



**The Importance of Charge-Transfer Interactions in
Determining Chromophoric Dissolved Organic Matter
(CDOM) Optical and Photochemical Properties**

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Environmental Impact Statement

The use of spectroscopic techniques to monitor chromophoric dissolved organic matter (CDOM) transport and fate has risen steadily, buoyed by relationships between CDOM source and optical properties. Research also shows that CDOM photochemical reactivity depends strongly on its optical properties. While these empirical relationships between CDOM source, optical, and photochemical properties represent potentially useful tools for studying and predicting rates and processes of CDOM transformation and photochemical reactions, their underlying physical basis is not firmly established. Such knowledge would improve interpretations based the empirical relationships and provide a foundation on which to refine and expand them. This review summarizes current understanding of how CDOM composition controls its optical and photochemical properties and indicates areas for further research.

1 **The Importance of Charge-Transfer Interactions in Determining Chromophoric Dissolved**
2 **Organic Matter (CDOM) Optical and Photochemical Properties**

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12

13 *Abstract*

14 Absorption of sunlight by chromophoric dissolved natural organic matter (CDOM) is
15 environmentally significant because it controls photic zone depth and causes photochemistry that
16 affects elemental cycling and contaminant fate. Both the optics (absorbance and fluorescence)
17 and photochemistry of CDOM display unusual properties that cannot easily be ascribed to a
18 superposition of individual chromophores. These include (i) broad, unstructured absorbance that
19 decreases monotonically well into the visible and near IR, (ii) fluorescence emission spectra that
20 all fall into a single envelope regardless of the excitation wavelength, and (iii) photobleaching
21 and photochemical quantum yields that decrease monotonically with increasing wavelength. In
22 contrast to a simple superposition model, these phenomena and others can be reasonably well
23 explained by a physical model in which charge-transfer interactions between electron donating
24 and accepting chromophores within the CDOM control the optical and photophysical properties.
25 This review summarizes current understanding of the processes underlying CDOM photophysics
26 and photochemistry as well as their physical basis.

27

28 *1. Introduction*

29 Chromophoric dissolved organic matter (CDOM) is the light-absorbing fraction of
30 dissolved organic matter. It can originate from both aquatic microbial sources and terrestrial
31 sources such as lignin that have degraded and dissolved; for purposes of this review, we refer to
32 these materials as microbial and terrestrial, respectively. Absorption of sunlight by CDOM
33 controls photic zone depths (1-6) and initiates a variety of photochemical reactions that convert
34 CDOM to inorganic carbon (6-14) and biologically-available, low molecular weight compounds
35 (5,15-18), affect trace-metal redox speciation (7,19-21), influence the fate of aquatic

36 contaminants (22-29), and in some instances can contribute significantly to aquatic oxygen
37 demand (30-33). The optical and photochemical properties of CDOM vary with season, CDOM
38 source, and water chemistry (2,34-41). An outstanding challenge for environmental scientists is
39 to understand these variations and predict their impact on elemental cycling and the fate of
40 anthropogenic compounds.

41 The color of CDOM comes predominantly from humic substances (HS), which comprise
42 humic acids (HA, soluble above pH 2) and fulvic acids (FA, soluble at all pH values) (42). A
43 battery of analytical techniques has been employed to gain structural information about CDOM
44 including pyrolysis-mass spectrometry (43-45), high- and ultrahigh-resolution mass spectroscopy
45 (46-50), ¹³C nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy (48,51,52), electron spin resonance
46 spectroscopy (53,54), acidimetric titrations (55-57), and electrochemistry (58,59). These studies
47 indicate that CDOM contains a variety of structures including carboxylic acids and carboxyl-rich
48 alicyclic molecules, substituted phenols, ketones, aldehydes, quinones, carbohydrates, saturated
49 and unsaturated hydrocarbons, and nitrogenous material (60,61).

50 All of the evidence suggests that CDOM absorption and photochemistry originates from
51 aromatic chromophores. However, the complexity of the mixture makes it exceedingly difficult
52 to identify the precise structures that produce these phenomena. Furthermore, CDOM exhibits
53 unusual optical and photochemical properties that are inconsistent with the behavior of
54 individual chromophores or even the behavior of a collection of independent chromophores.
55 This review summarizes these properties and current understanding of their molecular basis. We
56 advance the idea that much of the observed behavior can be explained by electronic interactions
57 between chromophores, which produce an array of photophysical and photochemical reaction
58 channels. We further argue that the relative importance of each channel varies with CDOM

59 source and environmental conditions due to varying abundance of electron donating and
60 accepting groups and the effects of solution chemistry on excited-state energies. In Section 2,
61 the optical properties are reviewed, and an electronic interaction model is introduced. Section 3
62 covers CDOM photochemistry, the implications of the electronic interaction model for the
63 photochemistry, and concludes with a brief review of correlations between CDOM optical and
64 photochemical properties.

65 *2. CDOM Optical Properties*

66 The optical absorption and emission properties of CDOM in both fresh and marine waters
67 have been investigated extensively over the last several decades. Much of this past work has
68 been summarized in a series of prior review articles to which interested readers are referred for
69 more details (2,34,35,62-65).

70 *2.1 Absorption*

71 CDOM absorption in most natural waters decreases monotonically with increasing
72 wavelength in an approximately exponential fashion, usually with no readily discernible
73 absorption bands (Fig. 1). How quickly the absorption decreases with increasing wavelength
74 varies geographically and seasonally, presumably due to variations in source as well as through
75 biological and (photo)chemical processing (2,34,35,62-65). To quantify these variations, spectra
76 are often fit to an exponential equation, with the exponent of these fits, the spectral slope
77 parameter, S , providing an indication of how rapidly absorption decreases (2,35,62-65); higher
78 values of S indicate a more rapid decline and a lower absorption contribution in the visible
79 wavelengths. Other empirical indices of this decline include the E2/E3 and E4/E6 ratios; the
80 E2/E3 ratio represents the ratio of absorption at 254 nm to that at 365 nm (66) while the E4/E6
81 ratio represents the ratio at 465 nm to that at 665 nm (62). More recently, workers have used fits

82 to other equations (67) or exponential fitting over more limited wavelength regimes (68-72) in
83 order to characterize the absorption spectra in more detail. The aim of this characterization is
84 ultimately to relate the differences in spectral line-shape to variations in source and changes in
85 the structural properties of the CDOM produced by chemical and biological processing.

86 Based on these types of studies, numerous workers have found that S usually increases
87 with decreasing molecular size (2,62,66,73-76). Photobleaching of CDOM in surface waters
88 under solar irradiation also usually increases S and $E2/E3$ (Fig. 1) (2,63,65,68,75,77-80) or ratios
89 of S over differing spectral regions (68,80), suggesting that photochemical reactions increase S
90 by converting high molecular weight species to lower molecular weight species (68,81). The
91 highest values of S are generally observed for offshore marine surface waters ($>0.020 \text{ nm}^{-1}$), with
92 intermediate values observed for estuarine, coastal and freshwaters (~ 0.014 to 0.018 nm^{-1}), and
93 the lowest values for soil HS (~ 0.010 to 0.014 nm^{-1}) (2,34,35,62-65). How much S varies in
94 aquatic systems due to differences in the source of CDOM as opposed to (photo)chemical and/or
95 biological processing of a given source material remains highly uncertain (2,35,65,80,82) and is
96 an active area of research. The possible structural basis of variations in S and how they may be
97 related to photochemical processes are discussed further below.

