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Cherokee Trails students give back ■ 20



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Ware Shoals Biology Club president Hannah Ashley wears one of the Save the Frogs bracelets the club sold to raise money for the Save the Frogs campaign.

FEELING FROGGY

Ware Shoals Biology Club students hope to save amphibians

By ERIN OWENS

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WARE SHOALS

The world's population of frogs has been declining rapidly, and the students of Ware Shoals High School's Biology Club are doing everything they can to make sure that trend does not continue.

After biology teacher George Sellers taught his students about the declining amphibian population and the effects it could have on the world, they knew they had to take action. Members of the Biology Club wrote a petition and a letter to S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley, encouraging her to recognize April 28 as Save the Frogs Day across the state.

"These kids are very bright, they're very astute, they're very energetic and they are the types of students who are able to take an idea and develop it, do something with it and produce some results," Sellers said. "That's nice to see."

Ware Shoals junior and Biology Club vice president Jacob Gilbert said after learning more than 200 amphibian species have gone extinct in the last three decades, he wanted



Ware Shoals Biology Club president Hannah Ashley and vice president Jacob Gilbert have been advocating for the Save the Frogs campaign since last year. They have written a petition and a letter to Gov. Nikki Haley, encouraging her to recognize April 28 as Save the Frogs Day in South Carolina.

to raise awareness of the issue and encourage other people to help. "People might not know it, but frogs are a staple ... of the ecosystem," he said. "They keep it in balance, and without them, the ecosystem may collapse."

Biology Club president Hannah

Ashley, a senior, said she was surprised to learn how important frogs are to the world, too.

"I didn't realize how vital they are," she said. "They really are great indicators of what might happen to humans over time, because it affects the frogs first, so it gives us an idea

To sign the Save the Frogs petition

- Go to www.change.org
- Search "Save the Frogs"
- Click "The Governor of SC: Recognize Save the Frogs Day"
- Fill out your information to sign the petition

of what we might be facing in the next few years. Without frogs here, we wouldn't have that kind of warning."

Sellers said he thought it was important for the students to know amphibians have the fastest growing rate of extinction.

"It's important for students to understand how important the biodiversity is on this planet, and I don't think there's enough instruction going on in school to really get these biodiversity concerns to students," the teacher said. "I want them to really have a good understanding of what's going on, so they can make decisions about things later in life, which is very important."

Some suggestions the club offers include conserving resources, recycling, building a frog pond, not using pesticides and not purchasing wild-caught amphibians as pets.

FROGGY

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The club has worked since last year to raise awareness about the Save the Frogs campaign and are hoping this year, South Carolina will join many other states and countries in celebrating Save the Frogs Day in April.

During last year's Save the Frogs Day, the Biology Club went to the Greenwood County Library, where they set up a booth to inform people of their cause and encourage them to sign the petition. This year, they plan on going to Greenwood Mall.

"We want to spread awareness about frogs and how important they are and how they're dying out," Gilbert said.

In addition to their outings, the club has a petition sign-up sheet in the Ware Shoals Library, and anyone can sign it online at www.change.org. The group is also working to raise money for the Save the Frogs charity, by selling T-shirts and rubber bracelets.

The club's petition has more than 400 signatures so far, including people from all around the world, and the students said they hope to add as many signatures as possible before sending it to

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— Hannah Ashley
Ware Shoals
Biology Club president

the governor next week.

Even after their letter and petition are sent, the students know the fight is not complete. Ashley said she will continue to work to help the world's frog population, and even hopes to pass her concerns down to future generations.

"I think advocating Save the Frogs Day is not something that's going to just end. It's going to be a process that's going to last a long time," she said. "If we do get those species to not be in any more danger, we still have to make sure that what has happened to make them endangered doesn't happen again. So after we help the frogs, we have to keep up prevention."