



Newsletter of the Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society
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COVER STORY

2025 Canadian Freshwater Mollusc Research Meeting

Submitted by Todd J. Morris and Kelly McNichols-O'Rourke

Great Lakes Laboratory for Fisheries & Aquatic Sciences, Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

The 6th biennial *Canadian Freshwater Mollusc Research Meeting* was held at the Canada Centre for Inland Waters in

Burlington, Ontario on November 4-6, 2025. The meeting was jointly hosted by Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Sponsors for the event included the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority and the Healthy Headwaters Lab at the University of Windsor. The 2025 meeting program included 40 platform presentations and 3 posters. For this year's hybrid meeting there were 80 in-person attendees and another 104 online for the largest group ever.



The objective of the meeting was to bring together Canadian malacologists to share past, current, and ongoing research on freshwater mollusks. Topics of discussion included: distribution and sampling, toxicology and threats, mitigation and recovery actions, and life history. Attendees were from eight Canadian provinces (BC, AB, SK, MB, ON, QC, NB, NS) and three American states (MI, NY, GA). In addition to

interested citizens, participants represented federal departments, provincial/state agencies, First Nations, academic institutions, environmental consultants, non-governmental organizations, naturalist groups, zoos, and museums. The goals of the meeting were to build relationships and promote future collaborations and research opportunities. In-person attendees gathered for a group dinner at the end of day 1 spawning many lively discussions well into the evening. A proceedings document including all abstracts from the meeting will be available soon at www.cfmrm2023.com. Abstracts from the first 5 meetings are also available on the site.

Be sure to join us for the 7th biennial CFMRM in 2027!



Contributed Articles

Submitted by Claire Waterhouse

Spring 2026 Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee Updates

For continuing education on DEI-related topics and development of the projects listed, the DEI committee holds monthly meetings that are open to all. For any inquiries or to be added to our Discord — which includes affinity group channels — please contact Sara Craft via email (sara.craft@ky.gov).

Ongoing Projects	Initiated	Purpose
FMCS website accessibility updates	2019	Make FMCS webpage accessible and inclusive for all
Participate in planning committees for upcoming symposia	2025	Planning of DEI-related content and inclusive accommodations for the 2027 joint symposium with AMS and JASM 2028
FMCS Code of Conduct updates	2023	Completed and approved by ex comm (Fall 2025), determining reporting pathways and strategies for handling potential reports
DEI Discussion sessions	2025	Devote committee meeting time to discussions which offer perspectives and strategies for advancing DEI related learning and work within the society
CASS DEIJA work – Safety officer trainings	2025	Discussions and planning for in-person trainings (targeting JASM 2028) for FMCS representatives to be certified safety officers and points of contact at symposia
CASS DEIJA work – new member recruitment	2026	Discussions around how to market FMCS to new members (students and young professionals), will provide new materials for CASS booths at symposia and points of contact within FMCS for prospective members

Submitted by Amanda Chambers

Guide to photographing freshwater mussels (family: Unionidae) for species identification

Introduction

Accurate identification of freshwater mussels (Unionidae) is frequently challenging due to their often subtle and variable morphology. Unlike many aquatic taxa, freshwater mussels possess few distinct diagnostic features or countable structures, requiring evaluation of multiple traits in tandem (e.g., shell shape, beak and disk sculpture, nacre coloration, hinge teeth). This difficulty is compounded by the prevalence of sexual dimorphism and substantial intraspecific morphological variation that can occur both within and among watersheds.

In the absence of a trained malacologist, or when uncertain specimens are encountered, photographic documentation may provide the only practical means of retaining a verifiable voucher. Standardized, high-quality images of live and dead specimens can improve identification accuracy and the reliability of occurrence records. This is especially important amid ongoing mussel declines, as citizen scientists and amateur malacologists are playing an increasing role in documenting species distributions in light of limited agency capacity.

Clear, consistent guidance for photographing mussels will strengthen species documentation, improve distribution data, and support conservation efforts.

Anatomy

When capturing photographs for species identification, it is important to be familiar with the basic external and internal anatomy of freshwater mussel shells (Figure 1).

