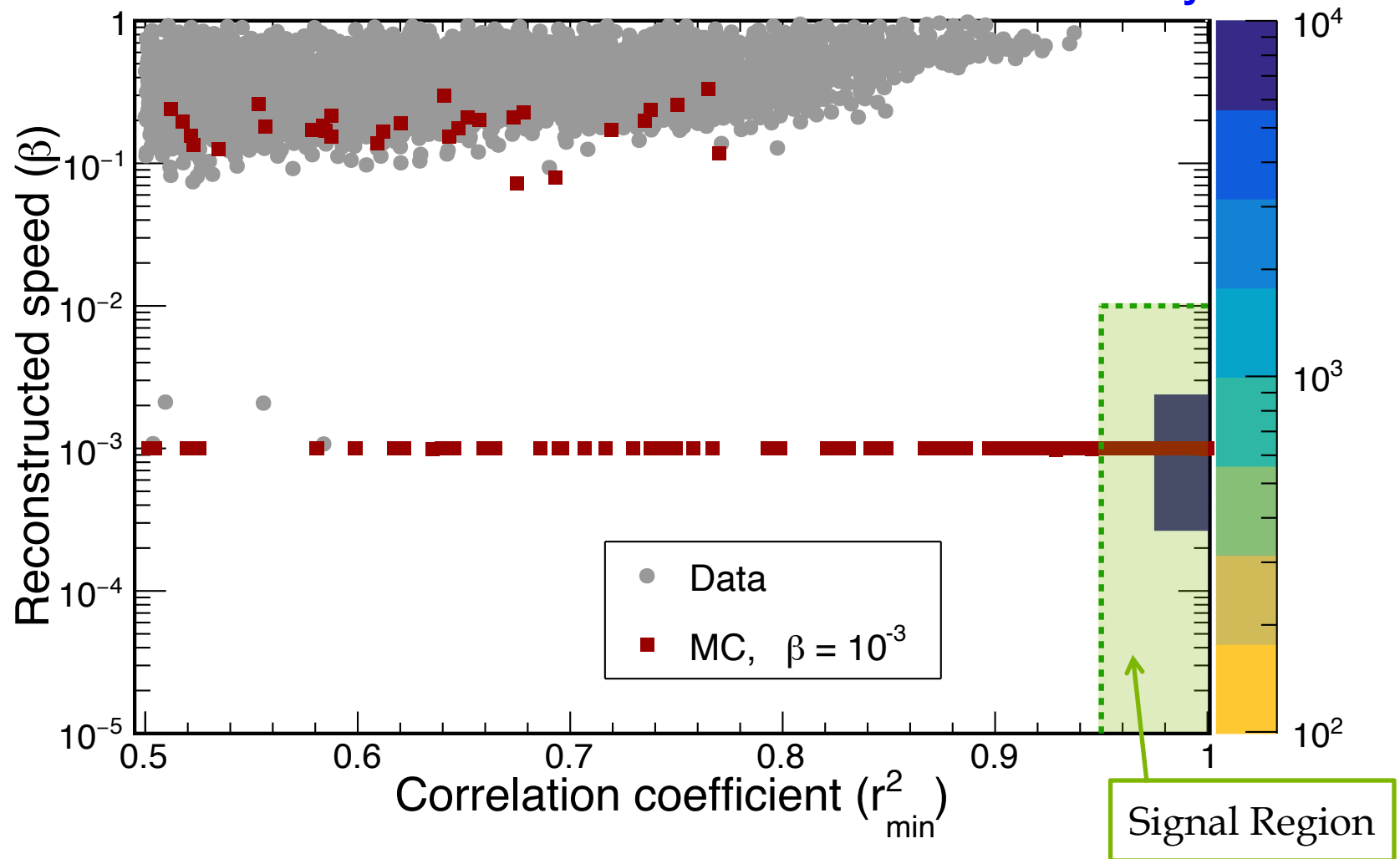
Correlation Coefficient

NOvA Preliminary



