

**Pacific Northwest Native Freshwater Mussel Workgroup
Minutes of the 1st Quarterly Meeting, 10 March 2016, 12 - 1 pm**

Participating: Rob Plotnikoff (TetraTech); Celeste Searles Mazzacano (CASM Environmental, LLC); Jon Mageroy (University of British Columbia), Phil Mathias (Wyoming Fish and Game), Julie Campbell (USFWS-WA), Amy Thompson (USFWS-WA), Liz Bockstiegel (WDFW), Marci Koski (USFWS-Columbia River Fisheries, Vancouver), Shelly Miller (City of Eugene, OR), John Fleckenstein (WA Natural Heritage Program), Matt Paroulek (Port of Portland), Al Smith (ODFW-retired), Sean Connolly (USFWS-OR), Michele Weaver (ODFW-Fish Division), Kevin Aitkin (USFWS-WA), Teal Waterstrat (USFWS-WA), Emilie Blevins (Xerces), Lucie Law (USFS)

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions (Celeste Searles Mazzacano, CASM Environmental)
- USFWS Directorate Fellows Program intern available this summer to assist on mussel-related projects (Sean Connolly, USFWS-OR)
 - o want to advance Mussel Academy in Portland and get more involved with mussel-based citizens science and surveys
 - o rising undergrads or recent grads apply for fellowship, will be completely funded through FWS program
 - o want to coordinate with workgroup to see what our needs are, perhaps using Mussel Academy and existing citizen science programs as a vehicle, contribute to filling existing gaps in mussel data
 - o want to coordinate with us early to see if we had any criteria for selecting intern, and if anyone wants to be involved in selection process
 - o internship is 11 weeks full-time in the summer; will be looking at current protocols and data, get her/him out doing surveys in areas that are needed

Questions/Discussion

- o Kevin: this is a good idea, and maybe we can do more of these DFPs in the future if it works out well
- o Who will be supervisor? Sean is immediate supervisor, but will encourage the intern to do as much individual coordination as s/he can
- o Celeste: contact Michele Blackburn at Xerces (michele@xerces.org) to participate in Crystal Springs surveys (dates not yet determined)
- o Teal: Julie Campbell and Amy Thompson are doing some mussel survey work this season
 - Julie and Amy are on call and confirm that it wouldn't hurt to have some extra hands

- o Marci: her office has money designated for a mussel project that has yet to be defined so she really wants to talk with Sean about this
 - o Sean hopes to have 3-6 people ready for interviews next week, maybe someone from group would like to be on interview panel
 - o Anyone who has project ideas and/or wants to be involved in selection process can contact Sean directly at sean_connolly@fws.gov
- Update on Mussel Symposium at The Wildlife Society/PARC/Idaho Bat Society joint meeting, 22-26 February 2016, Coeur d'Alene, ID (Teal Waterstrat, USFWS-WA)
 - o meeting program and abstracts are available at <http://thesnvb.org/meeting-history/>
 - o Proceedings will be published in volume 97, issue 2 of the Northwestern Naturalist
 - o Teal extended a special thanks to all who attended and presented at the conference and he hopes SNVB can bring some mollusks to their meetings in the future
 - o SNVB is starting to organize for the 2017 meeting in Arcata, CA; annual meeting is always open to partners
- Draft outline for new Workgroup web site (Celeste Searles Mazzacano, CASM Environmental; Teal Waterstrat, USFWS)
 - o Marci Koski obtained all the files that were on the now-defunct FWS-hosted workgroup web site and sent them to Celeste and Teal, though we will need to decide if we want to have all of them on the new site
 - o Celeste put together a draft site outline and shared it with web site subcommittee (Teal W. and Alexa Maine); they haven't had time to review it yet but once they have, a revised version will be shared with the workgroup
 - o discussion of if/how western mussel database will be shared via web site → will likely continue to be done as a direct request to Xerces staff
 - o in 2015, Xerces purchased the domain name and offered to host the web site on their server, with password-protected access for designated workgroup members to edit and add content
 - Celeste: they are in the process of replacing the web person who would have been involved in this, so we need to confirm that Xerces is still able and willing to do this, otherwise we will have to look at alternative web hosting platforms such as Weebly (which offers very good templates with their free and 1st-paid-tier services)
 - Emilie B. will talk to Xerces' communications staff and find out the current situation

