



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Zoo Invites Citizens to Participate in Conservation Project

Croak, Croak. The Fort Wayne Children's Zoo invites local residents to participate in a national conservation project to gather data on frog and toad populations.

The program, called FrogWatch USA, trains volunteers to recognize the calls of frogs and toads. The volunteers then visit local ponds, streams, and wetlands to document the species they hear. The information becomes part of a national database, where it is used to track trends in amphibian populations.

"If you want to participate in a real conservation project, you don't have to travel abroad," says Zoo Volunteer Manager Kathy Terlizzi. "FrogWatch USA is a chance for you to get involved right here at home."

Frogs and toads are known as 'indicator species,' like the aquatic version of the canary in the coal mine. They are often the first to show the effects of pollution and habitat loss. Frog and toad numbers are in serious decline worldwide.

Participants may attend one of two training classes, which will be held at the Zoo Education Center (located at 600 Franke Park Drive) on Saturday, February 20 or Saturday February 27 from 11 AM – 3 PM. There is no fee to attend and participants need attend only ONE of the classes. Participants should bring a sack lunch or snack. Families, adults, teens, and youth groups are all welcome.

FrogWatch USA is the flagship citizen science program of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), the accrediting organization of zoos nationwide.

Participants will be a part of real effort to preserve the natural wonders in their own back yard.

To register for the training or get more information, contact the Zoo Volunteer Office at 260-427-6828 or volunteer@kidszoo.org.

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About the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo: The Fort Wayne Children's Zoo's mission is to connect kids and animals, strengthen families, and inspire people to care. The zoo is northeast Indiana's largest tourist attraction, hosting more than 600,000 guests annually. The zoo received the **2015 TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Award**, was voted **Indiana's #1 "Gotta-Do Summer Attraction,"** and was named the **#7 Zoo in the United States and #20 in the World by TripAdvisor** in 2015.

The zoo is a conservation leader, contributing more than \$90,000 annually to local, regional, and international efforts to protect wild animals and habitats, and participating in cooperative management programs for 91 endangered species and taxa. The zoo was named Northeast Indiana's **Sustainable Business of the Year** in 2014.

As a self-supporting facility, the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo receives no tax dollars for operations. The zoo's operations are funded entirely by earned revenue and donations.

The zoo will open for the 2016 season on April 23. Zoo hours are 9:00am-5:00pm, open until 7:00pm Memorial Day through Labor Day. The zoo will close for one day on Friday, August 19 for an annual fundraising event.

Fort Wayne Children's Zoo | 3411 Sherman Blvd. | Fort Wayne, IN 46808 | 260.427.6800 | kidszoo.org