

# Distant Source (Alaska-Aleutian Subduction Zone) Tsunami Inundation Map Umpqua River West, Oregon

## Introduction

The Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) has been identifying and mapping the tsunami inundation hazard along the Oregon coast since 1994. In Oregon, DOGAMI manages the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program, which has been administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) since 1995. DOGAMI's work is designed to help cities, counties, and other states in coastal areas reduce the potential for disastrous tsunami-related consequences by understanding and mitigating this geologic hazard. Using federal funding awarded by NOAA, DOGAMI has developed a new generation of tsunami inundation maps to help residents and visitors along the entire Oregon coast prepare for the next Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ) earthquake and tsunami, as well as for far-travelled, or "distant" tsunamis.

The "Ring of Fire", also called the Circum-Pacific belt, is the zone of earthquake activity surrounding the Pacific Ocean. It is an arc stretching from New Zealand along the eastern edge of Asia north across the Aleutian Islands of Alaska, and south along the coast of North and South America (Figure 1). The Ring of Fire is located at the borders of the Pacific Plate and other major tectonic plates. The Pacific Plate is colliding with and sliding underneath other plates creating subduction zones that eventually release energy in the form of an earthquake rupture. This rupture causes a vertical displacement of water that creates a tsunami. When these events occur around the Ring of Fire but not directly off the Oregon coast, they take more time to travel the Pacific Ocean and arrive onshore in Oregon (Figure 2). Distant earthquake/tsunami events have affected the Oregon coast: for example, offshore Alaska in 1964 and offshore Japan in March 2011.

Historically, about 28 distant tsunamis have been documented by Oregon tide gauges since 1854. The most severe was generated by the 1964 M9.2 Prince William Sound earthquake in Alaska. Oregon was hit hard by the tsunami, which killed four people and caused an estimated \$20,000 to \$1 million dollars in damage to bridges, houses, cars, boats, and sea walls. The greatest tsunami damage in Oregon did not occur along the ocean front as one might expect, but in the estuary channels located further inland. Of the communities affected, Seaside was inundated by a 10 foot tsunami wave and was the hardest hit. Tsunami wave heights reached 10 to 11.5 feet in the Nehalem River, 10 to 11.5 feet at Coos Bay, 11.5 feet at Newport, 10 to 12 feet at Florence, 13 feet at Reedsport, 14 feet at Brookings, and 14 feet at Coos Bay (Witter and others, 2011).

**Alaska-Aleutian Model Specifications:** DOGAMI modeled two distant earthquake and tsunami scenarios involving M9.2 earthquakes originating near the Gulf of Alaska. The first scenario attempts to replicate the 1964 Prince William Sound event, and the second scenario represents a hypothetical maximum event. This maximum event is the same model used by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in their 2006 tsunami hazard assessment of Seattle (TPHA 2006). This model uses extreme fault model parameters that result in maximum seafloor uplift, nearly twice as large as in the 1964 earthquake. The selected source location on the Aleutian chain of islands also shows higher energy directed toward the Oregon coast than other Aleutian source locations. For these reasons the hypothetical "Alaska Maximum" scenario is selected as the worst case distant tsunami scenario for Oregon. Detailed information on fault geometry, subduction, computer models, and the methodology used to create the tsunami scenarios presented on this map can be found in DOGAMI Special Paper 43 (Witter and others, 2011).

