Freshwater mussels: shaping the streams they live in

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Bivalve Basics

- filter feeders
- limited vertical and horizontal movements
- very long life span
- biomass can exceed other aquatic macroinvertebrates by order of magnitude
- most imperiled group in North America
Improve water quality & clarity

- visibility up to 20X greater near dense beds
- 1 mussel can filter 20-70 L/day
Increase substrate complexity
Help stabilize substrate
Increase bioturbation

M. falcata, Pistol River OR; Pat Burns, ODFW
nutrient processing & bioavailability

remove particles from water column, transfer to substrate as biodeposits
“...pearly mussels still hold secrets that await discovery...”

Strayer, 2004