

The Role of the Plasmasphere in Radiation Belt Particle Energization and Loss

W. R. Johnston University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, Texas

P. C. Anderson University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, Texas

J. Goldstein Southwest Research Institute, San Antonio, Texas

S. G. Kanekal University of Colorado at Boulder, Boulder, Colorado

T. P. O'Brien Aerospace Corporation, Chantilly, Virginia



AGU Joint Assembly, 22 May 2007



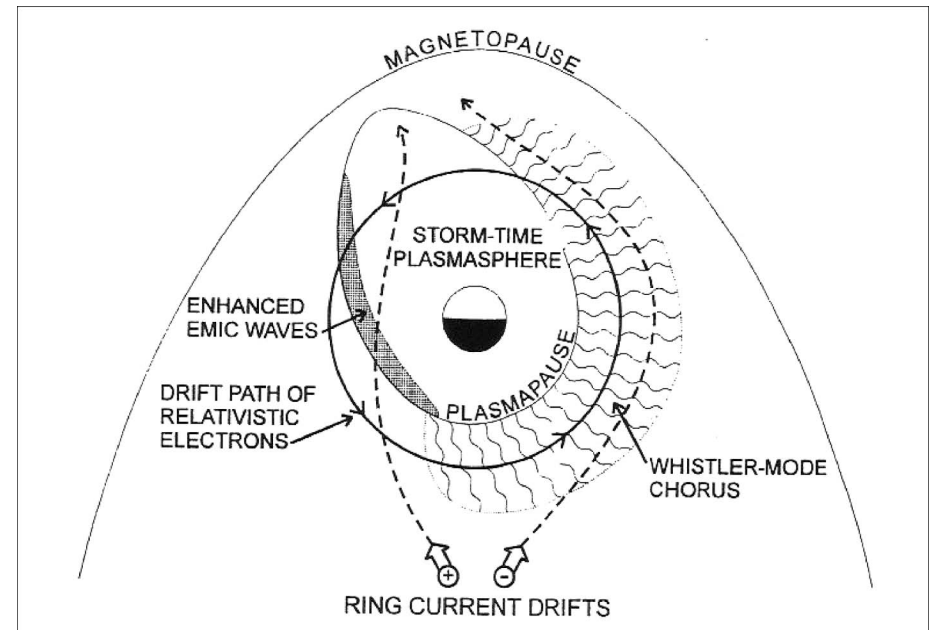
Outline

- Background
 - ionospheric signatures of plasmopause
- Method
 - use of DMSP observations of LIT to identify plasmopause
 - map plasmopause locations to equatorial plane
 - compare with IMAGE plasmasphere observations and SAMPEX energetic particle observations
- Results



Plasmasphere-radiation belt connection

- Plasmapause (PP) correlates with inner edge of outer radiation belt
- Wave-particle interactions are central to this correlation, e.g.:
 - EMIC waves inside PP scatter radiation belt particles into loss cone
 - whistler-mode chorus outside PP energizes radiation belt particles over multiple orbits



(Summers *et al.*, 1998, *JGR*, 103:20487)



Plasmapause signatures in ionosphere

- Several ionospheric signatures of the plasmapause have been proposed, including:
 - midlatitude electron density trough - TEC - SETE
 - precipitating electron boundary - LIT - SARS
- Generally not a one-to-one correspondence between any of these and the plasmapause
- Light ion trough (LIT) is proposed as one of the more consistent signatures (Taylor and Walsh, 1972, *JGR*, 77:6716; Horwitz *et al.*, 1990, *JGR*, 95(A6):7949)
- Some have found the LIT tends to be equatorward of other plasmapause identifications (Foster *et al.*, 1978, *JGR*, 83:1175; Grebowsky *et al.*, 1978, *PSS*, 26:651)

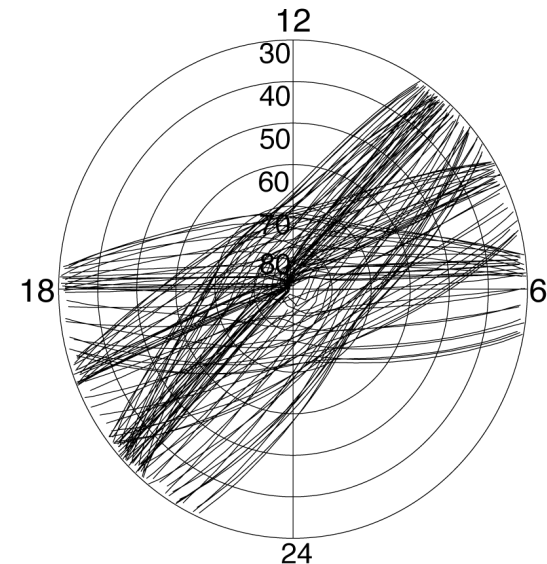


Method: DMSP

- DMSP satellites: sun-synchronous circular orbits near 840 km alt., 101 min. period, 99° inclination
- 3-4 satellites in operation continuously over 10+ years
- Instruments include Retarding Potential Analyzer providing ion density, composition, temperature
- Plot illustrates polar coverage in one day from four DMSP satellites (F11-F14) in MLAT-MLT
 - provides ~50% MLT coverage at 40°, ~75% coverage at 60°

