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## ADOPT A FROG POND AND FROG FORCE! CITIZEN SCIENTISTS AT LARGE

FROG FORCE (<http://www.frogweb.gov>) is a volunteer team of kids, their parents, teachers or anyone who cares about the environment working together in the Adopt a Frog Pond Program.

You might already know that amphibians (frogs, toads, salamanders and their kin) are disappearing worldwide . . . and nobody knows why. Scientists are also worried because they are discovering frogs and toads with missing, extra or malformed limbs. The first deformed frogs were found in the summer of 1995 by middle-school students on a field trip in southern Minnesota . . . citizens just like you.

Adopt a Frog Pond is a program to gather information about the environment and habitat of amphibians nationwide. The program (<http://www.frogweb.gov/adopt.html>) was created by the Department of the Interior, the National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII) and the National Wildlife Federation.® This program uses information from amateur observers around the country, including families, school groups, volunteer organizations and others. These observers are part of Frog Force.

Whether you have a little time or a lot, there is a FROG FORCE activity that you can participate in:

- **Frog Force: Malformation Monitoring** If you like to catch frogs and toads or to spend time in wetlands and other watery places, then this is the program for you. Your task will be to collect information on amphibian malformations and to report them to NARCAM: The North American Reporting Center for Amphibian Malformities (<http://www.npwr.usgs.gov/narcam/backgrnd/backgrnd.htm>). Instructions for participating in this program are posted at: <http://www.frogweb.gov/adopt.html>
- **Frog Force: Frogwatch program** If you want to wander around in or near wetlands and learn to identify local frog and toad species by their calls, then this



program should interest you. You will need to make a commitment of two evenings per week for several consecutive months. Instructions are posted at: <http://www.frogweb.gov/adopt.html>. This program is modeled after the Toronto Zoo's Frogwatch Ontario program, so you might want to check out their site at: <http://www.cciw.ca/frogwatching/>

- **Frog Force: "Frog Notes"** Have frogs disappeared from your community or favorite vacation spot? Have frogs appeared at new locations where you

never saw or heard them before? Do you remember seeing deformed frogs before amphibian deformities became a hot topic? Tell us about it at: <http://www.frogweb.gov/adopt.html>

- **National Wildlife Federation®: Backyard Wildlife Habitat** If you would like to make your property "frog friendly" by creating breeding habitat for frogs and other amphibians, then check out this program at: <http://www.nwf.org/habitats>

The Adopt a Frog Pond Program will

- Enlist citizen help in protecting, conserving and creating amphibian breeding habitat and sites,
- Provide invaluable data to experts about the size and scope of amphibian problems around the country, and
- Raise public consciousness of environmental issues such as biodiversity and nonpoint pollution.