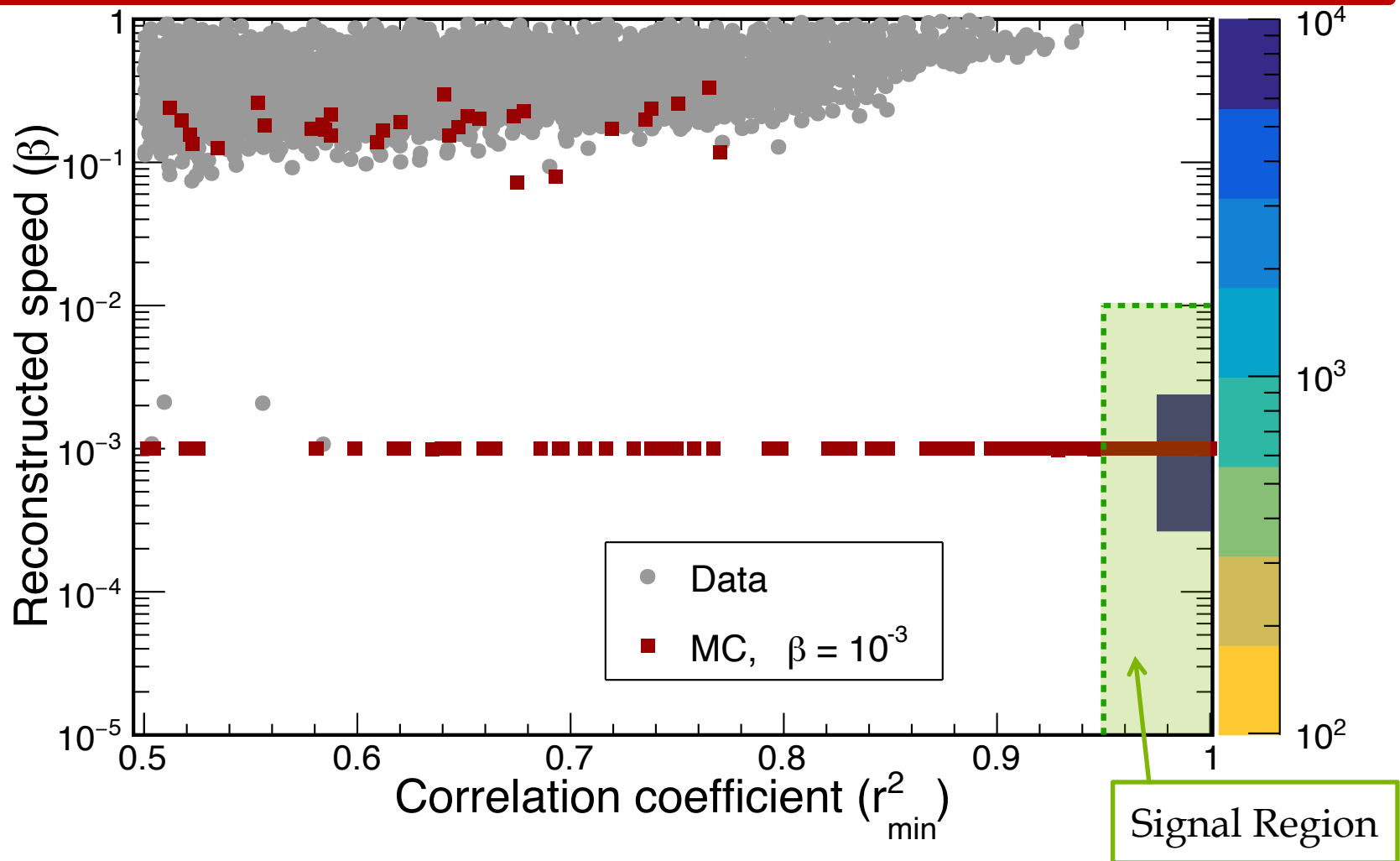
Signal Search

NOvA Preliminary



