

Northwest US Cascade range geology

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As an avid hiker living in the Seattle area, I've covered quite a bit of the Cascades. I'm curious as to how the range itself formed. The volcanoes are obvious, but what about the surrounding peaks? From how I see it as a hiker, you have a series of small broken mountains (5 to 6,000 feet in height) with a couple three massive volcanoes here and there. Where did the small mountains come from? Was it from the local plate getting pushed up? Are they volcanoes themselves? Are those mountains the remnants of previous volcanoes (tumulus I think I heard it called)?

Are the Olympics part of the same mountain chain, with Vancouver Island thrown in there for good measure – separated from the main range body by some other tectonic process?

The area is fascinating to me, very rugged in a very narrow band, with huge flat basaltic seas on one side and the ocean (well a strait anyway) on the other.