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FIELD AND LABORATORY DATA FROM AN EARTHQUAKE HISTORY STUDY OF THE WATERMAN POINT FAULT, KITSAP COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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INTRODUCTION

The newly discovered Waterman Point fault is part of the Seattle fault zone, an east-west zone of reverse and oblique faults that extends from the Kitsap Peninsula to Lake Washington (Figure 1; Johnson and others, 1999; Brocher and others, 2001; Blakely and others, 2002; ten Brink and others, 2002). The earthquake history of the fault zone is poorly known (Sherrod and others, 2000; Sherrod, 2001; Nelson and others, in press), and efforts to quantify the earthquake hazard posed by the fault zone are hampered by the lack of fault-specific earthquake-recurrence intervals for faults such as the Waterman Point fault. Geodetic data (Savage and others, 2001) show that the Seattle fault zone moved one earthquake of at least magnitude 7 about AD 930-980 (1020-1020 cal yr BP) on the southernmost fault in the Seattle zone (fig. 1; Atwater and Moore, 1992; Bucknam and others, 1992; Atwater, 1999), but the first radiocarbon-necessitated earthquake-recurrence intervals for a fault in the lowland crust from five trenches dug across a recently discovered Holocene fault scarp in the Seattle fault zone on Bainbridge Island (fig. 1; Nelson and others, 2002a, 2002b, 2003a, 2003b). The scarp on Bainbridge Island is the lowland to be identified on Airborne Laser Swath Mapping (ALSM) imagery (Buckeridge and others, 1999; Haugerud and others, 2001).

A second similar Holocene scarp was revealed by ALSM surveys flown in Kitsap County by Terrapoint LLC during the winters of 2000 and 2001 (fig. 1; Harding and others, 2002; Haugerud and others, 2002). The ALSM surveys were flown for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and the Puget Sound Lidar Consortium. High-resolution digital-elevation models (DEMs) of topography derived from ALSM data that were processed to remove vegetation (for example, Harding and Berghoff, 2000) show a south-facing scarp extending 14 km across the Point Glover peninsula (fig. 1) northeast of Port Orchard and the Waterman Point peninsula (fig. 1; Figure 2; Harding, D.J., and Berghoff, G.S., 2000, Fault scarp detection beneath dense vegetation cover—Airborne laser mapping of the Seattle fault zone, Bainbridge Island, Washington State: Proceedings of the American Society of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing Annual Conference, Washington, D.C., v. 1, p. 403-413).

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The shaping trench walls was projected as much as 2 m eastward into the vertical plane shown on the trench logs. Description of three soil profiles in two trenches helped us tie stratigraphic units to landform-development (table 6; Harding, 1994; methods of Birkeland, 1999). Paleoseismic study of geological lake deposits near the south end of the Bainbridge trench was unsuccessful because the lakes were too small to preserve a record of earthquakes.

Similar to our earlier report about the similar Toe Hill fault, 3 km to the northeast on Bainbridge Island (Nelson and others, 2002), this map presents primary field and laboratory data from its Quaternary geologic studies in the western Puget Lowland and Holocene history of large earthquakes on the Waterman Point fault. The map does not show surface faulting and folding events identified in the trenches. Instead, we will present our findings about the timing of these events in a subsequent report on the history of the Waterman Point fault. Those latter objectives, and how they impact earthquake hazard assessment in the Puget Lowland, are the subject of a future report.

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