Understanding land-atmosphere coupling

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Sept. 29, 2014

Earth's climate sustains life

- **Burning fossil fuels is increasing greenhouse gases**
- **Climate is warming: ice is melting, extreme weather is increasing**
- **Water plays crucial amplifying role**

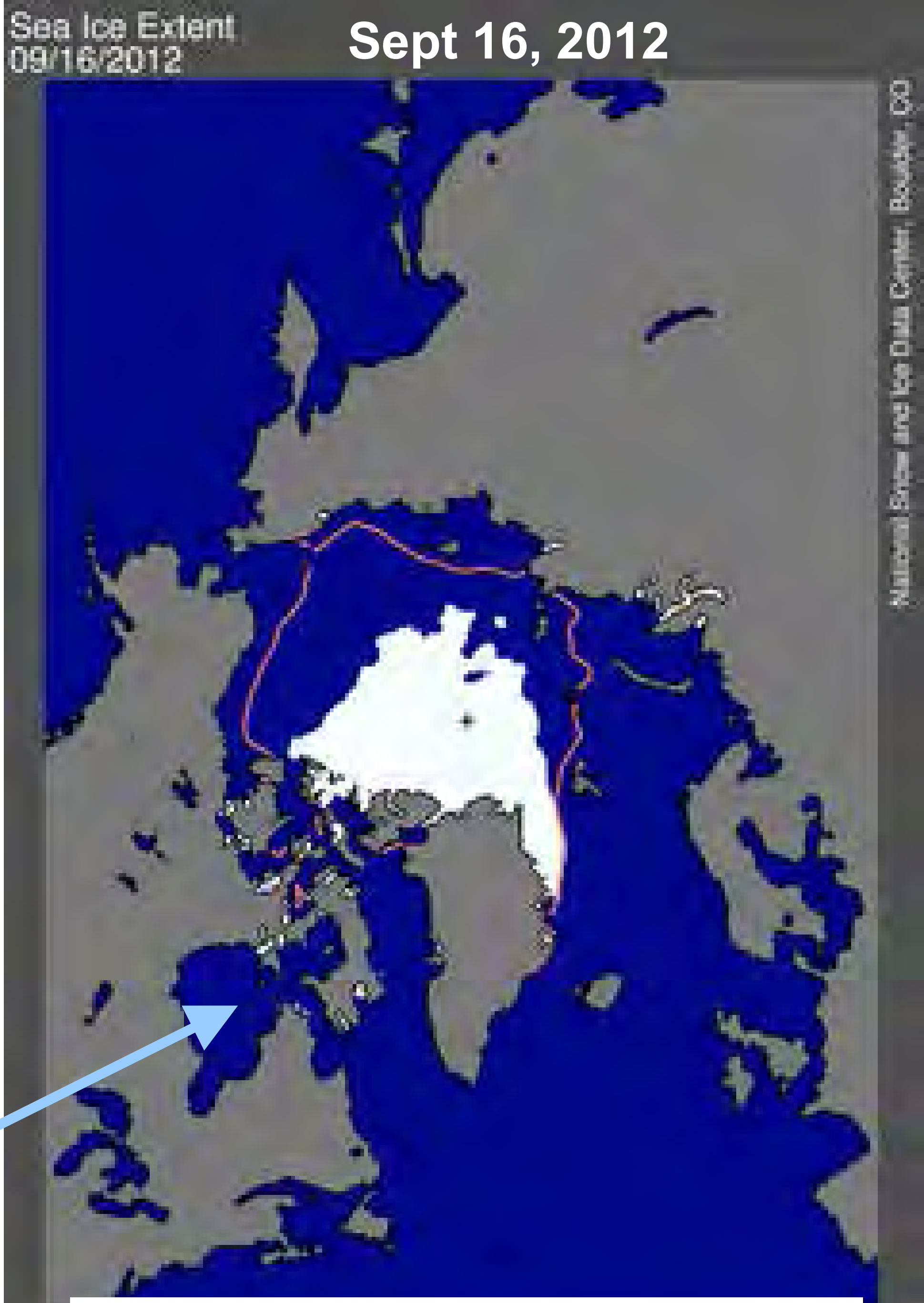
January 2, 2012: NASA

Water in the Climate System

- Vapor, liquid and ice
  - Ocean and land
- Shortwave reflectivity of clouds and snow
  - Effective cloud albedo, surface albedo with snow
- Vapor longwave (Infared) absorption
  - Water vapor greenhouse effect
  - Clouds ‘black’ in Infrared
- Surface Energy balance
  - Net radiation = $\underline{\lambda E}$ + H + G
- Latent heat of phase changes
  - Evaporation: $\underline{\lambda E}$ (Precip, soil water, stomatal control)
  - LH release drives clouds and storms

- **Half the Arctic Sea Ice Melted in 2012**
- **Open water in Oct. Nov. gives warmer Fall in Northeast**

> - ***Positive feedbacks:***
> - ***Less ice, less reflection of sunlight***
> - ***More evaporation, larger vapor greenhouse effect***
> - ***Same feedbacks as in our winters***



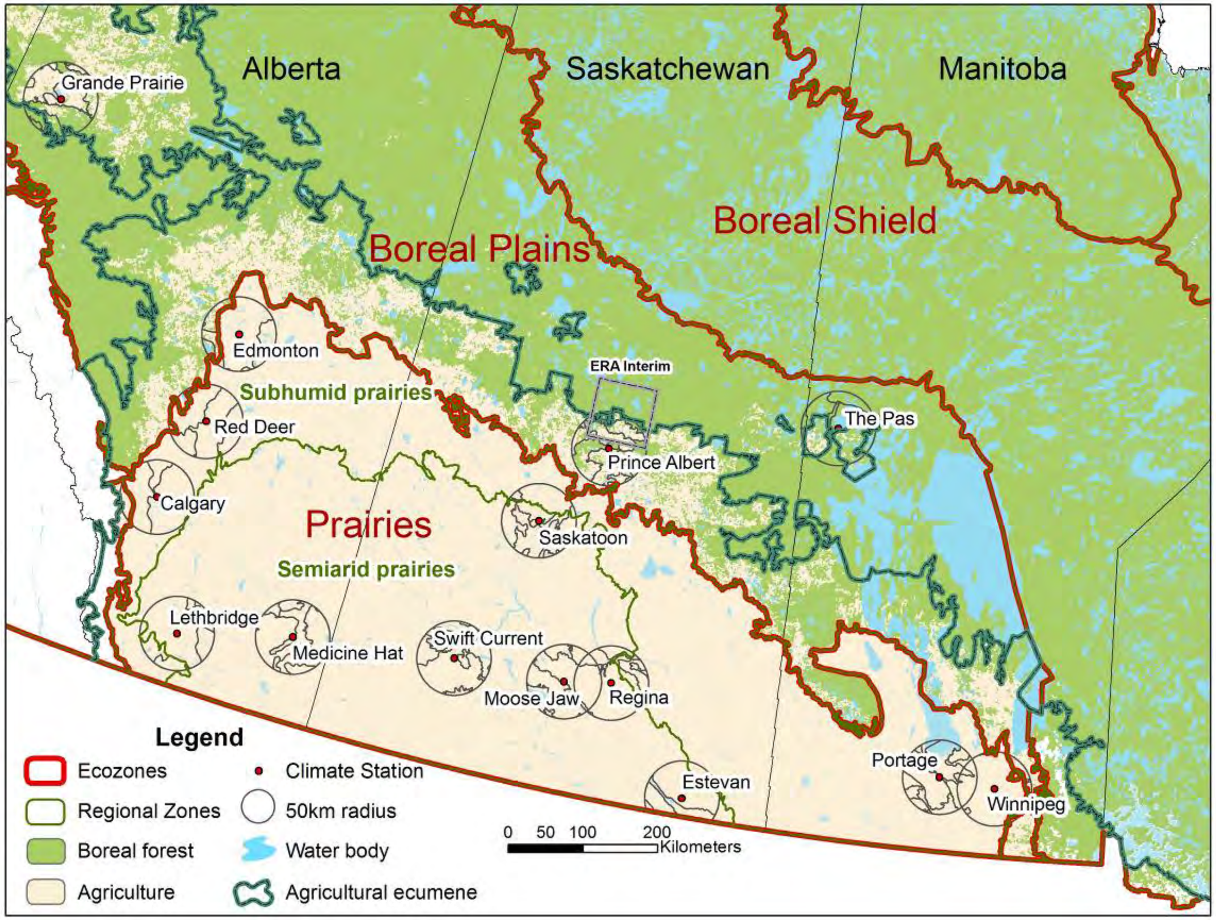
http://nsidc.org/arcticseaicenews/

Mysterious Ways of Science

- **2012 Agriculture-Canada asked for my help**
  - **I said “Yes”**

- **Sent me all the Prairie data: preprocessed**
  - **Which is not publically available!**
  - **I found it contain cloud observations:**
  - ***That I did not know existed***
  - ***That give us the radiative fluxes***
  - ***That transform our understanding***

14 Prairie stations: 1953-2011



- *Hourly* **p, T, RH, WS, WD, Opaque Cloud by level, (SW_{dn}, LW_{dn})**
- *Daily* **precipitation and snowdepth**
- **Ecodistrict crop data since 1955**
- **Albedo data (MODIS/CCRS: 250m, after 2000)**

Prairie Station Locations

Station Name	Station ID	Province	Latitude	Longitude	Elevation (m)
Red Deer*	3025480	Alberta	52.18	-113.62	905
Calgary*	3031093	Alberta	51.11	-114.02	1084
Lethbridge†	3033880	Alberta	49.63	-112.80	929
Medicine Hat	3034480	Alberta	50.02	-110.72	717
Grande Prairie*	3072920	Alberta	55.18	-118.89	669
Regina*	4016560	Saskatchewan	50.43	-104.67	578
Moose Jaw	4015320	Saskatchewan	50.33	-105.55	577
Estevan*	4012400	Saskatchewan	49.22	-102.97	581
Swift Current†	4028040	Saskatchewan	50.3	-107.68	817
Prince Albert*	4056240	Saskatchewan	53.22	-105.67	428
Saskatoon*	4057120	Saskatchewan	52.17	-106.72	504
Portage-Southport	5012320	Manitoba	49.9	-98.27	270
Winnipeg*†	5023222	Manitoba	49.82	-97.23	239
The Pas*†	5052880	Manitoba	53.97	-101.1	270

Outline

Review of published papers
(alanbetts.com)

- Clouds and Diurnal Cycle over seasons
  - *Betts et al (2013a)*
- Annual crops and seasonal diurnal cycle
  - *Betts et al (2013b)*
- Winter snow transitions and climate
  - *Betts et al (2014a)*

(+ many more)

References

- Betts, A. K. (2009), Land-surface-atmosphere coupling in observations and models. *J. Adv. Model Earth Syst., Vol. 1, Art. #4,* 18 pp., doi: 10.3894/JAMES.2009.1.4

- Betts, A.K., R. Desjardins and D. Worth (2013a), Cloud radiative forcing of the diurnal cycle climate of the Canadian Prairies. *J. Geophys. Res. Atmos., 118,* 1–19, doi:10.1002/jgrd.50593
- Betts, A.K., R. Desjardins, D. Worth and D. Cerkowniak (2013b), Impact of land-use change on the diurnal cycle climate of the Canadian Prairies. J. Geophys. Res. Atmos., 118, 11,996–12,011, doi:10.1002/2013JD020717
- Betts, A.K., R. Desjardins, D. Worth, S. Wang and J. Li (2014), Coupling of winter climate transitions to snow and clouds over the Prairies. J. Geophys. Res. Atmos., 119, doi:10.1002/2013JD021168

- http://alanbetts.com

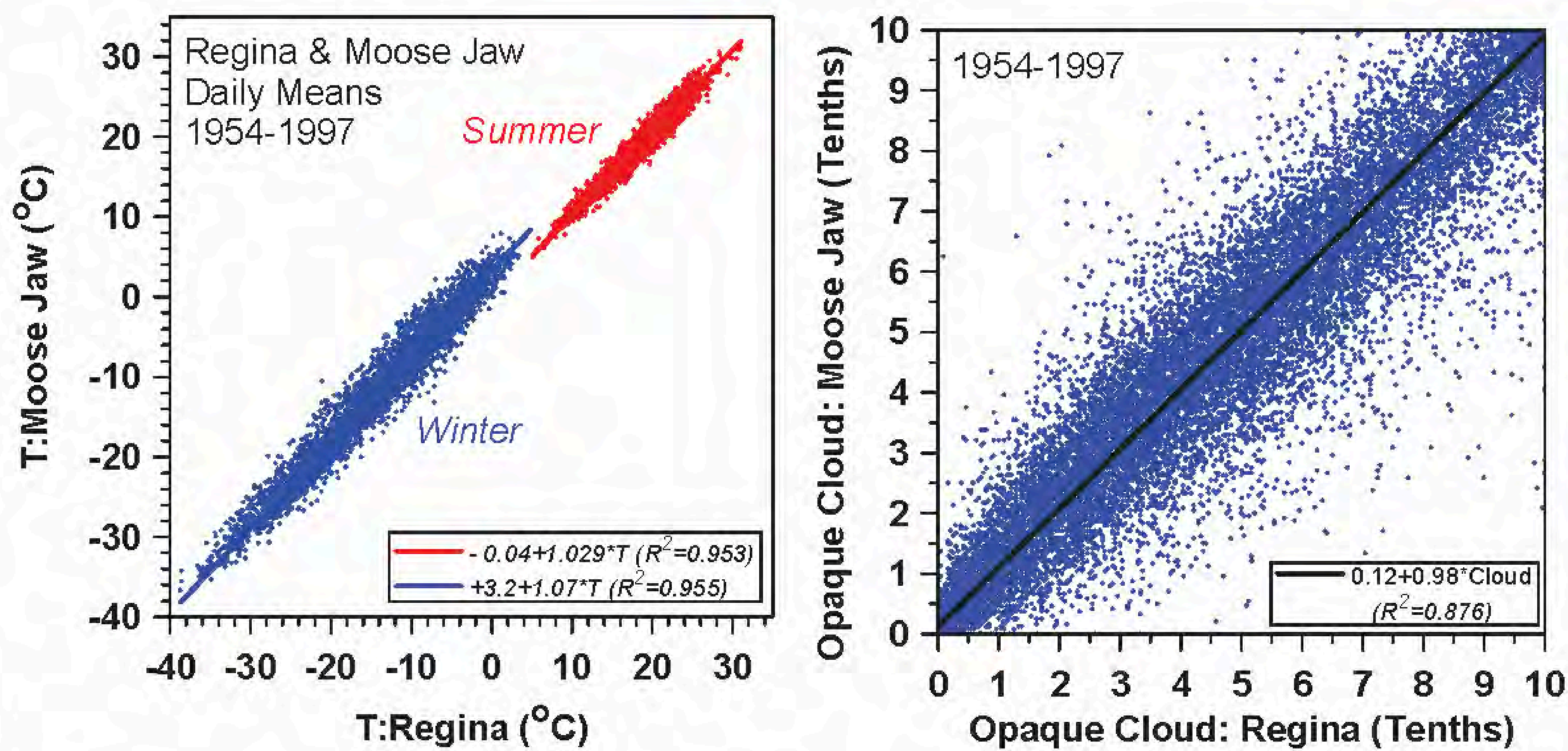
Methods: Analyze Coupled System

- *Seasonal diurnal climate by station/region*
- 220,000 days, excellent data (600 station-years)
  - Not freely available!!
- Impact of reflective/opaque cloud on diurnal cycle in summer and winter
  - Calibrate "cloud radiative forcing"
- Change of seasonal climate with cropping
  - 'Summerfallow' to annual crops on 5MHa in 30 yrs
- Impact of snow transitions
  - First snow in fall; spring melt of snowpack
  - Winter climate and % days snow cover

