



Source: Blue Origin [35]

# Rocket Propulsion Capstone Team 3

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# Project Description

Create a propulsion system for a high-power level 2 rocket:

- Develop a unique Ammonium Perchlorate Composite Propellant (APCP)
- Create casing for rocket motor
- Design rocket nozzle
- Create two small scale rockets for testing
- Optimize rocket motor

Create a test stand to gather thrust data during testing

- Ensure safe and accurate data gathering
- Collaborate with an Electrical Engineering capstone team

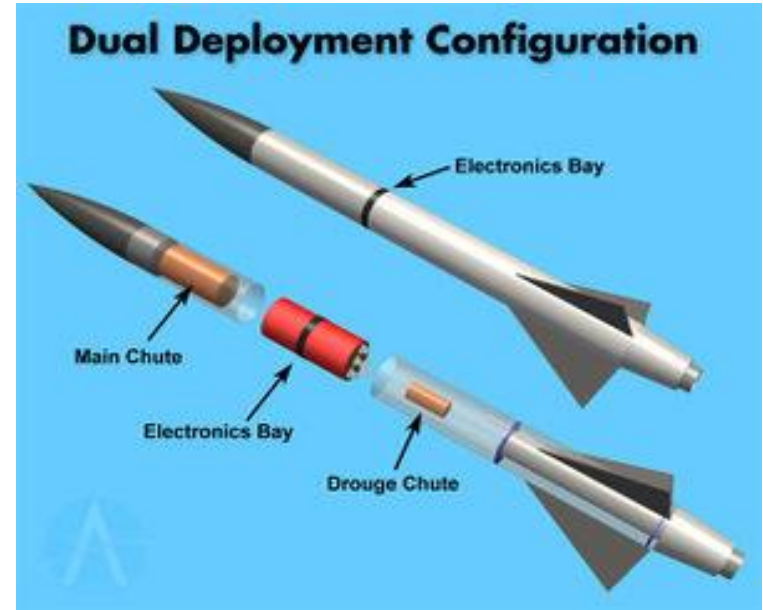


Figure 1: Rocket Diagram  
Source: Stanford SSI [36]

# Project Purpose

- Assist with future projects of the NAU Rocket Club
- Research and develop new formulas for rocket propellants
- Assist in development of aerospike nozzle design
- Gain an understanding of rocket propellant design and experience in the field of aerospace

## Funding and Sponsorships:

- A budget of \$2000 has been provided for the project
- Our teams GoFundMe has raised \$300 thus far



Figure 2: Rocket Launch  
Source: Canadian Association of Rocketry [37]

# Background and Benchmarking – Test Stands

## Aerocon Systems Horizontal/Vertical Test Stand

### Pros (Figure 3.):

- Various ring sizes for different motors
- Affordable - ~\$600 with all the clamps

### Cons:

- Aluminum body offers low melting temperature which is not ideal for this application
- No measurement for impulse which requires more tools



Figure 3: Test Stand 1  
Source: [29]

## FUTEK | Rocket Engine Thrust Measurement Stand

### Pros (Figure 4.):

- Incredibly sturdy, made from steel and formed sheet metal
- Multi-axis sensors, load cell and wireless capabilities allows for safe operation

### Cons:

- Work order required to purchase, not readily available, long lead times
- Single load cell ~\$6,000, with four of them, this is 12 times our budget

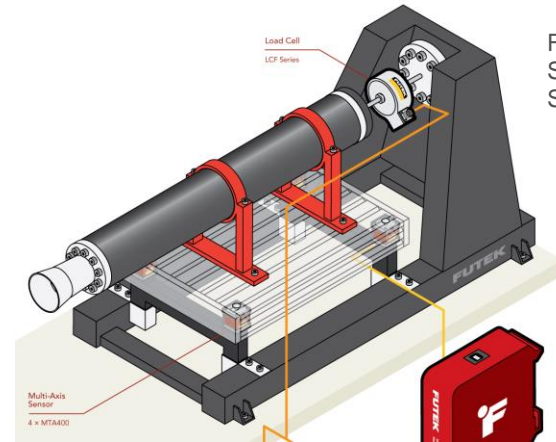


Figure 4: Test Stand 2  
Source: [30]

# Background and Benchmarking – Test Stand

Richard Nakka's STS-5000 Static Test Stand for Rocket Motors  
Pros (Figure 5.):

- Vertical orientation allows for realistic firing position
- Materials are cheap and the system is simple

Cons:

- Not available for purchase, requires the customer to buy the parts separate and build
- Design is very improvised and most likely will not take the forces we are dealing with

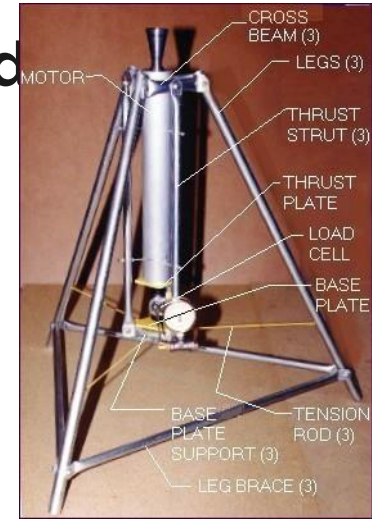


Figure 5: Test Stand 3  
Source: [31]

AeroTech RMS 75/1280 Motor

Pros (Figure 6.):

- Follows safety standards set by manufacturer's
- Fulfills size requirements

Cons:

- Not affordable- Costs about \$500
- Not in accordance with the Tripoli Rocket Level system



Figure 6: 1280 Motor  
Source: [32]

# Background and Benchmarking- Propulsion System

Aerotech High-Power M1350W-P 75mm

Pros (Figure 7.):

- Complies with all Tripoli standards
- Fulfills size requirements

Cons:

- Not affordable- Costs about \$800
- Requires level 3 certification to purchase



Figure 7: 1350 Motor  
Source: [33]

Aerotech High-Power L875DM-PS 75mm

Pros (Figure 8.):

- Requires level 2 certification to purchase
- Fulfills size requirements

Cons:

- Not affordable- Costs about \$800
- Requires purchasing additional tools to adjust



Figure 8: L875 Motor  
Source: [34]

# Customer Requirements

- Functionality – Fulfills the major engineering requirements
- Cost – Designate allowed expenditures for each category to remain under \$2000 + 10% from fundraising
- On-time – Need to be able to get the deliverables in the required amount of time
- Scalable – Design to test smaller, safer rockets first
- Compliance – Comply to Tripoli Rocketry Association Safety Standard



Figure 9: Falcon Heavy  
Source: SpaceX Falcon Heavy [38]



# Engineering Requirements

## Rocket Propulsion:

- Reach altitude of 10-15 kilometers
- Design a solid rocket propellant formula
- Create test stand which can resist the forces of the rockets thrust
- Motor that is between 28-38mm in diameter and able to be scaled up to a full-size 75mm shell
- Within Tripoli Rocketry Association (TRA) safety standards
- Completed by February-March 2024

## Test Stand:

- Able to withstand 5120 Newton-Seconds of impulse

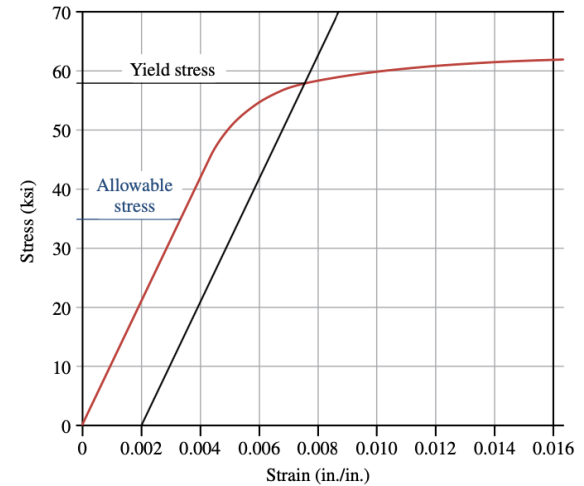


Figure 10:  
Allowable  
Stress  
Source:

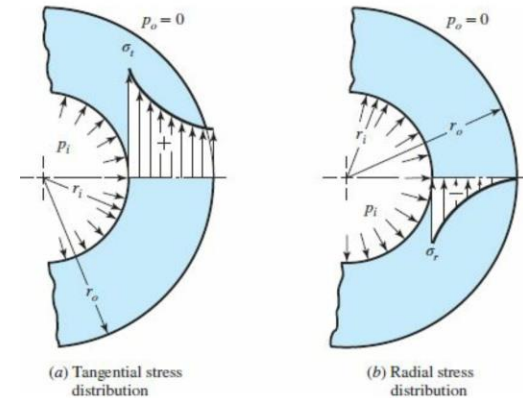


Figure 11:  
Pressurized  
Cylinder  
Source:





# A Literature Review: Nozzles

## Textbooks:

- [1] Rocket Propulsion Elements, Ninth Edition
  - Performance values, correction factors, phenomena and losses, boundary layers, multiphase flow.
  - Equations that account for variable thrust
- [2] Fluid Mechanics
  - Compressible flow through converging and diverging nozzles
  - Shockwave propagation through a compressible fluid, and how they travel through nozzles

## Scholarly Articles:

- [3] Short Nozzles Design for Real Gas Supersonic Flow Using the Method of Characteristics
  - Explains the process of using method of characteristics (MOC) to develop a nozzle of the shortest possible length
  - Explains the process of MOC with axisymmetric and planar nozzles, as well as ideal vs. real gases.
- [4] Design and Optimization of Aerospike Nozzle Using CFD
  - Explains how to design an aerospike nozzle using computational fluid dynamics (CFD)
  - Provides info on how MOC and CFD can be used together for design optimization
- [5] Effects of Nozzle Throat and Combustion Chamber Design Variables on Divergent Portion of the Nozzle
  - Explains the importance of material strength of nozzles showing calculations performed using finite element analysis (FEA)
  - Explains how combustion chamber conditions/converging portion of nozzle affect the geometry of the diverging section of the nozzle

## Online Sources:

- [6] <https://www.grc.nasa.gov/WWW/K-12/airplane/shortp.htm> (Propulsion Index)
  - Information/animations explaining thrust equations, atmospheric conditions, and thermodynamics.
- [7] <https://ntrs.nasa.gov/api/citations/19770009539/downloads/19770009539.pdf> (NASA Standard Atmosphere)
  - Provides equations for atmospheric conditions of pressure and temperature at different altitudes
  - Will help with calculating rocket performance

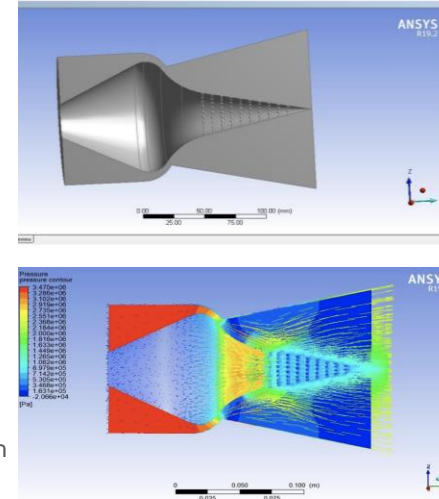


Figure 13: Pressure Plot  
Aerospike Nozzle  
Source: Aerospike  
Nozzles [42]

# A Literature Review: Test Stand and Motor Casing

## Scholarly Articles

- [8] "Design and analysis of composite rocket motor casing"
  - Compares Carbon Fibers and Epoxy's for motor casing material
  - Provides formulas for calculations of material analysis
- [9] "Design and structural analysis of solid rocket motor casing hardware used in aerospace applications"
  - Provides equations for calculating thickness of motor casing
  - Analyzes rocket design to determine factor of safety
- [10] "Nondestructive Testing of High-Strength Steel Rocket Motor Cases"
  - Crack propagations
  - Testing of motor cases

