

Dear WV Approved Mussel Surveyors,

I hope the 2022 field season treats you well and the weather complies. While I hoped to provide you with a new edition of the protocol at this time, it is still in review at our state office in Charleston. The 2022 protocol will be sent out to all of you when it's been approved. Until that time continue to use the 2020 mussel protocols. The most relevant proposed changes are to the large group 4 dredging projects in which the lateral buffers will now be project specific rather than 150m as a default. In projects involving group 4 dredging prior to the issuance of the new protocol, please contact me before submission so we can discuss. We also will be utilizing the FMCS taxa list moving forward for current scientific names.

Please note a frequent issue last year was failure to notify the agencies as to when you will be in the field, we have gotten calls from concerned citizens the past two years wondering what people are doing out in the river with all this equipment, I need to know if you're who they are speaking of when I get those messages from district offices.. Also note, there are additional contacts noted in your scientific collecting permit that you should also notify, such as the local Natural Resources Police Officer and/or District Office.

The past two year we have waved the continuing education requirement due to COVID and issues being able to access reference collections. The requirements will come back into effect this year and moving forward. The yearly reporting for calendar year 2022 continuing education is due February 15, 2023. The WVDNR reference collection in Elkins is available to visit, and we'd also like your help getting some more voucher specimens. If during your surveys you come along well preserved weathered or fresh dead specimens of the species listed below please hold on to them for us. An example museum tag has been included to display the information needed.

*Before any federally listed species can be sent in the mail or transferred, approval from the relevant USFWS field office is required.

Wanted species:

All federally listed species*

Alasmidonta marginata

Alasmidonta varricosa

Regiaia ebenus

Lampsilis radiata

Lampsilis ovata

Lampsilis fasciola

Lampsilis teres

Lasmigona compressa

Lasmigona subviridis

Obovaria olivaria

Potamilus ohioensis

Pyganodon cataracta

Cyclonaias nodulata

Simpsonaias ambigua

Toxoplasma parvum

Truncilla donaciformis

Uniomerus tetralasmus

Utterbackiana suborbiculata

The digital database entry form required to be used last year has been overall a success. A few notes from last year's submissions as we learn along with you how to best implement the new system. In 2022 we will require each company, rather than surveyor, to send a single database entry form including all projects from 2022, this will help us avoid duplicates in our data entry. For projects involving salvage, please include separate "events" under the same "project" detailing those efforts. This would include separate events for the survey, relocation area survey, and salvage effort.

Our website continues to give us issues relating to the file types we are able to post, please find all of the relevant WVDNR mussel documents attached along with this email. If you have any mussel related questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me directly.

Thank you all for the mussel conservation work you do in West Virginia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin Eliason".

Kevin Eliason
Mussel Program Leader
West Virginia Division of Natural Resources
Wildlife Resources Section

CC: Barbara Sargent, Danny Bennett, Kieran O'Malley, Scott Warner