Clouds and Diurnal Climate

- Reduce hourly data to
  - daily means: T_{mean} , RH_{mean} etc
  - data at T_{max} and T_{min}
- *Diurnal cycle climate*
  - $DTR = T_{max} - T_{min}$
  - $\Delta RH = RH_{tn} - RH_{tx}$
- *Almost no missing hourly data*
  - *(until recent government cutbacks!)*

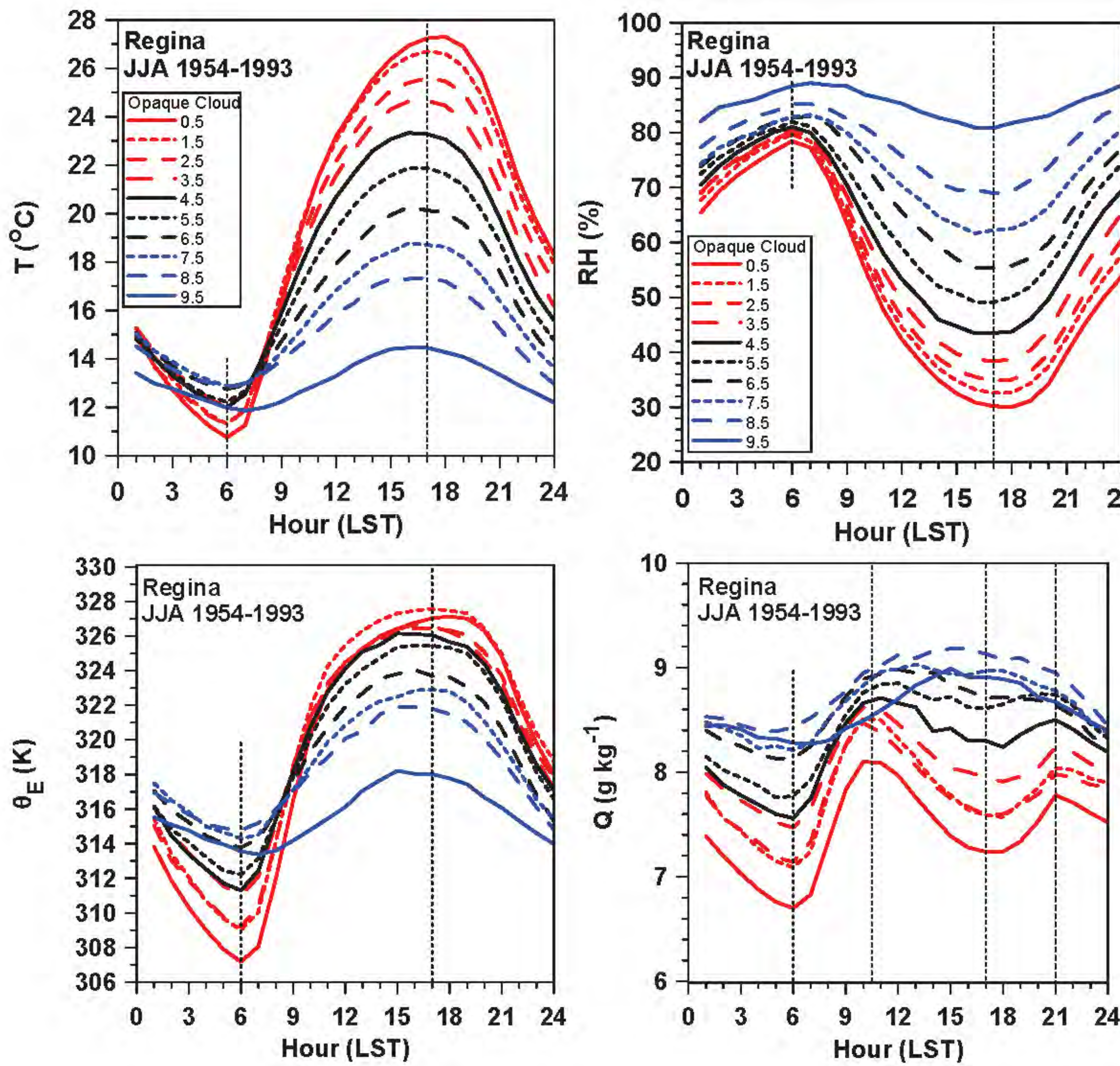
Compare Neighbors: 64 km



- Temp: 1 to 1: R^2 =0.95
- Opaque Cloud: 1 to 1: R^2 =0.88

Clouds to Summer Diurnal Cycle

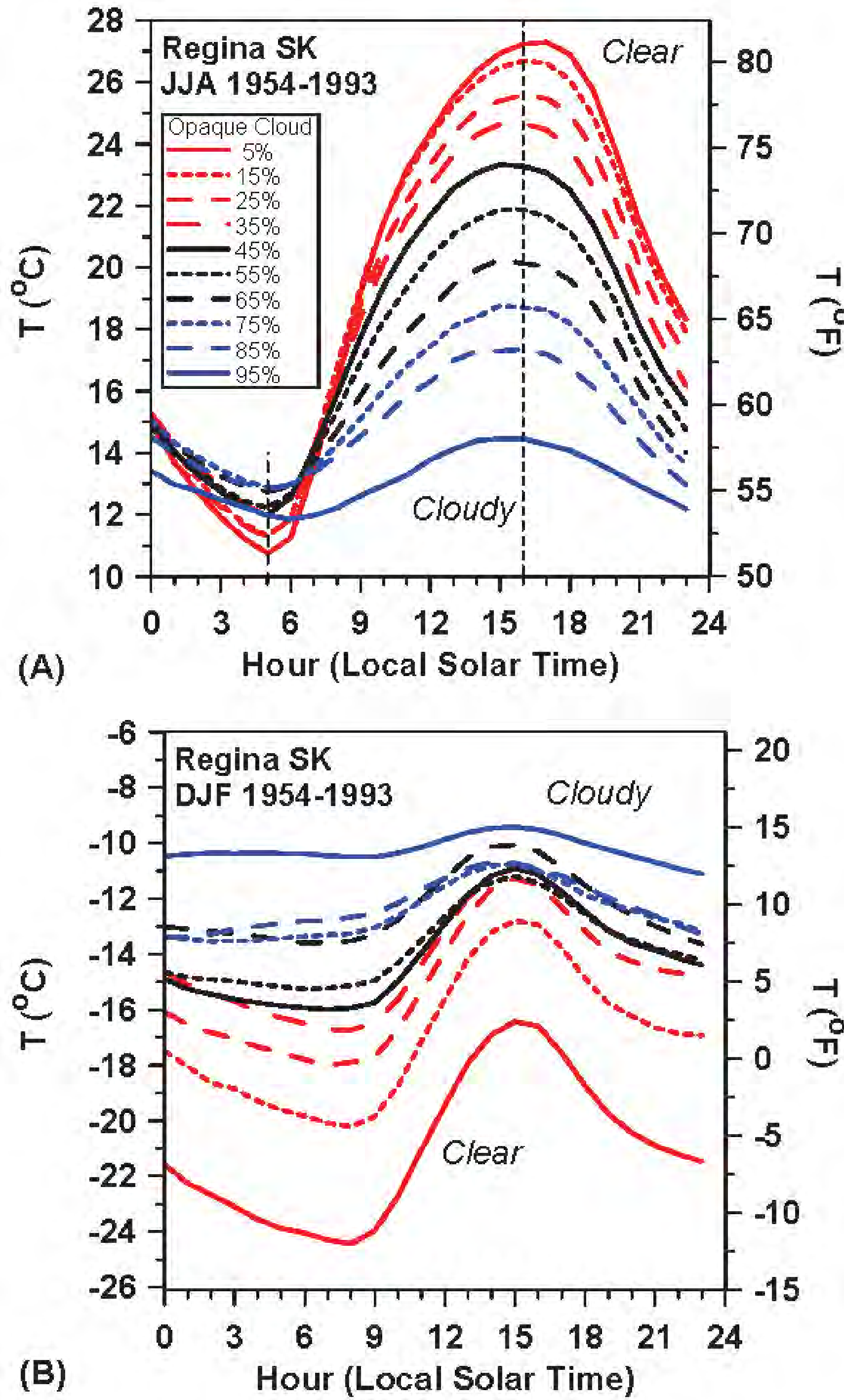
- ***40-yr climate***
- **T and RH are inverse**
- **Q has double maximum for BL transitions**
- **θ_E flatter**
- ***Overcast (rain) only outlier***



Cloud Impacts

- **Summer:** Clouds reflect sunlight
  - no cloud, hot days; only slightly cooler at night
- **Winter:** Clouds are greenhouse
  - snow reflects low sun
  - clear & dry sky, cold days, very cold nights
- ***Fast transition with snow in 5 days***

Betts et al. 2013

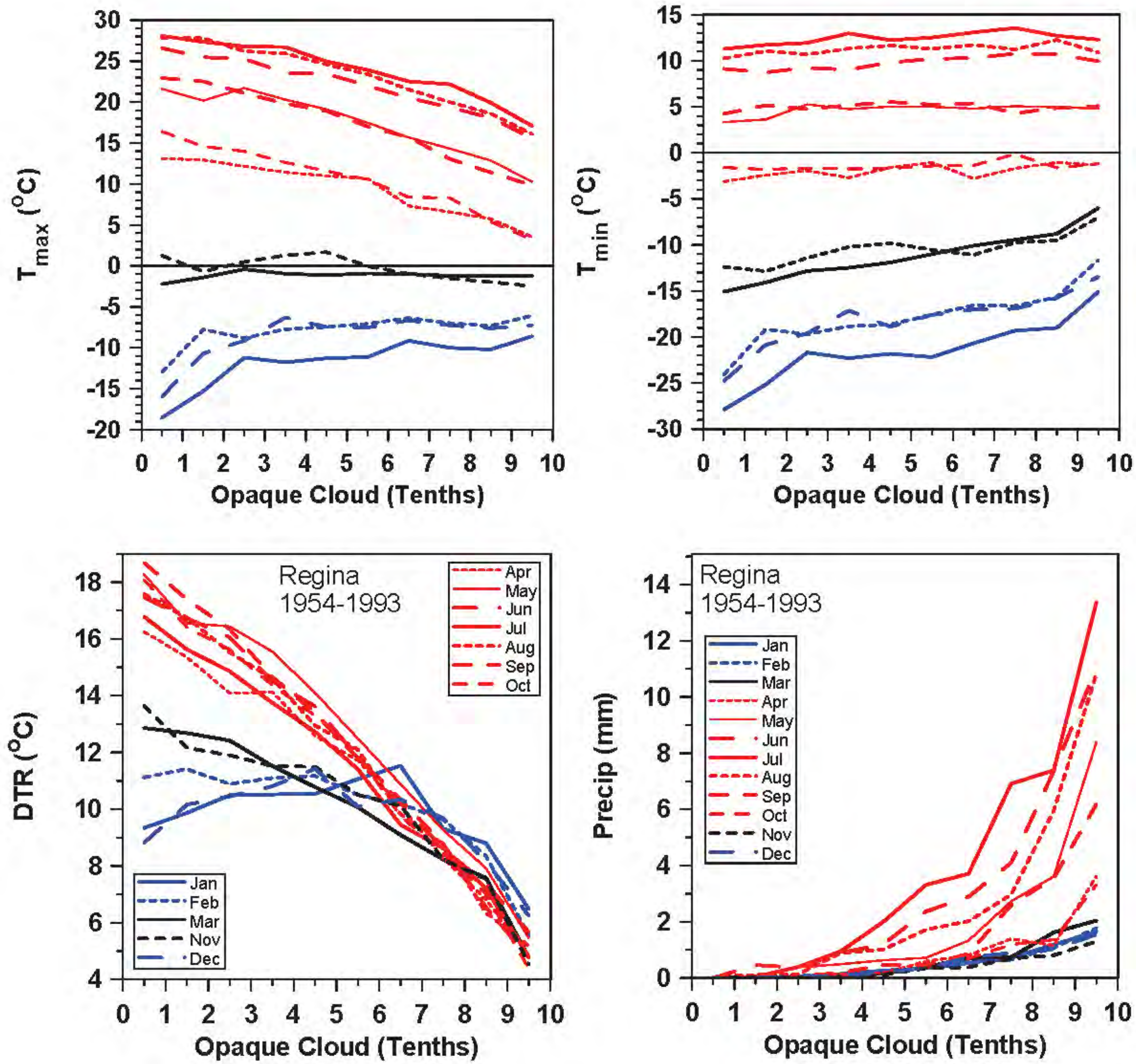


Annual Cycle: T_{max},T_{min}, DTR, Precip

- **Warm state: April – Oct**
- **Cold state: Dec – Feb**
- **Transitions: Nov, Mar**

