

Seismologists map earthquake faults near the Salton Sea

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SALTON SEA -- Seismologists are focusing much of their attention on the southern branch of the San Andres Fault where the 'big one' may occur. That segment has been 'stuck' for more than 300 years, but won't remain that way.

Leslie Gordon of the US Geological Survey says they want to map hidden faults criss-crossing the Salton Sea area. They're detonating small underground explosives to generate a picture of the earth's crust between the Coachella and Imperial valleys.

"How fast the sound waves travel through those sediments and rocks will give us an idea of how strong a shaking to expect in the next earthquake."

The study area extends from Yucca Valley to extreme Northern Baja.

A similar study done several years ago revealed the Los Angeles Basin was riddled with small faults, some that were previously unknown.