Enhanced Decarbonation of Mine Drainage using Iron Oxidation

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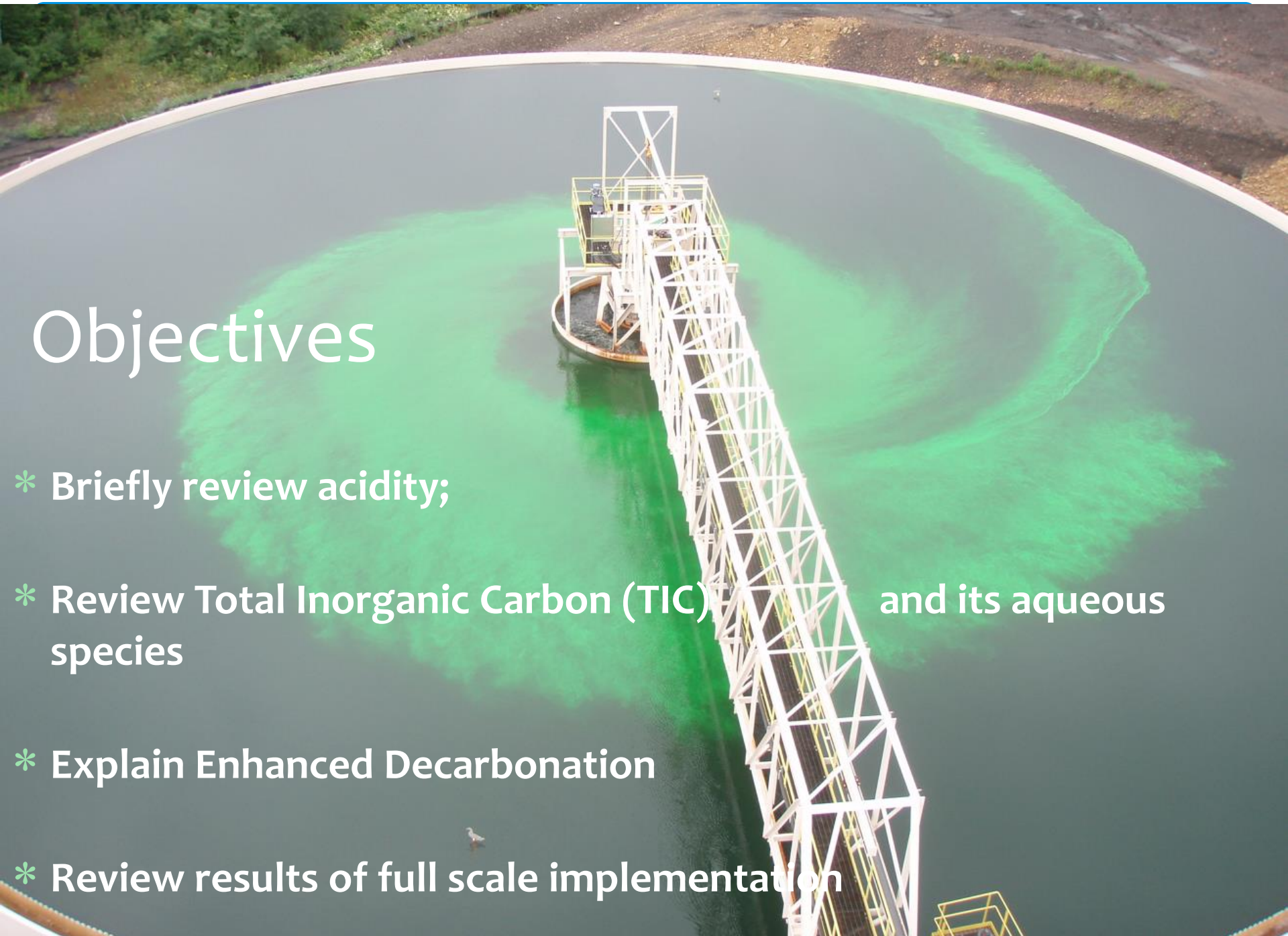
Office of Surface Mining Reclamation Enforcement