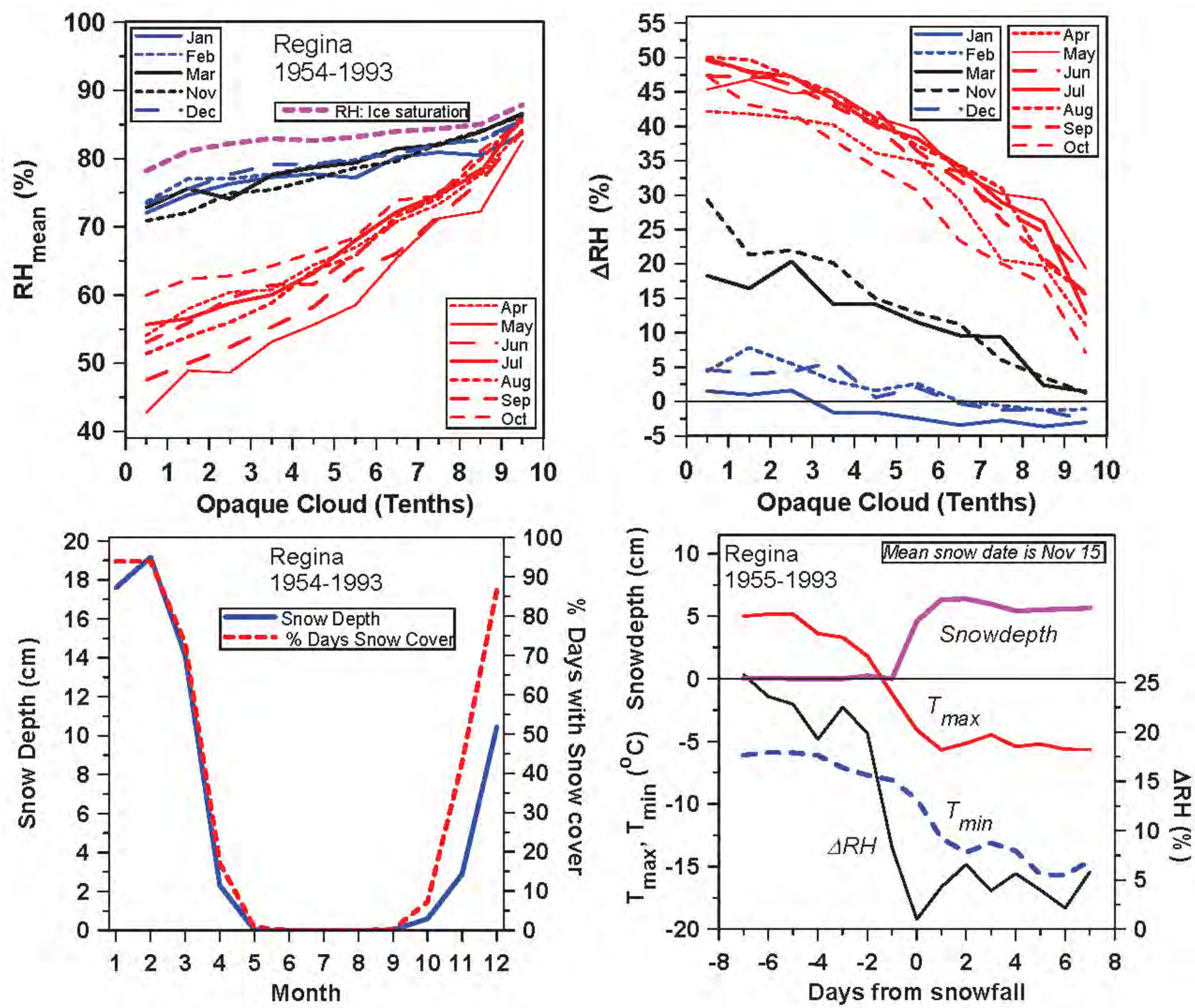
  $T_{max} \approx 0^oC$

- ***Actually occur in <5 days***

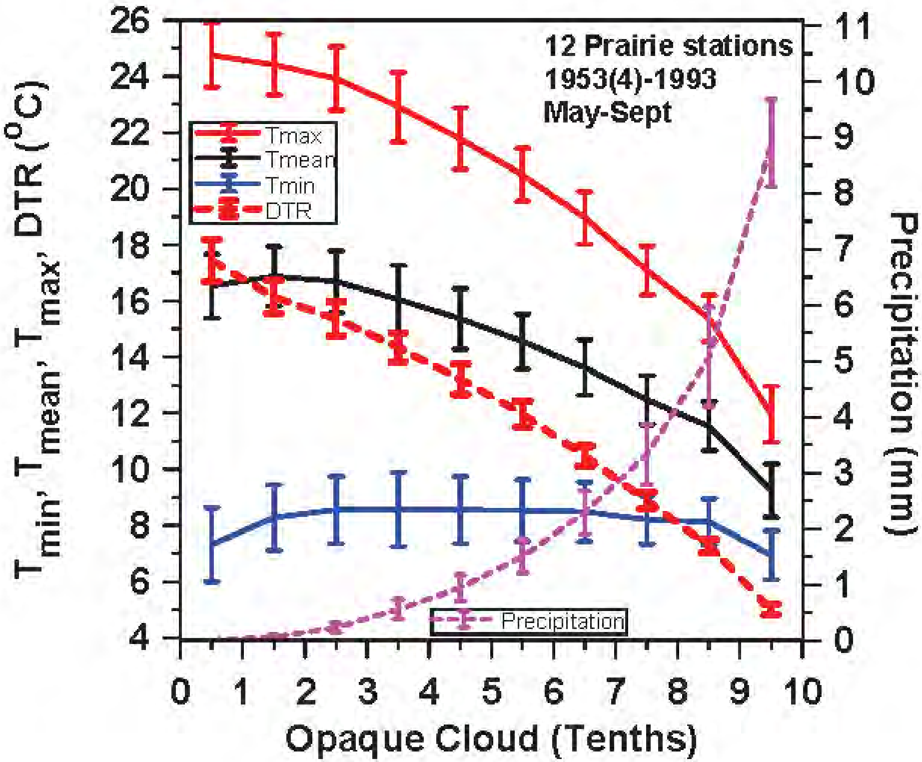


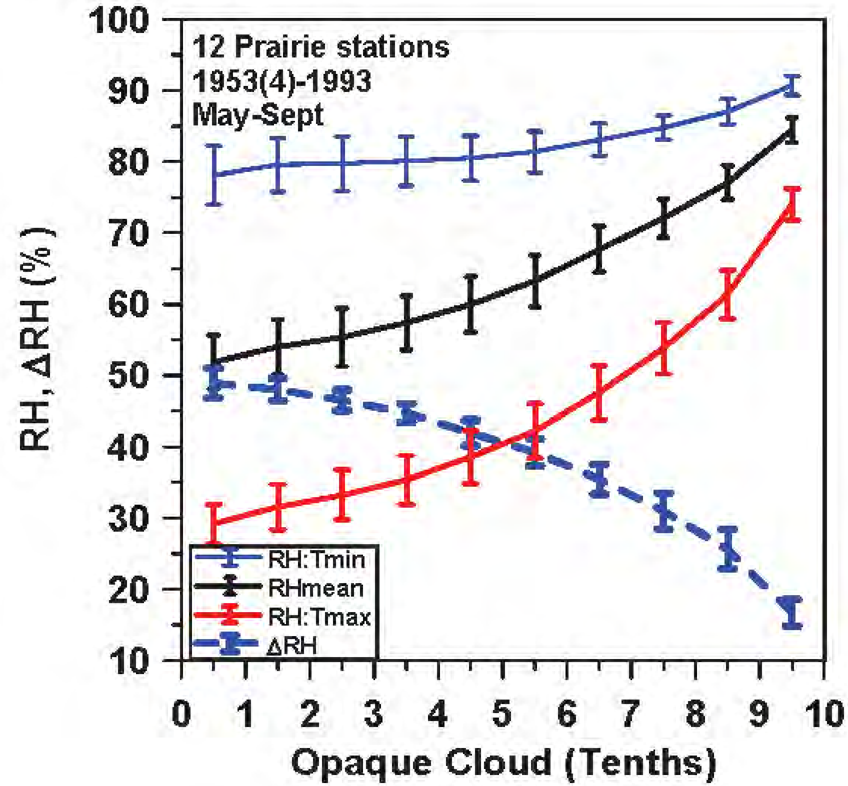
Annual Cycle: RH and ΔRH

- **Warm state: April – Oct**
- **Cold state: Dec – Feb**
- **Transitions: Nov, Mar**
  $T_{max} \approx 0^oC$
- **Transition**
  - ***in <5 days with snow***



Prairie Warm Season Climate





- **12 stations:** ***Uniform climatology***
- **<u>Tiny variability</u> in DTR and ΔRH**

Surface Radiation Budget

- $R_{net} = SW_{net} + LW_{net}$
  $= (SW_{dn} - SW_{up}) + (LW_{dn} - LW_{up})$

Define Effective Cloud Albedo (reflection)

- $ECA = (SW_{dn}(clear) - SW_{dn}) / SW_{dn}(clear)$

  Clear sky

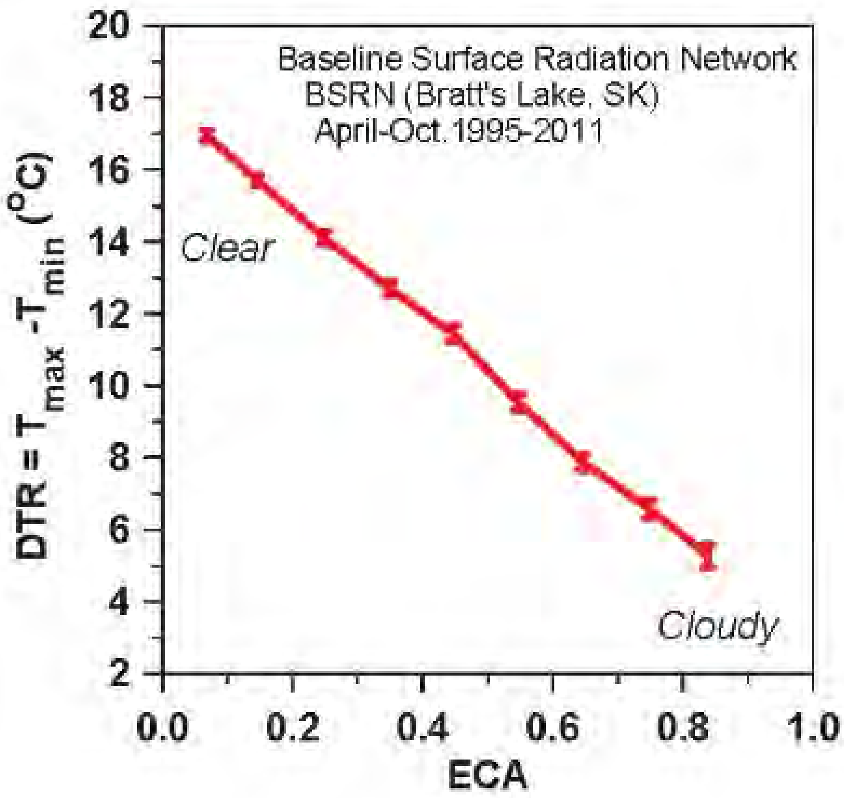
- $SW_{net} = (1 - \alpha_s)(1 - ECA)\ SW_{dn}(clear)$

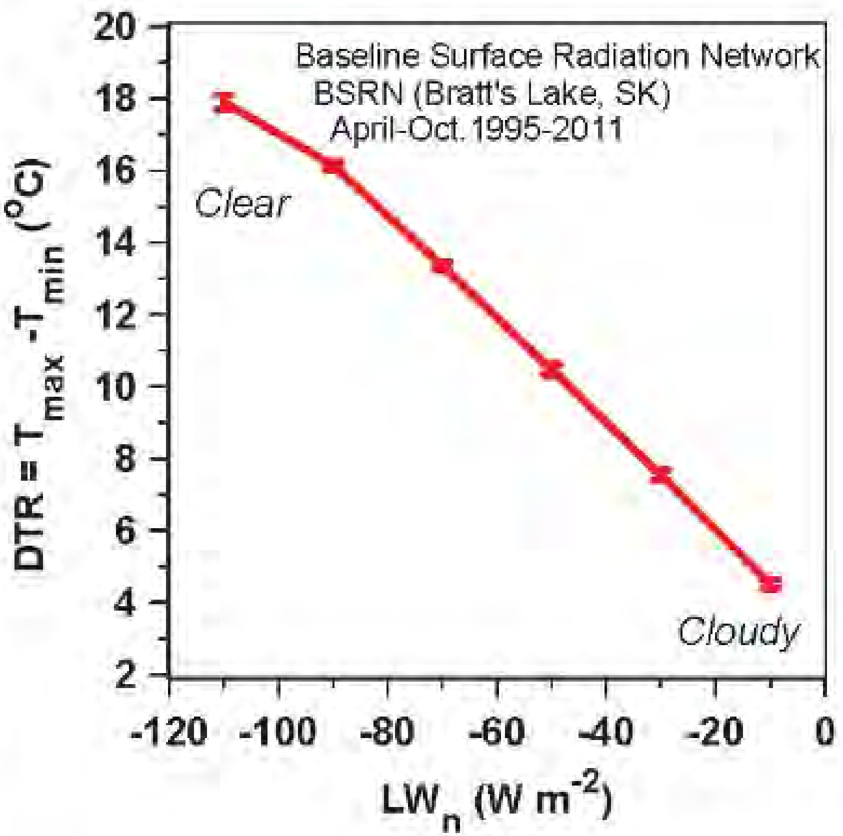
  Reflected by surface, clouds

  MODIS Calibrate Opaque Cloud data

Diurnal Temperature Range

Warms in daytime and cools at night





- **Daytime warming related to clouds: ECA**
- **Night-time cooling related to clouds: LW_{net}**

