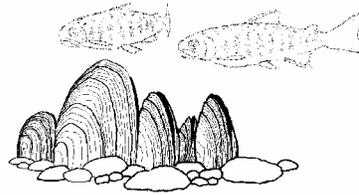


Pacific Northwest Native Freshwater Mussel Workgroup



February 28, 2006

Minutes

Attendees were as follows: Al Smith, Jeff Adams, Jason Dunham, and Nancy Duncan. Molly Hallock, Christina Luzier, Rob Plotnikoff, Kathryn Barko and John Fleckenstein were on the conference line. Special guests were: Scott Black (Xerces Society), Tom Ebert (retired professor) and Art Bass (Willamette River Keeper). Meeting took place at USGS in Corvallis

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

Affiliation with Another Group: Al gave a brief background on joining a parent group. Our needs: money handling, earning money (for symposia, publications, other events), reducing the need for money solicitation and revision and reprinting of mussel guide. Our group can offer: publications to sell, symposia, membership. Two parent groups are being considered: Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society (FMCS) and Xerces Society.

FMCS: We would need to form a chapter, appoint officers, develop organizational structure, and handle our own money. Al read comments from Workgroup members regarding their thoughts about joining FMCS. Comments were unanimous and reflected that Xerces was a better fit for our needs. Al solicited any further comments about FMCS. John Fleckenstein says that although we fit into FMCS's plan to expand their interests, Xerces does seem like a better fit.

Xerces Society: Scott Black, director, was present and gave a presentation on the history of Xerces, what they have to offer the Workgroup and some questions that they have. Xerces is a national and international organization but is headquartered in Portland and has a NW focus (1700 members in Oregon and Washington). Their primary focus is invertebrates. Jeff Adams is in charge of their aquatic program. They publish books and have journal and also have a cadre of volunteers.

Xerces would be happy to fill the role as our partner; however, they want to make sure the relationship is clear for both parties. He suggested developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). They agree to be the fiscal agent of the Workgroup. Activities will include handling money and selling publications. We would exchange website links. He asked if we needed anything else besides fiscal assistance.

John Fleckenstein stated that access to Xerces membership would be helpful. Scott Black said outreach and fundraising are possible.

Other questions from Workgroup posed to Scott Black:

Nancy D: Are you a chapter of a national organization? Is there a higher body that we will need approval from?

Scott B: No, Xerces is a national organization that is located in Portland with many projects across the West. There is no higher body, only a board of directors, currently with 5 members. Scott has already talked to the board and there is no problem with the potential arrangement.

Nancy D: Is there a finance charge? Will Xerces take a certain percentage of publication sales, symposia, etc.?

Scott B: Normal overhead is 18-19%. Xerces tentatively proposes 10% across the board for symposia, events and publications and 15% for grant proposals (costs are for accounting expenditures). Xerces would either set up a separate account for Workgroup or give us access to part of their account where we would request money from them when we needed it.

Kathryn B: What is the benefit to you?

Scott B: Our focus has been invertebrates. We are interested in getting projects going with you such as citizen monitoring groups for mussels, etc.

Al S: Would Xerces review our publications? What about copyright issues?

Scott B: Would like to review Workgroup's publications, they would probably benefit from our review. Photographers would retain copyright to photos. Xerces could retain copyright but would give permission for unlimited educational use.

Scott B: We would need to think about liability issues at events, etc.

Nancy D: What about the permanency of the relationship? How long does it last, when do we renegotiate, etc.?

Scott B: The relationship should be reviewed annually or semi-annually, whenever both parties decide is appropriate. The MOU can always be updated or modifications made.

Al S: Who works on the MOU?

Scott B: Al, Scott and Jeff Adams – then show to Xerces board.

Al S: Wendy Walsh in particular wanted an all Workgroup vote on joining Xerces.

Al asked each of the nine Workgroup members at the meeting to vote and give any final comments. The vote was unanimous from the members present to associate with Xerces. Al will email rest of Workgroup and ask for comments.

Al asked Christina to add Scott Black to communication list.

Al will contact FMCS to let them know we have decided to go in a different direction.

2006 Symposium: We are planning to join a session at the American Malacological Society/Western Society of Malacologists meeting in Seattle July 29 – Aug 3, 2006. Kevin has been corresponding with Terry Frest, who is the session convener, about the arrangements. Nancy D. asked if the Workgroup is going to have a display table. Christina L. asked if she should contact her office webmaster about advertising and call for papers on the website. Scott Black said he would advertise the meeting/session to the Xerces membership list. It was mentioned that previously presented papers/talks/posters could be submitted for this since it will be a new audience. Kevin will continue to work with Terry on our role in the meeting. Jason will contact appropriate people to encourage them to present papers or posters.

Oregon Field Guide: Jason Dunham has been contacted by Jim Newman of Oregon Field Guide, a television show on Oregon Public Broadcasting, about a segment on freshwater mussels. It would be a great opportunity to increase exposure of mussels. Taking video footage would occur this summer. We will need to have 1-2 people who will be spokespersons for the segment. Jason and Al will make a draft outline of what topics would be important for them to cover and will submit this to OPB. Additionally, a field location needs to be selected. The Chehalis (Columbia River tributary) and Fall Creek (Alsea River tributary) were suggested as possibilities. Filming a release of glochidia in a laboratory setting was also suggested. Jason will contact Chris Barnhardt, who has a lot of great footage on mussels, about using some of his videos.

