

# Sedimentation in Continental Rifts and Collisional Orogens: Insights from Southern California and Eastern Taiwan

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Thanks to:



Ministry of Science  
and Technology

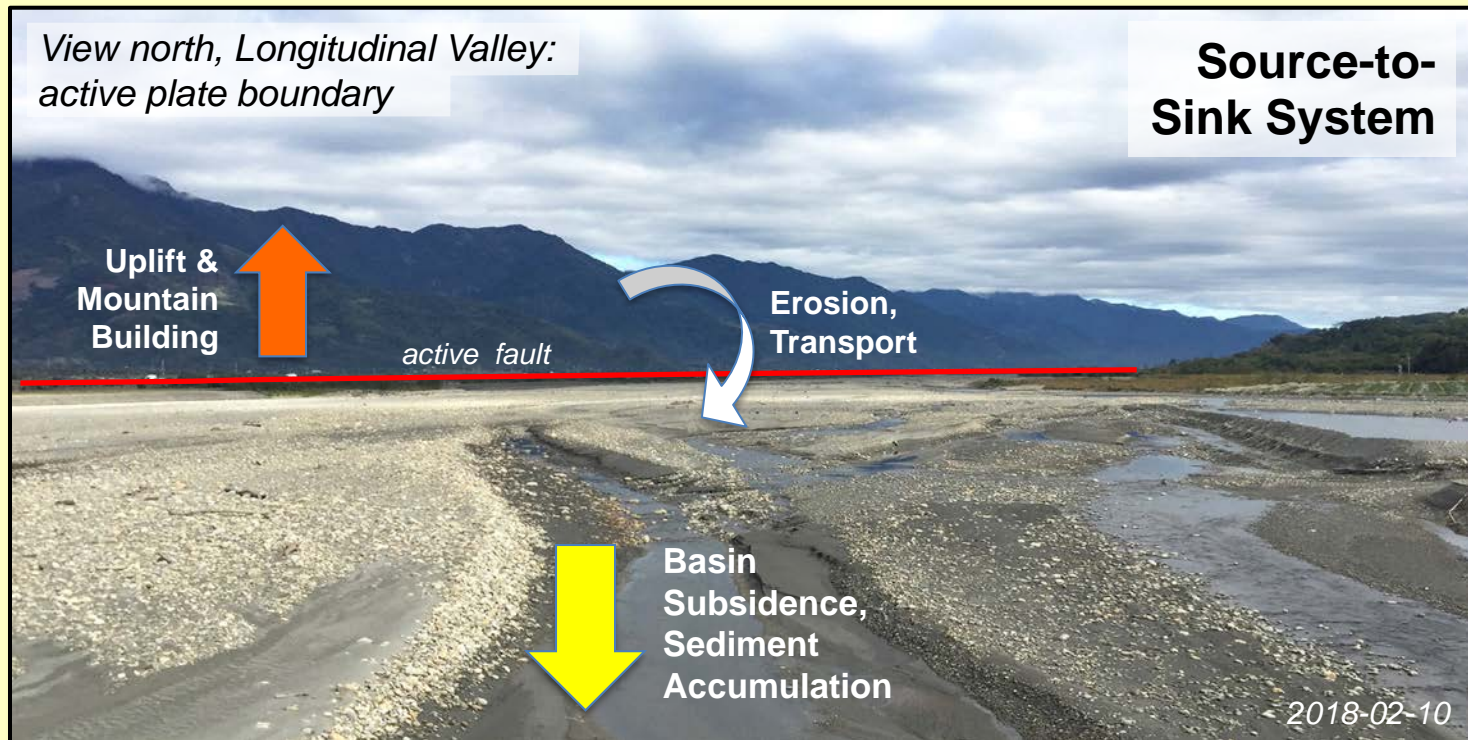


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And: Chih-Tung Chen, Wen-Rong Chi, Andrew Lin; Jiun-Yee Yen (NDHU); Yuan-Hsi Lee (NCCU)

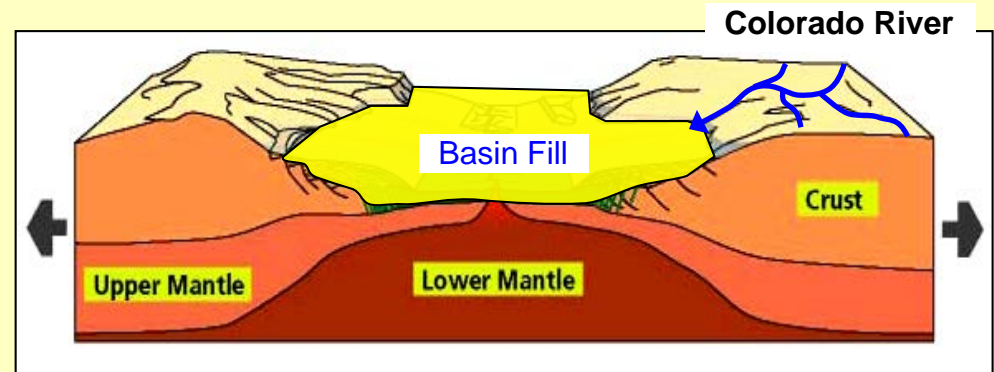


# Basin-forming processes in different tectonic settings: One example from each type

## (1) CONTINENTAL RIFT

### Southern California / NW Mexico

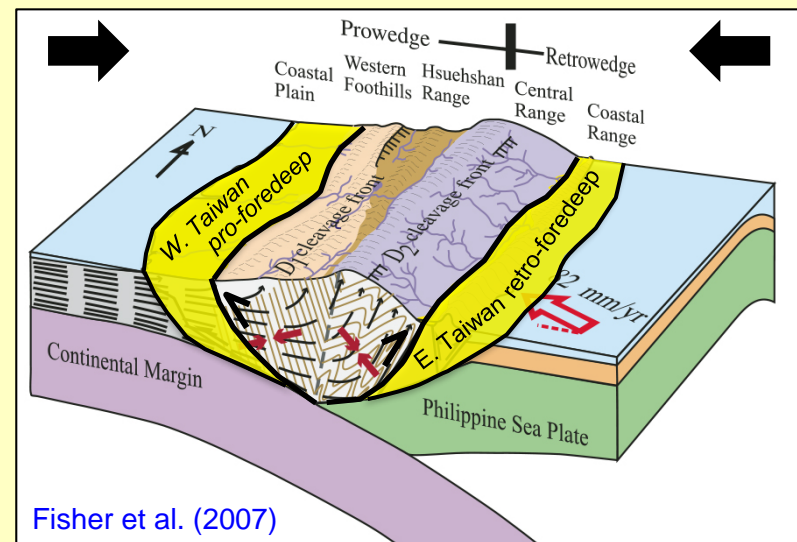
- Oblique-Divergent Plate Boundary
- Extension → Crustal *Thinning*
- Basins Form by Isostatic Subsidence
- Basins Fill with sediment from a single, ***slowly eroding*** large river source (Colorado River) in the past ~5 Myr.



## (2) COLLISIONAL OROGEN

### Taiwan: East Eurasian Margin

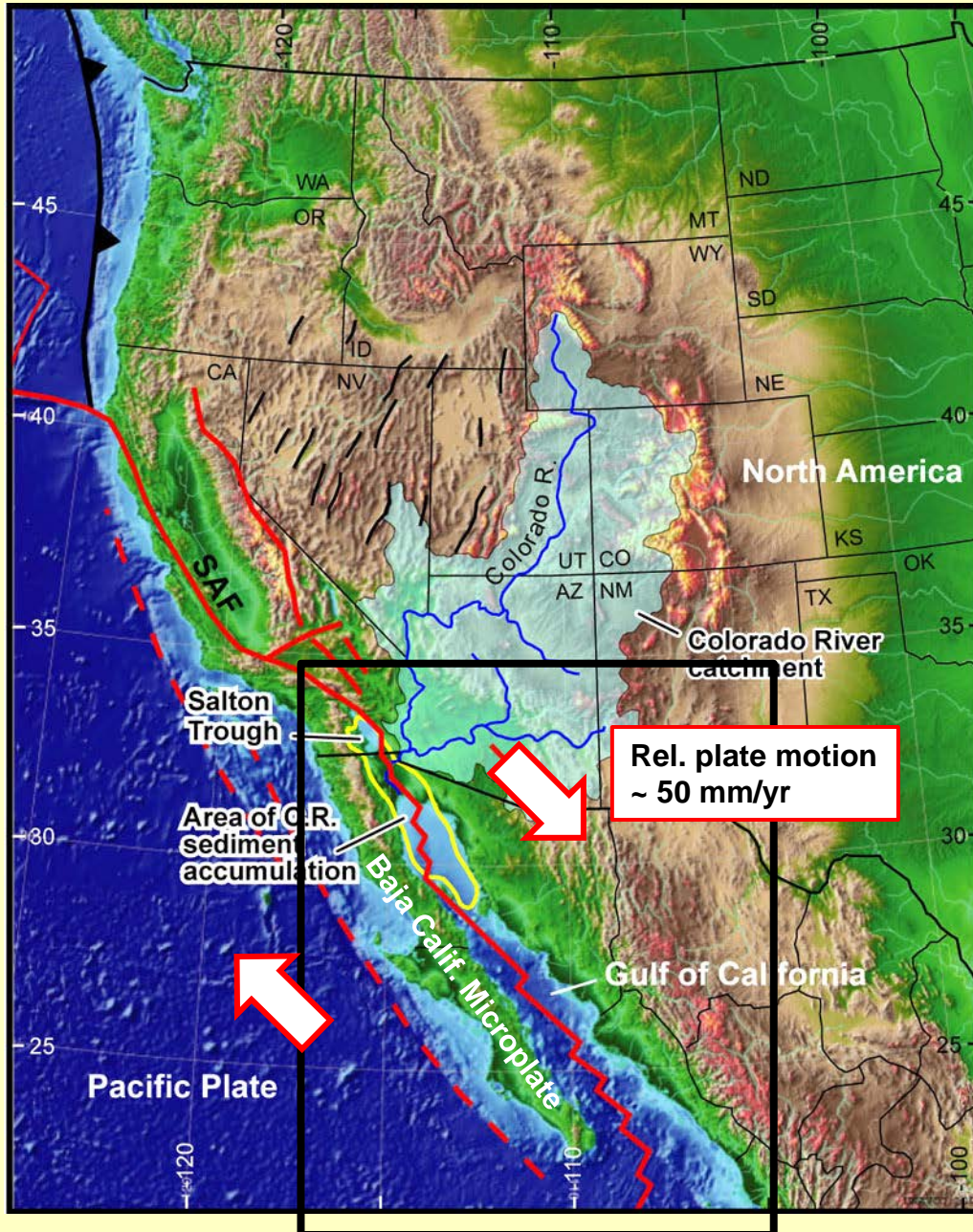
- Oblique-Convergent Arc-Continent Collision
- Shortening → Crustal *Thickening*
- Flexural Subsidence in western pro-foredeep, ... *and* in eastern retro-foredeep basin
- Basins Fill with sediment from multiple ***very rapidly eroding*** small rivers (~5 Myr).



**Sedimentary Basins:** Record of deformation, erosion, subsidence processes.



# (1) CONTINENTAL RIFT BASINS ... Western Margin of North America

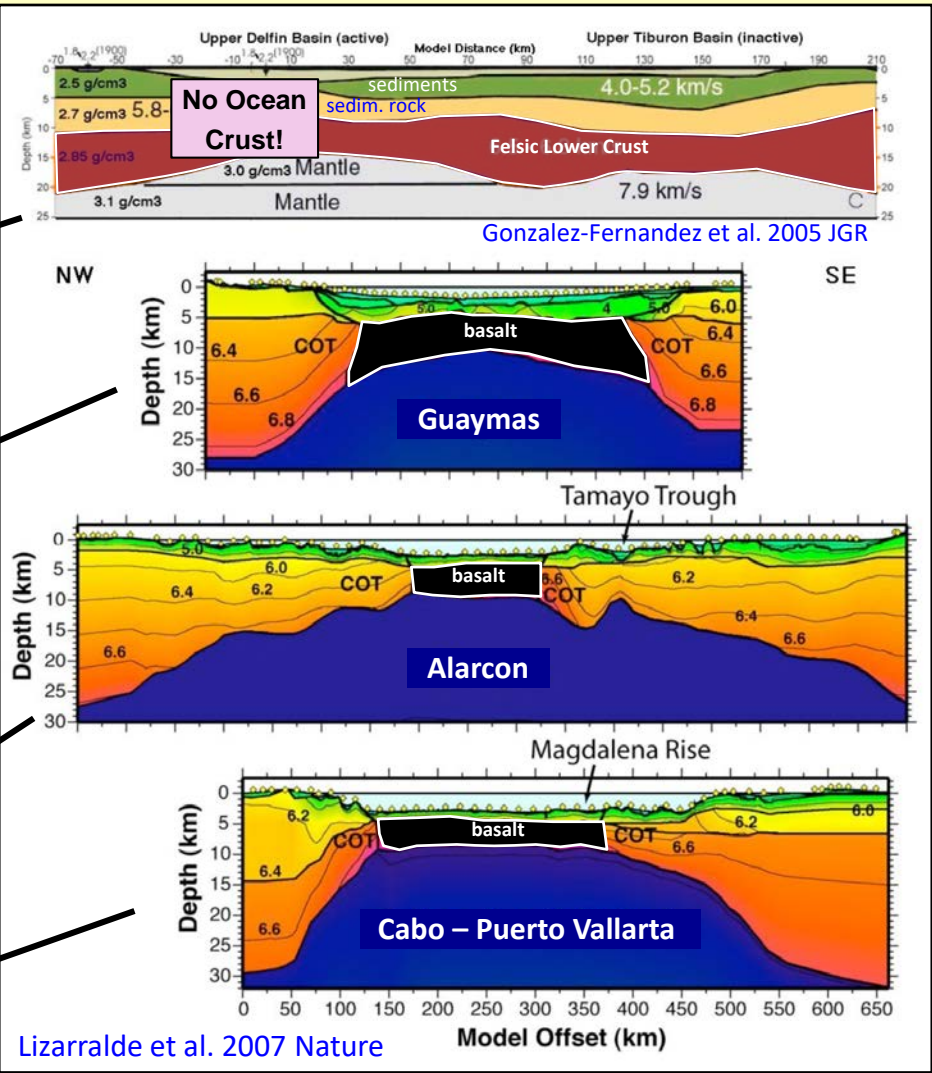
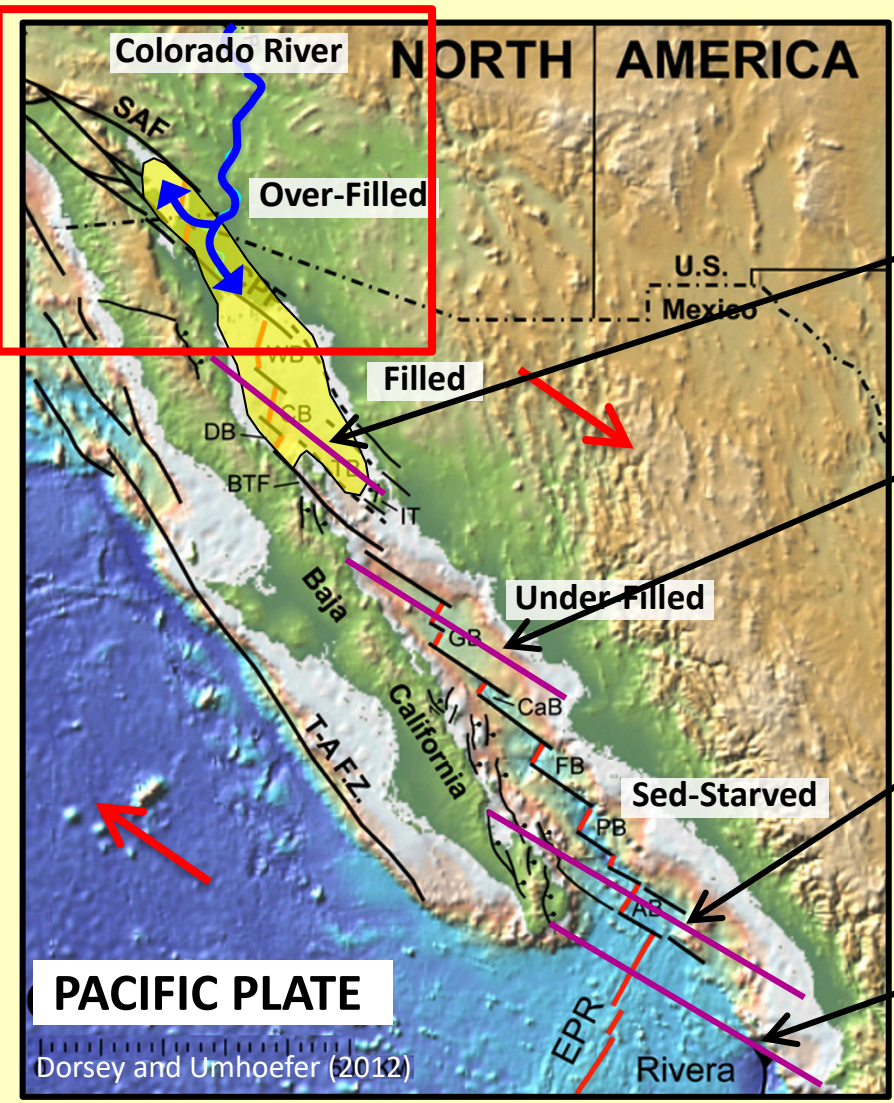


- Pacific-North America plate boundary:  $\sim 50$  mm/yr
- San Andreas Fault in north, Gulf of California in south
- Weak extension in Gulf of California started  $\sim 12$  Ma.
- Strain localized along plate boundary  $\sim 7-8$  Ma.
- Baja microplate moves with Pacific plate, rifting away from North America.
- Colorado River: large continent-interior catchment, huge sed flux to basins ...



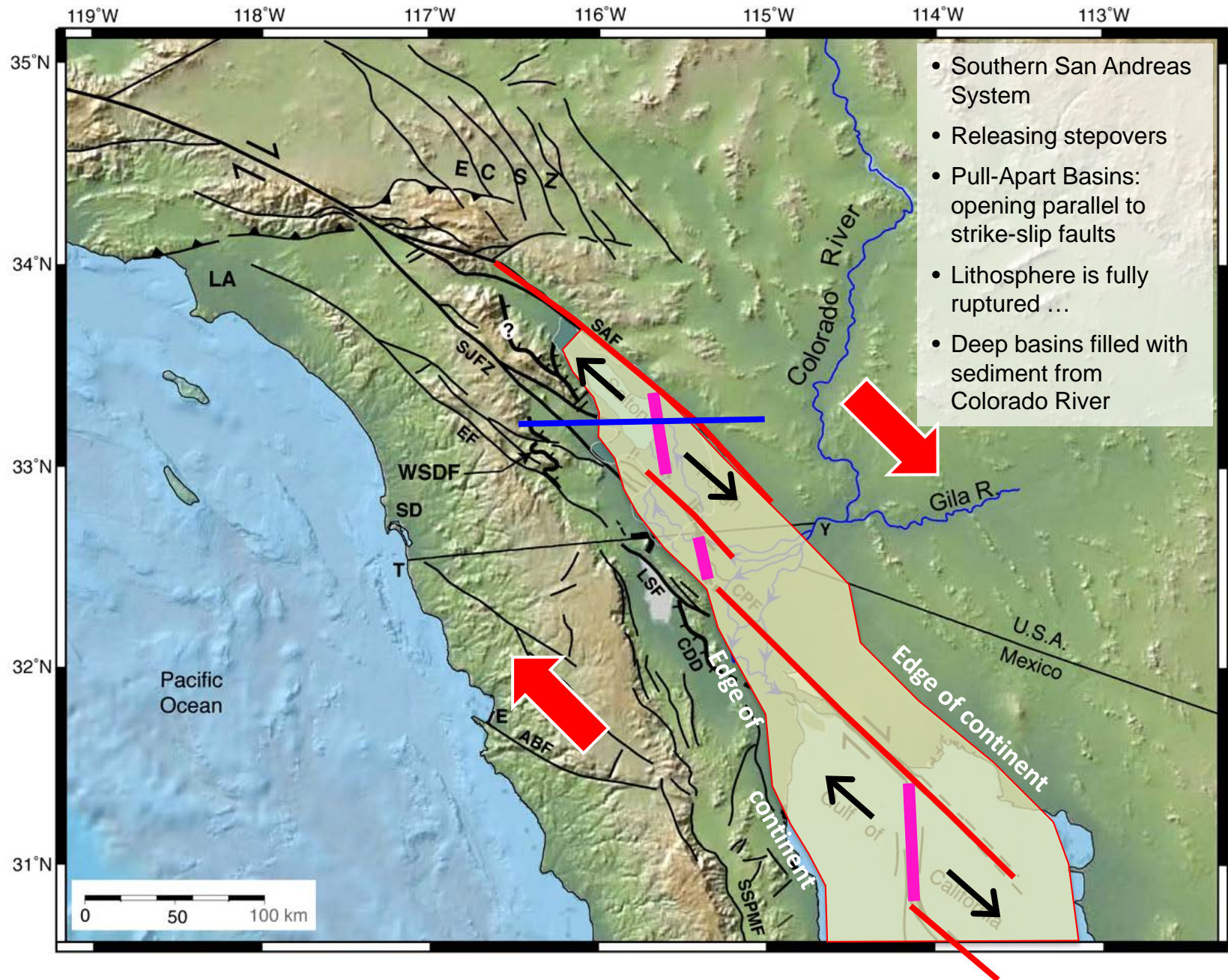
# Gulf of California and Salton Trough

- Amount and timing of oblique rifting same along strike: ~350-400 km since ca. 12 Ma.
- **Assess Role of Sediments:** input at point source in north (Colorado River)





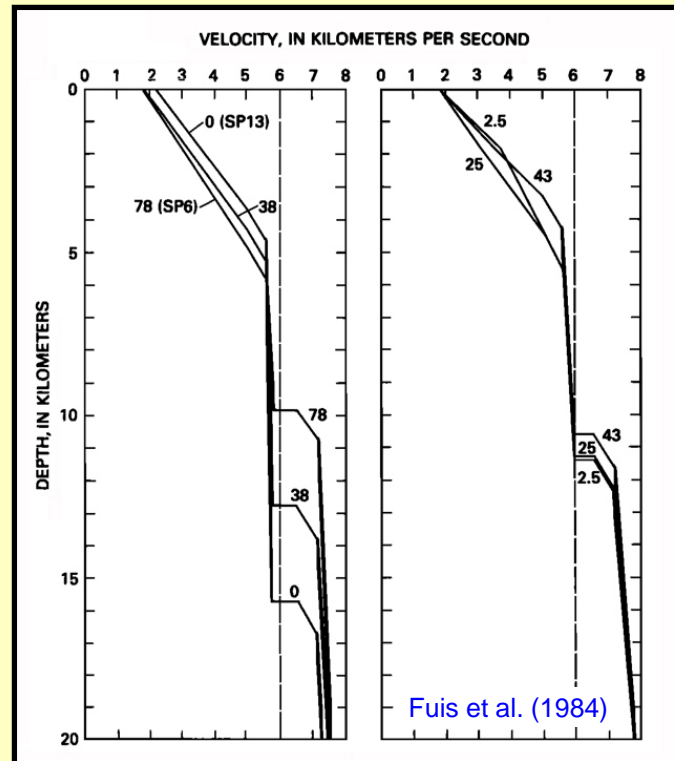
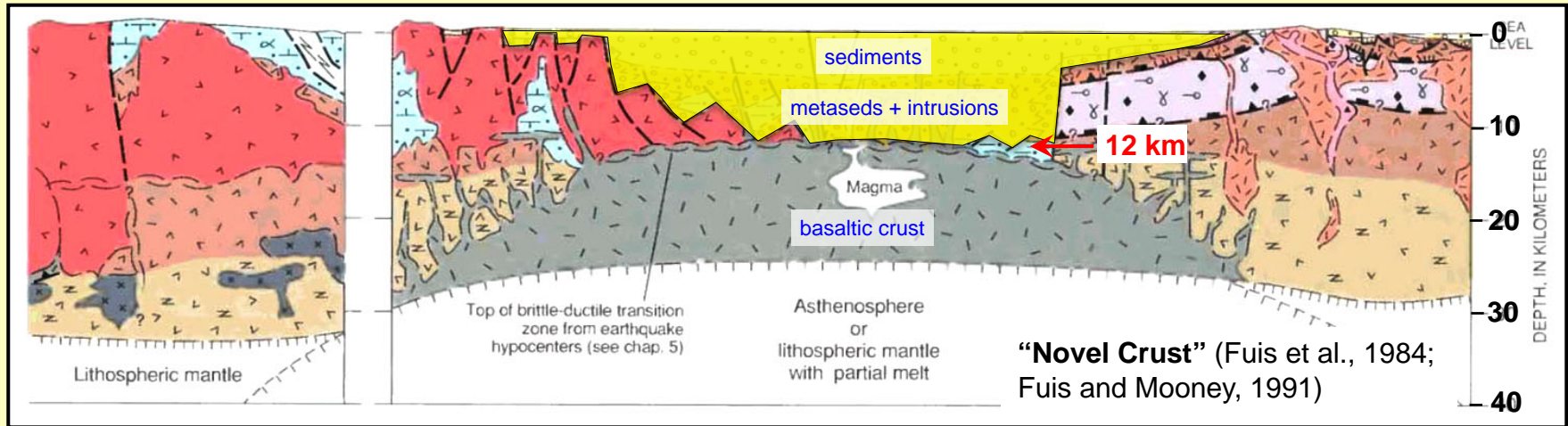
# Salton Trough and Northern Gulf of California



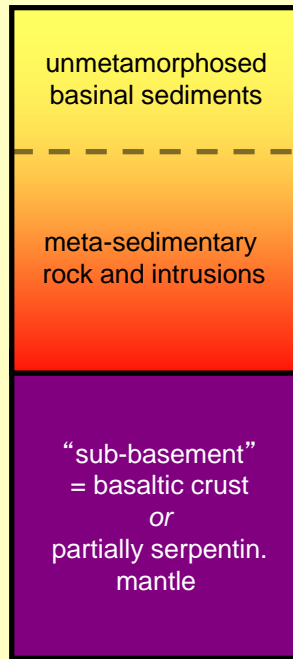
- Southern San Andreas System
- Releasing stepovers
- Pull-Apart Basins: opening parallel to strike-slip faults
- Lithosphere is fully ruptured ...
- Deep basins filled with sediment from Colorado River

# Crustal Model for Salton Trough (Fuis et al., 1984) – Seismic Refraction:

Lithosphere is fully ruptured. Young (post-5.3 Ma) Colorado River sediment and metaseds to depths of 10-12 km



... explains seismic refraction data, velocity structure



10-12 km in ca. 5 m.y. requires sed accum. rate  $\sim 2-3$  mm/yr, consistent with measured rates (Van Andel, 1964; Herzig et al., 1988; Schmitt and Hulen, 2008; Dorsey et al., 2011).

