



**MISSOURI
COOPERATIVE
FISH & WILDLIFE
RESEARCH UNIT**

PHD STUDENT OPPORTUNITY

Investigation of statewide multi-scale mussel habitat relationships and development of flexible mussel sampling protocols

Agency/location: Missouri Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, School of Natural Resources, University of Missouri; Columbia, Missouri <https://snr.missouri.edu/graduate-studies/>

Ideal start date: January 2023 (May 2023 possible)

Background: This project, funded by the National Park Service and Missouri Department of Conservation, seeks to conduct surveys on multiple streams throughout Missouri to increase our understanding of mussel-habitat predictive relationships, update distributional information, and develop a flexible sampling protocol that can be regionally adopted by managers. The successful applicant will gain experience working with multiple state and federal agencies on mussel conservation and ecology issues and have access to simultaneously acquired high-resolution habitat data from a companion project.

Responsibilities:

1. Develop survey protocols and implement a freshwater mussel survey of the Current and Jacks Fork Rivers within Ozark National Scenic Riverways
2. Conduct intensive mussel surveys in nine stream reaches where habitat mapping is planned and link local-scale distributions to habitat characteristics
3. Design a multi-method sampling protocol for mussels capable of implementation across a wide variety of potential habitat types
4. Summarize fish-mussel host relationships based on high quality fish and mussel data collected within target rivers

Qualifications: Master's degree in natural resources or related field, experience sampling and identifying freshwater mussels, strong written and verbal communication abilities, ability to work effectively in a team and with agency biologists, and a passion for conservation of aquatic species. Preferred qualifications include good organizational skills, and ability to develop strong quantitative skills. This is a field intensive project and will require sampling in a variety of physically demanding conditions, operating canoes and boats, and leading/coordinating hourly field technicians. This work may include snorkeling and SCUBA surveys, however SCUBA certification is not required when the student begins.

Stipend: \$25,000/year plus benefits and tuition waiver. Position will be for 4 years, but based on annual funding allocations.

Closing date: Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled, but preference will be given to applications received by September 15, 2022.

Contact: Email letter of interest, resume or CV, unofficial transcripts, and contact information for three references to Jacob Westhoff, Missouri Cooperative Research Unit, University of Missouri-Columbia. 573-884-8464; westhoffj@missouri.edu;

Please see my lab website for more details: www.aquaticdiversity.com