



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

November 4, 2009

Dr. Wendy Gordon
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
4200 Smith School Road
Austin, Texas 78744

Dear Dr. Gordon,

I write to you today on behalf of the Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society (FMCS) to express support for the proposed regulation changes to list 15 mussels (false spike, golden orb, Louisiana pigtoe, Mexican fawnsfoot, Salina mucket, sandbank pocketbook, smooth pimpleback, southern hickorynut, Texas fatmucket, Texas fawnsfoot, Texas heelsplitter, Texas hornshell, Texas pigtoe, Texas pimpleback, and triangle pigtoe) as Threatened in Texas.

Founded in 1998, 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.

Freshwater mussels are considered one of the most imperiled fauna in North America, with approximately 213 of the 297 recognized taxa considered endangered, threatened or of special concern (Lydeard *et al.* 2004, NatureServe 2008, Ricciardi and Rasmussen 1999, Williams *et al.* 1993). As you are aware, all of the species proposed for listing are rare in Texas and are represented by disjunct populations, further increasing the threats against them. Precipitous population declines have been observed for all 15 of these species in Texas over the last several years.

We ask that you support the protection and listing of these mussel species in the ongoing effort to conserve and protect our remaining freshwater mussel populations of the waters of the United States.

Thank you for your considerations in this matter.

Sincerely,

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

W. Gregory Cope, Ph.D.
President, Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society

Literature Cited:

Lydeard, C., R. H. Cowie, W. F. Ponder, A. E. Bogan, P. Bouchet, S. A. Clark, K. S. Cummings, T. J. Frest, O. Gargominy, D. G. Herbert, R. Hershler, K. E. Perez, B. Roth, M. Seddon, E. E. Strong, and F. G. Thompson. 2004. The Global Decline of Nonmarine Mollusks. *BioScience* **54**(4): 321-330.

NatureServe 2008. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 6.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available at <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. Accessed: February 4, 2008.

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