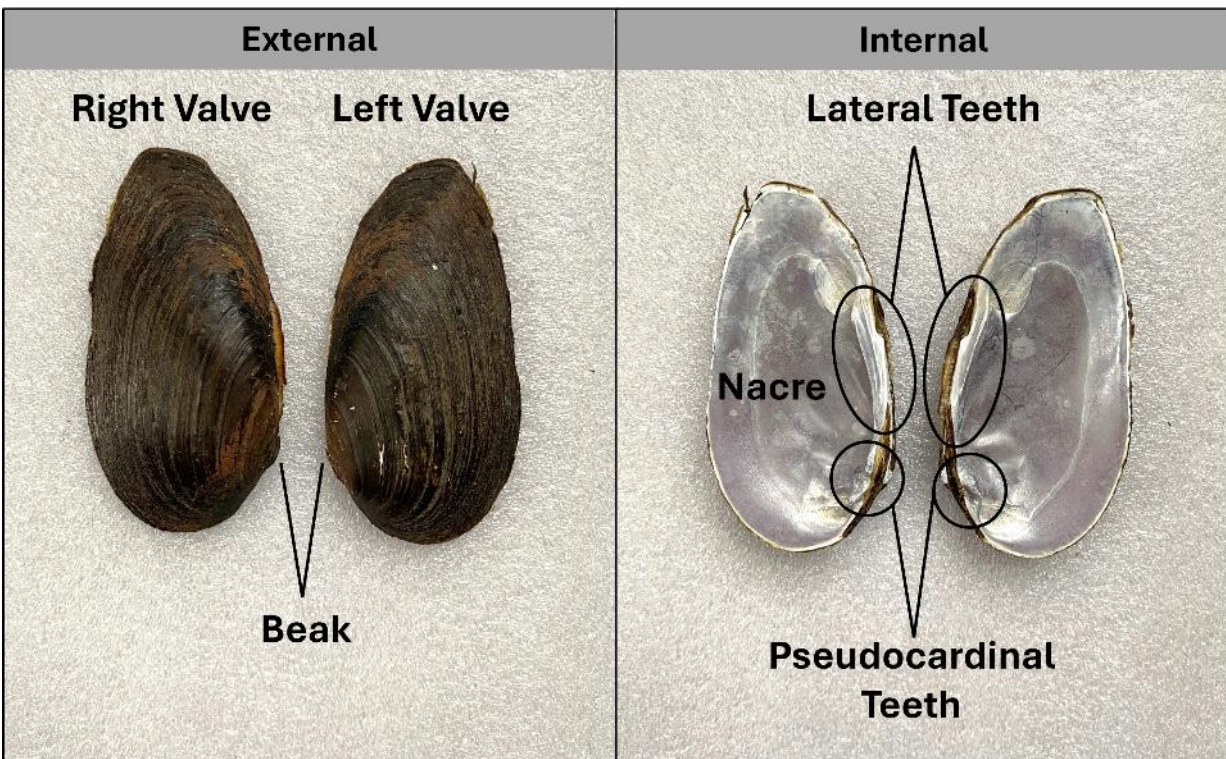


Figure 1: External and internal anatomical features of freshwater mussel shells.

At a minimum, photographs should be taken of the following structures:

- Beak
- Valves
- Internal features - shell only

Required Photographs

Beak

The beak can be highly diagnostic but is often eroded, obscured by algae, or colonized by other organisms, and can be difficult to capture clearly. It is also easy for the photographer's fingers to become the focal point of the image rather than the beak itself.

- Ensure images of the beak are sharply focused (Figure 2; area within the red square).
- Review photographs before releasing the mussel to confirm image quality.



Figure 2: Photograph of the beak of a Spike (*Eurynia dilatata*). Beak sculpture is highlighted within the red square.

Valves

Photographs of the valves are intended to capture the overall shape and outline of the mussel along with characteristics of the external surface of the shell (e.g., color, texture, rays, ridges, pustules, sulci).

- Include images of both the right and left valves (Figure 3).
- Photograph directly overhead and capture the full outline of the shell.



Figure 3: Photograph of the left valve of a Flutedshell (*Lasmigona costata*).

Internal Features - Shell Only

Photographs of internal shell features should clearly show pseudocardinal and lateral teeth (if present) and nacre coloration (Figure 4), which may be diagnostic for some species.

- Photograph directly overhead and capture the full outline of the shell.
- Never attempt to pry open live mussels to view internal features.



Figure 4: Photograph of the internal features of the right valve of a Kidneyshell (*Ptychobranthus fasciolaris*).

Best Practices

General considerations:

- Ensure photographs are clear and well-lit. Natural light works well but avoid harsh direct sunlight.
- Use a neutral, slightly contrasting background (e.g., waders). Avoid pure white or black backgrounds, which can wash out or obscure shell detail.
- Limit required photographs to one specimen. Group photographs can be added as supplemental images.

For valve photographs:

- Include an item for scale (e.g., ruler, tape measure; [Figure 3](#)).
- Try to take the photograph from directly overhead ([Figure 3](#)) and not at an angle ([Figure 5](#)).



Figure 5: Example of an angled photograph of a Round Pigtoe (*Pleurobema sintoxia*).

- Ensure the entire specimen is visible and not obscured by fingers or other objects (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Photograph of a Spike (*Eurynia dilatata*) that is partially obscured by the thumb of the collector preventing full visualization of the outer margin of the shell.

- Photograph one valve at a time so that certain features (e.g., wings, beak elevation in relation to hinge line, etc.) are more obvious and not obscured by shadows or overlap from the opposite valve (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Photograph of both valves of a Fragile Papershell (*Potamilius fragilis*). The photo limits clear visualization of the wings along the dorsal margin of the shell.

- When possible, gently remove dirt and debris from the specimen prior to photographing, while minimizing disturbance to other organisms on the mussel.

Supplemental Photographs

In some cases, it can be valuable to include additional photographs of an individual for better interpretation of shell characteristics:

Lateral Compression or Inflation

A dorsal photograph capturing the length of the entire mussel along the hinge line can help to assess the degree of lateral compression or inflation (Figure 8). Sometimes this is captured in the beak photograph for smaller specimens, but larger individuals may require a separate photograph to guarantee the entire specimen is in frame.



Figure 8: Photographs illustrating differences in inflation of a White Heelsplitter (*Pterosyna complanata*; left) compared to a Wabash Pigtoe (*Fusconaia flava*; right).

Shell Sculpture

While not required, angled photographs may aid in highlighting external features such as sulci, ridges, or pustules (Figure 9).