## Textbooks

- [11] Shigley's Mechanical Engineering Design
  - Describes formulas for stresses in pressurized cylinders
  - Assists with calculations for determining factor of safety
- [12] Mechanics of Materials
  - Analysis of the all materials
  - Choose materials based on the calculated forces

## Online Sources

- [13] NASA's "Rocket Laboratory Safety and Design Manual"
  - Discusses procedures for safety precautions before test flights
  - Discusses health hazards for certain chemicals typically involved in rocket assemblies and propellants
- [14] "Rocket Safety Plan Template For Recreational Use or for Academic and Outreach Classes"
  - Provides a safety checklist which can be modified for our specific testing procedure
  - Discusses required roles for the team during test flight

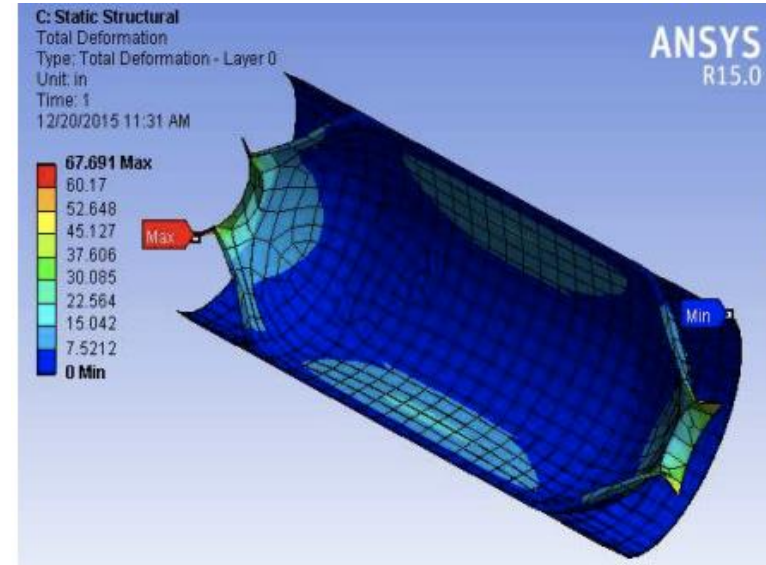


Figure 14: Casing Structural Analysis  
Source: Carbon Epoxy IM10/8552 composite [8]

# A Literature Review: Test Stand and Propellant

## Textbooks:

- [15] Solid Propellant Chemistry, Combustion, and Motor Interior Ballistics (Volume 185)
  - Depicts the decomposition of pure Ammonium Perchlorate as well as the mixtures of the different possible mixtures
- [16] Fundamentals of Aerodynamics, Sixth Edition
  - Gives the fundamentals and important equations for flow in air as well as the compressibility effects

## Scholarly Articles:

- [17] Ammonium Perchlorate Composite Basics
  - Gives fundamental equations for the combustion and measurements of the rocket
  - Grain geometries and their associated burn curves
- [18] Combustion of Solid Propellants
  - Gives various chemical properties of rocket chemicals like Ammonium Perchlorate, atomized aluminum, and resins
- [19] Ammonium Perchlorate as an Effective Additive for Enhancing the Combustion and Propulsion Performance of Al/CuO Nanothermites
  - Tests different Ammonium Perchlorate mixture compositions and graphs what the different displacements are.

## Online Sources:

- [20] APCP Solid Propulsion Development
  - Insight on test stands and associated safety precautions that should be taken
- [21] Solid Rocket Boosters
  - Describes how the Solid Rocket Boosters on the Space Shuttle were chemically composed
  - "16% Atomized aluminum powder (fuel), 69.8% Ammonium perchlorate (oxidizer), 0.2% Iron oxide powder (catalyst), 12% Polybutadiene acrylic acid acrylonite (binder), 2% Epoxy curing agent" (NASA)

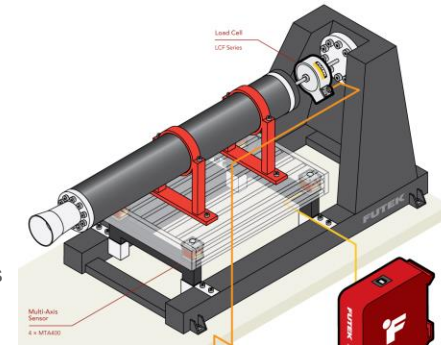


Figure 15: Test Stand  
Source: [30]

# A Literature Review: Propellant

Figure 16: Propulsion  
Source: Solid Propulsion Development [28]

## Books:

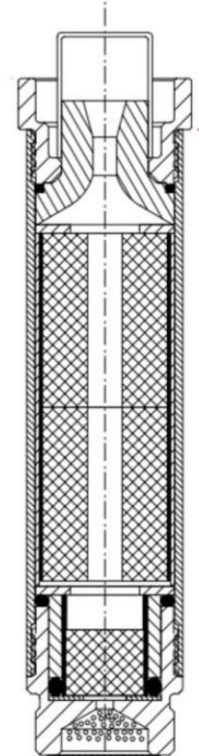
- [22] Interactive General Chemistry
  - Covers basic chemistry concepts that will be helpful when thinking about the propellant composition
- [23] Experimental Composite Propellant
  - Goes into depth about creating solid propellant
  - Contains a list of recommended minimum safety standards for propellant creation

## Scholarly Papers:

- [24] Review on Typical Ingredients for Ammonium Perchlorate Based Solid Propellant
  - Discusses the different ingredients that can be used for the components of solid rocket propellant
  - Solid propellant is made binder, metal fuel, oxidizer, and additives
- [25] Additive manufacturing of ammonium perchlorate composite propellant with high solids loadings
  - Goes over a procedure for additive manufacturing of rocket propellant
  - Also covers the effects of voids in propellant on the burn rate
- [26] Size and Shape of Ammonium Perchlorate and their Influence on Properties of Composite Propellant
  - Goes over their experimental set up and procedure for creating different composite propellants

