



GEOLOGICAL NOTES

The Gualala River system and surrounding topography evolved in response to rapid geologic changes along the west coast of North America over the past 20 million years, and especially in the last 5 million years. The drainage network evolved along with the changing landscape. The drainage network of the Gualala River is bedrock controlled and records the major geologic changes that took place. The landscape continues to change most notably by mass wasting. Mass wasting and erosion alter local geomorphic conditions, which in turn affect aquatic habitat conditions.

In the Gualala watershed, the distribution of landforms, channel types, and sediment is primarily controlled by distribution and physical properties of the various geologic formations that form the foundation of the watershed. Understanding these background relationships can aid in the identification of erosive processes, such as channel change.

Over the past 50 million years, much of the region was uplifted. As tectonic plates collided, the rivers incised into bedrock in many places. Large portions of the Gualala River system are incised into heterogeneous bedrock. The bedrock is composed of several rock formations of very different properties that have been juxtaposed in a complicated pattern through multiple generations of folding, faulting, uplift, and subsidence - many of which remain evident in the topography. The resistance to erosion is unevenly variable and depends primarily on the rock composition and the degree of deformation. As the bedrock was uplifted, eroded, and redrafted along active faults, the Gualala River system continuously evolved. The network of waterways was lengthened favorably along the weakened rock within fault zones. Many of the streams in the Gualala River watershed and surrounding area were clearly fault-controlled. All in all, with the exception of the San Andreas Fault area now considered inactive, the Toms Cross Fault system was probably active during the Pliocene (10,000 - 1.1 million years ago).

The present landscape in the Gualala River watershed continues to change through the processes of erosion and mass wasting in ways that force the stream channels to continually adjust. The process also occurs very slowly to maintain. The forces of erosion work against the weaker rocks moving them down into the stream channels in the form of landslides. Streams erode into bedrock forming canyons. The local strength of the bedrock varies, and the erosion is more rapid in the weaker rocks. Over the long term, the canyon deepens to attain a new equilibrium between continued deepening and mass wasting. For example, deep canyons form where bedrock is harder and resistant. When uplift and incision outpaced mass wasting, the slopes are oversteepened. Shallow landsliding is common in many of the steep canyons in the watershed as equilibrium is gradually established. In many areas, large landslides are obstacles that cause the streams to change course and grade. Even in areas where faulting and landsliding are dominant, the resistant distribution of varying rock types still determines stream channel processes.

Historically active landslides (movement within the last 150 years) comprise approximately 15% of the watershed, while dormant landslides constitute approximately another 2%. Large earthflows (approximately one-third of which are historically active) and gulches occur dominantly east of the Toms Cross Fault zone and in the southern portion of the watershed. Gulches typically erode the surface of the upper flow, rock slides, debris slides, and debris flows occur dominantly in the north from collapse of the upper flow. Large debris flows occur dominantly in the north from collapse of the upper flow. Large debris flows occur dominantly in the north from collapse of the upper flow. Large debris flows occur dominantly in the north from collapse of the upper flow.

- IMPORTANT NOTES**
- 1) The landslides and geomorphic features were mapped from the following sets of aerial photographs: 1984 WAC aerial photographs, nominal scale 1:3,000; 1998 WAC aerial photographs (Sonoma County), nominal scale 1:24,000; and 2000 WAC aerial photographs (Mendocino County), nominal scale 1:24,000. Field verification of landslide and geomorphic features was very limited and mapping relied primarily on interpretation of aerial photographs.
 - 2) The geology depicted on this map was modified from several sources ranging in scale from 1:24,000 to 1:250,000 (see references). The source of the majority of the geology for the watershed (Sonoma County portion) was mapped at a scale of 1:62,500 (Huffman and Armstrong, 1980). Although the geology is presented in this map at a scale of 1:24,000, the detail and accuracy of the geologic data are limited to the spatial resolution of the 1:62,500 scale (and other scales of the source data) in which the digital database was originally compiled.
 - 3) Landslides shown on this map have been divided into groups based on the clarity of their morphology and inferred type of movement. The landslides are also classified according to the certainty of their existence as determined by analysis of aerial photographs. The various landslide designations are not intended to imply the relative stability of slope involved. See Plate 2 for relative landslide potential of the area.
 - 4) The scale of this map limits the definition of some features, and the map should not be substituted for site-specific studies.
 - 5) Information on this map is not sufficient to serve as a substitute for the geologic and geotechnical site investigations required under Chapters 7.5 and 7.8 of Division 2 of the California Public Resources Code.
 - 6) Historical mapping by DMO (Davisport, 1984; Open-File Report 84-48) was considered and incorporated using current interpretive protocols for identifying and classifying geomorphic features and/or landforms. Historical mapping added directly to the Gualala River watershed database is referenced in the electronic database with a citation to the North Coast Watershed Mapping, Digital Compilation DMO CD 99-002 (DMG, 1999), which includes Open-File Report 84-48.
 - 7) All small landslides (depicted on the map as points) from the 1984, 1999/2000 aerial photograph sets and DMO Open-File Report 84-48 (Davisport, 1984) are shown on the map.
 - 8) Digital data shown on this map as well as additional landslide and geomorphology data are available from the following sources: on the CGS website at www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs, on compact disc from CGS (CD-ROM 2002-05), or on the North Coast Watershed Assessment Program website at www.ncwwatershed.org.