Figure 9: Photograph of a Mapleleaf (*Quadrula quadrula*) capturing pustules on either side of the sulcus.

Shell Thickness

Photographs of shell thickness are most easily captured in shell specimens (Figure 10), but for live individuals, it can also be beneficial to provide a qualitative description of the relative thickness (e.g., thin and brittle versus thick and robust).



Figure 10: Photograph illustrating the shell thickness of a Spike (*Eurynia dilatata*).

Multiple Individuals

Photographs consisting of multiple specimens can be useful for comparison of similar species (Figure 11), documenting relative abundance, or illustrating a variety of age classes.

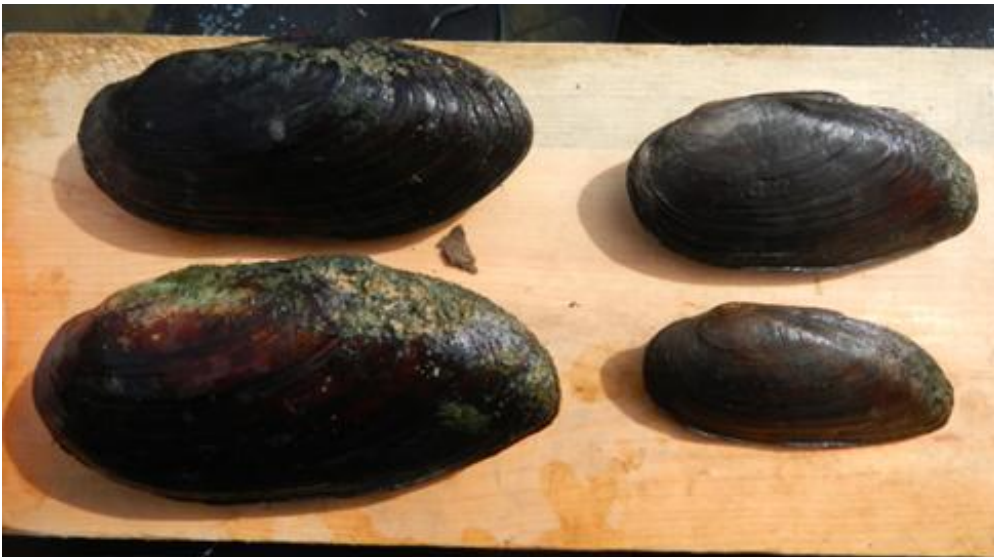


Figure 11: Photograph of two similar species; Black Sandshell (*Ligumia recta*; left) and Spike (*Eurynia dilatata*; right).

Handling and Replacing Live Mussels

Handle all specimens carefully and return live mussels to their original location as soon as possible.

If proper re-implantation techniques are not known, place the mussel on its side near the point of collection. Never insert mussels upside-down into the sediment, as this can be fatal.

In flowing systems, consider current velocity and substrate conditions. Avoid placing mussels in exposed, high-velocity areas without adequate cover.

Legal Considerations

Handling or possessing freshwater mussels often requires permits depending on jurisdiction. Scientific collection is typically regulated by state natural resource agencies and, for federally listed species, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

Always ensure appropriate authorization is obtained prior to handling mussels, including shells.

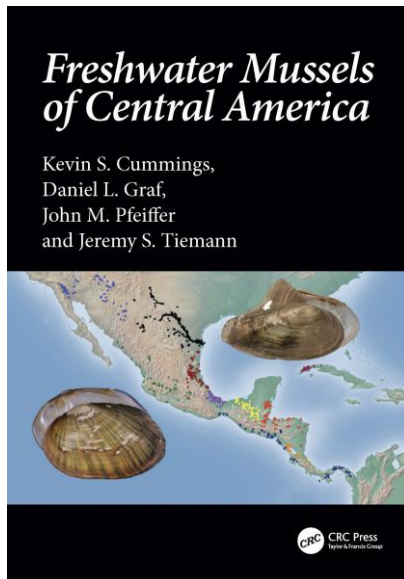
Conclusion

High-quality, standardized photographs can be exceedingly valuable for documenting freshwater mussel diversity and distribution. Because identification often relies on subtle morphological features, incomplete or low-quality images can limit the usefulness of records. Following these guidelines will improve identification accuracy, increase the long-term value of photographic vouchers, and support more reliable distribution data while minimizing impacts to live specimens.

Submitted by Kevin S. Cummings**New Publication** Freshwater Mussels of Central America.

Free pdf available through various University libraries. Hit the GET ACCESS Button to the right on the link below.

