

Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society



May 27, 2010

Cynthia Dohner, Regional Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region

Re: Support for Center for Biological Diversity T&E species petition

Dear Ms. Dohner,

This letter is submitted in support of the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) with regard to the listing of a large group of freshwater mollusk species under the US Endangered Species Act. The massive level of degradation of streams and rivers in the southeastern United States, resulting from a high degree of impoundments, mining operations, road building, water quality degradation, and poor land use practices have seriously jeopardized our native mollusks.

FMCS is dedicated to the conservation of and advocacy for freshwater mollusks, North America's most imperiled animals. The membership of FMCS consists of state, federal, academic, and private biologists, many of whom work directly with the nearly 150 endangered and threatened mollusks, and are considered experts in their conservation and recovery.

We agree with CBD that several species are in critical need of recovery actions by US Fish and Wildlife Service. Many species within the petition, especially regionally endemic species, are certainly in need of status review and survey funds in order to better assess their current conservation status. We note that several wide ranging mussel species are still found in multiple river systems but certainly appear to be rare and/or cryptic throughout their range. This is not to suggest that all species in the petition should not receive consideration. Listing will allow for greater protection and review by USFWS to prevent decline to a point where the species could be lost.

(cont.)

The mollusk taxa listed in the petition from the Mobile Basin should be given careful evaluation given the large number of extinctions that have occurred in the system, particularly the Coosa River system.

Thank you for all considerations.

Sincerely,

Dr. Greg Cope
President
Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society