## Online Sources:

- [27] Tripoli Rocketry Association Safety Code
  - Section 7- General Range Operation Rules
  - Contains info on rocket construction, stability, and more
  - Section 10- Motor Limitations
- [28] APCP Solid Propulsion Development
  - Details how students at Penn State built their rocket test stand and rocket propulsion system



# Engineering Tools: Burnsim

- Simulated thrust curve data
- May alter the fuel grain geometry to produce burns that are progressive, regressive

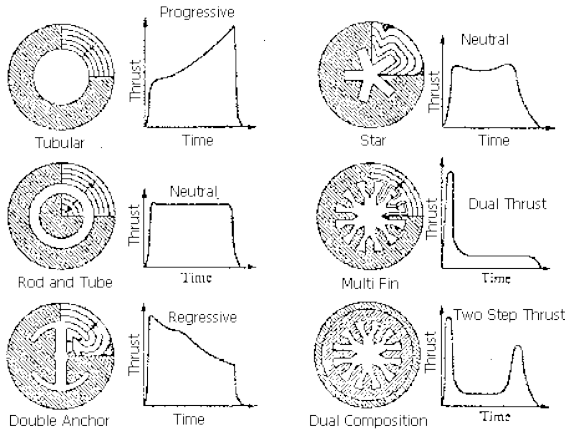


Figure 17: Grain Geometry  
Source: Nakka Rocketry [31]

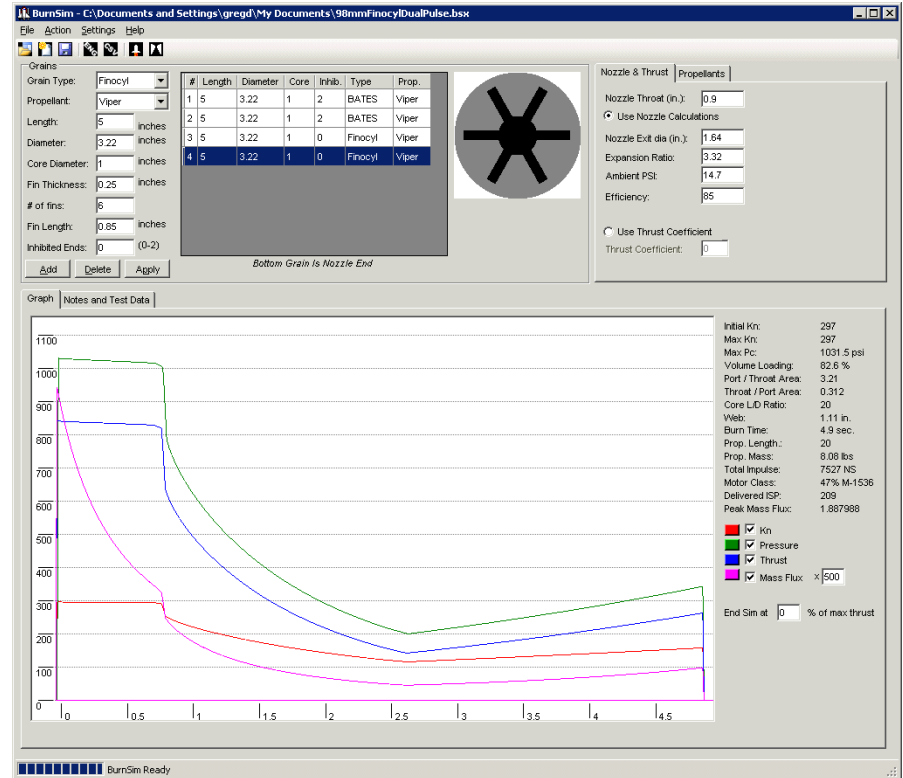


Figure 18: Burnsim Test  
Source: Burnsim.com [43]

# Engineering Tools: Rocksim

- Simulates aspects of rocket performance such as maximum altitude, velocity, acceleration, flight time, stability margin, etc.
- May use this program to identify how much total impulse and average thrust our motor must have

