Stratigraphic constraints for Miocene-age vertical motion along the Santa Clara fault, Espanola Basin, north-central New Mexico

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in:

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INTRODUCTION

This report examines the middle to late Miocene tectonic history of the Santa Clara fault (SCF) in the Española Basin, north-central Rio Grande rift. A part of the Embudo fault system, the northeast-trending SCF transfers strain between the San Luis and Española Basins. This fault dips to the southeast and exhibits a normal, east-down sense of offset and significant left-lateral slip. Comparing thickness changes of dated stratigraphic intervals across the SCF allows us to document the development of this structure during middle and late Miocene time. Our thickness comparisons indicate an increase in fault activity at ca. 12.7 Ma and suggest a prior increase in fault activity between 15 and 13 Ma. Between 11 and 10 Ma, the southward-flowing river associated with the Cejita Member (Chamita Formation) lapped westward 3 km onto the Santa Clara footwall, suggesting diminished subsidence during that time or increased sediment supply to this river. Approximately 430-500 m of stratigraphic separation of post-10 Ma Chamita Formation strata and lesser vertical offset of the Pliocene Puye Formation indicates that significant vertical motion along the SCF occurred after 10 Ma.

FIGURE 1. Shaded relief map showing locations of stratigraphic sections (thick black lines outlined in white): SR = Skull Ridge, UCS = upper Cuarteles section, MCS = middle Cuarteles section, LCS = lower Cuarteles section, RDO = Rio del Oso sections, WCS = West Chili section. Also depicted are faults (white lines, with ball and bar on the downthrown side) and folds (white lines = fold axis, with outward pointing arrows denoting anticlines and inward pointing arrows denoting synclines); dotted lines mark buried structures. Towns and other geographic features are abbreviated as follows: BM = Black Mesa, C = Chimayo, E = Española, V = Velarde, M = Medanales. Important faults are labeled as follows: OCF = Ojo Caliente fault, SCF = Santa Clara fault, BMF = Black Mesa fault, LMF = La Mesita fault, VF = Velarde fault, RdTF = Rio de Truchas fault, PuF = Puye fault zone, and PFS = Pajarito fault system. Fault locations and generalized dip directions are from Koning (2002, 2003, 2004), Koning et al. (2002, 2004c, 2005a), Koning and Manley (2003), and Koning and Aby (2003).
affected the Española Basin. The first phase was marked by major tilting and faulting that initiated about 7.5 Ma, and argued Basin as largely of Pliocene age. Golombek (1983) interpreted (1979) acknowledged faulting along the western rift border aftercene into the Pleistocene (Galusha and Blick, 1971), with onlyby faulting and tilting of the basin-fill strata from the late Mio
gocene-middle Miocene (Galusha and Blick, 1971; Baltz, 1978).

The second phase formed the Española Basin proper and the highrelief of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, and was accompaniedby faulting north of the Jemez Mountains between about 12 and 9.5
Ma. Koning et al. (2004a) used seismic reflection data to suggestthe Velarde graben began forming sometime between lateMiocene, when activity shifted eastward to
the Pajarito fault and SCF (Baldridge et al., 1994).

Understanding the tectonic history of the SCF is importantbecause it functions as part of a basin master fault for the west
tilted half-graben in the eastern Española Basin. Presumably, the tilting of that half-graben corresponds with motion along this fault.

PREVIOUS WORK

Early workers postulated that two phases of deformation affected the Española Basin. The first phase was marked by faulting and broad down-warping of the basin floor in the Oligocene-middle Miocene (Galusha and Blick, 1971; Baltz, 1978). The second phase formed the Española Basin proper and the high relief of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, and was accompanied by faulting and tilting of the basin-fill strata from the late Mio
cene into the Pleistocene (Galusha and Blick, 1971), with only minor faulting in the Miocene (Kelley, 1978, 1979).

The above paradigm underwent a shift after 1978. Manley (1979) acknowledged faulting along the western rift border after ~10 Ma, but interpreted the inner grabens within the Española Basin as largely of Pliocene age. Golombok (1983) interpreted major tilting and faulting that initiated about 7.5 Ma, and argued that the Pajarito fault zone postdates 5 Ma.

Particularly germane are studies that interpret pre-10 Ma faulting near the study area. Baldridge et al. (1994) suggested that extension and significant faulting in the western Española Basin began around 10 Ma. Aldrich and Dethier (1990) interpreted predominantly dip-slip along the SCF from before approximately 12.4 to 10 Ma, predominantly oblique-sinistral strike-slip motion between 10 and 5 Ma, and dextral strike-slip thereafter. Dethier and Martin (1984) recognized that major extension occurred on the north flank of the Jemez Mountains between about 12 and 9.5 Ma. Koning et al. (2004a) used seismic reflection data to suggest that the Velarde graben began forming sometime between late Oligocene to late Miocene time, and Koning et al. (2005b) interpret middle Miocene tilting east of España

KONING, CONNELL, SLATE, & WAN

SANTA CLARA FAULT

Santa Clara fault (SCF) was the first name applied to this structure (Harrington and Aldrich, 1984). Many subsequent workers (e.g., Aldrich, 1986; Aldrich and Dethier, 1991; Gonzalez, 1993; Machette et al., 1998) used the name Embudo fault because the fault strikes northeast like the La Mesita fault of the Embudo fault system. Earlier maps (e.g., Kelley, 1978) portrayed the two faults as a continuous structure. However, recent work indicates that the two structures are not continuous, at least near the surface, but rather undergo a structurally complicated right step at and east of the south tip of Black Mesa, called the Black Mesa segment boundary (Koning et al., 2004a). Furthermore, the sense of throw (northwest-down on the northern faults versus southeast-down on the SCF) reverses in this step-over. We feel it is justified to use a separate name when referring to this fault, and other workers have recently readopted the name SCF as well.

