Problem Statement

- Dynamic wind loads can cause structural fatigue and degrade optical performance
- Previous studies have focused on the impact of static wind loads (mean, peak) using scaled models in wind tunnels (Peterka, 1992)
- Need better characterization and understanding of the impact of dynamic wind loads on full-scale heliostats

Objectives and Approach

- Perform modal testing and analyses on full-scale heliostats at Sandia’s National Solar Thermal Test Facility (NSTTF) in Albuquerque, New Mexico
- Identify modal frequencies and shapes excited by wind loads
- Evaluate impacts of spatial positioning and blocking in a field of heliostats
- Use validated models to improve structural reliability and optical performance of new “low-cost heliostat” designs for SunShot

Modal Testing & Analyses

- Installation of accelerometers and strain gauges on a heliostat at the NSTTF

Wind Testing & Analyses

- Evaluation of velocity profiles near a heliostat with 3D ultrasonic anemometers and computational fluid dynamics modeling (upstream velocity was 20 mph)

Findings and Next Steps

- Predicted and observed modal frequencies and shapes matched well for most modes
- Need to evaluate rigid body modes of rotation associated with azimuth and elevation drives
- Modes 2 (yoke out-of-plane bending ~2 Hz) and 13 (columns 2, 3, and 4 moving out-of-plane ~5 Hz) were strongly excited by wind
- Remote data acquisition and analysis system is being developed
- Peterka (1992) wind load models are being evaluated
- Additional heliostats are being instrumented and modeled to evaluate impacts of wind on structural fatigue and optics

Participants

Clifford Ho (Lead), Adam Moya, Jeremy Sment, Todd Griffith, Patrick Hunter, Joshua Christian, James Yuan, Kye Chisman, Daniel Ray, J.J. Kelton, Ed Smith, Cheryl Ghanbari, Kaye Martin, Chuncheng Zang (visiting scholar)

References