



CHRIS SONCARTY

Principal Biologist/Regulatory Specialist

Chris Soncarty has 28 years of experience conducting and managing infrastructure and restoration projects, including federally funded projects for local, state, and federal agencies, as well as private clients. He has extensive knowledge of the National/State Environmental Policy Acts (NEPA/SEPA) and the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), and he prepares technical environmental documents such as environmental impact statement (EIS) discipline reports, technical memoranda and Categorical Exclusion (CE) Forms in support of NEPA and SEPA compliance, and biological assessments (BAs) for ESA consultations. Chris is experienced working on projects in freshwater, marine, and estuarine environments. He works closely with civil and hydraulic engineers during the design phase of restoration projects to develop specific types of habitats and habitat-forming processes that provide significant biological benefit to target aquatic species and life-history stages. Chris also coordinates extensively with permitting agencies during the design/permitting phase to ensure agency input is carefully considered and incorporated into the project as appropriate.

Representative Projects

Eleven Fish Passage Improvement Projects, Skagit County, WA. *Environmental/Permitting Lead.* This phased project includes site reconnaissance, surveying, alternatives analyses, design, permitting, Tribal coordination, and construction plans for the replacement of 11 road culverts that are fish passage barriers in Skagit County. Phase 1 was recently completed and Chris's work included participating in site visits with the consultant team to identify environmental design considerations (i.e., wetlands, ordinary high water mark), establish regulatory and permitting considerations, and evaluate design options; conducting site visits with the County and agency/Tribal stakeholders to discuss projects, design considerations, and habitat features; and preparing a memo with recommended prioritization for each of the 11 culvert replacements based on various parameters including habitat and biological benefit, permitting/regulatory process, design, and cost. Phase 2 is currently being scoped, which will include moving forward with the top 5 priority culverts to 30%, 60% and Final design as well as permitting and regulatory compliance.

ESA Consultation and Permitting Support, Snohomish County Public Works, Snohomish County, WA. *Task Manager.* Chris's work involves developing tools to help County staff determine the regulatory and permitting requirements for various types of projects they lead internally. The tools ask a series of questions that will determine whether environmental permits and regulations are triggered by a specific action. The questionnaire cross references a robust table where specific guidance on environmental permits and regulations and hot links to resources are provided.

SEPA Compliance for Proposed Commercial Air Service Terminal, Snohomish County Paine Field Airport. *Deputy Project Manager.* Chris managed review of the NEPA environmental assessment and supporting documents to inform Confluence's recommendation to the County on technical analysis that should be updated in the NEPA document to allow its adoption for SEPA compliance. Review of existing NEPA documentation included all supporting documents and recommendations related to updating the Air and Noise Analysis, consistent with updated FAA guidance related to modeling for these disciplines. Chris provided QA/QC of all technical documents and worked with the County and applicant to develop a series of mitigation actions that allowed a Determination of Non-Significance to be issued for the project. The mitigation actions addressed multiple



EDUCATION

B.S., Environmental Science/Ecology/ Fish Biology, The Evergreen State College, 1994

EXPERTISE

ESA Section 7 and Section 10
 NEPA/SEPA
 Fish Biology and Habitat
 Environmental Documentation
 Environmental Permitting
 Ecological Assessment
 Habitat Restoration
 Aquatic Impacts and Mitigation
 Culvert Analysis

CERTIFICATIONS

Certified Erosion and Sediment Control Lead (CESCL), #81608
 Qualified Senior Writer for Biological Assessment, WSDOT

ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Electrofishing Survey Protocol, DNR
 Electrofishing Protocol, Smith-Root
 Barrier Culvert and Habitat Assessment, WDFW



stakeholder concerns that had been received during the SEPA public commenting period (e.g., air quality, noise, traffic, and stormwater quality).