The SCF is marked by a relatively wide zone (hundreds of meters) of steeply southeast-dipping beds of the Chama Formation (30° to vertical, some overturned). Within this zone are one or more northeast-striking faults. On the south side of Arroyo de la Presa, the strike of the fault zone has a zigzag pattern (Figs. 1, 2), alternating between easterly strikes of about N70-80°E and northerly strikes of N30-40°E. Slickenside data on the more northerly striking sections indicate a left-lateral sense of motion (Gonzalez, 1993). Aldrich (1986) and Aldrich and Dethier (1991) interpreted a significant component of strike-slip along this fault based on the orientation of conjugate shears, and inferred a right-lateral direction because north-northeast sections of the fault showed signs of compression or transpression and lacked adjoining pull-apart basins. However, we suspect a general left-lateral component of slip based on the following: 1) at one locality, measurements on a N70-80°E striking section of the fault indicate a sinistral-oblique sense of fault motion (D. Koning, unpubl. data; UTM coordinates: 397339 E, 3991446N, NAD 27, zone 13); 2) on an easterly striking section of the fault about 0.5 km northeast of the aforementioned locality, beds that strike roughly parallel to the fault are locally overturned (Koning et al., 2005a), indicating transpression along this easterly striking segment consistent with sinistral slip along the generally northeast striking faults, and 3) Lobato Formation basalts flows 2-3 km north of the fault near the town of Chili are generally rotated counter-clockwise (Brown and Golombok, 1985; Salyards et al., 1994).

The magnitude of lateral slip is not known for the SCF, but the cross-section shown in figure 1.18 of the first day road log (also in Koning and Manley, 2003; Koning et al., 2005b) suggests a late Miocene-to-present throw of 430-500 m. This throw estimate uses the stratigraphic separation of a phreatomagmatic deposit encountered in the Agua Sana South Well #1 that may correlate with exposed, 12-25 m-thick, phreatomagmatic deposits underlying Lobato Formation basalts flows on the fault footwall. The base of these flows returned a K/Ar age of 12.4 ± 0.4 Ma (Dethier et al., 1986; Aldrich and Dethier, 1990) and a prelimi
inary 40Ar/39Ar age of 9.54 ± 0.66 Ma; a bomb in the underlying, thick phreatomagmatic deposits returned a preliminary age of 9.0 ± 1.4 Ma (Richard Esser, written commun., 2006).
FIGURE 2. Geologic map of the Chili 7.5-minute quadrangle (Koning et al., 2005a). Rectangular box along west margin is location of map of figure 1.73 of 1st-day road log. CdAF = Canada del Almagre fault. Quaternary valley-fill units not shown. For color version of this figure, see Plate 10 on page 140.
Three to four km east of Cerro Roman, the trace of the SCF becomes somewhat enigmatic in the poorly exposed Puye Formation (Fig. 1). Here, the north end of the Puye fault zone projects into the SCF (Figs. 1, 2). We suspect that a component of slip is transferred between the Santa Clara and Puyé faults in this area. Near Cerro Roman is a 2-3 km right-step in the SCF. The northern, northeast-striking fault in this step-over joins with the north-striking Pajarito fault near Santa Clara Canyon to the south and has formed a prominent scarp on the western edge of the Pajarito plateau. The southern fault is marked by a degraded fault scarp in the Puye Formation approximately 18 to 32 m high.

METHODS

We compare stratal thicknesses between the footwall and the hanging wall of the SCF. If no motion on the fault occurred during deposition of a particular stratigraphic interval, then the thickness of that interval should be similar on both sides of the fault, assuming no relict topography (of which there is no evidence in our study sites). If the hanging wall of the fault was subsiding, then the hanging-wall succession should be thicker than on the footwall, owing to the difference in accommodation and preservation of sediment. Thickness differences may be even more pronounced if the footwall block was subject to erosion. Other variables that may influence stratal preservation and sedimentation, such as discharge or paleoclimatic variations, are assumed to apply more or less equally on both the hanging wall and footwall. Ideally, the streams associated with the deposits should be approximately similar in size because smaller tributary streams may have steeper gradients and somewhat thinner deposits than larger, higher order streams.

Stratal thicknesses are compared between specific tephra beds or zones that we can correlate between stratigraphic sections in the footwall and hanging wall. Other faults between the hanging-wall stratigraphic sections and the SCF may also influence stratal thicknesses, but they are inferred to be relatively minor compared to the SCF (e.g., fig. 1.18 of the 1st day road log). Of these faults, the one having the most throw is located ~3.7 km east of the SCF (120-150 m east-down throw vs. >430-500 m on the SCF). Another relatively long structure, the Road fault east of Española, has an interpreted throw of 18 m (Johnpeer et al., 1985) north of NM-76. Activity along these intermediary faults may influence the thickness differences, but probably to a lesser degree than motion along the SCF. Another potential complication is thickness variations due to sinistral motion of different parts of the basin. We think this is not significant because Bouguer gravity contour lines in the immediate areas of our footwall and hanging-wall sites are generally parallel to the strike of the SCF (Ferguson et al., 1995). In other words, basin-fill strata seem to be of relatively constant thickness parallel to the fault, so movement along the fault probably would not juxtapose areas that may have experienced different subsidence rates (and hence thicker basin-fill).

Below, we summarize our stratigraphic sections and the tephra marker beds or zones. We conclude with a comparison of thickness changes between sections and discuss how the activity and motion along the SCF changed during the middle and late Miocene.

