A Cal State Fullerton faculty-student study shows evidence of abrupt sinking of the wetlands near Seal Beach caused by ancient earthquakes that shook the area at least three times in the past 2,000 years — and it could happen again, the researchers say.

The paleoseismology study reveals that the wetlands at the National Wildlife Refuge Seal Beach, a nearly 500-acre area located within the Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach and next to the communities of Seal Beach and Huntington Harbor, are susceptible to rapid lowering in elevation during large — over 7.0 magnitude — earthquakes.

Matthew E. Kirby, professor of geological sciences and colleague, Brady P. Rhodes, professor emeritus of geological sciences, and alumnus Robert J. Leeper, whose master’s thesis is based on the research findings, led the study. The researchers mentored numerous CSUF geology students and collaborated with geologists and earthquake experts, including those from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

A new economic impact analysis shows that Cal State Fullerton is a major driver of economic activity statewide, powering $2.26 billion in economic activity, supporting 15,000 jobs and generating $126 million in local and state tax revenue. The bulk of that impact is felt in Orange and Los Angeles counties.

In addition, CSUF returns $13.40 to California’s economy for every dollar invested by the state. Approximately 44 percent of the University’s annual operating budget is allocated each year by the California State University system as funded each year by the California Legislature and governor.

The data also show that Titan alumni spur an estimated $4.3 billion in annual spending attributable to their CSUF degree, which supports nearly 25,000 jobs and results in an additional $245 million in state and local tax revenue, due to this incremental earning power.
BEHIND THE MUSIC: CSUF CHORAL PROGRAM TOPS THE CHARTS

Last summer, the man responsible for some of the most recognizable film scores in history — from the terrifying main theme from “Jaws” to “Hedwig’s Theme” from the Harry Potter films — asked the Cal State Fullerton University Singers to join him in the studio to record anew the compositions he created for some of Steven Spielberg’s movies.

John Williams is no stranger to the University Singers, nor its members to him. The ensemble has joined forces with the Academy Award-winner several times in his annual “Maestro at the Movies” show at the Hollywood Bowl. For the album, the ensemble sang a piece from “Amistad” and one from “Saving Private Ryan.”

“It was a magical day,” says Robert Istad, professor of music and director of the choral program. “We walk in and the maestro is chatting with someone. And it’s Spielberg! The maestro starts conducting, and Spielberg is walking around and becomes overcome with emotion during the ‘Saving Private Ryan’ piece.

“The students are singing. The composer is on the podium. He’s an example of gratitude and professionalism. And when it’s over, John comes over to thank the students. He’s hugging the kids! And our students are getting this experience.”

Call this a high note in a Cal State Fullerton choral student’s academic career — one of many. “There’s a long history of vocal music here,” says Istad. “It all began with the clear vision of a few people back in the early days.”