

# PACIFIC NORTHWEST NATIVE FRESHWATER MUSSEL WORKGROUP



Photo by CTUIR Fisheries  
A mussel shell near a muskrat den.

*The purpose of the Workgroup is to provide an open forum for discussions focusing on native freshwater mussels, dissemination of related information, and to provide guidance on integrated planning of mussel research, management, and education. The goal of the Workgroup is to ensure that freshwater mussel research, management, and educational activities are coordinated, prioritized, and are consistent with information needs identified.*



Photo by CTUIR Fisheries  
Western pearlshell mussel bed.



Following Photos by Al Smith  
California Floater  
*Anodonta californiensis*



Oregon Floater  
*Anodonta oregonensis*



Western Floater  
*Anodonta kennerlyi*



Western Pearlshell  
*Margaritifera falcata*



Western Ridged Mussel  
*Gonidea angulata*



Winged Floater  
*Anodonta nuttalliana*



Photo by Steve Smith  
Yukon Floater  
*Anodonta beringiana*

## History

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 in general are considered to be the most endangered group of animals in North America. On February 19, 2003, a workshop on freshwater mussels was held in Vancouver, Washington that consisted of presented papers and a panel discussion. The purpose of the workshop was to initiate discussion on the regional population status of freshwater mussels. The workshop was attended by 91 participants of very diverse backgrounds. From this meeting, the Pacific Northwest Native Freshwater Mussel Workgroup was founded.

## Workgroup Objectives

- ✂ Hold an annual freshwater mussel symposium in the Northwest to review mussel status and the state of mussel research, management, and education
- ✂ Establish and maintain a list of prioritized mussel research needs to provide guidance for research emphasis leading to information needed for species conservation
- ✂ Protect and reverse the decline of quality mussel habitat
- ✂ Establish and maintain a website that provides information about freshwater mussels and about the Workgroup
- ✂ Maintain a Northwest database of mussel distribution to help assess mussel status and establish research needs
- ✂ Hold, sponsor, or support classes on mussels to aid resource managers and researchers and to educate biologists and non-biologists
- ✂ Publicize mussel issues, status, management, and research to raise public awareness of mussel needs
- ✂ Provide or support speakers for requested presentations to organized groups on mussels
- ✂ Produce or support production of mussel educational material for adults and students to raise public awareness of mussel status and issues



Photo by CTUIR Fisheries  
Mussels and fish.



Photo by USEWIS  
Snorkelers search for mussels during a survey.

## Workgroup Representation

The Workgroup is represented by federal, state, tribal, non-profits, and academic institutions and agencies in Oregon, Washington, Utah, Nevada, California, and Alaska. The following is a current list of representative agencies:

- ✂ Bear Creek Water Tenders
- ✂ Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- ✂ Deixis Consultants
- ✂ Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe
- ✂ The Nature Conservancy
- ✂ Nevada Division of Wildlife
- ✂ Portland State University
- ✂ Retired biologists
- ✂ Snohomish County
- ✂ Washington Department of Ecology
- ✂ Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- ✂ Washington Department of Natural Resources
- ✂ Washington Trout
- ✂ University of California, Berkley
- ✂ United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- ✂ United States Forest Service

## Accomplishments to Date

- ✂ Established a website to provide information on Workgroup activities
- ✂ The Workgroup has convened twice
- ✂ Provided detailed information on mussels in the mainstem Columbia and Snake rivers for the subbasin planning process
- ✂ Drafted a dichotomous key to the native freshwater mussels of the Northwest
- ✂ Provided sources of information on mussels for the Okanogan ecoregion planning effort

*For more information, please visit our website at:*  
[columbiariver.fws.gov/musselwg.htm](http://columbiariver.fws.gov/musselwg.htm)

## Planned Events

- ✂ Mussel session at the Oregon American Fisheries Society Annual meeting (Bend, OR, February 19th, 2004)
- ✂ "Freshwater Mussels of the Pacific Northwest" short-course (Ellensburg, WA, March 24, 2004; Portland, OR, August 2004)
- ✂ Second Annual Freshwater Mussels of the Pacific Northwest Symposium (Washington, Spring 2004)
- ✂ The Workgroup will meet on a quarterly basis, and more frequently if needed