A Satellite Approach to Estimate Land–Atmosphere 
CO\textsubscript{2} Exchange for Boreal and Arctic Biomes 
Using MODIS and AMSR-E

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Abstract—Northern ecosystems are a major sink for atmospheric CO\textsubscript{2} and contain much of the world’s soil organic carbon (SOC) that is potentially reactive to near-term climate change. We introduce a simple terrestrial carbon flux (TCF) model driven by satellite remote sensing inputs from the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) and the Advanced Microwave Scanning Radiometer for EOS (AMSR-E) to estimate surface (< 10-cm depth) SOC stocks, daily respiration, and net ecosystem carbon exchange (NEE). Soil temperature and moisture information from AMSR-E provides environmental constraints to soil heterotrophic respiration (\(R_h\)), while gross primary production (GPP) information from MODIS provides estimates of the total photosynthesis and autotrophic respiration. The model results were evaluated across a North American network of boreal forest, grassland, and tundra monitoring sites using alternative carbon measures derived from tower CO\textsubscript{2} flux measurements and BIOME-BGC model simulations. Root-mean-square-error (rmse) differences between TCF model estimates and tower observations were 1.2, 0.7, and 1.2 g \cdot C \cdot m^{-2} \cdot day^{-1} for GPP, ecosystem respiration (\(R_{\text{tot}}\)) and NEE, while mean residual differences were 43% of the rmse. Similar accuracies were observed for both TCF and BIOME-BGC model simulations relative to tower results. TCF-model-derived SOC was in general agreement with soil inventory data and indicates that the dominant SOC source for \(R_{\text{tot}}\) has a mean residence time of less than five years, while \(R_h\) is approximately 43% and 55% of \(R_{\text{tot}}\) for respective summer and annual fluxes. An error sensitivity analysis determined that meaningful flux estimates could be derived under prevailing climatic conditions at the study locations, given documented error levels in the remote sensing inputs.

Index Terms—Advanced Microwave Scanning Radiometer for EOS (AMSR-E), Arctic tundra, boreal forest, carbon, Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS), net ecosystem exchange (NEE).

I. INTRODUCTION

NORTHERN high-latitude boreal and Arctic biomes are important components of the global carbon cycle because they constitute a major sink for anthropogenic CO\textsubscript{2} emissions and contain approximately 119 Pg of soil organic carbon (SOC) that is potentially reactive in the context of near-term climate change [1], [2]. Recent studies and long-term measurement records indicate that much of the region is becoming warmer [3] and drier [4]–[6] with recent declines in carbon sink strength...
of penetrating clouds and low-biomass vegetation to provide
atmospheric CO$_2$ stocks and reducing the capacity of northern ecosystems to
exacerbate global climate change by destabilizing regional SOC

The net ecosystem exchange (NEE) of carbon (CO$_2$) with
the atmosphere is the residual difference between carbon uptake
by vegetation gross primary production (GPP) and carbon loss
through autotrophic and heterotrophic respiration, collectively
termed ecosystem respiration. The NEE term is thus a useful
measure of the magnitude and direction of carbon flow between
ecosystems and the atmosphere [9]. Current capabilities for
regional assessment and monitoring of NEE for boreal–Arctic
ecosystems are limited. Atmospheric transport model inver-
sions of CO$_2$ concentrations from sparse measurement stations
provide information on seasonal patterns and trends in at-
omospheric CO$_2$ but little information on underlying processes;
these methods are also too coarse to resolve carbon-source–sink
activity at scales finer than broad latitudinal and continental
domains [8], [10]. Tower CO$_2$ flux measurement networks
provide detailed information on stand-level NEE and associated
biophysical processes, but little information regarding spatial
variability in these processes over heterogeneous landscapes
[11]. Alternative measures of NEE and component carbon
fluxes from satellite remote sensing potentially provide the
means for scaling between relatively intensive stand-level mea-
surement and modeling approaches, and top–down assessments
from atmospheric model inversions.

The Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer
(MODIS) onboard the NASA EOS Terra and Aqua satellites
has been providing global operational mapping of GPP at
approximate eight-day intervals since 2000 and 2002, respec-
tively [12]. The GPP term quantifies the photosynthetic uptake
of atmospheric CO$_2$ but represents an incomplete picture of
NEE because of a lack of information on ecosystem respiration.
Several studies have applied satellite remote sensing to char-
acterize NEE over boreal–Arctic landscapes using empirical
relationships between CO$_2$ flux measurements and spectral
vegetation indices [13], [14] or simple physiological models
driven by optical–infrared (IR) remote sensing and surface
meteorological data to characterize both vegetation productivity
and ecosystem respiration [15], [16]. Empirical approaches
are constrained to the specific regions and conditions under
which they were developed and provide little diagnostic insight
into underlying biophysical processes. Physiological models
attempt to account for the primary environmental constraints on
productivity and respiration but are often limited by the avail-
ability and resolution of driving meteorological data sets from
sparse observational networks or coarse (1°–2.5°) resolution
gridded products from atmospheric model reanalyses. Recent
developments in satellite remote sensing offer the potential
for direct measurement and improved resolution of environ-
mental constraints for estimating land–atmosphere carbon
exchange.

Satellite microwave radiometers are sensitive to variations
in surface emissivity and dielectric constant associated with
changes in soil moisture (SM) and temperature [17], [18].
Lower frequency microwaves (e.g., < 18.7 GHz) are capable
of penetrating clouds and low-biomass vegetation to provide
information more representative of the underlying soil than
high frequency microwave and thermal IR observations. These
favorable properties have been exploited for mapping surface
SM and temperature across a wide range of environments
and vegetation types, including boreal forest and tundra [19],
[20]. The Advanced Microwave Scanning Radiometer for EOS
(AMSR-E) is deployed with MODIS on the Aqua satellite and
has been providing global multifrequency brightness tempera-
ture measurements on a daily basis since 2002. Current AMSR-
E operational and experimental products include daily SM [18]
and soil temperature [20], offering potential surrogate measures
of SM and temperature controls to heterotrophic respiration.
Thus, synergistic information from MODIS and AMSR-E may
provide an alternative means for regional mapping and mon-
itoring of NEE and component GPP and respiration fluxes.
The relatively coarse (~25-km) spatial scale of the AMSR-
E footprint limits the ability of the sensor to resolve subgrid-
scale land surface properties. However, the utility of satellite
microwave remote sensing for northern latitudes is the ability
to monitor land surface conditions day or night, independent of
solar illumination or signal degradation from cloud cover and
other atmospheric aerosol effects.

We introduce a new satellite remote sensing algorithm for
determining NEE and component carbon fluxes for boreal and
Arctic ecosystems using synergistic biophysical information
from MODIS and AMSR-E. Remote sensing inputs to the
algorithm include land-cover class and GPP information from
MODIS for characterizing general ecosystem properties and net
photosynthetic uptake of CO$_2$, and daily surface soil temper-
atre and moisture information from AMSR-E for estimating
soil decomposition and heterotrophic respiration. A by-product
of the algorithm initialization process includes a regional esti-
mation of surface (< 10-cm depth) SOC stocks. The algorithm
results are evaluated across a North American network of boreal
forest, grassland (GRS), and tundra monitoring sites using
independent measures of GPP, ecosystem respiration, and NEE
derived from BIOME-BioGeochemical Cycles (BGC) ecosys-
tem process model simulations and tower eddy covariance CO$_2$
flux measurements. The objectives of this paper are to char-
acterize algorithm uncertainty and determine whether global
operational satellite remote sensing products can be applied
within a simple carbon model framework to determine NEE and
component GPP and respiration fluxes with similar accuracy as
more detailed ecosystem process model simulations.

II. APPROACH

A. Study Domain and Test Sites

We selected nine study sites for this investigation, en-
compassing North American tundra, boreal forest, and GRS
ecosystems across a latitudinal climate and vegetation biomass
gradient. The sites coincide with existing or previous tower
eddy covariance CO$_2$ flux measurement campaigns and rep-
resent five distinct local vegetation types, including coastal
wet-sedge tundra, moist tussock tundra, boreal evergreen
needleleaf forest (ENLF), boreal deciduous broadleaf forest,
and northern temperate GRS (see Table I and Fig. 1). The
TABLE I
Boreal Forest, Grassland, and Tundra Study Sites Used for TCF Model Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Site Abbrev.</th>
<th>MODIS Land cover</th>
<th>Local vegetation</th>
<th>Location (Lat, Lon)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barrow, AK</td>
<td>BRO</td>
<td>OSB</td>
<td>Wet-sedge tundra</td>
<td>71.32N 156.62W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atqasuk, AK</td>
<td>ATQ</td>
<td>OSB</td>
<td>Tussock tundra</td>
<td>70.47N 157.40W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prudhoe Bay, AK</td>
<td>UPD</td>
<td>OSB</td>
<td>Tussock tundra</td>
<td>70.27N 148.88W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy Valley, AK</td>
<td>HPV</td>
<td>OSB</td>
<td>Tussock tundra</td>
<td>69.13N 148.83W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivotuk, AK</td>
<td>IVO</td>
<td>OSB</td>
<td>Tussock tundra</td>
<td>68.47N 155.73W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAF-IARC near Fairbanks, AK</td>
<td>IARC</td>
<td>ENLF</td>
<td>Boreal spruce forest</td>
<td>64.87N 147.85W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSA-OBS near Thompson, Manitoba CN</td>
<td>OBS</td>
<td>ENLF</td>
<td>Boreal spruce forest</td>
<td>55.88N 98.48W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSS-OAS, Saskatchewan CN</td>
<td>OAS</td>
<td>MXF</td>
<td>Boreal aspen forest</td>
<td>53.63N 106.20W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lethbridge, Alberta CN</td>
<td>LTH</td>
<td>GR5</td>
<td>Grassland</td>
<td>49.70N 112.93W</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

a Dominant vegetation classes within regional (25 km x 25 km) modeling windows as defined from a 1-km resolution MODIS IGBP global land cover classification [21], where OSB = Open shrubland; GRS = Grassland; ENLF = Evergreen needleleaf coniferous forest; MXF = Mixed broadleaf deciduous and evergreen needleleaf coniferous forest.
b Dominant vegetation of tower CO2 flux measurement footprints.