98 Specific absorption coefficients (62) and SUVA (66,83,84), obtained by normalizing
99 absorption to organic carbon concentration, have also been used to characterize HS and CDOM
100 and provide a measure of how strongly these materials absorb light on a mass-carbon basis. For
101 isolated HS, specific absorption coefficients (and SUVA) have been reported to increase with
102 increasing molecular weight and with percent aromaticity (66,83,84) and be larger for HA than
103 FA (62,83). Because not all carbon is absorbing, however, these parameters are far less useful
104 than S for characterizing CDOM in natural waters; one cannot distinguish between a small

105 amount of highly absorbing material embedded in a non-absorbing high-carbon background and
106 a larger amount of more weakly absorbing material embedded in a non-absorbing low-carbon
107 background. Furthermore, absorption by high levels of inorganic species such as nitrite and
108 nitrate as well as metal complexes can sometimes confound the interpretation of these
109 parameters (83).

110 *2.2 Fluorescence*

111 Fluorescence emission spectra acquired for the “humic-like” component of CDOM are
112 very broad and unstructured, exhibiting emission maxima that red-shift continuously with
113 increasing excitation wavelength (Fig. 2) (74,82,85,86). Fluorescence quantum yields are very
114 low, on the order of 0.1-2% depending on source (74,82,87,88), and decrease at both shorter and
115 longer wavelengths from the maximum value, which is usually found with excitation between
116 350 and 400 nm (74,82,87,88). Consistent with the quantum yields, fluorescence lifetimes are
117 also very short, predominantly sub-nanosecond, and decrease monotonically at longer
118 wavelengths on the red edge of the visible emission (74,89), as well as on the blue edge when
119 shorter-wavelength excitation is employed (89,90). Additionally, substantial Stokes shifts, on
120 the order of 150-200 nm, are usually observed upon short wavelength excitation (≤ 300 nm) (Fig.
121 2) (82,91-93).

122 Fluorescence quantum yields and lifetimes usually increase with decreasing molecular
123 size (74,88,94), indicative of intramolecular quenching interactions in the higher molecular
124 weight material (74). In stratified surface waters where photobleaching can take place, and in
125 laboratory photobleaching studies, emission maxima are shifted to shorter wavelengths
126 (74,80,82,95,96). Reduction of aquatic samples with sodium borohydride also produces
127 substantially-enhanced, blue-shifted emission (Fig. 2) along with a preferential loss of absorption

128 in the visible (Fig. 1), leading to ~3- to 6-fold increases in the fluorescence quantum yields on
129 the blue edge of the emission (82,97). Along with the unstructured, broad-band absorption, these
130 results point to the presence of numerous absorbing and emitting centers, some of which may be
131 due to a number of electronically-isolated chromophores while others are explainable by
132 chromophore-chromophore interactions in both the ground and excited state as discussed in
133 Section 2.3 below.

134 In addition to the “humic-like” component, distinct bands have been observed upon
135 excitation below approximately 290 nm that have emission maxima consistent with those of
136 tyrosine or other phenols (302 nm) and tryptophan (354 nm) (2,65,91). Other bands have been
137 observed that have yet to be related to possible structures (65,82). To our knowledge, evidence
138 for distinct emission bands has only been found for species absorbing and emitting in the
139 ultraviolet; as noted above, the continuous red-shift of the emission maxima in the visible with
140 increasing excitation wavelength, along with the monotonically-decreasing fluorescence
141 quantum yields (74,82,87) and fluorescence lifetimes (74,89) imply the presence of a near-
142 continuum of emitting species or states (62,74,85,89).

143 Over the past 10 years, excitation-emission matrix spectroscopy (EEMS, Figs. 2c and 2d)
144 combined with Parallel Factor Analysis (PARAFAC) has been employed increasingly to fit the
145 fluorescence spectra of CDOM to a varying number of components having distinct excitation
146 and emission spectra (98,99). In earlier studies, these components were often interpreted to be
147 distinct fluorophores (92,100), which in some cases led to incorrect assignments of components
148 to specific structures (101-103). A major assumption of PARAFAC is that all species giving rise
149 to emission absorb and emit light independently of one another, or in other words are
150 electronically-isolated (98,99). Although reasonable for the distinct emission bands often

151 observed in the ultraviolet, this assumption is highly questionable for the “humic-like”
152 fluorescence observed in the visible (see above). The complex spectral dependence of the
153 steady-state and time resolved emission cannot be easily reconciled with a simple superposition
154 of a small number of independently-absorbing and emitting PARAFAC components (74,85).
155 The central question is whether these PARAFAC components reveal anything about the
156 underlying structures producing the “humic-like” emission. While EEMS combined with
157 PARAFAC can be a very useful empirical tool for characterizing very large fluorescence data
158 sets to examine how the fitted components might vary geographically and seasonally (104-106),
159 in our view the use of this approach alone is unlikely to provide much insight into the structures
160 producing the “humic-like” emission. This information is essential not only for refining spectral
161 approaches to tracking CDOM source, but also for understanding how these structures are
162 involved in photochemical reactions and how CDOM may be modified by biological and
163 (photo)chemical processes.

164 *2.3 Structural Basis of Absorption/Emission Spectra*

165 In principle, two distinct models might explain the optical properties of CDOM, namely a
166 superposition model or an electronic interaction model. PARAFAC provides an example of a
167 superposition model in which all chromophores within the mixture are assumed to absorb and
168 emit light independently. The observed spectra thus represent a simple sum of the individual
169 spectra of the participating chromophores (see also ref. (107)). This model does not account for
170 possible electronic interactions between chromophores that could lead to altered emission
171 properties through, for example, energy or electron transfer, nor to broadened and new electronic
172 transitions produced, for example, through chromophore stacking and charge transfer
173 interactions (electronic interaction model, (74,85)). Because of chromophore-chromophore

174 interactions, the observed spectra will no longer be a simple sum of the spectra of the individual
175 (electronically-isolated) chromophores. Although evidence against a superposition model
176 continues to accumulate (see below), PARAFAC fitting is still employed widely to describe the
177 emission properties of CDOM.

178 Any optical model of CDOM must account for a number of rather unusual photophysical
179 and photochemical properties. These include: (1) unstructured, broad-band absorption that
180 extends to low energies well into the visible region (Fig. 1) (2,44,62,63,65,67,73,85); (2)
181 preferential decreases in visible absorption (increases in S) with photobleaching (Fig. 1) (68,78-
182 80) and with decreasing molecular size (66,73,74) (Fig. 1); (3) continuously red-shifting
183 emission maxima as excitation wavelengths increase (Fig. 2) combined with low and
184 monotonically decreasing fluorescence quantum yields and lifetimes on both the blue and red
185 edges of the emission (74,85,87,89,90); (4) preferential loss of visible absorption and enhanced,
186 blue shifted fluorescence with borohydride reduction (Fig. 2) (82,97,108-110); (5)
187 photochemical and photobleaching quantum efficiencies that decrease rapidly with increasing
188 wavelength and that are very small or indistinguishable from zero at visible wavelengths (Fig. 3)
189 (12,14,18,38,77-79,111-113).

190 A superposition model could only explain the low energy transitions in the visible as
191 resulting from a superposition of either highly-extended aromatic or heteroaromatic structures, or
192 highly-extended conjugated structures. There are, however, a number of problems with this
193 explanation. First, NMR, mass spectrometry and fluorescence spectroscopy provide little
194 evidence for the widespread occurrence of these types of structures in CDOM. Indeed, results
195 from ultra-high resolution mass spectrometry and fluorescence spectroscopy suggest a primarily
196 lignin-based origin for terrestrial HS and inland as well as coastal CDOM (74,109,110,114-118).