## Ring of Fire

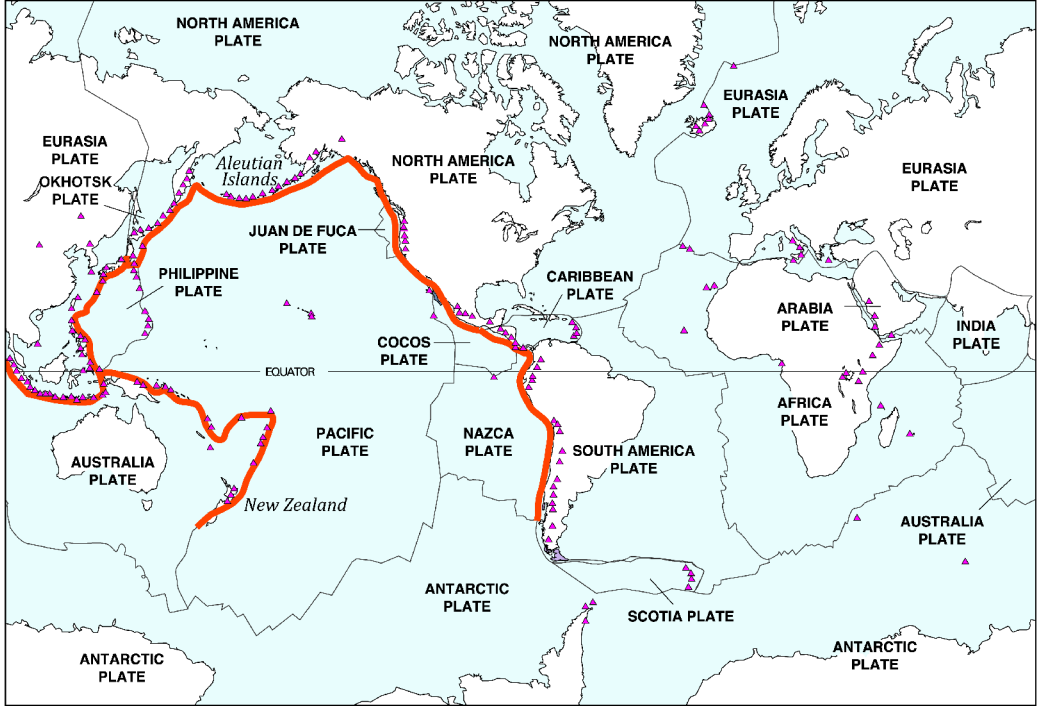


Figure 1. The "Ring of Fire" is a zone of active earthquakes and volcanoes that rings much of the Pacific Ocean, including the Oregon coast. Volcanoes and earthquakes on this ring are caused by the movement of tectonic plates. One type of movement is called subduction — when this, oceanic plates, such as those that compose the rock beneath the Pacific Ocean, sink beneath thicker, lighter plates that make up continental plates. Earthquakes that occur as a result of subduction can trigger tsunamis.