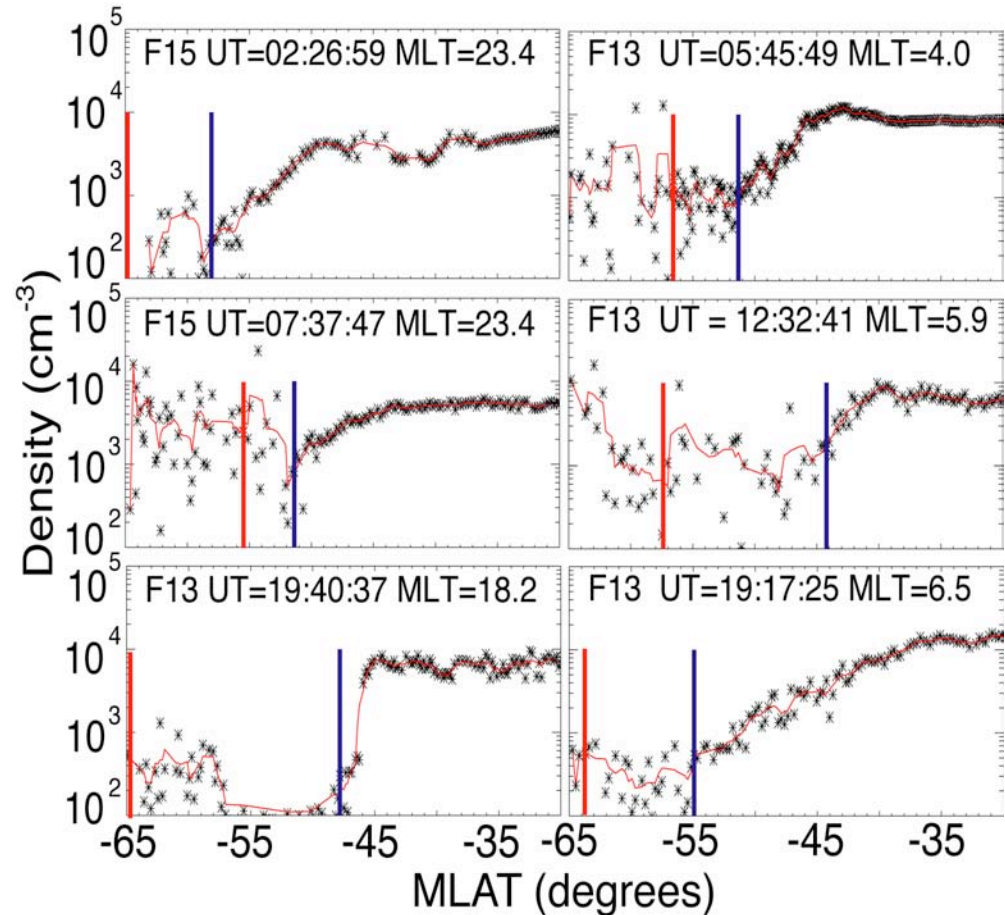


DMSP Coverage October 19, 1998



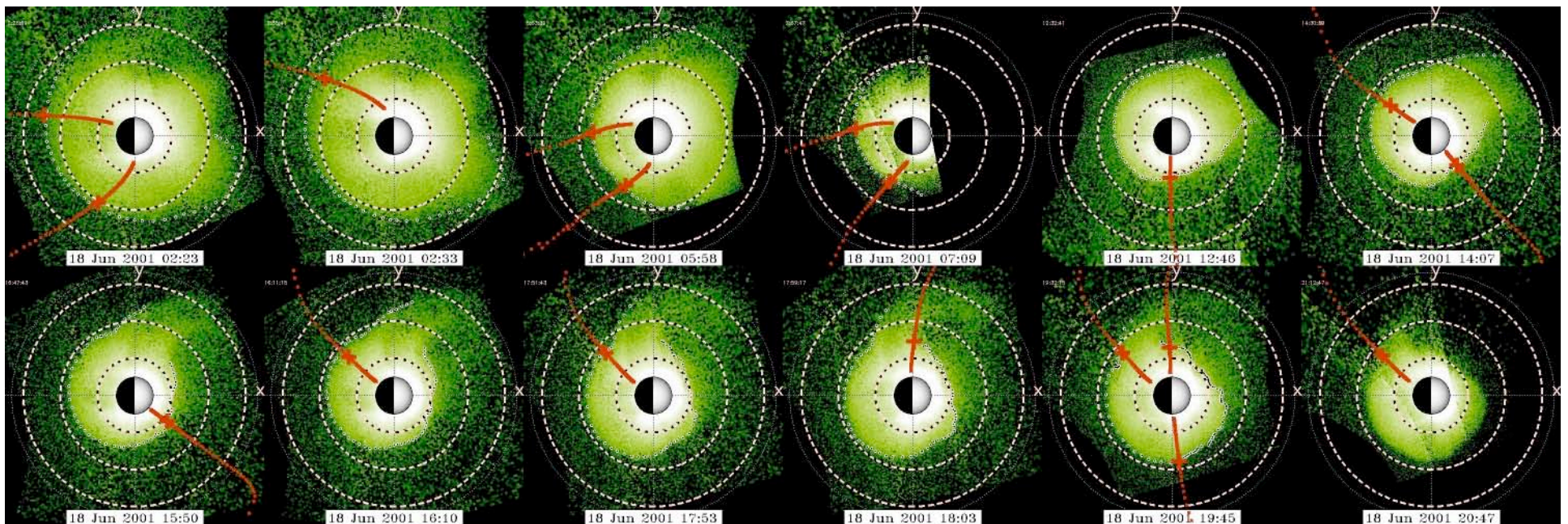
Method: LIT identification

- We use LIT as identification of plasmopause
- Plots show DMSP H⁺ density vs. MLAT, smoothed density in red
- Vertical red line is equatorward electron precipitation boundary
- Semi-automatic procedure picks PP identification at blue line
- Location is mapped to high altitude plasmopause along magnetic field lines using epoch-appropriate IGRF internal field and Tsyganenko external field