197 Moreover, numerous studies have found excellent correlations between CDOM absorption and
198 lignin phenol content in natural waters (74,119-123) and following photobleaching (122).
199 Because the aromaticity of lignin primarily derives from single aromatic rings that are
200 electronically isolated by o-ether linkages, long-wavelength visible absorption would not be
201 anticipated for lignins *a priori*. While possible oxidation products of lignins such as quinones
202 are known to absorb in the visible (97), their molar absorptivities (97) and concentrations (58,97)
203 are far too low in most instances to contribute significantly; additionally, a rather unbelievably
204 distinct distribution of quinones would be required to explain simultaneously the spectral
205 dependence of the visible absorption and the redox properties (58,97). Thus, a simple
206 superposition of the absorption and emission by lignin oxidation products in the visible also
207 appears incompatible with the evidence (97,102).

208 Second, owing to the continuously red-shifting emission maxima and monotonically
209 decreasing fluorescence quantum yields and lifetimes observed at visible wavelengths, a
210 superposition model would require uniquely that the compounds absorbing at these increasingly
211 lower energies (more highly extended aromatic or conjugated structures) exhibit systematically
212 smaller fluorescence quantum yields and lifetimes. Because no unique relationship exists
213 between the first excited singlet-state energy of aromatic or conjugated compounds and their
214 fluorescence quantum yields and lifetimes, this observation is also incompatible with a
215 superposition model. For example, chlorophylls and porphyrins absorb at very low energies in
216 the visible but can have very high fluorescence quantum yields.

217 Third, and as a corollary to the preceding point, the rapid decrease with increasing
218 wavelength of the apparent quantum efficiencies for reactive intermediate production (Fig. 3)
219 and photobleaching (77) is also incompatible with a superposition model: there is no

220 fundamental reason to expect that distinct chromophores absorbing at increasingly lower
221 energies in the visible will have systematically lower quantum efficiencies for these processes
222 (or for fluorescence). For example, porphyrins, chlorins, Rose Bengal and many condensed
223 polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (eg., perylene), to name just a few compounds and compound
224 classes, all absorb at wavelengths well into the visible but exhibit high and variable yields of
225 singlet dioxygen production. Indeed, within the superposition model the exceedingly low or
226 negligible quantum efficiencies for reactive intermediate production and photobleaching
227 observed with visible excitation would require that the individual compounds absorbing at these
228 longer wavelengths neither undergo direct photochemistry nor act as photochemical sensitizers,
229 rather unusual behavior for most aromatic compounds.

230 In contrast to the superposition model, an electronic interaction model can largely
231 account for the optical and photochemical properties of CDOM. This model proposes that the
232 optical properties of terrestrial CDOM arise in part through electronic interactions among
233 chromophores within partially-oxidized oligomeric/polymeric hydroxy-/methoxy aromatics such
234 as lignin, tannins, and polyphenols (74,85,89,109,110,116). Within the electronic interaction
235 model, short-range, charge transfer (CT) interactions between electron-rich donors and electron-
236 deficient acceptors (124,125), formed through partial oxidation of lignin (or other polyphenolic
237 precursors), are of primary importance, as they can provide an explanation for the long-
238 wavelength, near-UV and visible absorption and emission properties of CDOM. These
239 interactions are capable of producing new, lower energy, optical CT transitions (85,124,126)
240 arising from short-range contacts between hydroxy-/methoxy-aromatic electron donors and
241 carbonyl-containing electron acceptors (74,85,89,127,128). The CT model thus proposes that the
242 long-wavelength absorption and emission in the near-UV and visible results primarily from

243 intramolecular CT complexes between hydroxy-/methoxy-aromatic electron donors and
244 carbonyl-containing electron acceptors formed through the partial oxidation of lignin precursors
245 (74,85,89,127,128). Within lignin, electron donors could include phenols and/or methoxylated
246 phenols, while acceptors could include quinones and/or (aromatic) ketones/aldehydes.

247 According to the CT model, the increase in S with decreasing size can be attributed to the
248 smaller number and variety of CT contacts statistically possible within the smaller molecules of
249 the size ensemble (74,85). The increase in S with photobleaching (Fig. 1) and with chemical
250 oxidation (68,80,129,130,131) can be explained by both a reduction in the average size of the
251 ensemble as well as by the destruction of electron donors and acceptors contributing to the CT
252 transitions. In fact, the observation that photobleaching and chemical oxidation simultaneously
253 decrease $SUVA_{254}$ while increasing S suggests that destruction of electron donors and acceptors
254 is central to the loss of CT absorbance (68,80,129,130,131).

255 The spectral slope parameter, S , has also been observed to decrease with increasing pH
256 (39,56,132), particularly over the pH range where phenols are deprotonated (56,132). While
257 deprotonation of simple phenols would be expected to shift the absorption to the red by 15-20
258 nm (133), these shifts in absorption would be restricted to the UV. In contrast, substantial
259 increases in absorption are also observed across the visible (56,132). Because phenolate anions
260 are much better electron donors than the neutral phenols (134), a reasonable explanation for this
261 increase in visible absorption is that CT interactions are enhanced under alkaline conditions.

262 In terms of the fluorescence, the CT model explains the continuously red-shifting
263 emission maxima and the very small and monotonically decreasing fluorescence quantum yields
264 and lifetimes as due to charge recombination luminescence from an ensemble of low-energy CT
265 states populated by near-UV and visible absorption. Emission red-shifts that occur with

266 increasing pH (86) suggest an increased influence of CT states occurs upon dissociation of acidic
267 aromatic donor groups. The decrease in quantum yields and lifetimes with decreasing energy
268 (increasing emission wavelength) can be attributed to an energy gap dependence; at successively
269 lower CT energies, the rate of non-radiative relaxation increases relative to the radiative rate thus
270 leading to lower fluorescence quantum yields and shorter lifetimes (124). Moreover, the lack of
271 discernable photochemistry in most of the visible region (Fig. 3) is fully consistent with very
272 rapid relaxation of these states through charge recombination. Finally, the large Stoke's shifts
273 with short wavelength excitation produce emission spectra that reproduce many features
274 obtained with longer wavelength excitation (Fig. 2) (82,91-93). This suggests that lower energy
275 CT states similar to those obtained by direct CT absorption are populated from higher-energy
276 excited state donors via energy (or electron) transfer (74,124).

277 Another prediction of the CT model is that the removal of either the donor or acceptor
278 moieties will eliminate CT interactions and thus reduce the long-wavelength absorption and
279 fluorescence emission. Consistent with this prediction, partial photobleaching causes blue shifts
280 in emission maxima (80,95), which can be explained as enhanced emission from higher energy
281 (donor) species as decreasing CDOM molecular size eliminates quenching due to CT interactions
282 (74). Further, employing sodium borohydride as a selective reductant of carbonyl-containing
283 electron acceptors, namely (aromatic) ketones/ aldehydes and quinones, it has been demonstrated
284 that reduction of microbial and terrestrial HS, a commercial lignin, C18 extracts from the MAB
285 shelf and the Equatorial Atlantic, as well as natural waters alone, produces preferential loss of
286 visible absorption (Fig. 1) and substantially enhanced, blue-shifted fluorescence emission (Fig.
287 2) (82,97,108). Importantly, these observations preclude major contributions to visible
288 absorbance from compounds that do not undergo reduction with borohydride. This includes all

289 extended aromatic structures or highly conjugated structures, unless they contain a borohydride-
290 reducible carbonyl moiety in resonance with the aromatic or conjugated structure. The
291 enhanced, blue-shifted emission observed following borohydride reduction does not appear to
292 arise from the reduced products, but instead likely arises from donor species that are no longer
293 quenched after removal of CT interactions (97).