STRATIGRAPHY

Stratigraphy near the SCF

As an introduction to our stratigraphic sections, we summarize the stratigraphy on the footwall and hanging wall of the SCF (Fig. 3). Strata on the footwall generally consist of two sandy members of the Tesuque Formation, the fluviatile Chama-El Rito Member (180-360 m thick) and the overlying, predominately cross-stratified, eolian sediment of the Ojo Caliente Sandstone Member (13.4 to 12.5 Ma). These two members have interpreted age ranges of 18(?) to 13.4 Ma and 13.4 to 12.5 Ma, respectively (May, 1980, 1984; Ekas et al., 1984; Dethier et al., 1986; Aldrich and Dethier, 1990; Tedford and Barghoorn, 1993; Tedford et al., 2004; Koning et al., 2005a, b).

Locally on top of the Tesuque Formation lies the relatively thin (40-100 m) Chama Formation, which consists of sand, silty sand, gravel, and clay-silt beds that belong to the Vallito, Hernandez, and Cejita Members. The Hernandez Member consists of pebbly sand and sandy gravel channel-fills along with floodplain deposits of an ancestral Rio Chama. To the northeast, the Hernandez Member interfingers with the Vallito and Cejita Members. The Vallito Member consists of sandy ancestral Rio Grande deposits derived from the San Luis Basin (Koning and Aby, 2005) and interfingering, distal alluvial slope deposits of streams with a source in the Abiquiu embayment. The Cejita Member consists of floodplain sediment and sand to pebbly sand channel-fills deposited by a river draining the Peñasco embayment to the northeast (Manley, 1976, 1977, 1979; Koning and Aby, 2005). This river merged with the one draining the San Luis Basin immediately north of our study area, and Cejita Member sediment input dominates the axial river deposits on the SCF footwall. Depending on location, the contact between the Chama and Tesuque Formations may be either unconformable or gradational.

Interbedded with and generally overlying the Chama Formation on the SCF footwall are basalt flows of the Lobato Formation. At Cerro Roman, stacked flows attain a cumulative thickness as much as 180 m (Koning et al., 2005a). K/Ar age ranges of basals in the vicinity are 12.4 ± 0.4 Ma to 9.6 ± 0.2 Ma (Dethier and Manley, 1985; Dethier et al., 1986; Goff et al., 1989), mostly between 11-9.5 Ma, and a recent 39Ar/40Ar date returned an age of 9.82±0.28 Ma (Justet, 2003). Also of significance is the Rio del Oso dike swarm, which consists of subvertical basalt dikes that intrude the Ojo Caliente Sandstone and Chama-El Rito Members north of Arroyo de la Presa. These dikes have been dated at 10.7-9.3 Ma (Baldrige et al., 1980; Dethier et al., 1986; Aldrich and Dethier, 1990; Koning et al. 2005a), and indicate east-west extension during that time (Baldrige et al., 1980). More detail on the stratigraphy of the footwall can be found in Dethier and Martin (1984), Dethier and Manley (1986), and Koning et al. (2005a).

On the hanging wall of the SCF, the Tesuque Formation underlies the coarser-grained Chama Formation. The exposed Tesuque Formation is formally subdivided into three members:
the Nambe, Skull Ridge, and Pojoaque Members (bottom to top; Galusha and Blick, 1971). Within these three members, Cavazza (1986) differentiated two interfingering lithosomes (A and B) that indicate two distinctly different provenances. Buried under Chamita Formation strata immediately adjacent to the SCF are the Ojo Caliente Sandstone and Chama-El Rito Members (Fig. 3). As a whole, strata become significantly coarser after ~13.2 Ma. These coarser, Miocene-age deposits have been formally designated as the Cejita Member for strata similar to lithosome B (Manley, 1976, 1977, 1979; Koning et al., 2005b) and as the Cuarteles Member for lithosome A strata (Koning et al., 2005b). Both these members extend across the Chamita and Tesuque Formations, as allowed by NACSN (2005). Further description of the sediments and the stratigraphy of hanging-wall strata was given by Koning and Aby (2005) and Koning et al. (2005b).

On the SCF footwall, we measured stratigraphic sections in two general areas (descriptive data in Koning et al., 2005a). Along the middle part of Rio del Oso, about 1 km east of the abandoned village of San Lorenzo, are five stratigraphic sections: the basal, lower, and upper Rio del Oso sections together with the hanging-wall Rio del Oso section (RDO-HW) and the footwall Rio del Oso section (RDO-FW) (Fig. 1; 1<sup>st</sup> day road log, fig. 1.72). The basal, lower, and upper Rio del Oso sections exhibit strata of the Chama-El Rito and basal Ojo Caliente Sandstone Members of the Tesuque Formation (Fig. 4). The RDO-HW and RDO-FW sections were mainly measured in Chamita Formation strata intercalated with Lobato Formation basalt flows (Fig. 5); they also indicate 13 to 10 Ma activity along the Cañada del Alamgre fault (see minipaper by Koning and Kempter, 2007).

The base of RDO-HW corresponds with a gradational and possibly interfingering contact with the upper Ojo Caliente Sandstone, and the base of RDO-FW corresponds to an unconformity on the top of the Chama-El Rito Member (Fig. 5). The second area lies 1.4 km south-southwest of the town of Chili, where the West Chili stratigraphic section was measured in interfingering Vallito and Cejita Members of the Chamita Formation (Fig. 6). The base of this section is in the upper Ojo Caliente Sandstone Member.

These six stratigraphic sections document sedimentologic differences between the Chama-El Rito Member of the Tesuque Formation and the various members of the Chamita Formation. In the former, tephra consists of gray and white fine ash contained within discrete beds and paleosols are generally absent. In addition, sedimentary structures such as horizontal laminations, ripple marks, or cross-stratification are generally preserved within thin to medium, tabular to broadly lenticular sand beds.

