Crushed-Rock Ultra-large Stored Heat (CRUSH) System with Nuclear or Concentrated Solar Power (CSP) to Provide Economic Dispatchable Electricity

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Summary

• Require dispatchable electricity (replace gas turbine)
• Most economic electricity production with base-load nuclear and CSP operating at maximum capacity
• Adding heat storage enables economic variable electricity
• Economics is central
  – Batteries >$500 MWe
  – Traditional two-tank nitrate storage $20-30 kWh of heat ($60-70/kWh(e))
  – CRUSH heat-storage capital cost: $2-4/kWh ($10/kWh(e))
• Hourly-to-weekly storage improves economics
Energy Markets

Electricity Markets are Changing from Fossil Fuels where the Fuel Cost Control Electricity Costs to Nuclear, Wind and Solar where Capital Costs Determine Electricity Costs
Economics of Large-Scale Solar Are Driven by Energy Storage Costs, Not the Cost of Solar

• Electricity markets
  – Most electricity sold when no sun
  – Electricity price near zero when sun is out and solar production exceeds demand

• PV cost structure
  – Generation: $ 31.30/ MWh
  – Battery Storage: $ 121.86/ MWh
  – Battery Cap, Cost >$500/kWh(e)

• Same challenge for CSP

Projected California Production at 50% Solar/Wind vs Time over One Week

Projected CAISO Net Load Curve at 50% RPS

Hourly Weekly

Large Incentive for Hourly to Weekend/Weekday Storage
Two Storage Strategies: Electricity and Heat

• Electricity: Lithium ion battery
  – Round-trip efficiency 81% (real systems)
  – Capital cost today: >$500/kWh(e) with cost reductions limited by cost of raw materials

• Heat: Efficiency >95% for nuclear and CSP

• Convert electricity to heat and back to electricity
  – Round trip efficiency 40% (Heat-to-electricity efficiency)
  – Capital cost (two-tank nitrate salt): $65-75/kWh(e)
  – Crushed Rock Ultra-large Stored Heat (CRUCH) system capital-cost goal: $2-4/KWh heat (< $10/kWhe)
Wind and Solar Massively Increase the Storage Challenge

California Electric Production with 50% Wind and Solar over One Week

Solar Flux Over a Year at Noon Versus Latitude
Batteries Are Not a Solution to a Million-Gigawatt-Hour Energy Storage Challenge

- Battery capital cost leveling off at $500/kWh(e)
- $500 trillion for a million-gigawatt hours of storage
- U.S. Gross National Product is $22 trillion
- Battery cost more than 20 times U.S. GNP


Allowable Cost Versus Storage Duration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hours-Day Sunlight (200+ cycles per year)</td>
<td>Solar PV Electric Demand</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-Day Weather (100 cycles per year)</td>
<td>Wind Heating Air Conditioning</td>
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<td>Week (50 cycles per year)</td>
<td>Weekday/Weekend Demand</td>
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- **2-Tank Nitrate Salt**
- **Thermocline Single Tank**
- **CRUSH**

**Storage Duration**
- Hrs
- Day
- 3-Day
- Week

**Capital Cost ($/KWh of Heat)**
Incremental Capital-Cost Goal: $2-4/KWh of Heat

- Some capital costs associated with rates of heat input and output (pumps)
- Storage capital costs
  - Can pay more for parts of system used for daily storage (300 time per year)
  - Require low incremental capital costs if weekly use (50 times per year)—weekend/weekday
System Design
System Design for Nuclear or CSP with Heat Storage

Excess Solar and Wind Electricity

Nuclear Reactor or Concentrated Solar Power

Auxiliary Heat: Low-Price Electricity-to-Heat; Auxiliary Fuel (H₂, Biofuels)

Heat Storage

Power Block 2-4 X MWe Boilers and Turbines

Industrial User: Biofuels / H₂ for Seasonal Variations, Peak Capacity > Base Load
Thermal Energy Storage at Concentrated Solar Power Plants

Molten salt thermal energy storage

Solana Generating Station (2013, U.S., ~4200 MWh(t))

Solar System Heats Cold Nitrate Salt and Puts in Hot Storage Tank

Nitrate Salt Storage for CSP Facility
Advance Nuclear Systems Planning to Use Same Salt Heat-Storage System—Natrium Example

- GE/Terrapower
- First plant to be built in Wyoming
- Nitrate salt storage (same as CSP)
- Baseload: 345 MWe, variable power 100 to 500 MWe
Crushed Rock Ultra-Large Stored Heat (CRUSH) System with Oil or Nitrate Salt Heat Transfer
Traditional Nitrate-Salt-Storage Cost Structure