Warm Season Climate

- **Sun warms surface; grass, trees – transpire (λE)**
- **Heating forms unstable boundary layer**
- **Clouds form at lifting condensation level, reflecting sunlight**

Cold Season Climate

- **Low sun is reflected by snow**
- **Under clear sky, surface long-wave cooling**
- **Stable boundary layer forms**

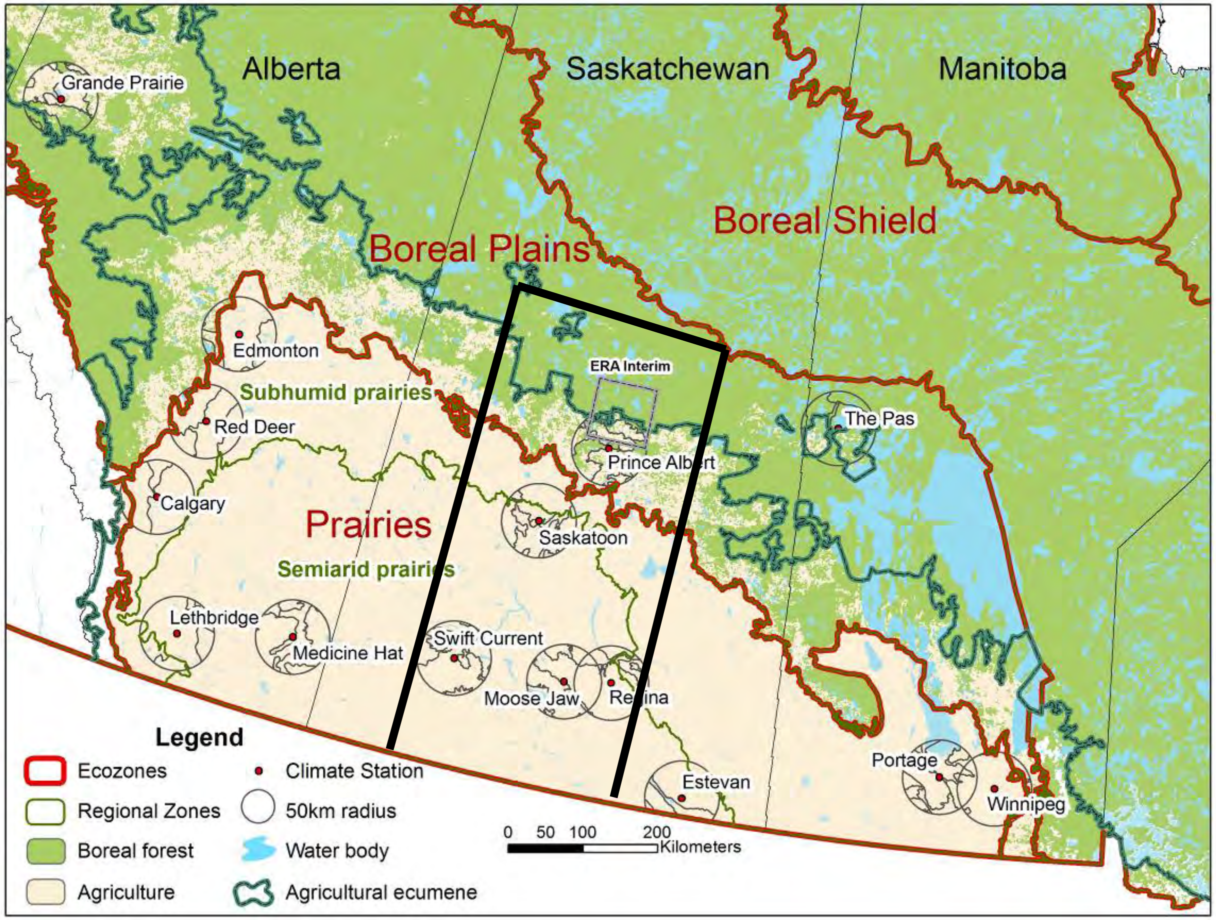
Impact of Snow on Climate

"Winter transitions"

- Composite about snow date
  - First lying snow in fall
  - Final snow-pack melt in spring
- Gives mean climate transition with snow
  - 13 stations with 40-50 years of data
- *Snow cover and winter climate*

- Snow cover cools surface 10-14K
  - Snow cover is a fast "*climate switch*"
  - Shift to 'LW cloud forcing' from 'SW cloud forcing'
    - Shift to 'Cold when clear' from 'Warm when clear'

14 Prairie stations: 1953-2011

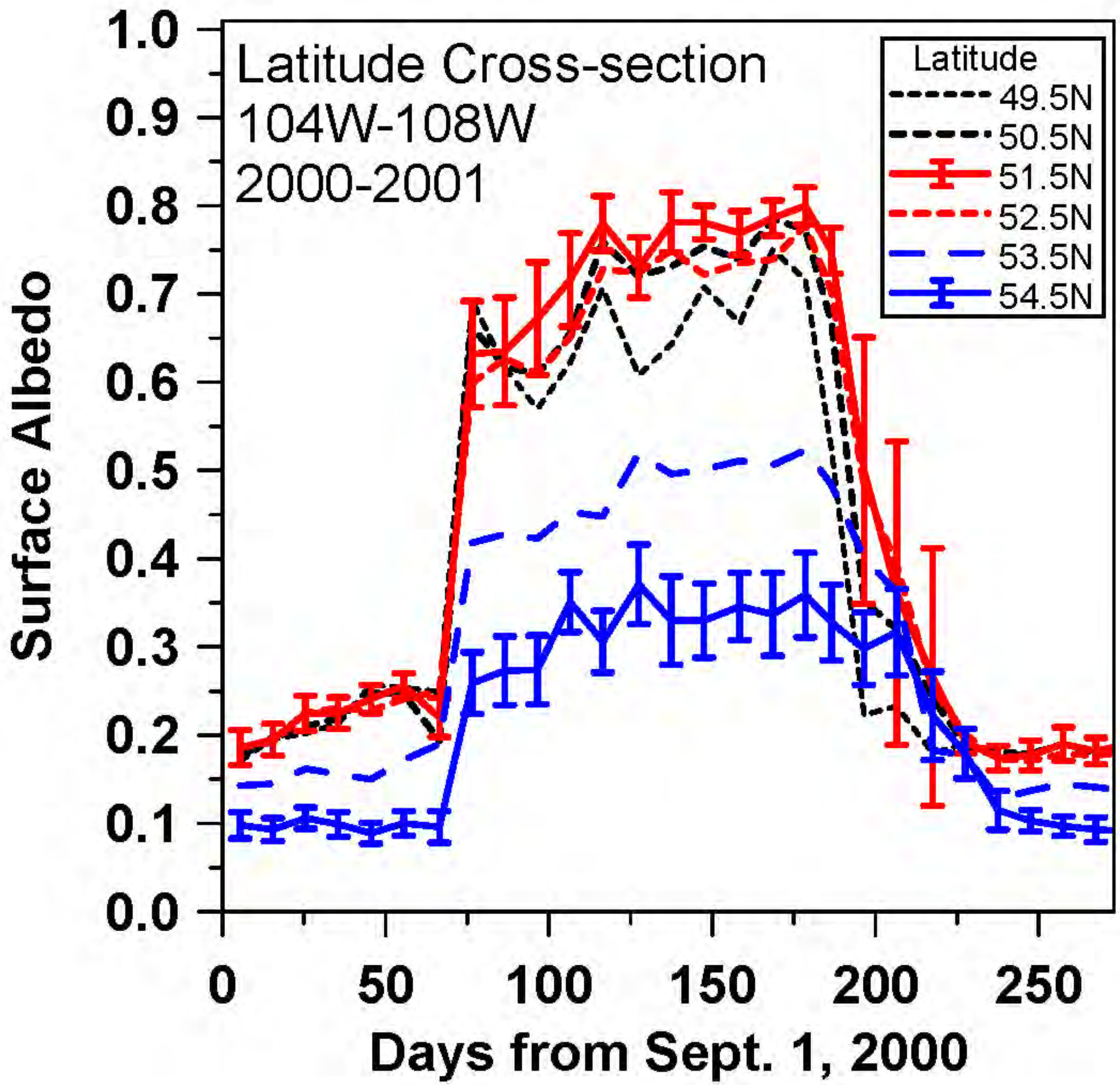


- **Hourly p, T, RH, WS, WD, Opaque Cloud by level, (SW_{dn}, LW_{dn})**
- **Daily precipitation and snowdepth**
- **Ecodistrict crop data since 1955**
- **Albedo data (MODIS/CCRS: 250m, after 2000)**

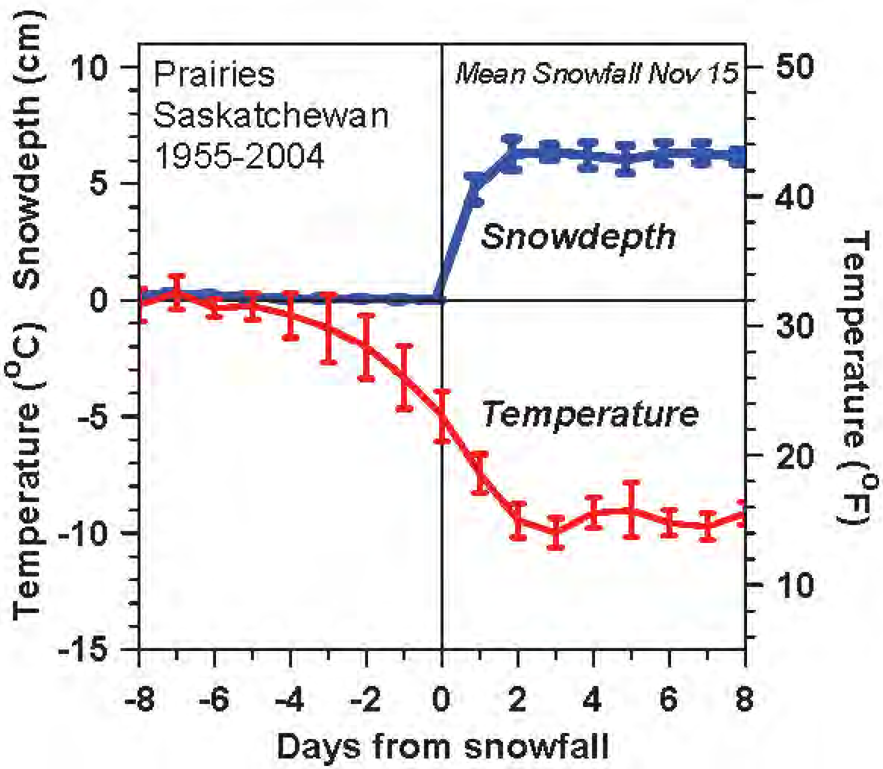
N-S Albedo through Winter

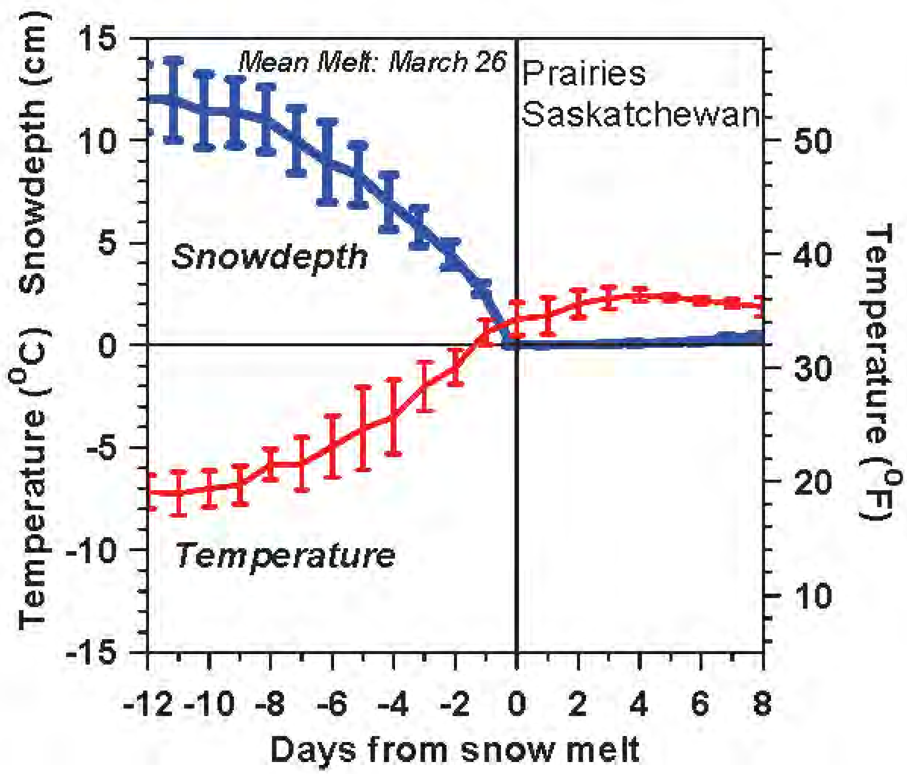
- **Prairies (SK)** α_s: **0.2 to 0.73**
- **Boreal forest** α_s: **0.1 to 0.35**

- ***MODIS: 10day, 250m, avg. to 50x50km to latitude bands***
  - ***CCRS product***