10-12 (abrupt increase in  $V_p$ )

Faster velocities (7.5-8.0 km/s) could be basaltic crust (Fuis et al., 1984) or partially serp. mantle (Nicolas, 1985).



## Colorado River:

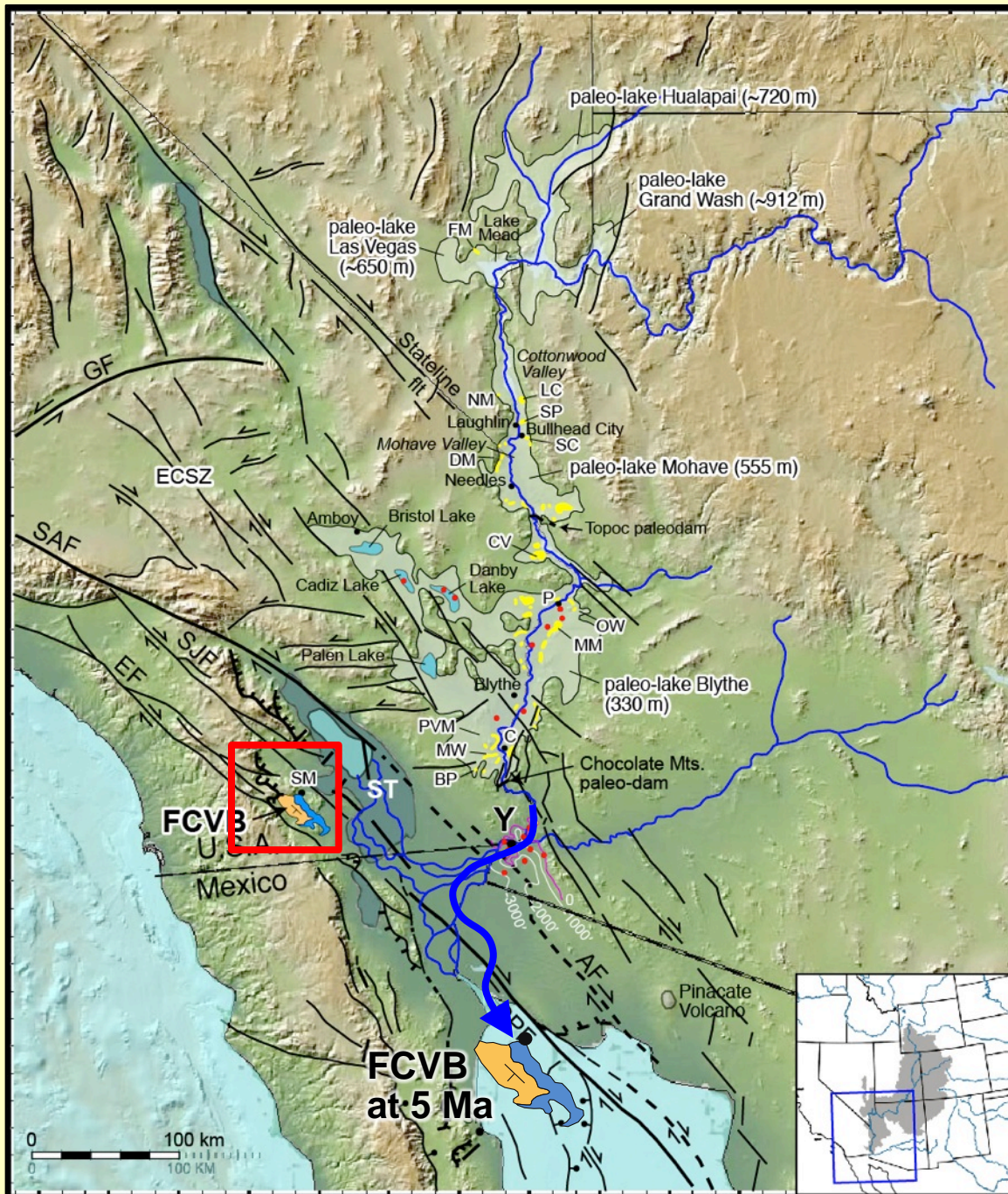
- Flows through complex transtensional domain:  
*Eastern Calif. Shear Zone*

- **Large Sediment Flux**  
to plate-boundary sed basins

- **Fish Creek – Vallecito Basin (FCVB):** Late Cz deposits. Filled with thick Col. River sediment starting ~5.3 Ma.

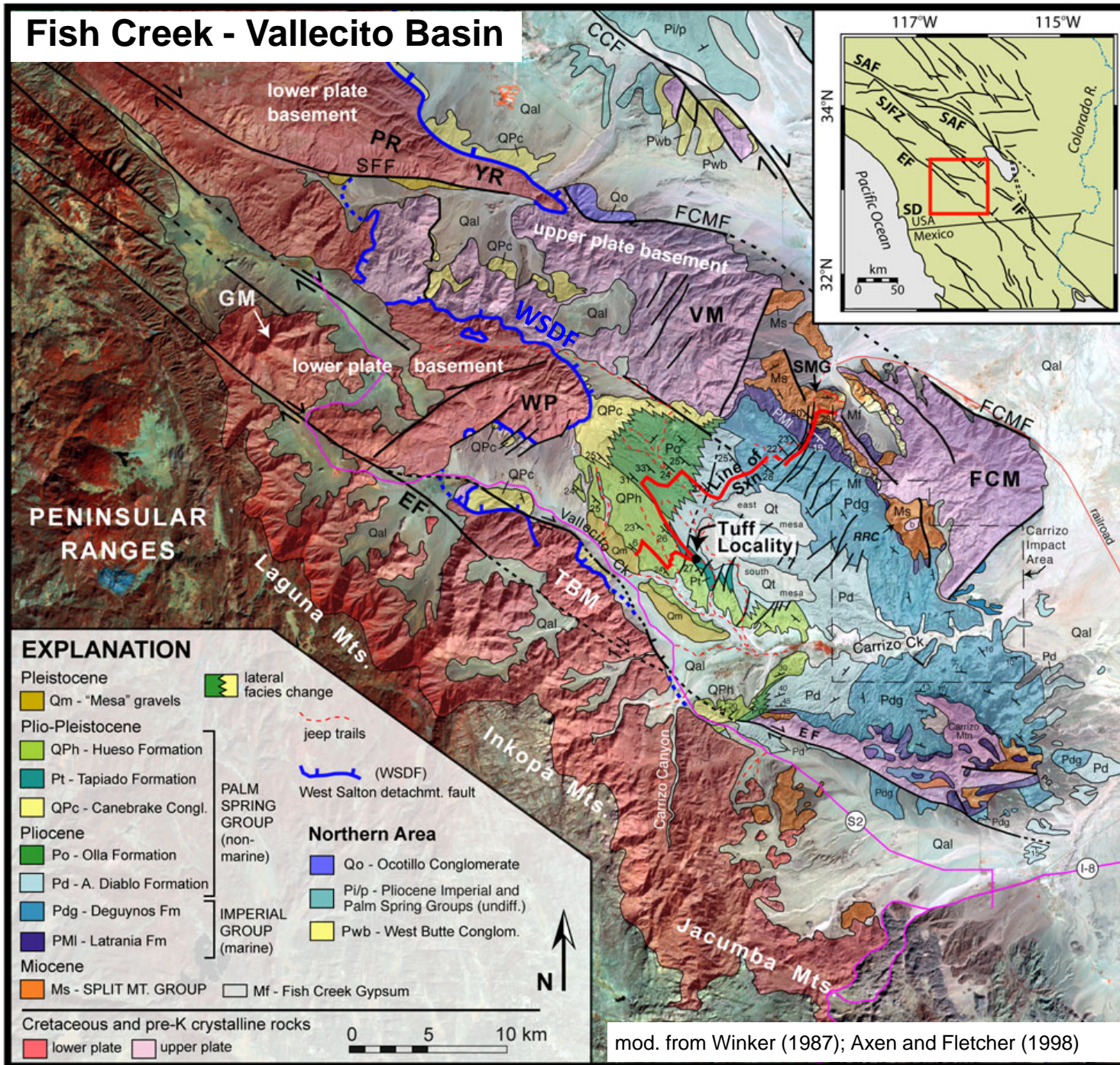
- **Well Exposed** due to recent uplift on young strike-slip faults (initiated ~1.2 Ma) ...

- **FCVB Restores** to position south of the mouth of Colorado River at ca. 5 Ma.





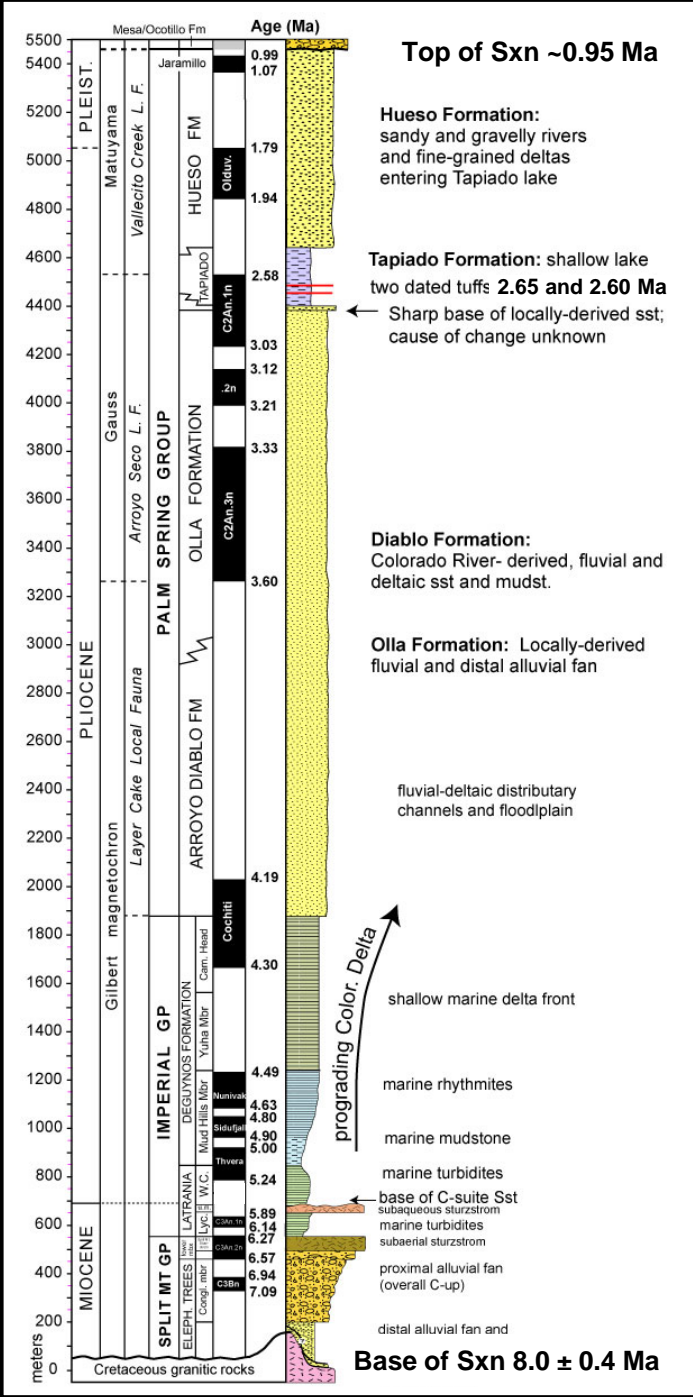
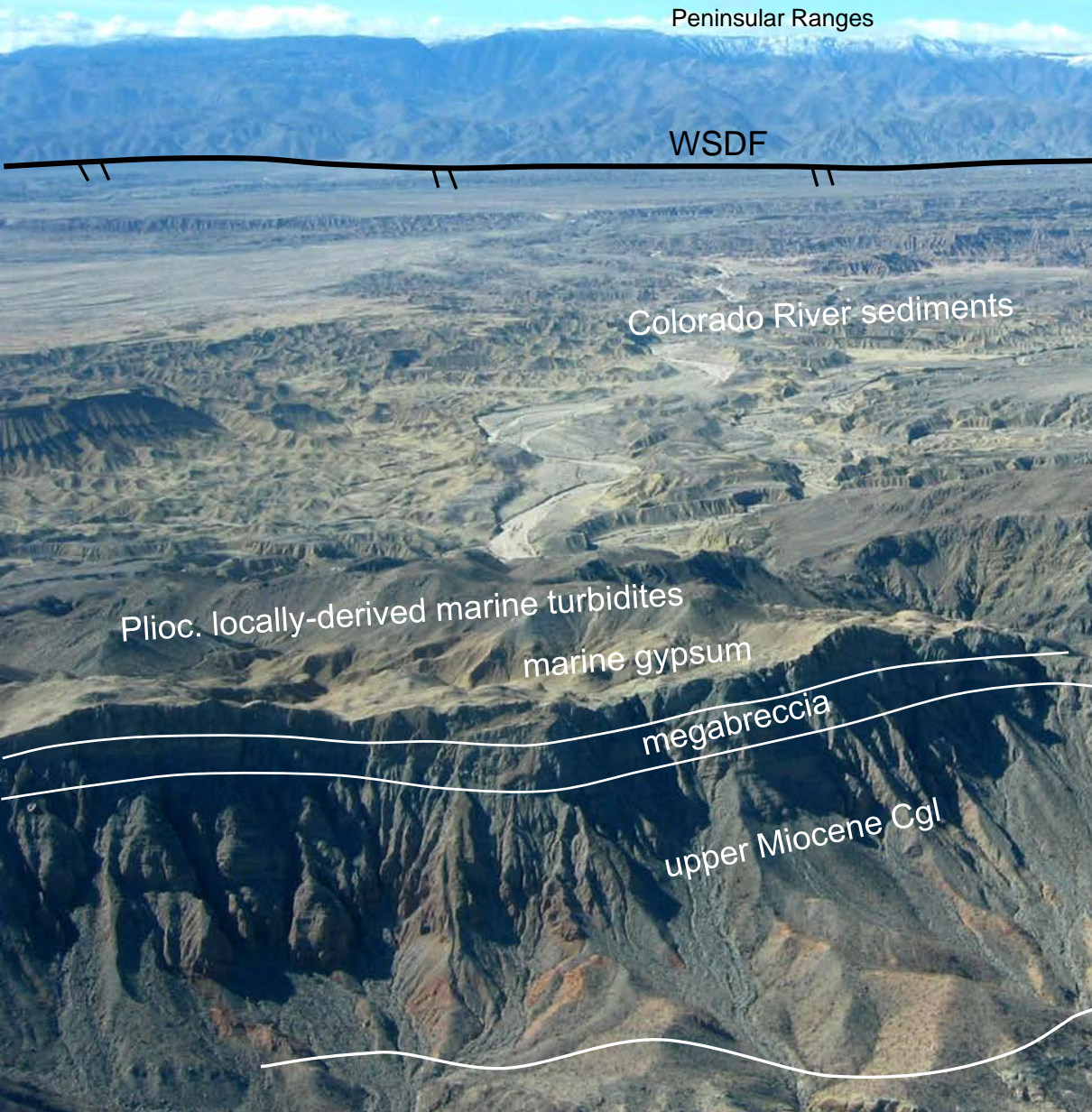
# Fish Creek - Vallecito Basin



mod. from Winker (1987); Axen and Fletcher (1998)



**SE Collaborators** Gary Axen, Susanne Janecke, Bernie Housen, Kris McDougall  
 (N.M. Tech) (Utah State Univ.) (WWU) (USGS)



**Top of Sxn ~0.95 Ma**

**Hueso Formation:**  
sandy and gravelly rivers and fine-grained deltas entering Tapiado lake

**Tapiado Formation:** shallow lake  
two dated tuffs **2.65 and 2.60 Ma**  
Sharp base of locally-derived sst; cause of change unknown

**Diablo Formation:**  
Colorado River- derived, fluvial and deltaic sst and mudst.

**Olla Formation:** Locally-derived fluvial and distal alluvial fan

fluvial-deltaic distributary channels and floodplain

shallow marine delta front

marine rhythmites

marine mudstone

marine turbidites

base of C-suite Sst

subaqueous sturzstrom

marine turbidites

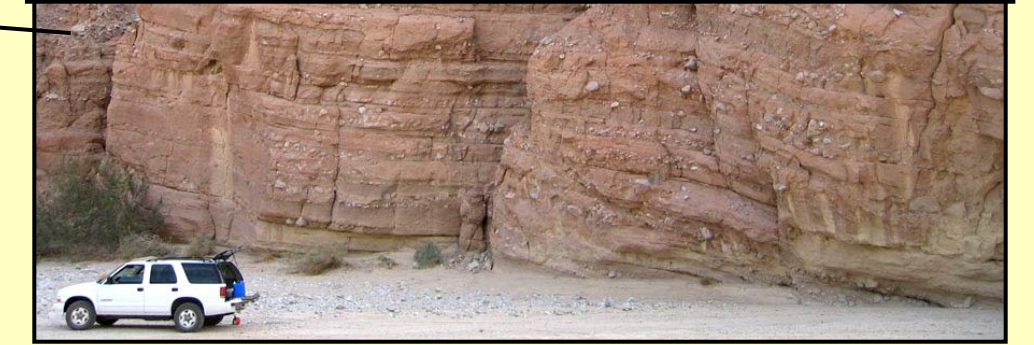
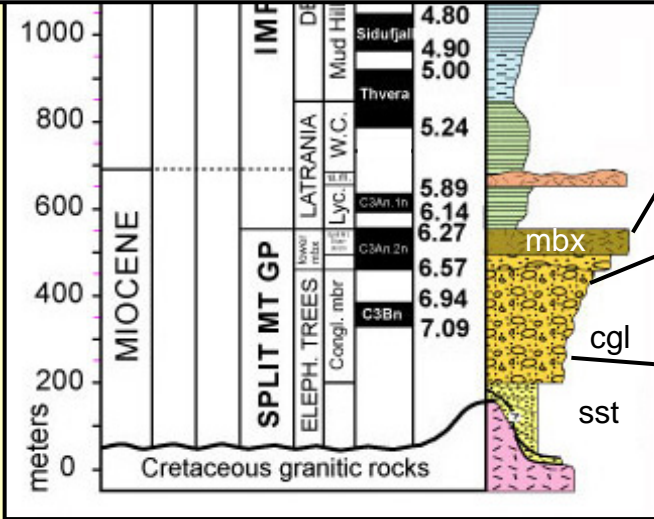
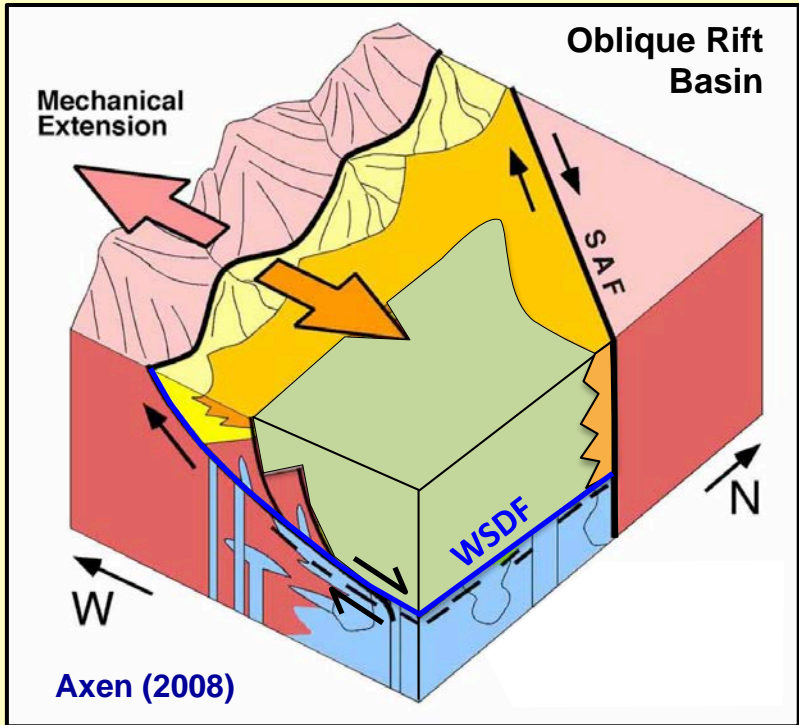
subaerial sturzstrom

proximal alluvial fan (overall C-up)

distal alluvial fan and

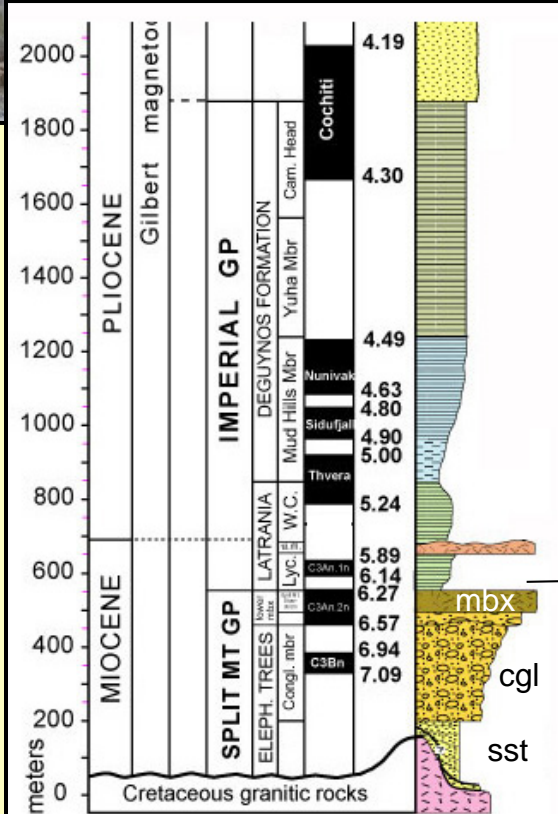
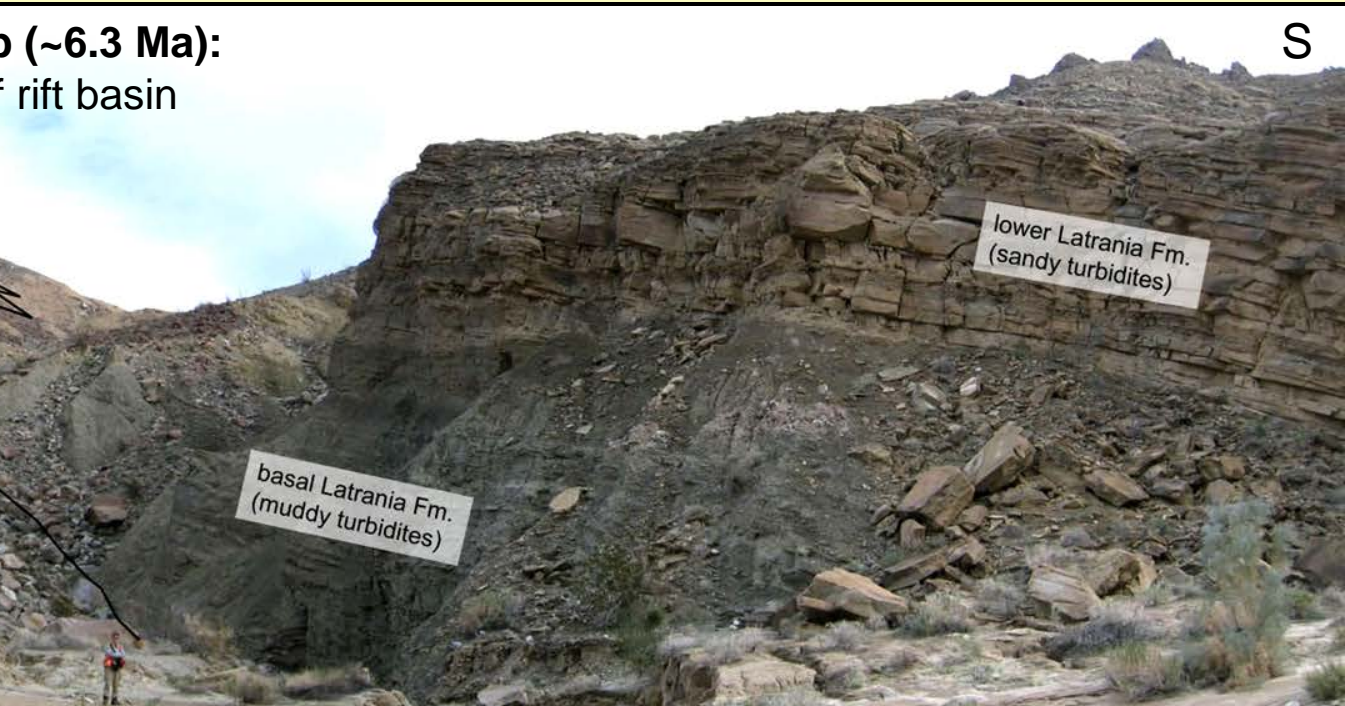
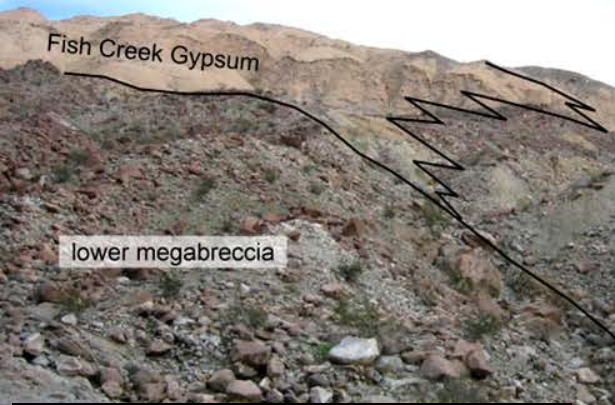
**Base of Sxn 8.0 ± 0.4 Ma**