Oct. 4, 2022



Objectives

* Briefly review acidity;
* Review Total Inorganic Carbon (TIC) and its aqueous species
* Explain Enhanced Decarbonation
* Review results of full scale implementation

$$Fe^{3+} + 3H_2O = Fe(OH)_3(s) + 3H^+$$

Acid

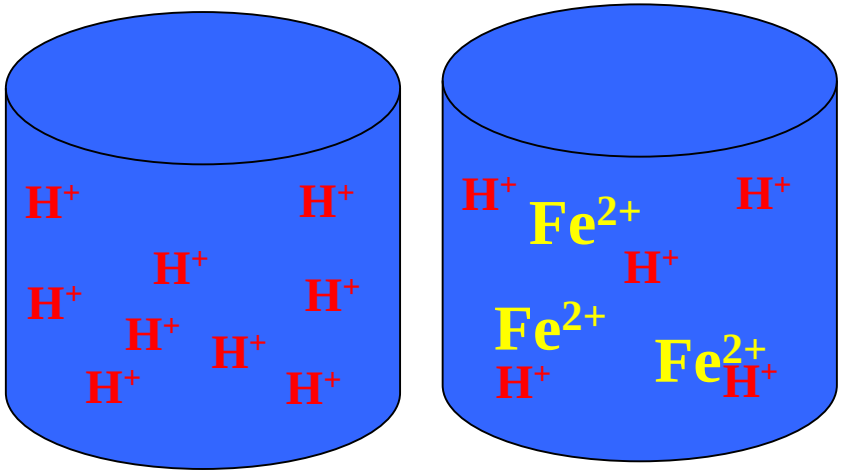
$pH = -\log[H^+]$

Caustic Soda

$$NaOH + H^+ = Na^{2+} + H_2O$$

Base **Acid**

* Bases prevent H^+ from increasing in concentration and causing the pH to drop



Three CO_2 Species in Water (Total Inorganic Carbon)

$O_{2(g)} + H_2O = H_2O + O_{2(aq)}$

$CO_{2(g)} + H_2O = H_2CO_3$

$H_2CO_3 = H^+ + HCO_3^-$

$HCO_3^- = H^+ + CO_3^{2-}$

$TIC = H_2CO_{3(aq)} + HCO_3^- + CO_3^{2-}$

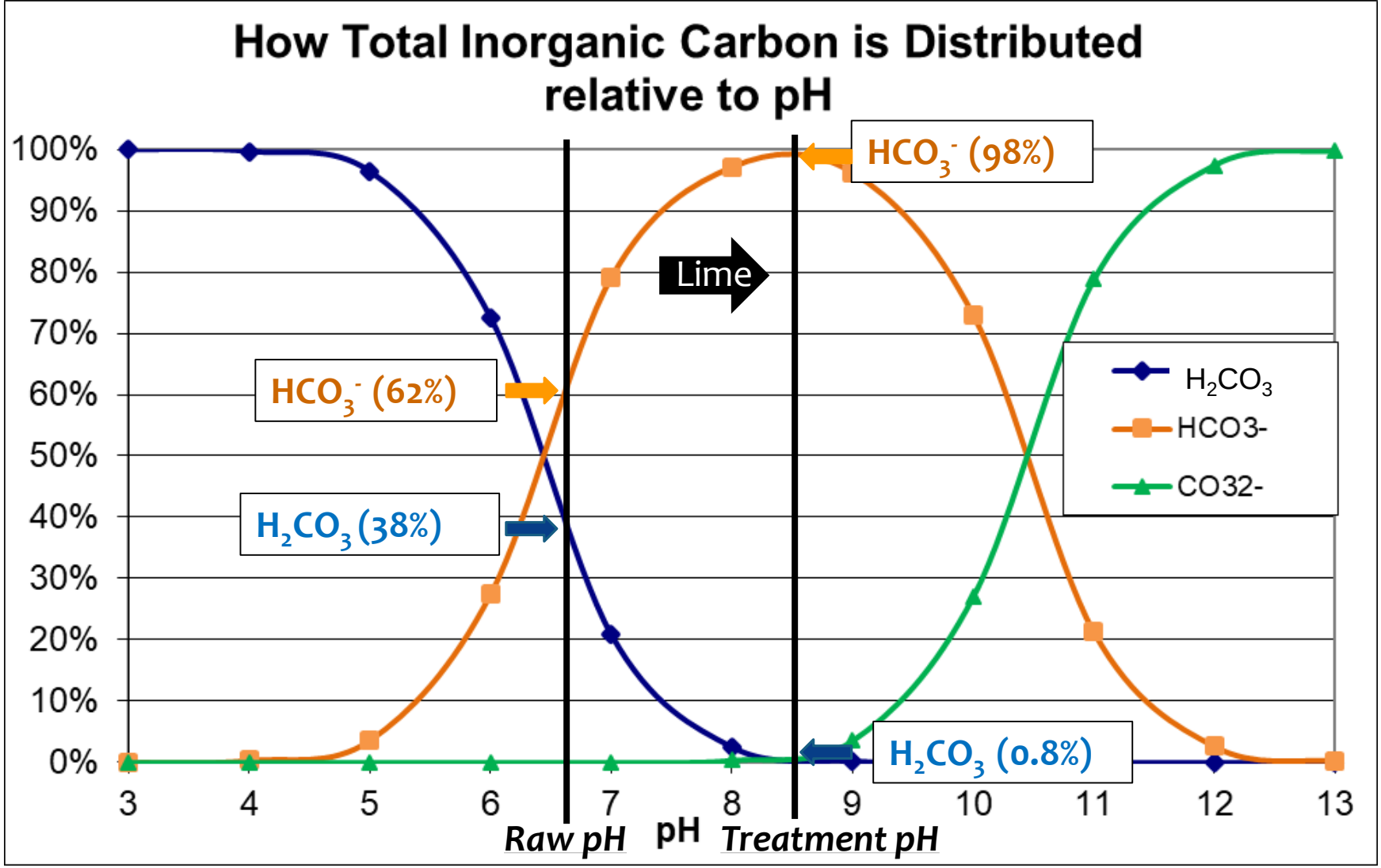
Solid Water (Ice)

