Characterization of active faults



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Coseismic deformation



Permanent surface deformation



Earthquake geology



- Large earthquakes recurr on geologically recognized faults
- Historic record is too short
- Past is the key to the future

Initial conditions





Strike-slip fault



Paleoseismology



- The study of prehistoric earthquakes
 - multidisciplinary science
 - can extend the record to hundreds of thousands of years
 - when, where, and how large

How large?



Marryat Creek, Australia earthquake 1986, M 5.8

- Only 10% M5 rupture the surface
 - Average and maximum offset about 5 cm
- Over 50% M6.2 rupture the surface
 - Average 30 cm; maximum 40 cm
- And 100% M7.6 rupture the surface
 - Average >280 m; maximum 590 cm

Regional investigations



- Tools
 - Remote sensing
- Sub-parallel topography
 - High ranges with intervening basins

Fault-scale studies



- Tools
 - Tectonic geomorphology
 - Geologic mapping
 - Relative age dating techniques

Tectonic geomorphology





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Geologic relations



Fault scarps





Lateral offset of stream



Detailed site investigations



- Trenching
 - Archeological style excavations

Field techniques



Characterizing paleoearthquakes



Dating paleoearthquakes



- Isotopic (¹⁴C)
- Cosmogenic (²¹⁰Pb, ³⁶Cl)
- Radiogenic (luminescence)
- Biological (lichenometry)
- Geomorphic (relative age)
- Correlation (tephrochronology)

Fault characterization from point data



214 paleoseismic sites in California

Correlation of paleoearthquakes

From Weldon et al .:



Active range front Pua fault





Images from Google Earth