BRO and UPD sites are dominated by coastal wet-sedge tundra and are characterized by low topography and a shallow water table with numerous thaw lakes [22]–[24]. The vegetation is predominantly composed of low-growing herbaceous sedges, grasses, mosses, and lichens, interspersed with areas of shallow standing water. The Gelisol soils are highly organic and consist of a shallow active layer that thaws each growing season and is underlain by continuous permafrost. The IVO, ATQ, and HPV sites are characterized by moist tussock tundra dominated by Eriophorum vaginatum and low forbs and shrubs composed of both deciduous and evergreen species [23], [25]. These sites are located on upland tundra where the soil active layer tends to be thicker than that of coastal sites.

The boreal OBS and IARC sites are composed of mature black spruce (Picea mariana) stands with respective overstory canopy heights ranging from 10 to 13 m and 1.5 to 6 m, and low topographic relief with discontinuous permafrost [26], [27]. The IARC understory is composed of a nearly continuous cover of mosses (Pleurozium and Hylocomium spp.) with a thick (∼20-cm) organic matter layer and Gelisol soils. Vegetation in the vicinity of the OBS tower includes aspen (Populus tremuloides) and jack pine (Pinus banksiana) stands on well-drained soils, black spruce and feathermoss (Pleurozium spp.) on moderately drained soils, and black spruce and a thick layer of mosses (Sphagnum spp.) on poorly drained soils. The boreal OAS site is dominated by a mature aspen (Populus tremuloides) overstory with a mean canopy height of 21 m and low topographic relief [28]. The OAS site also contains an extensive understory predominantly composed of hazelnut (Corylus cornuta Marsh.) with medium-to-fine silty-clay-textured Gray Luvisol (Alfisol) soils. The LTH site is the southernmost study site and is composed of semi-arid short-grass prairie on relatively flat terrain [29]. Vegetation is dominated by grasses (Agropyron spp.) with a mean canopy height of approximately 18 cm. Soils
at the LTH site are composed of orthic dark-brown chernozems (Mollisols) with a clay loam texture.

We identified the dominant land-cover class within overlying 25-km × 25-km windows surrounding each site location using the MODIS IGBP global land-cover classification [21]. In most cases, the local vegetation was of a similar functional type as the overlying global land-cover classification. The tundra sites were identified as open shrubland (OSB) by the land-cover classification. The BRO1 and BRO2 tower locations are within 1 km of each other and were represented within the same regional window. The OBS and IARC sites were classified as ENL, while the LTH site was classified as GRS. The aspen-dominated OAS tower footprint differed from the regional land cover, which was classified as mixed evergreen needleleaf and broadleaf deciduous forest (MXF) due to the relative abundance of both vegetation functional types within the regional modeling window.

B. Model Development

We applied a simple terrestrial carbon flux (TCF) model to compute ecosystem respiration and NEE on a daily basis. Our approach has structural elements similar to the Century [31], [32] and CASA [33] soil decomposition models but is adapted for use with daily biophysical inputs derived from both satellite optical–IR and passive microwave remote sensing time series as primary model drivers. Model inputs include daily GPP, soil temperature, and SM. GPP is used to estimate vegetation net primary production (NPP), autotrophic respiration, and metabolic, structural, and recalcitrant SOC pools. Surface (< 10-cm depth) soil temperature and moisture inputs are used to define the environmental controls to soil decomposition and heterotrophic respiration. Static inputs to the model include a global land-cover classification, which is used within the framework of a general biome properties lookup table (BPLUT) to define physiological response characteristics of different vegetation classes. All model inputs represent satellite-remote-sensing-derived products from NASA EOS sensors.

NEE (in grams of carbon per square meter per day) is computed on a daily basis as the residual difference between GPP and respiration from autotrophic (Ra) and heterotrophic (Rh) components

\[ \text{NEE} = (R_a + R_h) - \text{GPP} \quad (1) \]

where positive (+) and negative (−) NEE fluxes denote the respective terrestrial loss or uptake of CO2. The GPP term (in grams of carbon per square meter per day) represents the mean vegetation GPP of the dominant land-cover class within a grid cell and is obtained as an external model input. The Ra term encompasses growth and maintenance respiration components and is computed on a daily basis as a fixed proportion of GPP within individual land-cover classes, based on observational evidence that the ratio of Ra to GPP is conserved across global biomes [34]–[36]. While this assumption provides a key simplification for a remote sensing algorithm, the proportion of plant photosynthesis devoted to biophysical growth and maintenance may vary under changing environmental conditions and over the course of vegetation development [37]–[39].

Heterotrophic respiration is computed as the sum of variable decomposition and respiration rates from three distinct carbon pools as

\[ R_h = (K_{met}C_{met} + K_{str}C_{str} + K_{rec}C_{rec}) \quad (2) \]

where \( C_{met}, C_{str}, \) and \( C_{rec} \) (in grams of carbon per square meter) represent metabolic, structural, and recalcitrant SOC pools, and \( K_{met}, K_{str}, \) and \( K_{rec} \) (per day) are the corresponding decomposition rate parameters. The metabolic and structural SOC pools represent plant litter with relatively short (e.g., less than or equal to five years) turnover periods, while the recalcitrant pool represents more physically and chemically protected SOC with a longer turnover time.

The three-pool soil decomposition model approach is a simple approximation of the complex variation of intrinsic SOC turnover rates but has been found to produce results consistent with a wide range of observations from soil warming and incubation experiments [40]. Annual inputs to the \( C_{met} \) and \( C_{str} \) pools in (2) are derived as proportions of annual NPP, and input to \( C_{rec} \) is a constant fraction of the \( C_{str} \) pool; outputs to these SOC pools represent the annual sums of respired components from (2)

\[ \frac{dC_{met}}{dt} = C_{fract}NPP - R_{h,met} \quad (3) \]

\[ \frac{dC_{str}}{dt} = (1 - C_{fract})NPP - 0.7C_{str} - R_{h,str} \quad (4) \]

\[ \frac{dC_{rec}}{dt} = 0.7C_{str} - R_{h,rec} \quad (5) \]

where NPP is estimated as a fixed proportion of annual GPP (in grams of carbon per square meter per year) for individual land-cover classes, based on the assumption of conservatism in vegetation-carbon-use efficiency (i.e., NPP/GPP) and the proportional allocation of GPP to \( R_a \) within global biomes [34]–[36]. The \( C_{fract} \) term defines the rate in which NPP is allocated to metabolic and structural SOC pools, and is specified as a fixed rate within individual land-cover classes [32], [33]. Values for \( C_{fract} \), and proportional allocations of GPP to \( R_a \) and NPP are defined in a BPLUT of general ecophysiological properties of each land-cover class (Table II). This approach is based on the assumption that the litter input to the SOC pool is proportional to NPP under long-term steady-state conditions [31], [32].

The TCF model uses dimensionless rate curves to account for soil temperature and moisture constraints to soil decomposition. The soil decomposition rate (K) is derived as the product of dimensionless multipliers for soil temperature (Tmult) and moisture (Wmult) and a theoretical maximum rate constant (Kmx; per day) under prevailing climate conditions

\[ K = K_{mx}T_{mult}W_{mult} \quad (6) \]

where \( K \) is equivalent to \( K_{met} \), and \( T_{mult} \) and \( W_{mult} \) vary between zero and one. The value for \( K_{mx} \) was specified as a constant rate (0.0301 per day) for all biomes, while decomposition rate parameters for \( K_{str} \) and \( K_{rec} \) were estimated as 40% and 1% of \( K_{met} \), respectively [32]. The estimation of \( K \) in (6)
assumes constant soil decomposer efficiency (microbial-CO$_2$-production-to-carbon-assimilation ratio) inherent in the $K_{\text{max}}$ term, and that SM and temperature are the dominant controls on near-term (daily, seasonal, and annual) decomposition rates. However, we assume that changes in litter quality (e.g., physical protection and/or chemical resistance to microbial decomposition) influence $R_{\text{bas}}$ and NEE indirectly through associated changes in satellite-remote-sensing-derived GPP inputs over generally N-limited boreal and tundra ecosystems.

