

## A SNAIL'S TALE: UPDATES ON THE KANAB AMBERSNAIL PROJECT

by Jeff Sorensen, AZ Game & Fish Dept, Phoenix

This is an update on the recovery actions, monitoring, and research on the endangered Kanab ambersnail in Grand Canyon National Park. Agency partners helped mitigate habitat loss for the snail at Vaseys Paradise, for both the November 2004 Beach Habitat-Building Flow and the March 2008 High Flow Experiment. The 2004 mitigation effort succeeded in fully recovering ambersnail habitat in less than 6 months, as opposed to the 2.5 years for that habitat to recover from the 1996 high flow. Unfortunately, snail counts during over the past several years are down, not only at Vaseys, but also at the translocated population at Upper Elves Chasm. Lower counts at the Elves Chasm site appear to be attributable to drier habitat and reduced springflow at their release area. However, there is some good news...recent findings from a USGS-funded study of ambersnail genetics and morphology indicate that the Vaseys population along with 11 other populations of ambersnails in southern Utah and northern Arizona are members of the same species. Additional specimens of ambersnails from the northwestern USA and Canada were also tested—the initial results indicate that our ambersnails are more widespread across North America. If “Kanab ambersnail” no longer appears to be a valid subspecies, but instead is the more common nominate species, then the interagency working group may consider petitioning for de-listing based on these new findings, once they have been peer-reviewed and published.