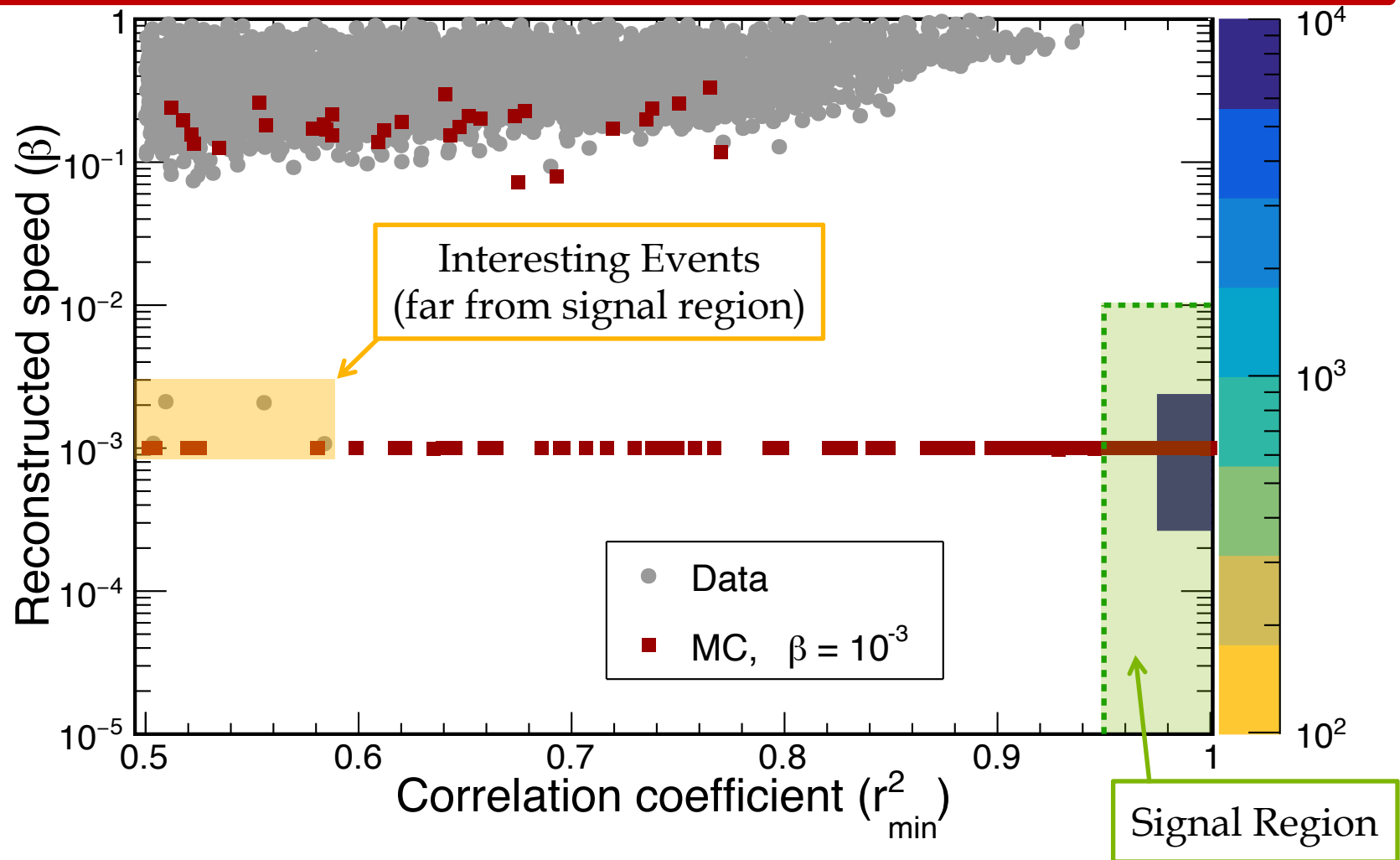
Signal Search

No Magnetic Monopole Event Found!