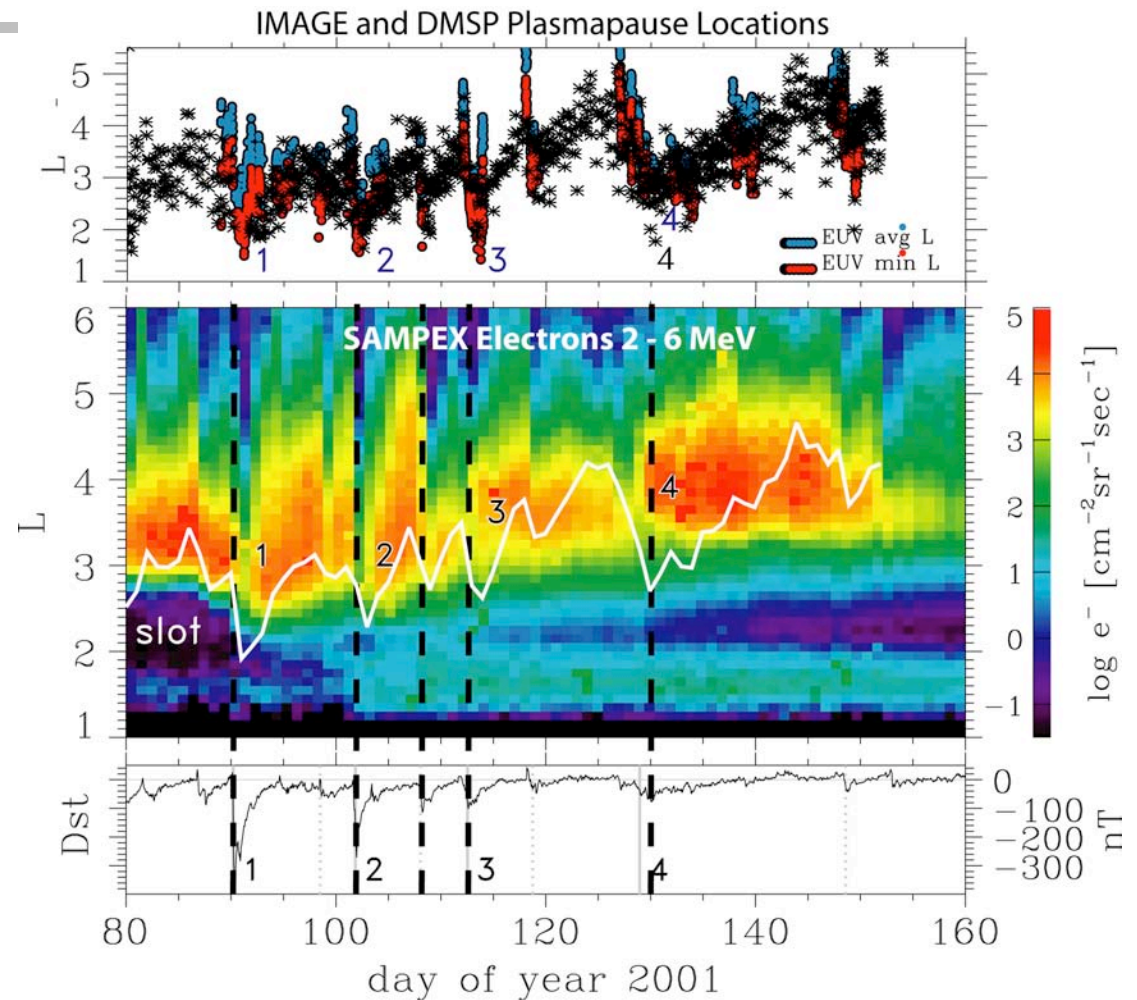
Results: comparison to IMAGE

- For 18 June 2001, plots show IMAGE EUV images of plasmasphere projected to SM X-Y plane, Sun at right
- Red lines show mappings of DMSP orbit track to SM X-Y plane, red cross shows identified plasmopause



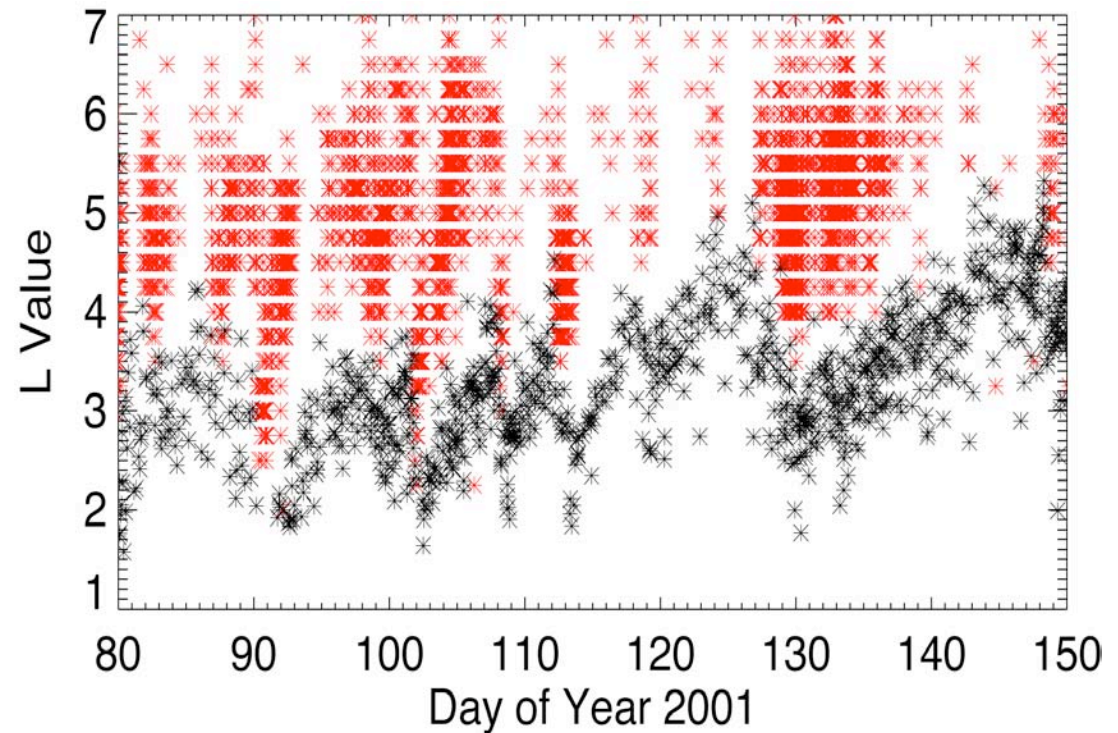
Results: comparison to SAMPEX

- For 72-day period in 2001, we obtained 1790 plasmopause IDs
- top: PP IDs from DMSP (black) compared to IMAGE
- middle: daily average of our PP IDs (white) compared to SAMPEX electron flux
- Correlation in PP movement and Dst, movement of inner edge of outer radiation belt



Results: comparison to SAMPEX

- red: SAMPEX-identified microbursts
 - microbursts are short (~1 s) bursts of precipitating relativistic electrons observed at low altitudes; found associated with whistler chorus (O'Brien *et al.*, 2003, *JGR*, 108(A8):1329)
- black: all DMSP-based plasmopause IDs



Conclusions

- We have obtained initial results from a method of identifying the plasmopause using DMSP observations of the LIT.
- Comparisons show good correlation with IMAGE plasmopause IDs and SAMPEX radiation belt flux and microburst observations.
- This approach will be applied to full DMSP database: 10+ years of observations--covering full lifetime of SAMPEX.
- Database will be used for event studies and to statistically analyze correlation of plasmopause-radiation belt dynamics.

