



CHRIS CZIESLA

Principal Marine/Fisheries Biologist

Chris specializes in regulatory compliance strategies and restoration. He has 22 years of experience in Pacific Northwest estuaries working on projects involving waterfront modification, over- and in-water construction, dredging, shellfish aquaculture and sediment toxicity, estuarine circulation, and eelgrass and saltmarsh alteration and restoration. Chris has worked with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Federal Highway Administration, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to develop guidance, conduct training, and streamline Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 consultations. He has also worked for the state Office of Regulatory Assistance in developing permitting guidance and has participated in the ongoing JARPA revisions. Chris has written numerous programmatic and project-specific biological assessments, fisheries sections of SEPA/NEPA environmental impact statements (EISs), and habitat conservation plans. He has also developed mitigation plans for sensitive species and habitats including salmonids and wetlands. Chris is a research SCUBA diver and has extensive field and boat experience conducting marine research including eelgrass and geoduck surveys.

Representative Projects

State Route (SR) 520 Bridge Replacement Program, WSDOT, Seattle to Redmond and Grays Harbor, WA. *Program Lead – ESA Compliance and NEPA Reviewer.* Directed the ESA compliance, integrated with the NEPA analyses, for all WSDOT SR 520 Program activities for three major projects: Eastside Transit and HOV (Medina to Redmond); SR 520 HOV and Bridge Replacement (Seattle to Medina); and the Pontoon Construction Projects (Grays Harbor). As the state's largest infrastructure program (\$4.6 billion), the complexity as well as political, public, and regulatory focus required innovative approaches to be developed. This included extensive collaboration with resource agencies and recognized experts to establish best scientific and commercial data available for evaluation of program activities such as in water pile driving and noise, vessel traffic, and overwater construction, nearshore dredging on listed species and designated critical habitat. The ESA program was structured to integrate collaboratively and seamlessly with the NEPA process, engineering design, state and local permitting, and mitigation and restoration design. Chris also provided senior technical review of the natural resources sections of the two EISs and one EA associated with the SR 520 Program.

North Mercer Island Interceptor & Enatai Interceptor Upgrade, King County Wastewater Treatment Division, Lake Washington, 2014 - present. *Environmental Lead/Permitting Lead.* Chris is integrally involved with the project team (consultants and county staff), which has completed a multi-stage alternative analyses process and is now working through final design and permitting. Early work included obtaining exploratory geotechnical boring permits to refine alternatives; establishing permitting and environmental criteria to use in screening of alternatives; ensuring consistency of all screening criteria with regulatory definitions (e.g., Clean Water Act 404 (b)(1)) to ensure alternative screening integrates seamlessly with future permitting efforts; assessing environmental conditions associated with the alternatives; and developing a permit acquisition plan that identified permitting processes and relative permitting challenges of



EDUCATION

M.S., Marine Biology, University of Oregon, Eugene, 1998
B.A., Biology, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1991

CERTIFICATIONS

Openwater SCUBA Diver, NAUI, WA, 1990
Qualified Senior Writer for Biological Assessment, WSDOT, 2006 – present

EXPERTISE

Local, State, and Federal Permitting
Endangered Species Act Compliance
NEPA/SEPA Strategy and Management
Fisheries Science
Restoration Biology & Mitigation Design
Habitat Assessments
Freshwater/Marine/Estuarine Ecology
Scientific Diving (Scuba)

ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Eelgrass Delineation Guidance Workshop,
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, June 2017

alternative sites and conveyance corridors. Subsequent tasks included further narrowing of alternatives and documentation of the process; more detailed environmental review of alternative alignments; finalization of the permit acquisition plan for top alternatives; preparing baseline documentation and developing permit application packages; and coordination with tribes. Currently, permit application packages are being submitted to multiple local jurisdictions and federal and state entities.

Gateway Pacific Terminal NEPA/SEPA Third Party EIS, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Washington Department of Ecology, Whatcom County. *Biological-Natural Resources Lead.* Responsible for developing methodologies to analyze potential project impacts to the natural environments, including aquatic resources, nearshore benthic biota, wetlands and terrestrial species. Specific areas of focus included underwater sound associated with pile driving and ship operations, risks of ship collisions and accidents, effects of overwater structures on aquatic and benthic species and habitats, wetland impacts and mitigation, and site stormwater management. These methodologies were developed based on best available science and applicable standards being used for other regional and national projects. This effort included extensive coordination with agency and regional subject matter experts to ensure defensible results. Chris authored and provided senior review and technical oversight during the preparation of the draft and final EIS for the project.

Regulatory Compliance Assistance, Various Growers, Pacific Northwest, WA. *Regulatory Strategist.* Collaboratively developed and implemented a permitting approach to address the evolving needs of shellfish aquaculture. The regulatory need for predictable ecological outcomes, along with the industry desire for operational flexibility and predictability, presented a unique challenge. Applied strategies including performance-based standards and adaptive management that enabled all stakeholders to reach a mutually agreeable path forward.

Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion Project, Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, Louisiana. *ESA Consultation and EFH Analyses Lead.* The Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion is a \$1.2 billion component of the Coastal Louisiana restoration strategy that proposes to divert sediment-laden water from the Mississippi River to restore natural delta processes and increase land area in the Barataria Basin. Chris is responsible for the Endangered Species Act and Essential Fish Habitat consultations associated with the project, as well as contributing to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review. Work includes an evaluation of short-term construction effects as well as operational effects over the 50-year design plan for the project. This effort is being coordinated closely with the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Restoration Plan for the project and the third-party NEPA environmental impact statement being developed by the Corps to ensure consistent analyses.

Squires Landing and Log Boom Park Waterfront Improvements, City of Kenmore, WA. *Aquatic Biology Lead/Permit Lead.* Part of a consultant team working on waterfront improvements for public access, recreation, and restoration at two waterfront parks. Providing fish biology, permitting expertise, and mitigation planning. Proposed park improvements include improved trails, hand-carried boat access, a dock, parking, a new building facility, and a swim area. Developed the permitting strategy, managed wetland delineations, contributed to the development of park improvement alternatives, and calculated estimated mitigation area requirements and costs. Currently leading the permitting efforts, mitigation planning, and agency coordination.

Regulatory Integration Analysis, Office of Regulatory Assistance, Olympia, WA. *Principal and Project Manager.* Identified regulatory integration needs and opportunities. Project goal was to improve state regulatory programs and develop a unifying picture of the multilayered regulatory system, including a clear depiction of permitting pathways, timelines, and statutory authorities. Identified regulatory redundancies, duplicated reviews, and jurisdictional overlaps that provide opportunities for regulatory integration. Outcomes included the identification and recommendation of numerous short-term improvements to the state regulatory system including: application tracking and consolidation (e.g., e-permitting), programmatic permits, JARPA revisions, JARPA drawing guidance; consistent work windows, multi-agency pre-application meetings, and technical normalization. This project ultimately resulted in redesign of the JARPA form which was rolled out in 2010.