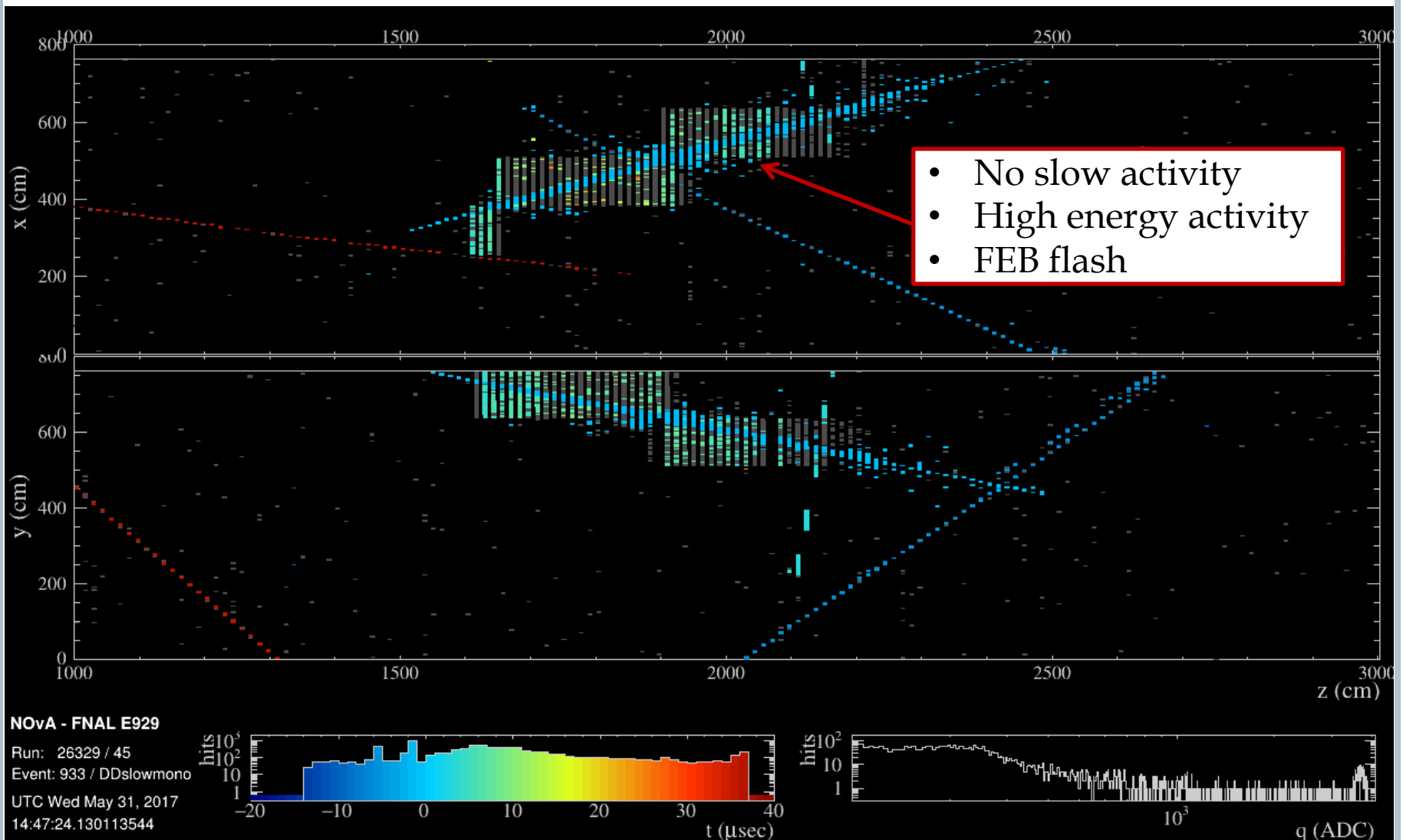


Signal Search