294 While quinones were originally anticipated to play a major role as electron acceptors in
295 CT transitions (85), currently available evidence suggests that (aromatic) ketone/aldehyde
296 acceptors are far more important determinants of CDOM optical properties (97,109,116).
297 Structural considerations suggest that substituted phenols are important high energy donor
298 species (74,109,110,114-118). These structural elements thus form the basis for the CT model of
299 CDOM optical properties. The optical properties themselves imply a large degree of rapid
300 photophysical relaxation via electron transfer interactions of these chromophores. Nonetheless, a
301 small fraction of excited states produce environmentally relevant photochemistry, many aspects
302 of which find logical explanations in the CT model. This topic is the subject of the following
303 section.

304 3. *Mechanistic Aspects of CDOM Photochemistry*

305 It has been clear since the 1980's that CDOM photochemistry can be an important
306 determinant of surface water chemistry. Seminal work during that era demonstrated CDOM as a
307 photochemical source of singlet oxygen ($^1\text{O}_2$) (135,136), superoxide (O_2^-) and its dismutation
308 product hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) (137,138), aqueous electron ($e^-(\text{aq})$) (139,140), and organic
309 radicals (141,142). It has since been shown that CDOM photochemistry also produces hydroxyl
310 radical ($\bullet\text{OH}$) (143,144) and excited triplet states of CDOM ($^3\text{CDOM}^*$) as important
311 photooxidants (22,145). All of these species can collectively be referred to as photochemically

312 produced reactive intermediates (PPRIs). Interested readers can find methods for detecting and
313 studying PPRIs reviewed elsewhere (146-148). Absorption of light also photobleaches CDOM
314 (149) and eventually leads to its photomineralization (40); this latter process is potentially
315 significant to the global carbon budget, though a precise assessment of its magnitude has been
316 difficult (8).

317 Figure 4 illustrates a model to explain the various reactions. Central to this scheme is the
318 lack of photochemistry occurring via CT absorbance (reaction 2) and competitive decay of
319 singlet excited state CDOM ($^1\text{CDOM}^*$) into either $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ (reaction 6) or charge-separated
320 species formed by donor-acceptor electron transfer ($\text{CDOM}^{+/-}$) (reaction 7). Much of the
321 following discussion focuses on apparent quantum yields (i.e., the moles of PPRI produced per
322 mole of photons absorbed) because that parameter indicates the kinetic efficiency of individual
323 reaction channels. The qualifying term “apparent” indicates that the quantum yields in question
324 are not primary but result from complex reaction mechanisms. For brevity, the following
325 discussion employs the term “quantum yields” with the implicit understanding that this refers to
326 apparent quantum yields.

327 *3.1 Photooxidation*

328 Photochemical oxidation of CDOM is an important albeit poorly constrained part of the
329 global carbon cycle (8,9). The initial stages of the process are characterized by rapid loss of
330 chromophores and photobleaching. Various studies have shown that phenols and other aromatic
331 components are particularly susceptible to photooxidation and are destroyed on similar time
332 scales as the absorbance loss (122,123,150-153). As noted above, photobleaching causes a more
333 rapid loss of visible than UV absorbance, which concomitantly increases S and the E2/E3 ratio
334 (68,75,77-79,149).

335 It is tempting to suspect that the mechanisms of photobleaching and photooxidation
336 involve reactive oxygen species (ROS). Indeed, in cases where very high $\bullet\text{OH}$ photoproduction
337 can occur via nitrate or nitrite photolysis (143) or photofenton reactions (e.g., low pH, Fe(III)-
338 rich waters), this ROS may play a small role in photomineralization (16). However, there is
339 little evidence that ROS sensitized by CDOM itself (e.g., $^1\text{O}_2$ and $\bullet\text{OH}$) play a role in
340 photooxidation. Support for such an idea is indirect, for example similar wavelength
341 dependencies of ROS quantum yields (147) (Fig. 3), photobleaching quantum yields
342 (107,154,155), and dissolved inorganic carbon quantum yields, which range from 5×10^{-4} to $5 \times 10^{-}$
343 3 at approximately 350 nm (40,154,156) (Fig. 3). However, there is good evidence against the
344 involvement of ROS produced by CDOM. A self-sensitized reaction would occur with 2nd order
345 kinetics, but photobleaching commonly follows 1st order or multi-phasic kinetics. Furthermore,
346 experiments designed to test for the involvement of $\bullet\text{OH}$ and $^1\text{O}_2$ in CDOM photooxidation
347 (157,158) and photobleaching (32,159,160) demonstrate at most a small effect of these species.
348 Direct oxidation of $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ with O_2 (160) does not appear plausible because current evidence
349 indicates that $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ is not a precursor to H_2O_2 (110). Alternatively, the magnitude of
350 dissolved inorganic carbon (DIC) quantum yields are roughly consistent with the extent of e^-
351 transfer indicated by $\text{O}_2^-/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ quantum yields (see below), and a link between H_2O_2 and DIC
352 production (oxidation) is suggested by the fact that both H_2O_2 and DIC quantum yields increase
353 with pH (39,156). Thus, the suspected H_2O_2 precursor, $\text{CDOM}^{+/-\bullet}$, could be an important
354 intermediate in photooxidation. Further research is needed to ascertain this.

355 3.2 Formation and Environmental Significance of Specific PPRIs

356 3.2.a. Aqueous Electron

357 Photoionization of CDOM to produce $e^-(aq)$ has been demonstrated at excitation
358 wavelengths from 250 to 400 nm using both steady-state and laser flash photolysis techniques
359 (37,111,140,161-163). The source of $e^-(aq)$ is undoubtedly aromatic groups; phenols and their
360 derivatives are well-known to eject $e^-(aq)$ from excited singlet states (125), and this behavior is
361 observed with aromatic carboxylic acids (164) and aromatic amino acids (165). Other evidence
362 suggesting the involvement of phenols and aromatic carboxylic acids is that $e^-(aq)$ production
363 increases at high pH (140), and synthetic humic acid produced by phenol polymerization
364 generates $e^-(aq)$ but not 1O_2 (162). In addition, $e^-(aq)$ quantum yields (Φ_{e^-}) increase rapidly with
365 decreasing wavelength (Fig. 3), becoming approximately 100x larger at 254 nm than at 350 nm
366 (111,162), consistent with the hypothesis that short-wavelength irradiation directly excites
367 electron donating chromophores such as phenols.

368 Early results from laser flash photolysis studies found Φ_{e^-} to be approximately 5×10^{-3} at
369 355 nm (161). However, recent work has shown that this value is much too large due to multi-
370 photon excitation (37,111). It is now established that Φ_{e^-} varies from approximately 10^{-4} to 10^{-5}
371 over the wavelength range 300 to 400 nm (37,111). Given such low efficiencies and the fact that
372 other components of natural waters such as tryptophan (free or in combined form) generate $e^-(aq)$
373 (111), it is unlikely that CDOM-derived $e^-(aq)$ has a significant environmental impact. However,
374 it may play a role in the photodegradation of hydrophobic chlorinated compounds that partition
375 into the CDOM microenvironment (23,27,166).

376 3.2.b. CDOM Radicals

377 Figure 4 shows various types of CDOM radicals being produced during irradiation. The
378 main routes for their formation are presumed to be homolytic bond cleavage (reaction 5),
379 formation of diradical charge-separated species (reactions 7 and 10), and oxidation by O_2

380 (reaction 11). Evidence for CDOM radicals comes from electron spin resonance measurements
381 and the use of nitroxides and nitric oxide as C-centered-specific and non-specific radical probes,
382 respectively (53,54,142,167,168,170-173). There have also been transient spectroscopic studies
383 of CDOM radicals produced by reaction of $\bullet\text{OH}$ and $e^-(\text{aq})$ generated from pulse radiolysis of
384 water (174,175). Some CDOM radicals are stable in the dark and are presumably semiquinones
385 (53,54,169), but others are transient and have estimated lifetimes of approximately a few to
386 several hundred μs (142,174,175).