Snowfall and Snowmelt

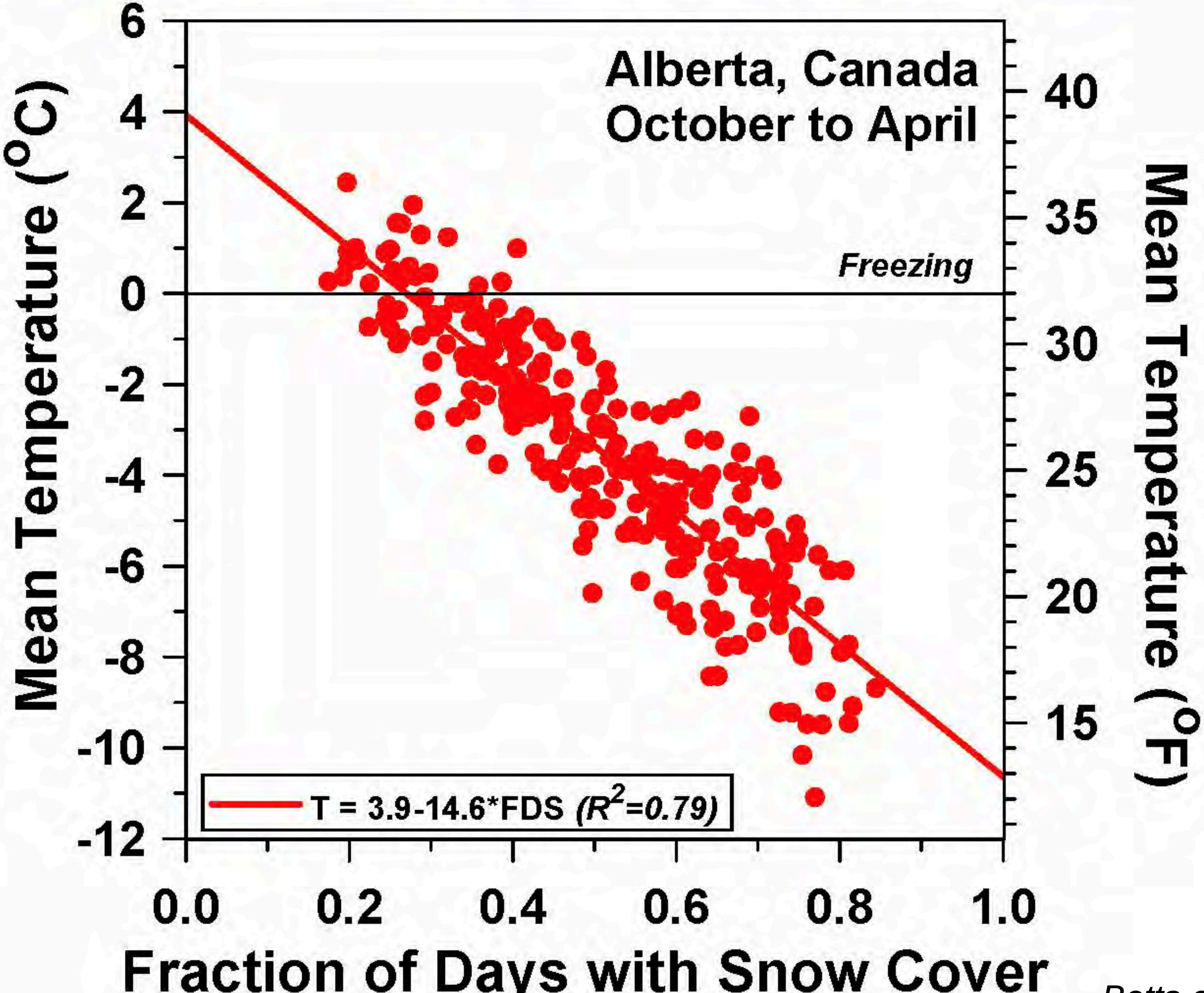




- **Temperature falls 10C (18F) with first snowfall**
- **Similar change with snowmelt**
- ***Snow reflects sunlight; reduces evaporation and water vapor greenhouse – changes 'local climate'***

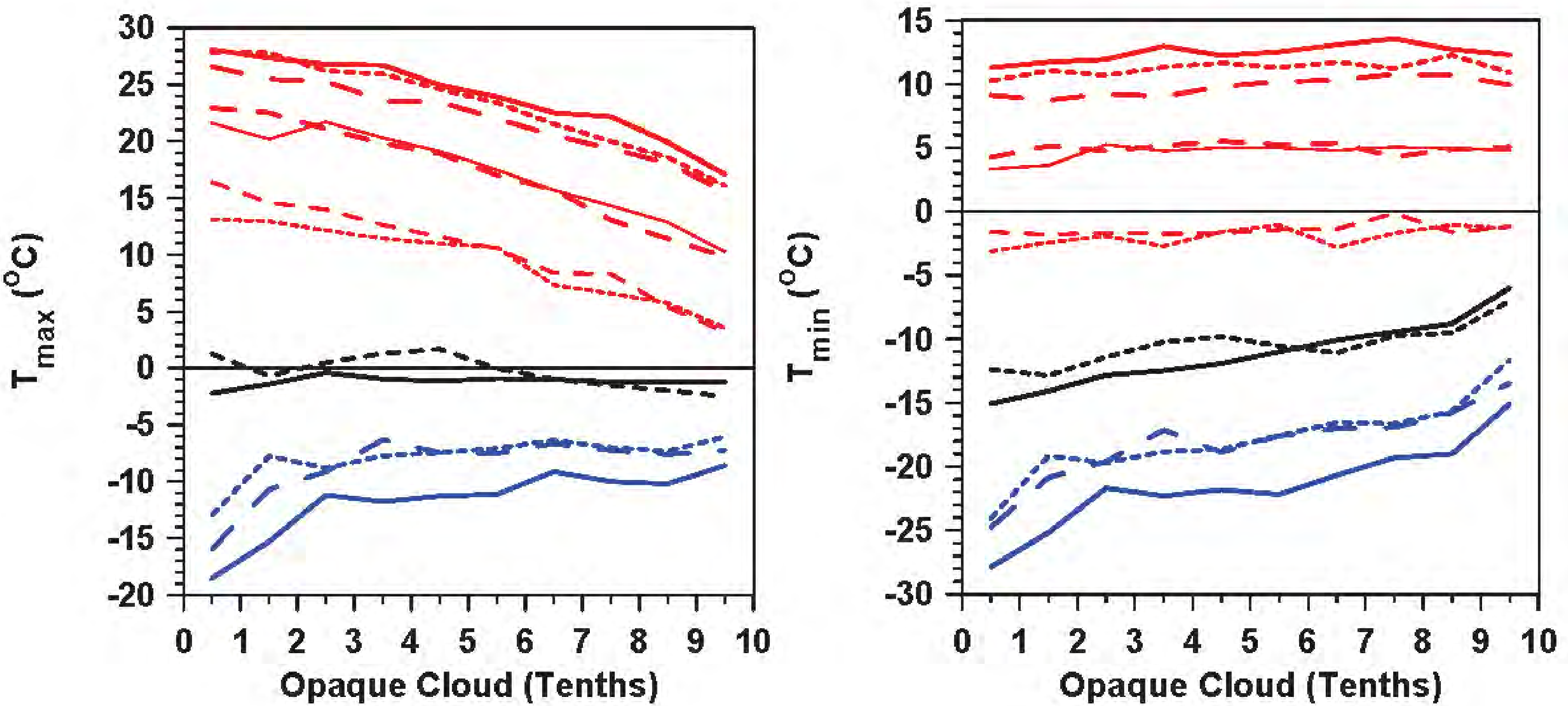
Betts et al. 2014

More snow cover - Colder temperatures



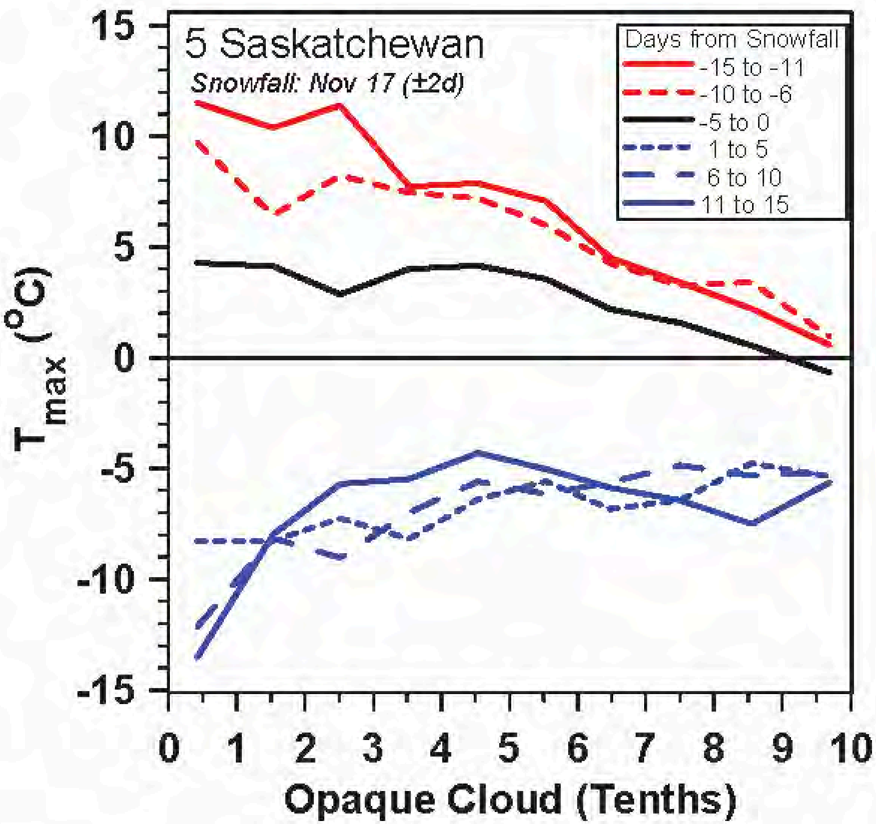
Betts et al. 2014

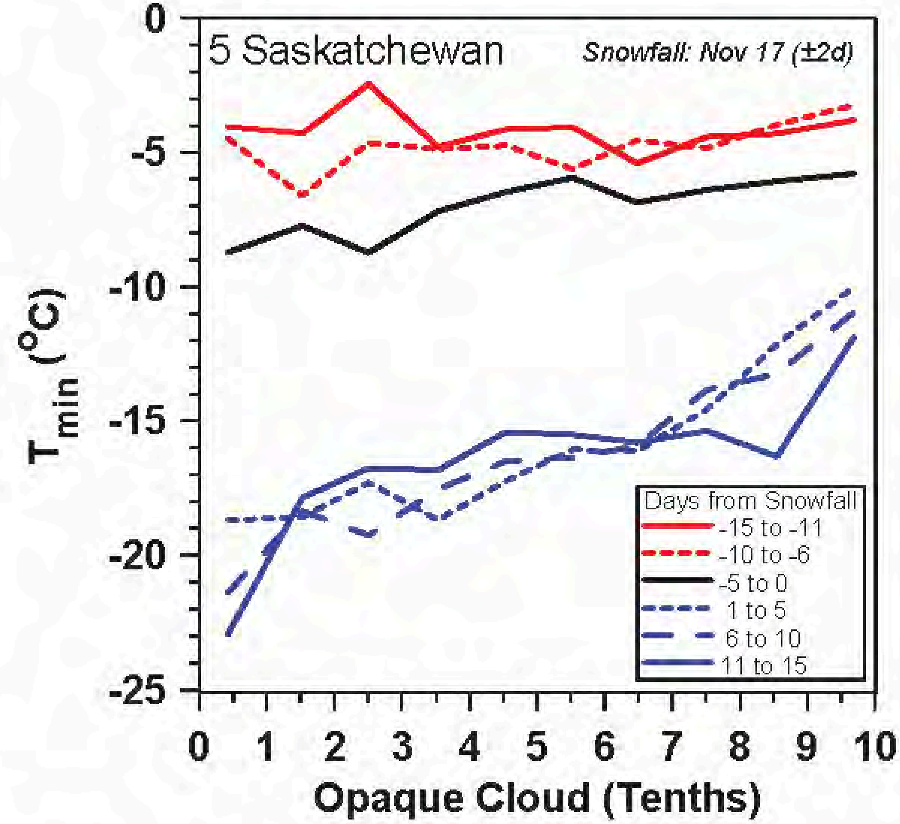
Recall: Annual Cycle: T_{max},T_{min}



- Warm state: April – Oct
- Transitions: Nov, Mar when $T_{max} \approx 0^oC$
- Cold state: Dec – Feb

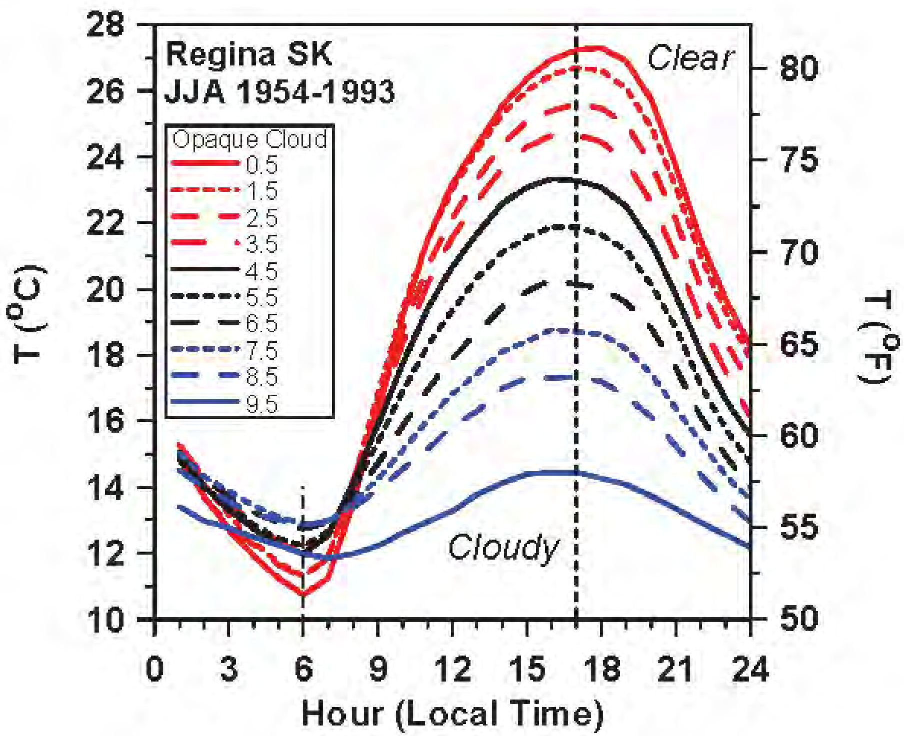
Snowfall is a 'Climate Switch'