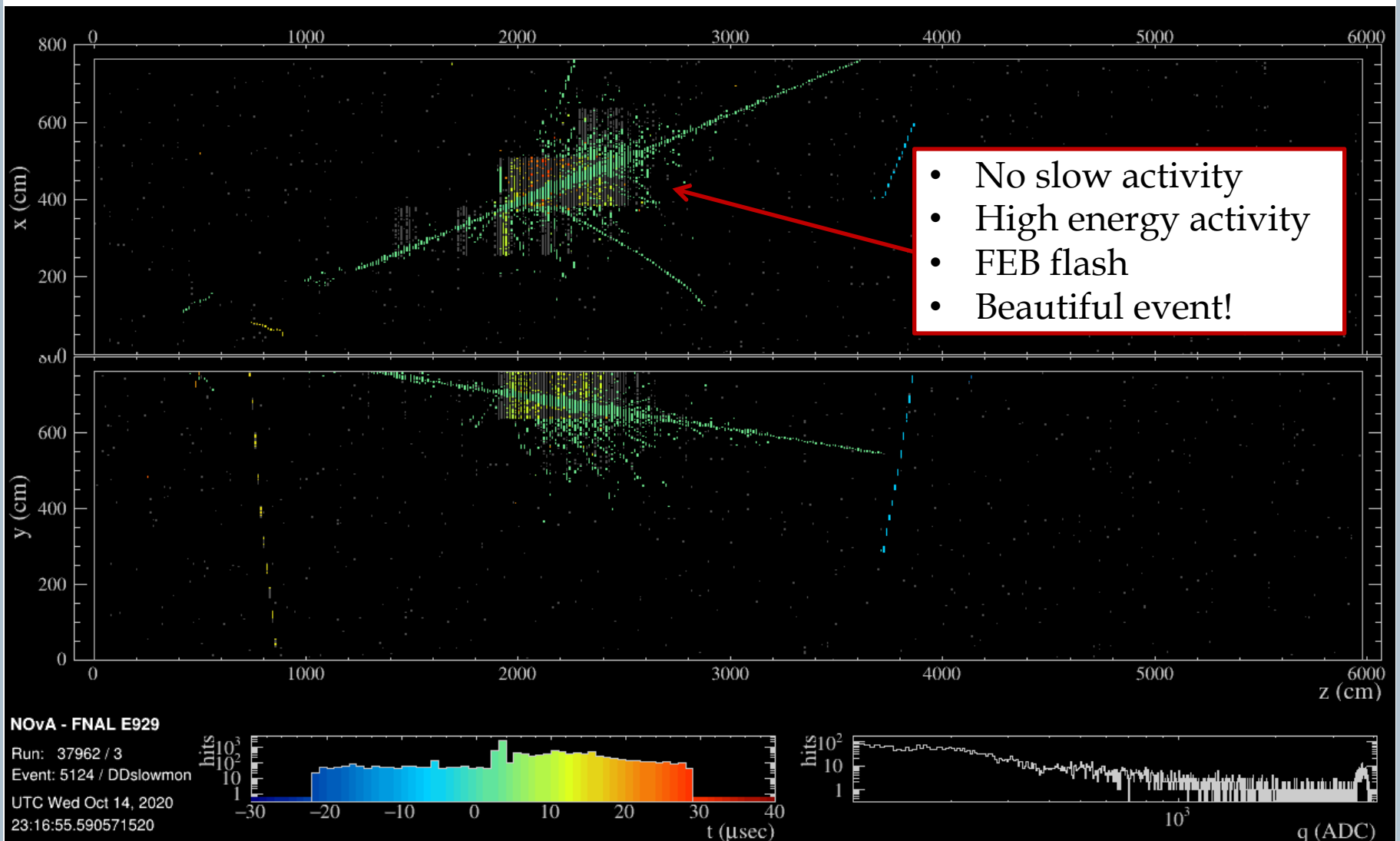
No Magnetic Monopole Event Found!



