U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATIONS MAP 3001
Pamphlet accompanies map



Figure 1. Generalized index map of the southwestern part of California showing the location of the Santa Barbara coastal plain region and nearby major tectonic faults.

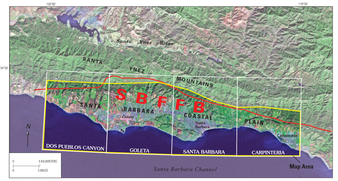


Figure 2. Landsat 7 image of Santa Barbara coastal plain region showing location of map area (yellow border) within five contiguous 7.5′ quadrangles (white rectangles). Approximate northern boundary of Santa Barbara fold and fault belt (SBFB) is shown by red line.



Figure 3. View, looking southeast from crest of the Santa Ynez Mountains, of low hills and intervening lowlands forming the western part of the Santa Barbara coastal plain. Hills are underlain by folded and faulted Miocene and Pliocene rocks of the Santa Ynez fault block on right (center). The broad low-coastal hills in upper center part of photo are bounded on their northern (inland) sides by the intersecting Mesa and Move Ranch reverse-oblique fault systems, which accommodated Quaternary uplift of the coastal area. The Santa Ynez foothills that open across the middle part of photograph and the steeper mountain flank in the foreground are underlain by moderately south-dipping Tertiary sedimentary rocks cut by numerous northwest-striking faults.



Figure 4. View, looking southwest from flank of Santa Ynez Mountains, of downtown Santa Barbara (white buildings) situated on the Santa Barbara coastal plain. Hills in middle distance are underlain by folded and faulted Miocene and Pliocene rocks of the Santa Ynez fault block on the horizon. Several features of the Quaternary Santa Barbara fold and fault belt are visible in photograph. The concealed Mesa fault lies along the base of "La Mesa" coastal hills just beyond downtown in right center part of photograph. The lower wooded area between downtown and the base of the Santa Ynez mountain flank is Mission Ridge, a complexly faulted anticlinal upwarp that has deformed Pleistocene alluvial deposits (**Qoa**). The Santa Ynez mountain flank in the foreground is underlain by a steeply overturned homocline of Tertiary sedimentary rocks.



Figure 5. View, looking northwest from Goleta Valley, of steep southern flank (the distance) and foothills (middle distance) of the Santa Ynez Mountains. Prominent hogback ridge in middle distance is held up by resistant sandstone beds of the Oligocene and lower Miocene Vaqueros Formation. Overturned to near-vertical beds of Vaqueros Sandstone (Tvaq) and lower Sespe Formation (Tsplr) are by several large northeast-striking faults that have had a varied and complex Neogene and Quaternary slip history. Note that many low ridges in foothills are capped by flat-lying geomorphic surfaces at one or more distinct elevations. These surfaces may represent relict older Pleistocene(?) uplifted alluvial or marine terraces.



Figure 6. Digital Elevation Model (DEM) shaded-relief image of the Santa Barbara coastal plain map area as viewed from the south and illuminated from northwest. Northern boundary of geologic map area shown by brown line. Hypsometric tint, 3-dimensional model elevation, and shaded-relief values derived from U.S. Geological Survey National Elevation Dataset (NED) 10-meter resolution elevation data, 2005.



Figure 7. Sea-cliff exposure near Santa Barbara Point, looking northwest, of southwest- (left-) dipping, calcareous and siliceous shale of the lower unit of the Miocene Monterey Formation (Tmlb), which in turn is unconformably overlain by flat-lying, upper Pleistocene (~ 19-ka) marine-terrace sand and gravel (Qmt). The Monterey Formation is a distinctive lithologic unit of diatomaceous, organic-rich, and locally phosphatic (middle Miocene) and benthic foraminiferal assemblages indicative of the upper Saucesian and (or) Relizian benthic foraminiferal stages and deposition at water depths of 1,500–4,000 m. Oblique-slip and contractional faulting and folding associated with the Santa Barbara fold and fault belt have produced the northwest-striking structure both (highlighted) and southwest-striked tilts visible in photograph, and numerous northward-trending folds and faults exposed nearby, provide evidence of a protracted episode of late Miocene(?) through Pleistocene transpression in the region.