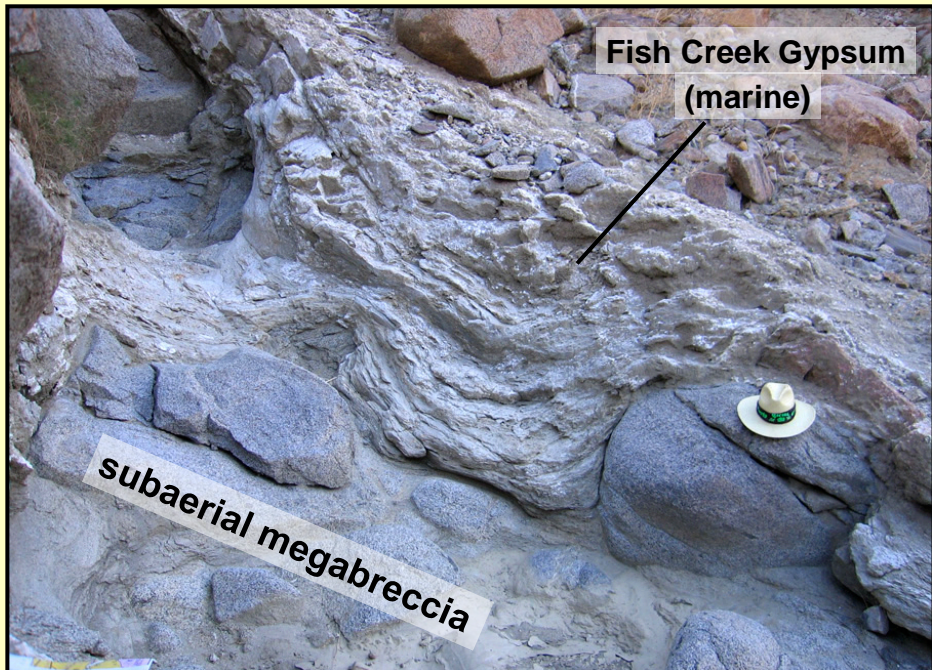
# N Base of Imperial Group (~6.3 Ma): Rapid marine flooding of rift basin



marine gypsum and turbidites

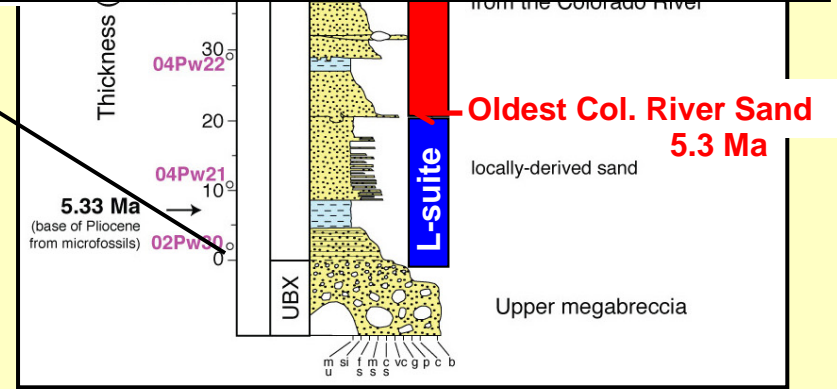
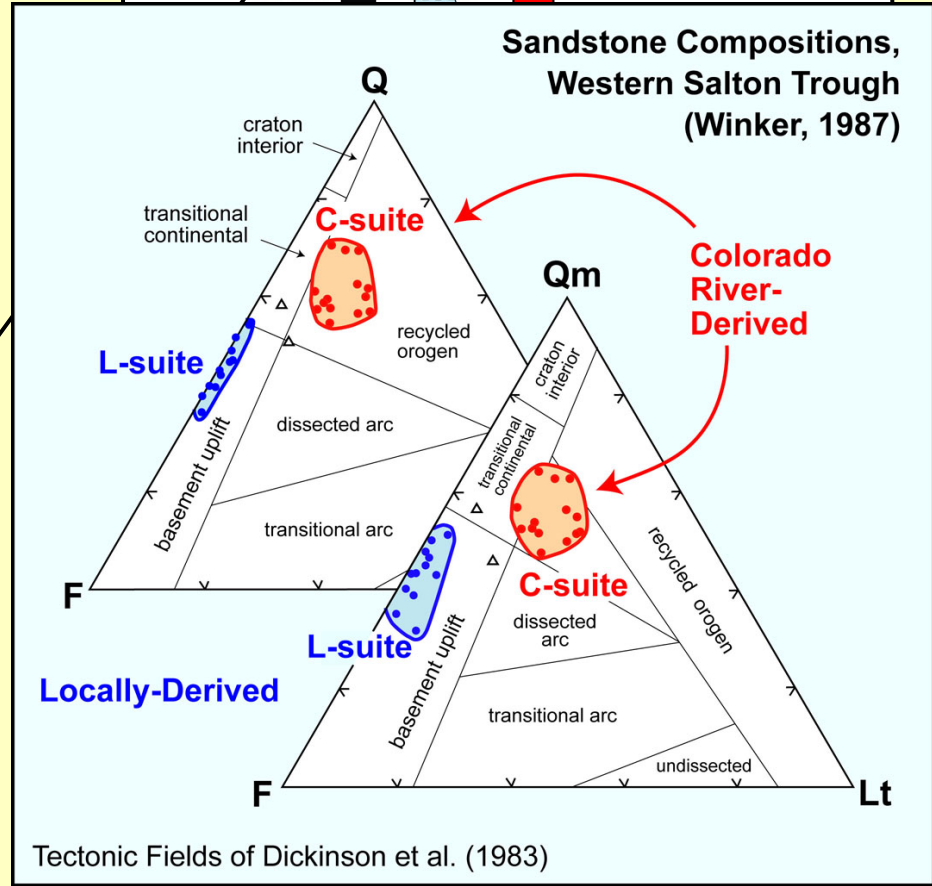
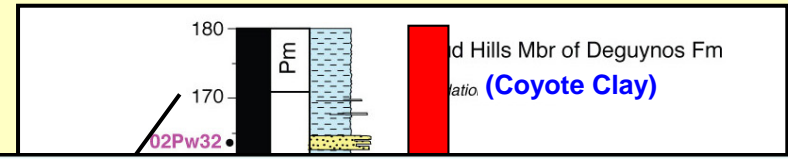
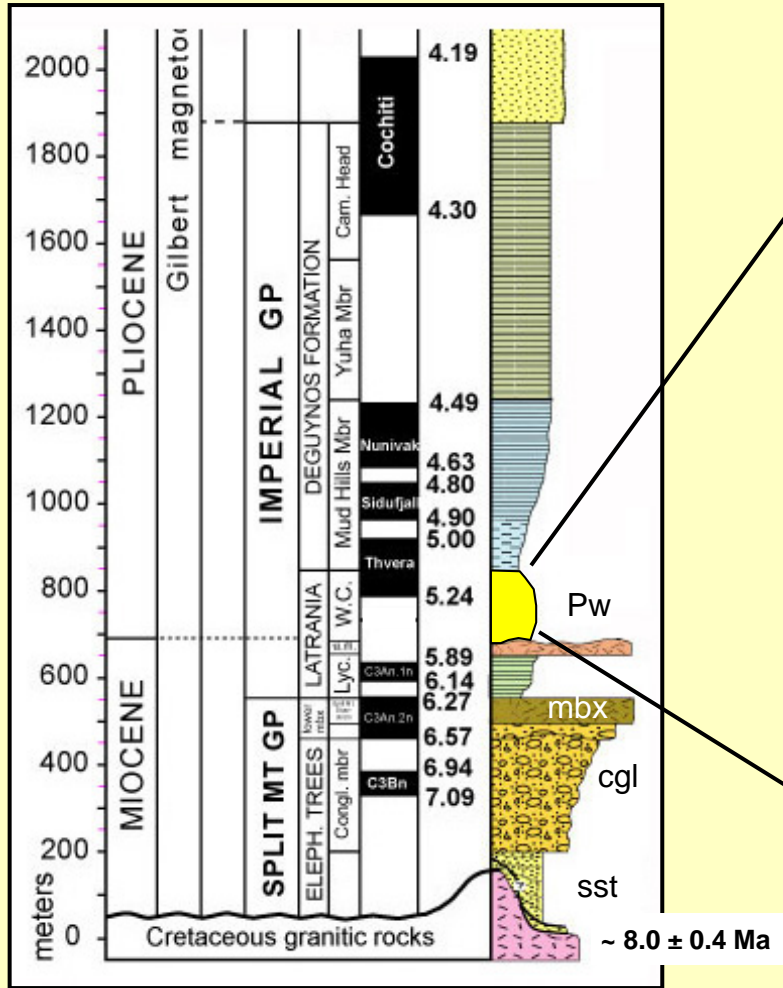
cgl

sst

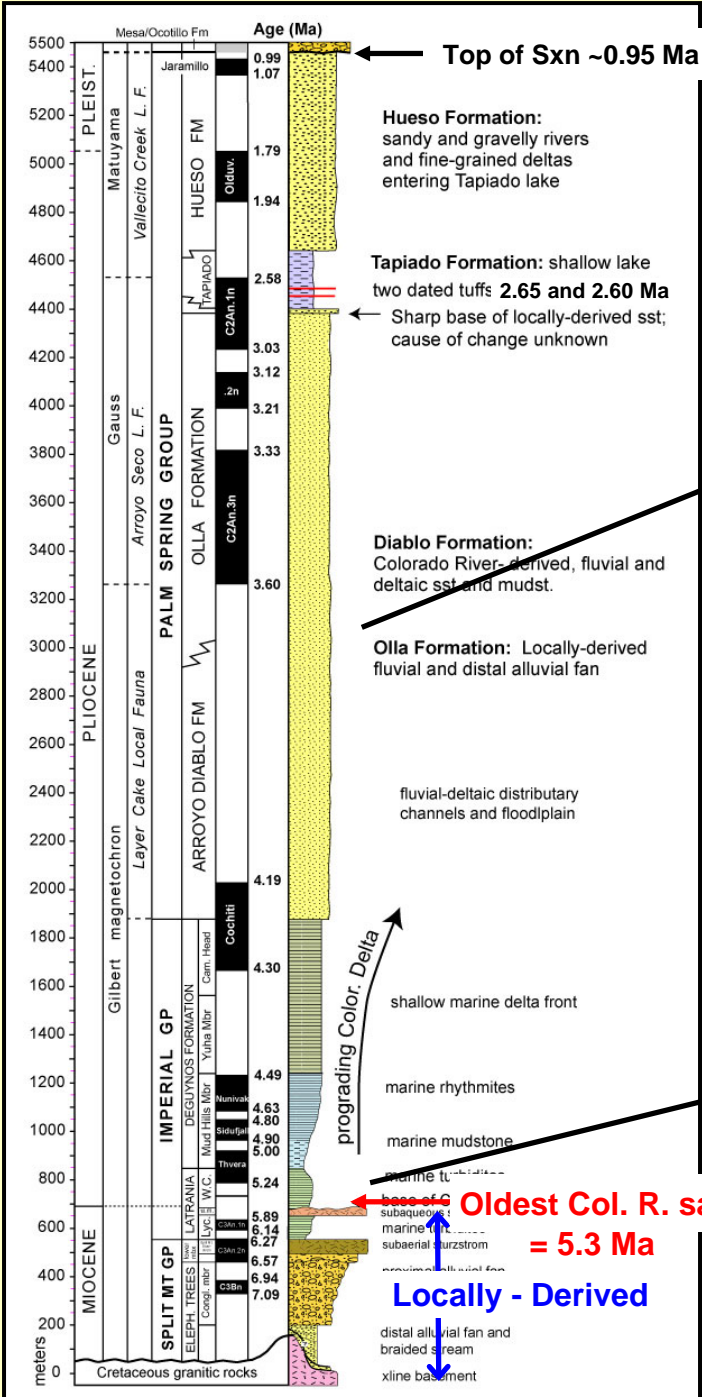




# First arrival of Colorado River sand (in marine turbidites)







## Colorado River sediments (A. Diablo Fm)



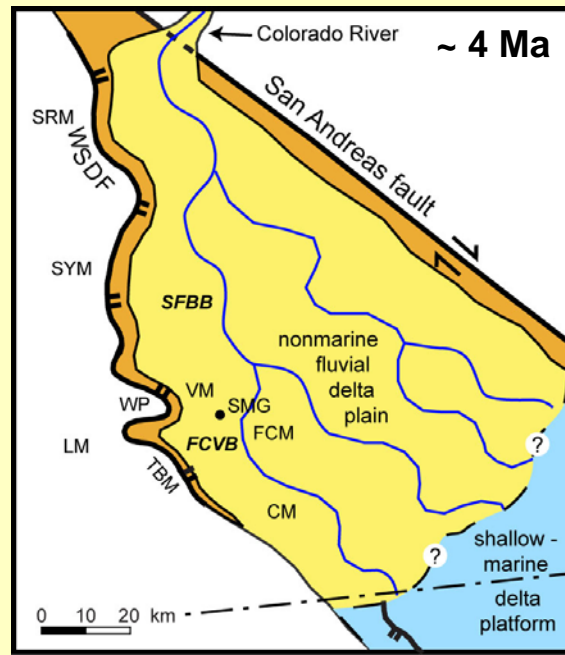
## marine turbidites (Wind Caves Mbr)



# Sediment Budget / Mass Balance

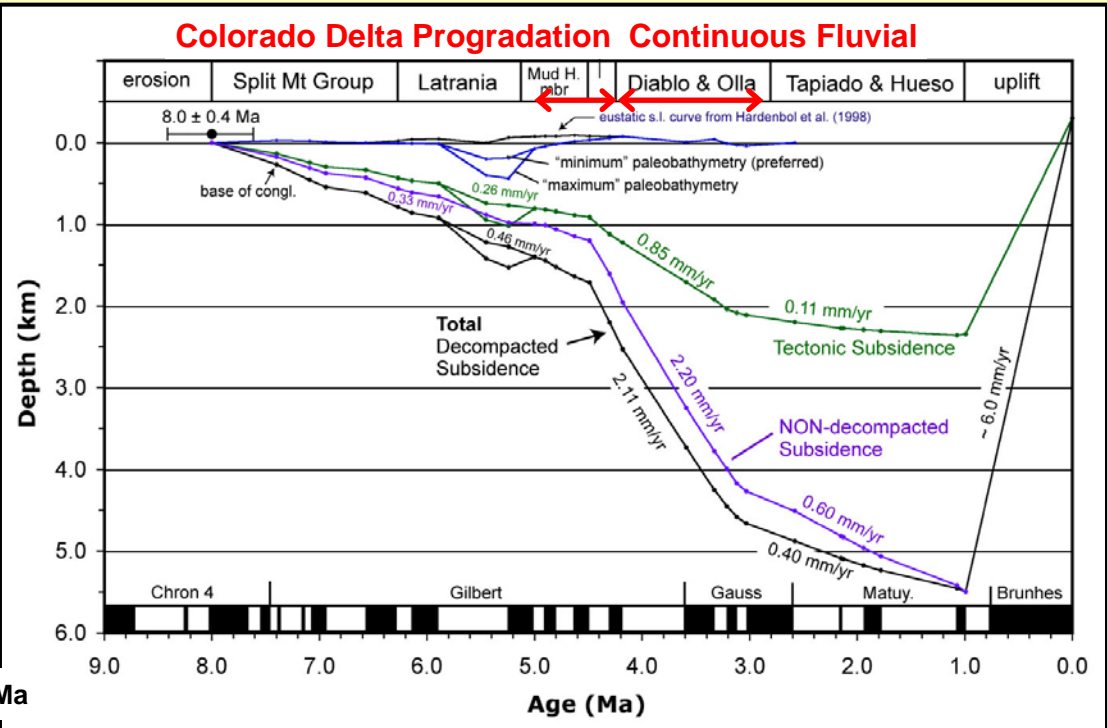
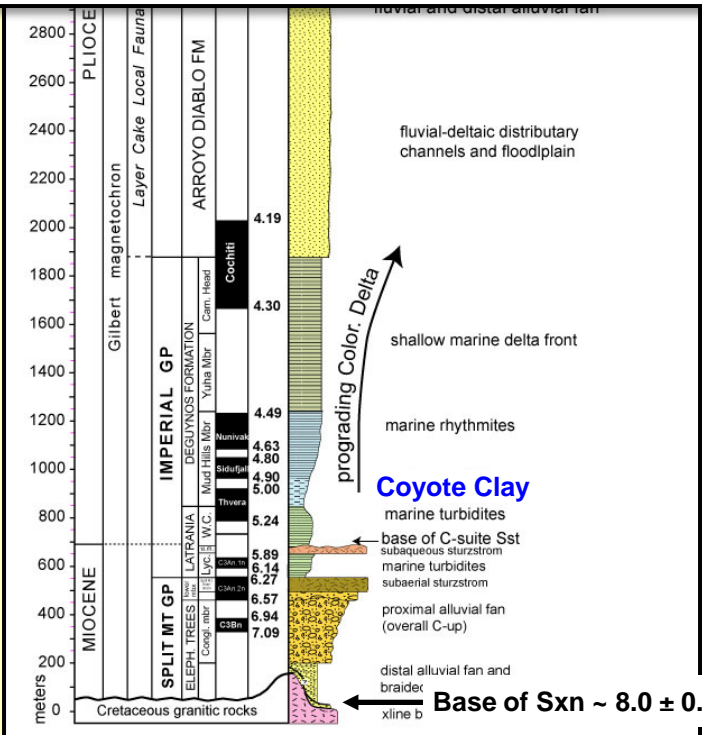
(Dorsey & Lazear, 2015; Dorsey et al., 2018)

- **Total C.R. Sed Volume in Basins:**  
 $2.8 \pm 0.6 \times 10^5 \text{ km}^3$ , since 5.3 Ma
- **Early Pliocene (5.3–5.0 Ma) river sediment discharge:**  $\sim 5\text{-}10 \text{ Mt/yr}$
- **Short-lived hiatus (Coyote Clay)**
- **Post-4.8 Ma sediment discharge:**  
 $172 \pm 66 \text{ Mt/yr}$  (= modern C.R. flux)
- **Suggests major increase in river sediment output at  $\sim 4.8 \text{ Ma}$ .**



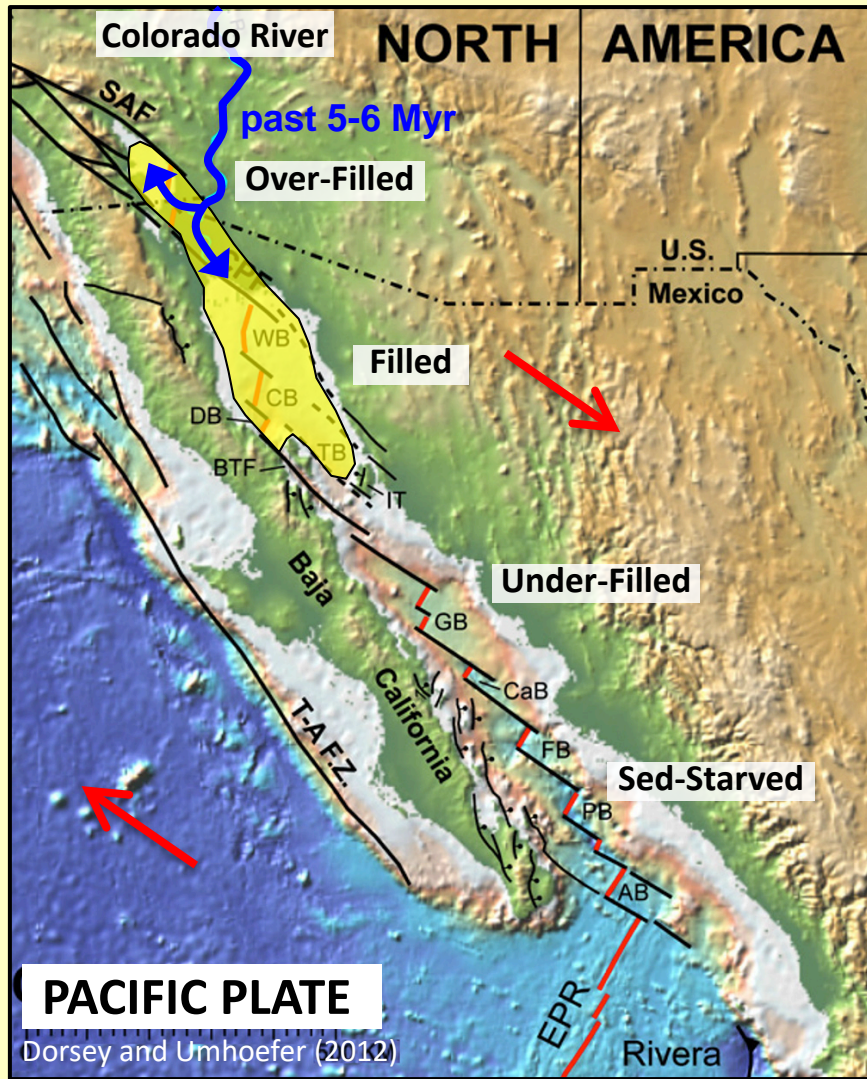
**Delta Prograded** during abrupt increase in subsidence rate, fluvial conditions persisted during rapid subsidence.

Requires large increase in sediment flux rate. Seen in other **supply-driven delta systems** (Goodbred and Kuehl, 2000; Carvajal and Steel, 2006)

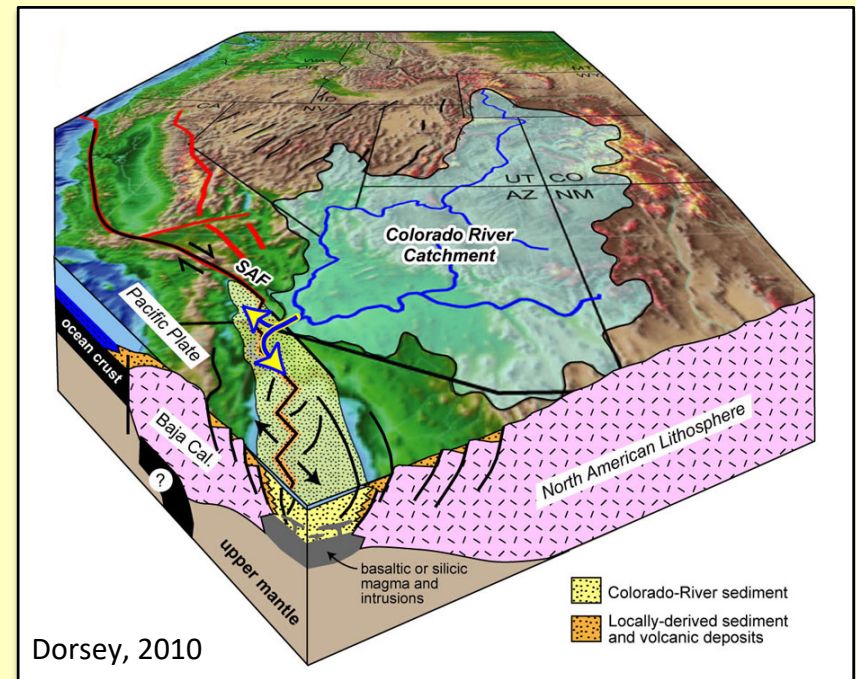




# Complex Feedbacks: Extension, Subsidence; Voluminous Sediment Input; Paleo-Depositional Environments; Crustal Composition & Architecture ...



- Inhibits creation of basaltic crust, Prevent formation of new ocean basin
- Creates a new generation of crust: 10-12 km of metasediment with intrusions.
- Important process of crustal recycling, likely active in other rift systems.