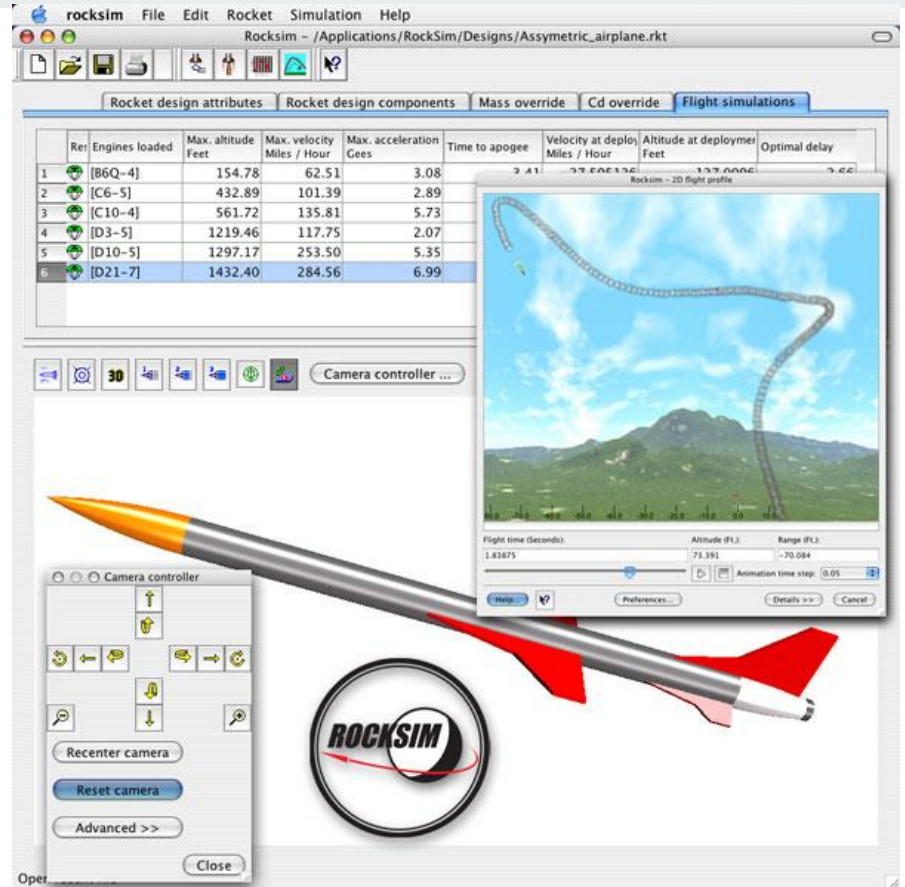
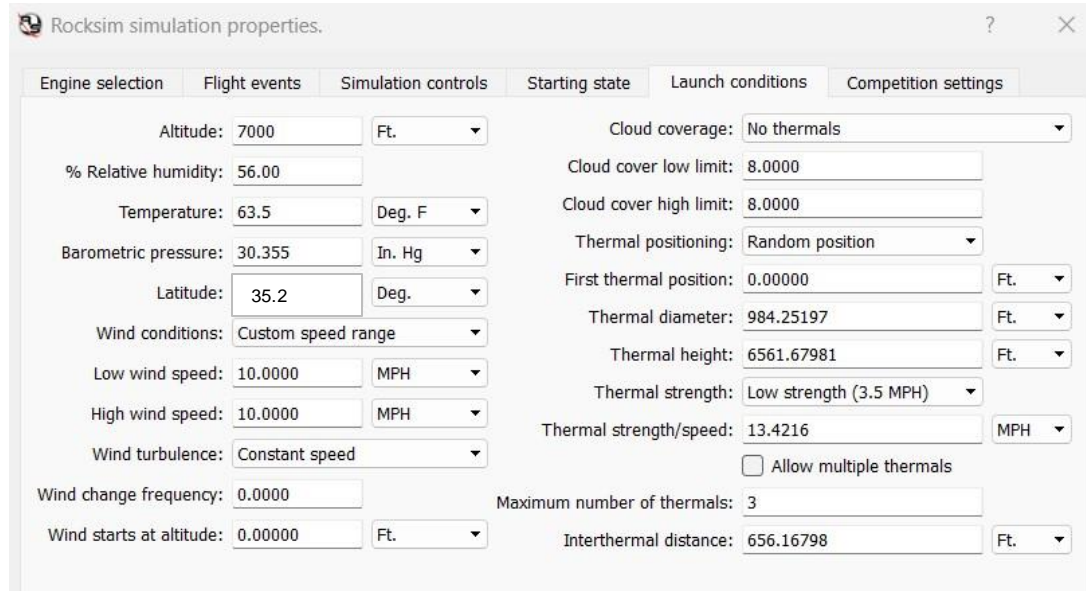


Figure 19: Rocksim Test  
Source: Apogee Rockets [44]



# Mathematical Modeling: Rocksim



Rocksim simulation properties.

Engine selection Flight events Simulation controls Starting state Launch conditions Competition settings

Altitude: 7000 Ft. Cloud coverage: No thermals

% Relative humidity: 56.00 Cloud cover low limit: 8.0000

Temperature: 63.5 Deg. F Cloud cover high limit: 8.0000

Barometric pressure: 30.355 In. Hg Thermal positioning: Random position

Latitude: 35.2 Deg. First thermal position: 0.00000 Ft.

Wind conditions: Custom speed range Thermal diameter: 984.25197 Ft.

Low wind speed: 10.0000 MPH Thermal height: 6561.67981 Ft.

High wind speed: 10.0000 MPH Thermal strength: Low strength (3.5 MPH)

Wind turbulence: Constant speed Thermal strength/speed: 13.4216 MPH

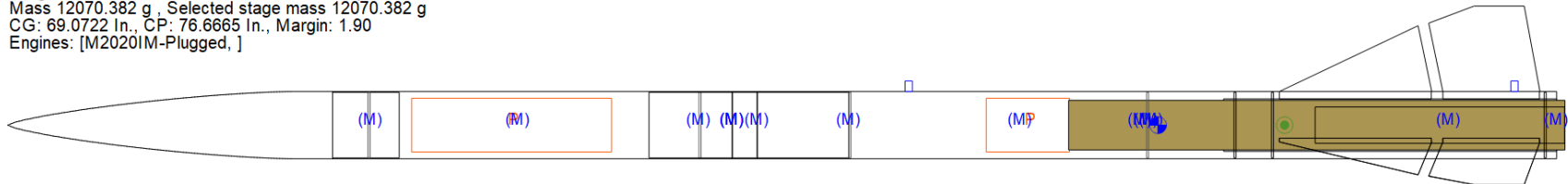
Wind change frequency: 0.0000  Allow multiple thermals

Wind starts at altitude: 0.00000 Ft. Maximum number of thermals: 3

Interthermal distance: 656.16798 Ft.