In contrast, stratigraphic sections in the Chamita Formation locally exhibit abundant paleosols (e.g., West Chili section) and tephra consists of white coarse ash-fine lapilli that may be in discrete beds but is commonly diluted and scattered within sand, silty sand, and mud beds. Furthermore, sedimentary structures are generally lacking in sand beds of the Vallito Member (i.e., these beds are internally massive).

We compare stratal thicknesses in these footwall sections to previously measured stratigraphic sections east of Española in the hanging wall of the fault (Figs. 1, 7, 8). These sections include the Cuarteles and upper Martinez stratigraphic sections (Koning, 2003; Koning and Manley, 2003; Koning et al., 2005b). Located in the escarpment north of the Santa Cruz River, these sections...
FIGURE 4. Rio del Oso sections that illustrate the ash-bearing Chama-El Rito (inferred lower Barstovian tuffaceous zone), overlying Chama-el Rito, and the basal Ojo Caliente Sandstone Members of the Tesuque Formation. Correlations between the basal, lower, and upper Rio del Oso sections are depicted. See Koning et al. (2005a, appendix) and 1st-day road log (fig. 1.73) for detailed descriptions and locations of these sections, and Figure 6 for explanation of stratigraphic section symbols and patterns.
STRATIGRAPHIC CONSTRAINTS FOR MOTION ON THE SANTA CLARA FAULT

extend up-section from the upper Pojoaque Member into coarse strata of the Cuarteles Member of the Tesuque Formation (Fig. 8). We also use stratigraphic sections D and C from Kuhle (1997) to illustrate stratigraphic positions of tephra in the Skull Ridge Member (Tesuque Formation) on the west side of the fault (Fig. 2; Dethier and Martin, 1984; Aldrich and Dethier, 1990; Koning et al., 2005a). See Koning et al. (2005a, appendix) and 1st-day road log (fig. 1.73) for detailed descriptions and locations of these sections, and Figure 6 for explanation of stratigraphic section symbols and patterns.

Marker beds and zones

Five dated tephra beds or zones serve as boundaries of stratigraphic intervals whose thicknesses are compared across the Santa Clara fault (Table 1). The 9.4-10 Ma age datum consists of the basal Alcalde tuffaceous zone (ATZ, in the hanging wall) and a 3 m-thick basalt that caps the West Chili section in the footwall. The dark-colored, coarse ashes of the main Española tephra zone (ETZ) lie in a 24 m-thick interval 28-52 m above the lower coarse white ash zone. Because of their uniqueness within the ETZ, we correlate pumice-bearing beds of the 12.9-15.7 m interval in the West Chili stratigraphic section with the greenish dacite-bearing lapilli bed lies 2.5 m below a pumice-bearing tephra bed dated using $^{40}$Ar/$^{39}$Ar at 12.71 ± 0.74 Ma, so we assign this lapilli bed an approximate age of 12.7 Ma as well. The entire LCWAZ has an age range of 13.1 to 12.1 Ma (Koning, 2007).

About 110 m below the LCWAZ on the hanging wall is the Pojoaque white ash zone in Pojoaque Member strata of the Tesuque Formation, having an age range of 13.2-14.0 Ma (Table 1; Koning et al., 2005b and references therein). On the footwall, geologic mapping in the Lyden and Chili quadrangles (Koning, 2004; Koning et al., 2005a) indicates that several white fine ashes occur in the basal 20-40 m of the Ojo Caliente Sandstone Member (including the gradational zone with the underlying Chama-El Rito Member) and upper 40-60 m of the Chama-El Rito Member. These ashes look similar to those in the Pojoaque white ash zone in the SCF hanging-wall (Table 1). Moreover, both sets of ashes occur in strata yielding fossils correlated with the late Barstovian North American land mammal “age” (Tedford and Barghoorn, 1993). Thus, we infer these two sets of white fine ashes corre-
One thin bed of altered fine white ash projects to 150 m in the upper Rio del Oso section. Since it lies only 17 m below the Ojo Caliente and Chama-El Rito Member contact, we correlate this ash to about the middle of the Pojoaque white ash zone.

One of the defining characteristics of the Skull Ridge Member of the Tesuque Formation is abundant white and gray, fine ash beds (Galusha and Blick, 1971; Koning et al., 2002). Our lower Rio del Oso section (Fig. 4) includes several ashes similar in appearance and abundance to those in the Skull Ridge Member. The ashes are not chemically similar to those in the Pojoaque white ash zone, the only other tephra zone with the same abundance of ashes. Correlating ashes in the lower Rio del Oso section with those in the Skull Ridge Member is consistent with suggestive biostratigraphic data. The Skull Ridge Member has yielded fossils belonging exclusively to the early Barstovian North American land mammal “age” (15-16 Ma; Tedford et al., 2004; Tedford and Barghoorn, 1993). Strata of the lower Rio del Oso section likely correlate to what Tedford and Barghoorn (1993, fig. 2) called the Rio del Oso-Abiquiu sites, which also yielded early Barstovian fossils. The only place we know of where early Barstovian fossils could possibly be collected along Rio del Oso is on the footwall of the Cañada del Almagre fault, because east of that fault Rio del Oso is generally within 60 m of the Chama-El Rito and Ojo Caliente contact (which would have yielded late Barstovian fossils according to Galusha and Blick, 1971, and Tedford and Barghoorn, 1993).