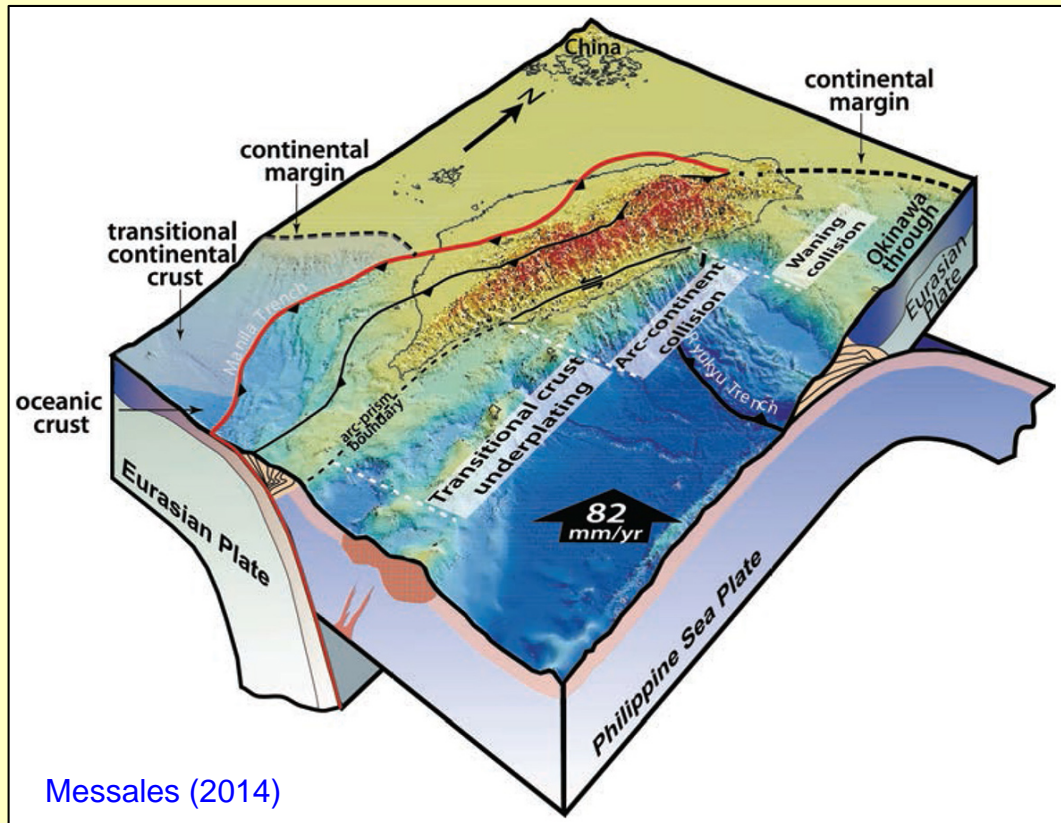


## (2) COLLISIONAL OROGEN: Taiwan

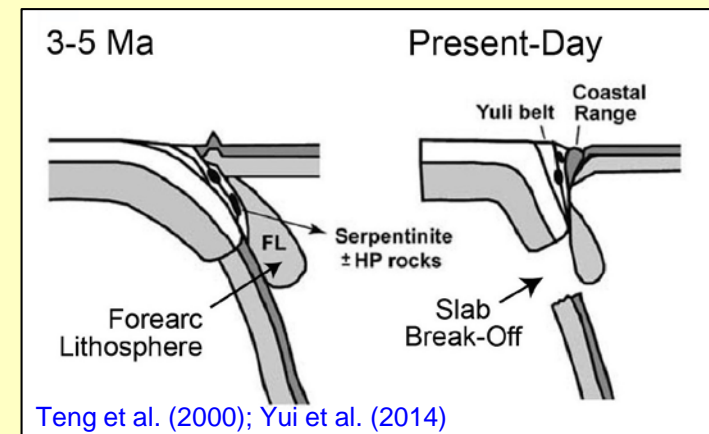
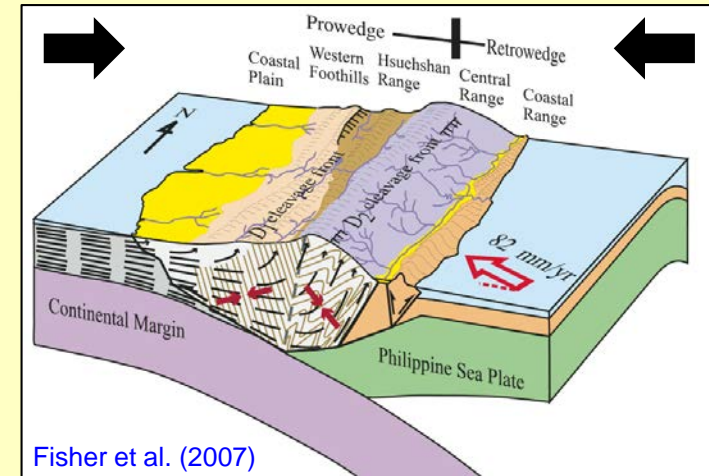
Test popular tectonic model: Doubly vergent orogenic wedge

### TAIWAN: Modern arc-continent collision

Feedbacks: mountain building, uplift, erosion, sediment routing, basin subsidence & filling

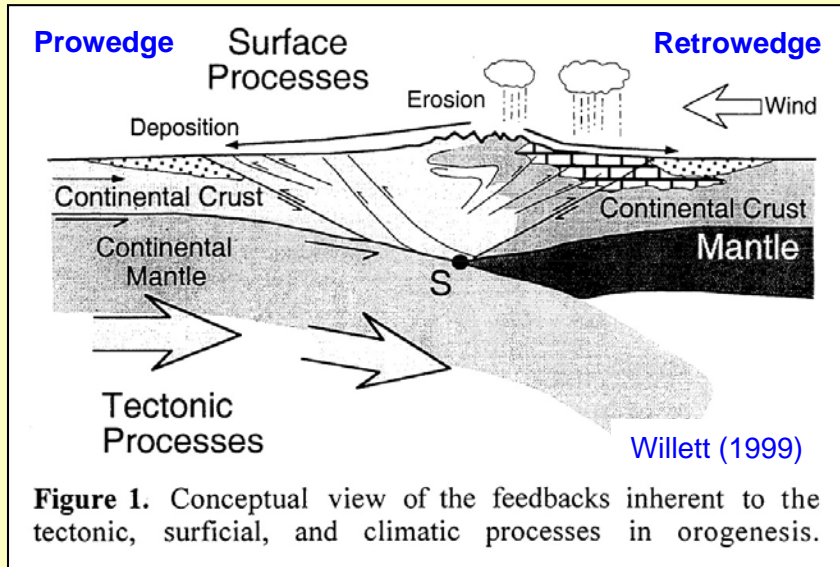


### Tectonic Models (many)

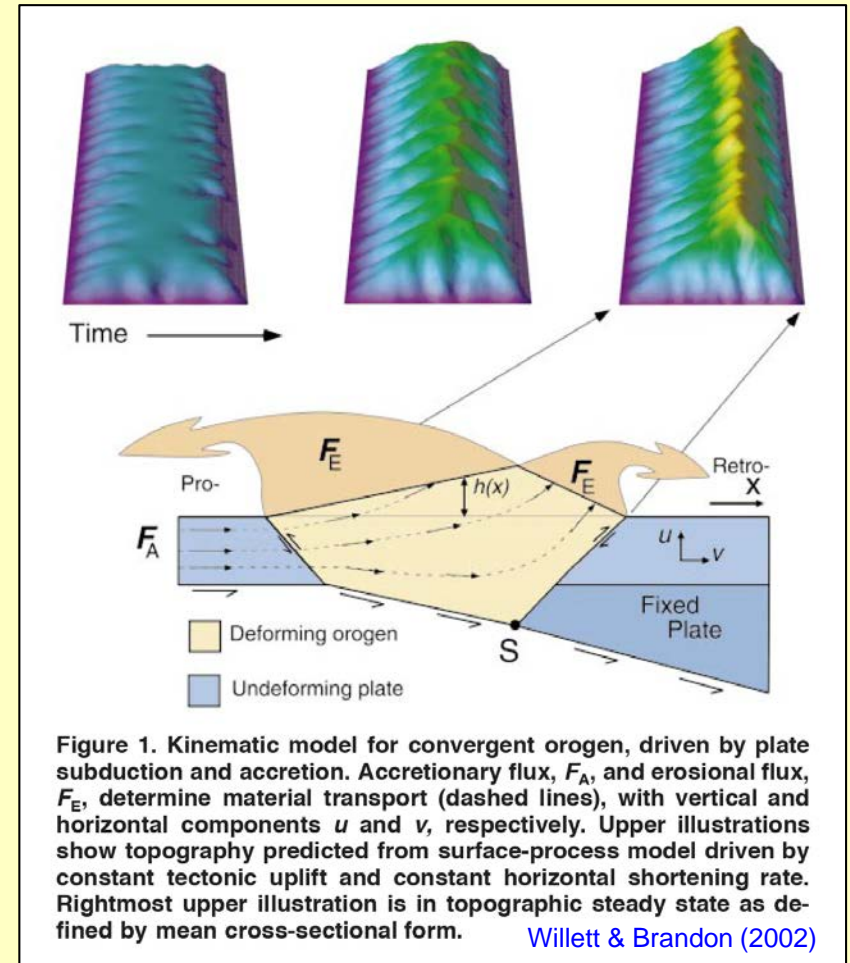




# Doubly-Vergent Orogenic Wedge Model: General



- 2D finite-element model: critical wedge undergoing visco-plastic crustal deformation and erosion ...
  - Flux of material into orogen by accretion (on left) is balanced by erosion of material from the surface.
  - Surface Erosion: set of physical rules that simulate fluvial incision and hillslope diffusion.
  - Mass flux results in advection of crust ...  
*through the prowedge into the retrowedge*
  - **Assumes topographic and flux steady-state**
- (Willett et al., 1993; Willett, 1999; other papers)

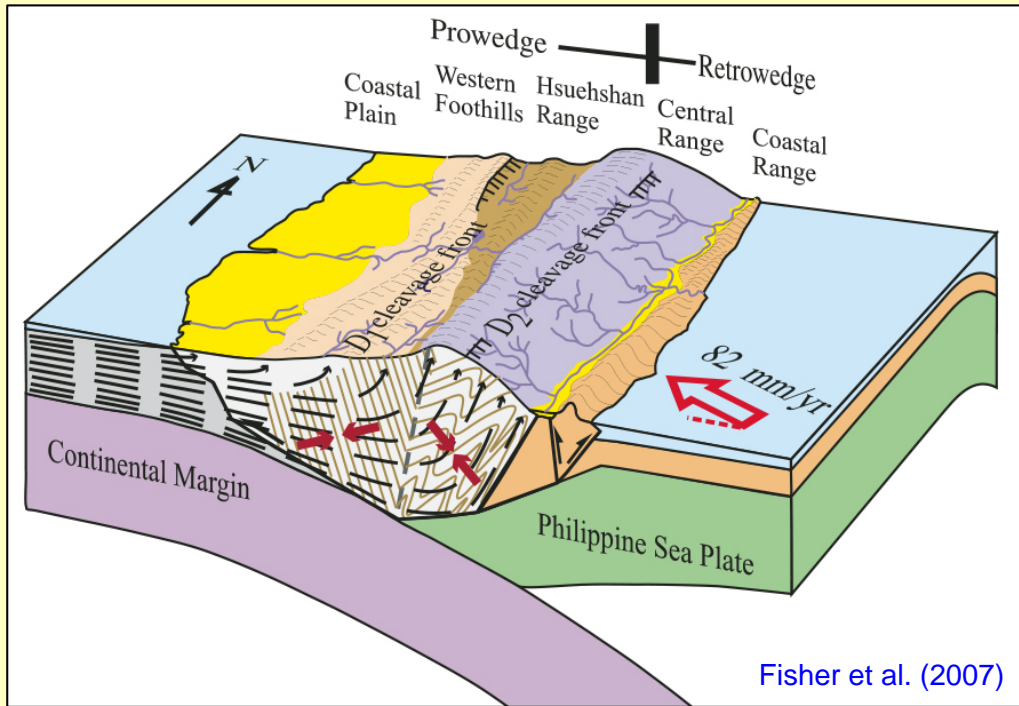


## ASSUMPTIONS:

- (1) Long-term steady state balance.
- (2) Little or no transfer of crust from over-riding plate into the orogenic wedge.

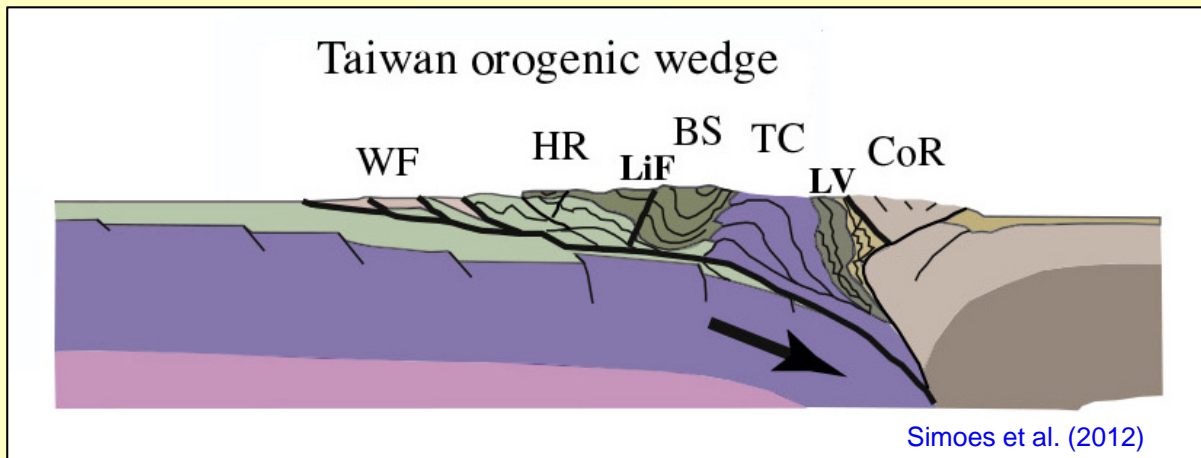


# Doubly-Vergent Orogenic Wedge Model: Applied to Taiwan



## Taiwan Collisional Orogen:

- Low-taper prowedge verges toward the subducting plate (Eurasia)
- High-taper retrowedge verges toward over-riding plate (PSP)
- Crest of the range is the boundary between the opposing wedges.
- **No transfer of crust** from Philippine Sea Plate into orogenic wedge
- **Assumes steady-state behavior.**

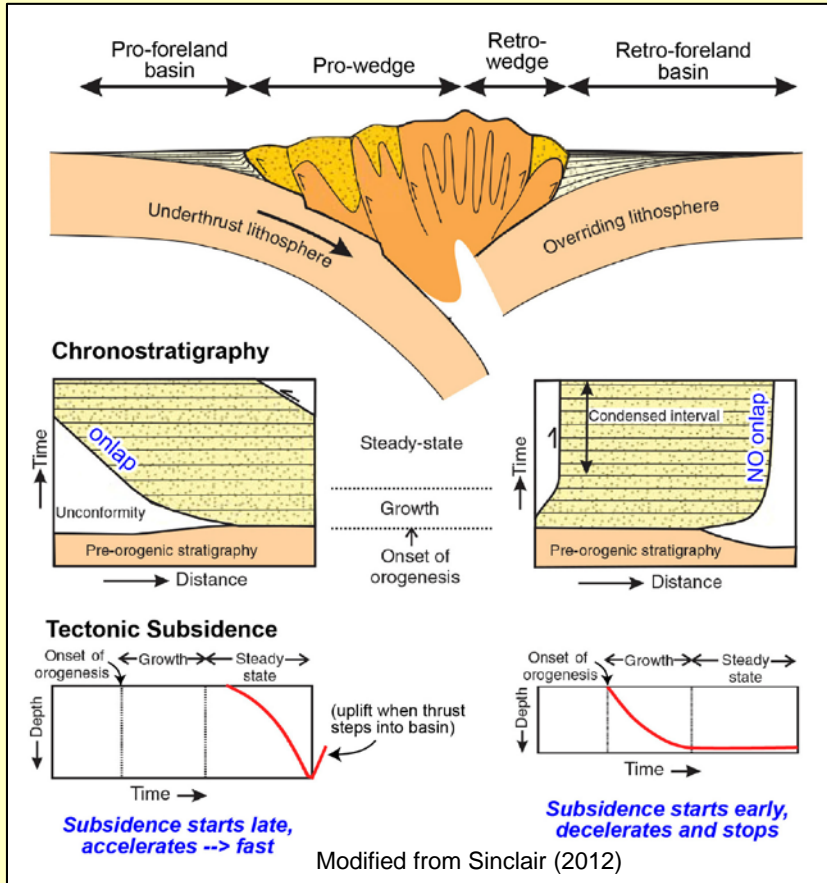


## In these models:

- **Tananao Complex (Yuli & Tailuko belts)** = crust of Eurasian margin, under-plated into thrust belt.
- **No transfer of crust** from Philippine Sea Plate into orogenic wedge.



# Predictions of the Doubly-Vergent Wedge Model for Sedimentary Basins



## Pro-foreland basin (FLEXURAL SUBSIDENCE):

- **Thrust belt migrates toward basin ...**
- Subsidence driven by subduction of plate beneath the orogen: starts slow, accelerates → fast.
- Abrupt change to uplift when basin is incorporated into the converging-migrating thrust belt.

## Retro-foreland basin (ALSO FLEXURAL):

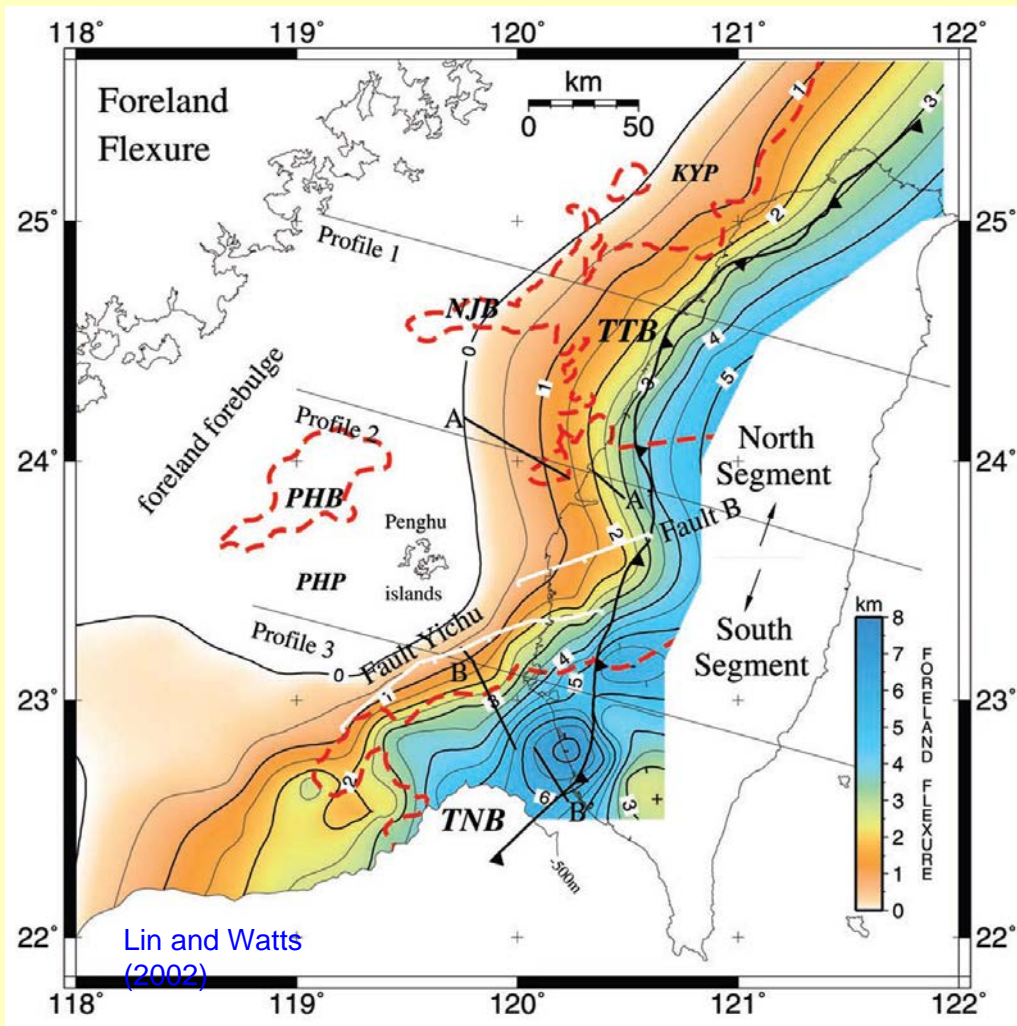
- **Thrust belt does not migrate toward basin ...**
- Subsidence is slow because the only driver is intermittent growth of the retro-wedge.
- No uplift at end, not incorporated into thrust belt.

“Type examples include Taiwan, the European Alps, and the Pyrenees.” (Sinclair, 2012)

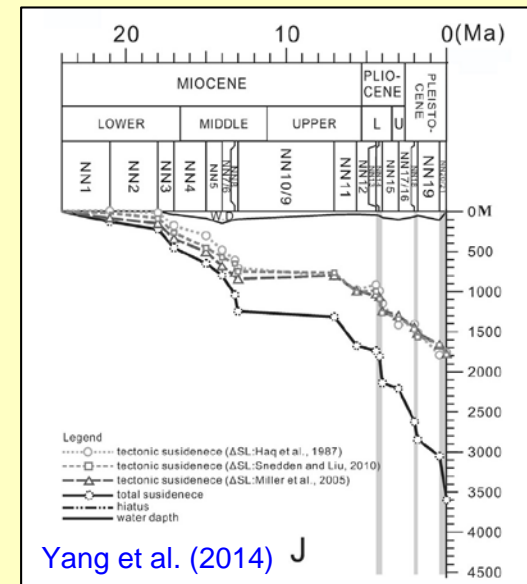
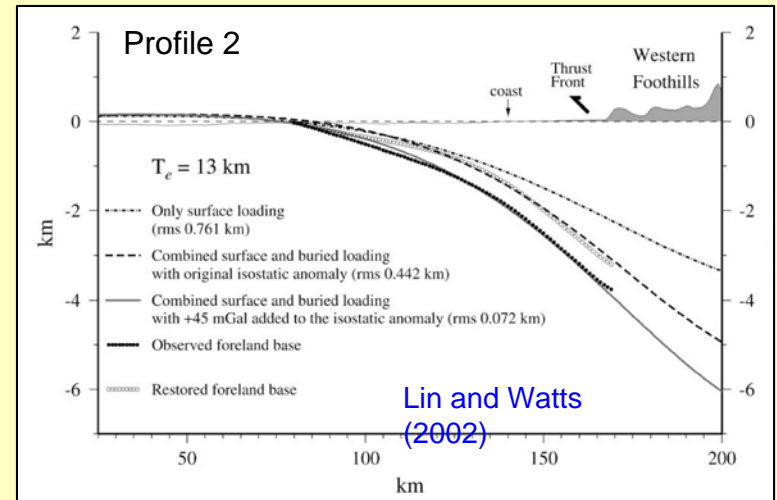