The soil decomposition rate response to temperature is defined using an Arrhenius-type function following [41]

$$T_{\text{mult}} = \exp \left[308.56 \left( \left(66.02\right)^{-1} - (T_{s,k} - 227.13)^{-1} \right) \right]$$  \hspace{1cm} (7)

where (7) is expressed relative to a 20-°C reference temperature and $T_{s,k}$ is the surface soil temperature (in kelvins). A variety of functional types have been used to describe temperature effects on soil respiration, including exponential [42], [43] and Poisson [31], [32] functions, while the Arrhenius functional type is physically based and provides a relatively accurate and unbiased estimate of soil respiration across a wide range of biome types and environmental conditions [40], [41], [44]. We assume that for soil temperatures above a 20-°C reference state, $T_{\text{mult}}$ is unity, and temperature is no longer limiting to soil decomposition. Under these conditions, SM is expected to decline with warmer soil temperatures, and $W_{\text{mult}}$ becomes the primary constraint to $K$.

The soil decomposition rate response to SM has been described using quadratic and parabolic functions and varying expressions of soil water content, with optimum rates being at intermediate soil water levels [45]. For this investigation, the soil decomposition rate response to SM is represented as a parabolic function

$$W_{\text{mult}} = 0.00036(105.0 \text{ SM} - \text{SM})^2$$  \hspace{1cm} (8)

where SM is expressed as a proportion (in percent) of saturation. The parabolic response curve accounts for the inhibitory effects of both low and high soil water on heterotrophic respiration rates and is consistent with laboratory soil incubation studies and field observations for a range of global biome types, including GRS and tundra [46]–[49]. The SM limitation to decomposition described by (8) approaches unity near 50% of soil saturation, although the shape of the parabolic response is likely to vary across different biomes and soil types. For this investigation, we assume that mean surface soil properties within boreal and arctic biomes are similar at the relatively coarse (~25-km) spatial resolution of satellite-microwave-remote-sensing-derived SM inputs.

C. TCF Model Inputs

The TCF model requires time series inputs of daily GPP, surface soil temperature, and SM to compute ecosystem respiration and NEE on a daily basis. Model inputs were derived using a three-year (2002–2004) daily time series of GPP, soil temperature, and SM derived from MODIS and AMSR-E sensor records. A MODIS global land-cover classification [21] was used with the BPLUT in Table II to define general ecophysiological properties for each of the study sites; the BPLUT parameters were derived from the literature for boreal, GRS, and tundra ecosystems. For each site window, the $C_{\text{met}}$, $C_{\text{str}}$, and $C_{\text{rec}}$ pools were initialized to steady-state conditions by continuous cycling of the three-year GPP, soil temperature, and SM daily time series.

1) GPP: The NASA MODIS has been operational on the NASA EOS Terra and Aqua satellites since 2000 and 2002, respectively, and provides a variety of consistent, well-calibrated, and validated land surface information ranging from spectral radiance and reflectance data to derived higher order biophysical variables including land-cover type, canopy photosynthetic leaf area, and vegetation productivity. Model GPP inputs were derived from the MODIS MOD17A2 algorithm [12]. The MOD17A2 algorithm has undergone several major revisions in response to extensive ongoing calibration and verification studies using biophysical information from regional station networks, including boreal and Arctic landscapes (e.g., [50]–[53]). For this investigation, we use the fifth-generation (Collection 5) version of the MOD17A2 algorithm and associated MOD15 LAI and FPAR inputs [52], [54]. The MOD17A2 algorithm uses a production efficiency model with MODIS sensor-derived land cover, fractional photosynthetically active radiation (FPAR), leaf area index (LAI), and daily surface meteorology as primary drivers. Daily surface meteorology inputs include incident solar radiation ($SW_{\text{rad}}$), minimum and mean daily air temperatures ($T_{\text{min}}$ and $T_{\text{avg}}$, respectively), and atmospheric vapor pressure deficit (VPD), which are provided by the NASA Global Modeling and Assimilation Office (GMAO) reanalysis surface meteorology [55], [56]. The surface meteorological data are used with simple response curves to estimate environmental reductions in photosynthetic-light-use efficiency under suboptimal solar radiation, temperature, and humidity conditions. The biophysical characteristics of the land surface vary according to individual land-cover classes as defined using a 1-km-resolution global land-cover map and the MOD17A2 BPLUT [52]. GPP is derived globally on a daily basis at 1-km spatial resolution and composited over eight-day time intervals.

We also used an alternative MOD17A2 product developed using daily surface meteorological inputs from the National Centers for Environmental Prediction–National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCEP–NCAR) reanalysis (NNR) [6],
The MOD17-NNR and MOD17-GMAO products differ in that the NNR surface air temperature, solar radiation, and VPD data have been corrected for regional bias using daily observations from the pan-boreal regional surface weather station network. Both MODIS data sets are used in this investigation to assess TCF model sensitivity to alternative GPP inputs.

The MODIS GPP inputs are derived globally at 1-km spatial resolution and eight-day intervals. The eight-day 1-km MODIS FPAR/LAI data used for these calculations are screened to remove cloud contamination and snow effects indicated by the daily MOD15A2 QC fields [52]. The GPP data were resampled to a daily time step by temporal linear interpolation of adjacent eight-day values. The GPP values were then aggregated to a 25-km spatial resolution by averaging values of the dominant land-cover class indicated by the MODIS 1-km-resolution global land-cover classification within each 25-km grid cell. The data were then reprojected to a 25-km polar EASE grid centered over each study site location using a nearest neighbor resampling scheme.

2) **SM and Temperature**: Daily soil temperature inputs were derived using multifrequency dual-polarized Level-2A (L2A) brightness temperatures \( T_b \)'s from AMSR-E [57], [20]. The AMSR-E sensor measures brightness temperatures at 6.9-, 10.7-, 18.7-, 23.8-, 36.5-, and 89-GHz frequencies. The native resolution of each frequency ranges from approximately 5 km × 5 km at 89 GHz to 60 km × 60 km at 6.9 GHz. The L2A data represent \( T_b \) from all frequencies resampled to the 6.9-GHz 60-km × 60-km native resolution [57]. The Aqua satellite is polar-orbiting with 1-A.M./P.M. equatorial crossing times, providing multiple daily acquisitions in polar regions [58]. For high-latitude regions, the overlapping orbital swaths allow two to four \( T_b \) observations per footprint overpass with a typical standard deviation of approximately 1 K \((\text{max} = 5 \text{ K})\) at 6.9 GHz and \(< 1 \text{ K} \) \((\text{max} = 3.5 \text{ K})\) at 89 GHz. The \( T_b \) observations were extracted from Level-2A orbital swath footprints whose centroid falls within 5 km of each site location. Therefore, the observations can be considered to be representative of an approximate 60-km × 60-km pixel centered over each location. The descending (A.M.) overpass of Aqua occurs between 3- and 6-A.M. local time within the study domain. The \( T_b \) observation with the earliest overpass time was selected to represent the time-of-day when the soil profile is closest to isothermal conditions. Low-frequency \((\leq 10.7-\text{GHz})\) \( T_b \) values may be contaminated by radio-frequency interference (RFI) typically associated with metropolitan areas [59]; however, the influence of RFI was not observed at the study locations and is not considered to be a significant factor in sparsely populated boreal–Arctic regions [20]. Daily soil temperatures were derived using an empirical approach developed over the study sites using AMSR-E daily multifrequency \( T_b \) values with separate coefficients for frozen and unfrozen conditions. This approach yielded respective accuracies of 2.82 and 4.68 K [root-mean-square error (rmse)] under unfrozen and frozen conditions relative to site-based measurements [20].

Daily SM inputs were obtained from the AMSR-E Level-3 (L3) operational SM product projected to a 25-km-resolution global EASE grid [60]. The L3 SM product is based on a change-detection algorithm with dual-polarized low-frequency daily \( T_b \) observations and a simplified radiative transfer equation for vegetation-covered soil [61]. Although the 6.9-GHz frequency has greater potential SM sensitivity, the 10.7-GHz frequency was used in the L3 algorithm to mitigate RFI in the 6.9-GHz band over populated areas [59]. The monthly minimum of the normalized \( T_b \) polarization difference ratio \([e.g., (T_{bv} - T_{vh})/(T_{bv} + T_{vh})]\) at 10.7 GHz linearly interpolated between months provides a daily lumped vegetation roughness factor and also defines dry soil conditions [61]. The vegetation roughness factor is included in an exponential term that amplifies the change in daily polarization ratio observations above dry soil baseline conditions. The algorithm does not explicitly account for open-water (WAT) effects, but the use of the monthly minimum polarization ratio for determining a baseline reduces its influence.