REFERENCES

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GUALALA AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS BY YEAR

EROS Data Center, U.S. Geological Survey, various dates, Digital Orthophoto Quarter-Squares, 10 meter resolution.

EROS Data Center, U.S. Geological Survey, various dates, Digital Elevation Models, 30 meter resolution.

WAC, Inc., 1984, black and white aerial photographs, flight 14, frames 153-194, 190-205, 213-225, 240-250, flight 15, frames 125-133, 191-197, flight 20, nominal scale 1:31,650, dated April 20, 1984.

WAC, Inc., 1999, color aerial photographs for Sonoma County, flight 10, frames 2-5, 13-18, 21-29, 31-40, 43-81, 83-98, 137-150, 151-175, 177-192, nominal scale 1:24,000, dated April 13, 1999.

WAC, Inc., 2000, black and white aerial photographs for Mendocino County, flight 3, frames 160-167, 186-190, 215-219, nominal scale 1:24,000, dated April 2, 2000.

EXPLANATION

Surficial Deposits (Holocene-Pleistocene)

- OBk Beach sand - marine-laid deposits of fine to coarse grained sand and gravel, may migrate seasonally.
- OF Alluvial fan - characteristic fan-cone shapes at the mouths of eroding stream canyons; includes debris fans.
- CHM Channel terrace deposits - unconsolidated sediments in active channels and flood plains.
- CHC Undifferentiated channel deposits - unconsolidated sediments in active channels and flood plains.
- CHS Stream channel deposits - stage-limited period 5 years or less.
- OR River terrace deposits.
- OA Older alluvium.

Overlap (Quaternary-Tertiary)

- OFr Oniskany Formation - siltstone.
- OFm Oniskany Formation - conglomerate.
- OFc Oniskany Formation - undifferentiated marine sandstone and conglomerate.

Gualala Block (Tertiary-Cretaceous)

- U Unconsolidated units of Geron Ranch, Anchor Bay and Stevarts Point - sandstone, siltstone, claystone and conglomerate.
- TG Geron Ranch Formation - marine sandstone and mudstone.
- TM Monterey Group - marine sandstone and shale.
- GA Gualala Formation, Anchor Bay Member - sandstone, mudstone and conglomerate.
- GA Gualala Formation, Stevarts Point Member - sandstone, conglomerate and mudstone.
- BP Black Point Spite.

Coastal Belt Franciscan, includes Coastal Terrane (Eocene-Early Cretaceous)

- CF Coastal Belt Franciscan - marine sandstone.
- CF Coastal Belt Franciscan - marine siltstone.

Central Belt Franciscan, includes Central Terrane (Cretaceous)

- CFr Undifferentiated Central Belt Franciscan - siltstone.

Eastern Belt Franciscan, includes Vols Baly and Pickett Peak Terranes (Early Cretaceous-Late Jurassic)

- AF Altago.
- CFr Central Belt Franciscan - marine, includes chert, sh., gneissite, g., gneissite, g., and sandstone, sh.

Great Valley Complex (Cretaceous)

- GA Sandstone and claystone.