Liquid Water (Fluid)

Water Vapor (Gas)

Total Water= Ice + Liquid + Vapor

Total Inorganic Carbon (TIC) is a summation of the three CO_2 species dissolved in water



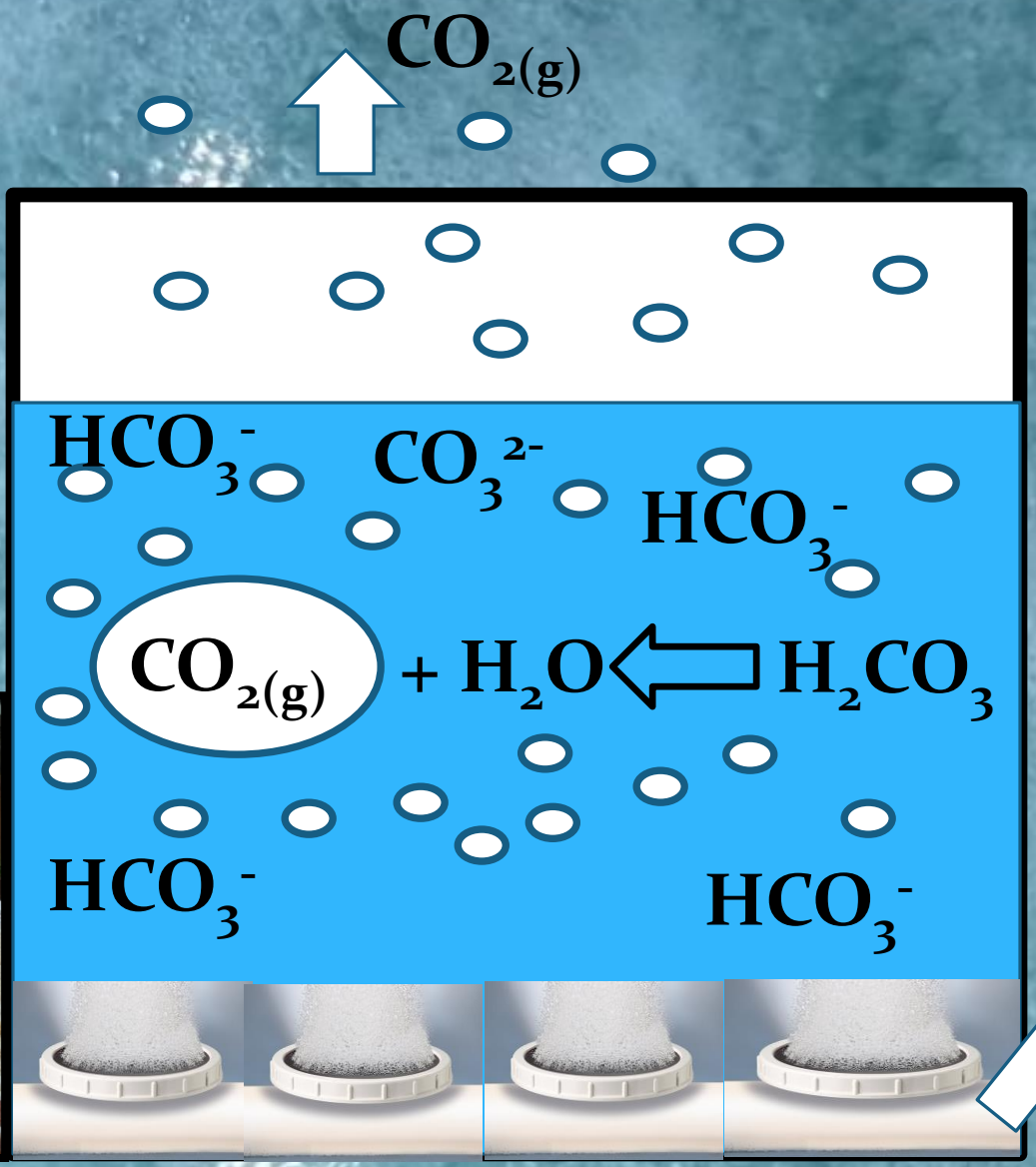
$$H_2CO_3 = H^+ + HCO_3^-$$

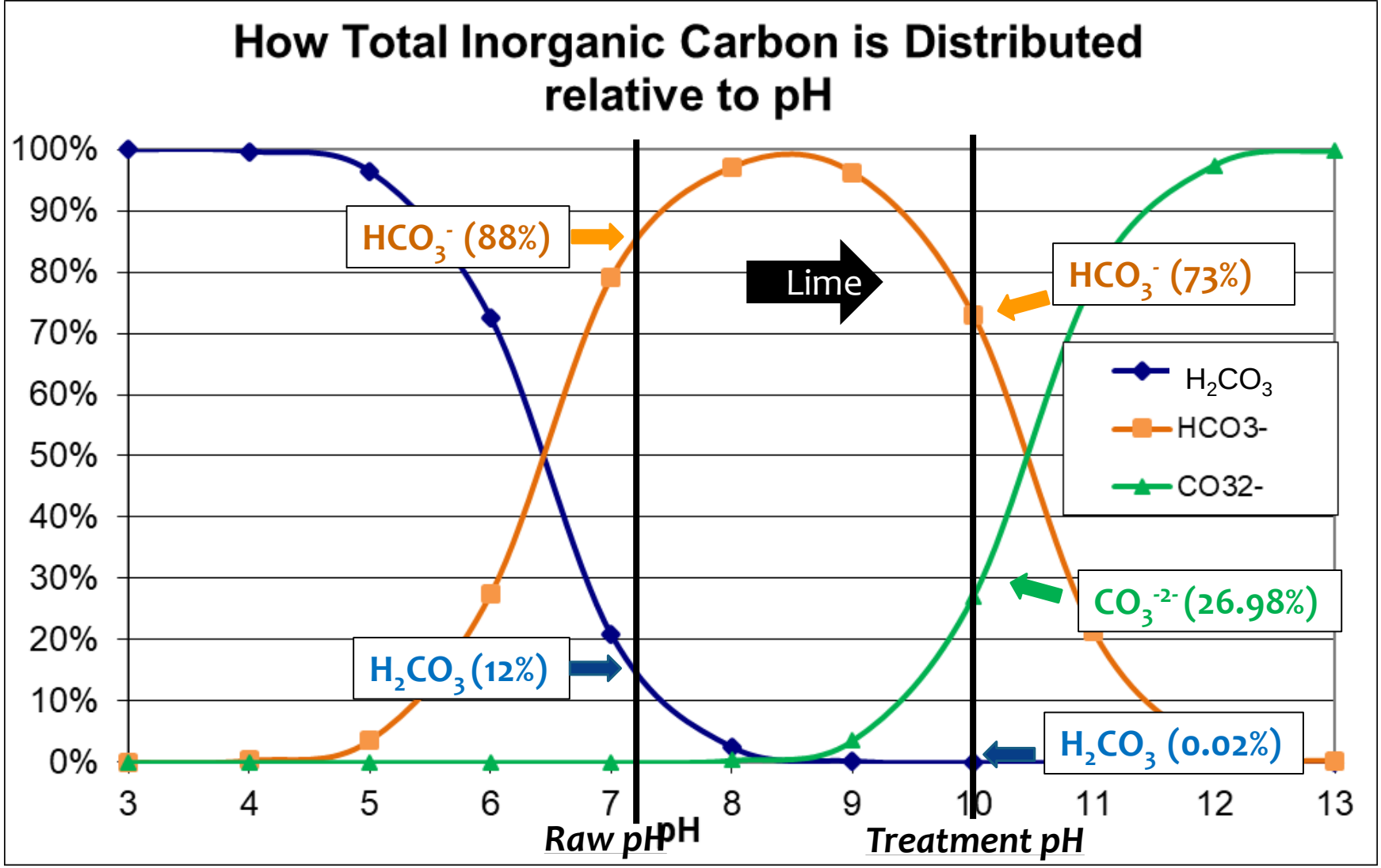
$$H^+ = Acid$$

$$2H^+ + Ca(OH)_2 = Ca^{2+} + 2H_2O + \$$$

Q: How do we get rid of H_2CO_3?

