



## Pre-announcement for four-year PhD research assistantship: Southeastern freshwater mussel conservation

**Description:** Over 70% of US freshwater mussels are imperiled, especially within the Southeastern US biodiversity hotspot. We seek a PhD student to help develop a risk-assessment tool to assist US Fish and Wildlife Service biologists evaluate imperilment of southeastern freshwater mussels, while providing analytical support for the formal review of the Coosa Creekshell – a mussel endemic to the Coosa River system (AL, GA). The candidate will work closely with biologists from the USFWS, US Geological Survey, state agencies, and Mississippi State University while learning in-demand skills transferable to broader applications in natural resources decision-making. The project will mainly use existing distributional data, but there may be opportunities for fieldwork if supporting project objectives.

**Qualifications:** Must have completed a master's degree in natural resources, ecology, or closely related field before enrolling, and have interest in freshwater mussel conservation. Candidates should have interests in R programming, Geographic Information Systems, species distribution modeling, and verbal and written communication. The hired candidate must be willing to learn emerging species status assessment methods, and work collaboratively and independently with Drs Corey Dunn and Mike Colvin to develop dissertation chapters within the context of southeastern aquatic conservation. **We also encourage interested postdoctoral scholars to email Corey Dunn in case of future funding on related research or if this position is modified and readvertised as a postdoctoral fellowship.**

**Salary and benefits:** Four-year Graduate Research Assistantship worth \$23,500 per year + free health insurance, waived tuition, support for professional development and conference travel, new computer. Student may have opportunity for a Pathways position with USFWS.

**Start date:** Applicant review will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. The position will be readvertised July 5, 2021 if unfilled. We encourage applicants to submit materials as early as possible. Targeted start date is fall semester (August 18, 2021), but a later start date or semester may be negotiated.

**Contact:** To apply, please email with the subject line "Mussel Application" to Corey Dunn ([corey.dunn@msstate.edu](mailto:corey.dunn@msstate.edu)): (1) brief cover letter describing experiential background, career goals, and project interest; (2) resume/cv; (3) email addresses and phone numbers for three professional references; (4) updated official or unofficial transcripts. The hired candidate will eventually submit official transcripts to MSU before admission. We welcome informal inquiries.

### Helpful links:

USGS MS Cooperative F&W Research Unit: <https://www1.usgs.gov/coopunits/unit/Mississippi>  
Dept. of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture: <https://www.cfr.msstate.edu/wildlife/>