387 There have been limited studies of CDOM radicals, so it is difficult to assess specific
388 formation mechanisms or their overall environmental significance. Evidence suggests that alkyl
389 radicals are not responsible for much chemistry; acetyl and methyl radical quantum yields at 350
390 nm are extremely low (10^{-6} to 10^{-5}) (176). This is also true of organic peroxides (155) and alkyl
391 nitrates, which presumably derive from organic peroxy radicals (177-179). Furthermore,
392 commonly employed nitroxide probes for CDOM radicals do not turn up large amounts of C-
393 centered radicals but rather react predominantly by one electron reduction to form the
394 hydroxylamine (171,176); this reaction is analogous to the reduction of O_2 to O_2^- and occurs with
395 at minimum twice the quantum yield of H_2O_2 (176), which suggests that the same reducing
396 intermediate is responsible for both reactions (work in progress). Besides production of H_2O_2 ,
397 CDOM radicals may play a role in the fate of organic contaminants. For example, CDOM
398 peroxy or phenoxy radicals are potentially long-lived photooxidants whose existence is inferred
399 from accelerated sensitized photolysis observed when probe compound concentrations decrease
400 below approximately $1\ \mu\text{M}$ (36,180,181). This effect is more pronounced with humic acids than
401 with fulvic acids (180), the former being more aromatic and having higher molecular weights,

402 which suggests that terrestrial CDOM may form radicals more efficiently or of longer lifetimes
403 than microbial CDOM.

404 3.2.c. Singlet Oxygen

405 The term singlet oxygen refers to the two lowest electronically excited states of O₂, ¹Δ_g
406 and ¹Σ_g⁺. Only ¹Δ_g is relevant for aquatic chemistry because ¹Σ_g⁺ forms with low efficiency and
407 rapidly decays to the ¹Δ_g state (182). Production of ¹O₂ by CDOM occurs via energy transfer
408 from ³CDOM* to ground-state O₂ (Fig. 4, reaction 8). Thus, ¹O₂ is essentially a probe for
409 ³CDOM* states capable of undergoing this reaction; given the low energy of ¹O₂ (94 kJ mol⁻¹),
410 and the generally high efficiency of energy transfer from aromatic triplets to O₂ (182,183), it is
411 likely that at least 30 to 50% of the ³CDOM* pool leads to ¹O₂. Besides diffusional reaction
412 between O₂ and triplets, ¹O₂ can also be formed via direct excitation of ground state sensitizer-O₂
413 complexes (182), but the relevance of this mechanism for CDOM photochemistry has not been
414 demonstrated.

415 Because ¹O₂ is a selective oxidant, its impact on contaminant fate is limited to particular
416 compound classes with which it reacts rapidly (e.g., phenolates, furans, indoles, imidazoles) and
417 to situations where it is produced in fairly high yield. However, inside the CDOM
418 microenvironment, ¹O₂ concentrations are orders of magnitude higher than in bulk solution
419 (184), which suggests that CDOM-associated contaminants will be more susceptible to reaction
420 with it. Furthermore, wastewater effluent CDOM tends to have a fairly high Φ_{1O2} relative to
421 terrestrial CDOM (130,185), presumably due to the microbial origin of CDOM from activated
422 sludge. This raises the possibility that rates of ¹O₂ reactions could be enhanced in wastewater
423 impacted streams and rivers.

424 Based on the structural composition of CDOM and considerations detailed in section
425 3.2.d, likely $^1\text{O}_2$ sensitizers are aromatic ketones and quinones, which in free solution produce
426 $^1\text{O}_2$ quite efficiently (183); it should also be noted that in samples where fluorescence indicates
427 substantial tyrosine, tryptophan or phenylalanine, these amino acids could be a significant source
428 of $^1\text{O}_2$ (186). In CDOM, the $^1\text{O}_2$ quantum yield ($\Phi_{1\text{O}_2}$) lies in the approximate range of 0.01 to
429 0.1 depending on CDOM source, excitation wavelength (Fig. 3), and solution pH
430 (38,39,108,113,130,187-189). Such low efficiencies relative to freely dissolved aromatic
431 ketones and quinones (183) indicate either inefficient energy transfer from $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ to O_2 or,
432 more likely, low $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ quantum yields (Φ_{T}). The ability of CDOM to form charge-separated
433 species provides a mechanism to explain this, as both direct excitation of CT complexes and
434 rapid deactivation of $^1\text{CDOM}^*$ or $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ to $\text{CDOM}^{+/-}$ (Fig. 4, reactions 7 and 10) would
435 lower Φ_{T} and $\Phi_{1\text{O}_2}$ relative to electronically independent sensitizers. In this regard, the increase
436 in $\Phi_{1\text{O}_2}$ that occurs with decreasing excitation wavelength in the visible and near-UV
437 (38,108,113,136) (Fig. 3) likely reflects an increase in Φ_{T} with decreasing CT character of the
438 absorption. Below 300 nm, however, Φ_{T} does not increase much (189), possibly because
439 $^1\text{CDOM}^*$ decays more rapidly by energy transfer than intersystem crossing at these wavelengths.

440 The efficiency of $^1\text{O}_2$ production also depends on environmental variables such as the
441 CDOM source and pH. Typically, $\Phi_{1\text{O}_2}$ is higher for microbial than terrestrial CDOM
442 (38,130,185). A related trend is the molecular weight dependence of $\Phi_{1\text{O}_2}$, because microbial
443 CDOM has lower molecular weight. The CT model explains these phenomena on the basis that
444 increased CT absorbance and relaxation in larger CDOM molecules decreases the efficiency of
445 $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ formation and thus $\Phi_{1\text{O}_2}$. The model explains the decrease in $\Phi_{1\text{O}_2}$ with increasing pH
446 (39,135,187) as reflecting a lower Φ_{T} due to the increased likelihood of CT complex formation

447 by dissociated aromatic acids compared to the undissociated acids; it is also noteworthy that
448 dissociation decreases Φ_T and Φ_{1O_2} for individual aromatic carboxylic acids, which has been
449 ascribed to intramolecular CT effects (190,191).

450 3.2.d. *Triplet CDOM*

451 The existence of $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ states is evidenced by the production of $^1\text{O}_2$ and other
452 photoreactions typical of organic triplets, such as energy transfer to photoisomerize dienes
453 (136,192). The latter reaction requires triplet energies higher than approximately 200 kJ mol^{-1} .
454 Estimates of the average $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ energy range from 180 to 250 kJ mol^{-1} (136,193). However,
455 the lower value derives from photo-acoustic spectroscopy (PAS) measurements, which detect
456 any species capable of generating heat during thermal decay to the ground state. Given the
457 opportunities for $^1\text{CDOM}^*$ to relax via CT pathways and the variety of radicals produced by
458 CDOM photolysis, much of the PAS signal observed in that study (193) likely did not arise from
459 $^3\text{CDOM}^*$. Furthermore, room- and low-temperature phosphorescence spectra of CDOM show
460 an emission maximum near 490 nm (244 kJ mol^{-1}) (194,195) supporting the higher estimate of
461 the average $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ energy. This energy is sufficient not only to produce $^1\text{O}_2$ and excite dienes
462 to their triplet states but also to oxidize a wide variety of compounds. Indeed, the one-electron
463 reduction potential of $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ has been estimated to be approximately 1.7 V (196), and many
464 environmentally relevant compounds whose photolysis is sensitized by CDOM show indications
465 of $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ intermediacy (22,25,26,197-201). In such cases, it is worth noting that complex,
466 CDOM concentration dependent oxidation kinetics can be observed because ground-state
467 CDOM sometimes inhibits contaminant oxidation, presumably by reducing the initial radical
468 produced by one electron oxidation of the contaminant by $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ (202-204).