Long Term Sampling/Aquatic Survey Protocol: Nancy Duncan spoke about long term monitoring of mussels and the development of a regional monitoring plan. The plan is for watershed groups to take responsibility for monitoring specific mussel population indefinitely. The Workgroup would be responsible for standardizing the methodology and receiving and organizing the data. The survey method that would be used is the Visual Estimation Protocol which would limit disturbance and would simplify sampling, especially for volunteers.

Nancy would like to get plans going right away. She thinks it will take 5 years before a dozen sites could be set up. Someone in the Workgroup asked if we needed to worry about redds. Nancy says that information is not included in the protocol. What about permits? Could we obtain a sub-permit under Xerces? Jeff Adams has since sent an email regarding avoiding listed fish while sampling and permitting. The link to this information is: http://www.xerces.org/CD-ROM%20for%20web/howto/process_permits.htm.

Nancy reminded the Workgroup that the sampling protocol that she speaks of was originally written for the BLM and US Forest Service.

Database/StreamNet: Jeff Adams spoke about the latest details regarding using StreamNet for the mussel database. He reiterated that there are two ways to use StreamNet: 1) the main database that is online and spatially referenced (GIS); and 2) independent data sets where data can be entered but it is not linked to spatial referencing. The Workgroup's goal was to get our

data into the main sitings database, which includes having them help us construct a database that could connect to fish runs, dams, etc.

We are currently waiting for them to get the main sitings database up and running. Jeff could not get an idea as to when this would be. We could always store our database as an independent dataset. Nancy asked if we could put our database in the independent dataset section right away. Jeff said we could but more work needs to be done on the format of our database, what fields we want, etc. The format of the data would be an Excel spreadsheet. John asked if there were size limitations. The answer was no. Jeff added that getting the data together is tricky and time consuming. The Workgroup is going to have to set up the process and get it going. The list of potential fields is long. Do we choose them all, streamline the list but have all of them available? Should we get our database going and link it to StreamNet as an independent dataset? Nancy fears we are losing momentum. The collection and housing of voucher specimens is also still a problem.

What should we do next? Should we use StreamNet? An advantage is that StreamNet is local but there could be more predictability with another system. Nancy declared that the National database is a mess. John F. will join effort. Rob P. suggested checking out NOAA and EPA databases. He gave the contact info for Rob Davidson at NOAA and Marlys Caepfert at EPA to Jeff Adams.

Christina was asked to put a request for database information on the website. We will state that we are developing a database and we would like collection information. Nancy D. and Jeff A. will be listed as contacts.

Collecting Permits: Molly gave updates on mussel collection permits in Washington. Currently shells cannot be picked up without a collection permit. She has asked several people (Kevin A., Cynthia T., John F., and Terry F.) to write letters to WDFW favoring the incidental collection of shells. Molly will present these letters in the next month or so. She thinks the policy can be changed. John F. asked if there was a specific proposal Molly would be presenting. The proposal is for no permit to be required for shell collection. There may have to be a limit on the number of shells (6-10 was suggested) per day or other time period.

Nancy D. worried about the commercial value of NW mussels. John F. says that species with heavier shells are usually used for commercial purposes. Nancy asked what law enforcement does with confiscated shells. Molly says they are put back, even Corbicula!

If anyone has any ideas on this subject, please contact Molly Hallock.

Miscellaneous:

Jeff Adams and Al Smith received awards from the Columbia Slough Watershed Council. Jeff received the award for his work with macroinvertebrates in the slough. Al received his for the mussel guide and his outreach and teaching efforts.

Art Bass has an article on freshwater mussels in the fall 2005 edition of Riverscape, a publication of the Willametter Riverkeeper.

Mussel proposals submitted to Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) for funding include: 1) WDFW – database entry; 2) WDFW – presence/absence mussel surveys; 3) Umatilla Tribe – John Day/Umatilla/Walla Walla surveying and outreach.

Other mussel research proposed for funding includes: 1) WDF&W examining impacts of gold dredging on the western ridged mussel, 2) Willamette Riverkeeper carrying out western pearlshell surveys in the Willamette Basin.

Mussel posters: There is a new mussel poster created by Donna Allard (USF&WS) and Ethan Nedeau (BioDrawiversity) and sponsored by USF&WS, Metro, Snohomish County, Water Tenders, Environmental Information Cooperative. Al Smith showed a sample. Let Christina know if you will be in Vancouver or Portland to pick some up.

Field Guides: Almost 4000 guides (out of 5000 total) have been distributed. This includes stocks that Kevin, Molly and other workgroup members are holding. Christina is holding about 600 for the Seattle meeting this summer.

Art Bogan of North Carolina State University requested 12 live *Gonidea* from Al Smith for a genetic study. Al was unable to get them in Crooked River (Central Oregon) because of high, turbid water conditions.

Nancy D. brought up Special Status listing program in the Northwest Forest Region 6 and OR/WA BLM. There are new criteria stating that species must be described in peer-reviewed literature and cannot have any taxonomic issues. This policy excludes many mollusk species and obviously is a big concern.

Next Meeting: Tentatively May 24, 2006 in Seattle. Brent Vadopalas to reserve a meeting place. Al will email the date and get feedback from the group.