A: Decarbonation





$$HCO_3^- = H^+ + CO_3^{2-}$$

$$H^+ = Acid$$

$$2H^+ + Ca(OH)_2 = Ca^{2+} + 2H_2O + \$$

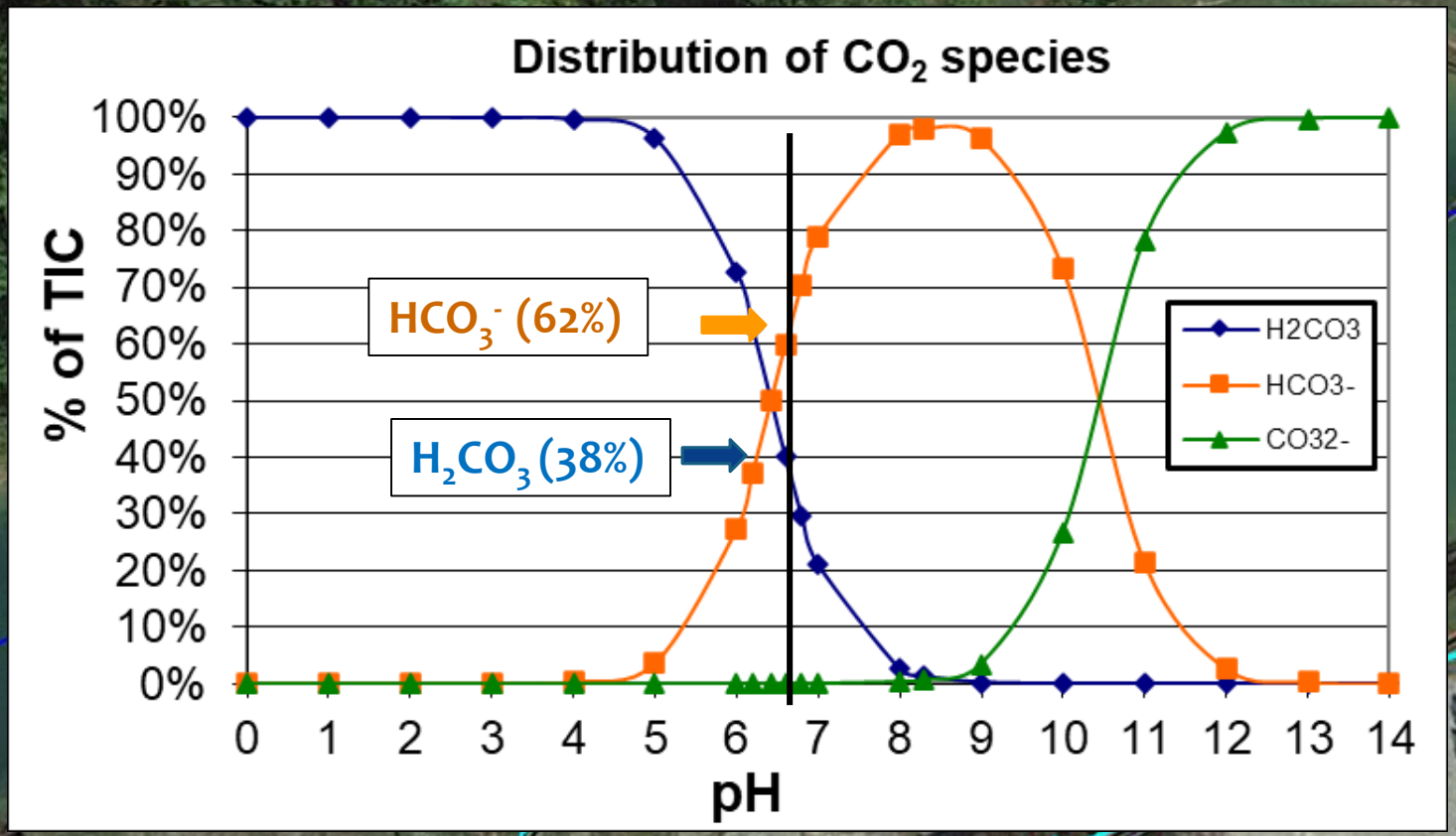
Enhanced Decarbonation

* Decarbonation is focused on reducing H_2CO_3 concentration by outgassing $CO_{2\,(gas)}$
* Enhanced Decarbonation is focused on lowering the concentration of **both** H_2CO_3 and HCO_3^-
* Two Step Process
  1. Transform HCO_3^- to H_2CO_3
  2. Decarbonate H_2CO_3

