

Research Directions

Office of Research Services

FRESHWATER MUSSELS IN THE HAWKESBURY-NEPEAN



Associate Professor Shelley Burgin, from the School of Science, Food and Horticulture, is undertaking a survey of the Hawkesbury-Nepean catchment. This has been made possible by funding from Hawkesbury City Council, NSW Fisheries and Penrith Lakes Corporation. The aim of the collaboration is to determine the habitat requirements of local freshwater mussel species.

Oral histories from indigenous people of the Hawkesbury-Nepean indicate freshwater mussels were historically widespread and abundant throughout the river system. Despite the past abundance virtually nothing is known of the ecology and habitat requirements of local endemic species. The information obtained will assist the river managers in determining what the mussels need to survive.

The research into the mussels' habitat needs will also enable researchers to learn more about how they contribute to the health of the river system. "Mussels are filter-feeders that contribute to the removal of suspended particles and nutrients from the water column" Prof Burgin said. "Freshwater mussels could act as "scrubbers" in the local wetlands, contributing to clearer, cleaner water".

Funding for the project has been set at \$42,590.

Project title: *Ecology and habitat requirements for freshwater mussels.*

Web Sites:

<http://www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au>
<http://www.uws.edu.au/about/acadorg/cste>
<http://www.fisheries.nsw.gov.au/>
<http://www.penrithlakes.com.au/>

Contact Details

A/Prof. Shelley Burgin

s.burgin@uws.edu.au