• EPRI study: 3500 MWh(t) of heat storage
• Cost breakdown
  – Tank: 50%
  – Nitrate Salt: 34.4%
  – Other: 15.6%
• Oil storage costs are higher

For low costs
Can’t afford expensive high-temperature tank
Can’t use nitrate salt for heat storage

EPRI, Solar Thermocline Storage Systems Preliminary Design Study, 1019581, June 2010
CRUSH System Stores Heat as Crushed Rock in Insulated Structure Similar to Aircraft Hangar

- Crushed Rock
  Lowest-Cost Heat Storage Material
- Low-Cost Insulated Building with 20+ Meter High Crushed Rock
Transfer Heat to and from Crushed-Rock Heat Storage With Liquid Oil or Nitrate Salt

- Spray hot or cold fluid over rock with gravity flow to salt or oil pan at bottom

- Minimize heat transfer fluid inventory and cost, liquid moves heat, not heat storage
Sequential Heating or Cooling of Crushed Rock Section by Section with Hot Fluid Flowing By Gravity

Sequential Heating of Crushed Rock With Hot Salt Spray

Side View

Hot Salt

Top of Crushed Rock

Collection Pan

Length

Cold Salt
Sequential Heating of Adjacent Zones with Hot Fluid

Hot Rock             Heating Zone             Cold Rock

In    Standby      In    Standby      In          In        Storage   In        Storage  In
Cold   Standby          Cold   Standby     To Next    Cold            Standby Cold       Standby To Next
Out                             Out                          Zone      Out                              Out

Cold Out  Standby  Cold Out  Standby  To Next Zone  Cold Out  Standby Cold Out  Standby To Next Zone

- Hot Rock  Heating Zone  Cold Rock
Sequential Heating Addresses Other Potential Challenges of Large Systems

• If non-uniform heating, can do second heating of zone x-hours later after temperatures equilibrate

• Partly-cooled fluid dumped on cold rock being initially heated

• Viable because of very low incremental heat storage costs—can have a gigawatt-hour of heat storage used in operations.
CRUSH Heat-Transfer System is Similar to Mass Transfer in Heap Pile Leaching of Copper Ores

- 20% of global copper recovered by heap pile leaching
- Spray liquid on crushed ore, flow through pile, leach copper and collect liquid
- Many features similar to heat transfer in CRUSH
Rock Pile Size Adjusted for 1 to 100 GWh with Multiple Zones (GWh ~ 20 m by 25 m by 25)

- 25 m by 25 m heating and cooling zones
- Crushed rock without flowing salt acts as a partial insulator
  - Low-conductivity crushed rock—touch at points
  - Gas between rocks acts as insulator

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Gravity Flow of Liquid Reduces Building Costs

• Side walls do not have to withstand liquid hydraulic pressures, enables tall storage systems

• No rock pressure against side walls with free expansion of liquid

• Lightweight aircraft-hanger-type structure with internal insulation
Requirements for Low Cost Buildings

• Building only provides gas-tight insulated structure, no liquid or rock containment

• Crushed rock pile
  – Flat top
  – Sloped walls of crushed rock

• Free expansion of rock with temperature

Light-Weight Building Similar to Insulated Aircraft Hanger
Massive Aircraft Hangar Building Experience

Tillamook Air Museum, Oregon
(Width: 269 feet., length 1072 feet, height 192 feet)

Hanger 375, San Antonio, Texas
(610 x 90 x 27.5m; 2,000 x 300 x 90 ft; 600,000 square feet)

http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utsa/00297/utsa-00297.html
Foundation Designed for Temperature Transients

- Two-tank nitrate salt tanks see few temperature transients
- CRUSH foundation sees many temperature transients
- Road-bed insulation layer (firebrick or sand/other mixture) addresses multiple temperature transients
- Insulation is the collection pan for the salt or heat-transfer oil

Only Insulation Sees Temperature Transients (Road-Bed Construction)
Extremely Low Incremental Capital Cost As Boost Capacity

• Building cost structure favors larger capacity
  – Heat capacity (volume) goes up as cube
  – Cost goes up as surface area—square (Incremental foundation and roof for building)

• Low-cost crushed rock
• Added fluid limited to residual on crushed rock
Conclusions

• Low-carbon world requires dispatchable electricity—replacement for gas turbine

• Can use base-load nuclear and CSP with heat storage to minimize electricity generation costs

• CRUSH incremental capital-cost goal: $2-4/kWh of heat
  – Crushed rock for low-cost heat storage
  – Nitrate salt or heat-transfer oil to move heat to/from crushed rock
  – Low-cost aircraft-hanger type building (no expensive tanks)
  – Foundation design for multiple temperature transients