# Do Taiwan Basins Fit Predictions of Doubly-Vergent Wedge Model ?

- In the Western Prowedge Thrust Belt and Foredeep Basin: **YES**



Depth to base of foreland basin sequence, western Taiwan

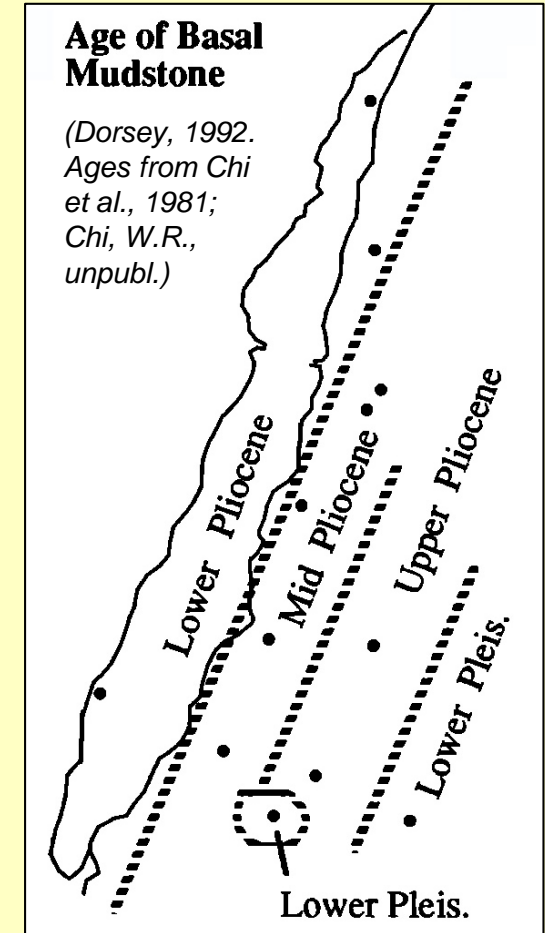
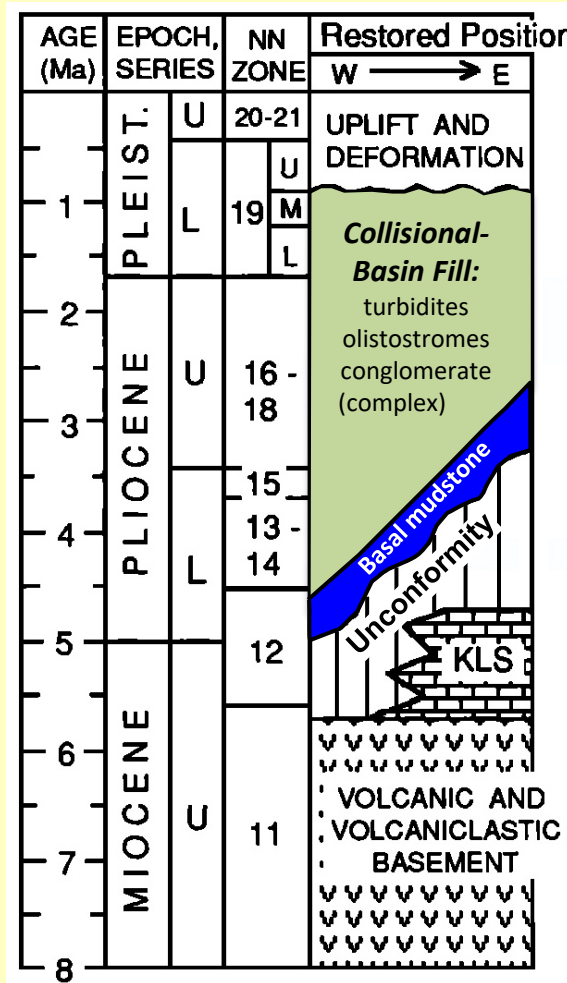
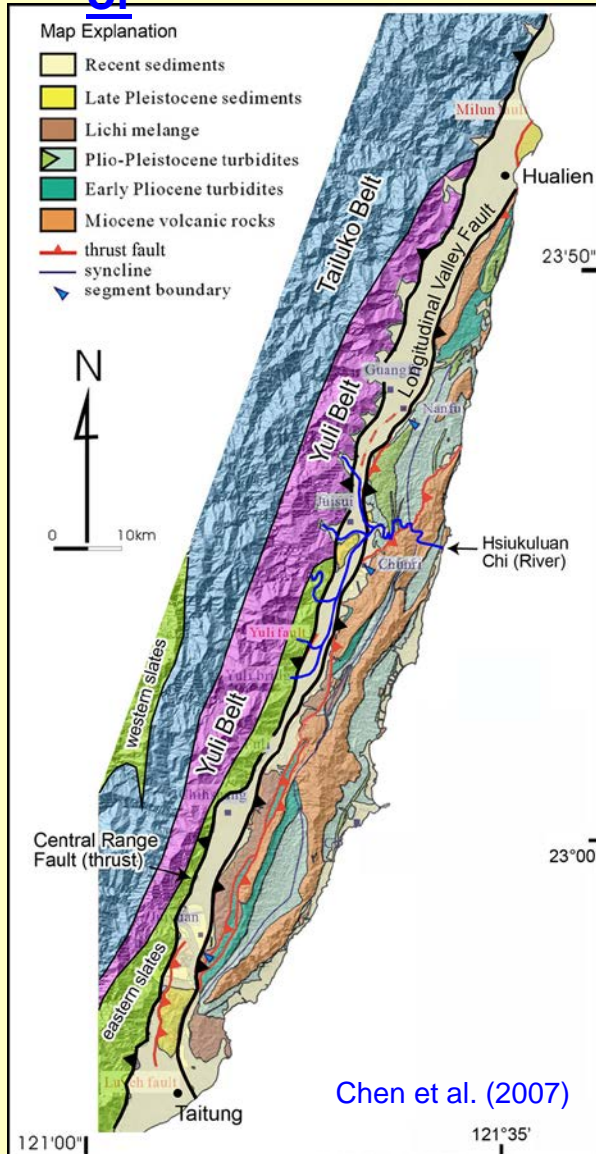


Yang et al. (2014) J



# Do Taiwan Basins Fit Predictions of Doubly-Vergent Wedge Model ?

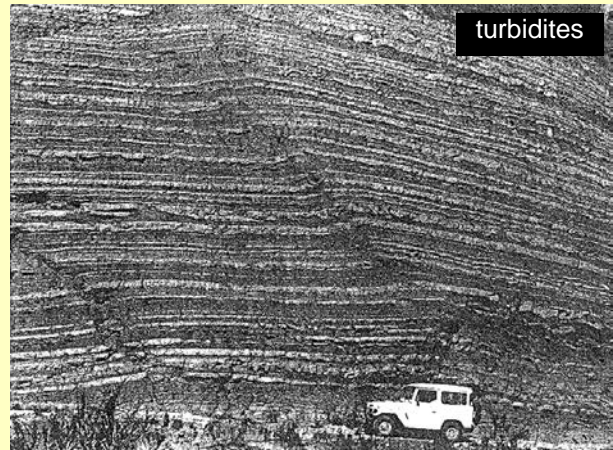
- In Eastern Retrowedge and Syn-Collision Basin (Coastal Range): Sort of



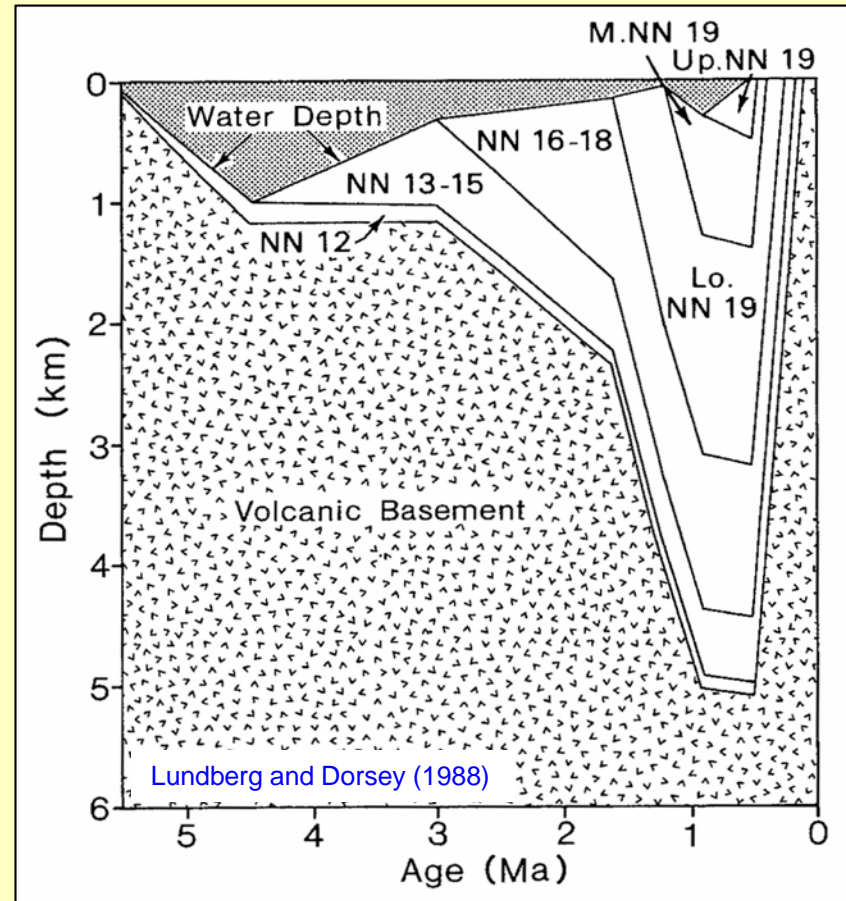
- Regional Unconformity: Separates older Tuluanshan Fm and Kangkou Limestone from thick syn-orogenic marine deposits.
- Mudstone above unconformity youngs to east (restored coordinates)



# Eastern Taiwan Coastal Range: Syn-Collision Basin Fill Sequence

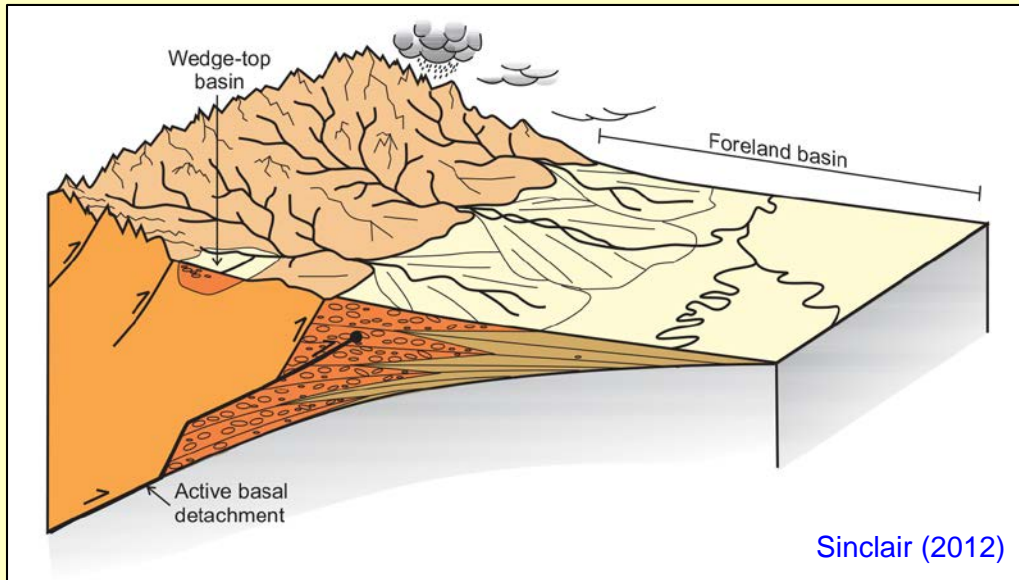


- (1) Erosional Unconformity at base: Probable forebulge
- (2) Stratal Onlap: Thrust-belt load moved toward basin
- (3) Subsidence: Started slow, accelerated ... deep!
- (4) Abrupt Uplift at End: Basin incorporated into orogen



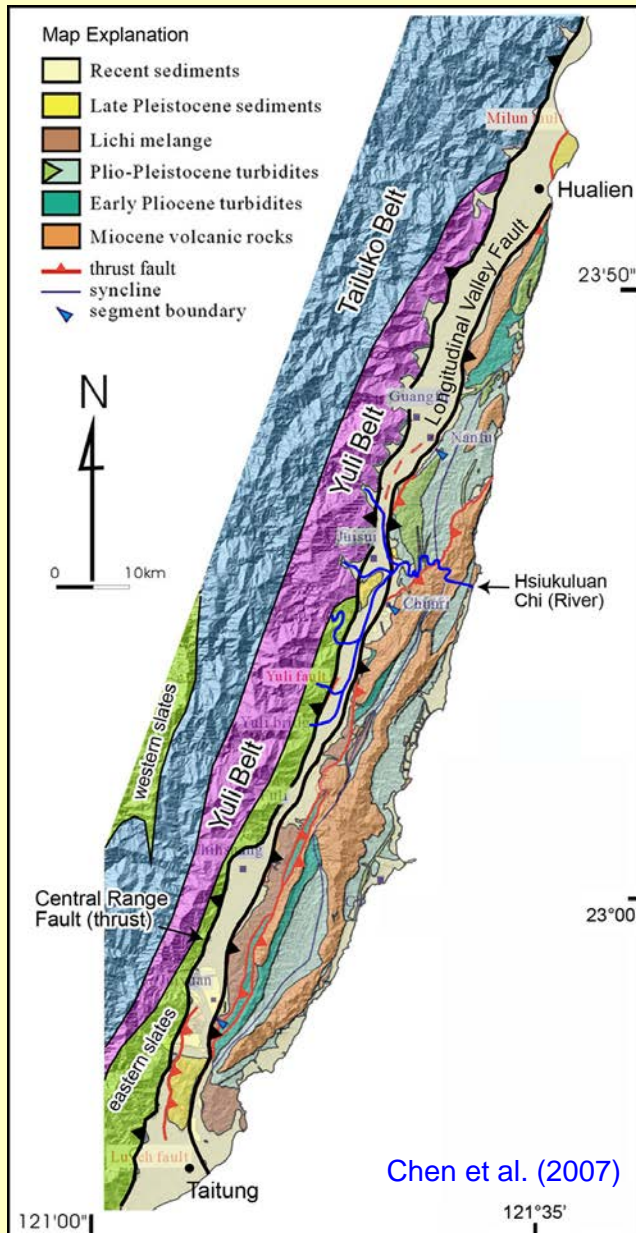


# Eastern Collisional Basin – Formed and Evolved as a Marine Foredeep



	Predicted		Observed
Basin Response to thrust belt evolvn	PRO-foreland basin	RETRO-foreland basin	Eastern Taiwan RetroWedge Basin
Stratal Onlap?	Yes	No	Yes
Subsidence Starts	Late: <i>after</i> onset of orogenesis	Early: <i>at</i> onset of orogenesis	Late: <i>after</i> onset of orogenesis
Subsidence Evolution	Accelerating, Rapid	Decelerating, Slow	Accelerating, Rapid
Steady-state subsidence?	Yes	No	<i>Uncertain</i>
Uplift at End?	Yes	No	Yes

# Eastern Collisional Basin – Formed and Evolved as a Marine Foredeep



## In Coastal Range Plio-Pleistocene Sequence:

- **Basal Unconformity:** Resembles forebulge unconformity typical of flexural foredeep basins.
- **Basal Mudstone** youngs to east, likely due to migration of thrust load toward basin thru time ...
- **Subsidence History: accelerating → rapid:** Typical of migrating flexural foredeep basin
- **Rapid uplift** at end: typical of foredeep basins.

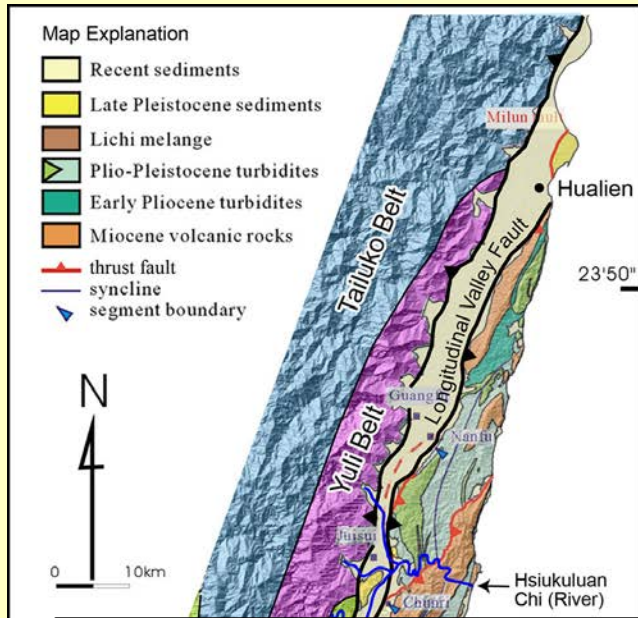
## In Eastern Central Range:

- **Yuli Belt** (HP ultramafic) contains Miocene-age rocks of volcanic arc origin: *Luzon arc origin?*
- **Metaconglomerate** in Yuli belt (related to Miocene arc-related Tuluanshan Formation?)

***All: suggest large-scale transfer of crust from over-riding plate (PSP) into orogen in past 3-5 Myr.***



# Yuli Belt: Recent Studies & New Ages, Require New Interpretation



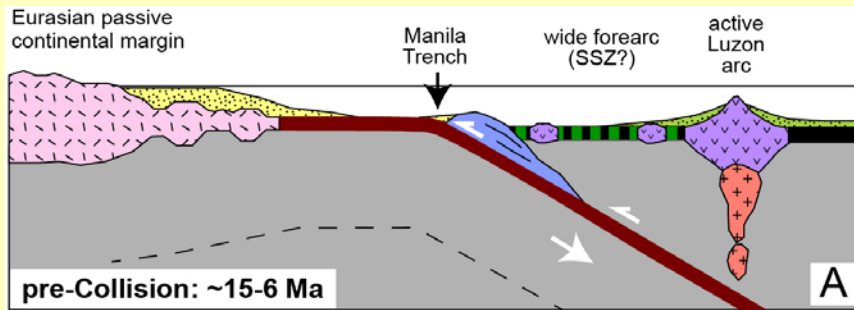
- **HP Blueschist:** mafic/ultramafic rx, 50-55 km depth (Tsai et al., 2013; Yui et al., 2014; Keyser et al., 2016)  
**15 Ma magmatic zircon in metavolcanics** (Chen et al., 2017)  
 ... possible parent rock is **Miocene Luzon arc ??**
- **Metaconglomerate** clasts: meta-gabbro, -basalt, -andesite? -diabase, marble? Equivalent of Tuluanshan Formation?
- **Suggest large-scale transfer of crust** from the Philippine Sea plate into orogen ...
- **How does that work?** Integrate with basinal record ...

River gravel sourced from Yuli Belt



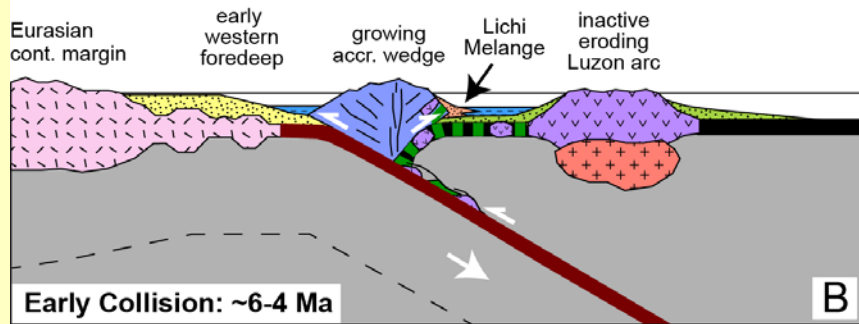
Yuli metaconglomerate = Tuluanshan Fm equiv.?

## Working Hypothesis



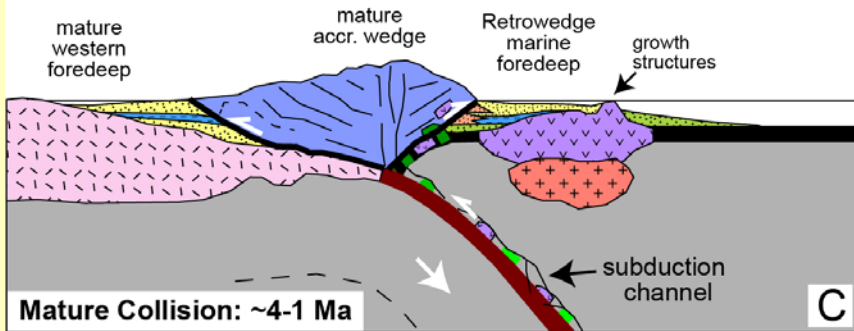
### (1) Pre-Collision: ~ 15 – 6 Ma

- Luzon volcanic arc and wide **forearc basin** ...
- Possible supra-subduction zone crust (ETO)
- Predates high topography in orogen.



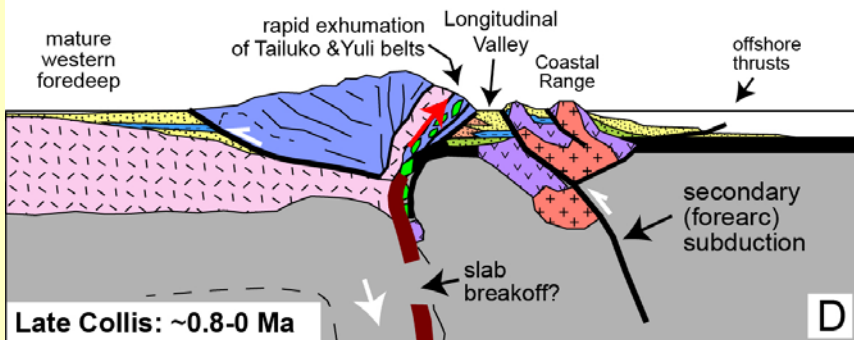
### (2) Early Collision: ~ 5 – 4 Ma

- Crustal thickening and uplift/erosion in orogen
- Inactive eroding arc crust, followed by...
- Rapid subsidence in **retro-foredeep basin**
- Lichi Melange olistostromes, turbidites, muds



### (3) Mature Collision: ~ 4 – 1 Ma

- Flexural subsidence in **retro-foredeep basin**
- Thrust belt converges toward the basin ...
- Subduction & exhumation of metamorphic rocks

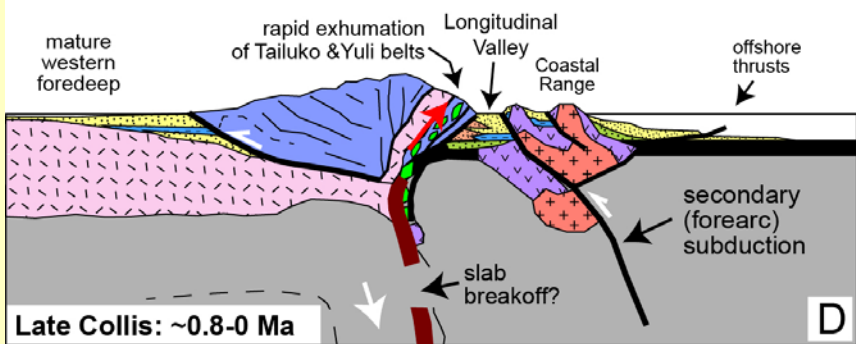
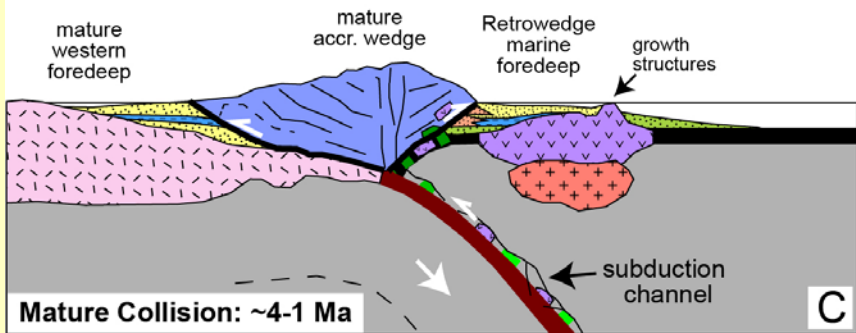
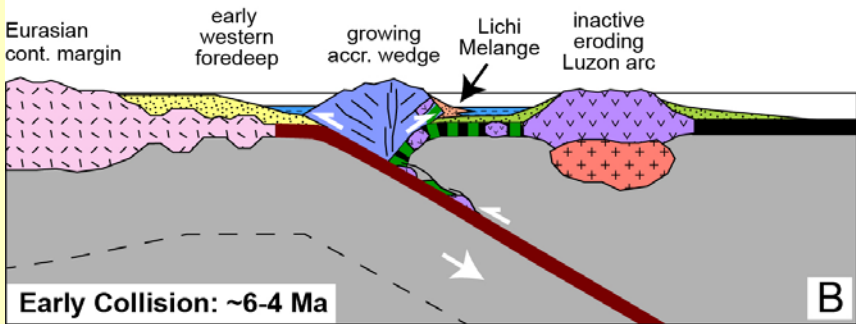
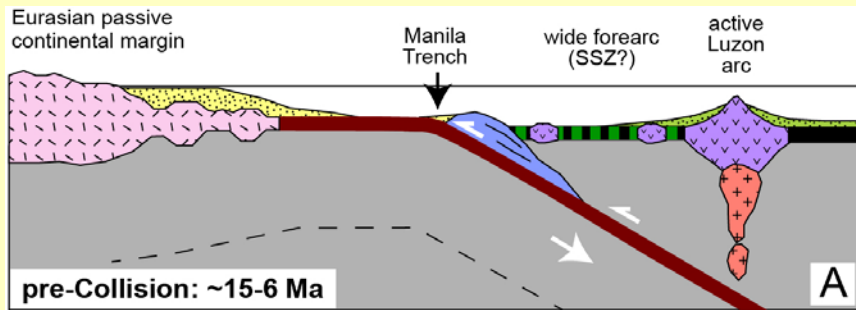


### (4) Late Collision: ~ 0.8 – 0 Ma

- Very rapid exhumation of Yuli belt (HP arc crust, possibly result of slab breakoff ?)
- Rapid uplift of Coastal Range (**retro-foredeep**)

**Not Steady-State**





**Deep Time processes: set modern tectonic - topographic architecture of the orogen**

**Hypotheses to test (collaborative project)**

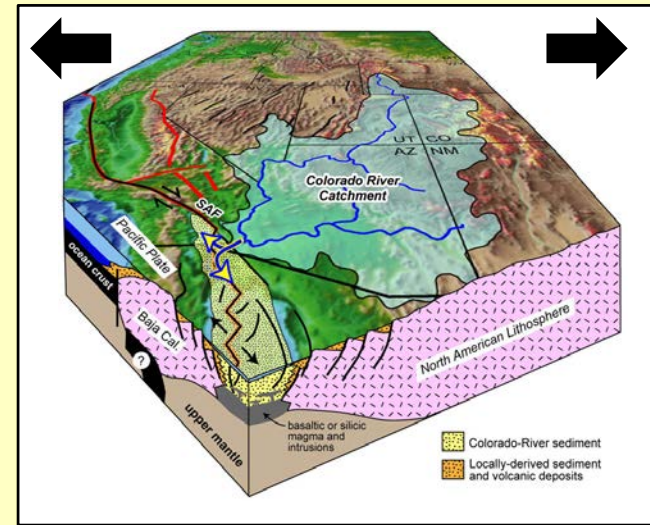
(J.Y. Yen, Y.H. Lee, W.R. Chi, C.S. Horng, M. Grove)

- **Foredeep evolution of Coastal Range:** Convergence between orogen & Luzon arc.
- **Suprasubduction Zone origin of the ETO**
- **Miocene Luzon-Arc origin of Yuli belt**
- **Transfer of over-riding plate into orogen.**
- **Unsteady simultaneous exhumation:** very rapid short-lived pulse starting ~1-2 Ma (Lee et al. 2015; Hsu et al., 2016)