Figure 8. View, looking east, of young oblique-reverse fault exposed in sea cliff at Loon Point (between Goleta and Carpinteria). Fault places upper Pleistocene (~ 100-ka) marine-terrace deposits (**Qmt**) over Pleistocene and overlying older alluvial (**Qoa**) and ~105-ka marine-terrace deposits (**Qmt**) over Pleistocene probable Santa Barbara Formation marine deposits (**Qsb?**) and overlying **Qoa** and **Qhf** deposits. Note that strata in hanging-wall block on south (right) side of fault are folded into a north-vergent syncline that is geomorphically expressed onshore as a small, elongated hill (see red hill *Eucalyptus* trees). The Santa Barbara coastal plain fault zone is concealed beneath the modern beach in the middle part of the photograph. Note the wave-cut notch and partly buried oblique and reverse faults of the potentially active Santa Barbara fold and fault belt.

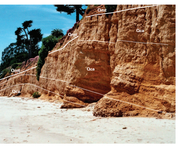


Figure 9. View looking northwest along trend of a young south-vergent anticline exposed in sea cliff below the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Anticline folds upper Pleistocene (~ 105-ka) marine-terrace deposits (**Qmt**) and overlying older alluvial (**Qoa**) and ~105-ka marine-terrace deposits (**Qmt**) over Pleistocene probable Santa Barbara Formation (**Qsb**) exposed just out of view of photo to left. Rocks in view thus may represent an uppermost Santa Barbara section that is transitional into the nonmarine alluvial deposits (**Qoa**), or they may be a western outlier of the Pleistocene Carpinteria Formation (**Qca**). The fold and fault, as well as the overlying marine terrace, is nonmarine, clastic sequences observed throughout the coastal plain area are inferred to record middle to late Pleistocene uplift and erosion of the Santa Ynez Mountains and concomitant accumulation of thick alluvial detritus into a retreating marine basin. Width of view ~2 meters.



Figure 10. View, looking northwest, of moderately (15–35°) northeast-dipping Pleistocene sediments exposed in large cut bank of Maria Ygnacio Creek just south of Highway 101 in Goleta. Sediments are probably Santa Barbara Formation (**Qsb**) and are bedded unconformities (locally conglomeratic), siltstones, and mudstones that are overlain with little or no angular discordance by less-resistant, locally derived alluvial deposits of probable Pleistocene age (**Qoa**). Fault in middle of view is a displacement or fault contact with marine rocks of the middle to lower Pleistocene Santa Barbara Formation (**Qsb**) exposed just out of view of photo to left. Rocks in view thus may represent an uppermost Santa Barbara section that is transitional into the nonmarine alluvial deposits (**Qoa**), or they may be a western outlier of the Pleistocene Carpinteria Formation (**Qca**). The fold and fault, as well as the overlying marine terrace, is nonmarine, clastic sequences observed throughout the coastal plain area are inferred to record middle to late Pleistocene uplift and erosion of the Santa Ynez Mountains and concomitant accumulation of thick alluvial detritus into a retreating marine basin. Width of view ~2 meters.

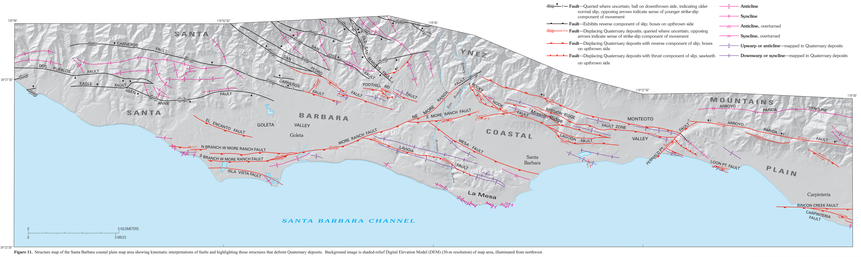


Figure 11. Structure map of the Santa Barbara coastal plain map area showing kinematic interpretations of faults and highlighting those structures that deform Quaternary deposits. Background image is shaded-relief Digital Elevation Model (DEM) (10-m resolution) of map area, illuminated from northwest.