• Early stages of development
Questions

Building Layout: Top Down
Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the support by the Shanghai Institute of Applied Physics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation (ENEC), The Claiborne Handleman Trust, and the U.S. Department of Energy.
Dr. Charles Forsberg is a principal research scientist at MIT. His research areas include Fluoride-salt-cooled High-Temperature Reactors (FHRs) and utility-scale heat storage including Firebrick Resistance-Heated Energy Storage (FIRES) and 100 GWh heat storage systems. He teaches the fuel cycle and nuclear chemical engineering classes. Before joining MIT, he was a Corporate Fellow at Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

He is a Fellow of the American Nuclear Society (ANS), a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and recipient of the 2005 Robert E. Wilson Award from the American Institute of Chemical Engineers for outstanding chemical engineering contributions to nuclear energy, including his work in waste management, hydrogen production and nuclear-renewable energy futures. He received the American Nuclear Society special award for innovative nuclear reactor design and is a Director of the ANS. Dr. Forsberg earned his bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from the University of Minnesota and his doctorate in Nuclear Engineering from MIT. He has been awarded 12 patents and published over 300 papers.

http://web.mit.edu/nse/people/research/forsberg.html
References


Alternative CRUSH / CSP System Designs

The Low Incremental Capital Cost of CRUSH May Change Large-Scale CSP/PV System Design
Conventional Heat Storage Economics of Scale End at a few Gigawatt Hours

- Cost of tanks
- Cost of nitrate salt or heat transfer oil

Nitrate Salt Storage for CSP Facility

Solana Generating Station (2013, U.S., ~4200 MWh(t))
Crush System Costs Decrease Rapidly with Size

• Crushed rock cheap
• Incrementally larger building costs are low—doubling building size does not double cost
• Costs decrease as go from a few to 100 GWh
Economics of Storage / Power Block Drives to Large Sizes to Minimize Costs and Maximize Revenue

- CRUSH system for 100 GWh of heat storage
- Enables daily to weekday / weekend heat storage to maximize revenue
- Similar in capabilities to TVA Raccoon Mountain pumped storage facility

TVA Raccoon Mountain Pumped-Storage Plant: 1,652 MW maximum output for 22 hours
Large-Scale Storage Supports Multiple CSP Systems Moving Heat to Central Storage via Pipeline

Many CSP Plants Pump Hot Fluids to CRUSH System and Power Block; Low-Cost CRUSH and Power Block Require Gigawatts of Heat Input
CRUSH System Coupled to Photovoltaic System

Use Where Limited Direct Sunlight

- Collector fields greater than 100 km$^2$
- PV direct current heats salt with pipeline heat transfer to central heat storage several kilometers away
- Avoid DC-AC-transformer-line-transformer-resistance heater losses and costs

Alternative Option of Electricity Transfer to CRUSH and Power Block
CRUSH System Coupling to Concentrated Solar Power on Demand (CSPond) System-I

- Advanced CSP where sunlight reflected off secondary mirrors into pool of nitrate salt open to atmosphere on the ground
- Volumetric collector that avoids heat flux limits of conventional collectors
- CRUSH and CSPond nitrate salts have high impurity levels

CRUSH System Coupling to Concentrated Solar Power on Demand (CSPond) System-II

• Addresses concerns about rock impurities in solar collector from CRUSH system
• Small prototype facility successfully tested concept
• For CRUSH, hot salt from multiple CSPond systems sent to CRUSH and power block
Large-Scale CSP Questions

Pipeline from Multiple Towers

Insulated Roof with Liquid Distribution System

Insulation
Support Column

Crushed Rock

Crushed Rock

Insulation
Air Cooling

Liquid In
Salt or Oil Drains Through Crushed Rock

Liquid Out

Collection pan
CSP/CRUSH System Conclusions

• With large-scale solar deployment, economics is more dependent on the cost of storage than cost of solar

• CRUSH system is much less expensive than electricity storage with incremental capital-cost goal of $2-4/kWh of heat

• Modify CSP with multiple plants to central CRUSH/power block to couple to low-cost storage and power block to enable lower cost solar with greater revenue
Heat-Transfer Oil Versus Nitrate Salt
CRUSH Systems
Heat Transfer Oil vs. Nitrate Salt

- Heat transfer oil
  - More expensive
  - Peak temperature ~ 400C
  - Little interactions with most types of crushed rock
- Nitrate salts
  - Relatively inexpensive
  - Peak temperatures approach 600C
  - Require careful rock selection for compatibility
## Compatibility of Different Rocks with Nitrate Salts-1