## Prince William Sound 1964 M9.2 Earthquake and Tsunami Travel Time Map

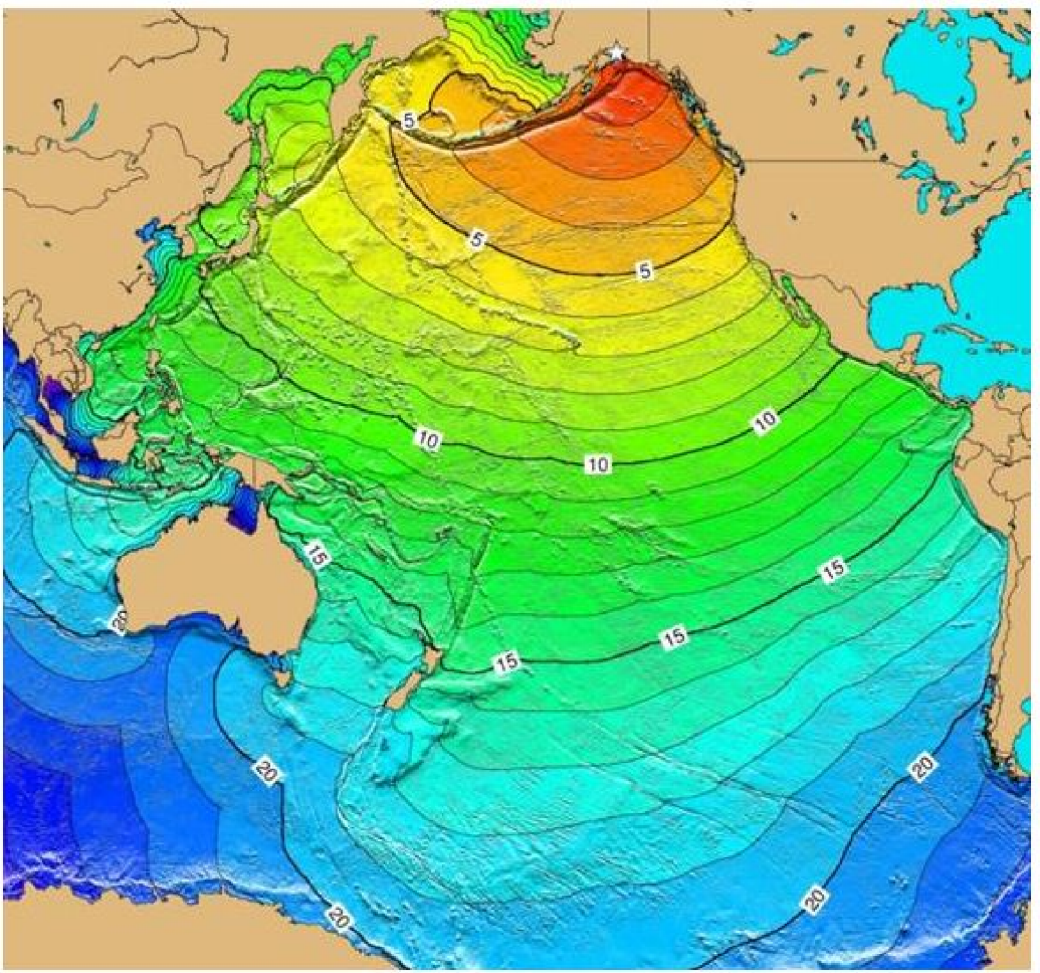


Figure 2. This image depicts the travel time for tsunami waves, in hours, around the Pacific Rim from the 1964 Prince William Sound earthquake. This magnitude 9.2 earthquake and resulting tsunami caused 125 deaths and \$3.1 billion in property loss. 58 million and 100 deaths in Alaska (NODC/WDC). The tsunami devastated many towns along the Gulf of Alaska, left serious damage in British Columbia, Hawaii, and along the west coast of the United States, and was recorded on tide gauges in Cuba and Puerto Rico.

## Buildings within Tsunami Inundation Zones

| Total Buildings                 | Entire Map Area | Unincorporated Areas |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Buildings within Tsunami Zones* | 156             | 156                  |
| Alaska M9.2 (1964)              | 9               | 9                    |
| Alaska Maximum                  | 9               | 9                    |

| Percent of Buildings within Tsunami Zones | Entire Map Area | Unincorporated Areas |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Alaska M9.2 (1964)                        | 5.4%            | 5.4%                 |
| Alaska Maximum                            | 5.4%            | 5.4%                 |

\*Building counts shown are based on polygon centroids and are cumulative within the map area.