EXPLANATION

- **Fault**—Queried where uncertain; hdl on downthrown side; arrow indicates relative reverse dip component of movement
- **Fault**—Exhibits reverse component of dip; hooes on upthrown side
- **Fault**—Displacing Quaternary deposits; queried where uncertain; opposing arrows indicate sense of strike-slip component of movement
- **Fault**—Displacing Quaternary deposits with reverse component of dip; hooes on upthrown side
- **Fault**—Displacing Quaternary deposits with thrust component of dip; sawtooth on upthrown side
- **Anticline**
- **Syncline**
- **Anticline**, overturned
- **Syncline**, overturned
- **Upwarp or anticline**—mapped in Quaternary deposits
- **Downwarp or syncline**—mapped in Quaternary deposits



Figure 12. View, looking southeast, of fault surface exposed in small cliff face in conglomeratic sandstone of the Miocene Sespe Formation (Tmsp) in Tar Creek, a tributary to Gobernador Creek in foothills of Santa Ynez Mountains. Fault strikes northeast (230°) and dips 70° to the northwest. Parallel slickenlines (small grooves, ridges, and other slip lineations) that are gently plunging to the southwest are visible on fault surface. Geologic relations indicate that fault is an unbroken Rincon Shale surface (labeled) indicate that this fault is a minimal strike-slip fault. Arrow shows direction of movement of block visible in photo. Such subtle structural features were used at fault exposures throughout the map area to help characterize the kinematics of both map-scale and smaller faults.



Figure 13. Exposure of thinly laminated (at rock hammer) between boulder conglomerate of the upper Miocene Sespe Formation (Tmsp) and underlying, well-laminated diatomaceous shale of the upper Miocene upper siliceous unit of the Monterey Formation (Tmu) in the sea cliff about 4 km east of Goleta Pier. Most of the clasts in the Sespean conglomerate are angular blocks of shale and dolomite derived from the Monterey Formation. We infer that the conglomerate was deposited by a debris flow or submarine rockfall that originated on the flank of a fault-bounded uplift that was active during middle Miocene (Mohnian) stage. Deposition of the conglomerate likely occurred during or shortly after uplift and erosion of the basin margin, which in turn may have been a response to regional transrotational tectonism.

LIST OF MAP UNITS

Qaf **Artificial fill (Holocene)**—Fill used for construction of highways, roads, buildings, airport runways, harbor facilities, breakwaters, and dams

Qa **Active channel alluvium (Holocene)**—Unconsolidated sediments in modern stream channels, primarily pebble to boulder gravel. Thickness less than 5 m

Qb **Beach deposits (Holocene)**—Unconsolidated sand along coastal beaches. Thickness probably rarely exceeds 5 m

Qds **Dune sand (Holocene)**—Unconsolidated sand/loose sand forming coastal dunes northwest of Coal Oil Point

Qe **Estuarine deposits (Holocene)**—Locally organic-rich clay, silt, and subordinate sand deposited primarily in portfall environment in low-lying coastal areas and in estuaries and tidally active sloughs. Maximum thickness probably less than 20 m

Qasp **Asphalt deposits (Holocene)**—Black, tar-like asphalt that represents seasoned and biodegraded oil derived from nearby natural seeps. Typically near asphalt-filled fractures in bedrock exposed in sea cliffs

Qalf **Alluvium and colluvium (Holocene and upper Pleistocene)**—Poorly consolidated, locally derived, fine- to coarse-grained alluvial deposits and colluvial fans and footslopes. Exposed thickness generally less than 10 m

Qac **Alluvium and colluvium (Holocene and upper Pleistocene)**—Poorly consolidated, locally derived, fine- to coarse-grained alluvial deposits and colluvial fans and footslopes. Exposed thickness generally less than 10 m

Qc **Colluvium (Holocene and upper Pleistocene)**—Poorly consolidated, poorly sorted, locally derived, fine- to coarse-grained colluvial deposits on hillslopes and footslopes. Exposed thickness generally less than 10 m

Qls **Landslide deposits (Holocene)**—Unsorted, unstratified, poorly consolidated, locally derived, fine- to coarse-grained deposits of recently active landslides. Largest landslide deposits may be as thick as 60 m

Qw **Travertine and caliche? deposits (Holocene? and Pleistocene?)**—White, massive, locally rough-textured, calcium carbonate. Deposits, deprived by point symbols on the map, are localized along or near faults

Qoa **Alluvium (Holocene and upper Pleistocene)**—Poorly consolidated, stratified silt, sand, and gravel that form low, rounded, moderately dissected terraces and piedmont alluvial fans that rest at higher elevations than the modern coastal piedmont surface underlain by unit Qac. Thickness probably locally exceeds 20 m