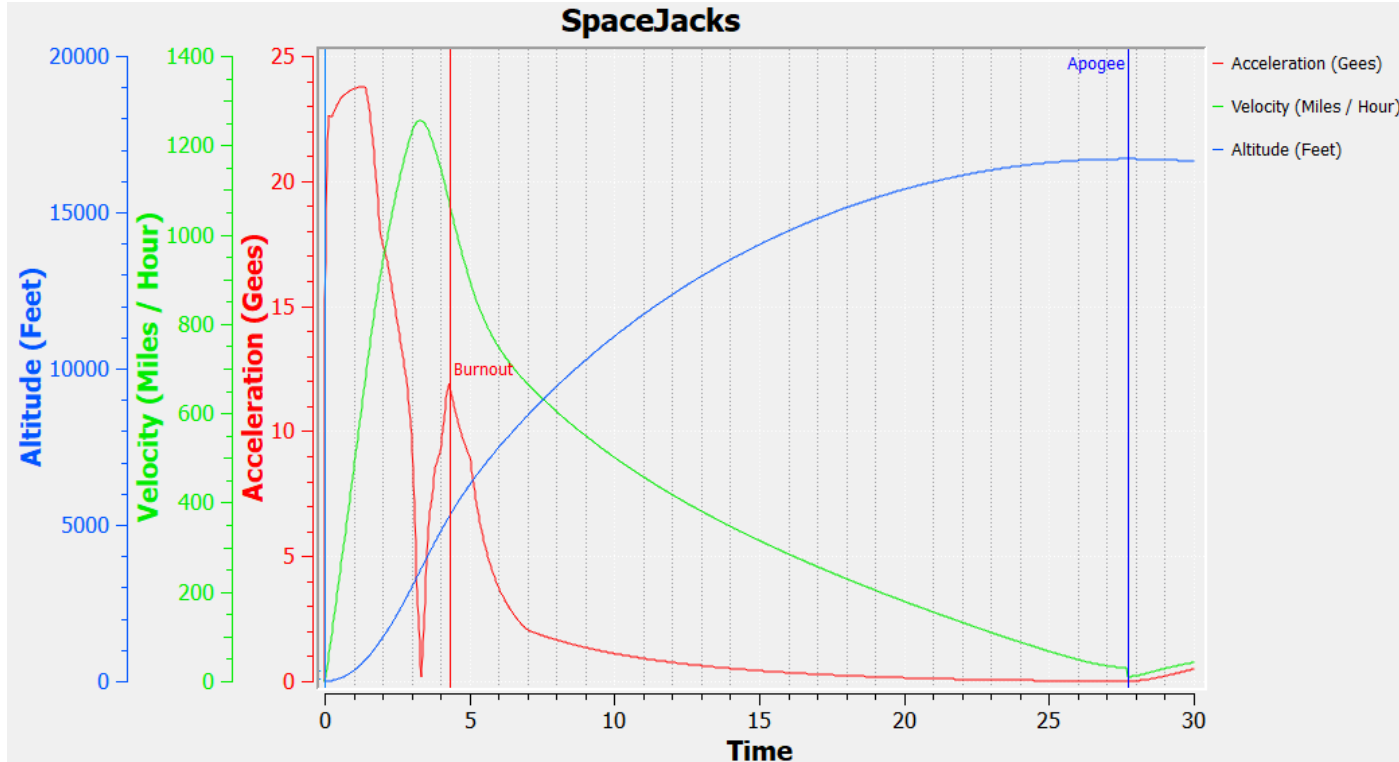
Figure 20: Rocksim Input Parameters  
Source: Apogee Rockets [44]

SpaceJacks  
Length: 93.4800 In. , Diameter: 4.0000 In. , Span diameter: 14.1790 In.  
Mass 12070.382 g , Selected stage mass 12070.382 g  
CG: 69.0722 In., CP: 76.6665 In., Margin: 1.90  
Engines: [M2020IM-Plugged, ]



# Mathematical Modeling: Rocksim

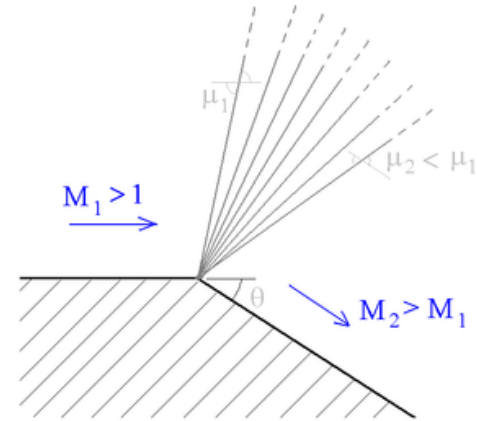
Figure 21: Rocksim Output  
Source: Apogee Rockets [44]



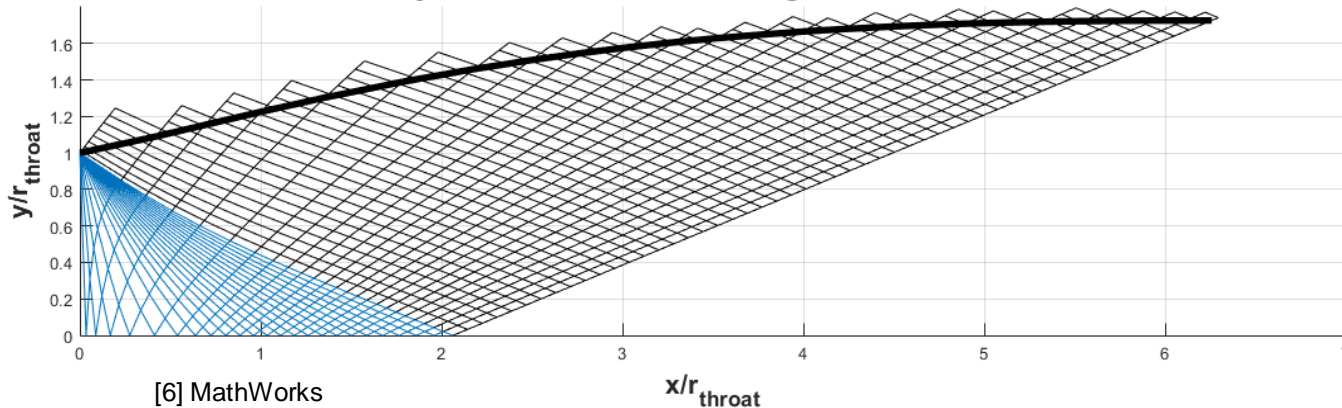
# Mathematical Modeling: Compressible Flow

## Method of Characteristics

- Utilizes Prandtl-Meyer expansion (figure to the right) to generate nozzle geometry
- Allows for a visualization of compressible flow within the nozzle (shock/expansion waves)
- Optimize nozzle geometry for maximum thrust or specific impulse
- Will help with avoiding unwanted shock wave interactions
- Helps to validate and refine CFD analysis (performed in open FOAM or Ansys)



Axisymmetric minimum-length nozzle contour



[6] MathWorks

Figure 22:  
Nozzle Design  
Source:

# Mathematical Modeling: Burn Rate

The burning rate,  $r$ , of a solid propellant is the linear rate of propellant consumption in a direction normal to the burning surface. It typically ranges from 0.1 to 2.0 inches per second and is primarily influenced by the combustion pressure,  $P_c$ ; propellant composition; and to a lesser degree by the ambient grain temperature and the velocity of gas flow past the burning surface. Burning rate may be expressed by the following equation:

$$r = aP_c^n \quad \text{Equation 1}$$

Burn rate is pivotal in the requirement of altitude. A slow burn rate may only get the projectile to a few thousand feet, but a longer burn rate can allow for a much higher altitude. A slower burn rate may not offer enough force to overcome the local gravity, so we need to make sure that the burn rate is fast enough to keep the rocket straight and on course, but slow enough to maintain this thrust to get to the required altitude.

