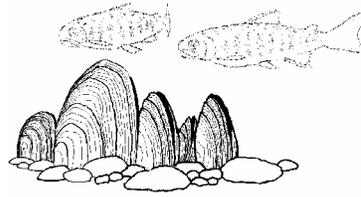


Pacific Northwest Native Freshwater Mussel Workgroup



November 8, 2005

Minutes

Attendees were as follows: Kevin Aitkin, Molly Hallock, Al Smith, Christina Luzier, Rob Plotnikoff. Jeff Adams, Kathy Thornburgh, and Brent Vadopalas were on the conference line. Special guest: Arden Thomas, grad student at University of Washington

Meeting took place at USFWS in Lacey, WA

Purpose: This was a regularly scheduled meeting of the Workgroup.

2006 Symposium: Discussion focused on whether we should host our own symposium this year or join a session at the American Malacological Society/Western Society of Malacologists meeting, Seattle July 29 – Aug 3, 2006.

Kevin spoke with Terry Frest about joining a session at the Seattle meeting. Terry is the chair of two concurrent sessions, Land and Freshwater, both occurring for half a day on August 2, 2006. Terry said he would welcome papers from workgroup members or from any of the people on our contact list, including anybody that has previously attended or spoken at one of our symposia. Furthermore, anybody interested in freshwater fauna is welcome to submit an abstract for this session. The selection process for papers will be rigorous, however. Kevin is going to ask Terry what the criteria will be for abstract review.

Discussion was started regarding being a part of the Freshwater session at the Malacology meeting or hosting our own symposium. Al mentioned that nobody on the workgroup has the time to take charge of planning a symposium. He added that it would be a good opportunity to be part of a big meeting. Christina agreed that it was a good idea to join the Malacology meeting. Kathy asked if we would satisfy the people who usually come to our symposia, she wondered if there would be enough material on mussels. Jeff wondered if the mussel papers could be trumped by papers about other freshwater topics. The group agreed that we have no way of confirming how much mussel content there would be; however, Rob added that we could promote our group and mussels to a larger audience and perhaps draw out some closet mussel enthusiasts. Al suggested that a signed copy of the field guide could be made available as an auction item.

Next Steps:

1) Kevin is going to find out: a) if we can have a separate poster session because the main poster session will be on a different day than the Freshwater session; b) if we can set up a table

to distribute field guides and other information about the workgroup; c) what the one day registration fee would be for people who just want to attend our session and possible poster session.

2) Do we want to have a Bear Creek field trip in conjunction with the Malacology meeting? Or do we want to have a separate small symposium on Bear Creek another day? King County, WA Trout and Water Tenders are organizations that could be responsible for hosting and making arrangements. Jamie Glasgow spoke on behalf of WA Trout and said they would be interested in being a sponsor of a Bear Creek event.

3) If we decide to go ahead with joining the Freshwater session at the Malacology meeting we should put information about the dates and recruitment of papers and a link to the meeting on our website.

Joining a Parent Group: Resumed discussion on joining a parent organization to help us with handling money and funding. Jeff, Al and Rob reported their conversations with three potential candidate organizations: Xerces Society, Freshwater Mussel Conservation Society and North American Benthological Society respectively.

Xerces: Jeff said that Xerces would be happy to do it. It would be a good fit for the society, it is a local organization and the mission of the workgroup fits within Xerces' mission (invertebrate conservation, monitoring and education). They could easily help with handling money, publications and website maintenance. Members of the workgroup would not have to be members of Xerces. Al asked how publications are currently sold and distributed through Xerces. Jeff said that a lot are sold through their website and they are advertised in member publications (there are 5000 members). The membership director processes and mails publications.

Further questions were asked about publications. Jamie asked if the field guide could be sold now? Kevin mentioned that the agreement was for us to give away the first printing. Al added that we have no way to handle money. The second printing however could be sold.