<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.1201/9781003314448/freshwater-mussels-central-america-kevin-cummings-daniel-graf-jeremy-tiemann-john-pfeiffer?context=ubx&refId=cdb75c15-3c43-48e5-8371-da8586473e7c>

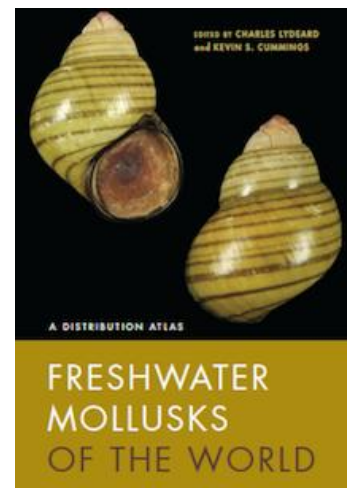


This book describes a fauna of global conservation concern and provides a framework for researchers to begin to test hypotheses regarding the evolution of freshwater mussels in Central America. Placing the Central American fauna in context with that of North and South America, the authors fill a gap in our knowledge of this endangered and largely endemic fauna. This book:

- Provides a full-color treatment of all 81 native and introduced freshwater mussel species found from the Río Grande in Texas, USA, and México to Colombia, South America
- Includes 110 distribution maps of all species

- Presents complete synonymies in every systematic species account
- Offers historical information and bios of previous workers in the field
- Cites complete literature and references on freshwater mussels in the region

Through photographs, distribution maps, and a complete list of species described and reported from Central America, *Freshwater Mussels of Central America* will inspire researchers to begin filling in the gaps regarding the systematics and ecology of freshwater mussels in Central America. It will be an essential source for conservationists, aquatic biologists, and those interested in the natural history of temperate and tropical freshwater ecosystems.



Kevin S. Cummings was born and raised in Chicago and is a lifelong resident of Illinois. He obtained B.S. and M.A. degrees in Zoology from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale and was employed as a Research Scientist and Curator of Mollusks at the Illinois Natural History Survey, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign for 38 years. He is also a Research Associate at the Field Museum in Chicago, the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh, and the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, Philadelphia.

Daniel L. Graf, after completing his B.S. from the College of Biological Sciences at the University of Minnesota (Twin Cities), Minnesota, studied Invertebrate Zoology while earning M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from Northeastern University in Boston and the University of Michigan, respectively. He was hired as Assistant Curator of Malacology at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia and then as Assistant Professor of Biology at the University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa). He currently holds the title of Professor of Aquatic Invertebrate Zoology at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

John M. Pfeiffer was born in Detroit and grew up in Oakland County, Michigan. He earned a bachelor's degree from Northern Michigan University, a master's degree from the University of Alabama, and a Ph.D. from the University of Florida. Currently, he serves as a Research Zoologist and Curator of Bivalves at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History.

Jeremy S. Tiemann is a Kansas native. He received his Bachelor of Science from the University of Kansas and his Master of Science from Emporia State University in Emporia, Kansas. He was employed as an Associate Aquatic Ecologist for the Illinois Natural History Survey at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign 2002–2025.

In Memoriam

Submitted by Todd J. Morris and Kelly McNichols-O'Rourke, Great Lakes Laboratory for Fisheries & Aquatic Sciences, Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Dr. Gerald "GERRY" L. MACKIE MEMORIAM

(July 20, 1942 – November 4, 2025)



On November 4, 2025, we were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. Gerald L. Mackie.

Gerry began his life in small town northern Ontario and then headed to Sudbury where he received his B.Sc. at Laurentian University. This was followed by a move south where he attended the University of Ottawa, and added M.Sc. and Ph.D. behind his name. In 1974, Gerry moved further south and settled at the University of Guelph where he became a Professor in the Department of Zoology (now Integrative Biology). There he dedicated his life to education and science specializing in freshwater invertebrates. Throughout his career he inspired countless students with his knowledge, passion, and inclusivity.

Gerry worked on freshwater invertebrates, with an emphasis on molluscs, for over 40 years. To many, he was "the" Canadian expert. Always eager to teach and share his knowledge, he supervised 29 post-graduate students (M.Sc. or Ph.D.) and was on the supervisory committee for over 50 more - many of whom remain active in the malacological community today. He authored over 150 peer-reviewed journal articles, authored or co-authored five books, 15 book chapters, 25 peer-reviewed conference proceedings as well as many technical and government publications. Those working across Canada will be familiar with "the Mackie protocol" for relocating freshwater mussels. In 1990, while continuing to work as a professor at the University, he formed Mackie & Associates Water Systems Analysts Inc. (later becoming Water Systems Analysts). This consulting company first focused on various research studies to determine if and how the invasive Zebra Mussel could be controlled and later expanded to risk assessments for invasive molluscs as well as relocating and monitoring freshwater mussel species at risk. From 1995 to 2006 and again from 2011 to 2014, Gerry was co-chair of the Mollusc Species Specialist Subcommittee (SSC) for the Committee on the Status of Endangered

Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). In 2009, he was awarded the Life-time Achievement Award from the Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society.

While his accomplishments are many and he was world renowned for his knowledge and expertise on freshwater invertebrates, he was first and foremost, a man known for his love of family, kindness, humour, and his easy-going nature. He was a teacher, a mentor, and most of all a friend. The “Mackie Lab” legacy runs deep through today’s Canadian malacological community.

Gerry, you will be missed, but we will carry on your legacy with the love and passion you shared with all of us.

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Ellipsaria is posted on the FMCS website twice a year: with a Spring issue in May, and a Fall issue in October of each year. The newsletter routinely includes Society news, meeting notices, pertinent announcements, and informal articles about ongoing research concerning freshwater mollusks and their habitats. Anyone may submit material for inclusion in *Ellipsaria* and all issues are accessible to anyone on the FMCS website (<http://molluskconservation.org>).

