

# BC Biologist's Research on Snails Published in Journal

Bainbridge College biologist Dr. Elizabeth L. Mihalcik's article on Mexico's desert land snails appears in the current edition of the *Bulletin of the Florida Museum of Natural History*. The entire 61-page publication that came off the press in mid-December is devoted to the article.

Her work on snails of Morelas, Puebla, Oaxaca and Veracruz, Mexico, includes many years of field collecting and museum work with her coauthor, Dr. Fred Thompson, curator of mollusks at Florida Museum of Natural History (FLMNH) at the University of Florida.

The journal article describes 14 new species. Specimens of those species are at the research collection of FLMNH's Mollusk Division, and duplicate specimens are under the auspices of the coauthors' colleague, Dr. Alfonso Correa-Sándavol, at Instituto Tecnología de Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, Mexico.



**BC biologist Dr. Elizabeth Mihalcik devotes years to study Mexico's desert land snails.**

Dr. Mihalcik became interested in snails because of Dr. Thompson, her mentor who noted the need for more people in this field of study. Her keen ability to notice subtle changes and to find small objects are skills vital to the work. She began working on this group of snails in her last year of master's degree work at the University of Florida. She made specimen collecting trips from 1992-2003 in desert areas that required her to climb limestone hills and cliffs and hike in desert habitats.

This group of North American land snails has been recorded at sites that date to the Cretaceous deposits of about 65 million years ago. Her study included analysis of type specimens borrowed from the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, DC, Museum für Naturkunde in Hamberg Universtat zu Berlin in Germany, Senckenbergische Naturforschenden Gesellschaft in Frankfurt, Germany, and the British Museum in the United Kingdom.

The Bainbridge College professor also presented her paper discussing this work, *Mexican Holospirinae in Review*, to the American Malacological Society (AMS) in Monterey, CA, in June 2005. AMS is a scientific society that promotes scientific cooperation and friendship, enabling persons interested in malacology (the study of mollusks) to exchange ideas and techniques and to discuss recent advances in research.



**Field research for snail specimen collecting trips from 1992-2003 required Dr. Elizabeth Mihalcik of Bainbridge College to climb limestone hills and cliffs and hike in desert habitats such as in this photo she took on a trip to in the northern part of Mexico's State of Chihuahau.**

**Such research resulted in finding 14 new species, including the one in the inset photo taken by Dr. Mihalcik's co-author, Dr. Fred Thompson.**