Jeff continued with Xerces information: he mentioned that Anita Shaul of NV Fish and Game has been inquiring about forming a SW mussel group. Xerces could help with including other regional members. Kevin asked if Xerces could handle two mussel workgroups. Jeff said they could handle money, publications and website responsibilities for two groups as long as they did not become too successful. They could also support administrative duties. Al asked if Anita had actually approached Jeff about starting a SW group. Jeff said that she did not specifically say she wanted to start a SW workgroup but was interested in making connections, etc. She would like a repository of data so he referred her to StreamNet.

Kevin reminded the group that an issue with Xerces is the conflict of interest with agencies. The group decided that members could recuse themselves on certain issues if necessary.

Freshwater Mussel Conservation Society: Al contacted FMCS and they have requested more information on our group, i.e., number of members, publications, etc. Al will pass along this information to them.

North American Benthological Society: Rob talked to the president of NABS and expressed our needs. The president said that NABS has similar problems and would not be able to aid us. So NABS will not be considered.

Washington Trout: Jamie said that WA Trout would not be a good candidate for a parent group but it could serve as a storefront for publications, etc. They could also be used as a short-term stopgap until a parent group can be found and organized.

Database: The database subcommittee and workgroup as a whole agrees that it is still worthwhile to partner with StreamNet. It is up to us now to get data together, put it in the correct format and get the information to them. Are we going to continue with just NW mussels or add in SW mussels to make it Western mussels? Mike from StreamNet is going to talk to Anita Shaul. SW mussel data could easily be put into the NW mussel forms.

Kevin stated that the subcommittee's work is now completed and the whole workgroup needs to help with decision making, variables, fields, forms, etc. He added that completing this project should be a goal of the workgroup in the next year.

What about vouchers? It is more of a workgroup issue but there would be a field for it.

Next Steps: Kevin, Jeff and Nancy will start a round of emails to the workgroup regarding fields. Al wondered if Nancy has a seasonal employee to enter data? Jeff stated that Xerces may have a volunteer to do it.

Jeff mentioned that we are responsible for standardizing location information (map with dots?). Rob added that lat/long information and standardization of units are also necessary.

Collection Permit Clarification: Molly reported what she found out about collection permits. Currently shells cannot be picked up without a collection permit. WDFW wants to talk about it in more detail before making a decision. They are concerned about the precedent being set (for other species, abalone, etc.).

Rob – could requiring a permit actually increase the quality of the collection?

Al – legally it could be easier to take live mussels if shells are permitted to be taken.

Kevin – Is there an academic loophole? Some sort of paper authorization stating that the person must send shells to person designated on the permit.

Next Steps:

Is there really a problem with collecting shells?

Can the current WAC be modified? Perhaps to make meat in possession illegal.

Could there be limits?

Can we see a list of offenses on current WAC?

Al encourages workgroup to send Molly ideas.

Arden Thomas - Grad Student from University of Washington: She is interested in studying mussel conservation and hydrology/flow regimes. She is hypothesizing that changes in hydrology could be a good indicator of mussel success. Arden plans study shear stress and the comparison of mussel presence and flow regimes in an undisturbed site versus an urbanized site.

She is looking for funding and methodology ideas. If you have information on these two topics please email her: ardent@u.washington.edu

Critical Needs Document: Rob has been working on compiling comments sent to him from workgroup members. Nancy contributed some great comments. John made major changes to the document. Rob is going to talk to John about his comments because they changed the face of the whole document and made other's peoples comments irrelevant. Rob will report back to the group after talking to John but emphasized that the critical needs document needs to be finalized soon.

Field Guide: Approximately 3400 guides have been distributed. This includes stocks that Kevin, Molly and other workgroup members are holding. Christina continues to get up to 3 requests per week for the guides.

Field Trips: Thinking of having field trips in July/August 2006. Two sites on the Chehalis River.

Next Meeting: Tentatively February 28, 2006 in Corvallis. Jason Dunham to reserve a meeting place. Al will email the date and get feedback from the group.

May meeting to be in Seattle. Brent will make arrangements.