$$CO_{2(g)} + H_2O = H_2CO_3$$

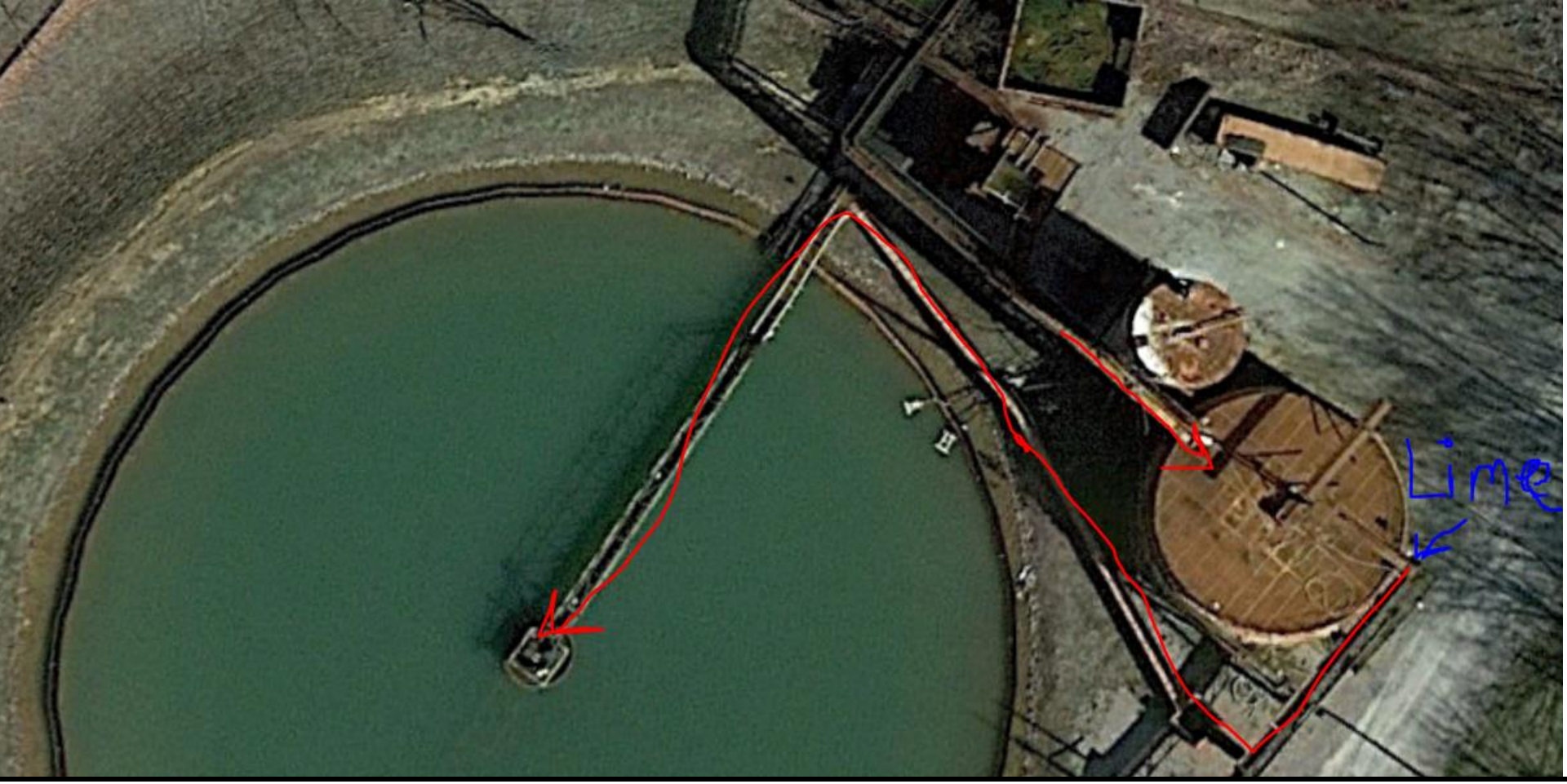
$$H_2CO_3 = H^+ + HCO_3^-$$

$$Fe^{2+} + 2.5H_2O + .25O_2 + \ = Fe(OH)_3 + 2H^+$$

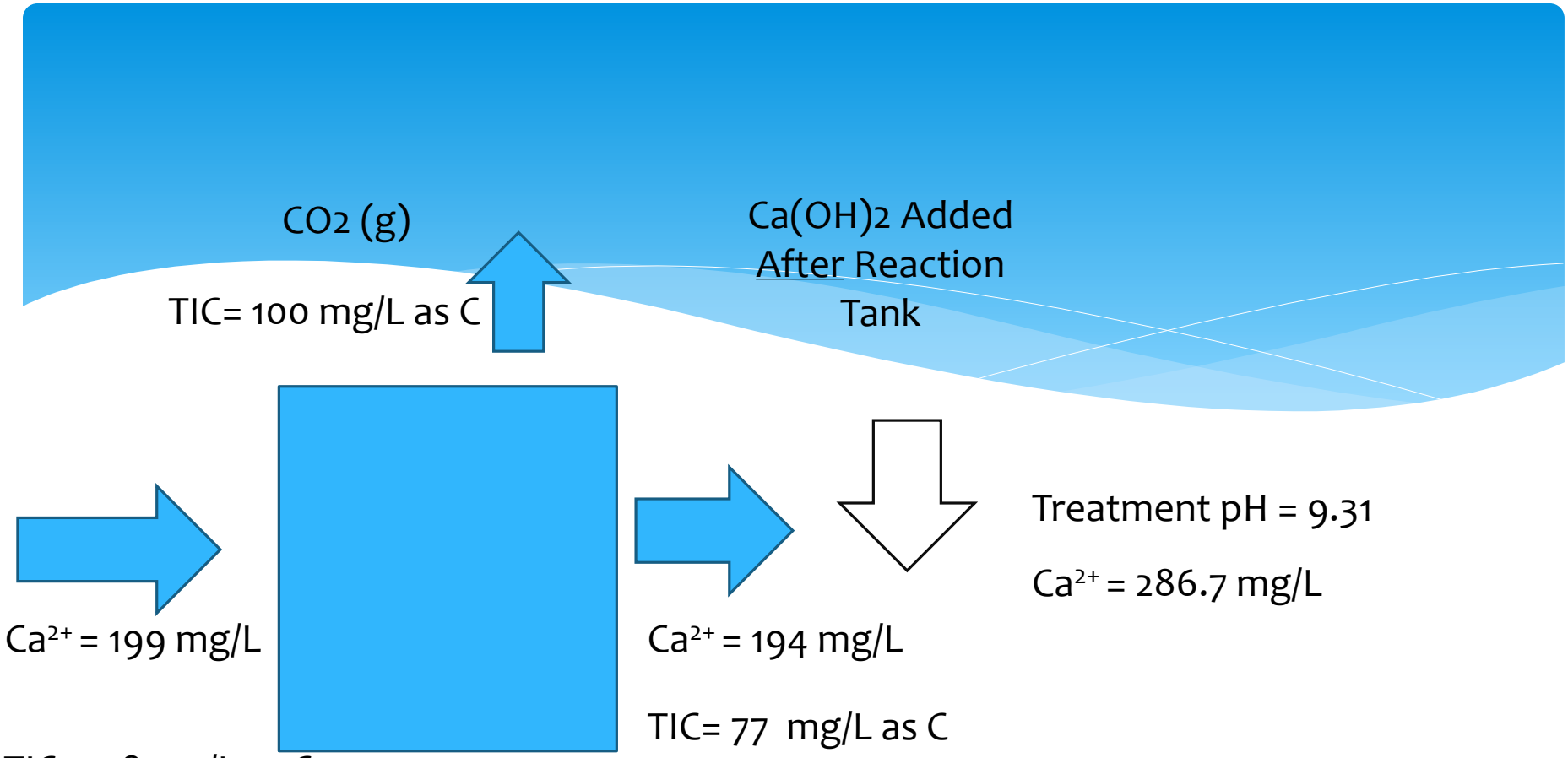


Sys. Influent 7/28/2020		
pH	6.56	S.U.
Alkalinity (HCO_3^-)	462.6	mg/l
Fe (D)	111.6	mg/l
Mn (D)	1.369	mg/l
$H_2CO_{3(aq)}$ *	69 (38%)	mg/l as C
Alkalinity (HCO_3^-)	111 (62%)	mg/l as C
TIC *	186	mg/l as C
* Calculated Value		

Existing Tank for Enhanced Decarbonation



	Field pH	Dissolved Fe^{2+}	Fe Acidity	H_2CO_3	HCO_3^-	CO_3^{2-}	TIC
	s.u.	mg/L as C	mg/L as C	mg/L as C	mg/L as C	mg/L as C	mg/L as C
Raw water w/field alk	6.56	111		69.2	109.3	0.0	178.50
Aerator outfall w/field alk	7.22	6	45.36	9.4	68.4	0.1	77.84
TIC Lost in aerator				59.8	40.9	0.0	100.66
				34%	23%		56%



