



**FRESHWATER MOLLUSK CONSERVATION SOCIETY  
1417 HOFF INDUSTRIAL DR.  
O'FALLON, MO 63366**

February 8, 2011

Alan Grant, Supervisor  
Water Quality Certification Branch  
KY DEP – Division of Water  
200 Fair Oaks Lane  
Frankfort, KY 40601

RE: Protection of freshwater mussel habitat in Ohio River at Paducah, Kentucky

Dear Mr. Grant,

The Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society (FMCS) is submitting public comment regarding protection of habitat for threatened and endangered freshwater mussels in the lower Ohio River. FMCS is dedicated to the conservation of, and advocacy for, freshwater mollusks, North America's most imperiled animals. FMCS is an international professional scientific society made up of state, federal, academic, and private scientists and conservationists, many of whom work directly with the nearly 150 endangered and threatened mollusks. Our members are considered experts in the conservation and recovery of freshwater mollusks.

We would like to note that according to the revised Biological Opinion issued by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) dated 21-Dec-2010, this project will result in incidental take of (546) individuals of *Potamilus capax* (Fat Pocketbook), (18) *Plethobasus cooperianus* (Orange-Foot Pimpleback), and (9) *Lampsilis abrupta* (Pink Mucket). The protection of the habitat for these species is essential for their protection and future recovery. These species have been lost from a great majority of their previously occupied habitat due to impoundments, habitat destruction and modification, exotic species, as well as point and non-point source pollution. In particular, we express strong concern for the harm to the habitat of *Plethobasus cooperianus*. This species is in a state of severe decline and is generally thought to only maintain two reproducing populations, one of which is found in the lower Ohio River (USFWS, 1984).

We would encourage KY DOW to maintain protection of the habitat for the threatened and endangered mussel species in the project area. The FMCS views this habitat of national importance and would encourage KY DOW to regard it as such in terms of final permit review.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "W. Gregory Cope".

W. Gregory Cope, President  
Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society

Literature Cited:

(USFWS) United States Fish and Wildlife Service. 1984. Recovery plan for the Orange-footed pearly mussel (*Plethobasus cooperianus*). Atlanta, Georgia. 44 pp.

Cc: Leroy Koch, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Kentucky Field Office  
Stephanie Fulton, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Jim Townsend, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Louisville District  
Don Dott, Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission  
Tierra Curry, Center for Biological Diversity  
Tom Fitzgerald, Kentucky Resources Council