Articles contributed to *Ellipsaria* should be preliminary or initial observations of note (e.g., natural history observations, meaningful new distribution records, interesting finds, etc.) concerning freshwater mollusks, their habitats, and/or their conservation. Articles that include quantitative analyses, draw conclusions based on analyses, or propose taxonomic revisions should not be submitted to *Ellipsaria* and, instead, should be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal such as *FMBC*. Please limit the length of contributed articles to about one page of text (i.e., excluding pertinent tables, figures, and references).

Information for possible inclusion in *Ellipsaria* should be submitted via e-mail to the editors, Bob Anderson and Don Hubbs, at Ellipsaria@gmail.com. Contributions may be submitted at any time but are due by the 15th of the month before each issue is posted. MSWord is optimal for text, but the editor may be able to convert other formats. Graphics should be in a form that can be manipulated using Photoshop. Note that submissions are not peer-reviewed but are edited for clarity and checked for appropriateness for posting in this freshwater mollusk newsletter. Feel free to contact the editor with questions about possible submissions or transmission concerns.

FMCS Committees and Their Chairs/Co-chairs

Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society

Spring 2026 Board Meeting

April 9th, 2026

10AM CST

Minutes

Call to order, roll call for attendance, and declaration of quorum – Amy Maynard at 10:03AM CST.

In attendance: Amy Maynard, Megan Bradley, Dave Berg, Alan Christian, Traci Dubose, Emilie Blevins, Sara Craft, Sarah Douglass, Nathan Eckert, Michael Gangloff, Matt Johnson, Jonathan Lopez, Madison Mueller, Caryn Vaughn, Heidi Dunn, John Harris, Brian Carlson, Lisie Kitchel, Jamie Bucholz, Sean Keogh, Kate Holcomb, Becca Winterringer, Paul Callomon
A quorum was declared.

Approval of the fall board meeting minutes- A motion was made by Heidi Dunn to accept the Fall 2025 meeting minutes as reported, seconded by Megan Bradley, the motion carried.

Treasurer's Report- Alan Christian (see attached report): Board review and approval of documents needed

Secretary's Report- Traci DuBose (see attached report)

Old Business

2026 Portugal Meeting- Dave Berg: Nothing new to report. Amy Maynard notes the first announcement was sent out and FMCS will advertise the meeting on social media.

2027 Symposium (Philadelphia)- Paul Callomon and Alan Christian: Planning is extraordinarily ahead of time. The venue is secured and schedule drafted. There is a full week planned, with the FMCS workshop on to Monday, themed sessions, joint banquet; and keynote speaker. They are discussing field trips on Saturday.

CASS Activities- Megan Bradley: Preparation for the next JASM has begun. Activities have been slowed due to uncertainties in funding.

FMCS Website Update- Amy Maynard for Nora Straquadine: Amy showed some screenshots of the new website. Sophie Binder isn't ready for input, but she will work with the website committee for improvements. Sophie asked for a WordPress pro membership, and Amy requested justification and invoice to financial committee; the cost is relatively small (<\$100). Emilie Blevins noted in the chat that the subheading should be mollusks, people, freshwater.

Treasurer succession discussion- Matt Johnson and Amy Maynard: Matt presented three options to formally incorporate treasurer succession into FMCS bylaws and operating procedures. Multiple people expressed support for creating a non-voting past-treasurer position, where the out-going treasurer provides guidance and support for a defined period after the election of a new treasurer. Alan Christian was supportive of a past treasurer position as the person who would be most affected by this decision. Discussion on needed changes to

the operations manual and potentially the bylaws occurred. The discussion is tabled for next meeting to provide time to identify changes to FMCS materials and specific timelines needed for financial duties.

New Business

Financial document approval- Amy Maynard: Given the Treasurer's report and the documents that were circulated with the agenda (990 tax form, balance sheet, and profit and loss statement), the board needs to approve the documents. Heidi Dunn motions to approve the financial documents and Sarah Craft seconds. All approved.

Committee Reports

Functional Committees:

National Strategy- Sarah Douglass (report enclosed)

Outreach- Madi Mueller: The committee is currently transitioning leadership.

Awards (report enclosed)

Regional Associations

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion- Sarah Craft (report enclosed)

Elections- Matt Johnson (report enclosed)

Finance- Heidi Dunn for Brian Watson: The committee met and approved financial documents. Alan Christian has been doing a great job.

Professional Development- Becca Winterringer (report enclosed): She was pleased with amount of first round submissions for the Mollusk Professional Certification Program; the number of submissions was right-sized for capacity. The process went smoothly. The next steps are to socialize and promote the professional certification program.

Publications- Caryn Vaughn (report enclosed): A big thank you to two AE stepping down. With new associate editors, there are now nine total associate editors. Megan Bradley asked about journal costs, and Caryn Vaughn replied they were fine. Amy Maynard notes that *Ellipsaria* is trying to move to an editorial board-based model still led by Bob Anderson and Don Hubbs.

Technical Committees:

Conservation and Restoration- Nathan Eckert: Work continues on the facility list, and they are adding propagated species as well. The committee is accepting volunteers for the next update to the kill book. Contact Nathan Eckert if interested in helping.

Environmental Quality and Advocacy- Michael Gangloff and Emilie Blevins: The committee is working on summarizing survey responses. They received ~ 23 responses and had good geographic representation. FMCS will send out another reminder email and extend deadline to end of April. The committee put together a letter to support restoration in Meramec watershed (Big River) and reviewed a CASS-associated WOTUS letter too. There is discussion about emergent impacts to mussels (e.g., data center construction and operation). Emilie offers to be point of contact for the issue as a committee leader. Amy Maynard mentions using the webpage to direct people to EQA.

