

## Pacific Northwest Native Freshwater Mussel Workgroup

June 11, 2019; 1:00 – 3:00 Pacific Time

Call-in details: Dial 1 856-425-2438. Enter PIN: 101 900#. Press \*6 to ensure you are unmuted. Please announce your name/affiliation when you join.

### Meeting Agenda

1. Emilie Blevins, Xerces Society— welcome and introductions
2. Emilie Blevins, Xerces Society— results of the survey regarding a 2020 PNW Mussel Meeting
3. Patty Morrison, USFWS retired; Teal Waterstrat, USFWS; Kevin Aitkin, USFWS; Emilie Blevins, Xerces Society— discussion of FMCS 2021 symposium [recurring agenda item]
4. Emilie Blevins, Xerces Society— upcoming Xerces mussel BMP workshops, reminder of workgroup's mussel die-off form and iNaturalist portal
5. Other discussion items:
  - a. Steve Stampfli— interest in Wind-White Salmon (WA) basin mussel surveys
  - b. Teal Waterstrat, USFWS— discussion of recent news: suction dredging, river dredging, rototilling
  - c. just for fun— summer reading recommendations for books on mollusks, writing of other interest to the group?

Attendees: Al Smith, ODFW retired; Christine O'Brien, Browns River Consulting; Elizabeth Bockstiegel, WDFW; Emilie Blevins, Xerces; Frank Mullins, USFWS IFWCO; Steve Stampfli, RCD retired; Franchesca Perez, Stillaguamish Tribe; Miranda Plumb, USFWS; Ron Constable, ODFW; Emily Davis, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission; Kevin Aitkin, USFWS; Laura Johnson, University of Oregon; Travis Williams, Willamette Riverkeeper; Rob Plotnikoff, Snohomish County; Kate Holcomb, UDWR.

### Call Notes

1. Emilie Blevins, Xerces Society— welcome and introductions; FMCS 2019 meeting comments
  - a. Al attended, mentioned he enjoyed it but wish field trip had not been canceled. Mentioned some challenges because of the federal furlough and weather kept folks from making it to the meeting. Emilie, Kate, Patty Morrison, Christine, and Alexa Maine all also attended from the PNW mussel workgroup.
2. Emilie Blevins, Xerces Society— Results of the survey regarding a 2020 PNW Mussel Meeting
  - a. 28 people responded that they are interested and would plan to attend
  - b. all responded that Vancouver, WA would work as a proposed location but 45% will need overnight accommodation if held there
  - c. January through April all worked for >75% of respondents
  - d. 60% of people would be willing to give a presentation at the meeting, >75% willing to volunteer
  - e. 30% expressed interest in a field trip (and offered ideas like identifying glochidia (at a hatchery), observing gravid mussels, identifying species, demos of survey techniques, visiting a restoration site with mussels)
  - f. 75% interested in a post-meeting social
  - g. >45% willing to help fundraise and potential for one to help fund

- h. 60% indicated interest in having a keynote talk on western mussel research, 25% in one by a national or international researcher
  - i. Preferred topics:
    - i. Research\_efforts
    - ii. Conservation
    - iii. Biology/Ecology/Life\_history
    - iv. Mussels\_and\_Multi-species\_Projects
    - v. Restoration/BMPs
  - j. Suggested themes:
    - i. Climate change
    - ii. Landscape ecology (e.g. considering mussels in an ecosystem context of the whole river network)
    - iii. How will WOTUS changes potentially affect mussels? (maybe that's more of a special session or keynote topic)"
    - iv. Incorporating TEK
    - v. Advocating for mollusks in the greater conservation world
    - vi. Restoration and mussels
    - vii. Crossing species boundaries, including mussels in other work
    - viii. More than just a living rock.
    - ix. Mussel Project Updates from across the Pacific Northwest; Who's Doing What Where?
    - x. Reversing the decline.
    - xi. Spreading understanding of freshwater mussels.
    - xii. State of the Union(ids) - What we know about freshwater mussel species in the Pacific Northwest to date
    - xiii. Taxonomical research needed, directions
    - xiv. Current available data/knowledge on the status of Western Pearlshell populations by watersheds, in CA, OR, WA, and BC
    - xv. Evaluation of loss of area of occupancy in Western Populations during past 30, 40, 50, 100 years (Museum records, TK, others)
    - xvi. Connection between Western Pearlshell stocks and salmonid stocks
  - k. Kate asked how many days will the meeting be. Plan is for just 1 day with an afternoon/evening social, based on feedback. Kevin said it will be useful to base this meeting off of the past successful ones held by the group. Franchesca mentioned reaching out to tribes who are doing mussel work. Next steps will be exploring venues and setting a date. More details for the workgroup to come.
3. Patty Morrison, USFWS retired; Teal Waterstrat, USFWS; Kevin Aitkin, USFWS; Emilie Blevins, Xerces Society— discussion of FMCS 2021 symposium [recurring agenda item]
- a. Kevin let folks know that we are ahead of the timeline recommended by FMCS. Emilie updated the group that we are looking into venues and an event-planning consultant to help. Al commented that most people he spoke to at the FMCS 2019 meeting seem excited about coming to Portland. Laura Johnson asked about options for reduced cost or volunteer opportunities for students. Al said that to his knowledge this has always been the case.