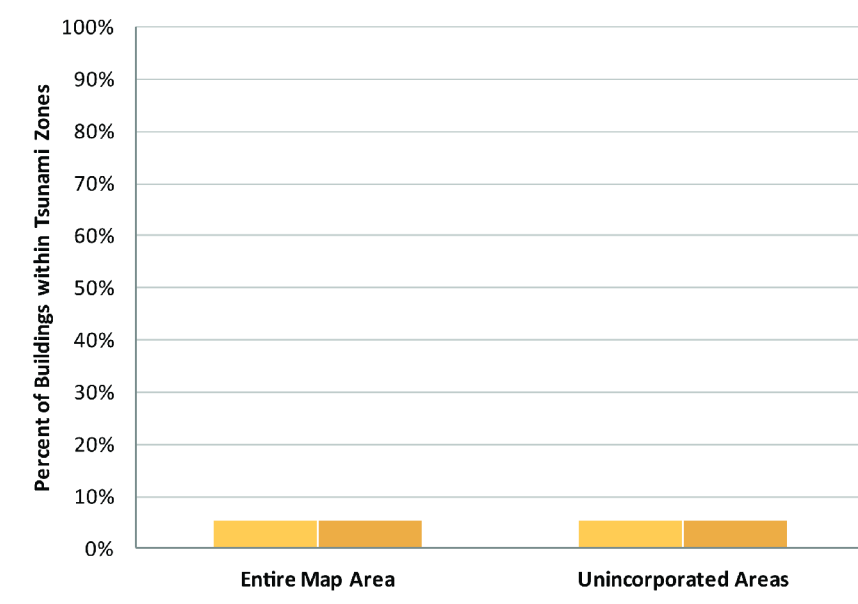


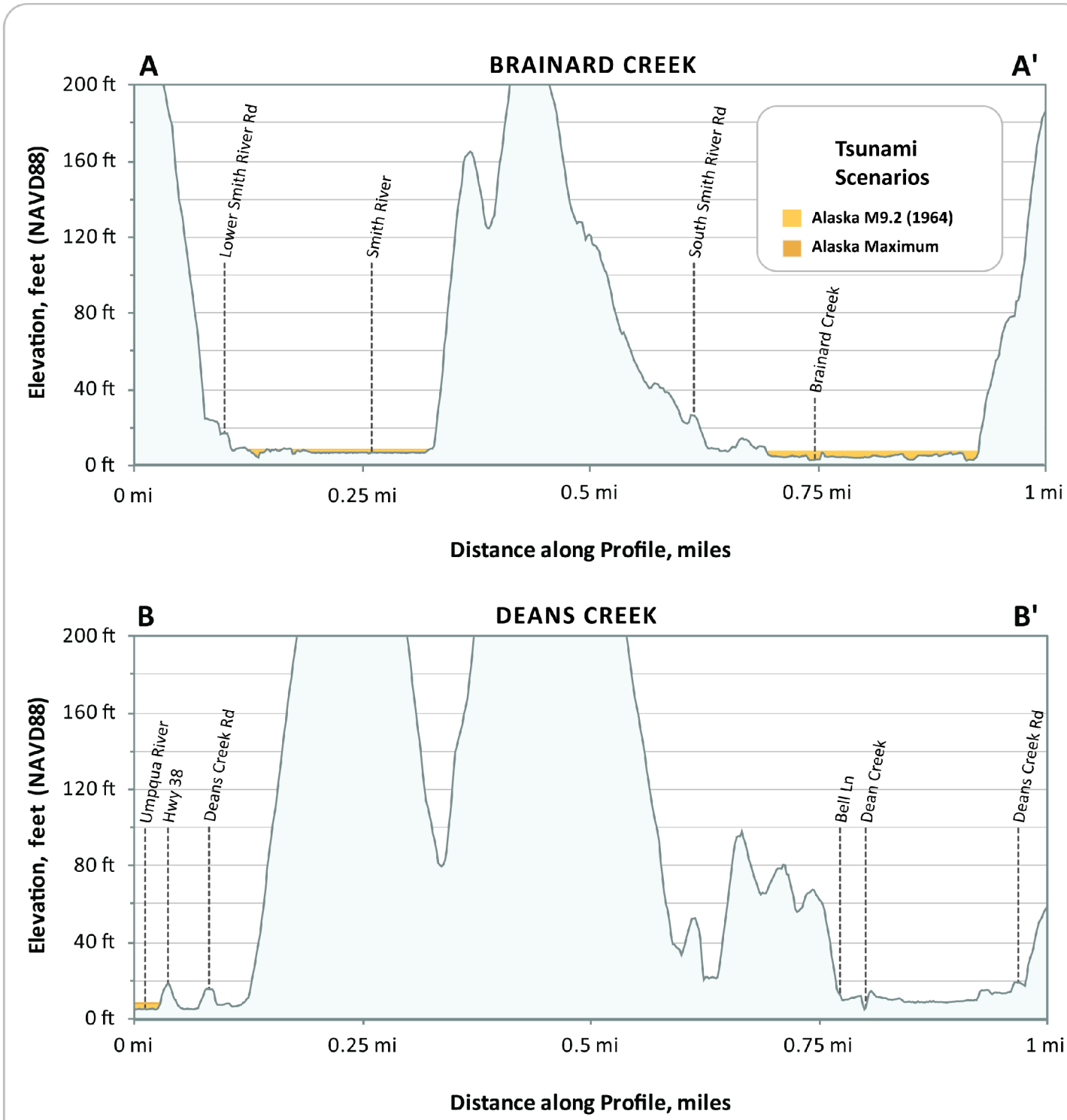
Figure 3. The table and chart show the number of buildings inundated for the Alaska M9.2 (1964) and the Alaska Maximum tsunami scenarios for cities and unincorporated portions of the map.

