

Presenter Information

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The Pacific Northwest Native Freshwater Mussel Workgroup

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The status of the seven species of freshwater mussels native to the Pacific Northwest has received very little attention, despite the fact that freshwater mussels are considered the most endangered group of animals in North America. The Pacific Northwest Native Freshwater Mussel Workgroup was founded in 2003 with the goal of ensuring that freshwater mussel research, management, and educational activities are coordinated, prioritized and consistent with identified information needs. The Workgroup adopted nine objectives to achieve this goal: 1. Hold an annual freshwater mussel conference in the Northwest to review the state of mussel research and management, 2. Maintain a list of mussel research needs to provide guidance for species conservation, 3. Protect quality mussel habitat, 4. Maintain a website that provides information about freshwater mussels and about the Workgroup, 5. Maintain a Northwest database of mussel distribution, 6. Support classes on mussels to aid resource managers and researchers, 7. Publicize mussel issues to raise public awareness of mussel needs, 8. Provide speakers for requested presentations to organized groups on mussels, and 9. Produce mussel educational material to raise public awareness of mussels. The Workgroup meets four times annually. Recent accomplishments are the establishment of a website (<http://columbiariver.fws.gov/musselwg.htm>), the second Mussel Symposium, and the development of a mussel field guide. The guide will be available in 2005. Additionally, the Workgroup is planning the third annual Mussel Symposium for June 2005. The Workgroup intends to raise the awareness of the status of mussels and assure that the knowledge-base continues to build.