# Basin-forming processes in different tectonic settings

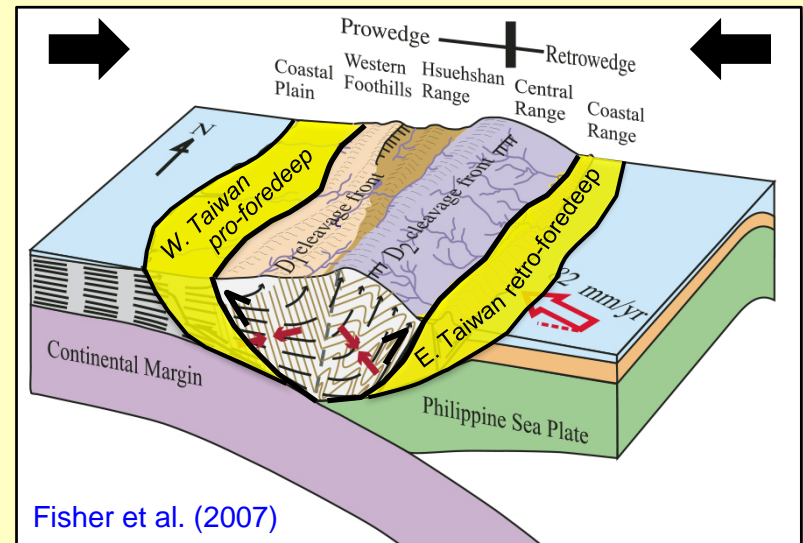
## Oblique Continental Rift:

- Extension → Thinning → *Isostatic Subsidence*
- Basins Filled with sediment from **slowly eroding** large river source (Colorado River)
- Rapid Subsidence & accumulation of thick syn-extension deposits at active plate boundary
- Plio-Pleistocene (ca. 5-6 Ma) to present
- Feedbacks: Basins, Sediments, Crustal Evolution



## Oblique Collisional Orogen:

- Shortening → *Thickening* → *Flex. Subsidence*
- Basins Fill with sediment from **very rapidly eroding** small, steep river catchments.
- Rapid Subsidence & accumulation of thick syn-orogenic deposits at active plate boundary
- Plio-Pleistocene (ca. 5-6 Ma) to present
- Feedbacks: Basin, Sediments, Crustal Evolution



Fisher et al. (2007)

**Sedimentary Basins:** Insights to deformation, erosion, subsidence processes.

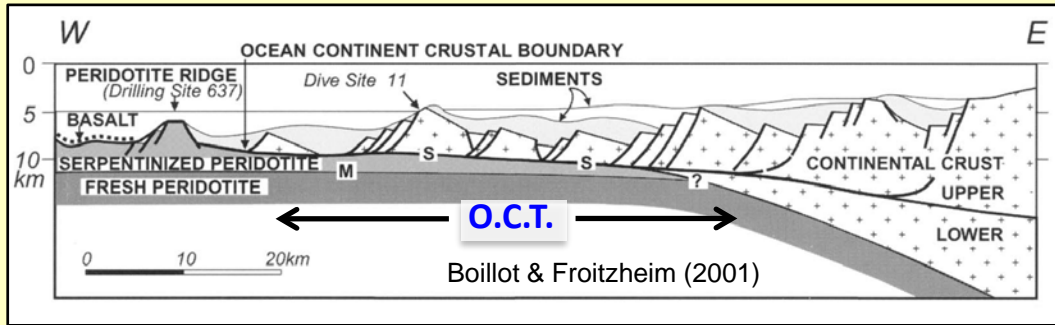






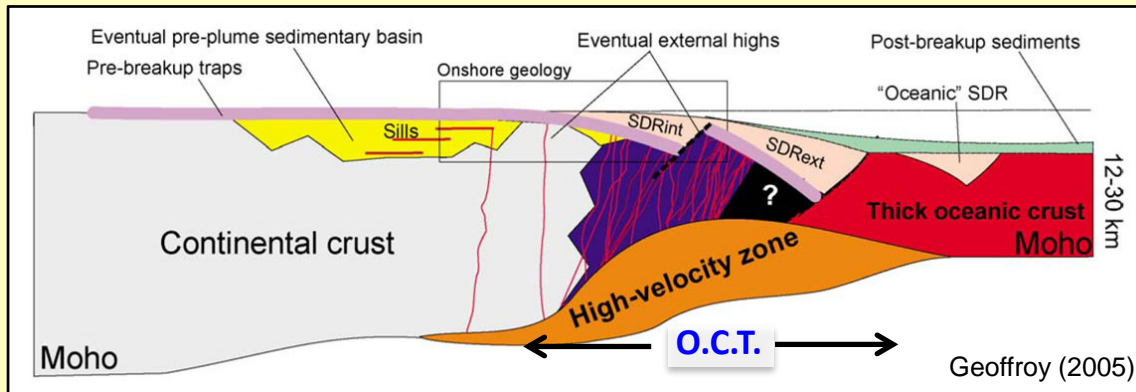


# Implications for Rifted Continental Margins



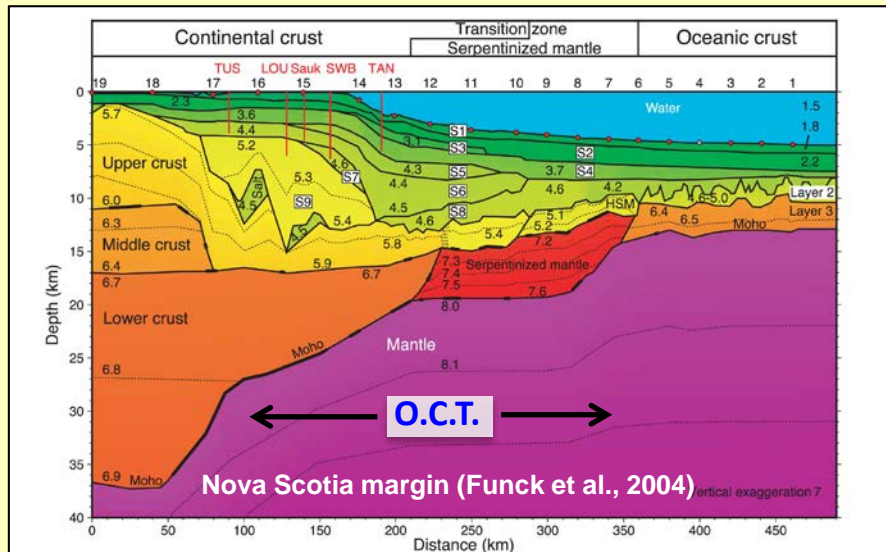
## 1. Non-Volcanic Margins (Hyper-Extended):

- Thin, magma-starved crust
- Highly extended, core complexes
- Mantle exhumed to near surface



## 2. Volcanic Rifted Margins:

- Thick mafic crust at OCT
- Robust syn-rift magmatism
- **Does not explain thick crust at non-volcanic margins ...**

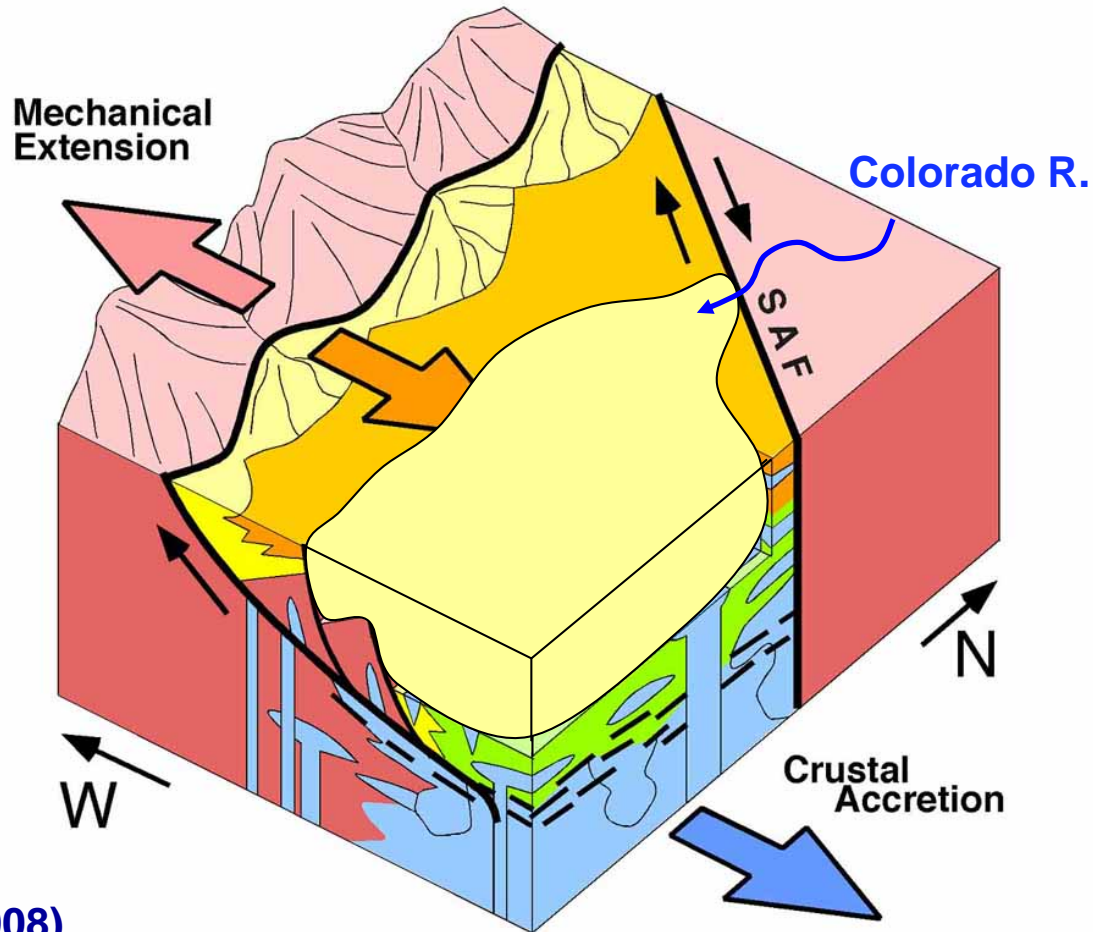


## 3. Third Type of OCT:

Thick Crust at OCT, *not volcanic*

- Intermediate seismic velocities
- Syn-rift sediments with intrusions ...
- **Sediment** builds recycled crust by
- **Input from Large Rivers.**
- **Colorado River** - modern example

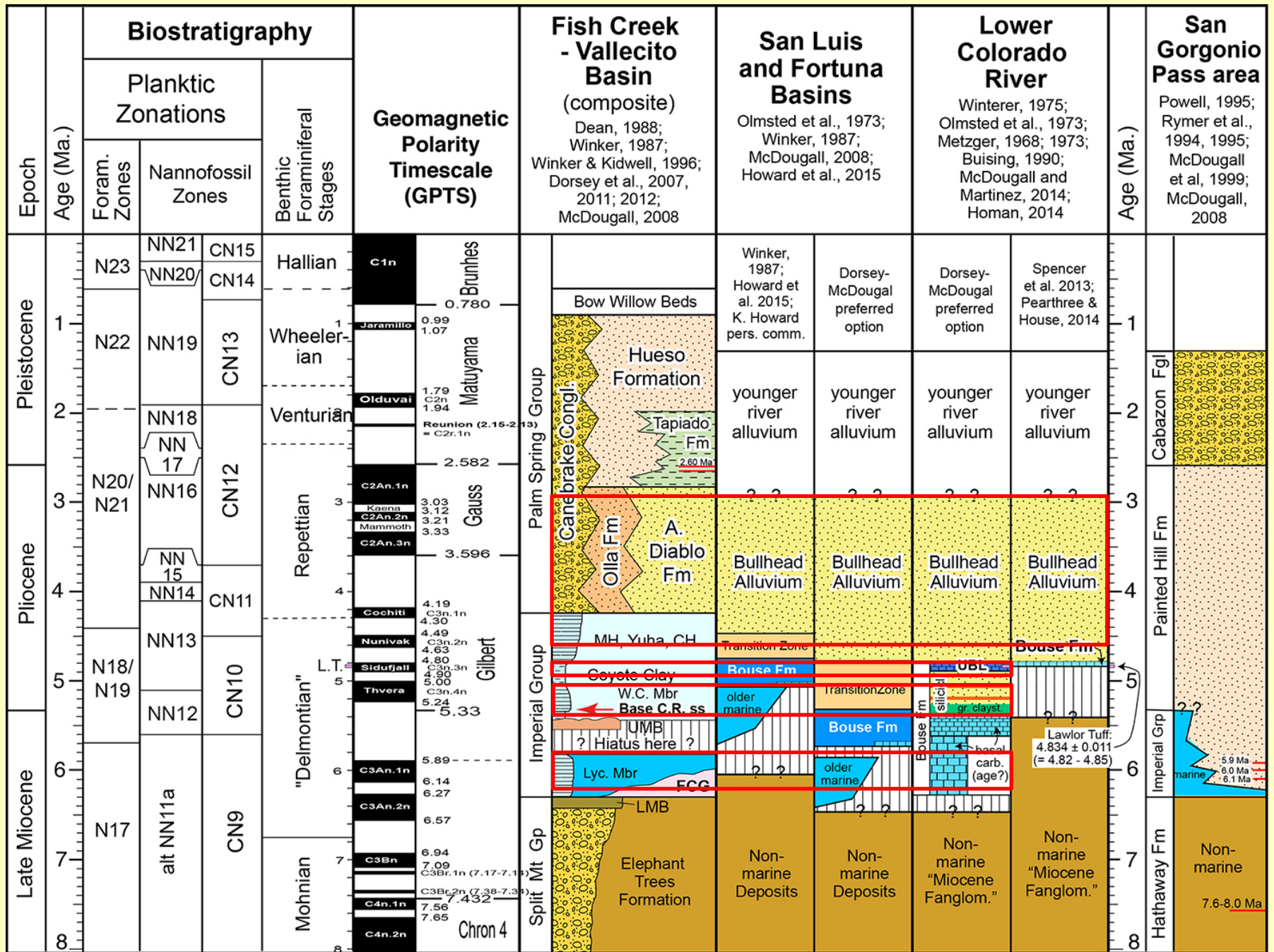
**ASYMMETRIC SPREADING IN THE SALTON TROUGH:  
Near-surface detachment slip accommodated by accretion at depth?**



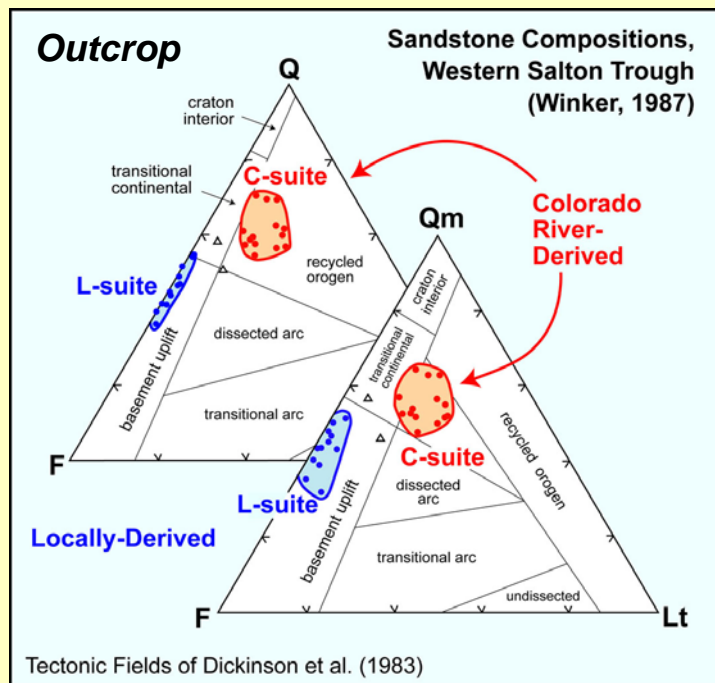
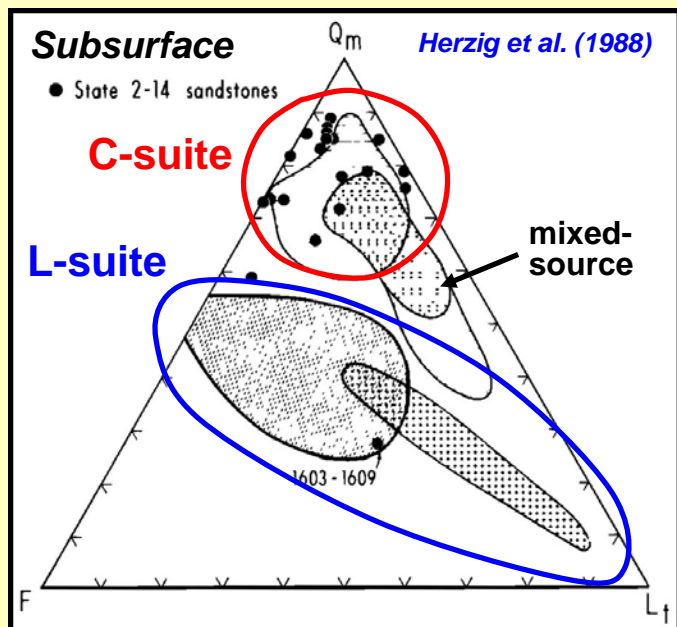
**Axen (2008)**

Linked slip on southern SAF and west Salton detachment fault. Space created by lithospheric rupture is filled with basaltic intrusions from below and voluminous sediment input from above (mainly Colorado River).

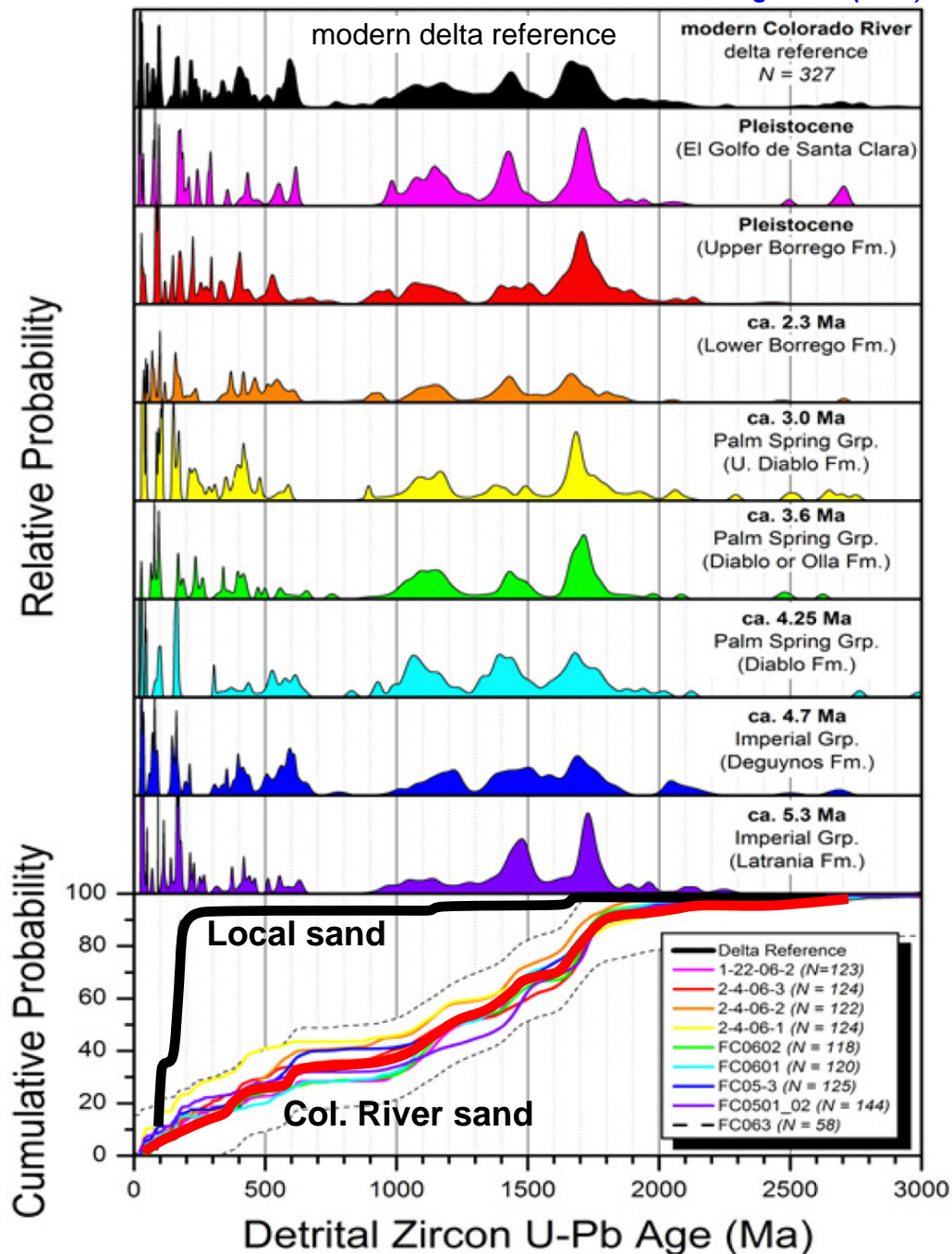




# Sand Composition

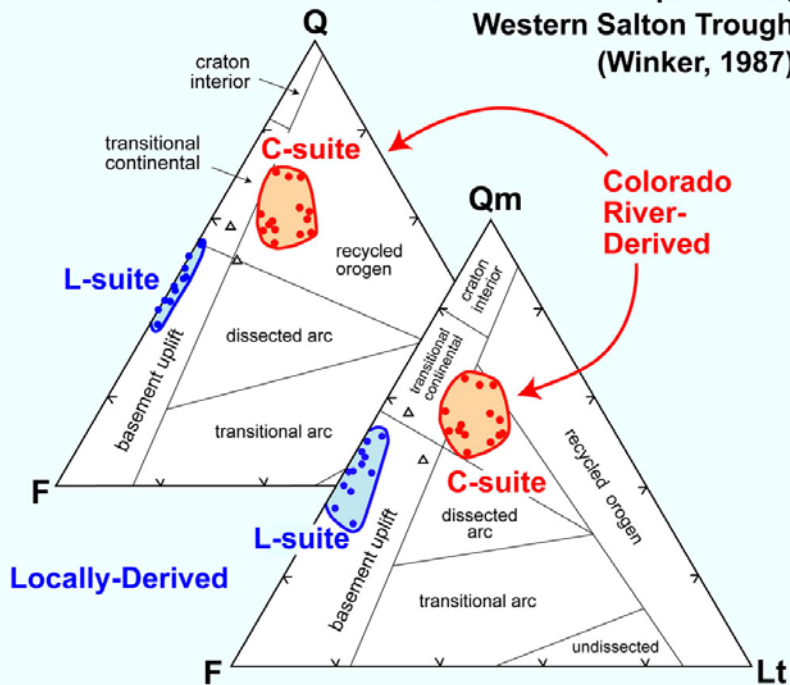


*Kimbrough et al. (2011)*

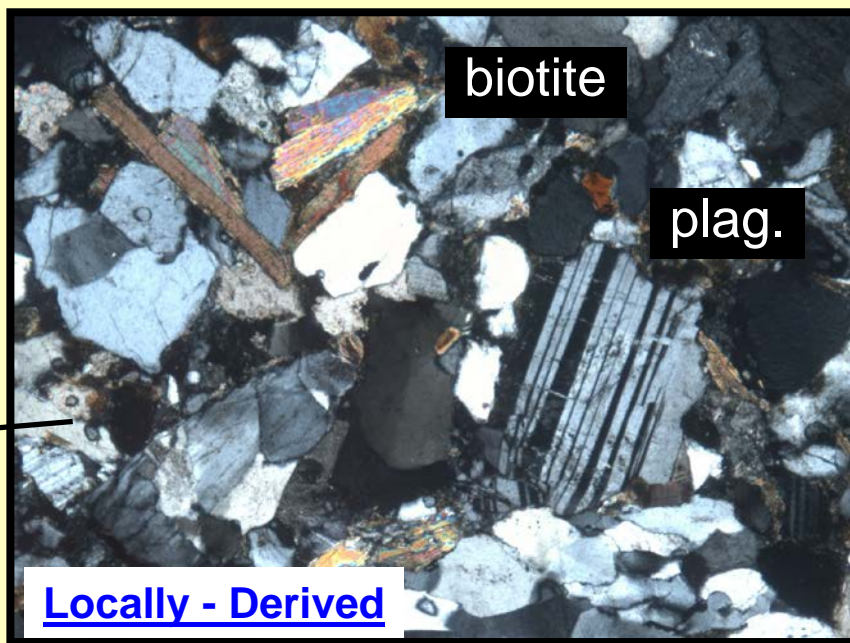
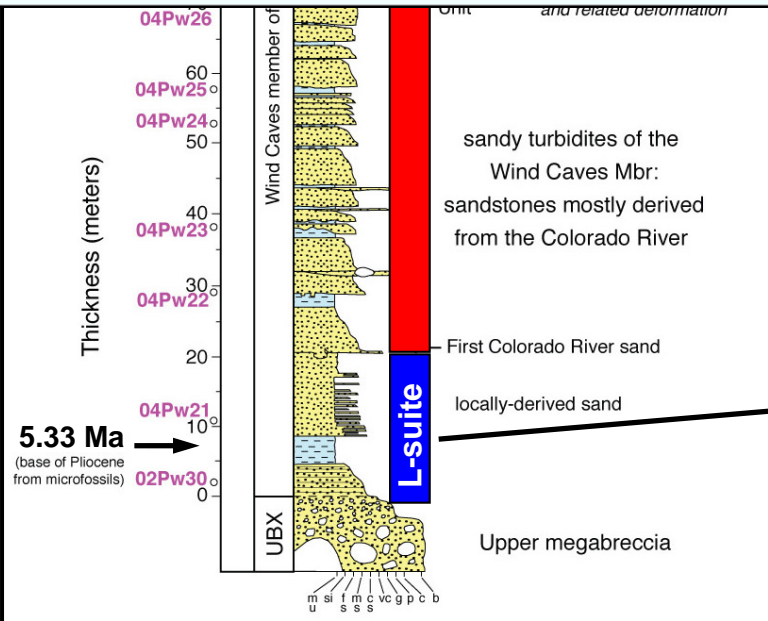
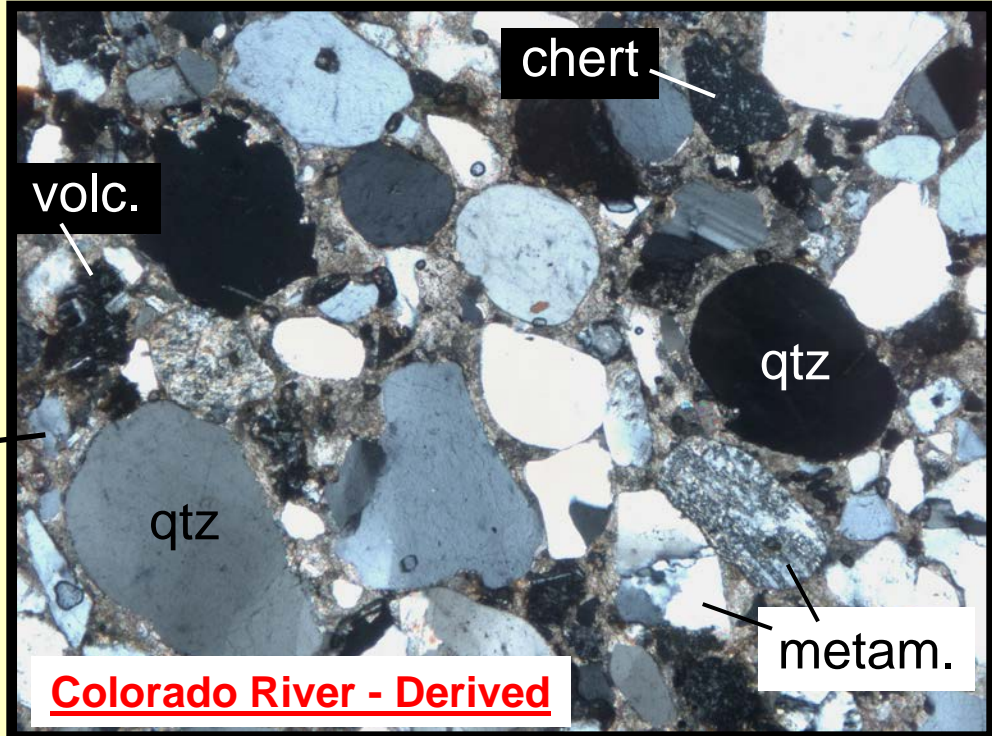