To test the suggestive biostratigraphic data regarding a correlation with the Skull Ridge Member, we analyzed the chemical compositions of all relatively unaltered ashes in the lower Rio del Oso section (Tables 2, 3). We then compared their compositions to two extensive, distinctive white ashes in the Skull Ridge Member on the hanging wall, called White ash #2 and White ash #3, using chemical composition data in Borchert (2002). Variables involved in comparing data sets from different labs make our resulting interpretations preliminary and inconclusive until we run them all on the same instrument. Initial results, however, are promising. Of the approximately 5500 entries in the USGS

### Table 1. Summary of tephra beds and zones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tephra bed or zone (source)</th>
<th>Stratigraphic position on FW (strat section)</th>
<th>Stratigraphic position on HW (strat section)</th>
<th>Lithologic Summary and age*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.4-10 Ma age datum (Lobato Fm eruptive center)</td>
<td>44.8-47.8 m (West Chili)</td>
<td>556.4-558.3 m (Martinez)</td>
<td>Basal Alcalde tuffaceous zone on HW: One to two, laterally extensive, thin to thick ash beds (9 to 12 m of stratigraphic separation m) that are black to gray, fine to coarse (mostly coarse), and are probably basaltic in composition. Top of ATZ is 9.40 ± 0.46 Ma (Koning et al., 2004b), so base ~50 m below is probably ~9.4-10 Ma. Lobato Fm basalt flow on FW: very dark gray; 10.11 ± 0.07 Ma (Maldonado and Miggins, this volume).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Espanola tephra zone (buried vents near center of the Española Basin)</td>
<td>12.3-15.7 m (West Chili)</td>
<td>386.8-410.6 m (Cuarteles)</td>
<td>HW: One to eight, black to dark gray to light gray, coarse ash beds intercalated in arkosic sandstone and granite-dominated, gravelly channel-fills. In unit 8p (410.6 m and unit 8j (397.0-397.7 m) of the Cuarteles section are locally abundant, white consolidated ash and pumice (0.5 - 17 mm in diameter). Age estimate of 10.2 to 12.4 Ma. FW: 8-20% black-gray basalt-andesite grains mixed with sand composed of quartz + 10-12% orange-stained quartz and possible potassium feldspar; also 2-4 mm long pumice grains and clasts; locally part of paleosols. At 12.9 m and 15.4-15.7 m in the W. Chili section are dark-colored, coarse ash beds that contain minor (~2-5%) white ash-pumice grains and clasts 0.5-4 mm in diameter. Age estimate of 10.2 to 12.4 Ma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower coarse white ash zone (northern Jemez Mtns)</td>
<td>Four beds between 0.8 m and 12.3 m. Another bed projects 29 m below base of section (West Chili)</td>
<td>372.8-442.4 m (Martinez)</td>
<td>Thin to thick beds containing coarse ash- to lapilli-size fragments of compacted white ash, pumice, and plagioclase crystals together with 1-10% biotite, 3-7% pink to light gray, felsic-intermediate volcanic rock ejecta, 3-5% quartz, and trace to 2% hornblende. These are intercalated within arkosic sand and gravelly channel-fills (Cuarteles Mbr., Tesuque Formation) in the HW sections, and within sand and pebbly sand (Vallito and Hernandez Member) strata in the FW sections. Within this zone is a bed containing heterogeneous, felsic-intermediate lapilli (25-30 mm) that includes a greenish, porphyritic dacite. Age range of 12.1-13.1 Ma (Koning et al., minipaper, this volume); the greenish porphyritic dacite lies 2.5 m below a pumice-bearing bed having a 40Ar/39Ar age of 12.71 ± 0.74 Ma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pojoaque white ash zone (western Nevada &amp;Snake River Plain, ID)**</td>
<td>See text</td>
<td>73-170 m (Cuarteles)</td>
<td>Numerous, thin to thick, tabular beds of fine white and local gray ashes interbedded in sandstone, silty sandstone, and siltstone of lithosomes A and B of the Pojoaque Member of the Tesuque Formation. White ashes generally altered and contain very sparse to sparse glass shards and up to 7% biotite. Assigned age of 14.0 Ma and 13.2 Ma (Koning, 2003 using magnetic-polarity stratigraphy work of Barghoorn, 1981, the revised geomagnetic polarity time scale of Cande and Kent, 1995, and fossil data (Koning et al., 2005b; Tedford et al., 2004, Tedford and Barghoorn, 1993). 40Ar/39Ar age of 13.7 ± 0.18 Ma (Izett and Obradovich, 2001) obtained in the lower-middle part of the PWAZ (Obradovich, written commun, 2004) in the Pojoaque Member type section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Barstovian tephra zone**</td>
<td>See text</td>
<td>Abundant white and gray, fine ashes in sandstone and siltstone of lithosomes A and B in the Skull Ridge Member of the Tesuque Formation.</td>
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Notes: HW = hanging-wall, FW = footwall
* Complete description of these tephra zones and their ages are given in Koning et al. (2005b), unless otherwise noted.
** Andrei Sarna-Wojcicki (unpublished data)
* A large possibility of source areas, include Snake River Plains origin.
taphrochronology database, sample OC-187, located 12 m above the basal white fine marker ash, chemically matches best with Skull Ridge White ash #3 (using our selected elements; Table 3 and Fig. 4).

At this stage in our study, it is useful to compare the thickness of the entire tuffaceous interval in the strata inferred to be ~15-16 Ma (early Barstovian) based on biostratigraphic data. The top and base of this informal lower Barstovian tuffaceous zone in the Skull Ridge Member correspond to the Road ash and White ash #2, respectively; White ash #2 may correlate with the basal white fine marker ash (Table 3; Fig. 7). Ashes are present above and below this tuffaceous zone, but are relatively sparse and widely spaced (Kuhle, 1997; Kuhle and Smith, 2001; Galusha and Blick, 1971). Near the Skull Ridge type section (near the C Skull Ridge section, Figs 1, 7), tephra are sufficiently abundant between these two ashes that they may be considered as a marker interval 160-180 m thick. The Road ash returned a $^{40}$Ar/$^{39}$Ar age of 15.1 ± 0.06 Ma, and the age of White ash #2 is constrained by $^{40}$Ar/$^{39}$Ar dating and magnetic-polarity stratigraphy work to range from 15.8 to 15.5 Ma (Barghoorn, 1981; Izett and Obradovich, 2001).