INDEX TO SUBBASINS

INDEX TO USGS 7.5 QUADRANGLES

INDEX TO GEOLOGIC AND GEOMORPHIC MAPPING REFERENCES

- 1. Davisport, C.W., 1984, Geologic and geomorphic features related to landsliding, Gualala 7.5 Quadrangle, Mendocino County, California, Open-File Report 84-48, scale 1:24,000.
- 2. DMO, 1999, North Coast Watershed Mapping, Digital Compilation DMO CD 99-002 (DMG, 1999), which includes Open-File Report 84-48.
- 3. DMO, 2000, Digital database of faults from the Fault Activity Map of California and Adjacent Areas, Division of Mines and Geology, CD 2000-06.
- 4. WAC, Inc., 2000, black and white aerial photographs for Mendocino County, flight 3, frames 160-167, 186-190, 215-219, nominal scale 1:24,000, dated April 2, 2000.

ROCK SLIDE Slope movement with bedrock as its primary source material. This class of failure includes rotational and translational landslides, mostly cohesive, slide masses with failure planes that are deep-seated in comparison to debris slides of similar areal extent. The slide plane is curved in a rotational slide. Movement along a planar joint of bedding parallel to the failure surface is referred to as translational. Complex events with combinations of rotational and translational movement or a failure developed on an arcuate, U-shaped failure surface are referred to as debris slides and debris flows. Slope near the angle of repose may be relatively stable except where weak bedding planes, bedrock joints and fractures parallel the slope.

DISRUPTED GROUND Irregular ground surface caused by complex landsliding processes resulting in features that are expansive soils, and/or gully erosion. Boundaries are usually indistinct.

ROCK SLIDE SLOPE SOURCE AREA A geomorphic feature characterized by steep, usually well-vegetated slopes that appear to have been subjected by numerous debris slides and debris flows. Upper reaches (lower areas of slope) are usually indistinct. CF indicates a scar, arrow indicates direction of movement, dashed where the presence of the slide is uncertain. Boundary is solid where historically active, dashed where dormant, queried where uncertain.

DEBRIS SLIDE Mass of unconsolidated rock, caliche, and coarse-grained soil that has moved slowly to rapidly downslope along a relatively steep, shallow, transitional failure plane. Debris flows from steep, unsteeped local in the head region and possibly impinge, hummocky deposits in the toe region. Scars commonly level and remain unvegetated for several seasons depending on slope aspect. Queried where the presence of the slide is uncertain. Boundary is solid where historically active, dashed where dormant, queried where uncertain.

DEBRIS FLOW TORRENT TRACK Long stretches of bare ground that have been scoured and eroded to bedrock by extremely rapid movement of debris-laden debris. Debris flows are commonly triggered by debris sliding in the source area during high intensity rains. Debris is often deposited down-slope as a tangled mass of organic material in a matrix of rock and soil. Debris may be reworked and incorporated into subsequent events; lack of vegetation indicates recent activity. Queried where the presence of the slide is uncertain. Boundary is solid where historically active, dashed where dormant, queried where uncertain.

SMALL LANDSLIDE Landslide too small to delineate at 1:24,000 scale (typically less than 1/5 acre in area or less than 100 feet in length).

Lithologic Contact Solid where location is certain, dashed where approximately located or inferred, dotted where concealed, and queried where continuation or existence is uncertain.

Fault Solid where location is certain, dashed where approximately located or inferred, dotted where concealed, and queried where continuation or existence is uncertain.

Lineament Linear feature of unknown origin noted on aerial photographs.

SCALE 1:24,000

COUNTY INTERVALS IN FEET

Watershed Boundary

Subbasin Boundary

County Boundary

Public Land Survey System

Primary Highway

Secondary Highway

Road, Street or Trail

City or Town

Spring

**GEOLOGIC AND GEOMORPHIC FEATURES RELATED TO LANDSLIDING
GUALALA RIVER WATERSHED, SONOMA AND MENDOCINO COUNTIES, CALIFORNIA
PLATE 1, SHEET 3 OF 3 (SOUTHERN PORTION)**

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MAP LOCATION

DATA SOURCES

- 1:24,000 California Watershed Map (CALWATERM 2.0) map database
- 1:24,000 USGS 7.5 and USGS 15' Digital Elevation Model (DEM)
- 1:24,000 USGS 7.5 and USGS 15' Digital Orthophoto Quarter-Squares (DOQ)
- 1:100,000 USGS 1:50,000 Scale

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