

Natural Environment

Overview

Island Crossing is set within the agricultural and natural land of the Stillaguamish River valley, on the traditional lands of the Stillaguamish, Tulalip, Upper Skagit, Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla Tribes.

Arlington and the surrounding region is known for its natural beauty, with plentiful access to water, fertile farmland, and mountain views.

Habitat Considerations

A variety of wildlife make their home in or near Island Crossing, including a range of fish, amphibians, and birds, in addition to native vegetation.

Many habitats, particularly those of salmon, have decreased in both size and quality over the past 150 years. Causes of habitat loss include:

- Channel sedimentation from natural landslides and erosion
- Diking and stream channelization
- Removal of beaver and their dams
- Removal of riparian vegetation and in-stream wood
- Pollution that degrades water quality

The Stillaguamish River near the subarea is within designated critical habitat for Chinook salmon, steelhead, and bull trout.

Key Findings

- Since most of the subarea lies within the 100-year floodplain, flooding is a major development consideration.
- River modifications alone will not lower flood elevations enough to prevent routine overtopping of SR 530.
- Raising the highway could be explored as an alternative to prevent routine inundation.
- The culvert under SR 530 will need improvement and expansion.
- If raising SR 530, compensatory storage for an equivalent area (and any fill north of SR 530) will be needed.
- The presence of federally-listed species in and around the Stillaguamish River may limit nearby development.

Flood Risk

Due to its proximity to the Stillaguamish River, the majority of Island Crossing is within the mapped 100-year floodplain and regularly experiences river flooding, impacting transportation on SR 530 and surrounding agricultural land. River flooding is expected to become increasingly frequent and severe due to climate change.

The main location of the overtopping is a swale near the middle of the subarea. A culvert at this location is hydraulically undersized and often impaired by debris.

Preliminary analysis suggests that modifications to the river alone will not sufficiently lower flood elevations to eliminate routine overtopping of SR 530. This means that the highway will have to be raised and the culvert expanded to prevent routine inundation, which may require additional mitigation.