4. Emilie Blevins, Xerces Society— upcoming Xerces mussel BMP workshops, reminder of workgroup’s mussel die-off form (<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/07295ba7aa33447fb927f0b071591147>) and iNaturalist portal (<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/freshwater-mussels-of-the-western-u-s>)

Upcoming mussel restoration workshops (more details will be sent out via email): Lakeview area- potentially August 8/9, Baker City- potentially September 4/5, Washington County- upcoming 2019/2020.

5. Other discussion items:

- a. Steve Stampfli— interest in Wind-White Salmon (WA) basin mussel surveys. Steve is a retired conservation district manager and watershed council coordinator, and a landowner along Rattlesnake Creek. He shared some background on his interest in some mussel surveys; he receives requests for salmonid surveys along his creek. He knows western pearlshell are present and has spoken with local agencies about these surveys. He is interested in learning where the mussel beds are located on the creek, and the agencies are supportive of the idea but don’t have funding for this. 1-2 volunteer-based surveys would be good to help them avoid mussel beds during other projects.

Laura asked how much area there was to survey (Steve said 2/3 of mile long along his property, 30ft width during high flows) and what time of year (Steve said July, August). She also asked if there are any issues with algal blooms (Steve said not really.)

Al asked if most of it is wadeable (Steve says yes, can’t snorkel when so low). Ron asked about when it is not snorkleable (October). Steve has manpower from local agencies but needs some mussel expertise to assist, could be done on a Saturday. Need an advisor biologist, for example from WDFW (possibly local habitat biologist). Also need equipment like glass-bottom buckets. Kevin and Miranda will check on aquascopes. Need to figure out how to get from Olympia to Portland, where Steve could pick them up. Liz asked if he had been in touch with his habitat biologist and offered to send her information about mussel surveys. Can work with her to help Steve out. Al also said volunteers from PNW mussel workgroup could bring them from Portland. He would be willing to help participate in these surveys. Emilie can connect people via email.

Steve said this was a nice opportunity to identify mussel beds. Another advantage of this project is that this would help with protecting mussels in the basin and incorporating them into restoration projects in the basin.

He sees a lot of shells but has not seen any live. Has anadromous cutthroat and coho and steelhead. Al says there could be *Gonidea* mixed in too. Ron said he could lend some snorkel gear, too, if needed.

Emilie mentioned that the basin is undersurveyed. Trout Lake Creek has a 1904 record only. (Steve asked, if it’s above falls would that mean that ocean-going fish have made it up. Al says, could be resident trout.)

- b. Teal Waterstrat, USFWS— discussion of recent news: Teal was not able to make the call, so Emilie brought up recent news: suction dredging (new HPA requirement for

Washington), potential river dredging, rototilling in the Okanagan and *Gonidea angulata*.

Kevin updated the group that the WA governor did not sign the Satsop dredging bill that was in the news. Miranda works in the Chehalis and says there has been a lot of discussion about the proposal locally and can put folks in contact with locals if interested.

- c. Travis Williams— 2019 Middle Fork Willamette Mussel Study (July 31 to August x?) WR will be doing surveys on the MF Willamette downstream from Dexter Dam. Emilie and Audrey from MFWWC and Travis all surveyed the area last summer and saw large numbers of mussels in that stretch. Appeared to be many juveniles. Celeste Searles Mazzacano is designing plan. Need lots of volunteers to help execute the survey plan. Can add people to a list to share more information.

There was also a significant April flood. Travis paddled a 45-mile stretch the week after and was amazed to see how much river rock was deposited on the floodplain. Also saw many mussels deposited, and now flows are dropping. He plans to see if there are now differences in distribution or abundance post-flood. Appears that many ended up high and dry.

Also, ODFW staff have found *Gonidea angulata* on the Long Tom- WR will survey next week. Al asked about access. Travis said tricky, with limited access, some via bridges. Emilie noted that pictures taken by Brian Bangs were of floater and western ridged mussel shells.

- d. Just for fun— summer reading recommendations for books on mollusks, writing of other interest to the group?
  - i. Emilie: Razor Clams: Buried Treasure of the Pacific Northwest by David Berger; Immersion: The Science and Mystery of Freshwater Mussels by Abbie Gascho Landis; Squid Empire: The Rise and Fall of the Cephalopods by Danna Staaf
  - ii. Rob Plotnikoff: The Big Oyster: Mystery on the Half Shell- a neat historical perspective on oyster harvest and restoration by Mark Kurlansky. He is coming out with another book on salmon.