469 Natural lifetimes of $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ have been estimated using both steady-state probe
470 techniques and time-resolved spectroscopy, and reported values lie in the range of 1 to 100 μs
471 (*37,109,140,205-207*). Regarding the time-resolved techniques, it is worth noting that despite O_2
472 quenching behavior suggestive of triplets, no transient signal has yet been sufficiently
473 characterized to unequivocally identify it as $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ (*139,140,205-207*). In fact, in one study a
474 transient that was referred to as a triplet was not quenched by alkyl phenols (*206*), common
475 probes for $^3\text{CDOM}^*$, which suggests that the signal was actually due to some other transient
476 intermediate.

477 It has not yet been possible to determine absolute $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ quantum yields, Φ_{T} .
478 Nonetheless, using steady-state techniques and reasonable kinetic assumptions, Φ_{T} is estimated
479 to lie between 0.01 and 0.1 (*108,109,192*). This is basically identical to $\Phi_{1\text{O}_2}$ and seems to
480 indicate that the $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ pool generating $^1\text{O}_2$ is the same $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ that directly oxidizes
481 contaminants (Fig. 4, reaction 9). This is consistent with the fact that 2,4,6-trimethylphenol,
482 which reacts rapidly with $^3\text{CDOM}^*$, inhibits the CDOM sensitized oxidation of fufuryl alcohol, a
483 selective probe for CDOM-sensitized $^1\text{O}_2$ (*208*). Furthermore, the efficiency of oxidations
484 initiated by $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ also follow similar patterns with regard to CDOM source and molecular
485 weight (*209,210*) to those described above for $\Phi_{1\text{O}_2}$. In contrast, the efficiency of phenol
486 oxidation by $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ has a pH dependence opposite to that for $\Phi_{1\text{O}_2}$ (*36*). Although this could
487 simply reflect the increasing ease of phenol oxidation as pH increases (*134*), this effect has never
488 been experimentally distinguished from an effect of pH on Φ_{T} .

489 Most evidence suggests that aromatic ketone and quinone chromophores comprise the
490 oxidizing $^3\text{CDOM}^*$. The case for aromatic ketones rests in large part on research by Canonica
491 and co-workers. Oxidations of substituted phenols by well-characterized aromatic ketones and

492 CDOM both appear to occur by an electron transfer mechanism (22,145,211). Furthermore, the
493 rate constants for these reactions follow a similar trend with phenol oxidation potential for both
494 $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ and ketone sensitizers (145). Strong evidence for ketone sensitizers is also provided by
495 the fact that borohydride reduced-CDOM samples display significantly reduced rates of 2,4,6-
496 trimethylphenol oxidation (109). However, reduction does not completely eliminate triplet-
497 induced oxidations or $^1\text{O}_2$ production (108,109). This could be attributable to quinones, which
498 are reversibly reduced by borohydride (97,109); alternatively, it could result from incomplete
499 reduction of ketone sensitizers. Evidence for quinones in CDOM comes from varied sources,
500 including electron spin resonance (53,54,169) and electrochemical experiments (59). Whether
501 $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ is ketone- or quinone-like, the mechanism for its action as an oxidant is likely e^-
502 transfer (Fig. 4, reaction 9). Intramolecular reactions of this type (e.g., between aromatic ketones
503 and lignin phenols) are a potential source of $\text{CDOM}^{+/-}$ (Fig. 4, reaction 10). Whether such
504 charge-separated species can be reached via $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ is unknown. A recent report that decay
505 rates of $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ decrease with ionic strength suggests that there are Debye-Hückel type
506 electrostatic influences on $^3\text{CDOM}^*$ deactivation, which could possibly be associated with CT
507 deactivation pathways (212).

508 3.2.e. *Superoxide and Hydrogen Peroxide*

509 The photochemical production of O_2^- and H_2O_2 by CDOM influences trace-metal redox
510 chemistry (213-216) and leads to CDOM oxidation. Irradiation of various waters with natural
511 sunlight or with comparable artificial sources (~1 to 3x solar intensities) produces both O_2^- and
512 H_2O_2 at similar rates, which depend strongly on the water source and vary widely, from 0.5 to
513 10^3 nM h^{-1} (155,217-219); in some cases, particularly oceanic waters, biological sources of O_2^-
514 may be significant (220,221). Reactions with dissolved metals and CDOM hold O_2^- at steady-

515 state concentrations of approximately 0.1 to 10 nM (217,221-224). Roughly half the O_2^-
516 dismutates to H_2O_2 (217,225), a relatively stable species with diurnal maxima of high nM to μM
517 concentrations (138,226). Because of this, H_2O_2 is a convenient proxy for CDOM e^- loss.
518 Indeed, the good agreement between estimated extents of CDOM oxidation from H_2O_2 yields
519 and DIC yields noted in section 3.1 supports this proposition.

520 Quantum yields for H_2O_2 ($\Phi_{H_2O_2}$) have a wavelength dependence closely resembling that
521 of the other PPRI (Fig. 3). At approximately 350 nm, $\Phi_{H_2O_2}$ ranges from 0.5×10^{-4} to 10^{-3} for
522 various CDOM samples (32,39,79,138,155,219). Quantum yields for O_2^- have not been directly
523 established, but given the stoichiometry of dismutation and an additional 50% loss of O_2^- to other
524 processes, a reasonable estimate of $\Phi_{O_2^-}$ is approximately $4\Phi_{H_2O_2}$. Although $\Phi_{H_2O_2}$ has been
525 determined for many different waters, no systematic study exists of its CDOM source
526 dependence. There is a reported correlation between H_2O_2 production rates and fluorescence
527 quantum yields from lake CDOM (219), which suggests that lower molecular weight, less
528 aromatic CDOM produces H_2O_2 more efficiently. However, this trend is not apparent in the
529 limited data that exist for $\Phi_{H_2O_2}$ of FA (less aromatic) and HA (more aromatic) from the same
530 source (39,110), nor is it the expected pattern based on the reported inverse relationship between
531 $\Phi_{H_2O_2}$ and E2/E3 (39).

532 The H_2O_2 formation mechanism clearly involves the direct production of O_2^- by reaction
533 of O_2 with some photoproduced reductant. At wavelengths above 300 nm, the involvement of e^-
534 (aq) can be ruled out on grounds that Φ_{e^-} is much smaller than $\Phi_{H_2O_2}$ and that e^- (aq) scavengers
535 do not affect $\Phi_{H_2O_2}$ (161,227). Furthermore, reactions between 1O_2 and CDOM have repeatedly
536 been shown to have minimal impact on H_2O_2 production (39,110,157,225). Other evidence
537 argues against a role for CDOM triplet quinones as intermediates in O_2 reduction. Recently,

538 Garg *et al.* (225) reported that DMSO has no effect on H₂O₂ production by Suwannee River FA
539 (SRFA), yet the same group demonstrated that DMSO enhances H₂O₂ production by
540 anthraquinone disulfonate (228). Additionally, Zhang *et al.* reported that halides enhance H₂O₂
541 production by SRFA, which is opposite the result expected if triplet quinones were involved
542 (110). Zhang *et al.* also saw minimal effects of borohydride reduction and triplet quenchers on
543 H₂O₂ production rates, which demonstrates that aromatic ketones do not play an intermediate
544 role (110). Rather, these authors propose that the reductant is a CDOM^{+•/••} species formed
545 directly by intramolecular electron transfer reactions of excited singlet states (Fig. 4, reaction 7).
546 Debye-Hückel theory suggests that such a charge separated species should be stabilized at high
547 ionic strength (229) and have a longer lifetime, which may explain observations that increasing
548 salinity elevates both H₂O₂ production and photobleaching rates (79,230).