The L3 product has relative merits for boreal and tundra landscapes over other satellite-based SM products because it partially accounts for WAT effects. However, a limited dynamic range of the L3 product has been reported in regional validation studies [62], although the total information content of the retrievals was found to be similar to other AMSR-E-based SM algorithms for the continental U.S. [63]. We therefore scaled the NASA L3 product between maximum and minimum values for the three-year observation period at each site location to produce an index of relative wetness varying between 0% and 100%. Under frozen conditions, the \( W_{mult} \) parameter in (8) was set to unity, and soil temperature was used as the sole constraint on TCF soil respiration rate calculations. The relative accuracy (rmse) of the L3 SM product has been estimated to be \( \pm 12.8\% \) of saturation under conditions where the overlying vegetation water content is less than 1.5 kg/m\(^2\) [18]. Relative accuracy in AMSR-E-derived SM was reported as \( \pm 29.4\% \) of saturation over continental vegetation in Spain [62]. Comparisons with station observations and site-based model simulations at the boreal–Arctic study sites indicate an L3 product accuracy (rmse) from 15% to 41% of saturation for site windows composed of \( \leq 25\% \) WAT and peak annual LAI \( \leq 4 \), with much of the error being due to bias from limited temporal variability [64].

**D. Model Assessment**

Model simulations were compared with tower-CO\(_2\)-eddy-covariance-measurement-derived carbon fluxes and terrestrial ecosystem process model simulations across the regional station network to verify model consistency with the other methods in terms of representing cross-site spatial patterns and daily-to-annual variability in NEE and component carbon fluxes. The dominant vegetation class of the overlying TCF grid cells was generally consistent with the more spatially constrained \((\sim 1-\text{km})\) tower footprints except for the OAS site where the TCF grid cell included cropland (CRP) and MXF rather than the mature deciduous forest of the tower footprint. The TCF simulations were also compared with BIOME-BGC ecosystem process model simulations of daily and annual carbon fluxes at all study sites. The BIOME-BGC simulations were conducted using similar regional land-cover class and daily meteorological inputs as the TCF simulations and...
associated MOD17A2 GPP inputs. The MOD17A2 results have previously been compared with site-derived GPP (e.g., [53]); these results indicate that the MODIS GPP inputs are generally larger but within 20%–30% of tower-based fluxes.

TCF model results were evaluated with respect to terrestrial carbon fluxes from alternate ecosystem process model and stand-level CO\textsubscript{2} eddy covariance measurement approaches in terms of producing similar magnitudes, spatial patterns, and daily and annual variability in carbon fluxes while recognizing that all of these methods are imperfect and incorporate various degrees of uncertainty. Model accuracy was assessed using least squares linear regression analysis of independent (TCF) and dependent variables. Validation statistics describing TCF model error relative to the other methods included coefficient of determination ($R^2$), rmse, and mean residual (MR) error terms. A sensitivity analysis was conducted to assess TCF model responses to alternate GPP inputs and uncertainty in AMSR-E SM and temperature inputs.

1) Comparisons With Tower CO\textsubscript{2} Flux Measurement Approaches: TCF model results were compared with tower-eddy-covariance-measurement-derived estimates of daily NEE, GPP, and ecosystem respiration ($R_{eto}$) from 2002 to 2004 for the BRO, ATQ, IVO, LTH, OBS, and OAS sites, where $R_{eto}$ is defined as the sum of $R_a$ and $R_h$. Daily flux data for the BRO, LTH, OBS, and OAS sites represent gap-filled and friction-velocity-filtered records derived from integrated half-hourly CO\textsubscript{2} flux measurements that include calculated GPP and $R_{eto}$ terms, where gap-filling procedures included either mean diurnal variation, nonlinear regression, or seasonal lookup table approaches [65], [66]. Gap-filled daily NEE data for the BRO, ATQ, and IVO sites were derived by first modeling $R_{eto}$ and GPP (see hereafter) and then computing NEE as a residual difference. Half-hourly $R_{eto}$ for the tundra sites was calculated using the Eyring function, which is based on soil temperature [67], [68]. When NEE data were available, half-hourly GPP was calculated as the difference between the modeled $R_{eto}$ and observed NEE. When NEE was missing or of poor quality, GPP was calculated using measured photosynthetically active radiation and a Michaelis–Menten rate response curve. Parameters for the response functions were derived from observed NEE and micrometeorological data [67], [68].

2) Comparisons With Ecosystem Process Model Simulations: We used version 4.2 of the BIOME-BGC model to simulate daily NEE and component carbon fluxes for each of the study sites. The BIOME-BGC ecosystem process model is designed to simulate fluxes and storage of carbon, water, and nitrogen for terrestrial biomes ranging from individual plot to global scales. The model has been successfully applied over a range of diverse biomes, spatial scales, and climate regimes including boreal forest and tundra landscapes of Alaska and Canada [51], [69]–[73]. Details of the model are presented elsewhere and include applications for multiple biome types and spatial scales (e.g., [74] and [75]), while a summary of model components pertaining to this investigation is provided hereafter.

The BIOME-BGC model is designed to realistically simulate soil–plant carbon (C) and nitrogen (N) cycling but with simplifying assumptions to facilitate application at regional scales using a limited number (34) of biome-specific physiological constants. All plant, litter, and soil carbon; nitrogen; and water pools and fluxes are entirely prognostic. The plant/ecosystem surface is represented by single, homogenous canopy, snow (when present), and soil layers, where understory vegetation is not distinguished from the aggregate canopy layer. The model operates on a daily time step, with daily maximum and minimum air temperatures, incident solar shortwave (direct and diffuse) radiation, and precipitation as primary inputs from which mean daily net radiation, VPD, and day/night average temperatures are estimated. Biophysical processes represented by the model include photosynthetic C fixation from atmospheric CO\textsubscript{2}; N uptake from the atmosphere and soil; C/N allocation to growing plant parts; seasonal phenology and decomposition of fresh plant litter and soil organic matter; plant mortality, growth, litterfall, decomposition, and disturbance (i.e., fire and management); solar radiation interception and partitioning into sunlit and shaded leaf fractions; rainfall routing to leaves and soil; snow accumulation and melting; drainage and runoff of soil water; evaporation of water from soil and wet leaves; and ET partitioning into transpiration, snow, soil, and canopy evaporation components.

NPP is determined as the daily difference between GPP and autotrophic respiration ($R_a$) from maintenance ($R_m$) and growth ($R_g$) processes. Photosynthesis, including both $C_3$ and $C_4$ pathways, is calculated separately for sunlit and shaded canopy components using a modified form of the Farquhar biochemical model [76]. Photosynthetic response is regulated by canopy conductance to CO\textsubscript{2}, leaf maintenance respiration, and daily meteorological conditions including air pressure, air temperature, and solar irradiance. Canopy CO\textsubscript{2} conductance is calculated as a proportion of the canopy conductance to water vapor ($g_c$), which is derived from a prescribed maximum rate modulated for suboptimal air temperature, VPD, solar irradiance, or soil water potential conditions [75], [77]. The $R_m$ term represents the total C losses from day and night foliar, sapwood, and coarse- and fine-root respiration components of living tissue. $R_m$ is calculated from a base respiration rate adjusted for tissue N concentration and an empirical exponential relationship to estimated daily air and soil temperatures [78]. The $R_g$ term is calculated as a constant proportion of new tissue carbon construction for woody and nonwoody tissue types.

NPP is calculated on a daily basis as the difference between NPP and soil heterotrophic respiration ($R_h$). The $R_h$ term is estimated as a daily rate defined from soil and litter C pools. Soil and litter decomposition and $R_h$ are defined as the aggregate result of characteristic exponential decay functions for a series of seven cascading litter and soil C pools of decreasing substrate quality. Daily $R_h$ within each C pool is calculated from an empirical decomposition rate modulated by daily soil water potential, soil temperature, and soil N conditions.

Relative proportions of C and N within soil, litter, and vegetation compartments are tightly coupled; plant growth and allocation, soil decomposition, respiration and N mineralization, and immobilization are strongly regulated by C and N availability defined from prescribed C: N ratios for individual compartments and environmental conditions. Vegetation canopy and fine-root phenology determines the seasonal pattern
of canopy photosynthesis, growth, senescence, and dormancy and is calculated for both evergreen and deciduous vegetation from an empirical phenology model and deviations of current air temperature, SM, and incident solar radiation conditions from long-term climatology of the site [74], [79]. Atmospheric N deposition occurs at a constant daily rate directly to a soil mineral N pool; N leaching and removal from the system occurs as a constant fraction of soil water outflow. Whole-plant mortality is calculated, in addition to seasonal canopy and fine-root losses, as a prescribed annual fraction of plant biomass mortality is calculated, in addition to seasonal canopy and fine-root losses, as a prescribed annual fraction of plant biomass scaled to a daily loss rate, which is then transferred to soil litter pools. Annual fire mortality is also specified as a biome-specific physiological parameter scaled to a constant daily rate of consumption for aboveground biomass, and root and soil litter C and N pools [74].