Qmt **Marine terrace deposits (Upper Pleistocene)**—Basal (~1 m) weakly to moderately consolidated, variably stratified, fossiliferous gravel, sand, and silt deposited as marine intertidal, beach, and estuarine deposits and overlying unconsolidated, variably stratified, fossiliferous eolian sand. Marine deposits rest on abraded marine-cut platforms and form shelf-like terraces or flights of terraces ranging in elevation from 10 to 90 m (30–300 ft) and in age from 82 ka (oxygen-isotope substage 5a) to 105 ka (substage 5c). Maximum exposed thickness about 20 m

Qmu **Marine terrace deposits (Upper Pleistocene)**—Moderately consolidated, crudely stratified, poorly sorted sand and sandstone, gravel, conglomerate, and breccia, and rare interbeds of clay, silt, and mudstone forming prominent, flat-lying terrace deposits that rest on the Santa Barbara Formation and Casitas Formation. Deposits are typically rich in fossils. Rare conglomerate lenses become more common upsection, and deposits grade upsection into the overlying, more conglomeratic deposits of the Casitas Formation (**Qmd**) or older alluvial deposits (**Qoa**). Maximum exposed thickness approximately 300 m

Qsu **Unnamed sedimentary rocks east of Goleta Pier (Pleistocene and Pliocene?)**—Marine conglomerate, sandstone, siltstone, and mudstone mapped as three informal units

Qmd **Conglomeratic unit (middle and lower Pleistocene)**—Conglomerate, sandstone, siltstone, and mudstone probably deposited within ancient submarine canyon eroded into underlying Pleistocene and Pliocene rocks (Qbs, Tsq). Contains marine fossils. Conglomerate contains clasts derived from the Sespe Formation (Tsq) and (or) Monterey Formation (Tmu, Tmm, Tmd), and older units. Width of paleo-submarine channel exposed in sea cliff about 610 m and minimum axial thickness of unit 33 m

Qsb **Santa Barbara Formation (middle and lower Pleistocene)**—Clayey sandstone, siltstone, and subordinate conglomerate and conglomerate. Contains marine fossils. Unit contains clasts derived from the Sespe Formation (Tsg) and (or) Monterey Formation (Tmu, Tmm, Tmd). Exposed thickness 45–60 m

Qhf **Hartford Formation (Pleistocene and upper Pliocene?)**—Massive and extensively bioturbated siltstone, mudstone, and silty sandstone. Contains marine fossils. Exposed thickness about 45 m

Tsq **Sespe Formation (lower Pliocene and upper Miocene)**—Marine, tan- to white-weathering, diatomaceous mudstone and shale, conglomeratic, and phosphatic, white- to tan-weathering mudstone and shale, with subordinate dolomite, porcelanite, breccia, glauconitic sandstone, and tuff. Unit includes a prominent, at least 20- to 30-m-thick, submember-thong deposit to see cliff near mouth of Eagle Creek in western part of map area. Thickness ranges from about 600 m to 1,000 m

Tvaq **Lower calcareous unit (middle and lower Miocene)**—Calcareous, siliceous, and phosphatic, white- to tan-weathering mudstone and shale, with subordinate dolomite, porcelanite, breccia, glauconitic sandstone, and tuff. In places, unit includes informational and diatomaceous (including breccia) that are too thin to be shown separately at map scale. Unit is discontinuous. Thickness about 250 m thick near the mouth of Dos Pueblos Canyon

Tmdb **Breccia (middle? and lower Miocene)**—Intraformational breccia exposed in sea cliff at Goleta Point. Breccia is clast supported and consists of clasts of calcareous mudstone and dolomite. Unit about 30 m thick

Tr **Rincon Shale (lower Miocene)**—Marine, primarily massive and thick-bedded, light-brown-weathering mudstone, with subordinate dolomite, siliceous shale, sandstone, and tuff. Mudstone is bioturbated and massive, petroliferous, and locally contains abundant fish scales and fish debris. One or multiple white-weathering tuff layers locked to upper 10 m of Rincon active. Thickness ranges from about 600 m to 460 m

Tvu **Siliceous shale interval (lower Miocene)**—Thin-bedded, white- to pale-gray-weathering siliceous shale that resembles siliceous shale intervals within the Monterey Formation. Unit is discontinuous and locally below top of Rincon Shale and has a thickness of 35 to 45 m