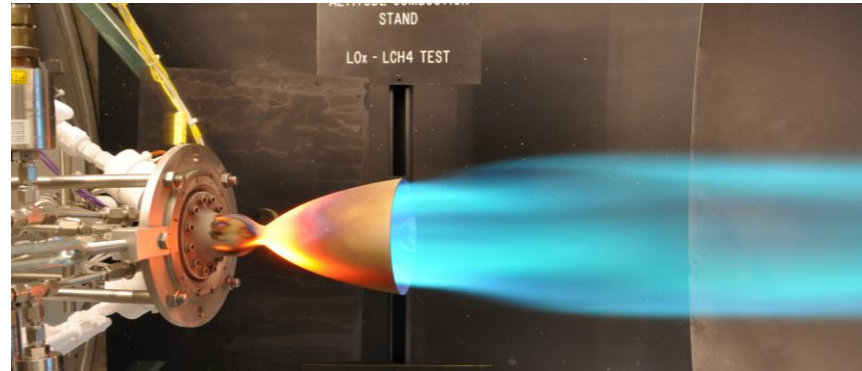


Figure 23: Burn Rate Simulation  
Source: Chemical Propulsion Systems [41]

# Mathematical Modeling: Motor Casing Thickness

The cylindrical shell thickness is calculated by using conventional formula from ASME Pressure vessel code.

It is given by the equation: Equation 2.

$$t = \frac{P * D * Mismatch\ Factor}{biaxial\ gain * 2 * (SE - 0.6P)}$$

Where from ASME standards:

- Biaxial gain = 1.1(10%)
- Mismatch factor = 1.15 (5%)
- D = Inner Diameter of Casing
- S = Allowable Strength = U.T.S/F.S
- E = Weld Efficiency (desired is 90%)

$$P = B(K_n)^{\frac{1}{1-n}} \quad \text{Equation 3.}$$

where  $P$  is the pressure in pounds per square inch,  $B$  is a constant for a specific propellant, and  $n$  is the same pressure or burning rate exponent as appears in the burn rate equation

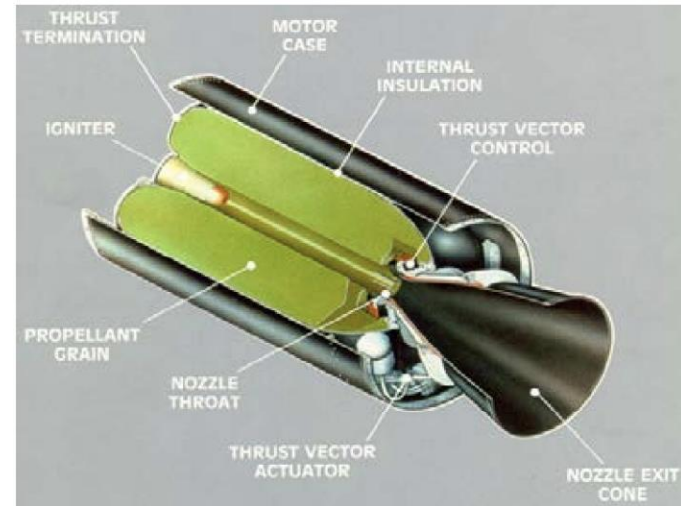


Figure 24:  
Motor Casing  
Source: Solid  
Rocket Motor  
Casing [9]

# Schedule Report 1 Oct 27 Report 2 Nov 24



Task	Timeline
Research	9/5/23 - 10/2/23
Design	9/18/23 - 10/12/23
Design Review	10/12/23
Re-Design	10/12/23 - 10/19/23
Design Approval	10/19/23
Finalize BOM	10/19/23
Build	10/19/23 - 11/4/23
Safety Checklist	11/4/23
Test 1	11/4/23
Test Report 1	10/30/23 - 11/24/23

Task	Timeline
Redesign/Modify	11/9/23 - 11/16/23
Redesign Approval	11/16/23
Build	11/16/23 - 11/24/23
Test 2	11/25/23
Test Report 2	11/25/23 - 12/8/23
Scale Up & Build	01/15/24 - 02/19/24
Obtain Launch Approval	02/19/24
Flight Readiness Review	02/19/24 - 03/01/24
Final Flight	03/02/24
Post-Flight Review	03/04/24 - 03/15/24

# Budget

Budget Items	Percent of Budget	Dollar Amount	Notes	Funding total	2300
75mm Final Rocket Motor	30.00%	690		Gore Fund	2000
38mm Test Rocket Motor	15.00%	345		GoFundMe	300
Test Rocket Motors	10.00%	230			
Nozzle	10.00%	230	Primarily funded through undergraduate research		
Casing	5.00%	115			
Test Stand	7.00%	161			
Test Stand Electronics	18.00%	414			
Miscellaneous	5.00%	115			
Total	100.00%	2300			

- Existing Funds
  - \$2,000 have been procured by the client
  - \$300 total have been fundraised by the team
- Continued Funding Plan
  - Fundraising through GoFundMe
  - Fundraising through the Rocket Club

Figure 29.



# Literature Citations: Andrew



## Textbooks:

- [1] G. P. Sutton and O. Biblarz, *Rocket Propulsion Elements*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2017.
- [2] R. C. Hibbeler, *Fluid Mechanics*. Hoboken, NJ: Pearson, 2015.