BIOME-BGC (BGC) simulations of vegetation and soil carbon stocks were conducted for the dominant vegetation class within 25-km windows centered over each site location. Vegetation classes within each window were identified using the 1-km-resolution MODIS IGBP global land-cover classification [21]. Simulations were initialized by “spinning up” the model through continuous cycling of available (1979–2004) daily meteorological time series from local weather station records, and model assumptions of constant annual fire disturbance and mortality rates within individual biomes, constant atmospheric N deposition, and constant atmospheric CO₂ levels. Long-term daily meteorological inputs for the BGC spin-up runs were developed for each site through spatial interpolations of nearby weather station records from the National Climate Data Center’s TD-3210 First Order Summary of the Day [80] using the MT-CLIM microclimate simulation model [81], [82]. A second series of BGC simulations was then conducted to estimate daily carbon fluxes over the three-year (2002–2004) study period for each site location using coincident GMAO-reanalysis-based daily solar radiation, air temperature, and humidity inputs under constant atmospheric N deposition and annual fire disturbance rates, and historical atmospheric CO₂ concentrations. Daily precipitation inputs for these model runs were obtained from local weather station records because precipitation data were not available from the GMAO reanalysis. The resulting 2002–2004 BGC simulation results were then compared with available tower-measurement-derived estimates of daily carbon fluxes and TCF results for each site location.

III. RESULTS

A. Surface SOC Stocks

The TCF simulations of surface SOC stocks are summarized in Table III. Model initializations of recalcitrant SOC stocks to steady-state conditions from continuous cycling of the three-year MODIS GPP and AMSR-E-based soil temperature and moisture series required approximately 350 and 1000 years for the boreal forest and tundra sites, respectively, while initialization of metabolic and structural SOC pools was generally attained within five years. The TCF-derived total SOC stocks ranged from 1299 g · C · m⁻² for the GRS site to approximately 4663 (±601 SD) g · C · m⁻² and 3233 (±1104 SD) g · C · m⁻² for the boreal forest and tundra sites. Model simulations of metabolic and structural carbon pools were less than 6% and 3% of the total estimated SOC pools, respectively. These results generally reflect conditions within the top 10 cm of the soil, as characterized by AMSR-E-based soil temperature and moisture inputs. The rmse of site differences between TCF simulations of surface SOC stocks and alternate-BGC- and global-soil-carbon-inventory-derived estimates were intermediate between relatively productive BRO and sparse data records. At Barrow, the MODIS GPP results were intermediate between relatively productive BRO₂ and less productive BRO₁ tower results. Model agreement was also lower for the BRO and ATQ sites where the sample size (N) of daily tower fluxes was greatly reduced relative to the boreal forest and GRS sites, while correspondence was more than 77% of daily variability in tower-derived GPP for the OBS boreal forest and BRO tundra sites. The MODIS-based GPP inputs to the TCF model accounted for more than 77% of daily variability in tower-derived GPP for the boreal forest and GRS sites, while correspondence was reduced for the less productive tundra sites with relatively sparse data records. At Barrow, the MODIS GPP results were intermediate between relatively productive BRO₂ and less productive BRO₁ tower results. Model agreement was also lower for the BRO and ATQ sites where the sample size (N) of daily tower fluxes was greatly reduced relative to the boreal forest and GRS sites, while correspondence was more than 77% of daily variability in tower-derived GPP for the OBS boreal forest and BRO tundra sites. The MODIS-based GPP inputs to the TCF model accounted for more than 77% of daily variability in tower-derived GPP for the boreal forest and GRS sites, while correspondence was reduced for the less productive tundra sites with relatively sparse data records. At Barrow, the MODIS GPP results were intermediate between relatively productive BRO₂ and less productive BRO₁ tower results. Model agreement was also lower for the BRO and ATQ sites where the sample size (N) of daily tower fluxes was greatly reduced relative to the boreal forest and GRS sites, while correspondence was more than 77% of daily variability in tower-derived GPP for the OBS boreal forest and BRO tundra sites. The MODIS-based GPP inputs to the TCF model accounted for more than 77% of daily variability in tower-derived GPP for the boreal forest and GRS sites, while correspondence was reduced for the less productive tundra sites with relatively sparse data records. At Barrow, the MODIS GPP results were intermediate between relatively productive BRO₂ and less productive BRO₁ tower results. Model agreement was also lower for the BRO and ATQ sites where the sample size (N) of daily tower fluxes was greatly reduced relative...
to the other sites and largely confined to spring and summer conditions.

The accuracy of MODIS GPP inputs indicated by rmse differences with tower fluxes was approximately 1.17 (±0.35 SD) g · C · m⁻² · day⁻¹. MR differences between MODIS- and tower-derived GPP were approximately 41% (±28 SD) of rmse values and represented from 3% (OAS) to 118% (ATQ) of tower GPP fluxes in summer. These results are generally consistent with previous MODIS GPP accuracy assessments over North American regional tower flux networks [51],[53].

The TCF-derived $R_{\text{tot}}$ daily time series accounted for more than 69% of daily variability in tower-based fluxes for the boreal sites and from 6% to 68% of tower-based $R_{\text{tot}}$ for tundra, with rmse differences of approximately 0.73 (±0.30 SD) g · C · m⁻² · day⁻¹. The relative correspondence between TCF and tower results for NEE was lower, with TCF-derived NEE rates accounting for between 26% and 50% of daily variability in tower fluxes for the boreal sites and less than 28% of tower variability for the tundra sites. The mean rmse between TCF- and tower-derived NEE was 1.18 (±0.56 SD) g · C · m⁻² · day⁻¹. However, daily differences between TCF- and tower-based results were both positively and negatively distributed so that the cumulative model error was reduced on an annual basis. The resulting MR differences between daily TCF results and tower-derived fluxes were approximately 43% (±26 SD) of rmse values and represented from 3% (LTH) to 99% (ATQ) of summer fluxes for $R_{\text{tot}}$ and from 11% (OBS) to 359% (ATQ) of summer fluxes for NEE.

The MODIS GPP and associated TCF results showed similar accuracy as the BGC model simulations relative to daily tower flux results. The BGC simulations accounted for more than 59% and 64% of daily variability in tower-based GPP and $R_{\text{tot}}$ for the boreal sites, while model agreement was reduced for tundra. The rmse differences between BGC- and tower-based GPP and $R_{\text{tot}}$ averaged out to 1.24 (±0.64 SD) and 0.57 (±0.22 SD) g · C · m⁻² · day⁻¹, respectively. As with the TCF results, daily differences between BGC- and tower-derived fluxes were positively and negatively distributed so that the cumulative model error was partially mitigated over the seasonal cycle, and MR differences were approximately 43% (±23 SD) of rmse values. The MR differences represented

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**TABLE IV**

**SUMMARY OF RELATIVE AGREEMENT IN ESTIMATED SITE DAILY CARBON FLUXES BETWEEN MODEL (TCF AND BIOME-BGC) AND AVAILABLE TOWER-CO₂-FLUX-MEASUREMENT-DERIVED RESULTS (DEPENDENT VARIABLE), WHERE BIOME-BGC RESULTS ARE IN BRACKETS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TCF [BIOME-BGC] vs Tower</th>
<th>GPP (g C m⁻²d⁻¹)</th>
<th>$R_{\text{tot}}$ (g C m⁻²d⁻¹)</th>
<th>NEE (g C m⁻²d⁻¹)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td>$R^2$ (%)</td>
<td>RMSE</td>
<td>MR (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRO</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>0.865</td>
<td>-0.217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRO₂</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>1.072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATQ</td>
<td>185/94</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>0.957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVO</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>0.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBS</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>1.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAS</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td>77.9</td>
<td>1.487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTH</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td>80.1</td>
<td>1.811</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TCF vs BIOME-BGC</th>
<th>GPP (g C m⁻²d⁻¹)</th>
<th>$R_{\text{tot}}$ (g C m⁻²d⁻¹)</th>
<th>NEE (g C m⁻²d⁻¹)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td>$R^2$ (%)</td>
<td>RMSE</td>
<td>MR (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRO</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>0.407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATQ</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td>83.1</td>
<td>0.342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPD</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>0.469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPV</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>0.574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVO</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>0.715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IARC</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td>1.246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBS</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>1.090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAS</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>1.224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTH</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>0.589</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$Sample size of daily carbon fluxes derived from tower flux measurements that were used to compute summary statistics; for ATQ, N=185 for NEE, while $^b$N=94 for GPP and $R_{\text{tot}}$.

$$\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{N} (\text{Tower}_i - \text{TCF}_i)}{N}$$

$$\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{N} (\text{BGC}_i - \text{TCF}_i)}{N}$$
from 2% (OBS) to 100% (IVO) and from 2% (OBS) to 33% (ATQ) of summer fluxes for GPP and $R_{\text{tot}}$, respectively. The correspondence between BGC and tower results for NEE was also reduced, with moderate correspondence for the OBS and LTH sites ($R^2 > 45\%$), reduced correspondence for the OAS and IVO sites ($R^2 = 22\%$), and relatively low correspondence for the other tundra sites ($R^2 < 10\%$). The BGC-derived rmse for NEE averaged out to 1.17 ($\pm$ 0.65 SD) g·C·m$^{-2}$·day$^{-1}$, while MR differences were approximately 41% ($\pm$ 25 SD) of the rmse and represented from 1% (OAS) to 399% (ATQ) of summer fluxes.