549 3.2f. Hydroxyl Radical

550 Irradiated CDOM oxidizes many compounds via •OH-like reactivity (181,231,232). Not
551 all of this appears to be free •OH (233,234), so published environmental production rates, 10⁻¹¹
552 to 10⁻⁹ M s⁻¹ (235-237) may represent a mix of free •OH and hydroxylating CDOM species; also,
553 few studies have specifically isolated the influence of CDOM from that of nitrate and nitrite.
554 There is good evidence that CDOM does produce free •OH, some of which forms through
555 Fenton-like chemistry involving H₂O₂ and a CDOM photo-reductant (233,234). This reductant
556 can include photochemically reduced Fe(II), particularly in acidic water, as well as reductants in
557 CDOM of unknown identity (20,203,233,234,237,238); semiquinones are unlikely candidates
558 because they are not known to reduce H₂O₂ to •OH (239). Besides Fenton chemistry, some
559 CDOM species is responsible for direct production of at least 50% of the free •OH (233). Again,
560 the identity of this species is unknown, but evidence argues against direct reactions of triplet

561 quinones, which do not photochemically produce free $\cdot\text{OH}$ (240-242). In addition to free $\cdot\text{OH}$,
562 hydroxylations also appear to occur via some lower energy CDOM species, possibly water-
563 quinone exciplexes (228,240,242,243). Figure 4 thus shows various routes to $\cdot\text{OH}$ involving
564 CDOM radicals; these are complex reactions, possibly involving organic peroxides, and include
565 a role for water because hydroxylation and $\cdot\text{OH}$ formation cannot be eliminated under anoxic
566 conditions (144,181).

567 The apparent quantum yield of $\cdot\text{OH}$ (Φ_{OH}) from CDOM (including Fenton-like
568 chemistry) is approximately 10^{-5} to 10^{-4} in the 300 to 400 nm region (144,237). Its CDOM
569 source dependence is not well explored and is difficult to assess. Many studies simply report
570 $\cdot\text{OH}$ production rates upon polychromatic irradiation of waters with different CDOM levels and
571 solution conditions. In the few cases where Φ_{OH} is reported (88,144,244) there are differences in
572 pH and irradiation conditions. With polychromatic irradiation, Rosario-Ortiz and co-workers
573 have reported that Φ_{OH} is higher for wastewater effluent OM than HS isolates (244) and in low
574 molecular weight, more fluorescent fractions of wastewater OM (88). This suggests that $\cdot\text{OH}$ is
575 produced more efficiently in samples with fewer CT interactions. Despite the similarity of this
576 reactivity pattern to that for ${}^3\text{CDOM}^*$, there is no evidence that ${}^3\text{CDOM}^*$ is involved in $\cdot\text{OH}$
577 production. In fact, the wavelength dependence of Φ_{OH} differs distinctly from that of the other
578 PPRIs, reaching a maximum near 310 nm (144,236,237). More work is needed to characterize
579 the relationship between CDOM character and Φ_{OH} and the mechanisms for $\cdot\text{OH}$ formation.

580 *3.3 Relationships between CDOM Optical and Photochemical Properties*

581 Several correlations have been reported between the quantum yields of CDOM
582 photochemical reactions and absorption coefficients (12,185), specific absorption coefficients
583 (10,245), spectral slope or E2/E3 (15,39,130,246), and fluorescence quantum yields (88). Such

584 correlations have potential use for predicting the photochemical reactivity of natural waters, but
585 the robustness of this approach depends on proper understanding of the underlying physical
586 basis. In this regard, the CT model may offer some insight. For example, the direct correlations
587 between Φ_{1O_2} and E2/E3, spectral slope, and absorption coefficients noted by several researchers
588 (39,130,185,246) can be explained as reduced efficiency of $^3CDOM^*$ formation in samples with
589 more CT absorbance (Fig. 4, reaction 2) and CT deactivation of $^1CDOM^*$ (Fig. 4, reaction 7).
590 The inverse correlation of $\Phi_{H_2O_2}$ with E2/E3 (39) and correlations of CO quantum yields with
591 absorption and specific absorption coefficients (10,12,245) could potentially be the result of
592 enhanced rates of $CDOM^{+/-}$ formation (Fig. 4, reaction 7) in samples with higher levels of
593 aromatic electron donors. Alternatively, the correlation between CO production rates and
594 specific absorption may simply reflect the contribution of aromatic groups to both absorption and
595 CO production (11,247).

596 The correlations can also be a guide for assessing the validity of proposed pathways for
597 PPRI formation. For instance, Φ_{OH} correlates with fluorescence quantum yields (88). Given that
598 fluorescence yields tend to increase with E2/E3 and that E2/E3 correlates negatively with $\Phi_{H_2O_2}$,
599 the relationship between Φ_{OH} and fluorescence suggests that different excited states produce
600 H_2O_2 and $\cdot OH$. This would seem to rule out reaction 13 in Figure 4 as a route to $\cdot OH$. Also, the
601 observation that formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, acetone quantum yields correlate with spectral
602 slopes (15) appears to be evidence that pathways to CDOM radical precursors to these molecules
603 (Fig. 4, reaction 5) form in competition with CT deactivation of $^1CDOM^*$. Future investigations
604 of spectral-photochemical relationships using varied CDOM samples and solution conditions
605 (e.g., pH, ionic strength) should provide additional useful tests of the CT model and help
606 elucidate mechanistic aspects of CDOM photochemistry.

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611 **List of Figures**

612 **Figure 1:** (a) Absorption spectra for 75 mg/L Suwannee River FA at pH 7. (b) Area normalized
613 spectra. Untreated (black line), borohydride reduced (dashed line), photobleached for 59 h with a
614 Xe lamp (red line).

615 **Figure 2:** Fluorescence spectra for 30 mg/L Suwannee River FA: (a) & (b) Emission spectra
616 over the excitation wavelength range 335 to 495 nm, (a) untreated, (b) borohydride reduced; (c)
617 & (d) Excitation-emission matrix spectra, (c) untreated, (d) borohydride reduced.

618 **Figure 3:** Wavelength dependence of various quantum yields for CDOM. (a) Dissolved
619 inorganic carbon: solid lines from equations in ref. (154) (Mackenzie Shelf water) and ref. (40)
620 (inshore coastal waters), data points from ref. (156) (Satilla River CDOM). (b) Aqueous
621 electron: Suwannee River FA (●), and Suwannee River HA (△) with power law fits to the data
622 (111). (c) Hydrogen peroxide with power law fits visually delineating the maximum and
623 minimum trends: (●) well and pond water (138), (△) Elizabeth River, VA (155). (d) Singlet
624 oxygen with power law fits visually delineating the maximum and minimum trends: (●)
625 Birkenes stream and Suwannee River HA (38), (△) aquatic FA and CDOM (108), (■) Black
626 Lake HA and Lake Baldegg CDOM (113).

627 **Figure 4:** Model of CDOM photophysics and photochemistry. P represents an exogenous
628 electron donor (e.g., phenol or amine contaminant).

