



Freshwater Mussels in the Skykomish



Skykomish River Side-Channel
(September 20, 2018)



Western Pearlshell Mussel (*Margaritifera falcata*)

A late summer 2018 habitat survey of Skykomish River side-channels found western pearlshell mussels. This is a rare and exciting find as the population of this mussel family has declined so much that it is nearing threatened status.

Western pearlshell mussels:

- Filter impurities and provide nutrients for other stream critters.
- Can live for 60 or 70 years and some can reach 100 years.
- Are known to be part of Western streams for at least 2000 years.
- Were a food source for indigenous tribes.
- Eggs hatch into microscopic infants that need to attach themselves to the gills or fins of a passing fish.



Mussel on the move in Skykomish side-channel.



Mussels embedded in filamentous algae in Skykomish side-channel.



Western Pearlshell mussels embedded in fine particulates in Skykomish side-channel.