Upper Quinault River Sustainable Floodplain Management Planning Project, Quinault Indian Nation, Quinault, WA. *Project Manager.*

Chris led development of a Roads Management Plan addressing sustainable access in the Upper Quinault River basin. The intent is to improve fish habitat, terrestrial habitat, and reduce road-related flood damage in a way that maintains access for residents and visitors. The range of activities will include relocation/abandonment of existing roadways, relocation of facilities, replacement of culverts and bridges, streambank and roadway protection to establish floodplain forests, reconnection of oxbow and other off-channel habitats, and protection of functioning floodplain forests and habitat. These actions are intended to restore habitat conditions for salmonids, particularly the blueback, or sockeye salmon, which is a fish of cultural significance to the Quinault Indian Nation. Work included extensive community outreach and coordination with agencies and community stakeholders, and the success of this project is dependent upon community and agency stakeholder support. Chris participated as co-lead for several public and agency meetings to engage with the stakeholders, incorporate input, and build support.

I-5/Marine View Drive to State Route (SR) 529 Peak Use Shoulder and Interchange Improvements Project, Washington

State Department of Transportation, Marysville, WA. *Project Coordinator.* The project proposed to construct a northbound and southbound peak use shoulder lane to improve mobility and increase freeway capacity, as well as a new interchange at SR 529 to allow access from SR 529 to southbound I-5 and from northbound I-5 to SR 529. Chris oversaw completion of all fieldwork, including wetland delineations and delineations of the ordinary high water mark in surface waters. He also provided QA/QC review of draft wetland and critical area reports completed by Confluence for City of Marysville, City of Everett, and Snohomish County.

Culvert Replacement Corps Permitting and Engineering Review Services, Snohomish County Department of Public Works, Snohomish County, WA. *Senior Biologist/Regulatory Specialist.*

Chris has provided ongoing technical support to determine applicable U.S Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) regulatory requirements for replacement of numerous (~30 to date) proposed culverts. He conducted site assessments of reference reaches to determine average bankfull width of appropriate reference habitat to determine appropriate culvert sizing to meet Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) stream simulation guidelines. These site assessments were conducted in coordination with the County, WDFW, the Corps, and the Tulalip, Muckleshoot, and Stillaguamish Indian tribes to reach concurrence on the appropriate reference bankfull width prior to submitting for permits. Chris helped ensure that habitat features were appropriately designed for fish passage and any wetland or stream mitigation. The culvert replacements are being designed to meet the current WDFW guidelines for fish passage, and to correct barriers to fish passage. Modifications to the stream channel, streambank, and beaver dams, as well as developing monitoring needs and identifying restoration/mitigation options, are elements of these projects.

Port Susan Trail Project Design Permitting Support, City of Stanwood Community Development Department, Stanwood, WA. *Project Manager.*

Under an on-call contract with the City, Chris is managing the design and permitting for this proposed non-motorized, multi-use trail project that will traverse approximately 1.5 miles between the Stanwood park-and-ride facility and Twin City Foods to the west, through the proposed Hamilton Landing Park project. Chris is managing a civil engineering firm and a landscape architectural firm as the design team, and developing permit applications for as the project transitions between the 30% and 60% design. Chris managed the wetland delineations at 3 study areas in Stanwood, and managed cultural resources and geotechnical surveys in support of the project.

South Fork Wind Farm (SFWF) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Biological Assessment (BA), and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Analysis, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Outer Continental Shelf Offshore of Rhode Island and Massachusetts. *Senior Biologist.*

Provided senior QA/QC review of various sections of the NEPA EIS for the proposed SFWF. The proposed wind energy project would construct 15 wind turbines on Bureau of Ocean Energy Management land leased by Deepwater Wind South Fork, LLC. Project construction includes impact hammer installation of 11-meter monopile foundations, producing potentially significant underwater noise effects on protected species in the project vicinity.

Index-Galena Road Flood Damage Repair Project – Fish Exclusion, Snohomish County Public Works, Index, WA. *Project Manager.*

The Index-Galena Road washed out in several places during a 2006 flood event of the North Fork Skykomish River. This project involved repairs to the last damaged half-mile segment of the Index-Galena Road. Chris managed and conducted fish removal and exclusion activities to comply with construction permits. The 3-person team used beach seines, block nets, and electrofishing gear to capture and remove fish.