- o once we are ready to set up actual pages, we will be asking people who are willing to contribute images of mussels and habitat for the gallery portion of web site
- o discussion of mussel die-off reporting outlet
 - Al: important to do, would be great if data could be input directly into the new web site
 - Emilie B.: Xerces wants to collect that data, she is willing to curate, take in data, find format to be reportable on web site; should be publicly available
 - Al: has lots of pictures of mussel die-offs at low or no water to share
 - Celeste: Emily, do you feel that you have records for recent years, or should people send their data to you?
 - Emily: has about 50 records or so from old workgroup meetings or literature records, but to be thorough people should send the records they have
 - Rob Plotnikoff: when he was with Ecology in WA, he asked colleagues to let him know if/when they saw mussels or dead shells, but didn't get a lot of response; might be most effective if a workgroup member could do a presentation in person to different agency staff
 - Al: important during outreach events to keep talking about reporting both live mussels and die-offs
 - Lucie Law: tidal monitoring program for macroinvertebrates finds mussels, she can share that data with Xerces to add to mussel database
 - Emilie: saw presentation from ID Fish and Game about snorkel surveys for salmonids that collect mussel observations at same time, might be good to talk to them
 - Shelly: when she was at ODFW, research lab had crews doing habitat or snorkel surveys, and they also collected data on mussels. these were usually incidental observations, but they found mussel presence in some new basins
- Are there resources available on mussel diseases? (Teal Waterstrat, USFWS-WA)
 - o Teal found an old reference from WA and a few relevant papers from the SE; there are always new emerging diseases in vertebrate world, so it seems strange that there is so little about mussel diseases → is it that an open avenue for research?
 - o Al: confirms that he has few papers about disease in his collection, which is extensive, so it's likely the work just isn't being done
 - o John F.: even for a lot of well-studied species, like *Margaritifera margaritifera* in Europe, the topic of disease seems understudied
 - o Are mussels disease resilient, or research-invisible? → likely haven't risen enough in priority that people are looking at their diseases

- o Emilie: could add a section on “the visible signs of a sick mussel” to the new web site
 - o Shelly: it would be good to develop a list of government employees at local, state, and federal level who should be contacted if a die-off noted
 - o Emilie: can draft e-mail to workgroup members asking them to share contact info for people who should be notified
 - o Al: start with ODFW district fish biologists; ODFW very decentralized, so there are staff in different areas placed to take action; ODFW also has a very good fish disease lab at OSU which sometimes works on other aquatic organisms
- Photos needed for new field guide to the bivalves of Wyoming (Phil Mathias, Wyoming Game and Fish)
 - o a few years ago Phil and a researcher at University of WY started discussing a “Mussels of WY” guide, which has evolved now into a guide to bivalves
 - o they don’t have a lot of pictures of California Floater; does anyone have photos they are willing to share?
 - o will be 40 pg., spiral bound, waterproof, tear-resistant, pocket-sized; for sale at cost so will be inexpensive; public as well as fisheries biologists can use
 - o will have online reporting page so people can send them records
 - o photo contributors will receive a free copy of the guide
 - o guide at graphic designer now, should be out in June
 - o Al: has a bunch of photos that he can send, they can select ones that they need
 - o if anyone has images to share, they can be sent to Phil directly at <philip.mathias@wyo.gov
- Additional items/announcements
 - o John Fleckenstein: WA Natural Heritage program is starting a survey of temporary wetlands (i.e. vernal pools). John will be looking at Fairy Shrimp as a part of this project; very little is known about their distribution, range, and ecology, so John will be sending out a list of species asking for input from people
 - Rob P.: went to grad school in eastern WA and knows that they did a lot of work in that area, does John have those records?
 - John says Turnbull is well-represented but not sure what he has beyond there, if Rob has way to share data or access to collections could he share with John; Rob will look into it and let John know who to contact
- Meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm. Thanks to everyone for their participation—this was a great turnout of workgroup members!
 - The next meeting will take place in June, so look for a Doodle scheduling poll early in May.