The correspondence between TCF- and BGC-derived daily fluxes for $R_{\text{tot}}$ was generally stronger than relations between either model- and tower-derived fluxes (Table IV). The correspondence between MODIS- and BGC-derived GPP results was also strong ($R^2 > 71\%$), with respective average rmse and MR differences of 0.73 ($\pm$0.35 SD) g·C·m$^{-2}$·day$^{-1}$ and 0.14 ($\pm$0.27 SD) g·C·m$^{-2}$·day$^{-1}$. TCF-based daily $R_{\text{tot}}$ rates accounted for between 57.4% (UPD) and 94.0% (IARC) of daily variability in BGC results, while respective rmse differences averaged out to 0.53 ($\pm$0.22 SD) g·C·m$^{-2}$·day$^{-1}$.

The MR differences for $R_{\text{tot}}$ were approximately 37% ($\pm$ 9 SD) of rmse values and represented from 5% (HPV) to 13% (LTH) of BGC-derived summer fluxes. Heterotrophic respiration represented approximately 47% ($\pm$ 10 SD) and 55% ($\pm$ 2 SD)% of the annual $R_{\text{tot}}$ rate for BGC and TCF results, respectively. During the summer months, TCF-derived $R_h$ represented approximately 43% ($\pm$ 5 SD) of $R_{\text{tot}}$ and was more consistent with BGC calculations. The larger proportion of $R_h$ from the TCF results reflects lower $R_a$ and corresponding $R_{\text{tot}}$ rates under reduced solar illumination and associated GPP rates in winter from which $R_a$ was derived. The primary sources of TCF-derived heterotrophic respiration were from the $C_{\text{met}}$ and $C_{\text{str}}$ pools, which represented approximately 66% ($\pm$10.4 SD) and 14% ($\pm$8.4 SD) of the annual $R_h$ rate, respectively, even though these pools were less than 6% of the total SOC stocks. In contrast, $C_{\text{rec}}$ contributed only 19% ($\pm$4.1 SD) of $R_h$ but was the dominant SOC component.
Fig. 3. Scatterplots and corresponding significant ($P < 0.05$) linear regression results between TCF- and BIOME-BGC-derived annual carbon fluxes for the regional network of boreal forest, GRS, and tundra sites; negative and positive NEE values denote respective ecosystem uptake and loss of carbon.

As with model comparisons with tower results, agreement between daily TCF and BGC results for residual NEE fluxes was lower than for component GPP and $R_{\text{tot}}$ fluxes. The TCF results accounted for between 35% (OAS) and 54% (IARC) of daily variability for the boreal forest sites and less than 31% of variability in BGC results for the GRS and tundra sites. For NEE, the rmse differences between TCF and BGC results averaged out to 0.61 ($\pm 0.30$ SD) $g \cdot C \cdot m^{-2} \cdot day^{-1}$, while MR values averaged out to 22% ($\pm 13$ SD) of the rmse and represented from 5% (ATQ) to 28% (BRO) of summer fluxes.

C. Annual Carbon Fluxes

Relations between TCF and BGC simulations of annual GPP and $R_{\text{tot}}$ fluxes were generally consistent with BGC simulations in terms of representing both site differences and annual variability of terrestrial carbon fluxes (Fig. 3). The TCF results accounted for more than 88% and 89% ($P < 0.0001$) of BGC-based simulations of variability in annual GPP and $R_{\text{tot}}$, respectively. The rmse of the estimated annual GPP between MODIS and BGC results was approximately 116 $g \cdot C \cdot m^{-2} \cdot year^{-1}$ across all sites, which was approximately 25% of the BGC-derived annual flux. The errors were both positively and negatively distributed so that the MR difference for GPP was approximately 7% (50.0 $g \cdot C \cdot m^{-2} \cdot year^{-1}$), while MR differences were also less than the rmse values for all other annual fluxes. For $R_{\text{tot}}$, respective rmse and MR differences between TCF and BGC results were 23% (86.7 $g \cdot C \cdot m^{-2} \cdot year^{-1}$) and $-4.3\%$ (9.8 $g \cdot C \cdot m^{-2} \cdot year^{-1}$), while TCF-based $R_{\text{tot}}$ was approximately 4% ($\pm 24$) larger than the corresponding BGC results. The near-steady-state SOC conditions of the TCF simulations reflect model assumptions of dynamic equilibrium between GPP and $R_{\text{tot}}$, and the near-neutral mean annual NEE rates over the three-year simulation period. In contrast, the BGC simulations show generally positive annual NEE uptake rates. The resulting rmse and MR differences for NEE were approximately 93.4 and $-59.8$ $g \cdot C \cdot m^{-2} \cdot year^{-1}$ and represented approximately 163% and 66% of BGC annual fluxes, respectively. The relative impact of these differences was magnified relative to GPP and $R_{\text{tot}}$ because of the much smaller size of the residual NEE fluxes.

A summary of site annual carbon budgets from model simulations and reported values from previous field studies is shown in Fig. 4. The MODIS-derived annual GPP results for the respective tundra, GRS, and boreal forest sites averaged out to 197, 257, and 716 $g \cdot C \cdot m^{-2} \cdot year^{-1}$. The TCF-model-derived
$R_{\text{tot}}$ rates averaged out to 197, 339, and 725 g · C · m$^{-2}$ · year$^{-1}$ for the tundra, GRS, and boreal forest sites. The OAS site had the highest annual GPP and respiration fluxes, while the UPD tundra site had the lowest annual fluxes. The TCF-derived annual NEE fluxes represented model assumptions of average steady-state conditions and fluctuated within $\pm 72$ g · C · m$^{-2}$ · year$^{-1}$ over the three-year study period. The BIOME-BGC-based NEE fluxes indicated a predominant annual sink for atmospheric CO$_2$, averaging $-57 \pm 58$ g · C · m$^{-2}$ · year$^{-1}$ for all sites. The TCF and BGC results were generally within the range of reported annual carbon budgets from tower-based studies in terms of representing the relative magnitudes of annual fluxes and differences among the major land-cover classes.

The MODIS-based GPP results were similar (i.e., within one standard deviation) to the range of reported annual rates from tower measurements for the boreal forest and GRS sites. The BGC results were also similar to tower-based annual fluxes for these sites except for IARC where the BGC results showed a larger GPP rate than either MODIS or tower results. While the MODIS- and BGC-derived GPP rates were similar for OAS and LTH, they occupied the lower range of reported tower GPP rates for these sites. For the tundra sites, there were insufficient daily tower flux data to compute annual rates, so the tower results shown in Fig. 4 reflect growing season (MJJAS or JJA) accumulations, relative to annual accumulations for the OBS, IARC, OAS, and LTH sites; for ATQ, there were insufficient tower flux data to present either seasonal or annual fluxes for GPP and $R_{\text{tot}}$. 

**Fig. 4.** Summary of site annual carbon budgets derived from BIOME-BGC (BGC) and TCF (GMAO) model simulations from this paper, and tower-based annual fluxes derived from this paper and reported values from the literature for each site; standard deviations of model-derived annual fluxes for the 2002–2004 study period are represented by thin black lines, while the range of reported tower fluxes is represented by thick black lines. The TCF GPP results are derived from the MODIS MOD17A2 (C.5) time series with GMAO climate. Site-measurement-derived fluxes for IVO, HPV, BRO, UPD and ATQ represent growing season (MJJAS or JJA) accumulations, relative to annual accumulations for the OBS, IARC, OAS, and LTH sites; for ATQ, there were insufficient tower flux data to present either seasonal or annual fluxes for GPP and $R_{\text{tot}}$. **

$*$Sources of reported tower fluxes: BRO (this study, [22], [23]); ATQ (this study, [23]); UPD [24]; HPV [25]; IVO (this study); IARC [27]; OAS [66, 89]; OAS (this study, [28]); LTH (this study, [29]).
cumulative fluxes for GPP or \( R_{\text{tot}} \). The corresponding model-based GPP rates for these sites reflect cumulative annual fluxes and were either within the upper range or more productive than the tower results.

The TCF-derived annual rates for \( R_{\text{tot}} \) were within the range of reported tower fluxes for the boreal forest sites. The BGC-derived \( R_{\text{tot}} \) rates were also similar to reported tower results for these sites except for IARC where the BGC results were larger than reported fluxes. For LTH, the BGC results were within the range of reported \( R_{\text{tot}} \) rates, while the TCF results were larger than both BGC- and tower-based results. For the tundra sites, the annual \( R_{\text{tot}} \) rates from both models were generally above the range of reported tower-based results. However, when the model results were adjusted to reflect only growing season accumulations, there was no change in GPP from annual rates, while \( R_{\text{tot}} \) rates were reduced by approximately 12% and were more consistent with the tundra tower results.

