

## Origin and fate of natural H<sub>2</sub> occurrences in a saline sedimentary aquifer

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As part of research on new clean and durable energy sources, we intend to understand the H<sub>2</sub> formation and consumption mechanisms in terrestrial environments. Natural occurrences of H<sub>2</sub> have been extensively studied in environments such as mid-ocean ridges and ophiolites where oxidation of ferrous iron is believed to play a key role in the production of H<sub>2</sub>. Natural H<sub>2</sub> also occurs in intracratonic contexts [1-4] and the role of Fe in this geological settings is not yet understood.

In Eastern Kansas, few wells were reported to produce H<sub>2</sub>, with the presence of gabbro and iron-rich sediments in the vicinity<sup>[3],[4]</sup>. A moderately deep well (450 m) gives access to a groundwater saline aquifer loaded with dissolved H<sub>2</sub>. Water displays a neutral pH, with a high Fe content (1.2 mM), comparable to the Pavin lake or the Mississippian Dome Salt aquifer. In these aspects, this water greatly differs from waters associated with H<sub>2</sub> in ophiolitic contexts. H<sub>2</sub>, N<sub>2</sub> and CH<sub>4</sub> are, however, the major dissolved gas species, similarly to ophiolitic contexts. In the intracratonic context studied here, in addition to these major gases, He from crustal origin is measured at the percent level.

We could demonstrate that H<sub>2</sub> has a much deeper origin than the aquifer studied. Moreover, the data suggest strong consumption of H<sub>2</sub> in the aquifer sampled by the well, possibly due to ferric iron reduction. We propose several models/pathways to explain the origin and fate of H<sub>2</sub> in this intracratonic setting, mostly based on the redox reactions of iron that could happen both in crust and sediments.

[1] B. Sherwood Lollar et al., *Nature*, vol. **516**, no. 7531, pp. 379–382, 2014. [2] N. V. Larin et al., *Nat. Resour. Res.*, 2014. [3] R. M. J. Coveney et al., *Am. Assoc. Pet. Geol. Bull.*, vol. **71**, no. 1, pp. 39–48, 1987. [4] K. D. Newell et al., *Nat. Resour. Res.*, vol. **16**, no. 3, pp. 277–292, 2007.