Ashes in this lower Barstovian tuffaceous zone that locally proved important are a gray fine ash near the top of the lower Rio del Oso section (sample 091106c) at 96.5-96.6 m, and another near the base of the upper Rio del Oso section (sample OC-277-271006-FGA-djk) at 2.1-2.5 m (Fig. 4). These two ashes are sufficiently similar in composition to justify correlation (Table 2). Correlating these ashes is consistent with projecting the contact between the two sections using local measurements of bedding attitudes (within the estimated ±15 m of error involved in such a projection). Thus, we are able to use the tephra composition data to confirm our tie between the lower and upper Rio del Oso stratigraphic sections.

**STRATAL ACCUMULATION RATES**

The abundant, relatively well-dated tephra markers in the Española Basin provide constraints for comparing stratal accumulation rates in the region (e.g., Koning et al., 2005b). We use some of these tephra to correlate strata across the SCF zone. We define four stratigraphic intervals: 1) 10-12.7 Ma interval between the 9.4-10 Ma age datum and the greenish dacite-bearing lapilli bed in the lower coarse white ash zone; 2) 12.7-13.1 Ma interval between the greenish dacite-bearing lapilli bed in the lower coarse white ash zone and the base of this zone; 3) 13.5-15.1 Ma interval between the middle of the PWAZ and the top of the lower Barstovian tuffaceous zone; and 4) 15.1-15.8 Ma interval corresponding to the lower Barstovian tuffaceous zone in Skull Ridge age-equivalent strata.

We compare the stratigraphic thicknesses of these four stratigraphic intervals across the SCF zone. A hanging wall-normalized thickening index, equal to the thickness difference between the hanging wall and footwall divided by the hanging wall thickness, is used to assess the amount of thickening of a particular stratigraphic interval across the SCF. Since we may be off ±10 m in our correlations (except for the greenish dacite-bearing lapilli), the estimated error involved in this calculation is about 15%. We also calculated stratal accumulation rates using our thickness and age data (Table 4).

These calculations indicate a progressive up-section increase in the hanging wall-normalized thickening index, from 16 to 22% in the lower Barstovian tuffaceous zone to 75% in the interval between the 9.4-10 Ma age datum and the greenish dacite-bearing lapilli bed. Stratal accumulation rates also decrease up-section in both the hanging wall and the footwall. However, the hanging wall-normalized thickening index and sedimentation rates are similar between the two middle stratigraphic intervals (i.e., between the top of the lower Barstovian tuffaceous zone and the greenish dacite-bearing lapilli bed). For each stratigraphic interval, the range of footwall sedimentation rates is generally lower than the range of hanging wall sedimentation rates.

**DISCUSSION**

**Temporal changes in vertical motion along the SCF**

Biostratigraphic data in addition to positions of tephra beds allow a preliminary thickness comparison of the lower two stratigraphic intervals. Here, we correlate strata based on the approxi-
mate middle of the Pojoaque white ash zone (PWAZ). In the upper Rio del Oso section, the thin bed of white ash that we correlate to the PWAZ is located about 20 m below eolian sediment of the Ojo Caliente Sandstone Member. This ash may correlate to two tephras in the Cuarteles section that are within 20 m of eolian sediment stratigraphic interval corresponding to strata between the hanging wall and footwall. At this time, the Cuarteles section was experiencing alluvial slope deposition and the West Chili section was experiencing alternating axial river (Cejita Member, Chamita Formation) and distal piedmont deposition (Vallito Member).

of the Pojoaque white ash zone and the top of the lower Barstovian tuffaceous zone (15.1-13.5 Ma). Thus, we infer that the SCF was active from 15.1 to 13.5 Ma. This fault activity seemed to have continued into the lower LCWAZ based on similar thickening index values for strata between the greenish dacite-bearing lapilli bed and the base of the LCWAZ.

Between the greenish dacite-bearing lapilli bed in the LCWAZ (~12.7 Ma) and the 10.0 to 9.4 Ma age datum, stratal accumulation rates decreased by roughly an order of magnitude and the hanging wall-normalized thickening index increased from ~40% to 75%. Although climatic changes may have reduced stratal accumulation rates across the entire basin, there is a significant difference in stratal thicknesses of this interval between the hanging wall and footwall sections. At this time, the Cuarteles section was experiencing alluvial slope deposition and the West Chili section was experiencing alternating axial river (Cejita Member, Chamita Formation) and distal piedmont deposition (Vallito Member).