Field Studies and Ecosystem Services- Jonathan Lopez (report enclosed)

Genetics (report enclosed)

Mollusk Status and Distribution

Common and Scientific Names subcommittee- John Harris (report enclosed): Paul Johnson and John Harris rotating off as committee leaders. Their last action will be to publish names in FMBC, and they are planning to submit the manuscript by June. They are turning over committee leadership to John Pfeiffer and Nathan Whelan.

Ad Hoc Committees

Guidelines and Techniques- Lisie Kitchel: The committee is accumulating guidelines, which they will post to the new website. They are having discussions on how to handle techniques and concerns about authority. Heidi Dunn suggests a survey to estimate member needs and products.

Website Update (report enclosed)

Motion to Adjourn – Michael Gangloff motions to adjourn the meeting. Heidi Dunn seconds. The motion carries, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:19AM CST.

Submitted by
Traci DuBose
Secretary

FMCS ExCom & Committee Reports**Spring 2026****Treasurer's Report**

Our 2025 Balance Sheet showed the Society's total liabilities and equity to be \$131,360.98. On December 31, 2025, our assets included \$51,221.49 in a general investment Bank of America CD, a student and early career Bank of America CD of \$9,096.65, a Bank of America savings of \$4,440.77, and a Bank of America checking of \$66,602.07. In terms of equity, we had retained earnings of \$89,215.90 and a net income of \$42,145.08.

Our 2025 Profit and Loss Statement showed a net income of \$42,145.08, with total income of \$198,650.05 and total expenses of \$156,504.78, after adjusting for cashing in and reinvesting the general and student/early career travel Bank of America CDs from the checking account. We had the following income by first-level categories: Fundraising: \$9253.00; Financial Refunds & Adjustments: \$4.99; Merchandise Sales: \$3,171.49; Refunds: \$4.38; Donations: \$2,473.00; Interest Income: \$646.35; Memberships: \$22,707.00; Workshops and Symposium: \$160,389.84. We had the following first-level expenses: Initiatives: \$2659.67; Postage, Printing, Shipping: \$617.11; Independent Contractors: \$3,420.00; Corporation Service Fees: \$2,899.90; Financial Service Fees: \$7,965.50; Office Expenses: \$2,030.88; Tax Expenses: \$114.69; Symposium & Workshop: \$128,675.50; Walkerana/FMBC: \$8,121.53.

The Finance and Executive committees approved the balance sheet, profit and loss statement, and a draft of the 2025 FMCS 990EZ IRS submission form. After board review and approval of these documents, the 2025 990ES will be submitted to the IRS by the required May 15, 2026, deadline.

Secretary's Report

As of April 10, 2026, we currently have 380 active members, 24% of which are student or retiree members, and 716 renewal overdue members. This number is 73 less memberships than in 2025. I plan to email the FMCS contact list in effort to increase membership. The email will highlight the benefits of renewing membership of FMCS and how FMCS serves its members. If you are having trouble accessing your membership profile (email, password, etc.) or suspect you are not receiving FMCS emails (we typically send ~ 1 a month), please contact Traci DuBose.

FUNCTIONAL COMMITTEES

Awards

Awards committee has not met since the last meeting. However, we are planning to start helping with the 2027 Symposium soon. We have a timeline of reminders established for the pre-meeting periods. These usually go out as email reminders (from Amy and on Unio) and as an addition to *Ellipsaria* in the Fall 2026. Awards and reminders include: Student Travel Awards (Travel / Welcome / Early Career), Professional Awards (Clinch, Lifetime, Meritorious, President), Student Awards (best poster/best platform), Request for Judges

Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Report

Membership: Sara Craft (KY DOW; chair) + recent active members: Jer Pin Chong, Mark Hove, Sean Keogh, Xenia Rangaswami, Claire Waterhouse, Daelyn Woolnough + many others on our mailing list

The last committee meeting via Teams was 12 February 2026. The next meeting was in April 2026. We meet approximately monthly via Teams. All are welcome.

Committee Tasks (2025/26):

Keep DEI issues on the forefront

- Participation in CASS DEIJ work group
 - o Claire, Mark, Daelyn, and Sara have attended CASS DEIJ work group meetings
 - Planning for DEI at JASM 2028
 - Discussions on how best to enforce/support Code of Conduct at meetings
 - Presentations by Stephanie Goodwin (president of Inclusion Works) and Susan Park (executive director of Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation)
- Planning of DEI-related content for 2027 joint symposium with AMS
 - o Sara, Mark and Claire have joined planning group for 2027 meeting
 - Joint symposium will include DEI committee meeting and panel, plenary session, and highlighted DEI talks

Foster a welcoming environment for FMCS members and event participants

- Disburse travel awards to FMCS symposia (points of contact - Mark Hove and Chantelle Rondel)
 - o Will occur again at 2027 symposium
- Update Code of Conduct and establish system for reporting/addressing instances of misconduct
 - o New Code of Conduct approved at last board meeting
 - o Ongoing development of means to support/enforce at meetings and beyond
- Continue topical discussions as time allows
 - o Next topical discussion: supporting students/early career colleagues in an uncertain job market

Election Committee Report

The Election Committee has no updates to report since the Fall board meeting. We anticipate that the committee will begin soliciting candidates in Fall 2026 for the 2027 officer elections.