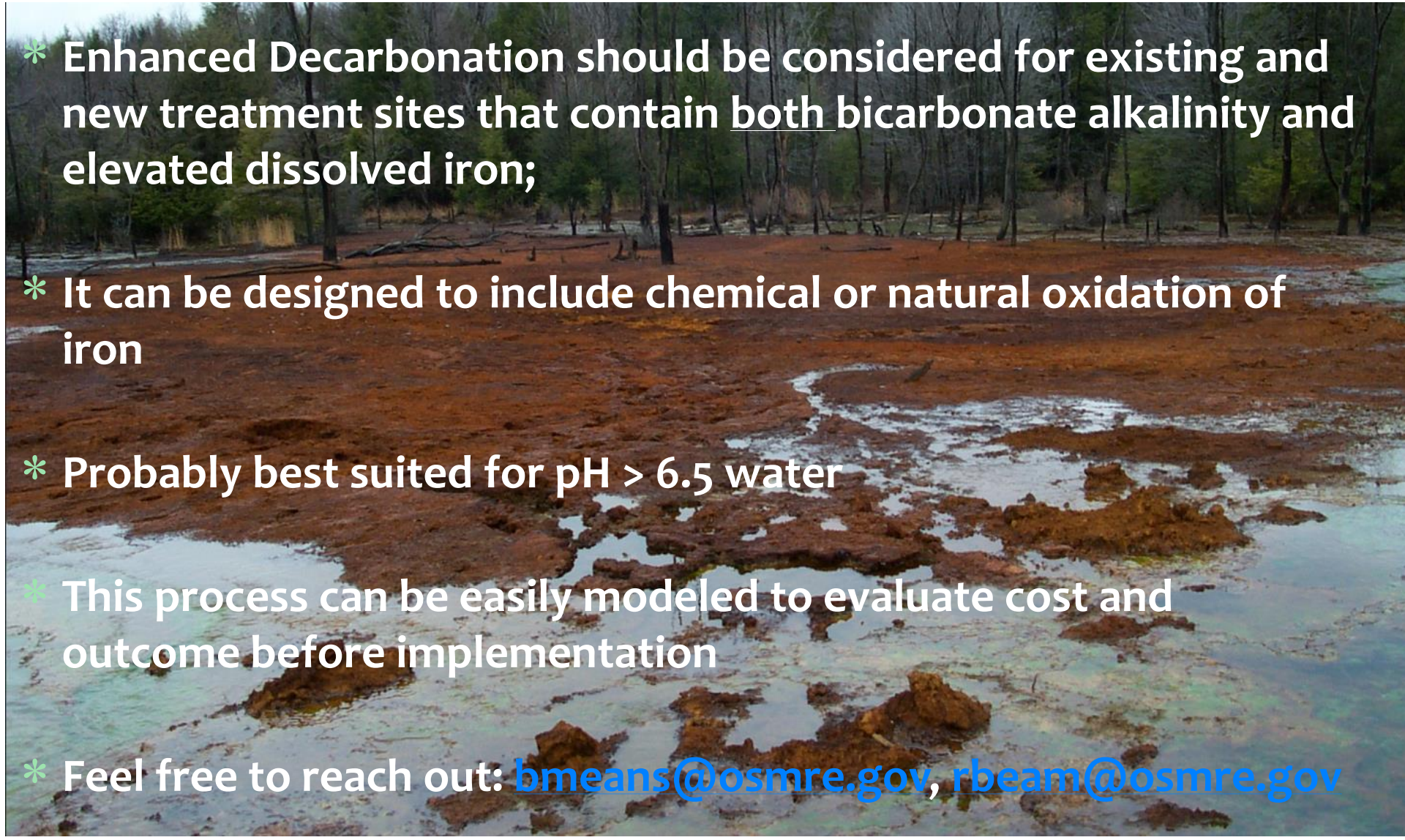
Ca²⁺ Mass Balance

286.7 – 194 = 92.2 mg/L Ca^{2+} added

92.2 mg/L Ca^{2+} = 167 mg/L Ca(OH)2 Added

~2.36 tons/day (50% reduction/annual cost savings of 60K)

Conclusion



* Enhanced Decarbonation should be considered for existing and new treatment sites that contain both bicarbonate alkalinity and elevated dissolved iron;
* It can be designed to include chemical or natural oxidation of iron
* Probably best suited for pH > 6.5 water
* This process can be easily modeled to evaluate cost and outcome before implementation
* Feel free to reach out: bmeans@osmre.gov, rbeam@osmre.gov