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<td>Gabbro</td>
<td>48.6% SiO$_2$, 12.1% CaO, 9.4% Al$_2$O$_3$, 9.9% MgO, 9% Fe$_2$O$_3$.15% TiO$_2$</td>
<td>Labradorite and pyroxene</td>
</tr>
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<td>Coarse grained granite</td>
<td>SiO$_2$ (65% ~ 70%), a little of Al$_2$O$_3$, CaO, MgO and Fe$_2$O$_3$</td>
<td>Feldspar, quartz, a few dark—coloured mineral, sand, mica.</td>
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## Compatibility of Different Rocks with Nitrate Salts-2

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<td>Hornfels</td>
<td>$\text{(Ca,Na)}_2\text{(Mg,Fe,Al)}_5\text{(Al,Si)}<em>8\text{O}</em>{22}\text{(OH)}_2$</td>
<td>Actinolite, andalusite, augite, biotite, calcite, chlorite, cordierite, diopside, epidote, feldspars, garnet, graphite, hornblende, kyanite, pyrite, scapolite, sillimanite, sphene, tourmaline, and vesuvianite.</td>
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Backup Viewgraphs
CRUSH Applicable to All Heat Systems

• Nuclear
• All solar systems
  – Classical CSP
  – Direct adsorption of light by heat transfer fluid
  – Photovoltaic with direct conversion to heat
• Conversion of low-price electricity into stored heat for electricity or heat markets
Features to Control Fluid, Building Atmosphere Composition and Minimize Air Pollution

• Filters to remove fine particles in oil or nitrate salt generated by thermal expansion and contraction of rock over time

• Atmospheric control
  – Oil heat transfer. Use inert gas (nitrogen or argon) to minimize oil degradation with time
  – Nitrate salt. Air or controlled atmosphere to minimize degradation of nitrate salt at higher temperatures

• Off-gas system to minimize air pollution and heat losses while maintaining atmospheric pressure (breather bags with/without heat storage or absorbers) as building breaths
CRUSH Can Decrease System Solar Costs

- At higher penetration, solar system costs rise dramatically
  - Transmission
  - Backup electricity
  - Non-dispatchability
- 100 GWh daily-to-weekly heat storage eliminates many of these costs
1000-MW CSP with 100-Gigawatt-hour Crushed-rock Heat Storage to Replace Dispatchable Fossil-fuel Electricity
Charles Forsberg, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

- If large scale solar, cost of storage (not cost of solar) controls electricity prices
- Zero value electricity during the day
- Cheap storage and power block (right) requires massive solar heat input
- Multiple solar farms send heat to storage via oil or nitrate salt pipelines
- Two-tank (hot / cold) heat storage has two expensive items
  - Tanks
  - Oil or nitrate-salt heat storage material
- Replace oil or nitrate salt with crushed rock pile 20+ meters high
  - Hot or cold oil or salt from solar collector sprayed on top of crushed rock
  - Gravity flow to collection pan below crushed rock—minimize oil or salt
  - Sequential heating / cooling of rock
- Replace tanks with insulated aircraft-hangar-like building
  - Sloped rock so no pressure on walls
  - Low conductivity road bed foundation under crushed rock with salt drains
  - Air cooling under road bed
- Cost goal of $2-4/kWh of heat
  - Require large size for low cost to minimize surface (building) to volume (heat storage) ratio
  - 10 to 100 GWh capacity
  - Factor of 50 under batteries per unit of electricity
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CRUSH Addresses Non-Uniform Heating

- Sequential heating of crushed rock sections left to right
- Similar to heap leaching of copper ores (mass transfer) except heat transfer by fluid flow and heat conduction
- Partly addresses challenge of non-uniform heat transfer or bypass flow in crushed rock
System Design of CSP System with Storage

CSP (Sized for Average Demand)

Low-Price Electricity-to-Heat; Auxiliary Fuel (H₂, Biofuels)

Hot

Boilers and turbines (Sized for Peak Demand)

Heat Storage

Cold
Require Rethinking Solar PV with Heat Storage

CRUSH Heat Storage is Similar to Heap Leaching of Low-Grade Copper, Uranium and other Ores—20% Global Copper Production

- Spray liquid on top of crushed ore
- Gravity flow through crushed rock to drain pan
- Liquid dissolves copper
- Crushed rock 10 to 100 meters high

Minimize Container Cost By Minimizing Surface-to-Volume

Rock Pile 20 m by 250 m by 250 m or Larger (100GWh)

- 25 m by 25 m heating and cooling zones

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