Tvq **Vaqueros Formation (upper Oligocene)**—Shallow-marine, massive and bioturbated, resistant, light-tan-weathering sandstone. Uppermost part of formation is a prominent, cliff-forming, light-tan-weathering sandstone that typically marked by a 50- to 150-m-thick, thinly bedded, calcareous conglomerate containing abundant fossil-shell fragments. Unit gradually decreases in thickness eastward from more than 1,000 m to about 75 m

Tsplr **Sespe Formation (Oligocene and upper Eocene)**—Nonmarine, fluvial, tan- to red-weathering, arkosic sandstone, conglomeratic sandstone, mudstone, and conglomerate. In map area, divided into three subunits that are distinguished from each other mainly by differences in lithology, provenance, and age. An unconformity, locally angular, representing a depositional hiatus lasting many tens of m of early Oligocene time, separates the Sespe from the underlying Eocene Coldwater Sandstone. Exposed thickness of Sespe Formation increases eastward from about 350 m to more than 1,500 m

Tsqm **Sespe Formation and mudstone unit (upper Oligocene)**—Interbedded sandstone, siltstone, and mudstone that weather to salmon shades of maroon, buff, pale green, tan, and gray. Proportion of different sedimentary rock types vary both laterally and vertically through the section. Sandstones commonly broadly lenticular, laminated, and thin to thick bedded. Unit is about 1,000 m thick between Gato Canyon on the east and Tar Creek on the west

Tsgm **Middle conglomerate and sandstone unit (Oligocene)**—Interbedded conglomerate, sandstone, and mudstone that weather to various shades of gray, brown, and pale green. Proportion of different sedimentary rock types vary both laterally and vertically through the section. Polymict conglomerate clasts include abundant chert and lithic sandstone likely derived from Franciscan Complex source terrane(s), which, together with Coldwater Sandstone, underlies Sespe Formation throughout map area (Dibblee, 1966). Middle unit generally increases in thickness eastward, from where it pinches out in Tecolote Canyon to almost 4500 m north of Carpinteria

Tsgl **Lower conglomerate and sandstone unit (lower Oligocene? and upper Eocene)**—Interbedded conglomerate, conglomeratic sandstone, sandstone, and mudstone that weather to various shades of gray, brown, and pale green shades of salmon-gray, reddish-gray, pale-reddish-gray, and tan. Proportions of different sedimentary rock types vary both laterally and vertically through the section. Polymict conglomerate clasts include abundant chert and lithic sandstone likely derived from Franciscan Complex source terrane(s) and minor amounts of reddish hues of sandstones, and abundant rounded quartzite, granitoid, metamorphic, and volcanic clasts in fine sedimentary conglomerates, which are likely derived from Mojave Desert source terrane(s). Lower unit generally increases in thickness eastward, from where it pinches out in Gato Canyon to more than 2500 m north of Carpinteria

Tcse **Coldwater Sandstone (upper? and middle Eocene)**—Shallow-marine, thin- to thick-bedded, resistant, light-tan-weathering sandstone. Unit is yellow, tan, and brown, with subordinate interbeds and lenses of gray, olive-gray, and greenish-gray siltstone, shale, and mudstone. Sandstone beds are resistant and form footpaths where steeply dipping. Upper part of unit locally conglomeratic and rich in fossil oyster shells. Base of unit unconformable and not exposed in map area; unit about 750 to 1,1000 m thick regionally

Contact—Long-dashed where approximately located; short-dashed where inferred; dotted where concealed; tic shows direction and angle of dip

Trace of marker bed

Outline of erosionally beveled geomorphic surface

Marine-terrace shoreline angle—Approximately located based on subtle to strong topographic slope of terrace surface; locally coincides with contact between terrace deposits and bedrock

Faults—Long-dashed where approximately located; short-dashed where inferred; dotted where concealed; queried where uncertain; small set arrow shows direction and angle of dip; set of barbed-headed arrows shows bearing and plunge of anticline and inferred dip direction of hanging-wall block

Strike-slip fault—Arrows show relative direction of lateral displacement; queried where uncertain; bi-directional arrows indicate unproposed direction and minimal slip on same fault

