

Re-establishment of the Endangered Banff Springs Snail into one of its Formerly Occupied Habitats

D.A.W. Lepitzki¹ and C. Pacas²

¹Wildlife Systems Research, PO Box 1311, Banff, AB T1L 1B3, < lepitzki@telusplanet.net >, Ph: 403-762-0864. ²Aquatics Specialist, Banff National Park, PO Box 900, Banff, AB T1L 1K2, < charlie.pacas@pc.gc.ca >, 403-762-141.

The endemic, endangered Banff springs snail (*Physella johnsoni*) is a small mollusc confined to 5 thermal springs in Banff National Park (see related abstracts by same authors). One of the recovery actions identified in the Parks Canada approved Resource Management Plan for the species' recovery is to re-establish populations into habitats they formerly occupied. Before such a re-establishment could occur, an environmental assessment had to be approved, habitat had to be secured from human-disturbance, a source of snails had to be confirmed, and critical habitat components i.e. water flow had to be ensured. In November 2002, 50 snails were translocated from one thermal spring to another. Until August 2003, the re-established population at Upper Middle Springs was monitored weekly and a total population count was obtained; thereafter, it has been monitored once every 4 weeks. Initially, the population declined to a low of 16 snails; however, on Christmas Eve, newly hatched snails began to be observed. Since then, the Upper Middle Spring population has undergone an increase of over 2 orders of magnitude. In addition to the latest population information, this poster will be accompanied by a Quick-Time video of the Upper Middle Springs, an area with restricted human access, and television broadcasts of the snail re-establishment.