

PNW FW Mussel Workgroup minutes
Wednesday 14 September 2016, 10 - 11 am

Call-in information: dial 641-715-3580; enter access code 289634 at the prompt

Participants: Emilie Blevins (Xerces Society), Liz Bockstiegel (WDFW), Jodi Bluhm (Samish Tribe), Kate Gill (EcoAnalysts), Laura Guderyahn (Portland Parks and Recreation), Matt Hill (EcoAnalysts), Marci Koski (USFWS-Columbia River Fisheries, Vancouver), Alexa Maine (CTUIR), Matthew Patterson (USFWS), Rob Plotnikoff (TetraTech), Celeste Searles Mazzacano (CASM Environmental), Cynthia Tait (USFS-ID), Teal Waterstrat (USFWS-WA), Travis Williams (Willamette Riverkeepers)

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions (Celeste Searles Mazzacano, CASM Environmental)
- Update on WDFW mussel citizen science program development (Liz Bockstiegel, WDFW): Working with Teal Waterstrat and Rachel Stendahl (Chehalis Basin Education) to re-start Mussel Academy, starting training this Friday with one classroom; working with Emilie Blevins and others on standardizing protocol, will work with the WDFW citizen science coordinator in the fall and use as basis to create program within the agency; no guarantees but hopeful
 - Matthew Patterson: are you aware that region 1 FWS has person working on mussel citizen science project in Portland regional office.
 - Marci noted that this was intern Kendra Chan, who finished her work 2 weeks ago; Sean Connolly was Kendra’s supervisor, is lead for Mussel Academy
 - would be good to coordinate to ensure standardized protocols across regions
- Potential freshwater mussel session at next meeting of the Oregon chapter of the American Fisheries Society (ORAFS), 28 Feb - 3 Mar 2017, Bend OR; theme is is “Casting A Broader Net: Increasing Diversity and Inclusion in the Fisheries Profession”; more information in newsletter at http://orafs.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Summer2016_PP.pdf (Shivonne Nesbit, NOAA Fisheries)
 - Celeste Searles Mazzacano presented since Shivonne unable to attend call: Shivonne is gathering information at this point, seeing if we would be interested. Celeste wasn’t sure if group would think this was too close on the heels of this

- year's SNVB meeting in ID, but then again it's been a long time since the workgroup was able to have a conference presence for 2 continuous years.
- o Emilie Blevins: Would more people be able to attend meeting closer by? Not a lot could attend ID meeting, would be good to see new faces
 - Celeste also noted that this meeting would be substantially less costly to attend than the ID meeting which would attract more members
 - o Teal Waterstrat: AFS will draw very different audience than SNVB does, so may be good idea, reach new people; another potential attractions may be big *Gonidea* bed near Smith Rock, though Emilie noted there has also been a big die-off there
- Online form to track mussel relocations (Emilie Blevins, Xerces Society): listserv has had recent questions about mussel relocations, it seems like several have been done recently, would be good to have more information on how often and why people are moving mussels; she has put together a GoogleForm for reporting (<http://tinyurl.com/hatywqo>), looking for feedback and data submissions
 - o Will this be posted on new web site? Yes, that would be great, and people should share it with their colleagues
 - o Is any western state of interest? Yes
 - o Teal noted he has a few recent relocations he can add to the form
 - o side note: Celeste noted that we also get approached by people who basically demand we show up for free at short notice to rescue mussels; the group and individual members have done a lot of work for free beyond just giving advice and pointing out resources, and we all want to help for the good of the mussels, but we can't be seen as a free service organization to be called on at will. What about adding language to the new web site, on the Home and/or About page, describing how we can help and what those limits are? The number of inquiries are good in one way, since it means more people are thinking of mussels, but they also need to be incorporating them into their project planning and budget, just like they do for fish salvages.
 - o Emilie B. agreed this was a good idea; Teal W. asked if are there any firms we can direct these people to (as a paid project). Alexa M. noted that CTUIR sometimes does this work; Celeste noted that EcoAnalysts is now doing mussel relocation in a very big way.
 - New workgroup web site pnwmussels.org (Teal Waterstrat, USFWS; Alexa Maine, CTUIR; Celeste Searles Mazzacano, CASM Environmental)

