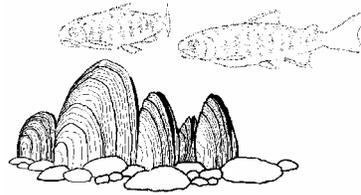


Pacific Northwest Native Freshwater Mussel Workgroup



September 14, 2006

Minutes

Attendees were as follows: Al Smith, Molly Hallock, John Fleckenstein, Christina Luzier, Michelle Steg. Rob Plotnikoff, Kathy Thornburgh and Tom Burke were on the conference line. Special guests were Marie Fernandez and Charlie Stenvall from Willapa National Wildlife Refuge.

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

2006 Symposium: Nancy Duncan was the only workgroup member who attended the American Malacological Society meeting in Seattle in early August. Following is her written summary of the meeting:

This year's annual meeting of the American Malacological Society was held this August in Seattle. Terry Frest's session on northwest species was scheduled for the last day of the five day meeting, which resulted in attendees from other parts of the country departing early. Consequently, the crowd was small on the last day, perhaps a total audience of 50 people. Karen Mock's work on Anodonta genetics was presented. They have shown that there are two major clades of the genus, one including oregonensis and kennerlyi (I remember this by thinking of it as O-K) and another representing californiensis and the rest. My presentation on the gains in mollusk knowledge due to the Northwest Forest Plan was well-received, and I have gotten several requests from folks wanting the regional collection! The poster about the workgroup did not get much attention, only a few questions about who we were. The hand-out posters of mussels by Ethan Nedeau went like hotcakes - all were taken within about a half-hour. (The framed donation of this poster was sold at the auction - to Ed Johannes!) The 100 field guides that I brought with me did not all get taken, so I left a few remaining copies with the University of WA bookstore to give away. Most people were very happy to have something like this, and were glad the workgroup had developed it. Of course, since Karen's work on Anodonta was fresh in folk's minds, there was some talk about that section - Again.

All in all, I think that our presence in the northwest is being felt, and that our work is quite worthwhile.

Lee Hastie's Visit: He visited Bear and Battle Creeks. He met with King County staff regarding mussel die-offs. He met with Kelly Toy about publishing a paper. He is interested in keeping in touch with the workgroup and will visit again. Rob will send notes from his meeting with Lee and Al will distribute them to the group.

WA DNR – Scientific Advisory Planning Council: Rob updated the group on Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP) being constructed. Issues dealing with state land and aquatic resources are included. New structures and modifications have to be approved by the council. CA floaters and Western ridged mussels are being considered in the HCP.

Field Guides: We have about 700 guides left. Al met with Scott Black, Xerces, about reprinting the guide. Xerces sells publications out of their office, on their website, Audubon Society stores, on Amazon.com and other outlets. Scott suggested that the guides could sell for \$9-14. We will need a sponsor to fund the reprint and will have to change the inside cover to reflect the new sponsorship and fix one typo. The group should think about funding sources. Rob is going to ask his new employer, Tetra Tech. Ethan Nedeau has agreed to oversee the reprint and we decided to use the same printer.

2007 Symposium: Theme ideas: 1) habitat; 2) reintroductions; 3) transplants; 4) speciation; 5) mussel die-offs (In related news: Molly saw a permit application for lethal collection of mussels for a toxicology study). Group suggested that broad theme of habitat could encompass several topics such as reintroductions, transplants because of road/stream work, regulatory news (Habitat Conservation Plans). We discussed charging a registration fee for the symposium but did not come to a decision. Molly and Christina offered to co-chair the symposium committee. Rob, Michelle and Al will help out. The symposium will tentatively be in Vancouver, WA, at the Water Resources Center, in April 2007.

To Do: Rob is drafting a pre-announcement notice that will be posted on our website as well as on other professional websites, AFS, AMS, etc. Tom is going to check with the Malacological Society for placement in their newsletter. Christina will contact Oregon AFS for use of their website and check with the Water Resources Center for dates and cost. Everybody on the workgroup should be thinking of sponsorship ideas and potential speakers.

Xerces Affiliation: Scott Black will be revising the draft MOU in October. It is being broken into three parts for better clarity: 1) general MOU; 2) fiscal – grants; and 3) fiscal – conferences. Xerces needs to receive 15% overhead for administering grants and 10% for symposia/conferences.

Rafter Mussel Sightings: Anita Shaul, an ex-workgroup member, contacted Al regarding using rafters to report mussel sightings. American Whitewater, based in Missoula, MT, has offered to provide this information. Anita is looking for a contact person to receive the data. The group agreed that it could potentially be a good source of data, at least location data. Molly suggested that perhaps they could take a digital photo and a GPS coordinate. We are going to send mussel guides to the rafting group. John will put together a data sheet if Nancy does not already have one. Al will contact Anita and tell her that he will be the contact.

Columbia Slough Glochidia Surveys: Al talked about a glochidia survey going on in Columbia Slough and Bybee Lake near Portland. It is a highly modified area that has been severely impacted by human development. They collected wide range of fish species, although most were introduced. Fish with most glochidia were 3-spined stickleback, a native fish. They observed winged, Oregon and California floater adults in Columbia Slough.

Oregon Field Guide: On June 21-23, Al and Jason Dunham met with Jim Newman and crew from Oregon Field Guide, a nature show on Oregon Public Broadcasting. They filmed 4-5 hours of mussel footage on Steamboat Creek, a tributary of the Umpqua River, and at the OSU Marine Science Center in Newport, OR. The show will air on October 26, 2006.

Willapa National Wildlife Refuge Mussel Introductions: Marie Fernandez and Charlie Stenvall told us about the restoration efforts being conducted on Willapa NWR, including: spartina management, forest restoration, coastal dune habitat, removal of forest roads and stream restoration. Marie mentioned their success with re-establishing sea run cutthroat trout and chum salmon in refuge streams. They are interested in restoring mussel populations but do not know if any mussel species are present. They were interested in: 1) getting historical information on mussel distribution; 2) help in surveying for mussels; 3) learning about the process of reintroducing mussels if necessary. The group relayed that there is no historical information and no data on reintroductions in the West. We could, however, help with the surveys. The group decided that this was the first necessary step before reintroductions should be considered. They stock trout in November and December and wondered if they were already introducing mussels this way. Glochidia are most likely not present on the gills this time of year.

Al said we could mobilize some volunteers to conduct a preliminary survey in October. Molly, John, Michelle and Christina said they could potentially help. Al will coordinate with Marie, Charlie and the group to set up dates for the surveys.

Shell collection: Molly gave an update on the WA mussel collection permitting issue. They were going to combine marine and freshwater shell collection. Five pounds of relic shells could be collected per day. The Fish Program manager did not approve this change so Molly is going to write a permit and allow as many permittees as necessary. The charge will be \$12 per year. The application process can be done via email.

Effects of Gold Dredging on Mussels: Molly reported on a project studying the impact of gold dredging on mussels in NE Washington. Thirty *Gonidea* and 30 *Margaritifera* were exposed to dredging. No physical impact on shells was observed. They are holding the mussels in cages to determine delayed mortality. One cage is buried, one was tossed on the surface of the substrate. No obvious harmful effects have yet been observed.

Next Meeting: December 7, 2006 in Lacey, WA.