Normal fault—Ball and bar on apparent downthrown side

Reverse fault—Rectangles on apparent upthrown side

Thrust fault—Sawtooth on apparent upthrown side

Fault-line scarp—Inferred from aerial photographs; hachures point downscarp

Slide-block boundary—Inferred; hachures on slide block

Fold and scarp axial trace—Long-dashed where approximately located; short-dashed where inferred; dotted where concealed

Anticline—Large arrow indicates plunge direction

Overturned anticline

Upwarp axis—Large arrow indicates plunge direction; mapped in Quaternary deposits where geomorphically expressed

Syncline—Large arrow indicates plunge direction

Overturned syncline

Downwarp axis—Mapped in Quaternary deposits where geomorphically expressed

Horizontal bedding

Inclined bedding—Showing strike and dip

Inclined bedding—Showing approximate strike and dip

Inclined bedding—Showing strike and dip of beds calculated from bedding trace

Vertical bedding—Showing strike

Overturned bedding—Showing strike and dip

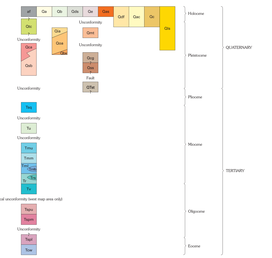
Concealed bedding—Measured in unit; small indicated where temporarily exposed at low tide or in construction excavation

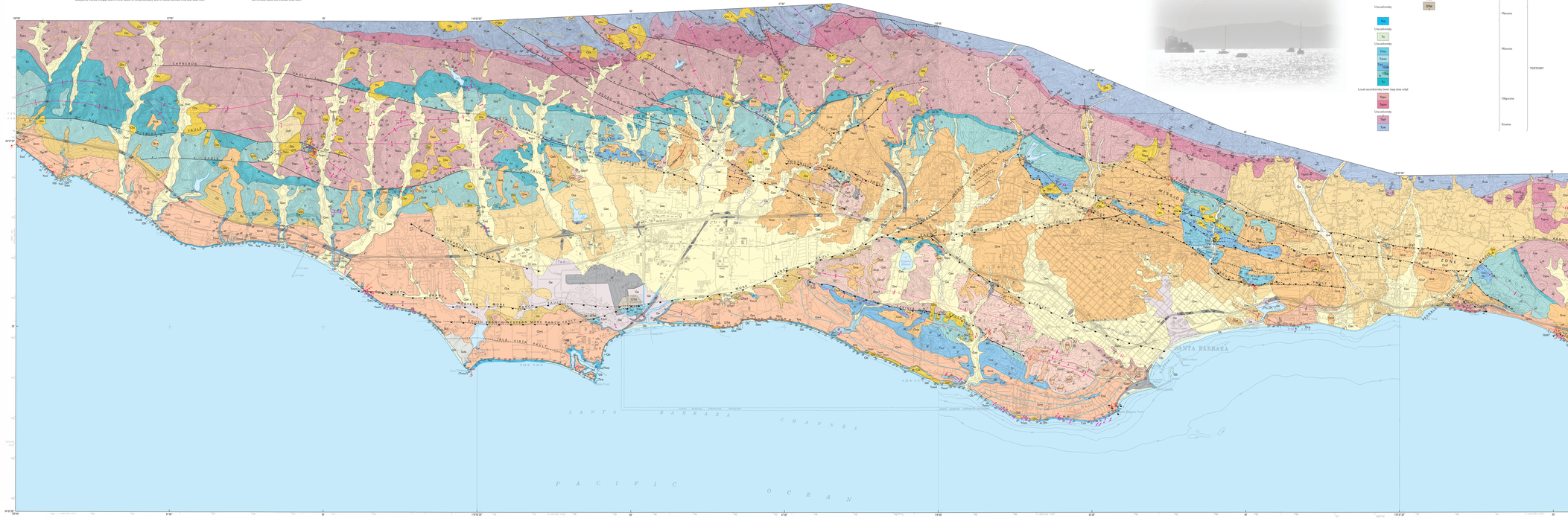
Oil seep

Qasp—Asphalt deposit

Qw—Travertine and caliche? deposit

CORRELATION OF MAP UNITS





Base from U.S. Geological Survey: Carpinteria, 1952; Ventura, 1952; Ventura, 1965; Dos Pueblos Canyon, 1951; Santa Barbara, 1951; Goleta, 1951; Santa Barbara, 1965; Goleta, 1965; Carpinteria, 1965; Ventura, 1965; Dos Pueblos Canyon, 1965