**Sandstone Compositions,  
Western Salton Trough  
(Winker, 1987)**

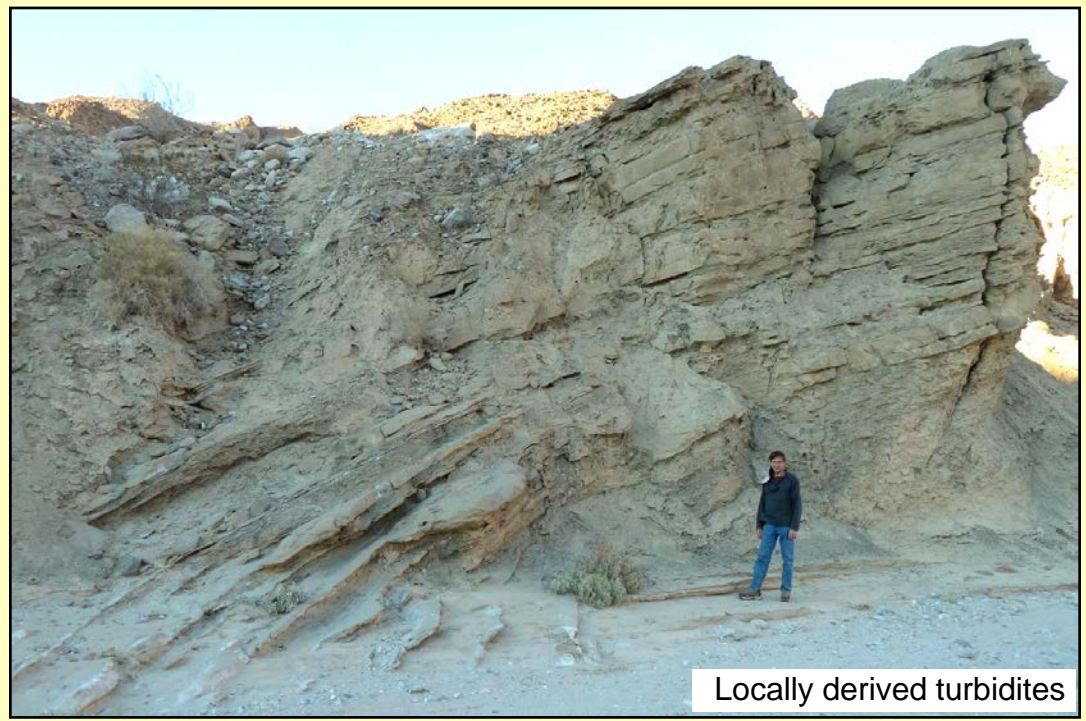
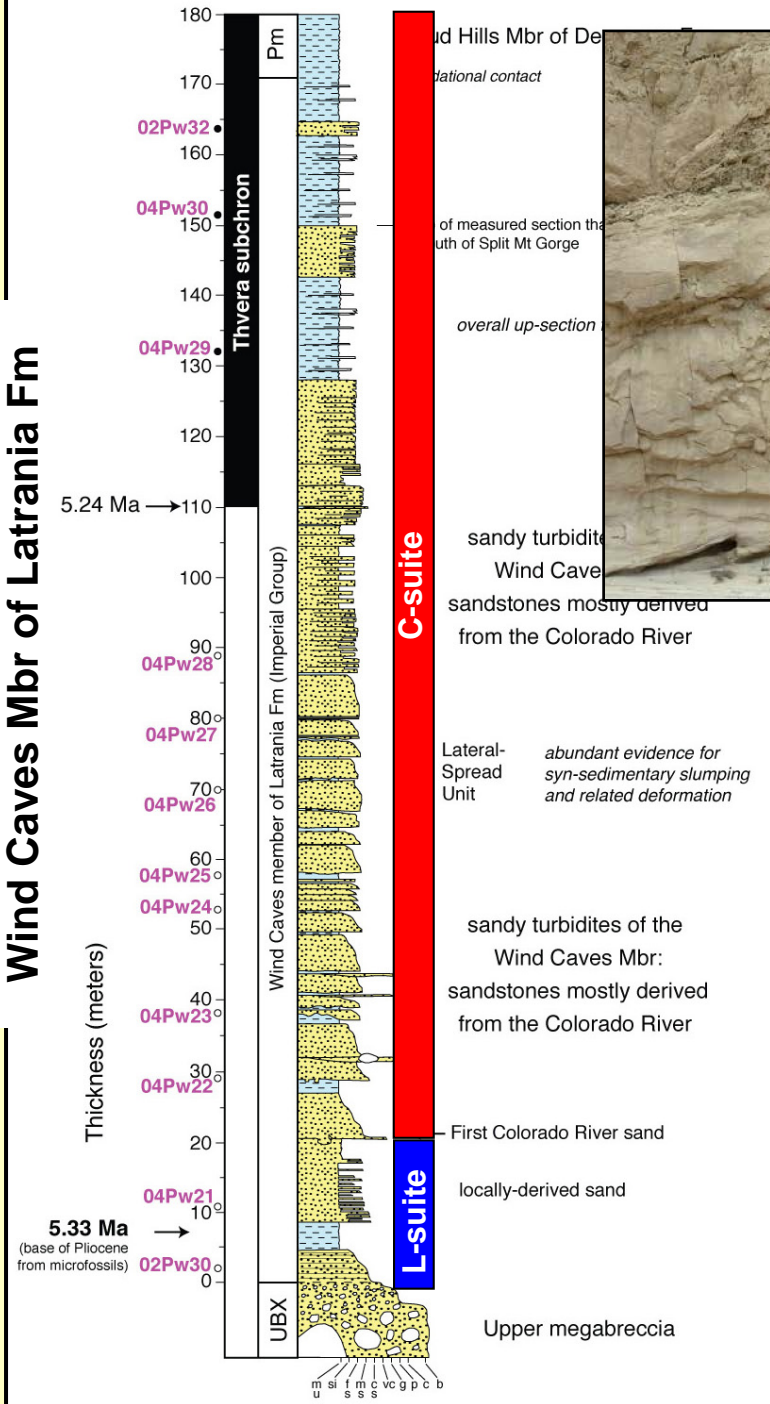


Tectonic Fields of Dickinson et al. (1983)





# Wind Caves Mbr of Latrania Fm





# The Taiwan Observatory, “Collaboratory”:

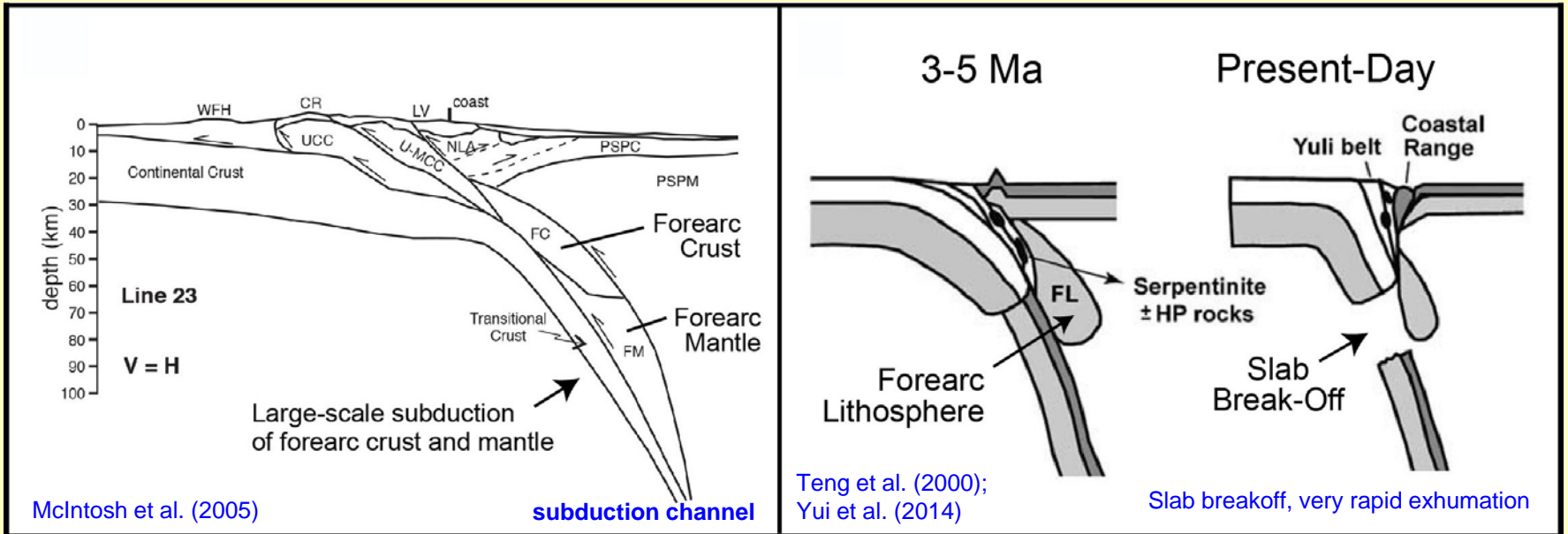
*“Feedbacks Among Climate Erosion and Tectonics”*

- Relatively simple orogen: compact, excellent access
  - Rapid forcing: tectonic and surface processes
  - Onshore-Offshore linkages: MARGINS-type focus site
  - High quality scientists, strong collaborations
  - Excellent Infrastructure (geodesy, seismology, hydrology): earthquakes, landslides, river discharge, morphology, etc.
  - Also provides insight into ...
- **Deep Time** processes at 1-5 Myr timescale ...
- **Control Tectonic-Topographic Architecture** of orogen

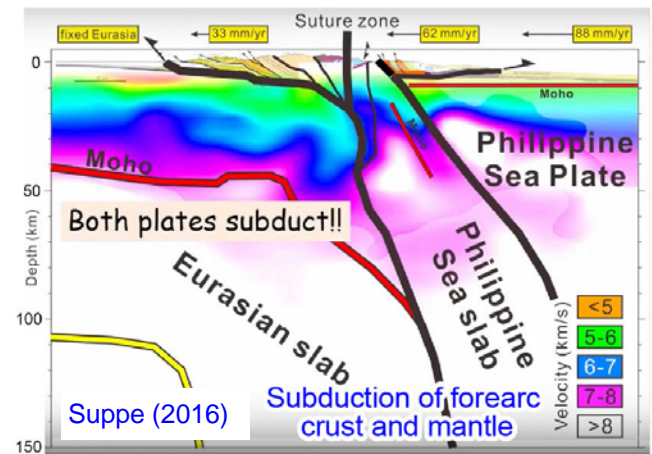
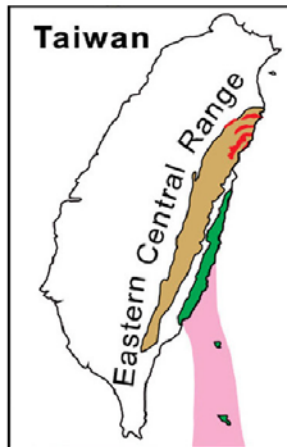
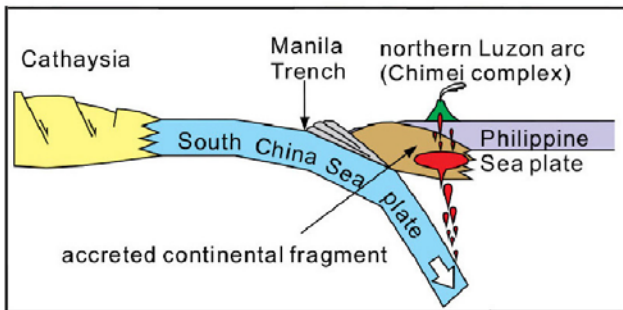
FACET Workshop I - May 2015



# Tectonic Models for Taiwan and Eastern Retro-wedge Domain

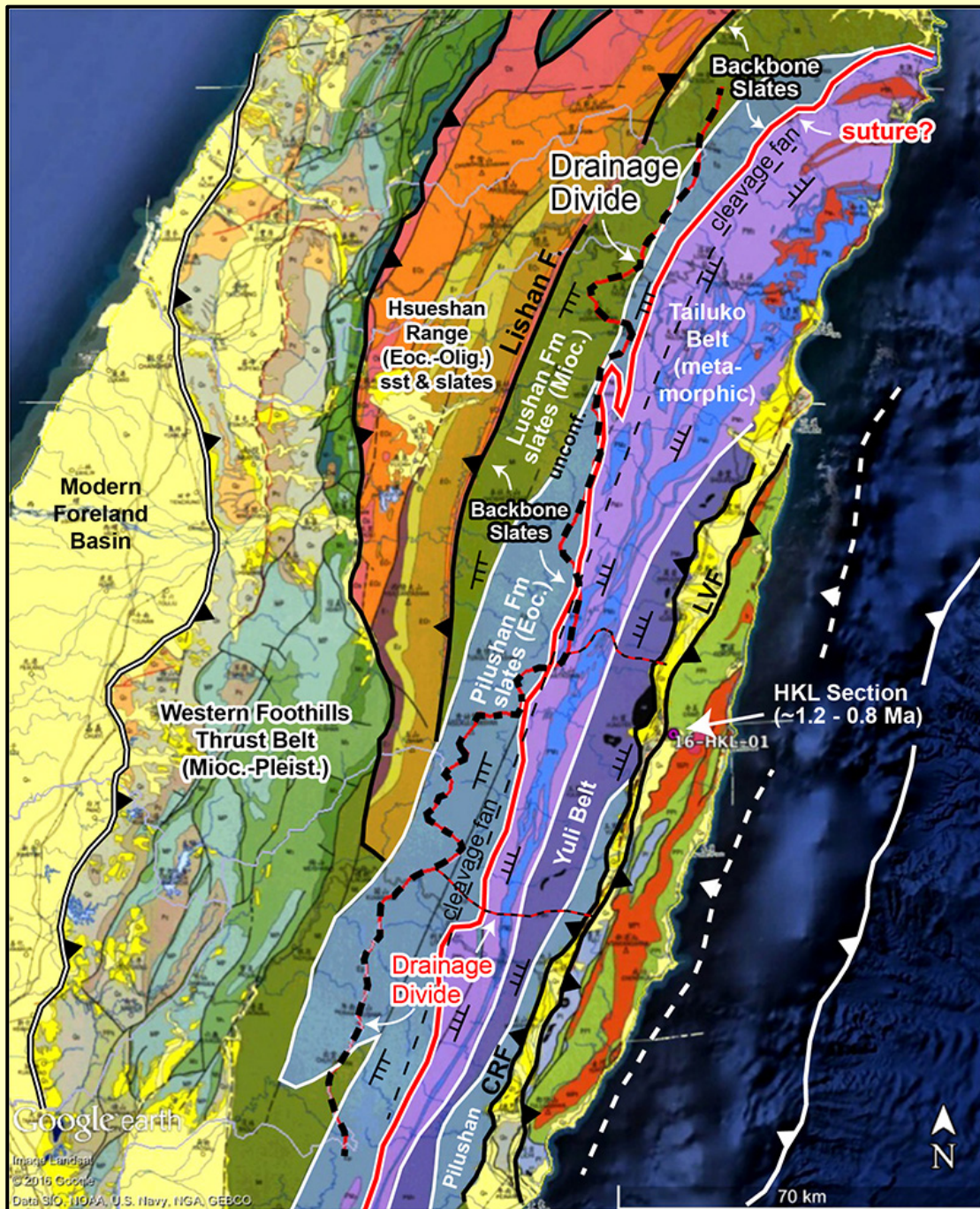


Far-traveled microcontinental fragment? (Shao et al., 2015)





## Tectonics of Eastern Taiwan

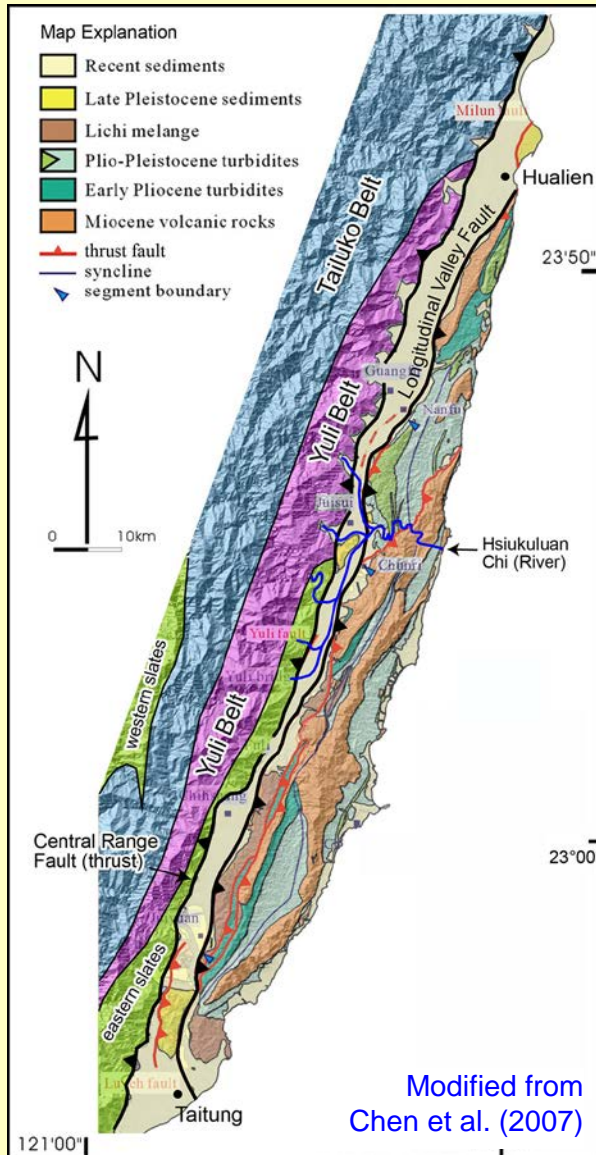


- **Tailuko Belt:** (1) Eurasian continent (e.g., McIntosh et al., 2013); or (2) Far traveled micro-continent fragment (Shao et al., 2015) ?
- **Yuli Belt:** Miocene arc-related rocks exhumed from deep subduction zone (e.g., Chen et al., 2017).
- **Lichi Melange:** blocks of meta-sst, Luzon arc, and ophiolite (ETO) ... *Supra-subduction zone setting?*
- **Collisional Basin** (Coastal Range) Subsided rapidly, migrated toward thrust load: marine foredeep basin.
- **Observations Suggest:**
  - Large (~100 km?) Shortening between Luzon arc and orogen
  - Erosion of Luzon arc 4-6 Ma (no modern analog for this)
  - Crust of Philippine Sea Plate and Luzon arc transferred into eastern part of thrust belt
  - Very rapid exhumation ~1-2 Ma: transient, not steady

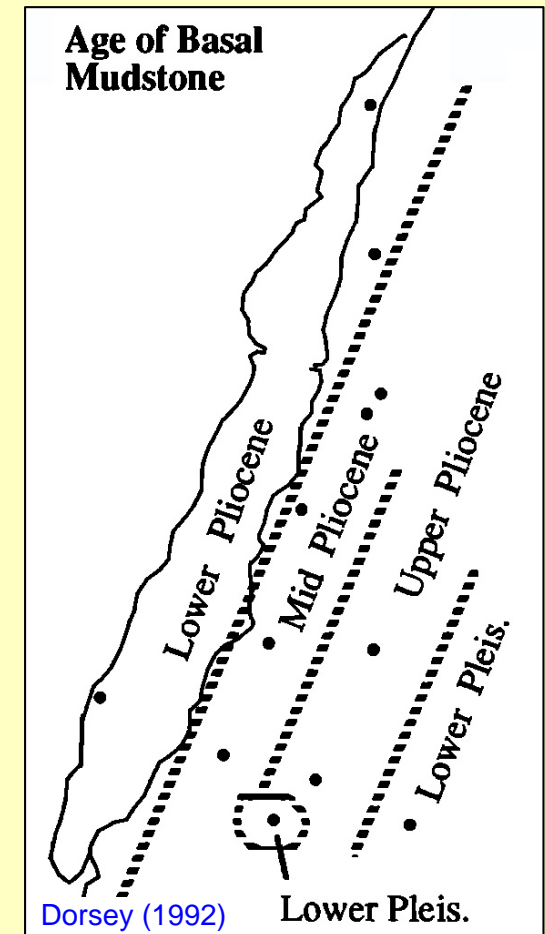
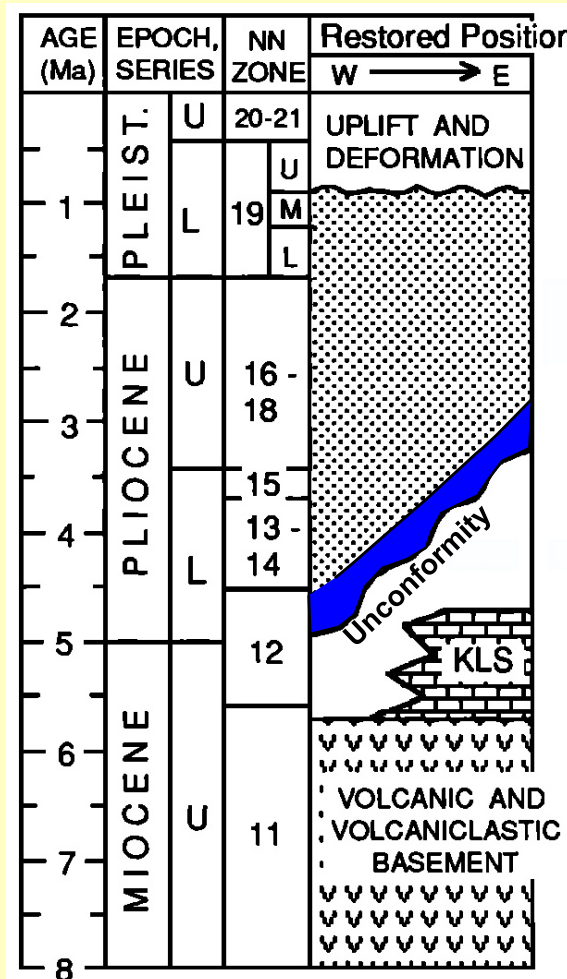


# Are Taiwan Basins Consistent with Predictions of Doubly-Vergent Wedge Model ?

- In the Eastern Retroedge and Collisional Basin: **NO**



- Erosional Unconformity at base – probable forebulge of migrating flexural marine foredeep basin.
- Stratal Onlap: Eastward younging basal mudstone.