## Scholarly Articles:

- [3] J. C. Restrepo, A. F. Bolaños-Acosta, and J. R. Simões-Moreira, “Short nozzles design for real gas supersonic flow using the method of characteristics,” *Applied Thermal Engineering*, vol. 207, pp. 1–14, May 2022. doi:10.1016/j.applthermaleng.2022.118063
- [4] K. N. Kumar, M. Gopalsamy, D. Antony, R. Krishnaraj, and C. B. Viswanadh, “Design and optimization of aerospike nozzle using CFD,” *IOP Conf. Series: Materials Science and Engineering*, vol. 247, 2017. doi:10.1109/icraae.2017.8297246
- [5] N. Önder and C. Tola, “Effects of Nozzle Throat and Combustion Chamber Design Variables on Divergent Portion of the Nozzle,” *2019 9th International Conference on Recent Advances in Space Technologies (RAST)*, pp. 223–230, Jun. 2019. doi:10.1109/rast.2019.8767796

## Online Resources:

- [6] N. Hall, Ed., “Short index of propulsion slides,” NASA, <https://www.grc.nasa.gov/WWW/K-12/airplane/shortp.html> (accessed Sep. 18, 2023).
- [7] “NASA Technical Reports Server (NTRS),” NASA, <https://ntrs.nasa.gov/api/citations/19770009539/downloads/19770009539.pdf> (accessed Sep. 18, 2023).

# Literature Citations: Shannon

## Scholarly Articles:

- [8] B. Niharika and B. B. Varma, “Design and analysis of composite rocket motor casing,” *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering*, vol. 455, p. 012034, 2018. doi:10.1088/1757-899x/455/1/012034
- [9] D. Kumar B and S. Nayana B, “Design and structural analysis of solid rocket motor casing hardware used in aerospace applications,” *Journal of Aeronautics & Aerospace Engineering*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2016. doi:10.4172/2168-9792.1000166
- [10] J. A. Hendron, “Nondestructive testing of high-strength steel rocket motor cases,” *Symposium on Recent Developments in Nondestructive Testing of Missiles and Rockets*. doi:10.1520/stp44520s

## Textbooks:

- [11] R. G. Budynas and J. K. Nisbett, *Shigley’s Mechanical Engineering Design*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill LLC, 2024.
- [12] F. P. Beer, E. R. Johnston, J. T. DeWolf, and D. F. Mazurek, “Chapter 4 Design Concepts,” in *Mechanics of Materials*, New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2020

## Online Resources:

- [13] Glenn research center | NASA, <https://www1.grc.nasa.gov/wp-content/uploads/Rocket-Lab-Safety-Manual-1959.pdf> (accessed Sep. 17, 2023).
- [14] EHS – EHS, [https://ehs.mit.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Rocket\\_Safety\\_Plan\\_Template.docx](https://ehs.mit.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Rocket_Safety_Plan_Template.docx) (accessed Sep. 17, 2023).

# Literature Citations: Remy



## Textbooks:

- [15] W. Anderson, M. Beckstead, and R. Behrens, *Solid Propellant Chemistry, Combustion, and Motor Interior Ballistics*, vol. 185. Reston, VA: American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Inc, 2000.
- [16] J. D. Anderson, *Fundamentals of Aerodynamics*, 6th ed. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education, 2017.

## Scholarly Articles:

- [17] R. R. Sobczak, “Ammonium Perchlorate Composite Basics ,” *Journal of Pyrotechnics*, no. 3, pp. 1–12, 1993.
- [18] G. Lengelle, J. Duterque, and J. F. Trubert, “Combustion of Solid Propellants,” *Internal Aerodynamics in Solid Rocket Propulsion/STO Educational Notes*, pp. 27–31, May 2002.
- [19] Ji Dai, Fei Wang, Chengbo Ru, Jianbing Xu, Chengai Wang, Wei Zhang, Yinghua Ye, and Ruiqi Shen, *The Journal of Physical Chemistry C* **2018** 122 (18), 10240-10247, DOI: 10.1021/acs.jpcc.8b01514

## Online Resources:

- [20] “APCP solid propulsion development,” Brandon Fallon, <https://brandonfallon.com/apcp-solid-propulsion-development/> (accessed Sep. 17, 2023).
- [21] B. Dunbar, “Solid rocket boosters,” NASA, [https://www.nasa.gov/returntoflight/system/system\\_SRB.html](https://www.nasa.gov/returntoflight/system/system_SRB.html) (accessed Sep. 17, 2023).

# Literature Citations: Grace



## Books:

- [22] J. White, B. Anderson, B. Green, and M. Hall, *Interactive General Chemistry*. New York: Macmillan Learning, 2019.
- [23] T. W. McCreary, *Experimental Composite Propellant an Introduction to Properties and Preparation of Composite Propellants - Design, Construction, Testing, and Characteristics of Small Rocket Motors*. Murray, Ky: Eigenverl., 2014.

## Scholarly Papers:

- [25] A. B. Aziz, R. Mamat, W. K. W. Ali, and M. R. M. Perang, “Review on typical ingredients for ammonium perchlorate based solid propellant,” *Applied Mechanics and Materials*, <https://www.scientific.net/AMM.773-774.470> (accessed Sep. 17, 2023).
- [25] Author links open overlay panelM.S. McClain a et al., “Additive manufacturing of ammonium perchlorate composite propellant with high solids loadings,” *Proceedings of the Combustion Institute*, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1540748918300531> (accessed Sep. 17, 2023).
- [26] S. Jain *et al.*, “Size and shape of ammonium perchlorate and their influence on properties of composite propellant,” *Defence Science Journal*, vol. 59, no. 3, pp. 294–299, 2009. doi:10.14429/dsj.59.1523

## Online Sources:

- [27] High-power safety information - tripoli rocketry association, <https://www.tripoli.org/safety> (accessed Sep. 17, 2023).
- [28] “APCP solid propulsion development,” Brandon Fallon, <https://brandonfallon.com/apcp-solid-propulsion-development/> (accessed Sep. 17, 2023).

# Benchmarking Citations



## Test Stands:

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**Thank you**



Source: High Power Rocketry [39]