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Graphical Abstract for Table of Contents

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632 **Summary text:** A critical review presenting the case for an electronic interaction model as the
 633 basis for CDOM optical and photochemical properties.

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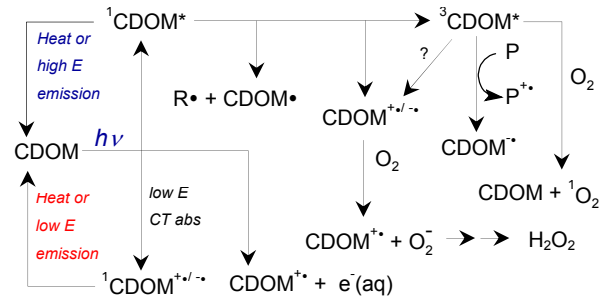
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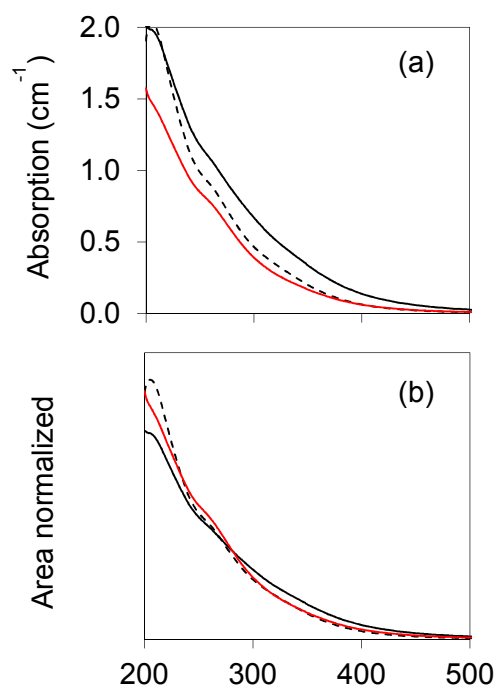
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Figure 1

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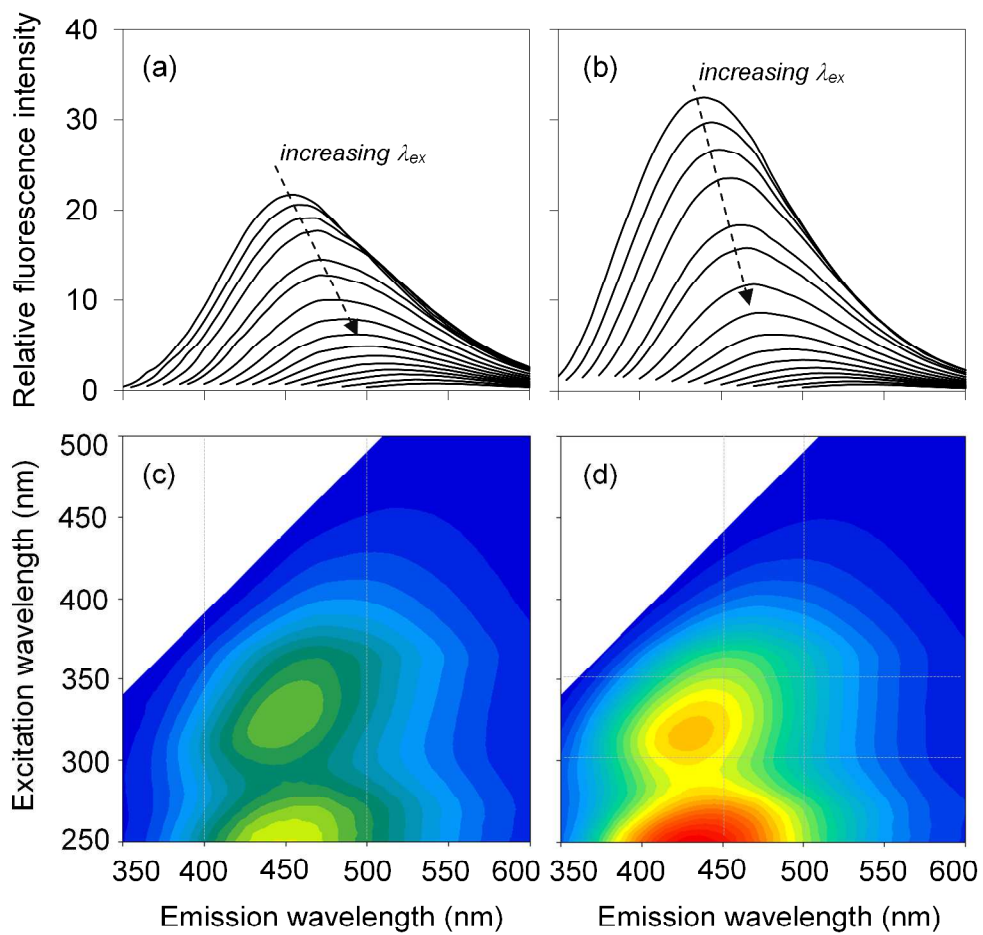
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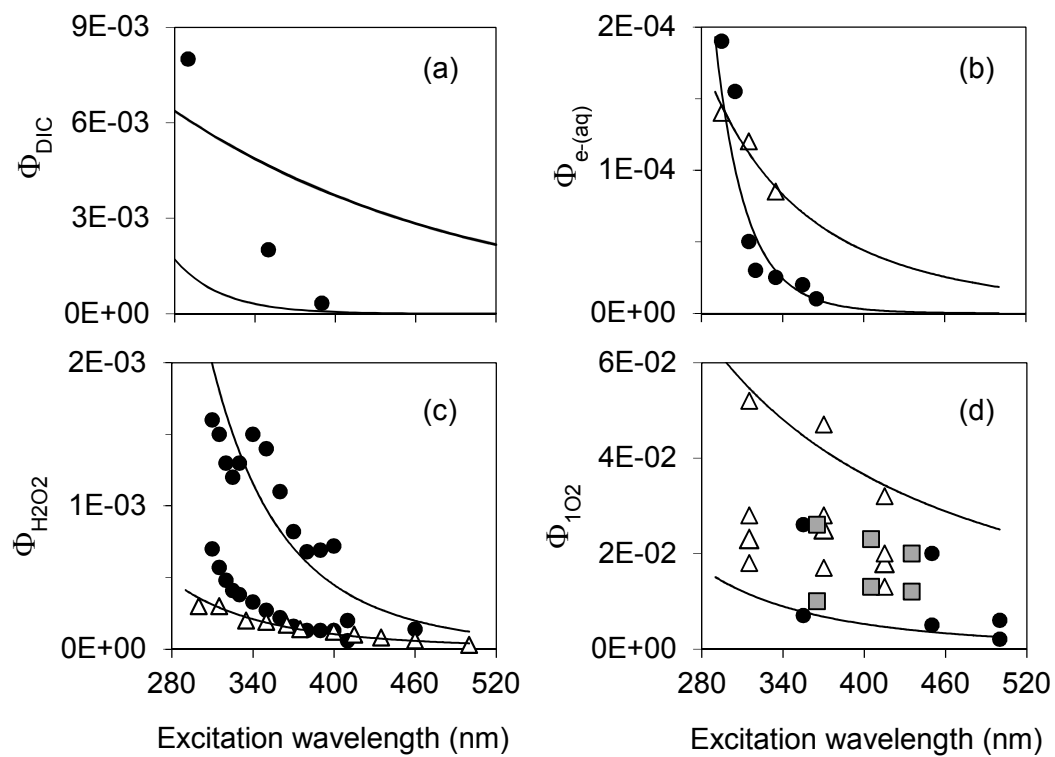
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Figure 4

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