## Estimated Tsunami Wave Height through Time for Simulated Gauge Station

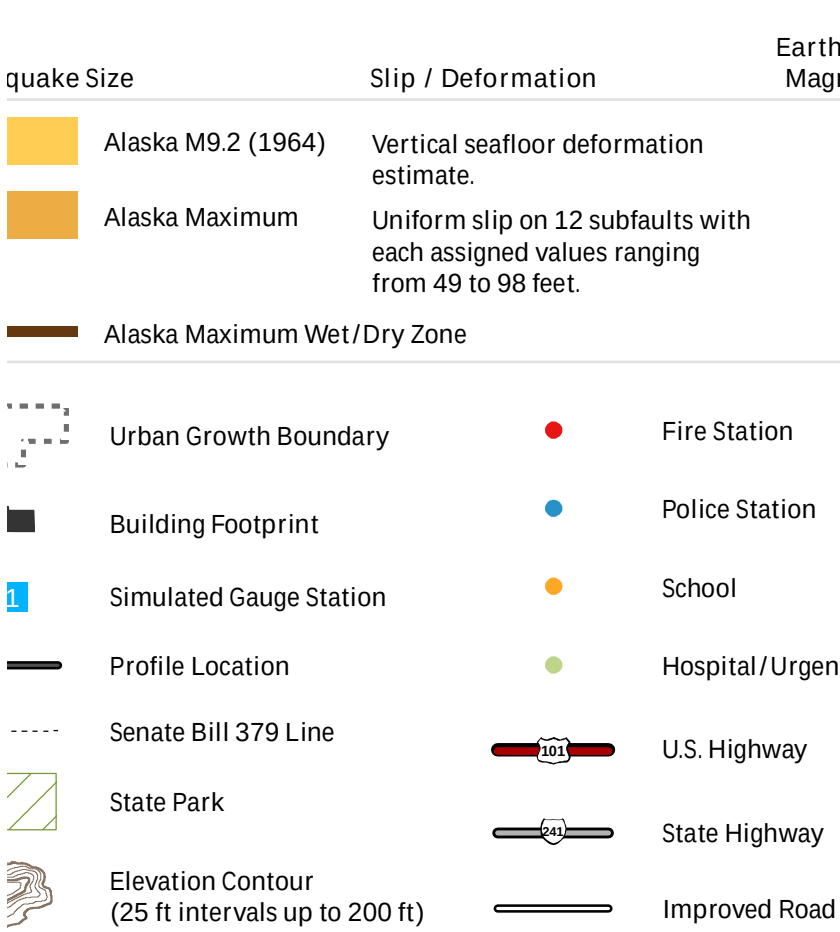
## No Gauge Station for Map Extent

Figure 4. This chart depicts the tsunami waves as they are at the selected reference point (simulated gauge station). It shows the change in wave heights for the two Alaska tsunami scenarios over an 8-hour period. Wave heights vary through time, and the first wave will not necessarily be the largest as waves interfere and reflect off local topography and bathymetry. Any absence of data indicates periods for which tsunami inundation has not yet reached or has receded from the station location and dry land is exposed.

## Maximum Wave Elevation Profiles



## Tsunami Inundation Map Index



## Data References

**Source Data:**  
This map is based on hydrodynamic tsunami modeling by Joseph Zhang, Oregon Health and Science University, Portland, Oregon. Model data inputs were created by John T. English and George R. Priest, Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI), Portland, Oregon.

**Hydrodynamic Data, contours, critical facilities, and building footprints** were created by DOGAMI. Senate Bill 379 line data were adapted by Rachel L. Smith and Sean G. Palmer, DOGAMI, in 2011 GIS file set. In 1995.

**Urban growth boundaries (UGBs)** were provided by the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD).

**Transportation data (2012)** provided by Douglas County were edited by DOGAMI to improve the spatial accuracy of the features or to add newly constructed roads not present in the original data layer.

**U.S. Census Bureau (2010)** U.S. Census Bureau, L20-2009-43123-FR, Deer Head Point, L20-2009-43123-02, North Fork, L20-2009-43123-03, Westport, and L20-2009-43123-04, Portland, Oregon.

**Coordinate System:** Oregon Statewide Lambert Conformal Conic, Unit: International Feet, Horizontal Datum: NAD 1983 HARN, Vertical Datum: NAVD 1985. Contours shown with geographic coordinate (Latitude/Longitude).

## References

**English, J.T., and Priest, G.R., 2011.** Simulating tsunami inundation and coastal erosion along the Oregon coast using hypothetical Cascadia and Alaska earthquake scenarios. Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries Special Paper 43, 57 p.

**Witter, R.C., Zhang, Y., Wang, X., Priest, G.R., Goldfinger, C., Simely, L.L., English, J.T., and Harris, E.A., 2011.** Simulating tsunami inundation and coastal erosion along the Oregon coast using hypothetical Cascadia and Alaska earthquake scenarios. Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries Special Paper 43, 57 p.

**Software:** Esri ArcGIS® 10.1, Microsoft® Excel®, and Adobe® Illustrator®.

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