- o New site is active, has good visual appeal and clear layout, many thanks to Xerces for hosting and set-up; still a work in progress; web site committee has gone through site and provided feedback to Justin at Xerces, who set the site up for us; much of what we are noting are things we want to add (reporting forms, PDFs, etc) as opposed to global changes to the site.
 - o Will we be able to access site directly to edit content? Yes, Justin will make this current round of changes and then workgroup committee members can edit pages
 - o Add contact person at bottom of page? Emilie will check with Justin to see if that should be him, or a workgroup member
 - o Marci K.: visually well laid out and well-organized; but would like to see more pictures of surveys, mussels, habitat; Celeste: more visuals would be great, we need to find out if first there is a server or file limit size; Alexa Maine has suggested having a workgroup YouTube channel to be able to house videos if we have a space limit on the web site
 - o Emilie: we are now gathering info through different venues (list serve, FB, iNat, web site), so places like FB may be better for imagery; Celeste: we also need to remember that not everyone uses all of those media—some FB users consider web sites old school, for example—so don't want to post some content exclusively in one site versus another
 - o everyone should check out the new site; if you have ideas or feedback, please share with one of the committee members (Teal, Alexa, Celeste)
- Possible workgroup recommendations to WDFW for planned baseline aquatic inventory of property on Satsop River, Grays Harbor Co., WA (Teal Waterstrat, USFWS): overall project is channel re-connection, 2 small populations of Western Pearlshell and Oregon Floater there; Teal hoping to get involved staff to do long-term monitoring, good opportunity since it's contained within WDFW ownership and there are 2 different types of mussels there; there is time for them to think about relocation, tracking, long-term monitoring of responses to restoration
 - o Is there interest there? Yes, but Teal only found out about this recently, and there was short timeline for them to get initial baseline surveys done before rains come
- Integration of the incidental observation protocol into ongoing Fish Program and HPA surveys (Liz Bocksteigel, WDFW) Liz & Chris Sato have been working within WDFW looking at how fish and wildlife biologists do their surveys to see if mussel findings could be included; working now to create incidental observation data form; finalizing form now to

see what kinds of data they want collected, have go-ahead from WDFW that they can give this to their data people

- o Cynthia Tait: people in her area have started including mussel observations as well, new sites have already been found; Idaho Fish and Game also including mussel info on their fish survey forms; Liz would like to talk to Cynthia about how they collect their data, and Cynthia can connect Liz with IDFG, as it would be great if everyone had a consistent protocol
 - o Liz: if anyone within WA has specific basins that they think would really benefit from collecting this kind of data, let her know, they can work on target areas for data collection
- Update on I-74 mussel relocation (Matt Hill, EcoAnalysts): EcoAnalysts merger with Ecological Specialists was completed, and they just started largest mussel relocation project ever done, in preparation for a new interstate bridge being built on Mississippi River. Project started 1 August, estimating 450,000 mussels will be moved during this process; so far 80,000 mussels in 29 species have been moved, including 3 federally protected species (Higgins eye pearlymussel, Spectaclecase, and Sheepnose). Impressive abundance and diversity.
 - o Could you give us step by step? Areas where new piers going in are staked out and divided into grids; have barge anchored in that area and boats on periphery, each has divers; 14 divers working in shifts, 7 in water at any time; divers run through grids, making multiple passes until they have a pass that brings up less than 10% of total. Mussels are sorted and counted on boat, dead removed, live brought to shore where they are randomized into treatments, ID'd, and marked with a dremel tool. Federally protected species given unique numbers to track individuals over time. Have 3 relocation sites upstream with different stocking densities (doubling and tripling the standing population there), will be monitored for 15 years. Common species put into the water from a moving boat (at 2000-4000 per day, can't place singly), protected species placed individually by divers into marked grids.
 - o How deep and murky, what is bottom like? Visibility only 6-12 inches on a good day, working at depth of 7 ft; flow has been variable, 150,000 cfs a week ago due to storms, 80,000 cfs more recently. Bottom mostly sand, lots of dead zebra mussel shells incorporated, but variable; divers saw veins of gravelly and that had lots of mussels, then areas of mud and zebra shells that were less productive.

Spectaclecases are getting placed downstream among existing populations, have been given electronic PIT tags.

- o Who is funding?: Department of Transportation project
 - o Is there existing abundance data for relocation sites?: Yes, surveyed last year to get estimated densities; now adding rescued mussels until they hit the double and triple densities
- Update on PSU mussel course EPP725 (Celeste Searles Mazzacano, CASM Environmental)
 - o 2 days in August; has been 3 years or so since class was taught; this is elective course for PSU environmental professional certification program, classroom and field components; about 12 students, from several states, tribal fish biologists, contractors, etc.; many have now joined workgroup, want to do surveys and find out about mussels in their own basins
 - o Matt Hill noted that he took the class, found it very informative and enjoyable; he has some nice *Gonidea* valves from Salmon River that he can share with Celeste for her teaching collection
- Update on McBride Slough mussel surveys for Port of Portland (Celeste Searles Mazzacano, CASM Environmental)
 - o process has been slow since working in contaminated area for government agency has meant lots of legal approvals to go through, but DEQ has approved survey plan, final landowner access agreements in process, should be able to get in the water before the end of September to survey for mussels to see if rescue will be needed prior to planned dredging next year
- Additional items and announcements
 - o last workgroup meeting of the year will be in December, a Doodle poll will be sent out in November to schedule