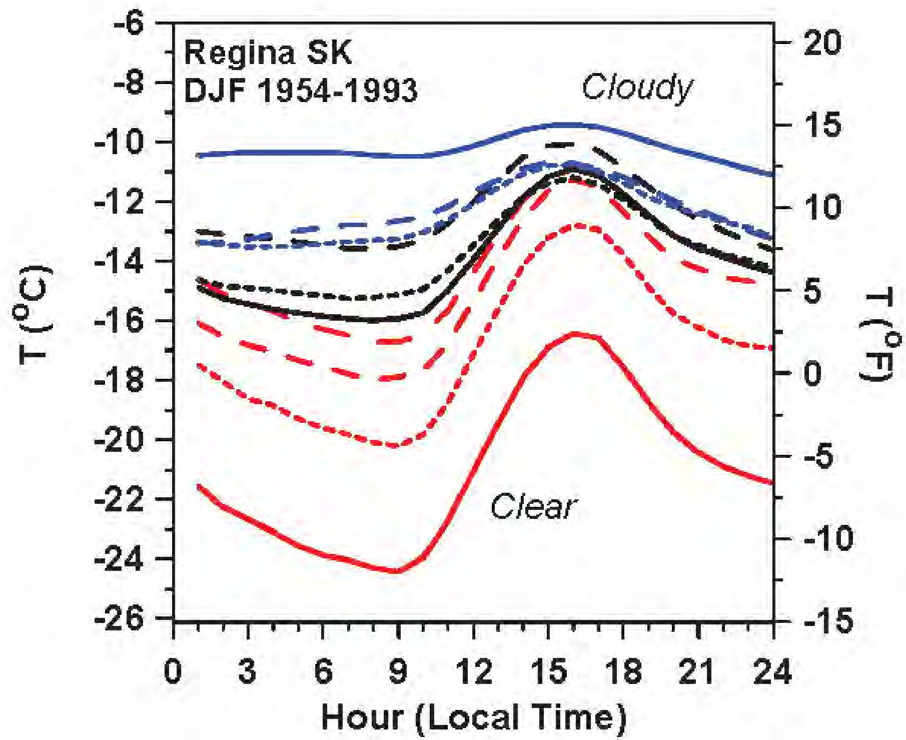




- **5-day means: *red: no snow; blue: snow* (6000 days)**
- **With snow: T_{max}, T_{min} plunge**
- **Cloud coupling shifts in 5 days**
- **From 'Warm when clear' to 'Cold when clear'**

Clouds: Summer & Winter Climate
Opposite Impact



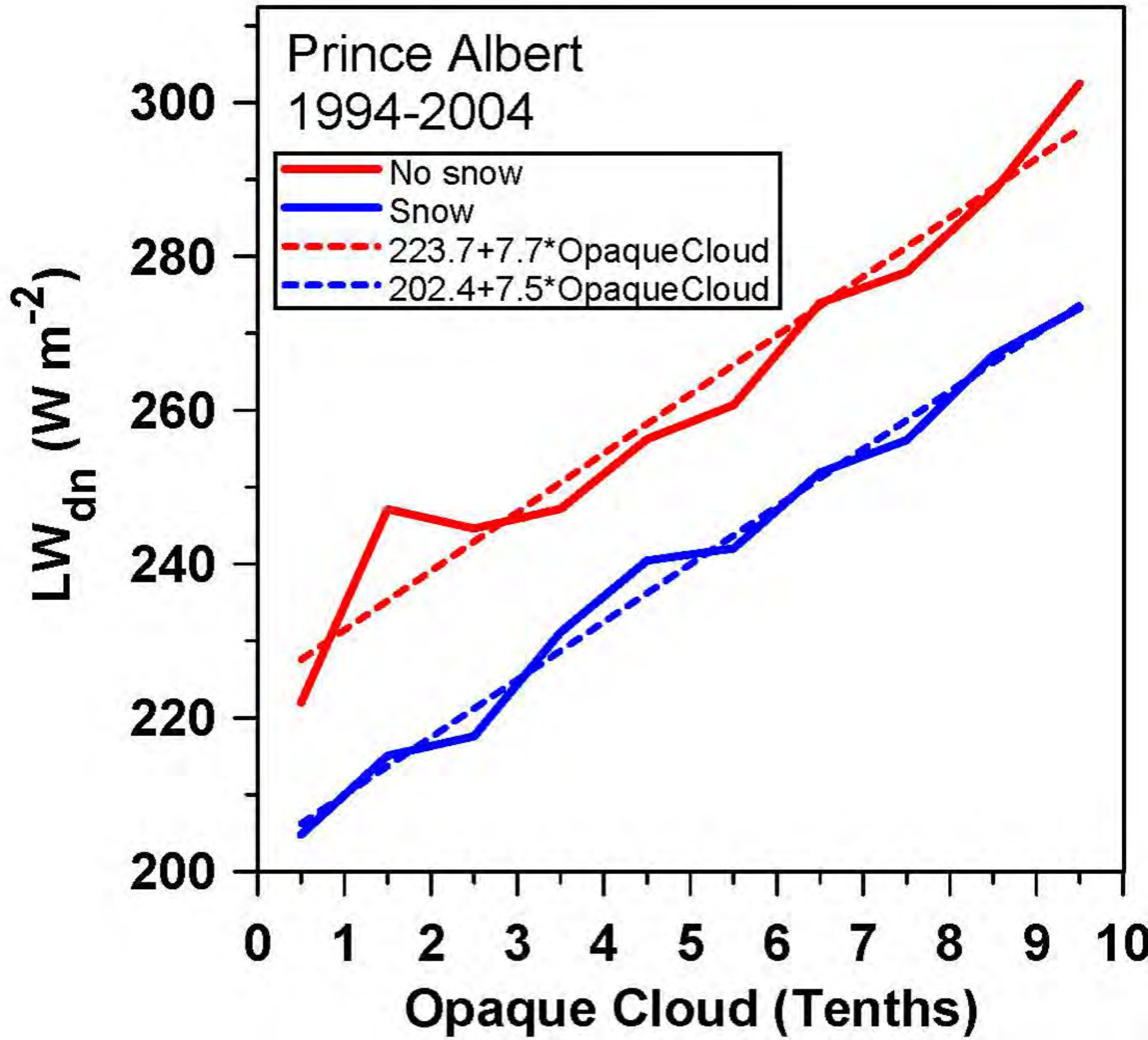


- **Summer:** **Clouds reflect sunlight (soil absorbs sun)**
  - **no cloud, hot days; only slightly cooler at night**
  - **Convective boundary layer in daytime**
- **Winter:** **Clouds are greenhouse (snow reflects sun)**
  - **clear & dry sky, cold days and very cold nights**
  - **Stable boundary layer**

Betts et al. 2013a

Role of LW_{dn} in Surface Radiation

- **Snow reduces vapor flux**
- **Atmosphere cooler and drier**
  - **Less water vapor greenhouse**
  - **$-22\ W/m^2$**
- ***Offset by 10% cloud increase with snow***



Surface Radiation Balance

- Across snow transition
  - Surface albedo α_s increases: 0.2 to 0.73
  - LW_{dn} decreases
  - Opaque cloud increases

- SW_{net} falls 34 W/m^2
- LW_{dn} falls 15 W/m^2
- Total 49 W/m^2

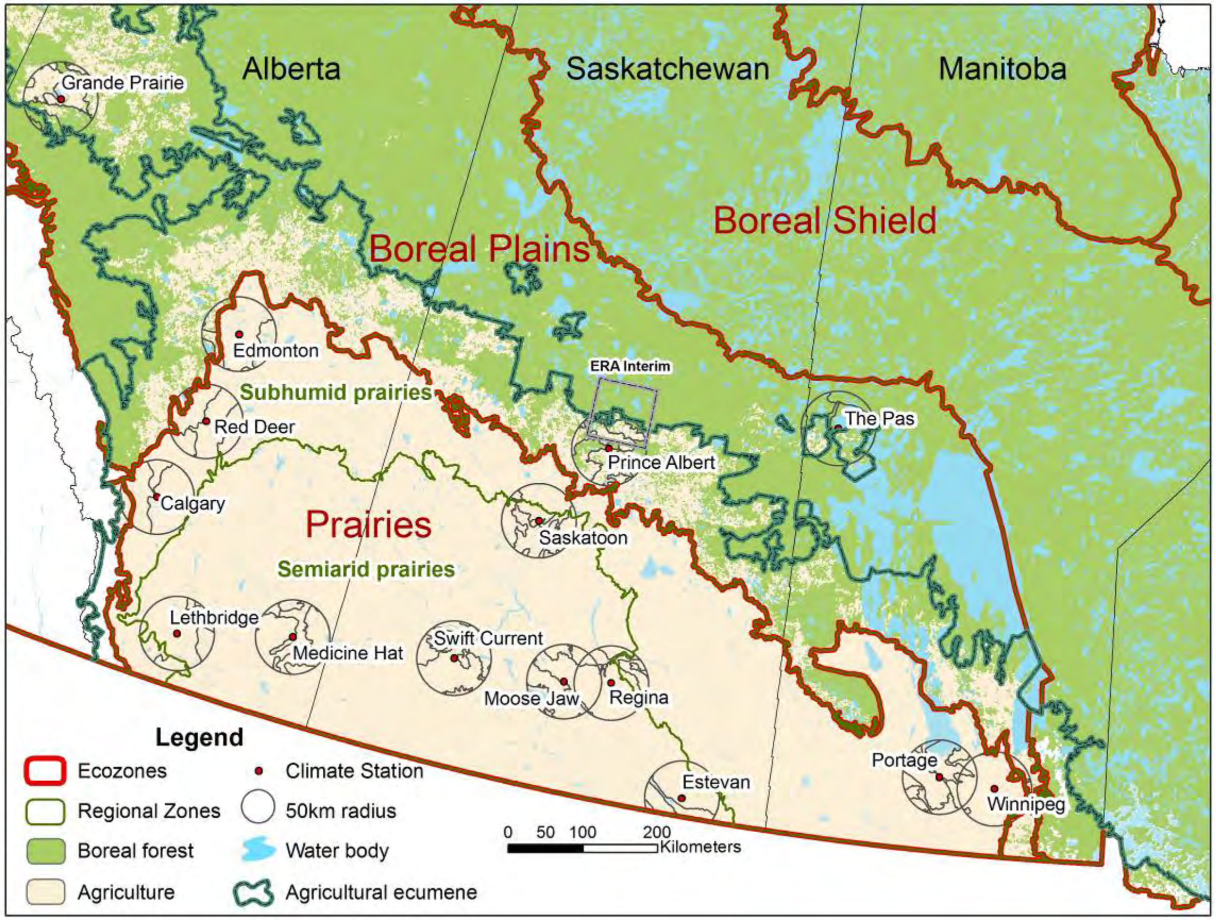
- Surface skin T falls: $\Delta T = -11K$ to balance

  (Stefan-Boltzman law: $\Delta(LW) = \Delta(\sigma T^4) = 4\sigma T^3 \Delta T$)

Annual crops and seasonal diurnal cycle

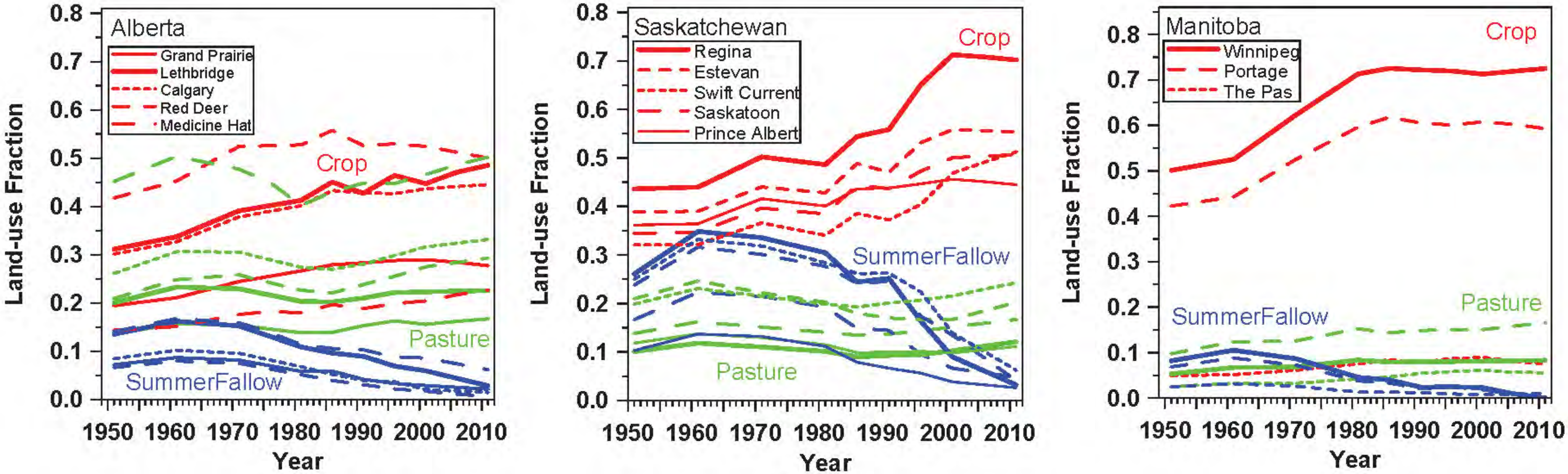
- **Ecodistrict crop data since 1955**
  - Ecodistricts mapped to soils
  - Typical scale: 2000 km^2 (500-7000)
- **Ecozones**
  - boreal plains ecozone
  - semiarid/subhumid prairie regional zones
- **Shift from 'Summerfallow' (no crops) to annual cropping on 5 MHa (11 M acres)**
  - *Large increase in transpiration: Jun-Jul*