The TCF annual NEE results were within the range of reported values for the OBS and IARC boreal evergreen forest sites, while BGC produced larger annual carbon sinks than the tower measurements for these sites. The TCF-based NEE results were much smaller than the reported tower-based results for OAS, while the BGC results showed a much stronger net annual carbon sink for this site that was within the lower range of tower observations. Both models were within the range of tower-based NEE rates for LTH, although the tower studies indicate greater potential sink strength for this site. For the tundra sites, both models were within the range of tower-based fluxes except for the BRO site. The BGC- and TCF-derived annual NEE rates indicated near-neutral annual carbon-source–sink activity for both BRO and ATQ sites, while the corresponding tower-derived seasonal fluxes indicated a moderate net annual carbon sink and source for BRO and ATQ, respectively. Adjustment of the model results to reflect growing season accumulations for the tundra sites increased carbon sink strength by approximately 32% and was more consistent with the tower results for BRO but less similar for ATQ.

D. TCF Sensitivity to Remote Sensing Inputs

The TCF algorithm sensitivity to daily GPP inputs was assessed by evaluating the relative impact of alternative MOD17-GMAO and MOD17-NNR GPP inputs on the estimated carbon fluxes. The MOD17-NNR-based daily GPP corresponded closely with MOD17-GMAO results (\( R^2 = 0.889 \) and \( P < 0.0001 \)) but was approximately 31% less than the baseline GPP inputs. The reduced productivity was primarily due to regional bias correction and associated reductions in reanalysis solar radiation inputs to the production efficiency model [6]. The use of these alternate GPP inputs resulted in average 13% (±25 SD) decreases in the estimated SOC stocks. The resulting annual carbon fluxes accounted for approximately 90% of the variance in baseline calculations of respiration components and more than 83% of the variance in NEE (\( P < 0.0001 \)). Resultant annual carbon flux calculations, however, were reduced by approximately 31%.

On an annual basis, low soil temperature was the dominant environmental constraint on TCF heterotrophic respiration calculations across all sites, resulting in annual \( R_h \) rates that were approximately 82% (±9.9 SD) below potential conditions (i.e., no temperature effect). SM limitations were of secondary importance, with annual \( R_h \) rates being approximately 16% (±8.5 SD) below potential conditions (i.e., no moisture effect). These results are consistent with previous observation and modeling studies indicating that biological processes and the growing season for northern ecosystems are largely constrained by cold temperatures [90], [91]. During the growing season (MJJAS), low temperatures were also the dominant environmental constraint on daily \( R_h \) except for the relatively warm dry LTH GRS site, where SM had a greater relative impact than soil temperature. Low soil temperatures reduced daily \( R_h \) rates during the growing season within the respective tundra, boreal forest, and GRS sites by 82% (±11.1 SD), 60% (±14.9 SD), and 43% (±17.8 SD) from potential conditions. Suboptimal SM levels at these sites reduced daily \( R_h \) during the growing season by approximately 26% (±24.2 SD), 18% (±14.4 SD), and 51% (±23.8 SD), respectively. The net effect of both soil temperature and moisture limitations reduced \( R_h \) rates by 85% (±7.0 SD) and 78% (±10.2 SD) for respective annual and growing season conditions across all sites.

A sensitivity analysis was conducted to assess TCF model uncertainty from AMSR-E-derived soil temperature (\( T_s \)) and SM inputs. The error was assumed uncorrelated between \( T_s \) and SM inputs and uncorrelated through time. The model GPP inputs were assumed to contribute a constant representative error (1.2 g · C · m\(^{-2} \) · day\(^{-1} \)) to the TCF calculations, derived as the mean rmse difference between MODIS and tower GPP results in Table IV. The total uncertainty contributed to NEE calculations from this amount of GPP error is 0.65 g · C · m\(^{-2} \) · day\(^{-1} \), with a 0.55-g · C · m\(^{-2} \) · day\(^{-1} \) error contribution to the estimation of \( R_h \) and \( R_{\text{tot}} \). All other model parameters, including soil and litter carbon pools, were assumed to be error free. Representative SOC pools of 95 (\( C_{\text{met}} \)), 129 (\( C_{\text{str}} \)), and 5110 (\( C_{\text{rec}} \)) g · C · m\(^{-2} \) were assigned for the sensitivity analysis (Table III), while respective larger and smaller SOC pools result in proportional increases or reductions in TCF estimation errors. Results of the sensitivity analysis are presented over a range of \( T_s \) and SM levels from 1 °C to 20 °C and 5% to 100% saturation, and for selected errors in \( T_s \) (under constant SM of 50%) and SM (under constant \( T_s \) of 20 °C). The expected errors for \( T_s \) and SM were 2 °C and 15%, respectively, based on comparisons of AMSR-E \( T_s \) and SM values to site biophysical measurements [18], [64].

Because of nonlinear dependence of \( R_h \) on \( T_s \) and SM in the model, error in estimated carbon fluxes (\( R_h \), \( R_{\text{tot}} \), and NEE) is dependent on the magnitude of \( T_s \) and SM inputs (Fig. 5). Uncertainty in \( R_{\text{tot}} \) from error in \( T_s \) inputs increases exponentially with \( T_s \), while uncertainty in \( R_{\text{tot}} \) from error in SM inputs is minimal near intermediate (50% saturation) moisture levels but increases under wetter or drier conditions. Uncertainty in \( T_s \) has the greatest impact on \( R_{\text{tot}} \) under intermediate SM conditions, whereas uncertainty in SM has the greatest impact on \( R_{\text{tot}} \) at the extreme wet and dry portions of the SM curve. Overall, GPP contributes the majority of uncertainty to TCF calculations of \( R_{\text{tot}} \) and NEE when respective errors in \( R_h \) are below 0.55 and 0.65 g · C · m\(^{-2} \) · day\(^{-1} \).
The relative contribution of $R_h$ error to NEE uncertainty under variable $T_s$ and SM levels is shown in Fig. 6. Under intermediate SM conditions, uncertainty in $R_{tot}$ ranges from 0.60 g · C · m⁻² · day⁻¹ (35%) to 1.0 g · C · m⁻² · day⁻¹ (15%) at $T_s = 1 \degree C$ and 20 °C, respectively (Fig. 5). This translates to 16.5% and 69.5% of the total uncertainty in $R_{tot}$, respectively, with the remaining error contribution being from GPP. For NEE, the error ranges from 0.69 to 1.05 g · C · m⁻² · day⁻¹, which includes 12.5% and 62.4% from SM and $T_s$, respectively. Under extremely dry (10%) surface SM conditions, uncertainty in $R_{tot}$ ranges from 0.69 g · C · m⁻² · day⁻¹ (58.7%) to 2.75 g · C · m⁻² · day⁻¹ (95%) at $T_s = 1 \degree C$ and 20 °C, and uncertainties in $R_{tot}$ imparted by both SM and $T_s$ are 36% and 96%, respectively. For NEE, the error ranges from 0.77 to 2.77 g · C · m⁻² · day⁻¹, while uncertainties in NEE imparted by SM and $T_s$ are 29% and 94%, respectively.

Acceptable error levels in $T_s$ and SM are dependent on GPP for deriving meaningful (defined as relative error < 100%) $R_{tot}$ information, which also depends on the relative contribution of $R_h$ to $R_{tot}$. For GPP = 0, meaningful $R_{tot}$ values can be determined when $T_s \geq 4 \degree C$ and error in $T_s \leq 4 \degree C$ at intermediate SM levels. For GPP = 0.64 g · C · m⁻² · day⁻¹ and SM between 35% and 70%, meaningful $R_{tot}$ values can be determined under optimal $T_s$ (20 °C) with ≤30% error in SM. When GPP exceeds 7.1 g · C · m⁻² · day⁻¹, meaningful $R_{tot}$

values can be determined when error in $T_s \leq 3 \degree C$ and error in SM ≤20% across the entire range of $T_s$ and SM conditions.

For the expected error levels ($T_s = 2 \degree C$ and SM = 15%), meaningful $R_{tot}$ can be determined for all values of $T_s$ and SM when GPP exceeds 4.4 g · C · m⁻² · day⁻¹. When GPP = 0, meaningful $R_{tot}$ values can be determined when $T_s \geq 2 \degree C$ under optimal SM levels, and under optimal $T_s$ conditions when SM is between 14% and 91%. Uncertainty in $R_{tot}$ ranges from 0.60 to 3.05 g · C · m⁻² · day⁻¹, and uncertainty in NEE ranges from 0.69 to 3.07 g · C · m⁻² · day⁻¹ for all $T_s$ and SM conditions. This translates into uncertainties in annual fluxes from 6.0 to 30.5 g · C · m⁻² for $R_{tot}$ (0.7%–30% of annual flux shown in Fig. 4) and from 6.9 to 30.7 g · C · m⁻² for NEE over a 100-day growing season.