TABLE 2. Tephra data for samples from upper, lower, and basal Rio del Oso stratigraphic sections and White ashes #2-3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample #</th>
<th>Location in strat sections (informal name)</th>
<th>date analyzed</th>
<th>SiO2</th>
<th>Al2O3</th>
<th>Fe2O3</th>
<th>MgO</th>
<th>MnO</th>
<th>CaO</th>
<th>TiO2</th>
<th>Na2O</th>
<th>K2O</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OC-189-271006-djk</td>
<td>Lower RDO, 105.0-106.6 m</td>
<td>1/17/2007</td>
<td>72.33</td>
<td>15.54</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDO-091106h-djk</td>
<td>Lower RDO, 101.9-102.9 m</td>
<td>12/4/2006</td>
<td>71.48</td>
<td>15.22</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDO-091106n-djk</td>
<td>Lower RDO, 100.6-100.9 m</td>
<td>1/17/2007</td>
<td>77.72</td>
<td>12.82</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>6.14</td>
<td>100.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDO-091106l-djk</td>
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<td>1/17/2007</td>
<td>72.78</td>
<td>15.22</td>
<td>2.54</td>
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<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>5.66</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDO-091106l-djk (pop1)</td>
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<td>1/17/2007</td>
<td>73.56</td>
<td>15.14</td>
<td>2.17</td>
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<td>0.10</td>
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<td>0.29</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>5.70</td>
<td>99.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDO-091106l-djk (total)</td>
<td>Lower RDO, 99.3 m</td>
<td>1/17/2007</td>
<td>73.04</td>
<td>15.19</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>5.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>OC-227-271006-FGA-djk</td>
<td>Upper RDO, 2.1-2.5</td>
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<td>12.67</td>
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<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>2.31</td>
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<tr>
<td>RDO-091106l-djk</td>
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<td>1/17/2007</td>
<td>76.99</td>
<td>12.87</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
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<td>13.42</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.07</td>
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<td>12.70</td>
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<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>6.09</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
* Ash collected 400 m south of strat section line
** Data for White Ashes #2 and #3 are from Borchert (2002). FeO recalculated to Fe2O3. Normalized to 100% on a water-free basis.
† These two beds have a similarity coefficient of ~0.99 and are interpreted to be correlative.

TABLE 3. Comparison of similarity coefficients for White ashes #2-3 with lower Rio del Oso ashes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample #</th>
<th>Location in strat sections (informal name)</th>
<th>date analyzed</th>
<th>SiO2</th>
<th>Al2O3</th>
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<td>72.78</td>
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<td>2.54</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.93</td>
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<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDO-091106l-djk (pop1)</td>
<td>Lower RDO, 99.3 m</td>
<td>1/17/2007</td>
<td>73.56</td>
<td>15.14</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>5.70</td>
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<td>RDO-091106l-djk (total)</td>
<td>Lower RDO, 99.3 m</td>
<td>1/17/2007</td>
<td>73.04</td>
<td>15.19</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.11</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>12.67</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>6.39</td>
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<tr>
<td>RDO-091106l-djk</td>
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<td>1/17/2007</td>
<td>76.99</td>
<td>12.87</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDO-091106g-djk (pop2)</td>
<td>Lower RDO, 89.9 m</td>
<td>1/17/2007</td>
<td>76.10</td>
<td>13.42</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>2.44</td>
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<td>RDO-091106g-djk</td>
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<td>12.70</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
* Ash collected 400 m south of strat section line
** Data for White Ashes #2 and #3 are from Borchert (2002). FeO recalculated to Fe2O3. Normalized to 100% on a water-free basis.
† These two beds have a similarity coefficient of ~0.99 and are interpreted to be correlative.
from streams draining the Abiquiu embayment. In the absence of tectonic factors, the West Chili section might be expected to have higher stratal accumulation rates because it was closer to the axial river at this time, whereas the tributary streams of the Cuarteles Member (Tesuque Formation) would have lower stratal accumulation rates because of their position in the basin and the lack of axial deposits in the Vallito Member. Paleocurrent data for the Vallito Member, sandy sediment of 12.7 to 10.0 Ma age generally lack sedimentary structures (suggesting more time for bioturbation) and have relatively abundant paleosols (particularly in the West Chili section), consistent with slower aggradation rates on a relatively uplifted footwall block.

That the SCF was undergoing normal throw in the middle Miocene is not unexpected. Koning et al. (2005b) demonstrated active westward tilting in the Española Basin during middle Miocene time, so it is reasonable to assume that the SCF would accommodate a component of normal movement. Also, Koning et al. (2004a) interpreted motion along the Velarde fault in the early to middle Miocene based on seismic reflection data. The southern Pajarito fault was active in the Oligocene or early Miocene based on paleoflow (Koning et al., 2005a), and on the Skull Ridge section D; 85 m added to account for lower Pojoaque Member (Fig. 6). Lastly, correlations between wells in the Guaje well field, located 6-7 km north-northeast of Los Alamos, indicate throw along faults between 13.2 and 11.6 Ma (WoldeGabriel et al., 2006).

An increase in vertical fault motion beginning around 12.7 Ma is consistent with the general geology and sedimentologic features on the SCF footwall. In particular, the Ojo Caliente Sandstone Member (13.4-12.5 Ma) varies in thickness from 0 to 360 m under the 11 to 9.5 Ma Lobato Formation basalts near and north of Cerro Roman (Figs. 2, 5; Koning et al., 2005b). Significant throw on the Santa Clara and other local faults between the initiation of Ojo Caliente Sandstone Member deposition and the emplacement of Lobato Formation basalts is required to account for this thickness variation. The fact that the Ojo Caliente Sandstone Member is about 100 m thick 2 km north of lower Santa Clara section, consistent with slower aggradation rates on a relatively uplifted footwall block.

### TABLE 4. Stratal accumulation rates and stratal thickening between footwall and hanging wall sections of the Santa Clara fault