13 Prairie stations: 1953-2011



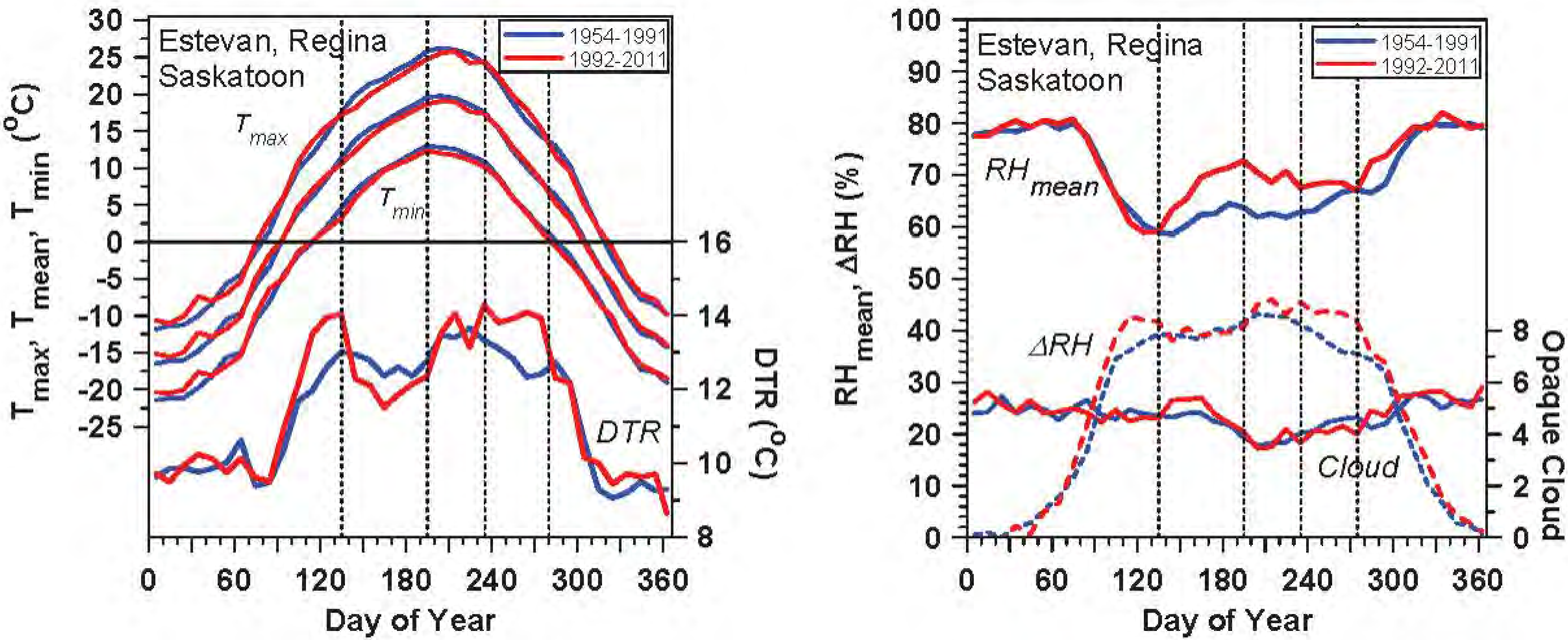
- **Hourly p, T, RH, WS, WD, Opaque Cloud by level, (SW_{dn}, LW_{dn})**
- **Daily precipitation and snowdepth**
- **Ecodistrict crop data since 1955**
- **Albedo data (MODIS/CCRS: 250m, after 2000)**

Change in Cropping



- **Ecodistrict mean for 50-km around station**
- **Saskatchewan: 25% drop in 'SummerFallow'**
- ***Split at 1991- has summer climate changed?***

Three Station Mean in SK

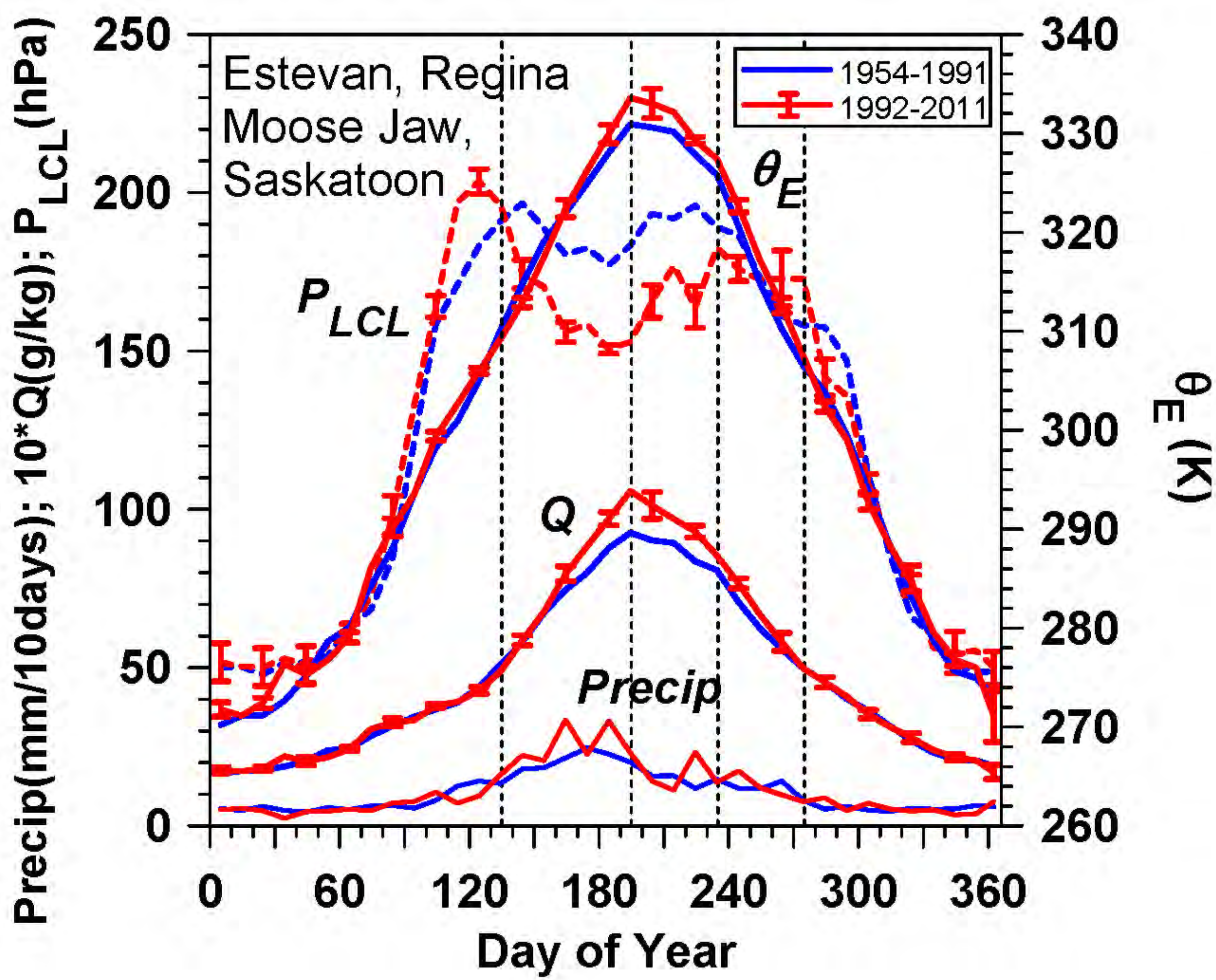


- Winter climate warmer but growing season
  - T_{max} cooler; RH moister
  - DTR and ΔRH seasonal structure changes

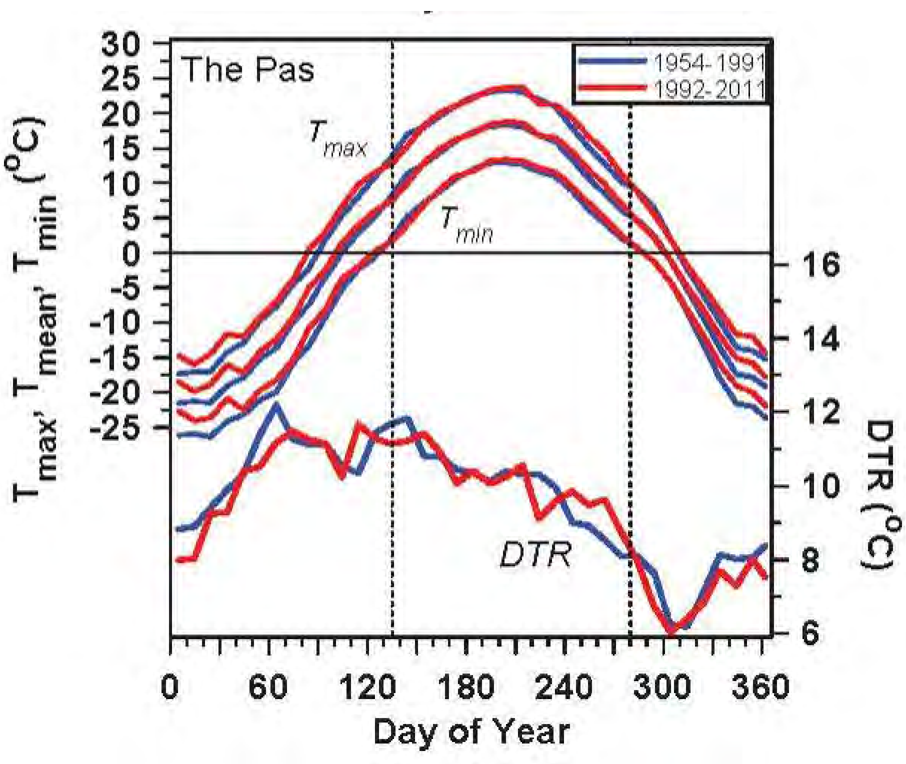
Impact on Convective Instability

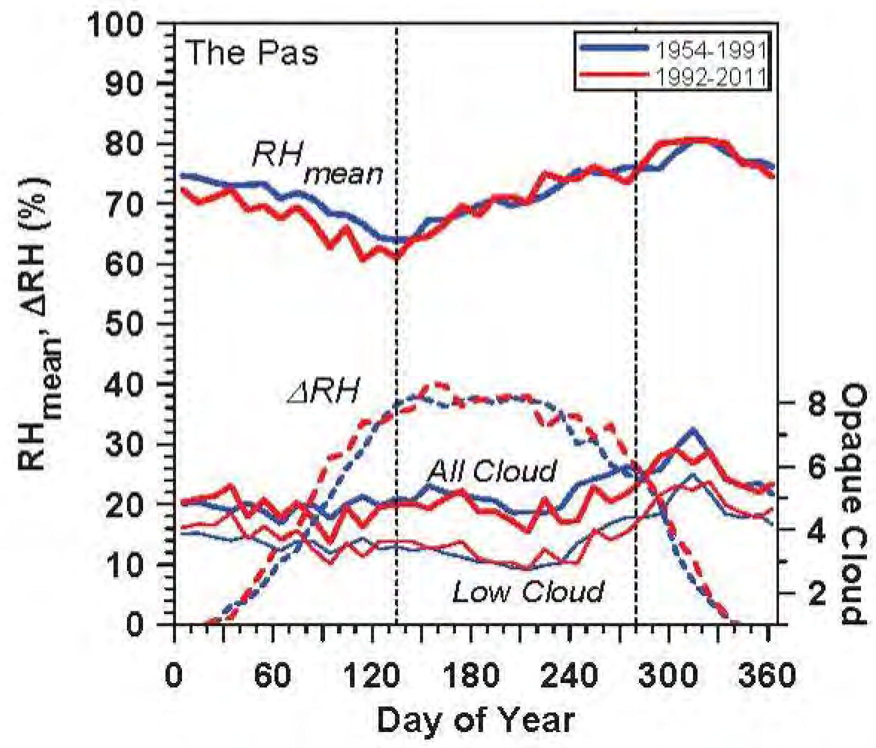
Growing season

- **Lower LCL**
- **Higher θ_E**
- **More Precip**



Contrast Boreal Forest





- **No RH, DTR signal**

Summary

- *High quality dataset with Opaque cloud*
- **Understand cloud coupling to climate**
- **Distinct warm and cold season states**
  - **Sharp transitions with snow cover: $\alpha_s = 0.7$**
  - **Snow cover is a "climate switch"**
    - **From 'Warm when clear', convective boundary layer**
    - **To 'Cold when clear', with stable boundary layer**
- **Transpiration from crops changes climate**
  - **Cools and moistens summer climate**
  - **Lowers cloud-base and increases θ_E**
  - **(While winter climate has warmed)**

