

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

Roadmaps for Recovery

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

The interrupted rocksnail, rough hornsnail, and Georgia pigtoe mussel are all endangered species, having disappeared from 90 percent or more of their historical ranges, largely due to the damming of rivers where they live. All three are native to the Coosa River drainage in Alabama and North Georgia, the Georgia pigtoe also occurring in east Tennessee.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently came out with a road map for recovering these animals. Over the last 75 years, the Coosa River Drainage has been converted from a free-flowing river to a scattered collection of isolated stream segments. Human activities will continue changing where these animals live, therefore key to efforts to recover them is the monitoring of changes to stream habitats across the watershed and responding promptly to those changes, whether through negotiation and partnerships to alleviate threats, through relocation, or captive breeding, rearing, and reintroduction.

Several organizations are working to recover these three mollusks. The state of Alabama, The Nature Conservancy, and the Service have collected brood stock from several populations and begun captive propagation and reintroduction. The state of Alabama has also created the Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center, which is helping recover the mussels.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.