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stratigraphic interval*</th>
<th>Height of lower contact (m)</th>
<th>Height of upper contact (m)</th>
<th>Thickness (m)</th>
<th>Approximate age of lower contact (Ma)</th>
<th>Approximate age of upper contact (Ma)</th>
<th>Stratal accumulation rate range (mm/yr)</th>
<th>Hanging wall-normalized thickening index**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.4-10 Ma datum to dacite-bearing tephra of LCWAZ</td>
<td>6.8 (FW)</td>
<td>44.8 (FW)</td>
<td>38 (FW)</td>
<td>12.4-12.8</td>
<td>9.5-10</td>
<td>0.01 to 0.02 (FW)</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>340.5 (HW)***</td>
<td>558.3 (HW)***</td>
<td>155 (HW)***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dacite-bearing tephra of LCWAZ to base of LCWAZ</td>
<td>-30 (FW)</td>
<td>6.8 (FW)</td>
<td>36.8 (FW)</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>12.4-12.8</td>
<td>0.05 to 0.1 (FW)</td>
<td>39%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>280.5 (HW)</td>
<td>340.5 (HW)</td>
<td>60 (HW)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>middle of PWAZ to top of lower Barstovian tuff. interval</td>
<td>6.6 (FW)</td>
<td>150 (FW)</td>
<td>133-153 (FW)</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>13.4-13.9</td>
<td>0.08 to 0.1 (FW)</td>
<td>35 to 49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>116 (HW)¹</td>
<td>106-130 (HW)²</td>
<td>237-261 (HW)²</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>lower Barstovian tuff. interval</td>
<td>-3.1 (FW)</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td>100 (FW)</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>15.4-15.8</td>
<td>0.1 to 0.3 (FW)</td>
<td>16 to 22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0&amp;42 (HW)³</td>
<td>116&amp;171 (HW)⁴</td>
<td>116 to 129 (HW)⁴</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
- * See text for more detail regarding stratigraphic interval: LCWAZ = lower coarse white ash zone; PWAZ = Pojoaque white ash zone.
- ** Index calculated by dividing the difference in stratal thickness between the hanging wall and footwall by the hanging wall thickness. Estimated error of ±15%.
- *** upper contact is in Martinez section, and the lower contact in the middle Cuarteles section; thickness calculation considers the interpreted stratigraphic tie.
- ² between the two sections (i.e., that 505.6 m of the Martinez section correlates to 442.6m of the upper Cuarteles section)
- ¹ upper contact is on lower Cuarteles section, and the lower contact is on the Skull Ridge section D; 85 m added to account for lower Pojoaque Member (Fig. 6)
- ⁴ 10 m estimated error in correlating section across a fault
- ³ The two values are for Skull Ridge sections D and C, respectively
- FW = footwall stratigraphic section (W Chili section and upper, lower, and basal Rio del Oso sections)
- HW = hanging wall stratigraphic sections (Martinez, upper Cuarteles, middle Cuarteles, lower Cuarteles, and Skull Ridge sections)
The SCF continued to experience normal throw through the late Miocene and Pliocene. For example, the cross-section of figure 1.13 in the 1st Day Roadlog suggests 430-500 m of stratigraphic separation of the 12.4-9.5 Ma phreatomagmatic deposit discussed earlier. The SCF and Puye faults together have produced a cumulative vertical offset of at least 60 m of the upper surface of the Puye Formation, based on estimating fault scarp heights from the geologic map of Koning et al. (2005b). The fact that few post-10 Ma strata are preserved on the footwall of the SCF is consistent with relatively large amounts of throw during the late Miocene and Pliocene.

CONCLUSIONS

This study extends the middle Miocene tectonic investigation undertaken by Koning et al. (2005b) by comparing stratal thickness differences on either side of the SCF for middle to upper Miocene strata. Further efforts at this correlation are ongoing for the lowest interval (lower middle Miocene). A preliminary comparison of the thickness of the entire lower Barstovian tuffaceous zone suggests a slight thickening of strata across the SCF during this time (16-22% hanging wall-normalized thickening index). Differences in stratal thicknesses (25-49% thickening index) between the approximate middle Pojoaque white ash zone and the top of the lower Barstovian tuffaceous zone suggests significant motion along the fault between ~15.1 and 13.5 Ma. A short interval at the base of the lower coarse white ash zone suggests vertical slip rates during 13.1 to 12.7 Ma were similar to ~15.1 - 13.5 Ma rates. Vertical slip rates increased between 12.7 and 10.0 Ma because hanging-wall strata of this age became significantly thicker compared to footwall strata (75% thickening index), and the thickness of Ojo Caliente Sandstone Member under ~10 Ma

FIGURE 8. West-east stratigraphic fence diagram illustrating our correlations between middle to upper Miocene footwall and hanging-wall strata west and east of Española. The graphic patterns between the individual stratigraphic sections show the relative extents and positions of the Vallito Member (Chamita Formation), Ojo Caliente Sandstone Member (Tesuque Formation), and Cejita Member (Tesuque and Chamita Formations). Thickness of Ojo Caliente Sandstone Member is from Koning et al. (2005b, fig. 7). The Cuarteles Member and lithosome A of the Pojoaque Member (Tesuque Formation) is unshaded.
Lobato basalts flow varies from 0 to 360 m in the vicinity of Cerro Roman. The axial river migrated 3 km onto the footwall of the fault during 11-10 Ma, indicating either a brief decrease in vertical slip rates or an increase in this river’s sedimentation rate. Vertical slip rates remained relatively high after 10 Ma because of the general lack of preservation of strata of that age on the fault footwall; also, there is 430 to 500 m of interpreted throw along the SCF since emplacement of 12.5-9.5 Ma phreatomagmatic deposits.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank our reviewers Steve Cather and David Dethier. Funding for the field geologic work was provided by the STATEMAP program. We thank David B. Wahl for helping to analyze the tephra samples, and especially appreciate the interpretations and judgments of Andrei Sarna-Wojcicki regarding our tephra samples. The analytical work by the USGS Tephrochronology Laboratory is funded by the National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program.

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Geologic map of the Chili 7.5-minute quadrangle (Koning et al., 2005a). Rectangular box along west margin is location of map shown in Figure 1.73 of the minipaper by Koning and Kemptier on page 50. CdAF = Canada del Almagre fault. Quaternary valley-fill units not shown. See article by Koning et al. on page 225.

58TH NEW MEXICO GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY GUIDEBOOK, 2007