Papers at http://alanbetts.com

Transformative Concepts

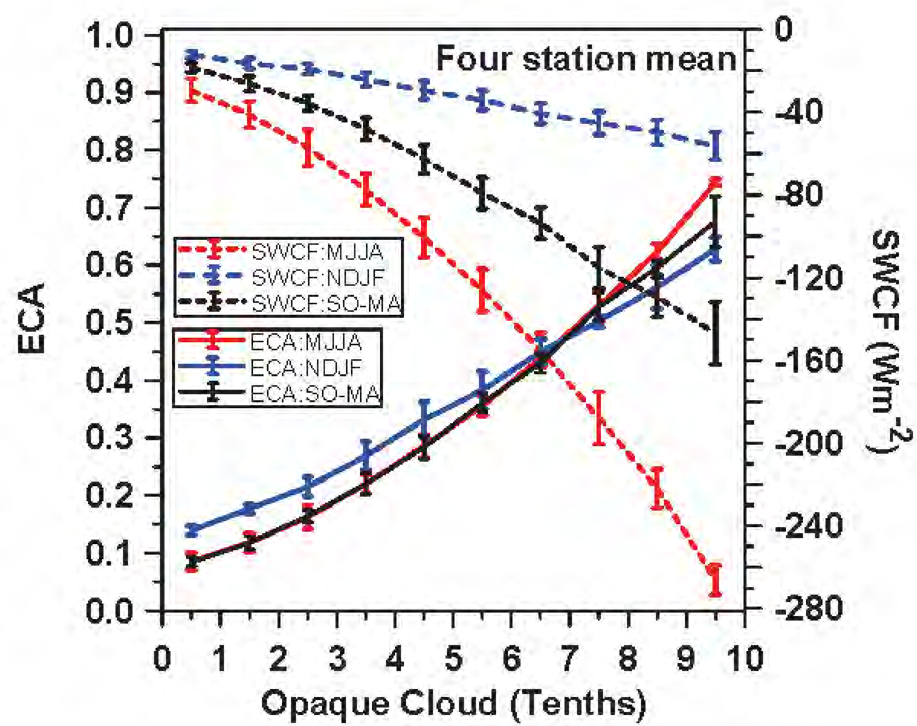
- **Snow as climate switch**

- **<u>Opaque/reflective cloud</u>**
  - **SWCF, LWCF $\longrightarrow$ R_n**

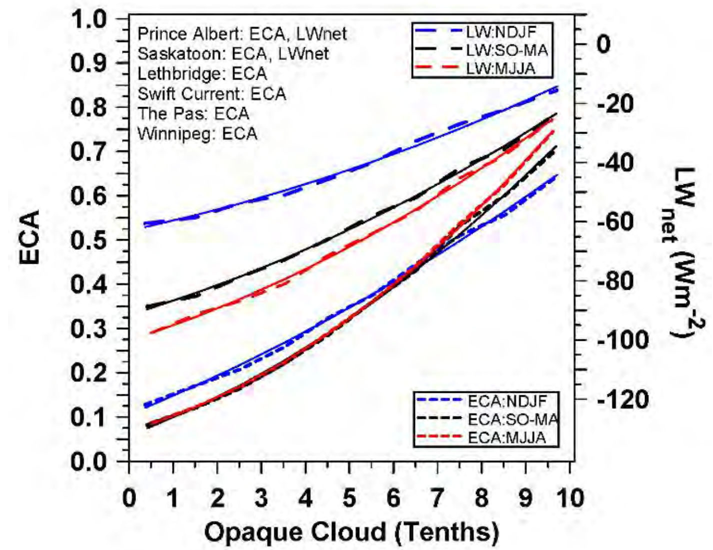
- **Diurnal climate analysis of T, RH**
  - **Dominated by cloud/R_n**
  - ***BUT*: *Radiation only analysis***
  - **Because no soil moisture, or EF**

Calibration of Opaque Cloud to Effective Cloud Albedo (ECA)

- **SW_{dn} data**
  - ***Lethbridge, Swift Current, The Pas, Winnipeg***
  - **82 station-years**
- **Tight relationship**
  - **OpaqueCloud to ECA**
  - **NDJF a little flatter**



Fit ECA and LW_{net} to Opaque Cloud



NDJF: ECA = 0.1056 + 0.0404 Cloud + 0.00158 $Cloud^2$

SO-MA: ECA = 0.0588 + 0.0365 Cloud + 0.00318 $Cloud^2$

MJJA: ECA = 0.0681 + 0.0293 Cloud + 0.00428 $Cloud^2$

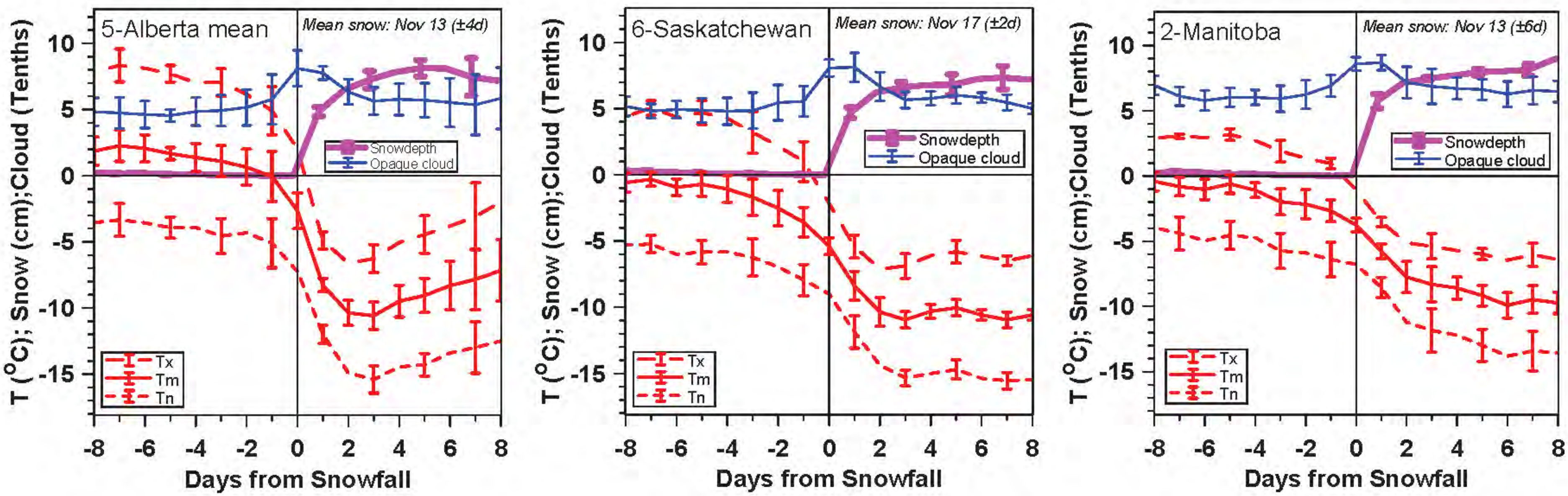
Gives SW_{net} from SW_{dn}(clear) and albedo α_s

NDJF: LW_{net} = -63.0 + 3.14 Cloud + 0.193 $Cloud^2$

SO-MA: LW_{net} = -91.5 + 4.43 Cloud + 0.267 $Cloud^2$

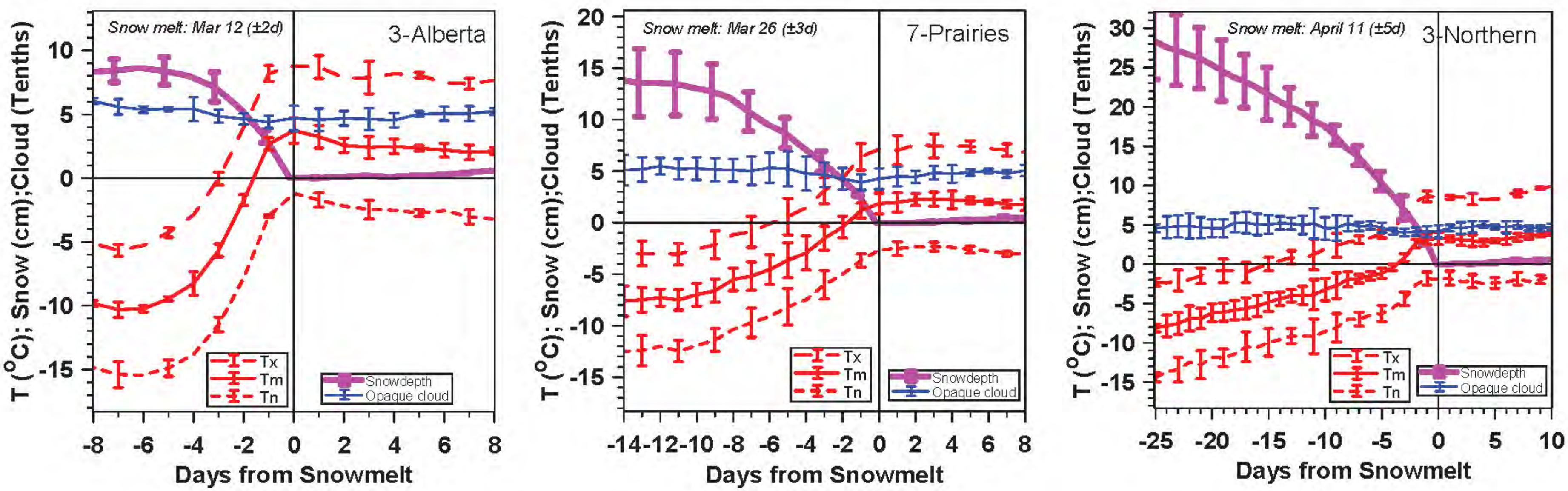
MJJA: LW_{net} = -100.1 + 4.73 Cloud + 0.317 $Cloud^2$

Fall Snow Transition Climatology



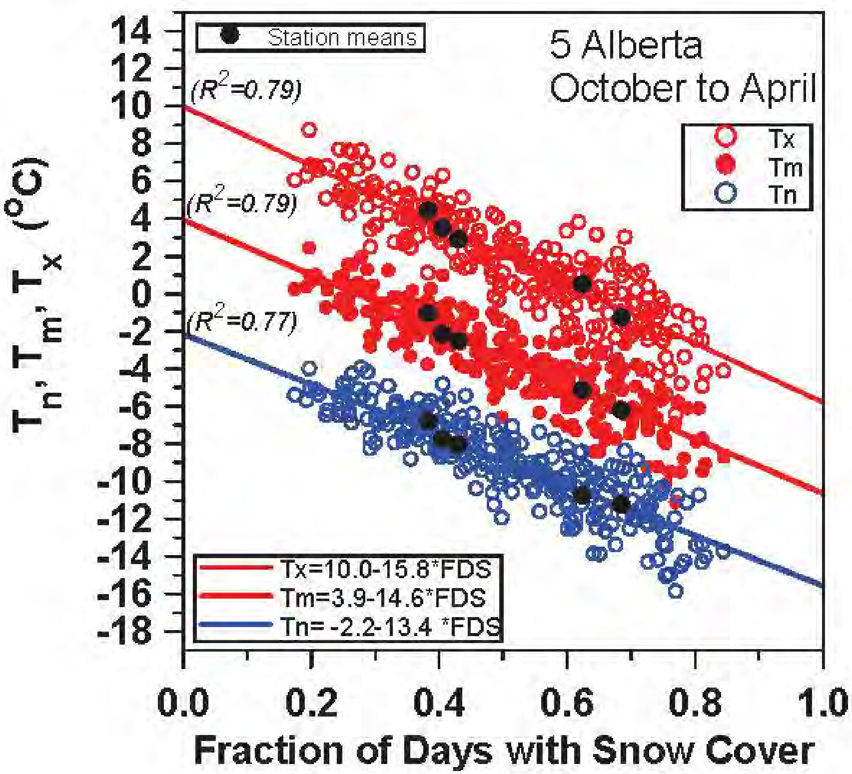
- T_x, T_m, T_n fall about 10K
- Cloud peaks with snow; increases ≈10%
- Snow date: Nov 15 ± 3 days

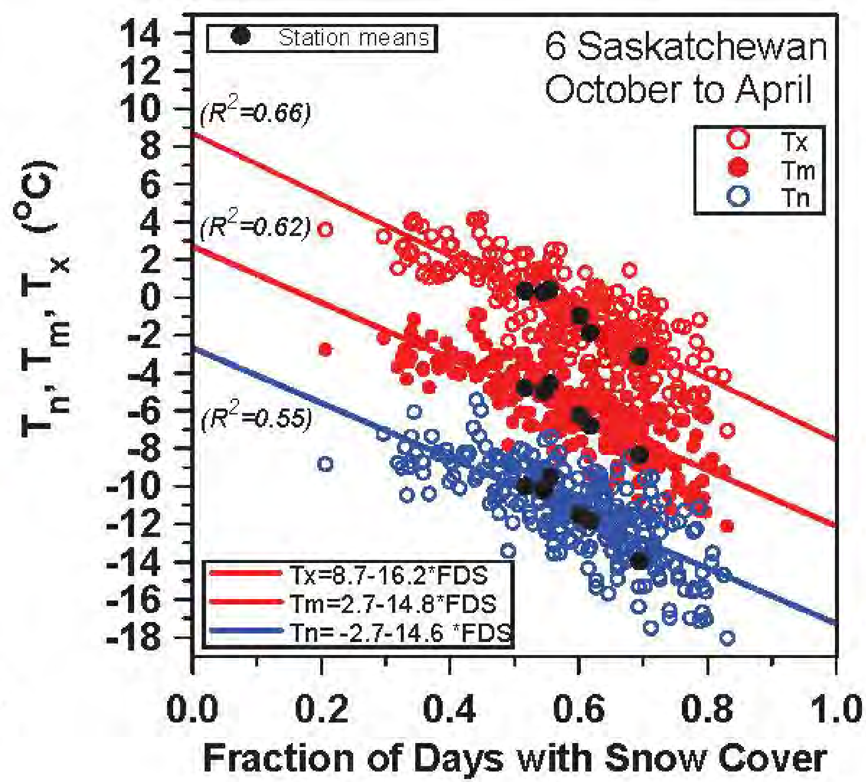
Snow-melt Transition Climatology



- SW Alberta: T increase about 11K
- Saskatchewan: T increase about 10K
- 3 northern stations: increase 10K, slower
- Melt date: March 12–April 11

Snow Cover: Winter Climatology





- **Alberta: 79% of variance**
- **Slopes**
  - **T_x -16.0(± 0.6) K**
  - **T_m -14.7 (± 0.6) K**
  - **T_n -14.0 (± 0.7) K**

10% fewer snow days

= 1.5K warmer