Finance Committee Report

The Finance Committee has met twice since the fall Board meeting on November 5, 2025. On January 15, the full Committee met virtually with the Board to review the 2025 balance sheet and profit and loss statement. Alan Christian provided a review of both documents and answered questions from the Committee and Board. The Finance Committee and Board both voted unanimously to accept the 2025 balance sheet and profit and loss statement. This allowed Alan to start the 990-tax form, which is due May 15. On February 24, five of the seven Finance Committee members met virtually with Alan to review the 990-tax form. Since this was the 1st time some of the Committee members reviewed a 990, Alan provided a review of how the figures were calculated and answered questions from the Committee. Alan also noted that a couple minor corrections and one addition had to be made to the 2025 balance sheet and profit and loss statement. The Finance Committee voted unanimously to approve the 990-tax form. The two Committee members that could attend the meeting were sent a summary of the meeting, and one member voted by e-mail to approve the 990, with the 2nd member abstaining. The 990 was to be sent to the Board for review and approval and submission to the IRS. Alan also provided the Finance Committee Chair with the draft 2026 budget, which was discussed at the February meeting. The budget is based on average revenue and expenses from 2022-2025. The draft budget was forwarded to the Committee.

National Strategy Committee Report

Chair: Sarah Douglass
Co-chair: Kate Holcomb
Secretary: Becca Winterringer

The Committee held its first meeting January 20, 2026 to begin coordinating efforts for developing the 2030 National Strategy document. In March, the committee chairs and secretary conducted interviews with 2016 Strategy authors to better understand the process that was used to agree upon the purpose and issues for the 2016 Strategy. In April or May, a

poll will be sent to FMCS members to determine the purpose, audience, and issues for the 2030 Strategy.

Professional Development Committee Report

The Professional Development Committee (hereafter Committee) worked through the fall and winter of 2025 and early 2026 reviewing new applications for the 2026 applicant pool for the Mollusk Professional Certification Program. In total we received 21 applications from qualified applicants by the December deadline, and the Committee is actively finishing up review for these applicants. We expect all applicants will have their reviews finalized in the coming weeks. We hope to have a finalized list naming the newly certified mollusk professionals for the next issue of *Ellipsaria* and then begin the first call for applications for the 2027 applicant pool where submission can begin in the summer and fall of 2026. Please contact David Foltz or Nathan Click if you are interested in becoming a member of the Committee or have questions regarding the application process.

Publications Committee Report

The spring issue will be published in April and contains two articles. The fall 2026 issue is expected to have 3-4 articles. In order to relieve some of the burden on our current Associate Editors, Caryn and Ani put out a call to the FMCS membership. Five qualified candidates were selected from the respondents and will be onboarded in spring/summer 2026. This greatly expands FMBC's capacity to handle manuscripts and broadens the topics of expertise on the editorial board. Additionally, the FMBC board would like to thank David Berg and Daniel Hornbach for many years of service as they transition out of the role of Associate Editor.

Regional Associations

No written update submitted.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

Environmental Quality and Advocacy

Michael Gangloff and Emilie Blevins

Activities in Last Quarter

During the last quarter the EQA Committee met once to discuss priorities and future activities. After some discussion we decided to commission a survey of the membership to get a better sense of what our committee's priorities should be. The survey was vetted by the ExCom and distributed to membership via email on 5 February 2026. The survey closed at the end of March 2026, and we had 23 respondents. The survey deadline was extended another two weeks with an additional reminder sent to membership in an effort to increase the response rate. A full analysis of the survey results will be completed and shared.

We were also asked by the Missouri Department of Conservation to provide a letter to the Army Corps of Engineers in support of funding restoration in the Meremac River Drainage in Missouri and targeted in the Big River watershed. The Big River watershed has been significantly impacted by a legacy of lead and zinc mining in this region of Missouri. A letter was drafted by the committee using the template provided by MoDNR and submitted on 18

March 2026. A copy of that letter is available upon request. The committee is available to provide similar letters upon request and review.

FMCS also signed onto a letter in support of WOTUS that was sent to the ACOE and EPA in March 2026. The EQA and the ExCom reviewed the letter prior to its signing.

Future Endeavors

We are planning to write up a summary of the EQA survey and possibly prepare a note for Ellipsaria. However, the low number of members responding to the poll is potentially a limiting factor.

Field Studies and Ecosystems

The Field Studies and Ecosystem Services Committee is actively working with the FMBC Editorial Board to institute a Data Availability Policy for the journal. After incorporating feedback from a fall meeting between the Editorial Board and the FSES chair, we have submitted a revised draft of the proposed policy to Editor-in-Chief Caryn Vaughn and Managing Editor Ani Escobar. The revised version includes a motivation/justification for data sharing, explicit options for authors who may have data sharing restrictions, and an example data sheet to exemplify appropriate format.

Genetics

Nothing to report at this time.

Mollusk Status and Distribution

No written update submitted.