# Working Hypothesis

## Eastern Retrowedge Basin:

- (1) Erosional Unconformity at base (forebulge unconf.)
- (2) Stratal Onlap: Basin moved toward thrust-belt load
- (3) Subsidence accelerated, abrupt rapid uplift at end

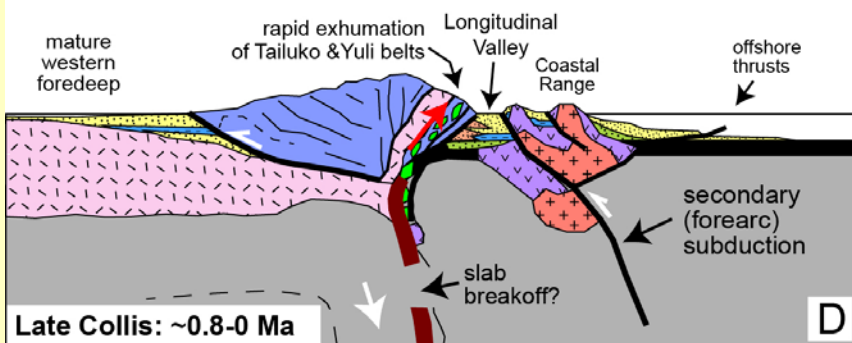
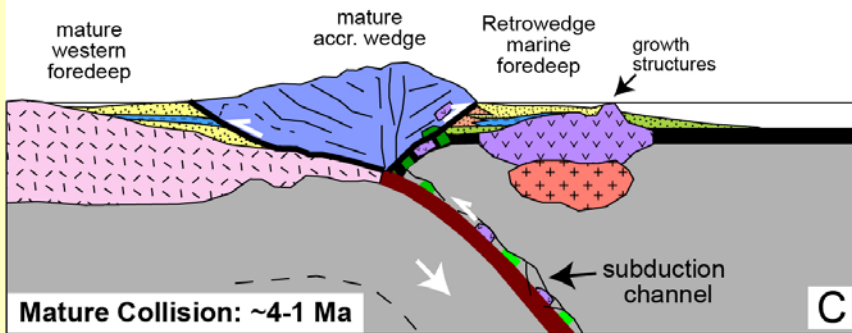
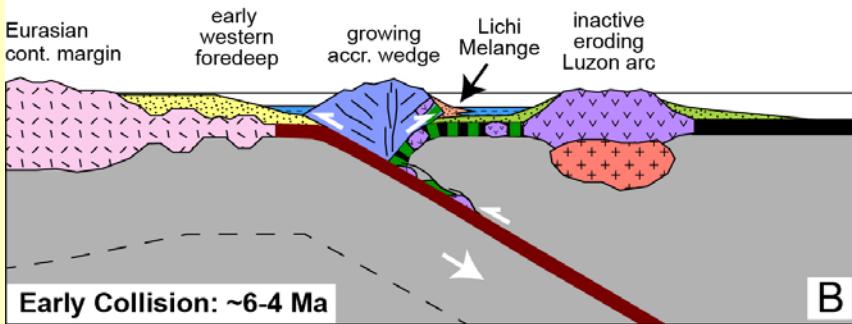
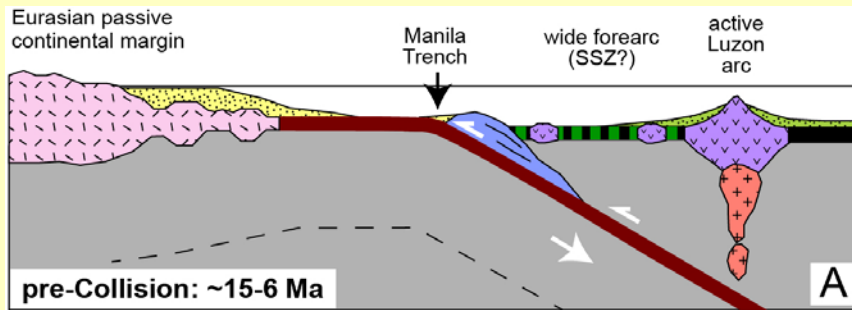
## Lichi Melange:

- (1) Blocks of sedimentary, volcanic, & mafic/ultramafic rocks mixed in chaotic melange
- (2) Rounded clasts of low-grade metasediment
- (3) Large submarine slumps & shear fabrics
- (4) East Taiwan Ophiolite: origin debated, need new data

## Yuli Belt:

- (1) Miocene exhumation age and volcanic-arc origin of mafic/ultramafic blocks. Recent discovery.
- (2) Prograde HP metam. facies → retrograde phase
- (3) Very Rapid Exhumation in past 1-2 Ma.

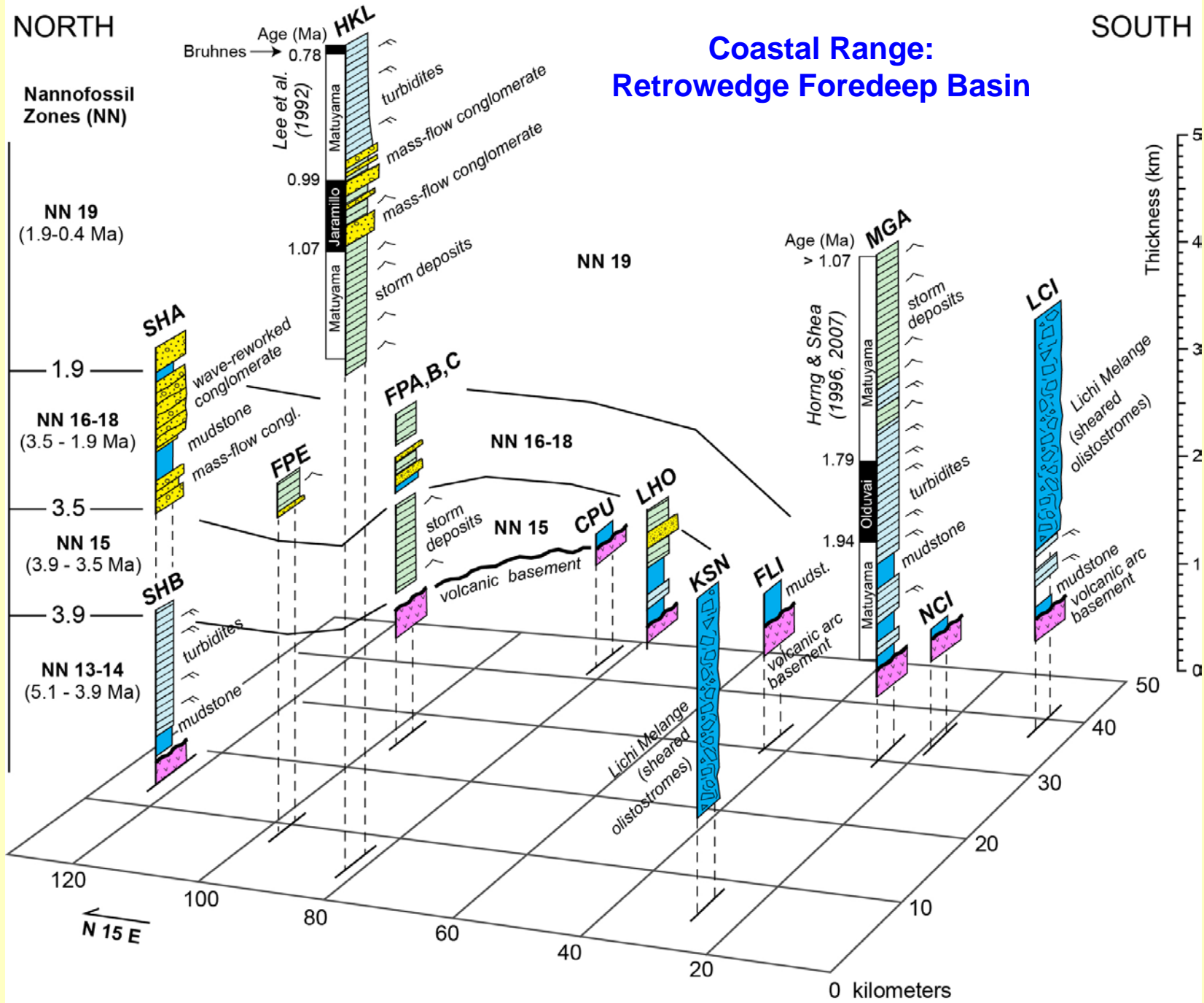
**Not Steady-State**



NORTH

SOUTH

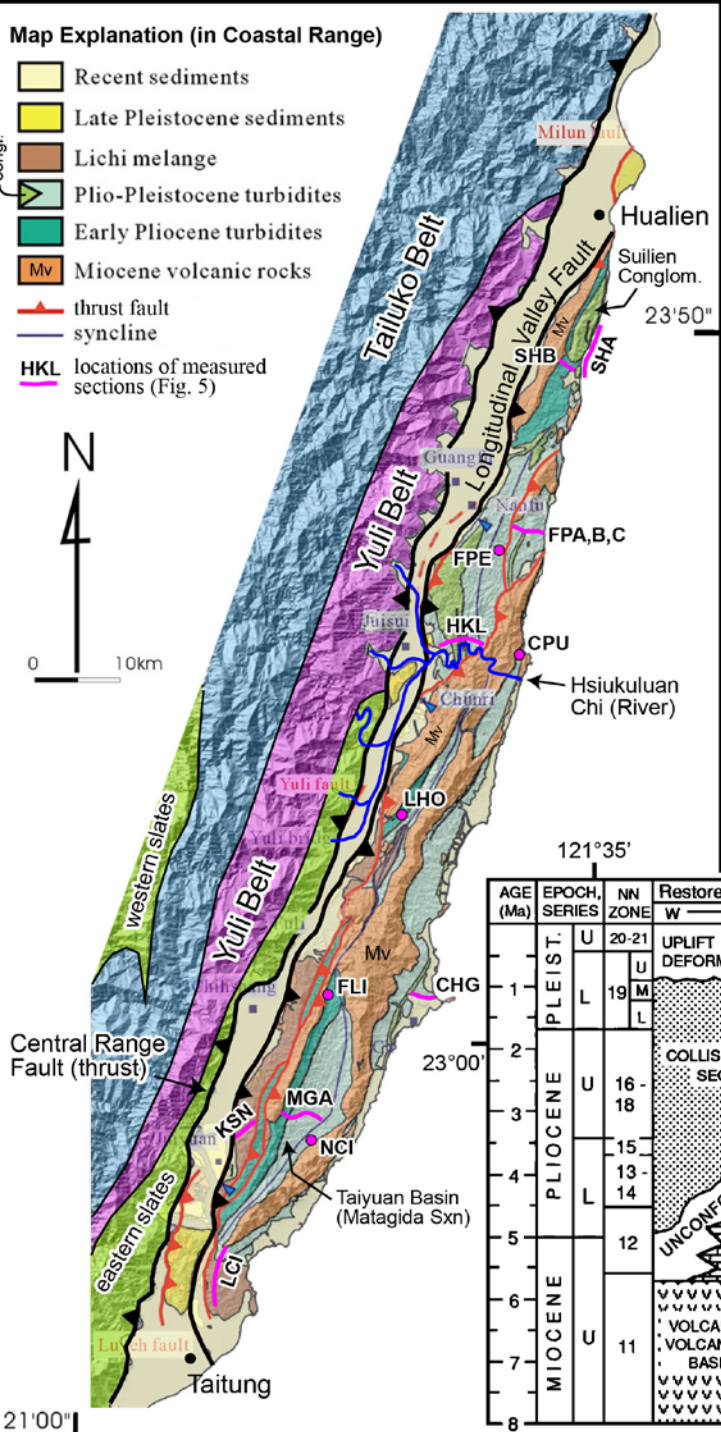
# Coastal Range: Retrowedge Foredeep Basin



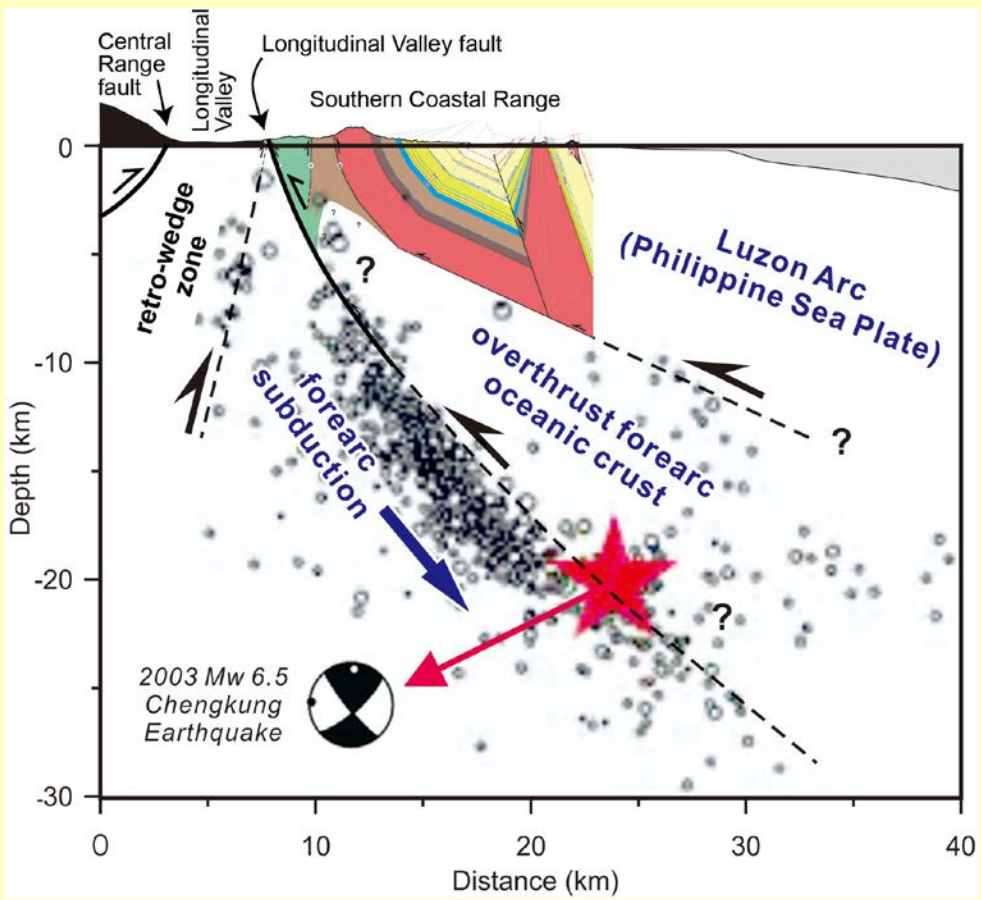


**Map Explanation (in Coastal Range)**

- Recent sediments
- Late Pleistocene sediments
- Lichi melange
- Plio-Pleistocene turbidites
- Early Pliocene turbidites
- Miocene volcanic rocks
- thrust fault
- syncline
- HKL locations of measured sections (Fig. 5)



AGE (Ma)	EPOCH, SERIES	NN ZONE	Restored Position W → E
1	PLEIST.	U 20-21	UPLIFT AND DEFORMATION
		U 19	
		M 19	
		L 19	
2-4	PLIOCENE	U 16-18	COLLISIONAL - BASIN SEQUENCE
		U 15	
		L 13-14	
		L 14	
5-8	MIOCENE	12	UNCONFORMITY
		11	
		11	
			VOLCANIC AND VOLCANICLASTIC BASEMENT







# Sedimentation in Continental Rifts and Collisional Orogens: Insights from Southern California and Eastern Taiwan

*Rebecca Dorsey - University of Oregon*

Thanks to:



Ministry of Science  
and Technology



National Science  
Foundation



University of  
Oregon

And: Yuan-Hsi Lee (NCCU); Jiun-Yee Yen (NDHU); Wen-Rong Chi (NCU); Chih-Tung Chen (NCU)

*View north along Beinan Chi:  
active plate boundary*

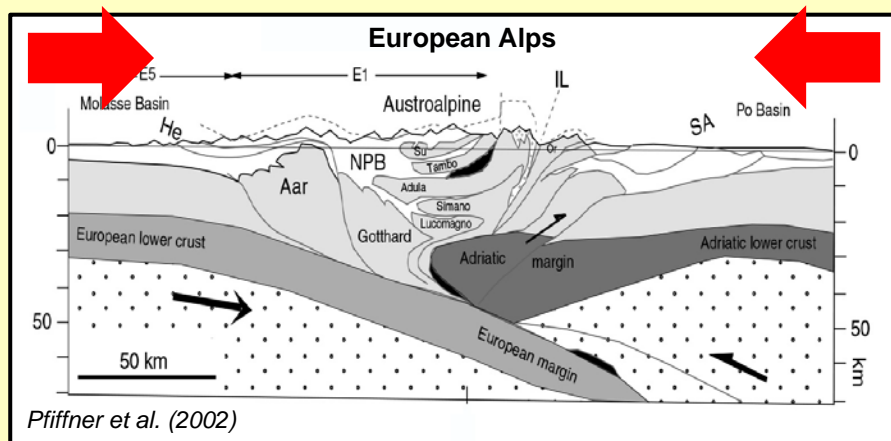


# Sedimentation in Continental Rifts and Collisional Orogens: Insights from Southern California and Eastern Taiwan

Rebecca Dorsey - University of Oregon

## The Wilson Cycle: Classic concept in plate tectonics ...

**Collisional Mountain Belts:**  
Produced by **CONVERGENCE**



**Rifted Continental Margins:**  
Produced by **EXTENSION**

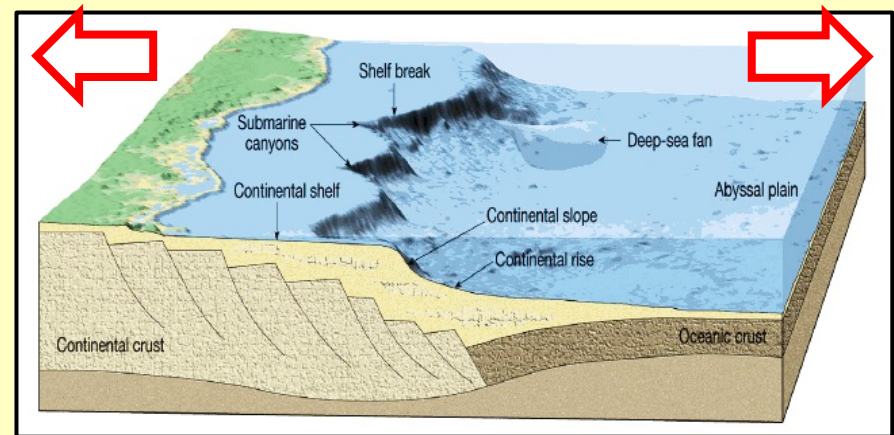
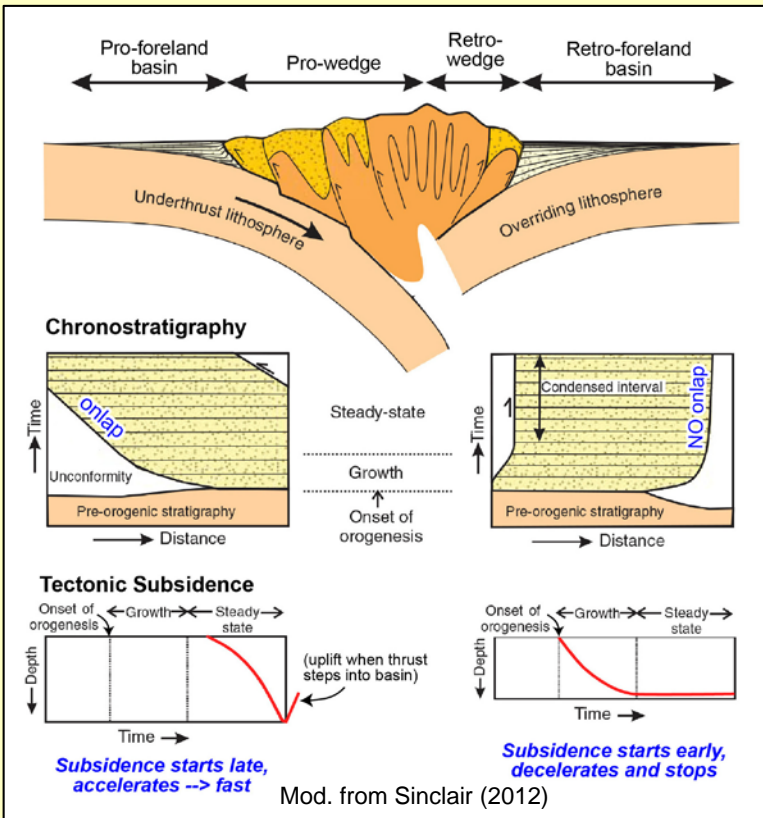


Plate boundaries and dominant basin type change through geologic time.



# Predictions of the Doubly-Vergent Wedge Model for *Sedimentary Basins*



## Pro-foreland basin (FLEXURAL SUBSIDENCE):

- **Thrust belt migrates toward basin ...**
- Subsidence driven by subduction of plate beneath the orogen: starts slow, accelerates → fast.
- Abrupt change to uplift when basin is incorporated into the converging-migrating thrust belt.

## Retro-foreland basin (ALSO FLEXURAL):

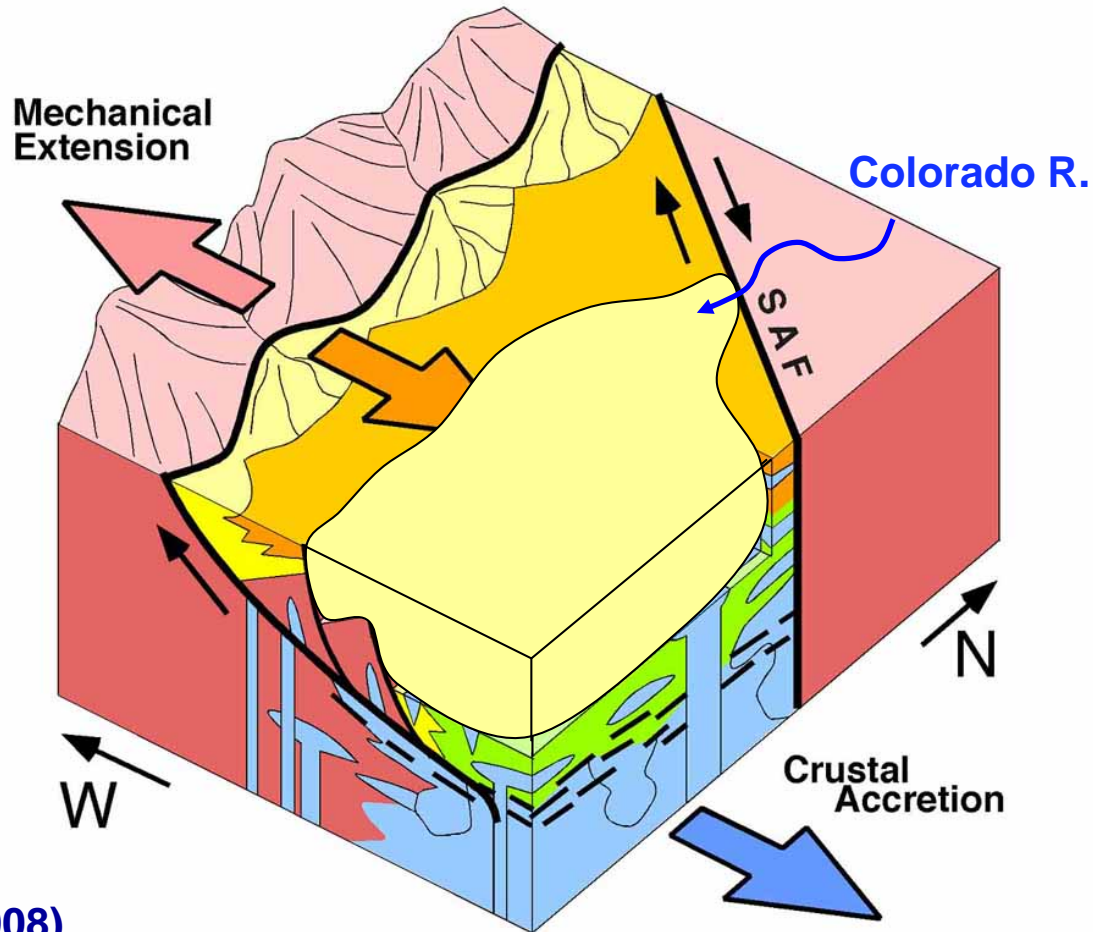
- **Thrust belt does not migrate toward basin ...**
- Subsidence is slow because the only driver is intermittent growth of the retro-wedge.
- No uplift at end, not incorporated into thrust belt.

*“Type examples include Taiwan, the European Alps, and the Pyrenees.” (Sinclair, 2012)*

Predicted Basin Response:	Pro-wedge and foreland basin	Retro-wedge and foreland basin
Stratal Onlap?	Yes	No
Subsidence Starts	Late: <b>after</b> onset of orogenesis	Early: <b>at</b> onset of orogenesis
Subsidence Evolution	Accelerating, Rapid	Decelerating, Slow
Steady-state subsidence?	Yes	No
Uplift at End?	Yes	No

(Compiled from: Sinclair et al., 2005; Naylor and Sinclair, 2007, 2008; Sinclair, 2012; Sinclair and Naylor, 2012)

**ASYMMETRIC SPREADING IN THE SALTON TROUGH:  
Near-surface detachment slip accommodated by accretion at depth?**



**Axen (2008)**

Linked slip on southern SAF and west Salton detachment fault. Space created by lithospheric rupture is filled with basaltic intrusions from below and voluminous sediment input from above (mainly Colorado River).





Unconformity