The results of the sensitivity analysis define potential uncertainty in the model-derived carbon fluxes due to error in AMSR-E soil inputs. Overall, GPP inputs to the TCF model contribute most of the estimation error for $R_{tot}$ and NEE when uncertainty in $R_h$ is relatively small (< 0.64 g · C · m⁻² · day⁻¹), which generally occurs when either $T_s$ is low (< 10 °C) or SM is near intermediate levels. The model sensitivity to $T_s$ uncertainty increases under drier or wetter SM levels, particularly when $T_s$ uncertainty is high. These results indicate that the accuracy of AMSR-E soil information is sufficient to determine meaningful flux estimates over a broad
component $\delta T$ minus the contributions from SM conditions (range of Fig. 6. Plots of the relative (in percent) contribution of both $\delta T_s$ and $\delta SM$ under variable $T_s$ and SM conditions. The relative contribution of GPS uncertainty is 100% minus the contributions from $\delta T_s$ and $\delta SM$. (a) Relative contribution of component $R_h$ estimation uncertainty to $\delta NEE$ ($Y$-axis) for selected $\delta T_s$ levels from 1 °C to 4 °C and variable $T_s$ conditions ($X$-axis), where $SM = 50\%$ and $\delta SM$ is fixed at 15%. (b) Relative contribution of component $R_h$ estimation uncertainty to $\delta NEE$ for selected $\delta SM$ levels from $10\%$ to $30\%$ and variable SM conditions ($X$-axis), where $T_s = 20 °C$ and $\delta T_s$ is fixed at 2 °C.

range of $T_s$ and SM conditions, including the boreal forest, GRS, and tundra sites represented in this paper. These results also specify an expected level of model error due to uncertainty in surface meteorological inputs between AMSR-E and biophysical station network measurements. The actual model error may be larger or smaller, depending on correlations between model inputs, model or measurement bias, and potential error in model representation of biophysical processes. In general, rmse values for the estimated carbon fluxes from this paper are consistent with the results of the sensitivity analysis under the prevailing climatic conditions of the study site locations.

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The TCF and BGC model simulations from this paper show similar accuracy with respect to tower-CO$_2$-eddy-covariance-based estimates of NEE and component carbon fluxes. The TCF-derived fluxes showed respective rmse values of 1.2, 0.7, and 1.2 g · C · m$^{-2}$ · day$^{-1}$ for GPP, $R_{tot}$, and NEE fluxes, while MR differences were approximately 43% of the rmse. The BGC simulations also produced rmse values between 0.6 and 1.2 g · C · m$^{-2}$ · day$^{-1}$ and MR differences that were approximately 42% of the rmse.

The correspondence between TCF and BGC results was generally better than either model’s agreement with tower-derived carbon fluxes. The TCF results reproduced annual variability and site differences in BGC-derived GPP and $R_{tot}$ fluxes to within 26% and 8% accuracies relative to respective rmse and MR terms. However, the TCF results did not correspond significantly ($P > 0.05$) with BGC simulations of annual NEE. The rmse between model results was approximately 93 g · C · m$^{-2}$ · year$^{-1}$ (163%), which was large, given the small size of the residual NEE fluxes. Thus, while the TCF model is generally consistent with more detailed ecosystem process model simulations for GPP and respiration fluxes, model results diverge for smaller residual NEE fluxes. A major cause of model NEE divergence is that the TCF simulations represent steady-state SOC conditions and associated dynamic equilibrium between GPP and $R_{tot}$. In contrast, the BGC simulations indicate a predominant sink for atmospheric CO$_2$ for most sites, which reflects disequilibrium between GPP and soil decomposition and respiration processes under rising atmospheric CO$_2$ levels.

The TCF-based $R_h$ results represented approximately 43% and 55% of $R_{tot}$ for respective summer and annual fluxes; these results are similar to radiocarbon analyses of temperate deciduous and boreal evergreen coniferous forests indicating that 41%–63% of soil CO$_2$ emissions are derived from $R_h$ [92], [93]. The dominant source of TCF-derived $R_h$ was from $C_{init}$ and $C_{str}$ stocks with a relatively high turnover rate, even though these components represented less than 6% of the total estimated SOC. These results are also consistent with radiocarbon analyses of temperate and boreal forest soils indicating that most of the CO$_2$ flux from soil decomposition is derived from SOC in surface (<15-cm depth) soil layers with a mean residence time of a decade or less [92], [94], which is well within the time span of current global operational satellite remote sensing records. These stocks contribute a majority of the decomposition flux but represent a relatively small component of the total SOC pool. These younger SOC stocks and associated $R_h$ rates are also closely tied to GPP and associated photosynthate supply under steady-state conditions, as has been observed across a broad range of global biomes [94], although disturbance from fire, insect defoliations, land-use and land-cover changes, and climate perturbations may cause short-term departures from these relationships [96], [97].

There are several potential sources of differences between tower-site- and model-derived estimates of land–atmosphere carbon exchange. For this investigation, tower eddy covariance CO$_2$ flux measurements and associated site-based carbon flux estimates were used as ground truth for TCF and BGC simulations of carbon exchange within regional (25-km resolution) modeling windows surrounding individual tower sites. However, large uncertainties exist regarding tower measurements and their consistency with regional land–atmosphere carbon fluxes over heterogeneous landscapes. Tower GPP is calculated as the difference between NEE and $R_{tot}$. Estimates of $R_{tot}$ at flux tower sites are typically made using nighttime fluxes of NEE (when photosynthesis is assumed to be zero). However, eddy flux towers can underestimate carbon fluxes by 10%–20% or more, particularly under nighttime conditions. This underestimation is fairly consistent and arises from both systematic and random errors [98]–[100] that propagate into associated GPP, $R_{tot}$, and NEE estimates. Bias is generally attenuated when annual NEE is considered, but has been estimated to
range from 4%–8% for temperate and boreal forests to 26% for northern agroecosystems [101]. Adverse environmental conditions, low NEE, and associated low productivity levels characteristic of tundra sites also increase sampling error and difficulty in acquiring accurate fluxes [22], [23], [102]. In addition, tower fluxes represent footprints of approximately 1 km or less and are much smaller subsamples of overlying MODIS and AMSR-E grid cells representing environmental conditions and aggregate response of the regional landscape [20], [50], [53]. Nevertheless, tower CO$_2$ eddy flux measurements remain a useful standard for the evaluation of surrogate measurements from satellite remote sensing, particularly when compared across regional networks spanning broad environmental and vegetation biomass gradients [9], [11], [100].

Differences between TCF and tower fluxes may also reflect the limitations of a relatively simple remote sensing algorithm to sufficiently characterize all the major processes regulating CO$_2$ exchange. For example, soil decomposition studies indicate that the carbon assimilation efficiency of soil microbes and associated SOC decomposition rates vary with changes in soil nitrogen availability [103] and may not be adequately represented by a constant maximum soil decomposition rate ($K_{mx}$). Tower-based studies at the LTH GRS site documented large increases in vegetation photosynthetic light-use efficiencies and GPP during years with increased summer precipitation and SM [29]. At the OBS forest site, automated sampling and isotopic analysis of soil respiration indicate that $R_h$ from deep (> 20-cm depth) soil layers increases with soil warming, with a significant respiration contribution being from older (centuries before present) SOC sources [104]. These processes may not be well represented by regional GPP measures and limited (three-year) sampling of near-surface soil temperature and moisture conditions from regional remote sensing measurements.

Previous studies have shown that surface soil temperature and moisture information can be retrieved with reasonable accuracy over heterogeneous landscapes from relatively coarse-resolution AMSR-E time series [18], [20]. The results of this paper indicate that AMSR-E-derived soil wetness and temperature information are effective surrogates for the primary environmental controls on soil decomposition and $R_h$ across a broad range of boreal forest, GRS, and tundra sites. Our results also show that the integration of this information with operational-satellite-derived GPP and a simple biophysical response model provides meaningful measures of surface SOC, daily NEE, and component carbon fluxes over broad boreal–Arctic landscapes that are similar to alternative measures derived from more detailed ecosystem process model and tower eddy covariance measurement approaches. The TCF model provides an effective means for satellite-based monitoring of land–atmosphere carbon fluxes across the pan-Arctic domain, bridging the divide between relatively fine-scale CO$_2$ flux measurements and coarse-scale assessments of atmospheric CO$_2$ concentrations from sparse sampling networks and atmospheric transport models. Major assumptions of the TCF model framework are that spatial and temporal variabilities in the relative magnitude and sign of land–atmosphere CO$_2$ exchange are largely driven by surface soil wetness and temperature variations through direct environmental controls on $R_h$ and that surface SOC stocks are in relative equilibrium with these environmental conditions and GPP. Further research is needed to determine how these relationships may vary over longer time periods, following disturbance, and under a warming climate.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The authors would like to thank the principal investigators and research teams of Ameriflux, BERMS, and FLUXNET Canada for providing the tower CO$_2$ flux and associated meteorological data for use in this paper. The provision of tower site measurements was provided through funding from a variety of sources including the U.S. Department of Energy Terrestrial Carbon and NASA Terrestrial Ecology programs; tower site principal investigators include S. Wofsy and A. Dunn (OBS site), T. A. Black and A. Barr (OAS site), L. Flanagan (LTH site), and Y. Harazono of the National Institute for Agro-Environmental Sciences, Tsukuba, Japan (BRO$_2$ site). The authors would also like to thank A. Appling for the technical assistance. Portions of the research described in this paper were carried out at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, under contract to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

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