Common and Scientific Names Subcommittee

Gastropod Chair: Nathan Whelan

Bivalve Chair: John Pfeiffer

The names committees are transitioning to new leadership as Paul Johnson's and John Harris's terms as chairs have ended. Coinciding with the end of the chairs' terms, each names subcommittee is tasked with writing a manuscript that summarizes name changes over the chairs' terms. Manuscripts summarizing name changes since the establishment of each committee are being finalized for submission to FMBC. The full Common and Scientific Names Subcommittees will be meeting in 2027 to coincide with the FMCS Symposium. A call for name change petitions will be submitted to Fall 2026 Ellipsaria.

AD HOC COMMITTEES

Website Update Committee Report

After several website discussions, our web designer Sophie has been working on updating and moving our site to WordPress. The website working group has configured a site tree aiming to 1) simplify, 2) improve navigation, and 3) preserve the history of our current website. Committee groups can expect to be contacted by a member of the working group in the coming months for committee specific updates. If any board members have photos of field sites or river landscapes that would work as cover photos do not hesitate to send them to Nora (nrstraquadine@gmail.com). Additionally, the colors used are being run through WCAG 2.2

AAA accessibility checkers. No photos of the website are available at this time due to changes in font/color discussions.

The joint AMS/FMCS symposium information forum 2027 will be displayed on our new site with an overview site on AMS that links to ours. This will help to decrease confusion if information needs to be updated. We hope to have the website finished by Fall/end of 2026.

Functional Committees

Awards

Curt Elderkin - elderkin@tcnj.edu
 David Hayes - david.hayes@eku.edu
 Susan Oetker - susan_oetker@fws.gov

Chapters

Emilie Blevins - emilie.blevins@xerces.org
 Manuel Lopes-Lima - manuelpmlopeslima@gmail.com

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Sara Craft - sara.craft@ky.gov

Elections

Matt Johnson - matthew_s_johnson@fws.gov
 Brian Carlson - brian.carlson85@gmail.com

Finance

Heidi Dunn - HeidiDunn005@gmail.com
 Brian Watson - brian.watson@dwr.virginia.gov

National Strategy

[vacant at present]

Outreach

Madi Polera - mpolera2@ncus.edu

National Strategy

Sarah Douglas - sabales@illinois.edu
 Kate Holcomb - kathryn.holcomb@state.mn.us
 Becca Winterringer - beccawint6@gmail.com

Professional Development

David Foltz dafoltz@edge-es.com
 Nathan Click - nathan.click@ky.gov

Publications

[vacant at present]

Symposia and Workshops

David Berg - bergdj@miamioh.edu

Ad Hoc Committees

Guidelines & Techniques

Lisie Kitchel- Lisie.Kitchel@wisconsin.gov

Webpage

Nora Straquadine - nrstraquadine@gmail.com

Technical Committees

Common And Scientific Names

Paul Johnson Gastropod sub-committee
paul.johnson@dcnr.alabama.gov
 John Harris Bivalve sub-committee
Omibob1@gmail.com

Conservation and Restoration

Tyler Hern - tyler_hern@fws.gov
 Nathan Eckert - nathan_eckert@fws.gov
 Jesse Weinzinger - jesse.weinzinger@wisconsin.gov

Environmental Quality and Advocacy

Michael Gangloff - elliptio@gmail.com
 Emilie Blevins - emilie.blevins@xerces.org

Field Studies and Ecosystems

Jonathan Lopez- jlopez2411@gmail.com

Genetics

Jamie Bucholz - jbucholz@proton.me
 Kentaro Inoue - kinoue@sheddaquarium.org
 Sean Keogh - keogh026@umn.edu

Mollusk Status and Distribution

Jason Wisniewski - jason.wisniewski@tn.gov

Wesley Daniel - wdaniel@usgs.gov

Parting Shots

Submitted by Brittany Bajo-Walker

The Comeback of a Rarity, *Theliderma sparsa*!

Before



After



In a unified effort to conserve an endangered species, the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA), Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VDWR), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) joined forces to reintroduce one of the rarest freshwater mussels in North America—the Appalachian Rockshell (*Theliderma sparsa*).

This federally endangered species was historically found in only a few locations in the Clinch and Powell Rivers, but wild populations have been nearly undetectable over the last decade. VDWR's Aquatic Wildlife Conservation Center (AWCC) has had great success in propagating, releasing and monitoring *T. sparsa* over the last few years. Due to the great success with Virginia's augmented population, the decision was made to expand the effort and release *T. sparsa* back into Tennessee's side of the Upper Tennessee River Basin. In September of 2025, AWCC continued to support this species' recovery by providing 50 pit-tagged individuals to TWRA for release at two locations, one on the Powell River and one on the Clinch River in hopes that new populations could be established.

This past month (May, 2026), representatives from TWRA, VDWR, and TVA all returned back to the sites in hopes of recovering the individuals and obtaining updated growth measurements. Excitingly, of the 25 individuals released in the Powell River, 22 individuals were recovered alive. As for the Clinch River, 24 of the 25 individuals were located- all alive and well with an average of 4 mm of growth across both sites! Both sites seem to be very stable as the individuals were located almost exactly where they were released 6 months ago.

This reintroduction effort highlights the strength of partnership-driven conservation and truly celebrates years of field effort and propagation work! Thank you to the partners who are continuing to bring *T. sparsa* back from the brink of extinction!

If you would like to contribute a freshwater mollusk-related image for use as a **Parting Shot** in *Ellipsaria*, e-mail the picture, informative caption, and photo credit to Ellipsaria@gmail.com.

Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society Newsletter