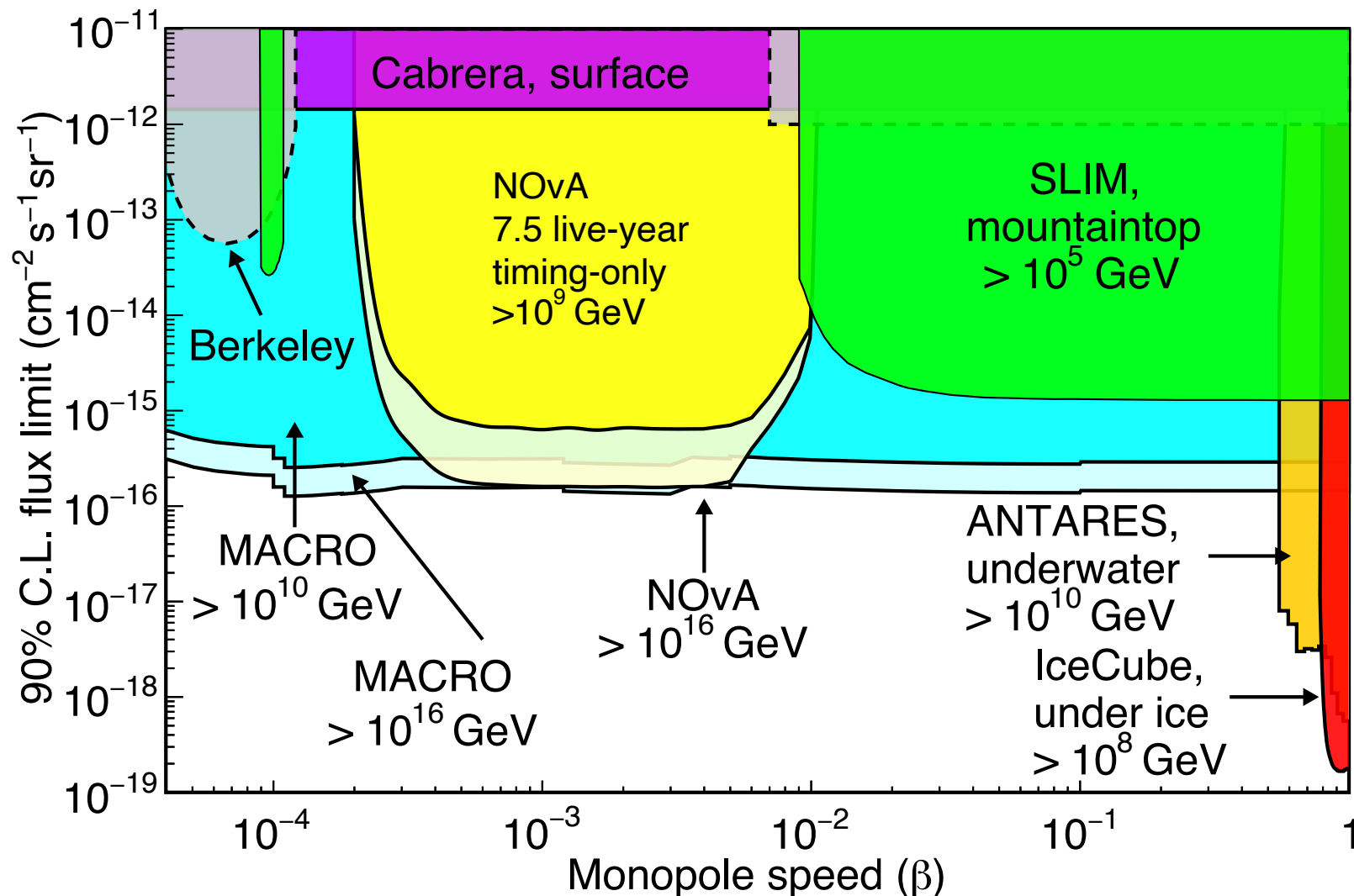
Interesting Event 1 – Timing Search



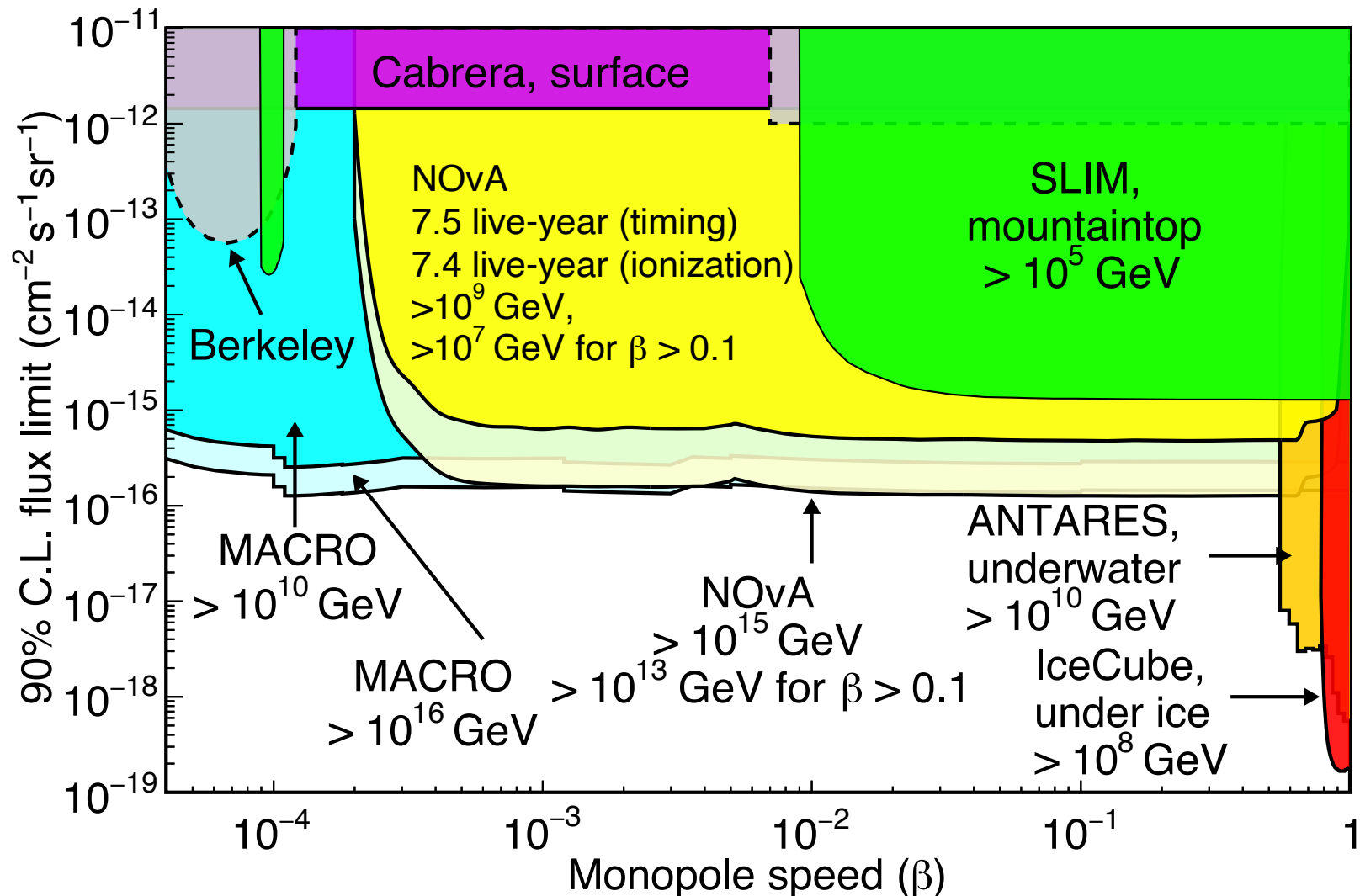
Interesting Event 2 – Timing Search



Magnetic Monopole Flux Limits



Magnetic Monopole Flux Limits





Summary



- We continue to untangle the oscillation parameter phase space.
 - Stay tuned for our combined results with T2K (up next)!
- We searched for magnetic monopoles. In the absence of any signal, we set limits as low as $2 \times 10^{-16} \text{ cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1} \text{ sr}^{-1}$.
- Thanks to the NOvA Collaboration!
- Thanks to our funding agencies for supporting the NOvA experiment (see next slide) and my work (NSF-2412236).



**>266 scientists and engineers
from 51 institutions from 8 countries**



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Signal Search – $L > 20$ m

NOvA Preliminary

