

Summarized Comments from Olympic Mudminnow Workshop, October 17th 2012, by Doug Zimmer and Taylor Goforth

Workshop participants shared their thoughts regarding moving forward in Olympic mudminnow conservation by considering four questions and writing answers on flip charts throughout the day and/or speaking up during the facilitated discussion at the end of the workshop. In looking back at the flip chart notes, Doug and I noted these ideas fell into two broad categories: “Science Needs” and “Education and Outreach.”

Each thought, or group of thoughts, is listed here under its appropriate category. A parenthetical phrase was added where there was direct overlap with a comment made from the other category. All told, this represents a summary of participants’ thinking as it was collected on the day of the workshop.

SCIENCE NEEDS

- Identify a lead entity to host information site/clearinghouse, including database, for scientists (and the public).
- Scientists (and the public) should be able to submit data online; maintain open-source data management.
- Agree on sampling protocol.
- Training needed for agency staff, citizens and academia.
- Coordinate survey efforts between National Wildlife Refuges and those state or government biologists doing surveys for other species, e.g. Oregon spotted frog, the Zoological Society frog surveys.
- Collect and publish better habitat identification, including essential elements, seasonal movements, and species’ preferences in range of habitat.
- Need better maps, especially off-channel maps, ground truth for accuracy and publish same.
- Expand geographical range of surveys, also expand to survey effects of predation and effects of fish passage restoration, i.e. Are we saving salmon at the expense of mudminnows?
- Need greater protection of wetlands, i.e. bigger and/or better buffers.

- Clarify who is responsible for enforcing current regulations, especially in “non-fish-bearing” streams.
- Define “better buffers”
- Discover creative incentives for landowners to protect their wetlands (maybe an outreach task after science is done 😊)

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

- Messages should answer the questions: Why should we/I care about the Olympic mudminnow? What is the cultural significance, tribal and non-tribal?
- Form an agency/citizen coalition for mudminnow conservation to engage high schools, NWR system, NGOs.
- Use hatchery facilities (like Cook Creek) and other visitor centers to do outreach.
- Build attractive, informative kiosks in key public recreation sites telling them what is there and why it is important/cool!
- Teach broad biological themes to tie mudminnow life history to salmon and other previously taught/known/surveyed species.
- Make the Olympic mudminnow our State fish!
- Develop outreach tools for planners, public and elected officials, real estate and other professionals (consult WSU extension or county Conservation Districts for expertise)
- Form a Procession of the Species mudminnow group and parade in the streets of Olympia (3rd weekend in April usually)
- Develop website** with information, fact sheets and photos. Use social media to link to this site.** (Receive scientific and public observations, responses and info via this same site.**)

**The WDFW Priority Habitat and Species (PHS) website is currently the most foundational and up-to-date website on Olympic mudminnows. Many expressed their desire for an interface with the State; i.e., Lori Salzer at Lori.salzer@dfw.wa.gov, to continue developing ideas and actions for sustaining and expanding function of this clearinghouse of mudminnow information.